# Personalized Positive Behaviors on the Sustainable Development Goal on Quality Education toward Education Without Exclusion among Multidisciplinary Instructors

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**ABSTRACT:**
This study explored the personalized positive behaviors of multidisciplinary instructors toward the promotion of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on Quality Education and education without exclusion. The study employed an exploratory qualitative research design involving 17 multidisciplinary college instructors from selected higher education institutions in the Philippines. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings revealed that instructors associate quality education with inclusive and learner-centered teaching, professional adaptability and instructional innovation, ethical responsibility and professional integrity, and reflective teaching practices for continuous improvement. Participants emphasized that empathy, flexibility, professionalism, and continuous self-improvement are essential in promoting meaningful and equitable learning experiences for diverse learners. The study concludes that personalized positive behaviors among instructors contribute significantly to the achievement of quality education and inclusive educational practices in higher education settings.

Keywords: Quality Education, Sustainable Development Goal 4, Multidisciplinary Instructors, Inclusive Education, Positive Teaching Behaviors

## 1. Introduction

Quality education has become a major global priority because of its significant role in promoting individual development, social equity, economic growth, and sustainable societies. The adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), emphasized the importance of ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all learners (United Nations, 2022). SDG 4 highlights not only educational access but also lifelong learning, inclusivity, professional teaching standards, and learner-centered educational environments (UNESCO, 2023a). However, despite global educational reforms and policy initiatives, many countries continue to experience challenges in achieving quality education due to systemic limitations, unequal opportunities, and varying educational conditions (Edwards et al., 2024).

In higher education, quality education is increasingly associated with instructional effectiveness, inclusive teaching practices, ethical professionalism, and responsiveness to learners' diverse academic and social needs. Universities are recognized as important institutions in advancing innovation, sustainable development, and global educational goals through interdisciplinary collaboration and transformative learning experiences (Ashida, 2022; Zayakova-Krushkova & Mitov, 2025). Nevertheless, higher education institutions continue to encounter challenges such as curriculum overload, limited technological integration, insufficient professional development opportunities, and inconsistencies in instructional quality (Macatangay, 2023; Hidayat et al., 2024). These challenges may hinder the achievement of meaningful and inclusive learning experiences among students.

The concept of quality education also remains multidimensional and often inconsistently interpreted across educational contexts. Karatsiori (2023) explained that the absence of conceptual consensus regarding "quality education" creates difficulties in translating global educational frameworks into classroom practice. Similarly, Carvalho et al. (2024) emphasized that quality education extends beyond academic achievement and includes ethical development, inclusivity, learner empowerment, and socially responsible learning. As a result, there is growing recognition that quality education should not only focus on measurable outcomes but also on the values, professional behaviors, and pedagogical commitments of educators.

Teachers play a critical role in achieving quality education because they directly influence students' learning experiences, motivation, engagement, and academic development. Kurniawan et al. (2025) emphasized that teacher innovation, professional commitment, and instructional adaptability significantly influence educational quality. Likewise, Huang et al. (2024) and Yasin et al. (2024) found that self-efficacy, professional identity, creativity, and autonomy contribute positively to effective and innovative teaching practices. Beyond instructional competence, teachers are also expected to demonstrate ethical responsibility, fairness, accountability, and responsiveness to students' diverse learning needs (Forster & Maxwell, 2023).

In the Philippine educational context, challenges related to quality education remain evident despite national reforms and institutional initiatives. Limited educational resources, infrastructure concerns, unequal learning opportunities, and increasing classroom diversity continue to affect the implementation of inclusive and learner-centered instruction (Ladines, 2023; Macatangay, 2023). Furthermore, there remains limited understanding regarding how multidisciplinary instructors personally interpret and practice quality education within higher education settings. Existing studies have largely focused on institutional performance, curriculum reforms, and policy implementation, while fewer studies have explored the personal values, ethical commitments, and positive teaching behaviors of instructors as contributors to quality education.

