

Mental Health and Personality Adjustment of Filipino Special Education Teachers: Foundation for a Mentorship Framework

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed mental health status and personality adjustment among Filipino special education (SPED) teachers in the Clark County School District, Nevada, as a basis for a mentorship framework in inclusive education. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was employed, using purposive sampling and responses reported for 465 Filipino SPED teachers. Mental health assets and liabilities were measured using the Mental Health Analysis, Adult Series Form A; home, health, social, emotional, and occupational adjustment were assessed using the Revised Bell Adjustment Inventory. Descriptive statistics, group-comparison procedures, and Spearman rank correlations were applied. Respondents were predominantly aged 40–49 years (51.0%), female (62.6%), and married (65.2%); most handled middle-level classes (57.0%). All

five mental health asset components were categorized as good, whereas four liability components were classified as low and physical defects as normal. The personality adjustment scores of men and women were generally interpreted as good or excellent. Several mental health and adjustment components differed significantly across age, civil status, educational attainment, teaching experience, or class assignment, while sex differences were mostly nonsignificant. Mental health assets had variable, generally weak associations with adjustment; nervous manifestations showed the strongest associations across the five adjustment domains (Spearman $\rho = -0.497$ to -0.509 , all $p < .001$). The findings informed a proposed mentorship framework integrating psychosocial support, professional coaching, collegial participation, work–life balance, and evaluation. The framework is proposed rather than experimentally validated.

Keywords: *Filipino migrant teachers, inclusive education, mental health assets and liabilities, mentorship framework, personality adjustment, special education*

INTRODUCTION

The well-being of special education teachers is increasingly recognized as a condition for sustainable, inclusive schooling. Their work requires continuous instructional differentiation, behavior support, multidisciplinary coordination, and documentation for learners with disabilities. When these responsibilities coincide with demanding workloads and limited organizational support, teachers may experience stress and burnout (Brady et al., 2023; McGrew et al., 2023). For Filipino teachers employed abroad, professional demands may intersect with cultural transitions, separation from family, unfamiliar policies, and the need to establish supportive networks in a new school system (Ceballos, 2020; Valenzuela & Rogers, 2021).

Filipino SPED educators in the Clark County School District (CCSD), Nevada, provide a relevant context for examining these interacting pressures. Previous research among Filipino SPED teachers in Clark County

documented limited social participation and close relationships for a substantial proportion of respondents, pointing to the importance of context-specific support systems (Salao et al., 2024). Studies on teacher resilience likewise suggest that individual coping resources and institutional barriers jointly relate to mental health (Zhang et al., 2020). Nevertheless, descriptions of occupational strain do not by themselves establish how distinct mental health assets and liabilities correspond with teachers' personal and professional adjustment.

The present study addressed this gap through a descriptive-correlational assessment of mental health and personality adjustment among Filipino SPED teachers working in CCSD. Mental health was organized into assets—close personal relations, interpersonal skills, social participation, satisfying work and recreation, and outlook and goals—and liabilities—behavioral immaturity, emotional instability, feelings of inadequacy, physical defects, and nervous manifestations. Adjustment covered home, health, social, emotional, and occupational domains. The analysis also considered demographic differences involving age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, and classes handled.

Specifically, the study described respondents' demographic characteristics; characterized their mental health and adjustment scores; examined differences across demographic groups; assessed relationships between mental health components and adjustment domains; and used the resulting needs profile as the basis for a proposed mentorship framework in inclusive education. The significance of the inquiry lies in providing empirically grounded priorities for culturally responsive mentoring and psychosocial support without assuming that the proposed intervention had already been tested.

Literature Review

Occupational demands, migration, and special education teachers' well-being

The Job Demands–Resources model explains occupational strain in terms of demands that require sustained physical or psychological effort and resources that support engagement, performance, and recovery (Demerouti et al., 2001). In inclusive education, complex classroom needs, administrative requirements, and interprofessional coordination can intensify these demands. Research on teacher stress and burnout identifies psychological work resources and institutional assistance as important considerations for teacher support (Brady et al., 2023; McGrew et al., 2023). These findings help explain why competence alone may not protect teachers from accumulated occupational strain.

