Innovations

Educating Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Exploring General Education Teachers' Lived Experiences

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Abstract: *Teachers who educatestudents with emotional and behavioral disordersface unique challenges that affect their professional perspectives in various ways. Using purposive sampling, the lived experiences of five general education teachers who teach students with EBD were explored in this phenomenological descriptive research. Semi-structured interviews were done using an aide-memoireto obtain the lived experiences of teachers in navigating their behavioral challenges, effective strategies, personal impact, and professional growth. The findings of this study revealed the profound impact of teaching students with EBD on teachersthrough the seven key themes identified, which include: individualized behavioral instability, experiential progressive strategies, structured support strategies, evolving teaching perspectives, resilient coping strategies, pedagogical breakthroughs, and transformed teaching perspectives. These findings highlight the complexity of teachers' lived experiences of addressing the unique needs of students with EBD while fostering an inclusive learning environment. In conclusion, teaching students with EBD not only challenges educators to adapt and grow but also transforms their instructional practices,teaching philosophies, resilience, and commitment. This study may contribute to the understanding of new and tenured teachers on how to navigate the challenges of teaching students with EBD in the general education setting. On the other hand, this study also emphasizesthe importance of continued investment in supporting inclusive schools with teacher training and support to truly create an inclusive classroom that embodies the education for all context. It is crucial to acknowledge these lived experiences of teachers to equip incoming educators with the tools, strategies as well as emotional resilience necessary to thrive in a challenging yet rewarding inclusive classroom environment. Future research may explore long-term outcomes of adaptive strategies for students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, focusing on their academic progress, emotional development, and the sustained well-being of educators to ensure lasting positive impacts in inclusive and special education.*

Keywords: *Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, Adaptive Teaching Strategies, Inclusive Education, Transformative Teaching, Teachers' Well-being*

Introduction

Teachers are essential in helping children with emotional and behavioral disorders succeed in general education classes because of their tolerance, commitment, and flexibility. However, they often face significant challenges due to a range of complex factors. Although professional development programs on EBD have been shown to enhance teachers' effectiveness (Alkahtani, 2019), general education teachers are dealing with diverse learners in a classroom filled with varied special needs, so the reality of supporting students with EBD remains an overwhelming challenge. While inclusive education in America ensures that students with EBD have access to the least restrictive environment, as mandated by the federal laws (IDEA, 2004), general education teachers are the ones addressing the challenges of this reality.

It is a fact that students with EBD are entitled to free and appropriate public education, including Individualized Education Programs with behavioral interventions (IDEA,2004). Additionally, students with disabilities are mandated reasonable accommodation though 504 plans (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), that ensures these students are not discriminated against other students and the Americans with Disabilities further reinforces these protections by ensuring they receive equal access to education which includes students with EBD (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990). However, the primary responsibility for supporting these students often falls on the general education teacher, with limited assistance from the special education teacher. As a result, creativity, innovation, and resilience must come from the general education teacher. With these, schools then implement positive interventions and support, social–emotional learning, and differentiated instruction to ensure that the students with EBD and their peers can thrive in the general education settings (Alkahtani, 2019).

While equipping the teachers with the above positive interventions and support with other evidence-based strategies that enhances and fosters an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Leggie & Terras, 2019), there are still significant portion of teachers who continue to struggle with managing students with emotional and behavioral disorders (Gage et al., 2020). These challenges arise from the reality of common classrooms in the real world, which include students with diverse special needs. This situation is further compounded by additional challenges posed by students with EBD, highlighting the need for continuous professional development and institutional support (Gage et.al., 2020; Oliver & Reschly, 2021).

General education teachers' understanding of students with EBD is essential in developing the creativity, innovation, and resilience needed to support these learners effectively. Challenges with emotional regulation and behavioral control are hallmarks of emotional and behavioral disorders, which severely hinder a person's ability to function in social and academic contexts. Externalizing behaviors such as aggression

and impulsivity, as well as internalizing behaviors like anxiety and social isolation, frequently manifest these challenges (González-Valero et al., 2023).From a neurological standpoint, EBD has been linked to defects in brain circuits connected to social and emotional processing, especially in the limbic system and prefrontal cortex (Smith, 2020). These disruptions could cause symptoms that mimic mental diseases, which would complicate diagnosis and treatment accuracy (Levenson et al., 2014). Although good intervention calls for awareness of behavioral patterns, risk factors, and evidence-based practices supporting both teachers and students in handling these challenges, it is important to underline that EBD spans a spectrum of emotional and behavioral difficulties greatly impairing a student's academic performance so it is necessary to highlight comprehensive strategies to address the varied needs of affected students (Berger, 2019; Maynard et al.,2019)

Leggio & Terras (2019) claim that EBD is linked to various behavioral and health issues in adolescents, including school dropout and criminality. Effective intervention thus depends on knowledge of risk factors, behavioral patterns, and evidence–based solutions that enable teachers and students to handle these problems. The stigma linked to EBD creates delays in support and intervention, hence parents are often inhibited from seeking expert evaluations (Perry & Daniels, 2020). Delays caused by this could make implementing appropriate educational services even more challenging and result in underreporting and erroneous diagnoses (Dorado et al., 2021). Remember that a student's environment significantly affects their emotional and behavioral health. Studies show that students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to have emotional and behavioral issues, which can have a bad effect on their social and academic growth (Baroni et al., 2020). Furthermore, many families in these conditions have limited access to mental health resources, which makes it even more challenging for students to get the care they need and for general education teachers to offer in an inclusive atmosphere (Gottried &Harven, 2021). Policymakers then repair financing these gaps and ensure that every school has the necessary supporting systems (Avery & Morris, 2021).

The road to teaching for educators managing students with EBD is never been easy. These challenges can linger throughout adulthood without appropriate therapies, which influences general well-being and job possibilities (Maynard et al., 2019). Since students with EBDare more at risk of falling behind academically, feeling socially isolated, and even getting engaged in the juvenile justice system, general education teachers are encouraged to make their maximum effort to educate them (Berger, 2019). Behavioral interventions and multi-tiered support systems havebeen maximizedby teachers to enable these students to succeed and veer toward betterment (Dorado, et al., 2021).

This study, which is grounded in behavioral science, offers a perceptive examination of how teachers could more effectively support students with EDB. This

includes Skinner (1953),who devised the operant conditioning hypothesis, which underscores the potential for controlled environments and reinforcement to influence behavior. Also, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which further broadens Bandura's 1977 social learning theory by emphasizing the role of positive role models and social interactions in guiding children toward appropriate behavior. This behavioral science posits that a child's behavior is influenced by several linked systems, including family, education, and community. In a variety of educational settings, these concepts are being implemented as instructional strategies to mitigate behavioral issues and foster emotional development and social competence of every student.