To address this gap, the present study examined the personalized positive behaviors of multidisciplinary instructors toward the promotion of quality education in higher education settings. Specifically, the study explored instructors' perceptions, professional values, instructional adaptability, ethical responsibility, and reflective practices in

relation to Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education. By examining teachers' lived experiences and pedagogical commitments, the study aimed to provide deeper understanding of how individual-level professional behaviors contribute to inclusive, equitable, and meaningful education without exclusion.

This study employed an exploratory qualitative design to investigate the perceptions and teaching practices of multidisciplinary instructors in higher education institutions in the Philippines. The findings of the study may contribute to the development of evidence-based educational policies, professional development programs, and learner-centered teaching practices that strengthen the achievement of quality education and educational inclusivity in higher education settings.

## 2. Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed an exploratory qualitative research design to examine the personalized positive behaviors of multidisciplinary instructors toward the promotion of quality education in higher education settings. Exploratory qualitative research is appropriate for investigating underexplored phenomena and understanding participants' perceptions, experiences, and meanings within specific contexts (Abdurasul et al., 2025; Olawale et al., 2023). According to Bouncken et al. (2021), qualitative exploratory designs provide methodological flexibility that allows researchers to examine emerging themes and socially grounded experiences in educational settings. The study specifically explored how instructors perceive quality education and how their personal teaching practices and professional values contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on Quality Education.

### Participants/Sample

The participants of the study consisted of 17 multidisciplinary college instructors from selected higher education institutions in the Philippines. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who possessed relevant teaching experiences and familiarity with the concept of quality education. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research to identify participants capable of providing rich and meaningful information related to the objectives of the study (Tajik et al., 2024).

Initially, 64 college instructors completed an online screening questionnaire distributed through professional academic networks and institutional mailing lists. From these respondents, 17 participants were purposively selected for in-depth interviews based on the inclusion criteria established by the researchers. Among the participants, nine were female and eight were male. Eight participants were employed in public higher education institutions, while nine were affiliated with private institutions. Their teaching experience ranged from 5 to 22 years, representing multidisciplinary fields such as education, business, social sciences, and applied sciences.

The inclusion criteria for participant selection were: (1) currently employed as a college instructor, (2) possessing at least five years of teaching experience, (3) familiarity with the concept of quality education, (4) active engagement in instructional or academic responsibilities within higher education institutions, and (5) willingness to participate in one-on-one interviews.

### Instruments

The study utilized a semi-structured interview guide as the primary instrument for data collection. The interview protocol was developed following the framework proposed by Kallio et al. (2016), which included identifying research objectives, reviewing relevant literature, drafting interview questions, conducting pilot testing, and revising the instrument based on expert feedback. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to collect detailed and flexible responses while maintaining consistency across participants (Belina, 2023).

The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore instructors' perceptions of quality education, personal teaching values, instructional practices, ethical responsibilities, and reflective teaching experiences. Probing questions were incorporated to encourage deeper explanation and clarification of participants' responses (Robinson, 2023).

To establish trustworthiness and content validity, the interview guide underwent expert validation involving specialists in qualitative research, teacher

education, and classroom instruction. Pilot testing was also conducted to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and effectiveness of the interview questions in generating meaningful qualitative data (Majid et al., 2017).

**Procedure**

Data collection was conducted through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were formally invited to participate in the study, and interview schedules were arranged based on their availability. Before the interviews, participants were informed regarding the purpose of the study, ethical considerations, confidentiality measures, and their voluntary participation.

The interviews encouraged participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, and teaching practices related to quality education. Participants were allowed to communicate using the language they were most comfortable with to ensure natural and meaningful interaction (Welch & Piekkari, 2006). With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded using secure digital devices to ensure accuracy in data transcription and analysis. Field notes and preliminary reflections were also documented during the data collection process.

**Data Analysis**

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis following the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021, 2023). Reflexive thematic analysis is a systematic qualitative approach used to identify recurring themes, patterns, and meanings within narrative data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The analysis involved six phases: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. An inductive approach was employed to ensure that themes emerged directly from participants' narratives rather than from pre-existing theoretical assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

To strengthen trustworthiness and minimize researcher bias, peer debriefing sessions were conducted with qualitative researchers who reviewed and challenged the emerging interpretations and thematic categories. This process ensured that the identified themes accurately reflected participants' experiences and perspectives.