Migration adds a distinct layer to this occupational context. International teachers may have to reconcile prior pedagogical practices with unfamiliar workplace expectations while rebuilding social support and professional identity. Ceballos (2020) describes mentoring and role modeling as resources for acculturation, whereas Valenzuela and Rogers (2021) link expatriate adjustment to the interaction between individual characteristics and environmental fit. In the Philippine context, teachers' mental health during major disruptions has also been examined in connection with coping and perceived support (Pekas et al., 2022).

Within CCSD, Salao et al. (2024) reported challenges in close relationships and social participation among Filipino SPED teachers. That earlier evidence identifies a plausible need for peer connection, but it cannot substitute for evaluating the wider pattern of mental health and adjustment within the present sample. Accordingly, this study examines both workplace-relevant liabilities and positive psychological assets as distinct empirical dimensions.

Mental health assets, liabilities, and protective resources

Mental health assets reflect resources that may help teachers sustain adaptive functioning, including relationships, interpersonal skills, participation, meaningful work and recreation, and positive outlook. Social relationships can provide emotional and informational assistance during difficult professional transitions. In an investigation of teacher–student relationships and teacher well-being, Trejo-Rivera and Sánchez-Cardona (2024) examined how the quality of educational relationships relates to teachers' psychological experience. Research on

psychological capital also connects teachers' hope, optimism, resilience, and coping with well-being (Zewude & Hercz, 2021).

Conversely, feelings of inadequacy, emotional instability, and nervous manifestations can characterize areas where psychosocial or professional support is needed. Rokala et al. (2023) found reciprocal associations between teachers' self-efficacy and sense of inadequacy, suggesting that perceptions of competence deserve attention alongside practical work demands. Resilience research in special education further underscores the importance of considering both internal coping capacity and teaching barriers rather than treating distress as a purely individual concern (Zhang et al., 2020).

These asset and liability dimensions should not be equated with clinical psychiatric diagnoses. The source study used a standardized questionnaire and scoring categories to describe respondents' characteristics; such classifications identify patterns for educational support rather than provide an independent clinical assessment. This distinction is important when translating survey findings into a mentoring response, particularly for internationally recruited teachers.

Personality adjustment and demographic differences

Personality adjustment in this study refers to how teachers manage home, health, social, emotional, and occupational situations. The Five-Factor Model offers a theoretical explanation of how relatively enduring dispositions may relate to well-being and adaptation, including neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1991). However, the five adjustment scores used in the thesis were drawn from the Bell inventory, not direct measures of the five personality traits. The theoretical model was therefore contextual rather than an operational substitute for the adjustment instrument.

Demographic and professional characteristics can also relate to well-being without determining it uniformly. Cordaro et al. (2023) examined differences in distress among public-school teachers of different backgrounds, while Lourenço et al. (2024) synthesized literature on gender-related patterns in teachers' mental health. Teacher experience, education, and assignment may correspond to access to coping resources, workplace autonomy, or specialized supports. Such associations warrant empirical testing rather than assumptions about any particular demographic group.

For teachers adapting to a new educational setting, personality-related strategies and organizational conditions may interact. Valenzuela and Rogers (2021) frame expatriate adjustment through person–environment fit; Ceballos (2020) emphasizes the role of guided professional acculturation. These perspectives justify examining the distribution of adjustment outcomes across personal and employment characteristics, while the cross-sectional design limits conclusions about cause and effect.

Relationships between psychological functioning and adjustment

Psychological resources and adjustment may be correlated because supportive relationships, coping capacities, and work satisfaction affect how educators experience daily responsibilities. Cahapay and Bangoc (2022) reported the roles of hope and resilience in the association between stress and life satisfaction among teachers in the Philippines, and Zewude and Hercz (2021) described coping as a link between psychological capital and well-being. These findings are consistent with examining positive assets alongside the demands experienced in special education work.

