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## **Innovative Teaching Strategies on the Intellectual Engagement and Social Well-Being of Students with Special Needs**

*Ian John H. Rivera*

Department of Education/Mlang National High School

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study explored the innovative teaching strategies on the intellectual engagement and social well-being of students with special needs in the Province of Cotabato during the school year 2024-2025. This research employed a qualitative approach to enhance the depth of gathered information and ensure data validity. For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 15 Teachers. A modified questionnaire and self-developed instrument were employed for data collection. The relationship between teachers' innovative teaching and students' intellectual engagement revealed that all dimensions of innovative teaching were highly significant in relation to all aspects of intellectual engagement among students with special needs. Moreover, findings revealed that all dimensions of teachers' innovative teaching were significantly associated with various aspects of well-being among students with special needs. In conclusion, Teachers actively implemented innovative teaching strategies, with peer-assisted learning being the most commonly applied. Additionally, the use of assistive technologies, multisensory learning materials, and differentiated instruction were also evident in classroom practices.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The social well-being of students with special needs is often compromised due to inadequate support systems, leading to isolation and exclusion in educational environments. These students frequently face social stigma, bullying, and a lack of understanding from peers and educators, which can hinder their social development and self-esteem. Their ability to form meaningful relationships and participate fully in school life is significantly affected, impacting their overall mental health and academic success. Ada (2016) shared that innovative teaching strategies for students with special needs focus on personalized, adaptive approaches that cater to individual learning styles and abilities. Utilizing assistive technologies, multisensory learning materials, and differentiated instruction, these strategies enhance accessibility and engagement. Inclusive practices such as peer-assisted learning, collaborative teaching, and universal design for learning (UDL) ensure that all students can participate and succeed.

While Albanesi, Cicognani, and Zani (2017) also stated that intellectual engagement for students with special needs involves creating stimulating and accessible learning experiences that cater to their unique abilities and interests. By employing differentiated instruction, adaptive technologies, and interactive, hands-on activities, educators can foster curiosity and active participation.

Despite growing awareness, a significant research remains in understanding how innovative teaching strategies impact both the intellectual engagement and social well-being of students with special needs. While aspects like assistive technologies and differentiated instruction have been studied individually, comprehensive research integrating these elements to assess their collective effect is limited (Helliwell, & Putnam, 2015). Addressing this problem is crucial for developing holistic educational practices that enhance learning and improve overall quality of life for these students (McDowell & Newell, 2017). The researcher is deeply interested in exploring how innovative teaching strategies can enhance intellectual engagement and social well-being for students with special needs. This study aims to integrate various educational approaches to develop comprehensive practices that not only improve academic outcomes but also foster social inclusion and emotional well-being.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to assess the innovative teaching strategies on the intellectual engagement and social well-being of students with special needs in the Province of Cotabato during the school year 2024-2025.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the challenges that teachers encountered in enhancing intellectual engagement and social well-being of the students?
2. What are the coping practices to address the challenges encountered that could enhance the intellectual engagement and the social well-being of the students?

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## METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains the discussion of the research design, locale of the study, research respondents, sampling procedure, research instrument, the data gathering procedures and statistical analysis, and ethical consideration.

### Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach to collect, analyze, and interpret data within a single study. The goal was to leverage the strengths of both approaches, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Fetters, 2016). Further, the descriptive qualitative was employed in which the data were usually collected through interviews, or focus groups, and the emphasis was on interpreting and presenting this data in a way that stays as close to the original meanings and context as possible (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The findings were often narrative or thematic, with rich descriptions that aimed to convey the complexity and depth of the subject under study (Lambert & Lambert, 2015).

### Respondents of the Study

The participants of the study has a total of fifteen (15) participants from the teachers were invited for an in-depth interview which were chosen using the purposive sampling specifically the criterion based. The following criteria were used in the selection: a. Teachers should have a degree in Special Education (SPED) or a related field or training in specific disabilities (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, intellectual disabilities) are highly recommended; b. They must have at least one year of experience working with students with special needs in inclusive or specialized classroom settings; and c. Willingness to participate in the study.

### Research Instrument

The researcher will developed an interview guide questionnaire to address the specific issues and challenges encountered in enhancing intellectual engagement and social well-being of students with special needs. This questionnaire will consist of open-ended questions designed to facilitate in-depth discussions, allowing the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subjects' opinions, behaviors, experiences, and perceptions related to intellectual engagement and social well-being of the students. By using open-ended questions, the researcher aims to encourage participants to express their thoughts freely, providing valuable qualitative data that can illuminate the complexities surrounding intellectual engagement and social well-being. This guided approach will enable the researcher to explore the phenomena in detail, ensuring that the insights gathered are rich and informative for the study.