Practically, educators who dealt with students with EBD used theoretical insights along with sensible teaching techniques, continuous professional development, and careful self-evaluation (Jones & Roberts, 2019). Drawing on the ideas of Skinner and Bandura, they used Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (Sugai & Horner, 2002) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Kendall & Braswell, 1993) strategies to assist students in creating self-regulation and adaptive behaviors. Implementing these strategies presented major difficulties, though, since students with EBD sometimes resisted organized interventions, needed customized help, and responded inconsistently to behavioral strategies (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Recognizing the emotional difficulties and burnout risks connected with working with this student population, teacher development programs have been equipping teachers with evidence-based interventions, stress-management techniques, and resilience-building strategies has been the top priority (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

With these, it has been implied that general education teachers must first understand emotional and behavioral disorders with much investment in creativity and innovationto properly support and encourage the resilience of students with special needs. EBD severely affectsstudents' social and academic performance with their difficulties in emotional and behavioral control. Recent research stresses the need for teacher knowledge and innovations in helping children with EBD. For example, McGuire and Meadan (2022) investigated general educators' thoughtson social development to support inclusive workplaces. Likewise, a 2019 Leggio and Terras study on the traits, the knowledge, and the skills of successful teachers for students with EBD highlighted the need for customized training and favorable classroom settings.

Teaching students with EBD has never been easy for teachers, especially in managing difficult behaviors, developing appropriate teaching plans, and handling the emotional and professional stress associated with the work. This has been proven through the studies, Jesse Lewis Choose Love program, Perryman et al. (2020) investigated how teachers and mental health professionals adopt social-emotional learning programs. Emphasizing the emotional weight of the work, Wooldridge–

McCormick (2022) investigated the stress and burnout experienced by special education teachers operating in self-contained classes. King (2023) looked at how effective math interventions are for students with EBDs in high school, offering insights into subject-specific teaching strategies.Additional research by Armstrong-Lee (2023) examined the academic achievement of middle school students with EBDs, while Robertson (2022) analyzed self-reported practices among teachers to identify what strategies are working and where additional support is needed.These studies demonstrate that teachers are still on the edge of discovering the optimal techniques to educate students in EBD in a smooth manner.

Even though these studies provide important insights, there is still a big gap in research when it comes to understanding the reality of the teachers' experiences in implementing these strategies and how each strategy works in facilitating the daily teaching and learningin the inclusive classroom andthe degree of efficiency about how these approaches hold up to each teacher over time or adapt to various school settings with general education teachers as key experts (Robertson, 2022; Wooldridge-McCormick, 2022). This study then was set out to explore the experiences of general education teachers by looking at the challenges they face, the strategies that work, how they grow in their roles, and the personal impact of teaching students with EBDs, with the research question:

How do general education teachers experience and navigate the behavioral challenges, effective strategies, professional growth, and personal impact of teaching students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders?

This study is important because it helps connect educational theory with real-world classroom experiences when working with students who have EBD. It highlights the behavioral challenges encountered, the effective strategies discovered, and the result of a personal and professional process that this study produces. Also, a deeper knowledge of these occurrences helps shape policies promoting more inclusive and supportive learning environments, enhance teacher preparation, and create evidence–based solutions. By providing insightful analysis of the psychological and emotional stresses of the work and highlighting strategies to maintain inspiration and lower burnout, this study contributes to the increasing discussion on teacher resilience and well-being. Eventually, these findings could enhance teaching methods, increase student achievement, and contribute to the formation of a more qualified and empathetic workforce for students with EBD.

Methods
Study Design
This study employed a phenomenological descriptive research approach to comprehend teachers' experiences in teaching students with EBD. This approach, which focuses on how the participants perceive and make meaning from their

experiences, is suited (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This study conducted semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth insights into the behavioral issues teachers encountered, the successful techniques they discovered, their professional development needs, and the personal effects of dealing with students with EBD on their personal and professional growth. Purposive sampling ensured that participants had extensive experience teaching students with EBD, resulting in relevant data gathering (Patton, 2015). Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological approach was used to examine data in a structured seven – step process that included reading through transcripts for an overall understanding, identifying key statements, deriving meanings from those statements, grouping similar themes, developing a core structure, identifying the essence of the phenomenon by capturing the core elements and relationships, and conducting member checking, in which participants validated findings. The study utilized member verification to increase credibility by ensuring that results were correct and supported by many sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study's use of bracketing allows the researcher to set aside personal prejudices and preconceptions to remain open and objective while analyzing participant experiences. This study provided an informative understanding of the problems of educating students with EBD by incorporating teachers' actual challenges, instructional strategies, and professional development into general education classes. A phenomenological method, which focuses on how teachers perceive and navigate their everyday reality, allows for a more in-depth exploration of these lived experiences.

Participants

Participants for this study were meticulously selected based on direct expertise in teaching students with EBD. Utilizing Colaizi's(1978) phenomenological approach, the objective was to find educators who are capable of providing comprehensive, firsthand accounts of their experiences through purposive sampling. The study involved five general education teachers on the west side of Florida with at least three years of experience teaching students with EBD. The primary objective was to cultivate trust and provide a conducive atmosphere for candid conversation, ensuring that participants felt safe in sharing genuine experiences (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Before interviews, participants were thoroughly reviewed with the objective, methodology, and ethical considerations, including anonymity and voluntary involvement (Smith et al., 2009). The comprehensive interviews focused on revealing the challenges faced by teachers, the most effective strategies employed, and the personal impacts of teaching students with EBD.

Procedure

This phenomenological study examined teachers' lived experiences in guiding students with EBD, focusing on their perceptions and interpretations (Creswell & Poth,

2018). Semi-structured, indepth interviews lasting 30 to 60 minutes were conducted to investigate behavioral issues, effective methods, professional growth requirements, and personal effects (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Prior to data collection, consent was obtained from the school principal, and participants signed an agreement affirming their voluntary participation, confidentiality, and compliance with ethical guidelines. As Smith et al. (2009), the open-ended yet adaptable format of interviews fostered candid dialogue, and pseudonyms were designated to protect identities. Data analysis, adhering to Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step methodology, encompassed member checking for validity, structural synthesis, transcript scrutiny, theme clustering, and an exhaustive description. Triangulation and member verification ensured correctness and consistency in outcomes, hence enhancing confidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Strict compliance with ethical principles, including the anonymization of sensitive data, safeguarding participant rights, and maintaining confidentiality, was maintained throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethics

The study adhered to ethical guidelines set by the Florida education system. Data gathering followed approval from the school administrator. Participating general education teachers in the study got a thorough knowledge of the objective of the study, the methodology, and access to interview transcripts and findings. Every person gave written informed permission before taking part, with them verifying their knowledge of the aim of the study and guaranteeing that their data would remain private. Participants were advised that their answers would be kept anonymous and no identifying information would be shared. Furthermore, the results of the study have been shared with them and the larger society before public release. Emphasizing the voluntary character of involvement, participants kept their right to withdraw at any moment, free from consequences. Participants were given a modest token as a thankyou for their contributions. Every bit of the gathered data was safely kept and applied just for research. A written researcher and participant agreement was used to better protect participant privacy by delineating data collecting techniques, confidentiality policies, and defencesagainst possible privacy violations. These ethical issues were guaranteed throughout the research process participants' rights, privacy, and well-being.

