

## **Regular Primary School Teachers' Perceptions on the Inclusion of Learners with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in General Primary Schools in Chiwoko Zone Lilongwe, Malawi**

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**Abstract:** *Emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD) in learners obstruct effective teaching and learning. However, the perceptions that educators have towards learners with EBD may or may not hinder the teaching and learning of these learners. This paper aimed at investigating how regular primary school teachers view the inclusion of learners with EBD in the general primary schools in Chiwoko zone, Lilongwe district, Malawi. The sample of the study consisted of 80 primary teachers from five different primary schools. The respondents completed a questionnaire with Likert-scale questions and a focus group discussion. The study findings showed that teachers had an overall positive perception towards the inclusion of learners with EBD in regular schools. Findings from the focus group discussions indicated that even though the teachers supported the inclusion, they had pertinent issues which they wanted resolved to facilitate active inclusion and integration of the learners with EBD to the rest of the learners in regular school.*

**Key words:** *attitude, emotional and behavioural disorders, inclusion*

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Date of Submission: 13-01-2020

Date of Acceptance: 29-01-2020

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### **I. Introduction**

According to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004), Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (EBD) is a term referring to pupils' malady displaying one or more of the subsequent features over a long period of time and to a degree that evidently affects school performance, An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors, a failure to build or sustain satisfactory relationships with peers and teachers, inappropriate types of behaviour under normal circumstances, a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (Hannell, 2006).

EBD problems include externalising behaviours (acting out) such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. And internalising practices (withdrawn) such as Anxiety Disorder, Depression Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Schizophrenia. Ganado & Cerado (2015)

Historically, societies saw people with EBD as possessed by demons (Gathua, Muthee, Murugami, & Tesfu, 2015). Hence, learners with EBD encountered a lot of obstacles to move toward practical educational placements. Learners with EBD learners were deprived of access to education and other services before the 1960s (Lee, 2012). During that time, EBD was believed to be a medicinal or psychosomatic problem rather than an educational problem (Lee, 2012). EBD became an area of study in the middle of the 20th century.

Globally, the real inclusion of learners with EBD started in 1990 when the United Nations (UN) set forth the possibility of 'Education for All (Gidlund, 2018). During the same time, the IDEA added learners with EBD to the list of a disability group. However, Scanlon and Barnes-holmes (2013), in the USA, stress that the extremely troublesome groups to include in mainstream education are learners with EBD because of negative attitudes of educators.

A study on EBD and the developmental level of countries revealed that developed countries accept the concept of EBD easily than developing world (Lopes, 2014). The study found that developed countries have extensive information about identification procedures, categories, support systems, funding for these EBD learners than developing countries; hence, useful inclusion of learners with EBD is achievable (Lopes, 2014).

Lee (2012), in the USA found data of learners with EBD from the U. S. Department of Education, which indicated an increasing trend in general classroom admission. The overall rate of general classroom placement for learners with EBD improved from 1998 to 2005 at a rate of 27% to about 34.7%. In Jamaica, Anderson (2012), found that inclusive education for learners with EBD is at the Centre of significant debates in

education circles. The argument is about whether to include learners with EBD in regular schools or not. Whereas, in the Netherlands, schools focus on providing an adequate social-emotional environment to manage learners with EBD in schools. However, schools do not adapt instructions to benefit learners with EBD and their teachers (Mooij, & Smeets, 2008). Lindsay (2007), in the United Kingdom, found that teachers performed in unity with their persuasions, not necessarily the presence of requirements to help them educate learners with special needs. In the Philippines, a study about Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude towards Inclusive Education: Basis for an Enhanced Professional Development Program found neutral attitudes among teachers regarding the inclusion of learners with special needs, (Dapudong, 2014).

Furthermore, Cassidy (2011) researched particularly on Teachers' Attitudes toward the Inclusion of Students with Autism and Emotional Behavioural Disorder in the United States of America. The results of the survey showed that the type and severity of students' disability influenced teachers' attitudes. Most teachers preferred having a child with Autism in their classroom rather than a child with EBD. This indicated that the presence of typical characteristics of the two disabilities influences teachers' perceptions to have these learners in their classrooms. This study was done in the USA; hence, there is a need to do the same research in other countries like Malawi. Lusk, Bullock, and Texas (2013), in the USA investigated Teachers of Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders perspectives in which years of experience was one of the demographic variables. The results showed that teachers with more years of teaching experience found more excellent value in using the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) standards in their teaching practices than those with fewer years teaching experience educating students with EBD.