### Statistical Analysis

The data gathered by distributing the instrument needed in the study and through the Key Informants interview were interpreted as additional concrete information based on the triangulation fact-finding results. Key informant interviews were qualitative in-depth interviews with people who known what was going on in the school community. The purpose of key informant interviews was to collect information from a wide range of people including school administrators who had first-hand knowledge about the innovative teaching strategies on the intellectual engagement and social well-being of students with special needs. These participants, with their knowledge and understanding, could provide insight on the nature of problems and gave recommendations for solutions (Sandelowski, 2016).

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This phase of the study aimed to explore the various challenges teachers encounter in enhancing these two interconnected domains—intellectual and social well-being of the students. Furthermore, this phase identifies the coping strategies and practical interventions employed by teachers to overcome these barriers. These coping mechanisms—ranging from pedagogical adjustments to relational and emotional support—offer valuable insights into classroom-level practices that promote holistic student engagement. The results of this inquiry will serve as a basis for formulating targeted intervention programs and policy recommendations that aim to improve both academic and social outcomes for students, while supporting teachers in implementing balanced and responsive educational approaches.

### Challenges that teachers encountered in enhancing intellectual engagement and social well-being of the students

This study explored the multifaceted barriers that educators encounter as they strive to support the cognitive and emotional development of learners with diverse needs. Two central themes emerged from the data: *Challenges in Enhancing Intellectual Engagement of Students with Special Needs* and *Challenges in Enhancing the Social Well-being of Students with Special Needs*.

### Challenges in Enhancing Intellectual Engagement of Students with Special Needs

This encapsulates the instructional, systemic, and cognitive-behavioral barriers teachers face in fostering deep, sustained intellectual engagement among students with special needs. Despite their efforts to support learning, teachers often confront significant constraints in making lessons both rigorous and accessible, especially within an inclusive classroom setting. Under this theme, three sub-themes were formulated – misalignment between curriculum demands and individual learning needs, implementation barriers in differentiated instruction, and cognitive, behavioral, and emotional disruptions to academic focus.

**Misalignment Between Curriculum Demands and Individual Learning Needs.** Teachers consistently shared their struggle to align the national curriculum with students' varying capabilities. They noted the stress of trying to meet both standardized requirements and the developmental realities of their students' cognitive levels.

Teachers find it difficult to match curriculum expectations with student readiness levels.

*"It's very difficult, especially when you have a fixed set of competencies to follow."* IDI-1

A clear gap was also highlighted between individualized education plans (IEPs) and standardized curriculum expectations.

IDI-6: *"The individualized goals are often far from what's required by the general curriculum."*

Teachers also feel the constant pressure of balancing student needs with rigid academic standards.

*"Aligning their learning plans with the curriculum feels like walking a tightrope."* IDI-11

Adapting lessons to bridge IEP goals and national curriculum demands is both time-consuming and mentally taxing.

IDI-8: *"I'm constantly rewriting lesson objectives and trying to make connections between the IEP and the mainstream curriculum."*

**Implementation Barriers in Differentiated Instruction.** Though teachers are committed to differentiated instruction, they are hampered by the lack of time, manpower, and instructional materials. This makes it difficult to consistently meet the diverse needs of learners. Teachers face resource and workload constraints that prevent effective differentiation.

Time has always been an issue when it comes to lesson preparation and implementation, as emphasized by the respondents.

*"Time is a major issue. Preparing multiple sets of materials... takes a lot of planning."* IDI-1

*"Differentiation requires more than just modifying worksheets... which isn't always doable daily."* IDI-7

Moreover, the absence of tools and support systems limits effectiveness of the teachers' implementation of differentiated instruction.

*"Without proper teaching aids or classroom support... differentiation is exhausting."* IDI-11

One respondent emphasized the importance and their need to have adequate time and accessible support and resources.

*"You need time, support, and resources to do differentiation well. Often, I have none of those."* IDI-10

**Cognitive, Behavioral, and Emotional Disruptions to Academic Focus.** Students' cognitive delays and behavioral challenges, such as inattentiveness or emotional outbursts, often disrupt classroom routines and limit their academic focus. Behavioral and cognitive difficulties interfere with sustained engagement in academic tasks.