Data Analysis

Colaizzi's (1978) method in descriptive phenomenology helped to arrange, save, and examine the gathered data. From every transcript, important remarks about the research topic were found, noted with page and line references, and then interpreted. These readings were arranged into themes and categories, therefore enabling a

thorough knowledge of the phenomenon. The results of the study were aggregated to provide a clear rationale for teachers' interactions with students exhibiting EBD. Through peer debriefing and collaborative discussion of findings with fellow researchers, the researcher sought to mitigate bias and maintain objectivity, ensuring precision and reliability. Triangulation was employed utilizing various data sources, encompassing participant messages and interview transcripts. This facilitated the verification and validation of the results (Patton, 1990). The study focused on achieving the research objectives and identifying participant similarities and differences. The examination of written materials and documentation enables the researcher to ensure an accurate representation of lived experiences, hence augmenting the study's validity.

Results

The interviews provided a rich and diverse account of general education teachers' interactions with students with EBD. The findings revealed seven major themes that describe the challenges, strategies, and personal and professional development that general education teachers face in their role. First is Individualized Behavioral Instability, which highlights how unpredictable and different student actions are, so teachers were found to be always flexible. Second is Experiential Progressive Strategies since experiences mirror the teachers' trial-and-error process of learning successful management skills applicable to the varied needs of students with EBD. Third is the Structured Support Strategies, in this case, the experiences underscored the requirement of external support systems and organized interventions in fulfilling the demands of the students with EBD. Fourth is Evolving Teaching Perspectives, this theme documents how, in response to their experiences, the teachers' teaching philosophies and strategies change with time. Fifth is the Resilient Coping Strategy, which emphasizes the emotional and professional resilience teachers acquire to negotiate the daily obstacles of dealing with students with EBD. Sixth is Pedagogical Breakthroughs, when the experiences of the teachers mark significant turning points in instructional practices that result in appreciable student development. At last, the seventh is Transformed Teaching Perspectives, which shows how these events affect teachers' general professional attitude and teaching strategies over the long run. These issues taken together show the difficulties of educating students with EBD, the adaptive solutions teachers use, and the great impact these events have on their professional development and classroom practices.

Individualized Behavioral Instability

The answers pointed out that every student with EBD has different difficulties and that particular behavioral instability emphasizes the customized character of problems with impulse control, emotional regulation, and social issues. Reflecting the complex and

varied difficulty of their demands, this theme covers emotional instability, impulsivity, and difficulties in managing frustration that influence both the behavior and social interactions, and reflect the particular issues every student with EBD experiences. Emphasizing that no two students experience EBD in the same way, the different natures of EBD explain the multiple difficulties of EBD. While some would battle with impulse control and aggressiveness, others could have problems with social contact or emotional regulation. This emphasis shows how EBD is a spectrum of behaviors and issues shaped by particular events, environments, and triggers instead of a one-size-fits-all approach. When asked about behavioral problems they usually encounter in students with EBD, the responses below emphasized the individualized behavioral instability:

T1: One of my EBD students battles greatly with impulse control. During a math lesson, while I was explaining a new concept, she frequently blurted out answers without raising her hand, talked over classmates, and even got up from her seat to walk around the room. On another occasion, while giving instructions for a group activity, she suddenly interrupted me to ask an unrelated question about a TV show she watched the night before. These disruptions made it challenging to maintain the class's focus and required frequent redirection. I consider this behavior disruptive because it affects both her learning and that of her classmates. According to my experience, my student with EBD has a problem with her impulse control, which often leads to frequent disruptions in class, such as calling out while lessons are ongoing, getting out of her seat, and interrupting lessons.

T2: One of my students, who has EBD, often refuses to follow directions and challenges my authority. For instance, during a writing assignment, I asked the class to take out their journals and start working. While all the other students complied, he crossed his arms, leaned back in his chair, and said, "I'm not doing this. It's boring." When I calmly reminded him of our classroom expectations, he rolled his eyes and muttered, "You can't make me." On another occasion, during a group activity, he deliberately ignored my instructions, walking around the classroom instead of participating. When I redirected him, he responded with, "Why should I listen to you?" and continued to disrupt the lesson. His defiance makes it challenging to maintain a structured learning environment, as I constantly have to balance addressing his behavior while keeping the rest of the class engaged. I often see my student with EBD refusing to follow directions, arguing with me, or deliberately ignoring my classroom rules, which can make it difficult for me to maintain a structured learning environment. This is because of his noncompliance and defiance.

T3: One of my students who has EBD often exhibits aggressive behavior when he feels frustrated or overwhelmed. During a math lesson, he struggled with a problem and, instead of asking for help, he suddenly threw his pencil across the room and shouted, 'This is stupid!' When I calmly approached to offer assistance, he pushed his chair

back aggressively and yelled, 'Leave me alone!' On another occasion, when a classmate accidentally bumped into him in line, he responded by shoving the student and calling him names. There were also times when he directed his aggression toward me and my paraprofessional. For instance, when asked to transition from recess back to class, he refused, stomped his feet, and shouted at us. When my paraprofessional tried to guide him back, he pulled away forcefully and swung his backpack at her. This type of behavior is making it difficult for me to maintain a safe and structured classroom with a peaceful environment because it requires me to have constant de-escalation strategies and support to help my student manage his emotions appropriately. This includes him displaying aggressive behavior towards his classmates, to me, which includes all helpers and paraprofessionals coming into my classroom.