Lorga, Magdalena, Saponaria, Camelia, Dirtu, and Gabriela a Ioan (2016), in Romania conducted a study on the social perception of mentally disabled people and the attitudes toward them among teachers. The researchers found that teachers' opinions were influenced by age, gender and degree of experience in teaching mentally disturbed learners. The results also showed that young teachers, female teachers and teachers with expertise in teaching mentally disturbed learners had positive attitudes.

However, studies conducted by Hastings and Oakford (2003), in the United Kingdom and Gidlund (2018), in Sweden found that teachers voiced more negative feelings towards the inclusion of learners with behavioural and emotional disorders. The researchers concluded that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of EBD learners were dependent on the nature of the disability. The study focused on the quality of disability, leaving out training age and gender. Therefore, the gap remains for more studies to be done on other factors that influence the perceptions of teachers. Similarly, Sutherland, Lewis-palmer, & Morgan, (2014) study in the USA which found that most learners with emotional or behavioural disorders (EBD) show both learning and behavioural problems that make it difficult for teachers to provide effective instruction.

Arseneau (2011), in the USA detailed few fundamental hindrances to the incorporation of EBD learners. The researcher, for example, noted that inadequate help and preparing in a joint effort, discovering time for correspondence and arranging with colleagues, unable to meet the educational needs of the EBD learners, and lack of behaviour management and curricular amendments skills. These barriers put teachers off when it comes to teaching learners with EBD. In Pakistan, a study revealed that disruptive behaviour is a concern for many teachers. Disruptive behaviour interferes with the learning process for other students. It also retards the ability of teachers to teach most effectively, and it can distract the drive and resources of teachers and school away from their objectives and educational mission. Hence, instigating negative attitude in teachers. (Rehman Ghazi, Shahzada, Tariq, & Qayum Khan, 2013)

Elisavet (2016) and Stampoltzis, Ioannou, and Georgiou (2016), in Greece found that young teacher, female teachers and teachers with experience in special needs teaching, obtained the highest mean scores in coping up with learners with EBD. The study looked at age, gender and years of experience, leaving out the severity of the disorder and training, which also influences teachers' perceptions.

Most countries in Africa do not have special educational programs for EBD learners. Literature has indicated that only Kenya and Zimbabwe had programmes for EBDs in Eastern and Southern Africa by 1985 (Gathua et al., 2015). In Kenya, learners with EBD face challenges because of high enrolment, overcrowded classroom and lack of specialised teachers (Gathua et al., 2015). Likewise, Mukuria and Korir (2010), in Kenya examined on Education for Children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders. The survey discovered that inclusive educational services for learners with emotional and behavioural problems are not being addressed adequately in Kenya because of traditional negative beliefs about these learners, 80% of the respondents, which included general and special education teachers, administrators, and social workers demonstrated contrary feelings towards students with EBD. The Kenyan society sees these people as being frantic or controlled by evil spirits.

In Malawi, the use of resource centres is the most typical method of implementing inclusive education. Learners with special needs education receive instruction in regular primary schools; after that, they receive additional support in resource centres, a separate room outside the regular classroom (Banks & Zuurmond, 2015). A study by Chimwaza (2015), on inclusive education, in which teachers perceptions were also lobbied, found that regular primary teachers had positive attitudes towards learners with special needs. Similarly Chitiyo,

Prater, and Sekulowicz (2015) in Malawi, found many attitudinal and academic strengths among Malawian teachers and community members related to including children with disabilities in the general education classroom. Nevertheless, Hagen (2016), in her study in Malawi found little or no attention and stigmatisation among teachers towards learners with special needs in general.

However, challenges in providing inclusive education services in regular schools still exist in Malawi (Chitiyo, Prater, & Sekulowicz, 2015). For instance, combining programs for learners with EBD with programs for learners with Learning Difficulties (LD) (department of special needs, Malawi, 2018). The idea of combining learners with LD and EBD was more common in the Spanish teachers due to their belief that the presence of LD produces lower self-esteem also present in some learners with EBD, however, American teachers opposed this belief (Cornoldi, Capodieci, Colomer Diago, Miranda, & Shepherd, 2018). This combination of programs may instigate negative perceptions and attitudes in teachers who may find it difficult to assist them effectively due to lack of skills and expertise.

Therefore, following the above findings, it is important that the study on the inclusion of learners with EBD and the educators' perceptions has to be researched and replicated comprehensively worldwide. Henceforth, this study seeks to investigate how regular primary school teachers view the inclusion of learners with EBD in general primary schools in Chiwoko, zone, Lilongwe, Malawi. The study further seek to establish that there is no statistically significant relationship between teacher training programme, gender, years of teaching experience and age and the regular primary school teachers perceptions.