Evidence concerning adjustment also suggests that the same psychological characteristic may relate differently to different life domains. For instance, workplace relationships can be relevant to occupational adjustment but may be less closely associated with home-related experiences, whereas anxiety-related manifestations may span both. The study therefore correlated each mental health asset and liability with each adjustment domain instead of relying on a single undifferentiated psychological index. Spearman correlations were used to summarize the direction and magnitude of those associations, without implying causality.

Mentorship and culturally responsive professional support

Mentoring may provide structured access to information, coaching, and trusted interpersonal relationships as teachers adjust to the expectations of a new workplace. Ceballos (2020) emphasizes the significance of mentors and role models for internationally educated teachers, while Palacio and Digo (2024) describe the development of instructional coaching and mentoring guidance for master teachers. These perspectives support moving beyond orientation alone to sustained, context-sensitive assistance.

Mentoring for Filipino SPED teachers may need to combine instructional coaching, structured reflection, and psychosocial support, because the stressors documented in the literature include both technical and interpersonal demands. Teacher-retention and resilience studies point to the value of organizational resources and consistent support (Brady et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2020). An appropriate framework can therefore incorporate mentor–mentee matching, opportunities for collegial participation, well-being check-ins, skills development, and progress reviews while respecting confidentiality and boundaries around mental health information.

The literature points to a coherent gap: although occupational stress, resilience, acculturation, and mentoring are widely discussed, fewer investigations bring together the specific mental health components and five adjustment areas measured in this Filipino SPED teacher population. A needs-responsive mentorship design should be anchored in actual measured strengths and limitations rather than imported assumptions about migrant teachers. The following conceptual framework summarizes the study’s input, assessment, and proposed mentoring output.