T4: One of my students, who has EBD, struggles significantly with peer relationships. During group activities, she often misinterprets social cues—when a classmate playfully teased her, she became visibly upset and accused them of being mean. At other times, she engaged in inappropriate interactions, such as standing too close to others or interrupting conversations abruptly, which made it difficult for her to form friendships. There were also days when she completely isolated herself, refusing to join group discussions or choosing to sit alone at lunch. I noticed that when she felt anxious or overwhelmed, she would withdraw from her peers rather than ask for help. She once told me, 'Nobody likes me anyway,' which showed how deeply her low self-esteem affected her ability to connect with others. Despite encouragement and structured social support, she continued to struggle with building and maintaining relationships in the classroom. My student with EBD struggles with her relationships with classmates. She seems to have trouble understanding social cues because she engages in inappropriate interactions or sometimes isolates herself due to anxiety and low self-esteem. She is having social difficulties.

T5: One of my students, who has EBD, experiences intense mood swings that greatly affect her ability to engage in the classroom. One morning, she came in cheerful and talkative, but within minutes of being asked to complete an assignment, she suddenly slammed her book shut and muttered, 'I hate this!' When I approached her calmly to offer help, she pushed her chair back, crossed her arms, and refused to make eye contact. On another occasion, after a minor disagreement with a classmate, she had a full-blown outburst—crying, yelling, and knocking her pencil case onto the floor. However, at other times, instead of acting out, she completely shut down. During a class discussion, she kept her head down on her desk and refused to participate, ignoring my attempts to engage her. I have been trying to reassure her, but she ignored me and she does not respond to show interest in any part of the lesson throughout the day. The way she acts is not regulated, and I had difficulty catching her attention. I have to think of ways to constantly support her, which includes managing

her feelings and emotions in a safe but productive way. When I see my students with EBD experience mood swings, frequent frustrations, and outbursts of anger, I at least manage to de-escalate the situation. I often call these situations emotional dysregulation.

Experiential Progressive Strategies

Teachers develop their skills mostly through hands-on experience working with students with special needs by facing the real classroom challenges rather than relying on formal training. This approach highlights the importance of ongoing learning to better support students with EBD. The general education teachers in this study show a strong commitment to improving their abilities through collaboration, workshops, online courses, and training programs. By continuously learning and adapting, they create more supportive environments for students with EBD. This dedication is clear in the responses about the types of training and professional development they pursue to manage and assist students, as evident in the following statements:

T1: I've attended multiple workshops on behavior management, including de-escalation techniques and positive interventions. These have helped me understand how to support students with emotional and behavioral disorders in the general classroom setting. Honestly, I've had plenty of training through workshops and seminars.

T2: Most of what I've learned comes from working closely with special education teachers and behavior specialists. We have regular meetings to discuss strategies, and I've gained a lot from hands-on experience and collaboration. I work closely with the Special Education staff to keep my classroom running smoothly and meet students' needs.

T3: I've taken online courses on classroom management and trauma–informed teaching, which have given me useful strategies for creating a supportive learning environment and handling challenging behaviors. Usually, throughout summer break or all year, I complete online courses and webinars to ensure I have sufficient information to help my EBD kids.

T4: Our district aimed at assisting students with varied needs, including EBD, our district offers yearly professional development seminars. These classes cover individualized behavior plans, behavior assessments, and restorative strategies. Attending these district–based trainings has been really vital in helping me to understand and support my students with EBD.

T5: For my teacher preparation program, I signed up for special education courses, including behavior management training. I have completed classes on altering lessons for students with behavioral problems as well as inclusive teaching. Essentially, I have

finished courses and qualifications aimed at managing students with particular needs like EBD.

Adaptive Resilient Efforts

Adaptive Resilient Efforts illustrates how educators assist students with EBD in acquiring skills necessary to overcome their challenges, while also navigating the complexities of working with them. This theme illustrates the significant impact that patience, encouragement, and robust relationships may have on a student's development. Educators describe how minor yet intentional efforts, such as fostering trust, altering the classroom environment, and providing students with EBD a springboard in their schooling that led to significant progress. Their remarks demonstrate the essential nature of consistency, sensitivity, and targeted strategies in facilitating the success of these students. The crucial lesson is that the students with EBD can thrive and develop with suitable assistance and patience. The teachers' replies highlight this theme:

T1: One of my discoveries came from a student who would frequently shut down in class and fight emotional outbursts. Months of building trust later, he finally spoke openly about his academic disappointments. Instead of responding badly, he requested a break and used a strategy we had spoken about. That time made me see how much loving environments, patience, and consistency truly can help.

T2: I saw how much difference even tiny changes could make. One of my students would become angry and run from independent study. Working with the special education teacher, we designed a calm corner in the classroom and a visual timetable. One day he left instead of walking to the calm area alone. This tiny but important incident showed me how effectively students could control their feelings with the right help.

T3: One of my most difficult yet rewarding experiences was with a student who struggled with social circumstances and showed consistent aggressive behavior. For a project, I teamed him with a classmate; for the first time, he worked with someone without an outburst. Seeing him work and gain confidence served as a reminder that growth is always possible—even if it takes time.

T4: I came to understand relationships. One of my students refused to participate in class and exhibited extreme anxiety and regular outbursts. Every morning I made sure to welcome him and find out about his interests. He began to rely on me over time, and one day he raised his hand to respond first to a question in front of the class. That moment let me realize the force of a strong, positive relationship.

T5: I picked up a lot of flexibility and patience. One of my pupils would often refuse to do any homework and pull apart projects. Rather than pushing him, I provided him with options, such as choosing between odd- or even-numbered questions. He began

regularly finishing his assignments at last. This encounter showed me that rather than rigid guidelines, knowledge, and adaptability might be more powerful.

Structured Support Strategies

Structured Support Strategies emphasize setting up students with EBD in a neat, motivating surroundings. Teachers stressedthe creation of orderly classrooms where students feel supported and safe. Through daily check-ins, they establish trust using clear expectations and reinforcement of good behavior via praise and awards; they also maintain consistency with organized routines and visual timetables, fostering soothing strategies, alternatives, and space when needed; they also enable students to control their emotions. Ensuring students have the help they require mostly depends on cooperation among parents, counselors, and special education personnel. Every one of these initiatives helps to create a classroom where EBD students may flourish. The following responses show some of the best techniques teachers employ to control conduct in their classes.

T1: Establishing clear expectations and regularly rewarding good conduct seems to help EBD sufferers stay on target. Under a token system, they gain points for excellent behavior that they can trade for little benefits. A lot of my strategy revolves around clear expectations and positive reinforcement.

T2: Developing close, trustworthy relationships with my students is vital. Every day I follow up with them, pay attention to their worries, and set up a classroom where kids feel respected and safe. Although it takes time, it's crucial for enabling my EBD sufferers to succeed.

T3: Students with EBD do best with structure; so, I keep to a regular daily plan and use visual timetables to guide them toward what to expect. This lessens fear and stops outbursts. For this reason, I ensure that my classroom activities—inside as well as outside—have a set framework.