## 3. Results

The qualitative analysis of the interview responses generated several themes describing the personalized positive behaviors of multidisciplinary instructors toward the promotion of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on Quality Education. The emerging themes included: (1) commitment to inclusive and learner-centered teaching, (2) professional adaptability and instructional innovation, (3) ethical responsibility and professional integrity, and (4) reflective teaching practices for continuous improvement.

### *Theme 1: Commitment to Inclusive and Learner-Centered Teaching*

The participants emphasized the importance of creating inclusive and learner-centered educational environments that accommodate students' diverse academic, emotional, and social needs. Instructors described quality education as an educational process that ensures equal learning opportunities, active participation, and meaningful engagement for all learners regardless of their backgrounds and abilities.

> *"Quality education means making sure that every student feels included, supported, and capable of learning regardless of their differences."*
>
> *"As instructors, we should adjust our teaching strategies based on students' needs because not all learners learn the same way."*

The responses indicate that multidisciplinary instructors view inclusivity and responsiveness to learner diversity as essential components of quality education. Participants highlighted the importance of empathy, flexibility, and learner-centered instructional practices in promoting education without exclusion.

### *Theme 2: Professional Adaptability and Instructional Innovation*

Another major theme that emerged from the findings was professional adaptability and instructional innovation. Participants emphasized the importance of continuously improving teaching

practices, integrating technology, and utilizing innovative instructional strategies to address changing educational demands.

> *"Teachers should continue learning and adapting because students today learn differently compared to previous generations."*
>
> *"Innovation in teaching is necessary to make learning more meaningful and engaging for students."*

The findings demonstrate that instructors recognize adaptability and innovation as important professional behaviors that contribute to the achievement of quality education. Participants emphasized the value of integrating interactive teaching methods, digital tools, and flexible instructional approaches to enhance student learning experiences.

### *Theme 3: Ethical Responsibility and Professional Integrity*

The findings also revealed that ethical responsibility and professional integrity play important roles in promoting quality education. Participants described fairness, accountability, respect, and professionalism as essential teaching values that influence students' trust, motivation, and learning experiences.

> *"Teachers should become role models who practice fairness, respect, and honesty inside and outside the classroom."*
>
> *"Professional integrity is important because students learn not only from lessons but also from the behavior of their teachers."*

The responses indicate that participants perceive ethical teaching practices as important contributors to inclusive and meaningful education. Instructors emphasized that demonstrating professionalism and ethical responsibility strengthens positive classroom environments and learner development.

### *Theme 4: Reflective Teaching Practices for Continuous Improvement*

Another significant theme that emerged from the analysis was reflective teaching practices for continuous improvement. Participants highlighted the importance of self-evaluation, professional reflection, and openness to feedback in improving instructional effectiveness and supporting quality education.

> *"Teachers should always reflect on their teaching practices and identify areas that need improvement."*
>
> *"Listening to students' feedback helps us improve our teaching strategies and become better educators."*

The findings suggest that instructors view reflective teaching as an essential professional behavior that supports lifelong learning and instructional improvement. Participants emphasized that continuous reflection and professional growth contribute to more effective, responsive, and learner-centered educational practices.

Overall, the findings revealed that multidisciplinary instructors associate quality education with inclusivity, innovation, ethical professionalism, and reflective teaching practices. The participants emphasized that personalized positive behaviors such as empathy, adaptability, professionalism, and continuous self-improvement contribute significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education and the promotion of education without exclusion.

## 4. Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that multidisciplinary instructors associate quality education with inclusive, learner-centered, and responsive teaching practices. Participants emphasized that quality education involves ensuring equal learning opportunities, meaningful participation, and supportive learning environments for diverse learners. These findings support UNESCO (2023a), which emphasized that Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) promotes equitable and inclusive education that responds to learners' diverse academic and social needs. Similarly, Carvalho et al. (2024) explained that quality education extends beyond academic achievement and includes learner empowerment, inclusivity, and ethical educational practices.