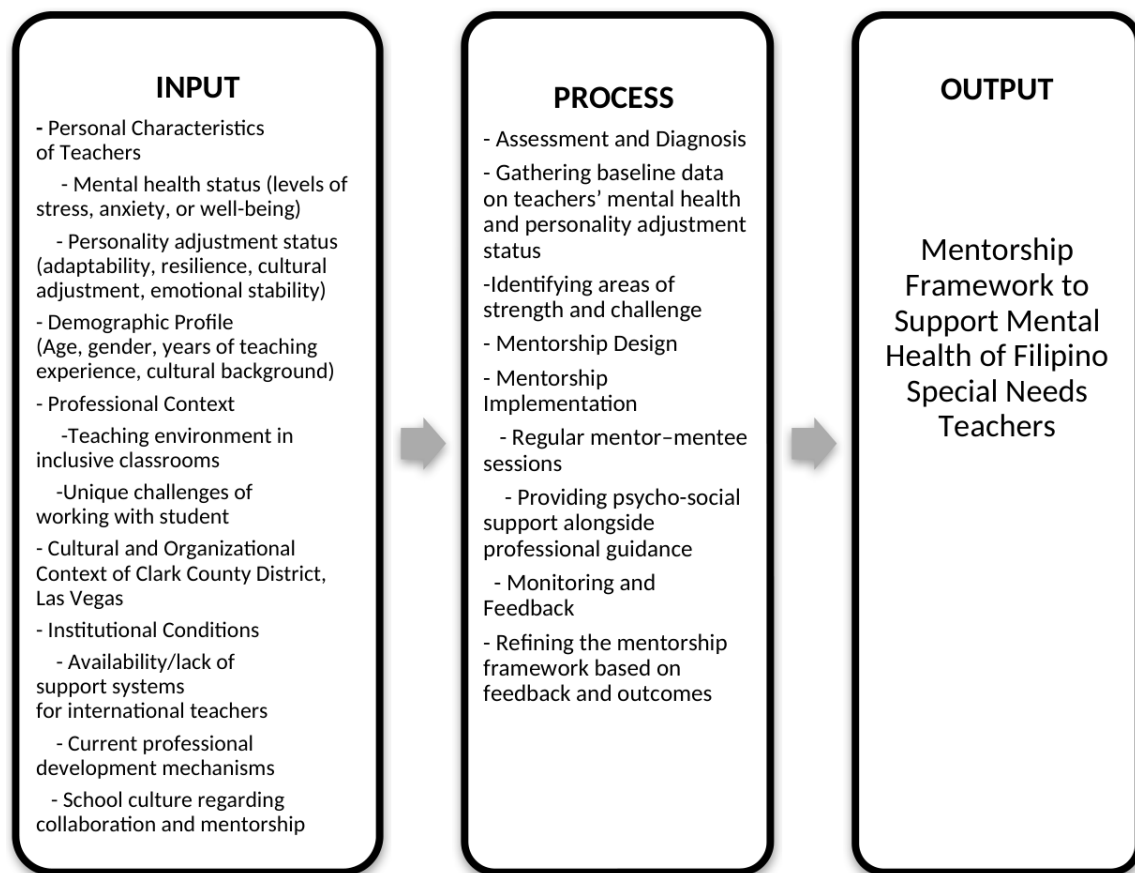


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study (reproduced from the original thesis).*

METHODS

Research Design

A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used to characterize the mental health status and personality adjustment of Filipino SPED teachers and to evaluate associations between the two sets of measures. The design did not manipulate participants' environments or establish causal relationships. Comparative analyses examined whether component scores differed according to demographic and professional characteristics (Devi et al., 2022).

Research Locale

The research was situated in the Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada, United States. The study focused on Filipino teachers employed in special education and inclusive classroom settings within the district. The locale was selected because of the professional and cultural adjustment demands experienced by internationally recruited teachers in this educational system.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was employed. Eligible participants were Filipino by birth, currently employed as SPED teachers in Clark County, and had taught in the district for at least two years. The thesis reported a sample-size calculation using Raosoft with a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level, and 50% response distribution. The demographic tables and inferential analysis described 465 teachers; this was the denominator retained for the

journal report. Participant descriptions included age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, and classes handled.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire with three parts. The first collected demographic and work-related information. The second drew on the Mental Health Analysis, Adult Series Form A (Thorpe et al., 1946), including five asset and five liability components. The study assigned one point to “Yes” responses and reported separate asset and liability component scores interpreted using its designated classifications. The third adapted the Revised Bell Adjustment Inventory to assess home, health, social, emotional, and occupational adjustment. The source thesis specified sex-dependent interpretive ranges for adjustment scores and indicated that higher adjustment scores generally reflected less favorable adjustment.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher reported obtaining ethics and institutional permissions, arranging expert validation, revising the instrument, and conducting a pilot study before online administration. School administrators and coordinators were contacted through formal email and invited to circulate the questionnaire to eligible respondents. An informed-consent statement appeared before survey items. Responses were collected through a secure online platform, checked for completeness and duplicates, organized, and analyzed in aggregate form.

Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages described the respondents, while means and classifications summarized the mental health and adjustment components. The thesis used nonparametric group-comparison statistics, including Mann–Whitney U and chi-square-labelled/Kruskal–Walli’s statistics, to assess differences across demographic groups. Spearman rank-order correlations evaluated relationships between mental health components and the five adjustment domains; a significance level of .05 was used. Numerical values are reproduced from the thesis tables without attempting to reconstruct analyses from unavailable respondent-level data.

Ethical Consideration

The thesis described ethics review and school permissions, voluntary participation through online informed consent, anonymized data collection, secure handling of responses, and presentation of aggregate results. The mental health information was treated as sensitive. Results were reported at group level, and the proposed mentorship framework was not presented as a replacement for qualified clinical mental health services.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of Filipino SPED teachers

The tabulated data described 465 Filipino SPED teachers. The largest age group was 40–49 years ($n = 237$, 51.0%), followed by 30–39 years ($n = 122$, 26.2%); women constituted 62.6% and married respondents 65.2%. Nearly half had 15–19 years of service (49.0%), and 57.0% handled middle-level classes. Most were pursuing or had completed graduate-level study. These characteristics describe a largely experienced workforce whose professional profile should be considered when determining mentoring and adjustment needs.