T4: When an EBD student starts to grow irritated, I remain cool, allow them time, and present options to enable them to take control. To assist studentsin self-regulating, I also employ breathing exercises and mindfulness practices. It has really changed to be adaptable with de-escalation techniques for soothing.

T5: To create and apply behavior plans, I closely collaborate with parents, counselors, and special education personnel. Maintaining open lines of contact guarantees continuity between home and school, therefore empowering the pupils. Properly controlling conduct in my classroom depends on working with parents and support workers.

Evolving Teaching Perspectives

Working with students with EBD alters both teachers and students in significant ways, as Evolving Teaching Perspectives notes. Many teachers say the experience has made them more sympathetic and compassionate, enabling them to look past the behavior to grasp what their students need. Using proactive techniques to establish a disciplined and encouraging environment has also helped them to enhance their classroom management. Working collaboratively with parents and experts to ensure children receive the support they require, teachers have evolved into more potent advocates. Simultaneously, students have grown resilient, learning to negotiate obstacles and honoring even the slightest successes. For many, this experience has changed their whole approach to instruction from merely delivering lectures to emphasizing relationship-building and creating a great classroom environment. The following responses reflect how teaching students with EBD has shaped educators both personally and professionally:

T1: I've definitely become more patient and empathetic. Working with students with EBD
has taught me to look beyond behaviors and understand the struggles they're facing. This has made me a more compassionate and supportive teacher.

T2: My classroom management skills have improved so much. Not only does this help students with EBD, but it also helps the entire class since I have learned to be more proactive in building disciplined and encouraging surroundings.

T3: I have become more adept at collaborating with other experts to advocate for my kids. Working with families, counselors, and special education instructors has helped me to see how crucial it is to provide students with EBD the tools they need to thrive.

T4: I have a great deal of emotional and personal fortitude. There have been tough moments, but seeing even the smallest progress in a student reminds me why I became a teacher. It's challenging, but also incredibly rewarding.

T5: My whole perspective on teaching has shifted. I used to focus mostly on delivering lessons, but now I see how important it is to build relationships and create a positive classroom culture. Students need to feel safe and understood before they can really learn.

Resilient Coping Strategies

Resilient coping mechanisms are mostly about how teachers manage to stay effective in the classroom while attending to children with EBD by balancing their own needs. Teachers should have strategies to control stress and prevent burnout since teaching these children can be both physically and psychologically taxing. Many teachers rely on self-care, support from colleagues, mindfulness, and setting clear boundaries to help them stay grounded. These strategies not only help them cope with the

challenges of the job but also allow them to continue giving their best to their students. The following responses reflect how teachers handle the stress that comes with working with students with EBD.

T1: Yes, I've felt burnout. Teaching students with EBD can be tough, especially when trying to support all my students while handling disruptions. What helps me is leaning on my colleagues for support, attending training on behavior management, and making sure I set boundaries between work and personal life.

T2: Yes, I've felt stressed at times. The unpredictability of student behavior can be overwhelming, but I've found that mindfulness, deep breathing, and regular exercise help me manage it. I also try to focus on the progress my students make, no matter how small, which helps keep me motivated.

T3: I've felt the emotional toll, but I've learned to adapt. In the beginning, it was really difficult, but I realized that building strong relationships with my students makes a huge difference. I also work closely with special education staff and use de-escalation strategies to make things easier for both me and my students.

T4: I wouldn't say I've reached burnout, but I do feel stressed. Some days are harder than others, especially when I'm managing difficult behaviors while keeping the rest of the class engaged. I rely on self-care routines like journaling and spending time with my family, and I remind myself that I can't control everything.

T5: Yes, I've felt burnout before. There were times when I questioned if I was making a difference. But I've learned that taking breaks, being kind to myself, and celebrating even the small wins help me stay motivated. I also join teacher support groups where I can share ideas and get encouragement from others who understand.

Pedagogical Breakthroughs
Pedagogical breakthroughs are those little but significant events that alter the course of education and demonstrate that meaningful relationships are the foundation of actual development. These events empower teachers as much as assist kids by demonstrating the great impact that trust and support can create. Strong relationships are the secret to academic, emotional, and social development for students with EBD. Those who feel really recognized and cherished developthe courage to meet obstacles, strengthen their resilience, and acknowledge their development. Real transformation is driven by these connections, which remind us that the path of learning and personal development defines success rather than its outcomes alone. The answers below capture what participants find most fulfilling about working with students with EBD:

T1: Seeing individuals with EBD flourish personally and academically is among the most rewarding aspects of my work. I'll never forget a student who struggled with self-

control by watching him learn to manage his emotions and succeed in class was an incredible experience. These are the moments that remind me that I love teaching.

T2: Building strong relationships with my students is one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. I had a student who refused to engage for a week, no matter what I did. But by being patient, checking in with him daily, and just showing up consistently, he finally started to open up. First, in small conversations, then with real effort in class. When students begin to trust me, I see their walls come down, and that's when real growth happens. Those connections don't just help with learning, they create a classroom where students feel safe, valued, and capable.

T3: One of the best parts of teaching is helping students learn how to manage their emotions healthily. I had a student who used to completely shut down when he got frustrated, refusing to do any work. After working together on deep breathing and positive self-talk, I saw a shift. One day, instead of giving up, he took a deep breath, asked for help, and kept going. It was a simple moment, but it showed me why this work matters by seeing students apply these skills and build confidence is what makes teaching so rewarding.

T4: Creating a positive, supportive classroom where all students, especially those with EBD, feel understood is incredibly fulfilling. One of my students used to battle outbursts and felt like an outsider a lot of times. Through consistent routines, patient demeanor, and celebration of little victories, he gradually began to trust the surroundings. He once even assisted a classmate in need of something he never would have done before. These events remind me that when children feel safe and supported, they not only improve personally, but the entire classroom gets stronger as well.

T5: Teaching children with EBD is very important because of the few successes. One of my students would shut down right away when a chore seemed too difficult. Instead of giving up one day he inhaled deeply and tried once more. Though it was a small event, for him it was a major one. Every small step forward counts—from keeping interested for a whole lesson to constructively managing frustration to contacting a classmate. These events helped me to realize that although major benchmarks define progress, it is created in the little victories along the road.

Transformed Teaching Perspectives
Transformed Teaching Perspectives cover more ground than merely learning fresh approaches. It is about development, introspection, and forging actual relationships with students. Teaching children with EBD is about being patient, providing tailored assistance, and always changing to fit their needs, not only about controlling misbehavior. Teachers must develop trust, learn alongside their students, and change their strategies as they go. This path is about teachers changing throughout time as much as about helping students succeed. When teachers promise to develop

relationships and flourish alongside their students, their lessons become most valuable. Teachers' responses to questions on what they would have done differently in handling EBD reveal this trend.