Limited attention span affects students' ability to stay engaged in learning tasks. Distractions and task avoidance are common barriers to academic progress. These were revealed by the respondents as they noted that:

*"Some students can't stay focused for more than a few minutes."* IDI-1

*"They get easily distracted, talk off-topic, or avoid tasks entirely."* IDI-12

Students often display behaviors that indicate disengagement or confusion.

*"They may keep repeating questions, wander around, or zone out."* IDI-7

Behavioral outbursts can be rooted in frustration or emotional discomfort. One respondent said that:

*"Some students act out when they don't understand or feel embarrassed."* IDI-3

Based on the responses, teachers face significant challenges in delivering differentiated instruction due to limited time, resources, and support. These barriers make it difficult to consistently meet the diverse learning needs of their students. Also, the teachers-respondents revealed that cognitive and behavioral challenges frequently disrupt students' academic focus, leading to disengagement, task avoidance, and emotional outbursts in the classroom.

### **Challenges in Enhancing the Social Well-being of Students with Special Needs**

This centers on the interpersonal and emotional barriers that hinder students with special needs from forming friendships, participating in group activities, and experiencing a sense of belonging within the school community.

**Difficulties in Peer Interaction and Social Skills.** Many students with special needs struggle to read social cues, initiate conversations, or maintain peer relationships. Teachers observed that even when these students wanted to connect, their limited social understanding often led to isolation.

Students have the desire to build relationships but lack the necessary social tools.

*"They want to connect but don't know how."* IDI-10

It was also revealed that social engagement is limited to parallel play rather than true interaction.

*"Sometimes they play alongside others but not with them."* IDI-11

Challenges in understanding social cues often lead to awkward or isolating behaviors.

*"They misinterpret social signals or behave inappropriately."* IDI-7

One of the respondents revealed that basic communication difficulties create barriers to initiating and maintaining friendships.

*"Some students want to make friends but don't know how. They struggle with basic conversational skills."* IDI-6

**Peer Attitudes and Social Exclusion.** Students with special needs often face exclusion from their peers due to stigma, lack of awareness, and unwillingness to accommodate differences. These attitudes contribute to marginalization in classroom and social settings.

The respondents highlighted that negative peer attitudes and stigma contribute to social exclusion.

*"Other students don't always show empathy... they exclude them from groups."* IDI-7

*"Classmates sometimes mock or avoid them... especially when they behave differently."* IDI-12

*"They're treated as outsiders... interaction doesn't always go smoothly."* IDI-5

Other students do not want to play with them if they think of them as different, that they cannot interact well with others.

*"Some students avoid them during play or projects, thinking they're "slow" or "different."* IDI-2

**Emotional Dysregulation and Social Withdrawal.** Anxiety, mood swings, and impulsivity among students with special needs hinder their ability to participate in social settings. Teachers observed that these emotional responses often led to conflict or withdrawal from peer interaction.

Emotional instability impacts their ability to engage and interact consistently. Their fear of social situations leads to avoidance or unintended conflict with others. These were highlighted on the statements from the respondents below:

*"Some students have sudden mood swings or anxiety."* IDI-6

*"Social anxiety is common... they avoid interaction or behave in ways that upset others."* IDI-7

These situations can quickly escalate, resulting in emotional shutdowns. Also, struggles with emotional perception hinder effective social interaction. These were also revealed by the respondents.

*"Small conflicts... can lead to meltdowns or withdrawal."* IDI-12

*"Difficulty reading emotions or cues makes it hard for them to respond appropriately."* IDI-9

Teachers face significant instructional and systemic barriers in fostering both the intellectual and social development of students with special needs. Academically, they struggle to align rigid curriculum standards with diverse cognitive levels, often finding individualized planning time-consuming and unsupported. Differentiated instruction is further limited by insufficient resources, staffing, and preparation time. Additionally, students' behavioral and emotional challenges—such as inattention, task avoidance, and emotional outbursts—frequently disrupt learning.

Socially, students with special needs experience difficulty forming peer relationships due to poor social skills, anxiety, and misinterpretation of cues. Negative peer attitudes and stigma further contribute to exclusion. Emotional dysregulation, including mood swings and social anxiety, often results in withdrawal or conflict, impeding a sense of belonging in the classroom.

This implies that systemic changes are needed—including curriculum flexibility, increased support for differentiated instruction, targeted social-emotional learning programs, and a stronger focus on inclusive peer culture within schools to enhance the intellectual and social engagement of students with special needs.