## **II. Material And Methods**

This study was carried out on regular primary school teachers from five schools in Chiwoko zone Lilongwe Malawi from August 2018 to August 2019. A total of 80 teachers(both male and females) of between 25 to 55 years of age participated in this study.

**Study Design:** sequential explanatory design

**Study Location:** The study was carried out in Chiwoko zone in Lilongwe, Malawi. Chiwoko zone is in Lilongwe urban. It has 14 schools with an average of 30 teachers in each school. Lilongwe district is a capital city of Malawi. Malawi lies in south-east Africa, bordered to the West by Zambia, North and East by Tanzania, and east and south by Mozambique. The country covers a total area of 118,480 sq. km, 24,400 sq. Km (20%) of which is water.

**Study Duration:** August 2018 to August 2019.

**Sample size:** 80 regular primary school teachers.

**Sample size calculation:** The sample size was determined by imitating sample size of similar study. A randomized sampling was used to investigate the views of regular primary school teachers. The target population from which we randomly selected our sample was 420. However, sample size actually obtained for this study was 80 teachers.

**Subjects & selection method:** The respondents were drawn from regular primary school teachers only. They were asked to answer a Likert scale questionnaire. Convenient sampling was also done on the same teachers who took part in the answering of the Likert scale questionnaires for a focus group discussion.

### **Inclusion criteria:**

1. All regular primary school teachers
2. Either sex
3. All ages

### **Exclusion criteria:**

1. All special needs primary school teachers
2. All learners with Emotional and behavioural Disorders

### **Procedure methodology**

After permission from the Ministry of Education (Malawi) to collect data from the sampled schools. An up-to-date consent was also gotten from the respondents A Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data from regular primary school teachers. Data was collected with the help of one trained research assistant. The purpose was to help in photocopying, reading and editing written questionnaires and sending out questionnaires to schools and waiting up until they are filled and taken the same day. The researcher visited the sampled schools a week earlier before the actual date of data collection. To familiarise oneself with the schools and build working rapport. It was also to get permission from head teachers and to make arrangements for data collection. The data collection process was in two phases;

### Quantitative Phase

The primary intention of the quantitative phase data collection and analysis was to broadly investigate educational stakeholders' perceptions on the inclusion of learners with EBD in Chiwoko zone. The first phase started with collecting quantitative data through questionnaires that were self-administered to head teachers and regular teachers then analysed it. Afterwards, the researcher conducted structured interviews with learners and parents and then analysed it.

### Qualitative Phase

In the qualitative phase, the results from the quantitative data-guided and informed the researcher to conveniently sampled ten regular teachers and eight learners to participate in the focus group discussion and the type of questions for each group. Of which only eight regular teachers and six learners participated in the FGD. Convenience sampling helped the researcher to choose participants from those that participated in the first quantitative phase.

### Statistical Analysis

After data collection, the researcher edited and counterchecked completion of questions in order to detect items which might not have been correctly answered. Then, quantitative data was coded and feed into SPSS programme version 22.0. After that, the quantitative data were analysed by descriptive statistics using tables, graphs, figures, percentages, mean, and frequencies; a t-test and multiple regression tests were conducted to determine the basis of variances in perceptions of the respondents, (Eng, Szmodis, & Mulsow, 2014). The choice of SPSS was because of its simplicity for beginners to use, fast and has minimal errors(Coakes, & Steed, 2007). The analysis of qualitative data from the focus group discussions was done thematically and reported narratively.

## III. Results and Discussions

### Teachers' perceptions on the inclusion of learners with EBD in regular Primary schools

The objective aimed at assessing opinions of regular primary school teachers on the inclusion of learners with EBD in regular Primary schools in Chiwoko Zone in Lilongwe district.

In the first place, the researcher established the mean perception score for teachers in the SPSS data view section. The mean perception score for the teachers was 14.5 representing (72.5%) of the maximum total average of 20. The percentage falls in the fourth quarter signifying that on average, the teacher agreed that learners with EBD should be included and enrolled in regular schools. That is, the teachers had a positive perception towards the enrolment. The results contradict the finding in the Philippines, in which the researcher sought to investigate teachers' knowledge and attitude towards inclusive education. The findings showed neutral attitudes among teachers regarding the inclusion of learners with EBD and unique needs in general (Dapudong, 2014).

Further findings from the Likert scale of teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of learners with EBD are listed in Table 4.8 below.