The participants' emphasis on inclusivity and learner-centered instruction also aligns with the principles of education without exclusion. Instructors recognized the importance of adjusting teaching strategies based on learners' individual differences, learning preferences, and classroom

experiences. These findings support Forster and Maxwell (2023), who emphasized that inclusive educational practices require teachers to demonstrate empathy, responsiveness, and flexibility in addressing students' varying needs. Likewise, Ladines (2023) noted that inclusive education in higher education settings requires instructional adaptability and supportive learning environments that encourage participation among all learners.

Another important finding of the study was the role of professional adaptability and instructional innovation in promoting quality education. Participants emphasized the importance of continuously improving teaching practices, integrating technology, and utilizing innovative instructional strategies to address evolving educational demands. These findings are consistent with Kurniawan et al. (2025), who explained that teacher innovation and instructional adaptability significantly influence educational quality and student engagement. Similarly, Hidayat et al. (2024) emphasized that innovative teaching practices contribute to meaningful learning experiences and strengthen students' participation in higher education.

The findings also revealed that multidisciplinary instructors consider ethical responsibility and professional integrity as important components of quality education. Participants highlighted fairness, respect, accountability, and professionalism as teaching values that influence learners' trust, motivation, and academic experiences. These findings support Huang et al. (2024), who explained that professional identity, ethical behavior, and teacher self-efficacy positively influence instructional effectiveness and classroom relationships. Likewise, Yasin et al. (2024) emphasized that professionalism and ethical commitment contribute to sustainable and learner-centered educational environments.

Reflective teaching practices also emerged as an important professional behavior among the participants. Instructors emphasized the importance of self-evaluation, openness to feedback, and continuous professional growth in improving instructional effectiveness. These findings align with Ashida (2022), who emphasized that reflective teaching and lifelong learning strengthen educators' ability to respond to educational challenges and diverse learner needs. Similarly, Zayakova-Krushkova and Mitov (2025) explained that reflective professional practices support innovation, instructional improvement, and sustainable educational development in higher education institutions.

The findings of the study suggest that personalized positive behaviors among multidisciplinary instructors contribute significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education. The participants demonstrated that inclusivity, instructional innovation, ethical professionalism, and reflective teaching practices are essential in promoting education without exclusion. These findings imply that higher education institutions may benefit from strengthening professional development programs that encourage inclusive teaching practices, ethical leadership, instructional adaptability, and reflective professional growth among educators.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the idea that quality education is not limited to curriculum delivery and academic performance alone but also involves educators' professional values, attitudes, and teaching behaviors. The study reinforces learner-centered and inclusive educational frameworks that emphasize responsiveness, collaboration, and continuous instructional improvement as essential dimensions of sustainable quality education.

Despite the positive findings of the study, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study involved a limited number of participants from selected higher education institutions in the Philippines, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts. In addition, the study focused primarily on instructors' perceptions and experiences regarding quality education and did not include direct classroom observations or student perspectives. Future studies may further examine the relationship between teachers' professional behaviors and students' learning outcomes using larger participant groups and mixed-methods research designs across different educational settings.

## 5. Conclusion

The study concluded that multidisciplinary instructors associate quality education with inclusive teaching, instructional adaptability, ethical professionalism, and reflective teaching practices. The findings revealed that personalized positive behaviors such as empathy, flexibility, innovation, fairness, and continuous self-improvement contribute significantly to the promotion of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education and education without exclusion.

The study further suggests that higher education institutions may strengthen quality education by supporting professional development programs that promote inclusive, learner-centered, and innovative teaching practices among instructors. By fostering ethical responsibility and reflective professional growth, educators may create more meaningful and equitable learning experiences for diverse learners.

Future studies may further explore the relationship between instructors' professional behaviors and student learning outcomes using larger samples, classroom observations, and mixed-methods approaches across different educational settings.

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