**Table 10.** Themes on challenges that teachers encountered in enhancing intellectual engagement and social well-being of the students

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Challenges in Enhancing Intellectual Engagement of Students with Special Needs	Misalignment Between Curriculum Demands and Individual Learning Needs	Meeting both standardized requirements and developmental realities IEP and mainstream curriculum
	Implementation Barriers in Differentiated Instruction	Lack of time Lack of manpower Lack of instructional materials

	Cognitive, Behavioral, and Emotional	Cognitive delays Behavioral challenges Emotional outbursts
Challenges in Enhancing Social Well-being of Students with Special Needs	Difficulties in Peer Interaction and Social Skills	Lack of social skills Struggle to maintain peer relationships Struggle initiate conversations
	Peer Attitudes and Social Exclusion	Lack of awareness Face exclusion
	Emotional Dysregulation and Social Withdrawal	Anxiety Mood swings impulsivity

### Coping practices to address the challenges encountered to enhance the intellectual engagement and the social well-being of the students

Table 11 presents the themes formulated from the responses of the teacher-respondents during the in-depth interviews.

#### Coping Practices for Challenges in Enhancing Intellectual Engagement of Students with Special Needs

Teachers respond to the challenges of fostering intellectual engagement among students with special needs. The strategies employed reflect adaptive pedagogical decision-making that addresses diverse learning abilities, behavioral tendencies, and instructional gaps. The global theme is grounded in three organizing themes that capture the proactive and responsive measures adopted by teachers to create inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environments.

**Flexible and Differentiated Instructional Approaches.** This highlights teachers' efforts to make instruction accessible by modifying lesson design and delivery. Differentiated strategies allow teachers to accommodate various readiness levels and cognitive needs without compromising lesson goals.

Teachers adjust the complexity of tasks to ensure that students can access the content. This often means offering multiple entry points to the same lesson or simplifying content into smaller, achievable objectives. However, teachers express concern about potentially diluting the intellectual rigor.

*"I have to tone down the complexity, but then it risks losing the depth that makes the lesson engaging."* (IDI-1)

*"I often have to simplify the content so much that it loses its original purpose or higher-level thinking aspect."* (IDI-2)

To manage cognitive load, teachers break lessons into smaller chunks and use scaffolding techniques to support comprehension. These include task breakdowns, checklists, and step-by-step instructions.

*"I have to use chunking all the time. Some students need visual schedules or step-by-step task breakdowns."* (IDI-2)

*"Instructions have to be broken down into very small steps."* (IDI-12)

Teachers enhance engagement by integrating tactile and visual resources such as charts, realia, and manipulatives. These make abstract concepts more concrete and facilitate comprehension for learners with processing difficulties.

*"I have to use more visuals and hands-on tasks."* (IDI-4)

*"I have to do more visual and tactile activities."* (IDI-7)

Teachers adjust the pacing of lessons to accommodate students who need more time to grasp content. This includes repeating tasks, slowing down instruction, or creating parallel activities for those who finish early.

*"Some students just need more exposure, and I have to adjust constantly."* (IDI-6)

*"I prepare backup tasks if someone falls behind."* (IDI-3)

**Classroom Management Strategies for Adaptive Behavior.** This organizing theme focuses on how teachers manage classroom behavior to maintain a conducive environment for learning. Rather than punitive approaches, teachers employ structured routines, emotional regulation tools, and positive reinforcements.

Students with special needs benefit from predictable routines that help reduce anxiety and behavioral disruptions. Teachers noted that behavior patterns such as pacing, shouting, or zoning out often stem from a lack of structure.

*"Interrupting, calling out, or engaging in repetitive movements are common."* (IDI-9)

*“Behavioral issues like crying, shouting, or even leaving the room occur regularly.” (IDI-8)*

To prevent sensory overload or emotional meltdowns, teachers allow flexible breaks and designate calming spaces in the classroom. These coping tools enable students to self-regulate and return to tasks when ready.

*“Some students have meltdowns or need to leave the room when overstimulated.” (IDI-6)*

*“Some constantly ask for breaks or try to leave the room.” (IDI-2)*

Rather than focusing on punitive measures, teachers use praise, tokens, or privileges to reinforce desired behavior such as focus, participation, and task completion.