Table 1. *Selected demographic characteristics of the respondents ($N = 465$).*

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Age	40–49 years	237	51.0
Age	30–39 years	122	26.2
Sex	Female	291	62.6
Sex	Male	174	37.4
Civil status	Married	303	65.2

Education	With MA/MS	221	47.5
Length of service	15–19 years	228	49.0
Classes handled	Middle	265	57.0

Age, teaching experience, and educational attainment might offer different opportunities to draw on professional networks, but demographic categories alone cannot establish who is psychologically well-adjusted. The analysis therefore treated these characteristics as grouping variables rather than risk labels. Earlier research on migrant teachers emphasizes the importance of evaluating workplace fit and available support in addition to personal background (Ceballos, 2020; Valenzuela & Rogers, 2021).

Mental health assets and liabilities

Table 2 reproduces the mean component scores and their original verbal interpretations. All five asset dimensions were rated “Good”: close personal relations (16), interpersonal skills (14), social participation (16), satisfying work and recreation (13), and outlook and goals (15). On the liability scale, behavioral immaturity (84), emotional instability (83), feeling of inadequacy (87), and nervous manifestations (85) were categorized “Low,” while physical defects (61) were “Normal.” The interpretation terminology follows the instrument categories as used in the thesis and does not represent a diagnostic judgment.

Table 2. *Mental health assets and liabilities reported by respondents.*

Component	Mean score	Original interpretation
Assets: Close personal relations	16	Good
Assets: Interpersonal skills	14	Good
Assets: Social participation	16	Good
Assets: Satisfying work and recreation	13	Good
Assets: Outlook and goals	15	Good
Liabilities: Behavioral immaturity	84	Low
Liabilities: Emotional instability	83	Low
Liabilities: Feeling of inadequacy	87	Low
Liabilities: Physical defects	61	Normal
Liabilities: Nervous manifestations	85	Low

The generally good asset classifications suggest the presence of interpersonal and motivational resources in the study group. These results do not eliminate the need for organizational support, since the underlying domains may vary substantially by assignment and individual circumstances. Consistent with the literature on teacher well-being, relational resources and opportunities for constructive coping remain valuable targets for professional mentoring (Trejo-Rivera & Sánchez-Cardona, 2024; Zewude & Hercz, 2021).

Personality adjustment across five domains

The respondents’ adjustment patterns were generally rated good or excellent across home, health, social, emotional, and occupational domains. Table 3 presents the original sex-disaggregated weighted means. Male respondents were rated good in four areas and excellent in social adjustment. Female respondents were rated good in home and health adjustment and excellent in social, emotional, and occupational adjustment. Because the Bell inventory was scored with domain- and sex-specific thresholds, the descriptive ratings should be interpreted using the original scoring key rather than comparing raw numerical means across domains in isolation.

Table 3. *Personality adjustment by sex, based on reported weighted means.*

Adjustment domain	Male mean	Male rating	Female mean	Female rating
Home	2.89	Good	2.79	Good
Health	2.84	Good	2.75	Good
Social	2.84	Excellent	2.77	Excellent

Emotional	2.90	Good	2.78	Excellent
Occupational	2.95	Good	2.84	Excellent

A favorable mean rating does not mean that all teachers experienced identical adjustment. The pattern is compatible with evidence that teachers' coping resources and professional environments contribute to well-being in different ways (Cahapay & Bangoc, 2022; Cordaro et al., 2023). For this reason, mentorship planning should focus on identifiable needs and preferred support rather than assuming a uniform intervention for all Filipino SPED teachers.