**Table 4.8 Teachers views**

Teachers' Perception	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
EBD learners will develop a more positive self-concept by being included in regular schools	6 (7.5%)	8 (10.0%)	55 (68.8%)	11 (13.8%)	2.89
I believe that I may not be able to work effectively if EBD learners are included.	16 (20.0%)	28 (35.0%)	29 (36.3%)	7 (8.8%)	2.34
Inclusion of EBD learners into regular schools brings an opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and personally	2 (2.5%)	7 (8.8%)	45 (56.3%)	26 (32.5%)	3.19
I believe my work is more interesting when given the opportunity to work with EBD students.	2 (2.5%)	15 (18.8%)	44 (55.0%)	19 (23.8%)	3.00
In general, I look onward to the challenge of working with students with EBD	3 (3.8%)	8 (10.0%)	53 (66.3%)	16 (20.0%)	3.03

N= 80 Mean values in a scale of 1 – 4 (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree)

Table 4.8 indicates that majority of the teachers' strongly disagreed (20.0%), and 35.0% disagreed that they were concerned that they might not be able to work effectively if learners with EBD are included in the regular school. The results implied that they could work effectively with learners having EBD problems. To the teachers, the inclusion of learners with EBD into regular schools brings an opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and personally. The response was strongly agreed by 32.5% and agreed by 56.3% respectively by the teachers. In the opinion, 66.3% of the teachers stated that they looked forward to the challenge of working with learners with EBD. 55.0% of the teachers believe their work is more enjoyable when allowed to work with

learners with EBD. In their views, 68.8% of the teachers feel that learners with EBD will develop a more positive self-concept by being in regular schools.

During the focus group discussion the teachers' stated that the positive view was a result of frequent in-service training where teachers are being encouraged to get to know each learner one-on-one and understand that each display of behaviour problem has a source, hence as teachers they must appreciate all learners before reacting to a learners' behaviour. Teachers commented that they are encouraged to use positive strategies when dealing with all learners due to the idea of inclusion.

These results support the findings of Chimwaza (2015) and Chitiyo, Prater, and Sekulowicz (2015), in Malawi who found Malawian teachers having more positive attitudes concerning the inclusion of all learners with disabilities in general primary education. However, the results clashes with Tirado, (2016), findings in the USA, California and Dapudong (2014), in the Philippines respectively who stated that teachers were not completely comfortable in knowing about and working with learners identified with EBD, and they were also reluctant to have them in their class. There was alsomoderate knowledge about inclusive education among teachers and too neutral attitude among teachers towards inclusion of all SEN learners, including learners with EBD.

**Examining the relationship between teachers predictors and perception score using Multiple Regression**

Multiple regression was also conducted to investigate the relationship between the teachers' predictors of age, gender, years of teaching experience, teacher training programme against the perception score (inclusion)

**Table 4.9 Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.368 <sup>a</sup>	.135	.089	1.809

a. Predictors: (Constant), In which programme were you trained in? What is your gender? What is your teaching experience? What is your age?  
 b. Dependent Variable: perception score

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.425	4	9.606	2.935	.026 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	245.462	75	3.273		
	Total	283.888	79			

a. Dependent Variable: perception score  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), In which programme were you trained in? What is your gender? What is your teaching experience? What is your age?

In the model summary Table, the R Square value is .135. The findings signify that 13.5% of variations in the dependent variable was explained by the predictors. The significance level in the ANOVA Table was 0.026<sup>b</sup>, a figure below  $p < 0.05$  which indicates that generally, the predictors had a statistically significant influence on the perception of teachers regarding the inclusion of learners with EBD in regular schools. However, the results do not give us which independent variable is giving us a statistically significant influence. Therefore, the following coefficient, Table 4.10, highlights the significance of each predictor on the dependent variable.

**Table 4.10 Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	13.906	1.398		9.946	.000	11.120	16.691
	What is your gender?	-.776	.496	-.168	-1.563	.122	-1.765	.213
	What is your age?	.032	.294	.013	.109	.914	-.554	.618
	What is your teaching experience?	.452	.176	.018	.148	.882	-.325	.377
	In which program were you trained in?	-.026	.148	.332	3.060	.003	.158	.747

a. Dependent Variable: Perception score

As seen in **Table 4.10**, the predictor type of programme trained in had a statistical significance level of .003, which was below ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) to mean that it had a statistically significant effect on the teachers' perception regarding the inclusion of learners with EBD in regular schools. These results suggest that the training programme of a teacher influenced their opinion about integration. Teachers' attitudes depended on the type of teacher training programme. The other variables, gender, age and teaching experience had significance levels

.122, .914 and .882 respectively, which is more than  $p \geq 0.05$ ; hence they had no statistically significant effect on the perception of teachers — indicating that teachers positive attitudes towards inclusion of learners with EBD were not influenced by age, gender or degree of experience.