T1: Early on, relationship building would be ideal. Looking back, I wish I had stayed more at the beginning of the year, getting to know my EBD kids. I could have assisted them more successfully all year if I had developed trust and identified their triggers earlier.

T2: It emphasizes personal needs. Instead of depending on broad classroom management strategies, I would have spent more time on customizing my approach to every student. More customized behavior plans and accommodations would have greatly changed things.

T3: Working more with the support personnel is cooperation. I need to collaborate closely with counselors, special education teachers, and other support staff. Their knowledge would have enabled me to apply improved plans and treatments for my EBD students.

T4: I should have been more flexible and patient. I saw now that I could have responded to demanding actions with more understanding and tolerance. Rather than acting out of annoyance, I wish I had taken more time to find the causes of the behavior and handled it with composure.

T5: It includes emotional and social development. Social and emotional learning should have taken the front stage in my instruction. Cold has provided students with better tools to control their emotions and actions by helping them to acquire self-regulation, coping mechanisms, and conflict-resolving skills.

At last, these results underline how difficult and always challenging it is to manage and educate students with EBD. Though the difficulties are real, so are the techniques teachers use to help and adjust for their children. The seven main elements demonstrate how teachers develop, develop resilience and uncover significant instructional innovations. By not only enabling students with EBD to flourish but also by supporting themselves in their professional development, they also underline the value of continuous training, solid school support, and innovative teaching strategies.

Discussion

The results of this study provide a clear view of the difficulties, approaches, and personal development general education teachers go through when dealing with students who have EBD. Individualized Behavioral Instability, Experiential Progressive Strategies, Structured Support Strategies, Evolving Teaching Perspectives, Resilient Coping Strategies, Pedagogical Breakthroughs, and Transformed Teaching Perspectives help to capture the several layers of instructing students with EBD needs.

The discussion is on the significance of these topics, their impact on pedagogical approaches, and how teachers adapt to meet the needs of their students. Looking at these findings allowed this section to highlight the many methods the teachers use, the effectiveness of support systems, and the enduring influence these occurrences have on their professional growth and teaching approach.

Individualized Behavioral Instability

Teachers handling students with EBD often firsthand understand how unpredictable and unique a student's challenges can be. Classroom management is a continual balancing act for these students who often battle impulsivity, defiance, and emotional regulation. Teachers depend on regimented procedures, such as reinforcement approaches based on Skinner's (1953) operant conditioning theory, to inspire good behavior as daily activities can vary.For example, T1 shared that a student who frequently disrupted class started showing improvement in self-regulation when given consistent reinforcement.

However, behavioral interventions alone aren't always enough. As T2 pointed out, some students' emotional instability stems from deeper trauma, requiring a more compassionate, trauma–informed approach. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory also plays a role, as students often model behaviors they see in their surroundings. T3 observed that a student's defiance mirrored what they experience at home, reinforcing Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory which highlights how family, school, and community environments shape behavior. Because these external influences affect students differently, teachers adjusted their approach to fit each student's specific needs.

In order to help the students with EBD develop socially, teachers used structured peer activities and social-emotional learning programs. Some students show progress like the one T4 described, who gained social skills through guided interactions with others, and as T5 noted, who may still withdraw despite similar interventions. This unpredictability makes working with EBD students challenging, even though research supports social-emotional learning programs for emotional regulation (Perry & Daniels, 2020). Teachers highlighted their lack of institutional support and training to properly handle these intricacies (Dorado et al., 2021). These make it clear that helping students with EBD calls for more than simply discipline or organized courses. Meeting each student's constantly changing expectations calls for a flexible, holistic approach combining behavioral management, emotional support, and cooperation.

Experiential Progressive Strategies

The experiences of the teachers make it apparent that educating students with EBD needs hands-on experience, teamwork, and lifetime learning that may not merely arise from textbook knowledge. Instead of relying just on their formal training, teachers

actively engaged in real-world classroom settings, went to professional seminars, and worked with special education professionals to gain essential skills. Many of the teachers underlined the need for pragmatic teaching. For example, attending seminars on positive reinforcement, de-escalation strategies, and behavior management has significantly improved T1's ability to support EBD students. T2 specify the need for cooperation by referring to monthly planning meetings with special education teachers and behavior experts who have strengthened their classroom management abilities. Research backs this up; EBD-oriented professional development programs enable teachers to be more effective in managing the conduct of EBD students and foster inclusive classrooms (Alkahtani, 2019). Teacher growth depends on institutional support and organized learning as much as seminars and teamwork. T3 enrolls in online courses and webinars on trauma-informed teaching and classroom management, therefore acting proactively. T4 values districtinstruments that are necessary in meeting students' particular needs,like the functional behavior assessments, tailored behavior plans, and restorative practices.

Many educators still feel inadequate for the demands of dealing with students with EBD despite these initiatives. Studies underline the requirement for continuous professional growth as well as more solid institutional support (Gage et al., 2020; Oliver & Reschly, 2021). T5 notes that developing competence is much aided by formal schooling as well, including graduate courses and special education certification programs. These common experiences relate to the reality that helping students with EBD is challenging and always shifting. To be completely ready for their work, teachers must have both official teaching and practical experience. Creating classrooms where every student can flourish depends on ensuring access to high-quality learning opportunities, whether through seminars, mentoring, or academic programs as education changes (Leggio & Terras, 2019).

Adaptive Resilient Efforts

The answers of the respondents have shown the need for patience and flexibility in guiding students with EBD. Teaching students with EBD calls for patience, adaptability, and great dedication to developing relationships, not only information. Although these students present erratic difficulties for their teachers, their capacity for adaptation and tenacity make a significant impact on their academic and social growth. Many teachers relate tales of breakthrough events that show how important resilience is in the classroom. T1 remembers a strong experience when a student with EBD at last used a self-regulation technique instead of having an emotional outburst following months of constant support and relationship-building. This event strengthened how regularly and with support students acquire coping mechanisms. In a similar vein, T2 discovered that adding a visual schedule and designated calm areas helped students control frustration on their own without interfering with the lesson. Studies confirm these ideas

since flexible, student-centered solutions are essential to helping students with complicated behavioral needs (Alkahtani, 2019; Gage et al., 2020).Other teachers likewise stress in their courses the need for flexibility. T3 tells the story of a student who had a history of hostile conduct but finally worked effectively on a project with a classmate, demonstrating how organized social contacts helped a reclusive student to join in class discussions for the first time. T5 notes, meanwhile, that allowing students options instead of imposing strict standards changed their attitude from continuous non-compliance to routinely doing assignments. These real-life events coincide with studies demonstrating that instructors who stay adaptable and resilient provide more inclusive and supportive classrooms, therefore improving the outcomes for children with EBD (Leggio & Terras, 2019; Oliver & Reschly, 2021). Helping every kid achieve depends on educators being able to adjust, create relationships, and be patient as they negotiate the difficulties of inclusive education.