Group differences in mental health and adjustment

The inferential tables identified multiple significant differences by demographic and professional variables. Among assets, close personal relations differed by age ($\chi^2 = 14.4$, $p = .006$), educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 10.3$, $p = .016$), and service length ($\chi^2 = 37.6$, $p < .001$). Interpersonal skills differed by sex ($U = 23,111$, $p = .049$), educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 17.5$, $p < .001$), and class assignment ($\chi^2 = 28.2$, $p < .001$). Social participation differed by age, civil status, and classes handled (all $p < .001$); satisfying work and recreation differed by age ($\chi^2 = 30.4$, $p < .001$), educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 12.6$, $p = .006$), and classes handled ($\chi^2 = 11.9$, $p = .008$). Outlook and goals differed by classes handled ($\chi^2 = 10.4$, $p = .015$), but not by the other demographic variables reported.

Liability scores also varied across groups. All five liability components showed significant differences by age and length of service according to the thesis tables, while sex differences were nonsignificant throughout these liability comparisons. Emotional instability differed by age ($\chi^2 = 57.8$, $p < .001$), civil status ($\chi^2 = 30.2$, $p < .001$), education ($\chi^2 = 7.90$, $p = .048$), service length ($\chi^2 = 26.5$, $p < .001$), and classes handled ($\chi^2 = 45.7$, $p < .001$). These comparisons indicate heterogeneity but do not identify causal demographic mechanisms.

Personality adjustment differences were significant for civil status, educational attainment, length of service, and classes handled across all five adjustment domains in the original table. Age differences were significant for home, health, social, and occupational adjustment (all $p < .001$); the emotional-adjustment age entry was nonsignificant ($p = .236$). Most sex comparisons were nonsignificant. The emotional-adjustment sex row in the source table appears inconsistent with adjacent table entries and the source discussion, so the manuscript does not infer a stable sex-related pattern from that single entry.

The overall pattern reinforces the value of differentiated mentorship. Teachers may require different levels of peer support, stress-management guidance, or targeted professional coaching according to their experience, school context, and reported adjustment needs. This contextual interpretation is consistent with evidence on migrant teacher acculturation and job demands–resources (Ceballos, 2020; Demerouti et al., 2001), but no group comparison can show that a proposed intervention will improve outcomes without subsequent evaluation.

Relationships between mental health and personality adjustment

The rank-correlation results showed that most mental health asset components were significantly, though weakly, associated with all five adjustment domains. For close personal relations, ρ ranged from $-.187$ to $-.206$; for interpersonal skills, from $-.213$ to $-.244$; and for social participation, from $-.270$ to $-.291$ (all $p < .001$). Satisfying work and recreation showed small positive coefficients ($.188$ – $.241$, all $p < .001$). In contrast, outlook and goals was not significantly related to any adjustment domain ($\rho = -.009$ to $.022$; $p = .629$ – $.920$). These heterogeneous signs should be interpreted cautiously because the original scoring conventions differ among the instruments.

Among liabilities, behavioral immaturity showed correlations of $-.259$ to $-.289$, emotional instability $-.263$ to $-.285$, and feelings of inadequacy $-.233$ to $-.238$ (all $p < .001$). The physical-defects component showed small positive correlations ($.242$ – $.269$; all $p < .001$). Nervous manifestations had the largest absolute coefficients, ranging from $-.497$ for occupational adjustment to $-.509$ for home adjustment (all $p < .001$). These are associations, not evidence that nervous manifestations directly cause poor adjustment or vice versa.