*“I use peer support and visual guides, but I still need to constantly adjust pacing and repeat content.” (IDI-5)*

**Instructional Monitoring and Responsiveness.** This reflects how teachers continuously assess and respond to students’ understanding during instruction. Monitoring allows real-time adjustments and reduces misunderstandings that can disengage learners.

Teachers pause frequently to check whether students are keeping up with the lesson. This often involves questioning, guided practice, or visual cues to identify confusion early on.

*“I always have to check for understanding, sometimes in the middle of instruction.” (IDI-3)*

*“Instruction becomes repetitive... many still need re-teaching.” (IDI-11)*

To address individual learning gaps, teachers provide targeted support through side-by-side guidance or structured peer help. These moments allow students to work through confusion in a low-pressure setting.

*“I try to differentiate, but with limited time and a large class, it becomes hard to give equal attention to everyone.” (IDI-8)*

*“I also have to constantly check in with each student to see if they understood.” (IDI-1)*

Teachers must often restate directions in simpler language or in multiple formats (oral, visual, written) to ensure understanding among students with memory or processing issues.

*“Their memory limitations mean I need to constantly repeat instructions.” (IDI-10)*

*“They forget quickly, so I always need to review past lessons.” (IDI-12)*

### **Coping Practices for Challenges in Enhancing Social Well-being of Students with Special Needs**

Teachers support the social and emotional development of students with special needs. Given the common experiences of social exclusion, miscommunication, and emotional instability among these students, teachers adopt strategies that promote peer connection, empathy, and emotional safety in the classroom. The responses reflect teachers’ efforts to foster belonging, develop social-emotional competencies, and build trusting relationships.

**Social Skills Development and Emotional Coaching.** Intentional efforts to help students with special needs understand and practice appropriate social behavior were highlighted in this theme. Teachers guide students through emotional regulation, model socially appropriate responses, and integrate social-emotional learning into daily routines.

Teachers help students recognize emotions in themselves and others, and develop awareness of how their behavior affects peers. Fostering empathy is foundational for building respectful relationships and reducing social conflict in inclusive classrooms.

*“Some lack empathy or the ability to understand how their actions affect others.” (IDI-2)*

*“They get very emotional when things don’t go their way, and that pushes peers away.” (IDI-3)*

These reflections underscore the importance of explicit coaching in emotional awareness to support peer connection.

More so, teachers model expected behavior and guide students through social scenarios using role-playing or structured dialogue. This helps learners practice responses like turn-taking, apologizing, and resolving conflicts.

*“They misinterpret social signals or behave inappropriately, like touching others or interrupting.” (IDI-7)*

*“Often, they try but get rejected or misunderstood by peers.” (IDI-10)*

SEL routines are integrated into classroom practice to build emotional regulation, resilience, and interpersonal effectiveness. These routines may include daily check-ins, feelings charts, or guided discussions.

*“Some students have sudden mood swings or anxiety that makes it hard for them to join social situations.” (IDI-6)*

*“Small conflicts or misunderstandings can lead to meltdowns or complete withdrawal.” (IDI-12)*

**Supportive Environment and Relationship Building.** This theme focuses on the physical and emotional climate of the classroom. Teachers emphasize the creation of trusting, predictable, and respectful spaces where students with special needs feel accepted and secure.

Teachers build rapport by developing trust and mutual respect through consistent, individualized interaction. Quick check-ins, one-on-one conversations, and consistent emotional availability foster a sense of safety and belonging.

*"I make it a point to check in privately. These quick conversations help me figure out what they're dealing with."* (IDI-1)

*"Sometimes they play alongside others but not with them, making it hard to build relationships."* (IDI-11)

Teachers intentionally structure social interaction through guided group tasks, cooperative games, or assigned peer partnerships. These create safe, inclusive contexts for students with special needs to build and practice friendships.

*"They are often misunderstood. They might say something inappropriate or fail to pick up on social cues."* (IDI-4)

*"They are usually left out during group work or recess."* (IDI-8)

Teachers create designated areas or calming strategies (like quiet zones or sensory tools) to help students self-regulate. These safe spaces allow students to manage overstimulation or distress without feeling ashamed or excluded.

*"Social anxiety and lack of emotional awareness cause them to avoid interaction."* (IDI-7)

*"Difficulty reading emotions or cues makes it hard for them to respond appropriately."* (IDI-9)

Teachers are actively engaged in supporting the social and emotional development of students with special needs by fostering empathy, emotional regulation, and positive peer interactions. They employ strategies like emotional coaching, social skills development, and role-playing to guide students in recognizing and responding to emotions, both their own and others'. Teachers also integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) routines to enhance emotional awareness, resilience, and interpersonal effectiveness.