Structured Support Strategies

In classrooms where they feel comfortable, supported, and understood, students with EBD flourish. Teachers employed Structured Support Strategies as a well-organized technique combining consistency, encouragement, and clear expectations to create a loving learning environment, therefore enabling this. Studies reveal that children with EBD are better able to control their emotions and behaviors when classes are set up and predictable (Alkahtani, 2019). Structure is brought to life in great part by teachers. T1, for instance, stresses the need to clearly express expectations and praise good behavior. Research indicating that positive reinforcement helps lower disruptive behaviors supports their use of a token system whereby children gain points for excellent behavior that can be exchanged for privileges (Sugai & Horner, 2002).Beyond benefits, good teacher-student connections are absolutely vital. T2 emphasizes how regular check-ins and attentive listening foster trust, therefore establishing a classroom in which the children feel heard and supported. This fits Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which holds that behavior is shaped by good relationships and modelling. In a similar vein, T3 discovers that visual calendars and regimented routines make kids feel safer, hence lowering anxiety and emotional outbursts (Leggio & Terras, 2019). Controlling difficult behaviors calls for careful action as well. Using de-escalation strategies, including options, mindfulness exercises, and allowing students space to self-regulate, helps reduce emotional outbursts and enhances self-control (Kendall & Braswell, 1993). T5 emphasizes the value of cooperation at the same time, pointing out that working with parents, counselors, and special education professionals results in improved results for children with EBD. Studies demonstrate that cooperative tactics and multi-tiered systems of assistance enhance academic performance as well as behavior (Gage et al., 2020).Although federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA, 2004) mandate that schools provide students with disabilities, including those with EBD, with the least restrictive environment, many teachers still feel overwhelmed due of great class sizes, lack of resources, and inadequate training (Oliver & Reschly, 2021). Programs like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Social–Social-emotional learning assist instructors in the interim to establish clear expectations and support emotional development (Dorado et al., 2021). With these, schools are better with students with special needs once they invest in sustained teacher training, better resource allocation, and stronger collaboration across disciplines. By ensuring educators have the tools they need, teachers may create classrooms where students with EBD feel safe, understood, and empowered to succeed.

Evolving Teaching Perspectives
Teaching students with EBD isn't just about helping them grow; it also transforms the educators who work with them. Many teachers find that their approach to teaching, classroom management, and collaboration shifts over time, leading to a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. For example, T1 shared that working with students with EBD has deepened their patience and empathy. Rather than merely seeing the behavior, they now know to see the difficulties pupils have beyond it. Studies confirm this; teachers who deal with EBD students generally develop higher emotional intelligence, which enables them to build more caring and responsive classrooms (Leggio & Terras, 2019). T2 underlined how better their classroom management techniques are now since she understood the need for proactive approaches to keep discipline. Structured methods such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports help to establish stable classrooms where children are more involved (Alkahtani, 2019).

Teaching students with EBD teaches advocacy and teamwork in addition to behavior management. T3 underlined how working with these students improved their capacity to interact with experts, guaranteeing appropriate support for the students. Studies show that intervention programs are considerably more successful when families, counselors, general educators, and special education instructors collaborate (Gage et al., 2020). Teaching students with EBD also calls for emotional resilience. T4 noted that although this work can be difficult, it is also immensely fulfilling and so she accepted the emotional ups and downs of this labor. Research indicates that resilient teachers are more adept at managing stress and maintaining long-term job engagement (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Finally, T5 described a fundamental shift in her teaching philosophy by moving simply from delivering content to focusing on building strong relationships and a positive classroom culture. This aligns with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which emphasizes how positive teacher-student interactions shape behavior.

Although the effectiveness of many strategies, including cognitive behavioral interventions and differentiated instruction, many teachers still feel they lack the training and institutional support needed to fully meet the needs of students with EBD (Oliver & Reschly, 2021). That's why these teachers' responses, along with their ongoing professional development, strong collaboration, and resilience–building strategies, are essential not just for students, but for the educators who dedicate themselves to their success.

Resilient Coping Strategies

Teaching students with EBD is challenging as well as gratifying. If educators lack good coping mechanisms, the emotional toll, unpredictability, and necessity for ongoing adaptability can cause stress and burnout. Many teachers find that maintaining their well-being in the classroom depends on a mix of self-care, support networks, and resilience-building strategies. T1 and T5 freely admit burning out is a problem. While T5 finds comfort via self-compassion and teacher support group participation, T1 emphasizes the need of establishing professional boundaries and seeking help. Studies confirm this; a good support system and organized coping strategies greatly lower burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).Stress is a constant struggle for T2 and T4, but they depended on mindfulness practices, self-care regimens, and emphasizing little student development to keep them driven. Research indicates that self-regulation techniques and mindfulness assist teachers control their stress and preserve their mental health (Schussler et al., 2018). T3 notes the emotional toll that working with students with EBD causes but finds strength in developing good relationships and working with special education professionals. Strong teacher resilience (Gage et al., 2020; Oliver & Reschly, 2021) is reportedly mostly dependent on close ties between teachers and interdisciplinary collaboration (Gage et al., 2020).

Although personal coping mechanisms are crucial, teachers also require institutional support if they are to properly handle the difficulties of dealing with students with EBD. Studies reveal that teachers who focuson teaching with behavior management and de-escalation report better confidence and less stress (Alkahtani, 2019). By offering methodical, proactive classroom management tactics, programs like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support and Social–Emotional Learning assist lower teacher stress (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Nevertheless, for many teachers, the erratic nature of EBD and the complexity of inclusive education caused persistent anxiety notwithstanding these supports (Leggio & Terras, 2019). Inclusive schoolsthen have to make investments in continuous professional development targeted at behavior management and emotional resilience, better teacher cooperation networks that offer peer support, and institution-wide self-care programs that enable sustainable stress management if they are to support teachers. Teachers who deal with students with EBD show amazing resiliency, but they also require both strong institutional

support and personal coping mechanisms if they are to keep their passion and efficacy. Schools can build a better, more sustainable classroom where teachers feel competent and supported in their quest to help students with EBD succeed by giving both a top priority.

