



Behavioral Challenges and Teacher Support in Japanese Special Schools: A BPI-S Analysis Of 562 Students

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Abstract

Challenging behavior is common among students in special schools and places considerable demands on teachers, yet little is known about how teacher support and concern vary with its severity in Japan. This study described behavioral challenges using the Behavior Problems Inventory–Short Form (BPI-S) and examined how teachers' support practices and concerns differed across levels of behavioral severity. Teachers in special schools in Tottori Prefecture, Japan, completed a questionnaire on 562 students aged 6–18. The BPI-S assessed self-injurious, aggressive/destructive, and stereotyped behavior (frequency and severity); eleven support practices and five teacher-concern items (1–5) were also rated. Students were grouped by BPI-S severity (none, low–moderate, high) and compared using Kruskal–Wallis tests and Spearman correlations. Overall, 64.6% showed at least one challenging behavior (self-injury 31.5%, aggression/destruction 41.8%, stereotypy 51.6%), comparable to or exceeding prior special-school findings; prevalence rose with intellectual disability and with autism. Teacher concern increased steeply with severity—difficulty coping at school rose from 1.53 to 3.03 ($p = .49$) and wanting external advice from 1.73 to 3.03 ($p = .41$; all $p < .001$). However, use of functional assessment remained low (~45%) regardless of severity, and was unrelated to teacher experience or age. As behavior intensified, teachers' difficulty and help-seeking rose sharply, but function-based assessment did not. Strengthening functional-assessment-based positive behavior support, teacher training, and consultation is needed.

Keywords: Challenging Behavior; Behavior Problems Inventory (BPI-S); Special Education; Teacher Support; Functional Assessment