In addition to emotional guidance, teachers focus on creating a supportive and predictable classroom environment where students feel safe and accepted. Trust-building, individualized interactions, and structured social opportunities, such as cooperative tasks and peer partnerships, help promote positive relationships. Teachers also provide calming spaces to assist students in managing emotional distress, ensuring they have safe places to self-regulate without fear of exclusion.

These imply that it is essential to continue prioritizing the integration of social-emotional learning, build strong, supportive relationships, and create inclusive, emotionally safe environments. By focusing on both emotional and social competencies, teachers can help students develop the skills necessary for positive peer interactions and a sense of belonging.

Table 11. Themes on Coping practices to address the challenges encountered to enhance the intellectual engagement and the social wellbeing of the students

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Coping Practices for Challenges in Enhancing Intellectual Engagement of Students with Special Needs	Flexible and Differentiated Instructional Approaches	Use of simplified and tiered learning tasks Chunking and scaffolding of content Use of visual aids, manipulatives, and hands-on activities Adjusting pacing based on learner needs
	Classroom Management Strategies for Adaptive Behavior and	structured routines Providing task breaks and quiet corners Use of positive reinforcement for sustained attention
	Instructional Monitoring and Responsiveness	checking for understanding Offering one-on-one clarification or peer-supported learning Repeating and rephrasing instructions
Coping Practices for Challenges in Enhancing	Social Skills Development and Emotional Coaching	Showing empathy

Social Well-being of Students with Special Needs		Role-playing and modeling of appropriate social behavior  Incorporating SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) routines
	Supportive Environment and Relationship Building	Building rapport Providing structured social opportunities Maintaining safe spaces for emotional regulation

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Summary of Findings*

This study identified the challenges encountered by the teachers in enhancing intellectual engagement and social well-being of the students and the coping practices to address the challenges encountered. Moreover, this study offered intervention and policy formulation that can be crafted based on the results.

The qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 15 teachers. A modified questionnaire and self-developed instrument were employed for data collection. The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha yielded scores of .957, .960, and .965 based on a sample of 25, indicating highly reliable of the instrument. The data collection procedure involved formal communication addressed to the Schools Division Superintendents. Statistical tools used included the mean for descriptive analysis, while Spearman rho and multiple linear regression were applied to test the hypotheses.

### *Conclusions*

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Teachers actively implemented innovative teaching strategies, with peer-assisted learning being the most commonly applied. Additionally, the use of assistive technologies, multisensory learning materials, and differentiated instruction were also evident in classroom practices.

Students with special needs demonstrated high levels of intellectual engagement, particularly in areas such as task completion, active participation, critical thinking, curiosity and inquiry, and sustained attention, as observed by the respondents.

Students' well-being was positively reflected through strong social outcomes, with high levels of social integration, social coherence, social acceptance, and social contribution reported among students with special needs.

All dimensions of innovative teaching were significantly related to the intellectual engagement of students with special needs.

Peer-assisted learning and collaborative teaching notably influenced students' active participation and task completion. Collaborative teaching significantly enhanced curiosity and inquiry, sustained attention, and critical thinking among students with special needs.

Teachers' innovative teaching strategies were significantly associated with the overall well-being of students with special needs.

Multisensory learning materials and collaborative teaching positively impacted students' social integration, acceptance, contribution, and coherence.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researcher offered the following recommendations of the study.

**1. District Supervisors and School administrators** are encouraged to provide continuous support and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their use of innovative teaching strategies, including peer-assisted learning, assistive technologies, multisensory materials, and differentiated instruction.

**2. Teachers** should consistently implement these approaches to sustain and improve the intellectual engagement and well-being of students with special needs.

**3. Students with Special Needs** should be given more opportunities to collaborate and participate in engaging classroom activities that promote both cognitive and social growth.

**4. Future Researchers** are encouraged to explore the long-term impact of innovative teaching strategies on the holistic development of students with special needs across various educational settings.

**5. Modified Framework** presents the details on the teachers' innovative teaching on the intellectual engagement and social well-being of students with special needs. As shown in the diagram, regarding the relationship between teachers' innovative teaching and intellectual engagement revealed that all dimensions of innovative teaching were highly significant in relation to all aspects of intellectual engagement among students with special needs.

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