Pedagogical Breakthrough

Understanding that structured help, trust, and real connections are just as vital as academic learning signals a pedagogical revolution in guiding students with EBD. While traditional discipline–focused strategies sometimes fail, when teachers give connection top priority over correction, students acquire the confidence and resiliency to succeed. This change in teaching technique goes beyond controlling behaviors to grasp and handle the underlying factors of emotional and behavioral problems. Teachers working with students with EBD report that small, intentional strategies lead to major transformations. T1 shares that by focusing on incremental progress rather than immediate change, students develop a sense of accomplishment that fuels further growth. T2 emphasizes that trust is the key to engagement, especially when students feel safe with their teachers; they take academic and social risks that lead to learning breakthroughs. T3 highlights the importance of explicitly teaching self-regulation strategies, giving students practical tools to manage their emotions and behavior. T4 broadens the perspective, demonstrating that an inclusive and structured classroom environment benefits all students, not just those with EBD. T5 reminds teachers that even the smallest victories, may it be a student using a calming strategy instead of having an outburst, represent meaningful progress toward long-term success.

These insights align with research showing that positive behavioral interventions and social–emotional learning, as well as differentiated instruction, create environments where students with EBD can succeed (Leggio & Terras, 2019).Theories like Skinner's operant conditioning, Bandura's social learning theory, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory explain why these strategies work, like students learning by reinforcement, modelling, and interactions with their environment. However, the true breakthrough lies in shifting the mindset of educators from seeing EBD as a challenge to be managed to seeing students as individuals to be understood and supported. This paradigm shift not only enhances outcomes but also fosters emotional resilience, ensuring that students with EBD are equipped for success both inside and outside the classroom.

Transformed Teaching Perspectives

Transformed teaching perspectives emerge when educators intentionally reflect, adapt, and build meaningful connections with their students. Teaching students with EBD involves not just behavior management but also mutual development. T1 emphasized the need to establish robust relationships early, T2 focused on

customizing tactics to meet individual needs, T3 highlighted collaboration with support staff, T4 advocated for the practice of patience and flexibility, T5 underscored the integration of social–emotional development into daily instruction, indicating significant shifts in perspective. These modifications illustrate research indicating the significance of essential relationships, customized interventions, and continuous professional growth in supporting children with EBD (Alkahtani, 2019). Among educators, a crucial understanding is that teaching is a reciprocal process in which students are not the sole recipients of knowledge. Positive behavioral interventions and supports, together with social-emotional learning, substantiate this by illustrating that effective teaching encompasses not just instruction but also the creation of an environment conducive to the flourishing of both teachers and students (Gage et al., 2020).

Numerous educators, meantime, enter the classroom unprepared and overwhelmed by the challenges of managing students with EBD (Oliver & Reschly, 2021). This underscores the necessity for enhanced professional development, training, and robust school-wide support networks to empower teachers in overcoming these challenges. Theories of learning and behavior offer a profound study of the reasons behind the evolution of these pedagogical perspectives. Bandura's social learning theory highlights the importance of modelling and interpersonal interactions, whereas Skinner's operant conditioning underscores the significance of positive reinforcement in behavior formation. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory emphasizes that factors external to the classroom, including family, community, and institutional regulations, significantly influence students' behavior.

Evidence-based interventions such as cognitive-behavioral strategies (Kendall & Braswell, 1993) and positive behavioral interventions and supports (Sugai & Horner, 2002) align with these theories and facilitate the development of essential coping and self-regulation skills in children. Despite these policies, inclusive education continues to face significant challenges, including large class sizes, inadequate resources, and teacher fatigue (Leggio & Terras, 2019; Wooldridge–McCormick, 2022). Inclusive schools must consistently invest in policy, mental health care, and teacher development to effectuate enduring change. Furthermore, enduring transformation may encompass financing for ongoing teacher development, mental health services, and legislative reforms prioritizing the well-being of both teachers and students. Research indicates that educators who undergo targeted professional development in behavior management and emotional resilience are better equipped to assist children with EBD, concurrently reducing their stress and burnout 9Alkahtani, 2019; Oliver & Reschly, 2021). By means of clear expectations and proactive support systems, implementing organized frameworks including positive behavioral interventions and supports has been demonstrated to improve both student results and teacher well-

being (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Gage et al., 2020). Teaching students with EBD changes not only the students but also the teachers who are dedicated to knowing and helping them. By embracing a mindset of growth, reflection, and collaboration, teachers can create classrooms where every student has the chance to succeed and where teachers, in turn, will find deeper purpose and fulfilment in their work.

Limitations

This study has provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of general education teachers in teaching students with EBD. However, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The small sample size and qualitative nature of this study limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations, particularly to general education teachers working with students who exhibit varying degrees of EBD severity. Additionally, the sample was drawn from an inclusive general education setting, with participants who were experienced educators primarily working with students classified as Level 1 EBD. Level 1 EBD is characterized by mild emotional and behavioral challenges that, while impacting a student's academic and social performance, can often be managed with targeted interventions, classroom accommodations, and individualized support. Level 2 EBD involves persistent and disruptive behaviors that require structured interventions and specialized support, while Level 3 represents the most severe cases. While this study aligns with the evolving direction of the field in emphasizing the role of educational principles in fostering students' social and emotional development, the findings may not capture the experiences of teachers working with students across the full spectrum of EBD severity. Given that school environments and cultural contexts influence teaching effectiveness, a broader study incorporating diverse educational settings and longer observation periods may provide a more comprehensive assessment of teacher effectiveness.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study emphasize the profound impact of teaching students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders on teachers' instructional approaches, professional development, and personal resilience. The seven key themes identified, including individualized behavioral instability, experiential progressive strategies, structured support strategies, evolving teaching perspectives, resilient coping strategies, pedagogical breakthroughs, and transformed teaching perspectives, highlight the complexity of addressing the unique needs of students with EBD while fostering a conducive and inclusive learning environment. With these, it is best to conclude that teaching students with EBD not only challenges educators to adapt and grow but also transforms their instructional practices, resilience, and commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments. This study may contribute to

the understanding of new or tenured teachers on how to navigate the challenges of teaching students with special needs in the general education setting. On the other hand, this study also emphasizes that there is a need for continued investment in supporting inclusive schools with teacher training and support to truly create an inclusive classroom that embodies the education for all context. It is then crucial to acknowledge these lived experiences of teachers to equip incoming educators with tools, strategies as well as emotional resilience necessary to thrive in a challenging yet rewarding inclusive classroom environment.

Future research may explore long-term outcomes of adaptive strategies for students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, focusing on their academic progress, emotional development, and the sustained well-being of educators to ensure lasting positive impacts in inclusive education.

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