Table 4. *Range of Spearman correlations (ρ) with the five adjustment domains.*

Mental health component	ρ range	Significance across domains
Close personal relations	-.206 to -.187	All $p < .001$
Interpersonal skills	-.244 to -.213	All $p < .001$
Social participation	-.291 to -.270	All $p < .001$
Satisfying work and recreation	+.188 to +.241	All $p < .001$
Outlook and goals	-.009 to +.022	None ($p = .629-.920$)
Behavioral immaturity	-.289 to -.259	All $p < .001$
Emotional instability	-.285 to -.263	All $p < .001$
Feeling of inadequacy	-.238 to -.233	All $p < .001$
Physical defects	+.242 to +.269	All $p < .001$
Nervous manifestations	-.509 to -.497	All $p < .001$

The consistent but uneven relationships help prioritize supports rather than justify a single explanation of teacher functioning. Existing research emphasizes both workplace resources and resilience in special education teachers' well-being (Brady et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2020). The especially large absolute associations for nervous manifestations support including appropriate wellness referral pathways in mentoring design, while the nonsignificant outlook-and-goals results counsel against assuming that every positive asset will correlate with every adjustment domain.

Proposed mentorship framework in inclusive education

Based on the descriptive and correlational patterns, the thesis proposed a Mentorship Framework in Inclusive Education rather than reporting its implementation or effectiveness. Its core elements were mentor-mentee pairing, psychosocial support, professional development, social engagement, work-life balance support, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Mentor pairing would account for teaching experience and class assignment; professional coaching would address inclusive practice, feedback, and task-specific guidance; psychosocial components would provide structured check-ins and access to support.

Table 5. *Proposed mentorship components derived from the thesis.*

Component	Proposed activities	Intended contribution
Mentor-mentee pairing	Pair less-experienced and experienced teachers, considering assignment.	Context-specific professional guidance
Psychosocial support	Check-ins, peer groups, stress-management sessions.	Support emotional well-being
Professional development	Instructional coaching, observations, constructive feedback.	Strengthen inclusive practice
Social engagement	Collaborative planning and team-building activities.	Increase collegial connection
Work-life balance	Time-management and wellness activities.	Support sustainable working habits
Monitoring and evaluation	Feedback, progress reviews, periodic reassessment.	Refine the proposed program

The framework responds to the needs profile by integrating technical and interpersonal resources instead of offering generic training alone. It is consonant with research on mentoring and cross-cultural adjustment (Ceballos, 2020; Palacio & Digo, 2024). However, the study did not experimentally test the framework; its feasibility, acceptability, and eventual impact on well-being, adjustment, and retention require separate evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The findings portray a predominantly experienced group of Filipino SPED teachers in the Clark County School District who, on average, exhibited favorable mental health asset classifications and good-to-excellent personality adjustment ratings. The mental health liabilities were mostly classified as low, with physical defects rated normal under the original instrument conventions. Nevertheless, meaningful differences in specific domains emerged across age, civil status, educational attainment, service length, and class assignments, indicating that teachers' needs are not uniform.

Associations between mental health and personality adjustment were generally weak to moderate in magnitude and varied by component. Nervous manifestations demonstrated the largest absolute correlations with adjustment, whereas outlook and goals were not significantly associated with any adjustment domain. These cross-sectional findings support an individualized, institutionally grounded approach to mentorship and teacher support, but do not establish causation or demonstrate an intervention effect. The study's principal contribution is a context-specific evidence base and a proposed mentorship structure combining instructional guidance, psychosocial assistance, collegial participation, and ongoing review.

Recommendation

School administrators and SPED leaders should consider piloting a structured mentor–mentee system for Filipino teachers that pairs instructional coaching with voluntary well-being check-ins, collaborative planning time, and accessible professional support. Matching should consider years of service, classroom assignment, and expressed needs without categorizing teachers as at risk solely on the basis of age, sex, or marital status. Because of the significant correlations involving nervous manifestations, schools should make confidential, qualified support and referral options available alongside nonclinical mentoring activities.

Professional-development coordinators should prioritize practical support for inclusive classroom planning, communication, individualized education program responsibilities, and work–life boundaries. Mentor feedback and program outcomes should be monitored with ethically appropriate, confidential indicators. Future research should verify the original dataset and score interpretations, replicate the analysis in other districts, and evaluate the proposed mentorship framework prospectively through feasibility studies or controlled designs. These further steps would determine whether the framework actually improves well-being or adjustment rather than merely being supported by correlational evidence.

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