In the unstandardized coefficients column, the independents' variables; age and years of teaching experience had positive  $\beta$  coefficients signifying that a unit increase in their values would lead to a positive change in the perception score. For instance, the predictor type of years of teaching experience had a  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.452 indicating that one unit change in the type of programme trained in would result in a change of 0.452 in the perception score of teachers.

This results support the study findings of Lika, (2016) in the Czech Republic, who stated that training in inclusive education positively affected the attitudes of the teachers in an inclusive setting. Indicating that teacher training generates professionals with knowledge of particular skills to help them executes their duties.

However, the results contradict the findings of Lorga, Magdalena, Saponaria, Camelia, Dirtu, and Gabriela a loan (2016) in Romania, who noted that teachers' attitudes were influenced by age, gender and degree of experience in teaching mentally disturbed learners.

**Table 4.11** explains in detail on the teacher training program and opinion of the teachers to handle learners with EBD.

**Table 4.11 Do not feel adequately trained**

Training	SD	D	A	SA	TOTAL
1 year	2(11.1%)	1(5.5%)	3(16.6%)	12 (66.7%)	18 (100%)
2 years	2(25.0%)	1(12.5%)	2 (25.0%)	3(37.5%)	8 (100%)
IPTE	8(65.5.7%)	4(30.8%)	1(7.7%)	0(0.0%)	13 (100%)
MASTEP	1(10.0%)	2(20.0%)	4(40.0%)	3(30.0%)	10 (100%)
MIITEP	14(27.5%)	25(49.0%)	6(11.8%)	7(13.7%)	51 (100%)

N=80 NB: SD-strongly disagree, D-disagree, A-agree, SA-strongly agree.  
 IPTE: Initial Primary Teacher Education, MASTEP: Malawi Special Teacher Education Program MIITEP: Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Program

Table 4.11 shows using Fisher's exact test to test for any association in the teachers' opinion about their training and views on including learners with EBD, the findings showed that majority of the teachers trained under the IPTE program, 65.5% and 30.8% and the MIITEP program 27.5% and 49.0% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they do not feel adequately trained. The results imply that teachers trained under the two programs (IPTE and MIITEP) felt adequately prepared to handle learners with special needs, including learners with EBD.

IPTE program has a mandatory aspect of special and inclusive education, and it started in 2005, teachers' are empowered to handle learners with special needs with slightest challenges because they are bestowed with necessary skills to teach learners with SEN. MIITEP programme was instated in 1997 and ended in 2004, but they may feel trained due to in-service training done in schools. A good number of teachers' trained for one year (66.7%), two years (37.5%) program and the MASTEP (30.0%) respectively agreed that they were not adequately trained to handle learners with EBD. However, Fisher's exact test showed the association was statistically significant at  $P \leq 0.05$  level. The results signified that training influenced teacher attitude.

These results were also consistent with previous studies in the USA that indicated that training help the teachers to have strong beliefs that inclusive education had a positive influence on both learners with and without disabilities (You, Kim, & Shin, 2019). Indicating that trained teachers help to educate the masses that inclusion is useful for all the learners in school. And that learners with special needs were not different from other learners without special needs.

**Opinion of Teachers on inclusion and the impact of behaviour problem of the learners with EBD.**

The researcher wanted to examine the impact of behaviour problems of learners with EBD on the teachers and the teachers' views of including them in regular school. The findings are outlined in Table 4.12 below

**Table. 4.12 views of teachers on the impact of behaviour problems**

Impact	SD	D	A	SA	Mean response
Consumes a lot of my time for pupils.	2 (2.5%)	11(13.8%)	48 (60.0%)	18(22.5%)	3.04
I feel helpless	11(13.8%)	27(33.8%)	22 (27.5%)	20 25.0%)	2.64
Poses additional stress	5 (6.3%)	23(28.8%)	36 (45.0%)	16(20.0%)	2.79
Makes me feel emotionally exhausted	7 (8.8%)	30(37.5%)	23 (28.8%)	20(25.0%)	2.70
Increases excessively the workload	1 (1.3%)	12(15.0%)	44 (55.0%)	23(28.8%)	3.11
Impedes me from paying attention to other kids	7 (8.8%)	18 (22.5%)	44 (55.0%)	11(13.8%)	2.74
Makes me feel nervous	12(15.0%)	32(40.0%)	28 (35.0%)	8 (10.0%)	2.40
Makes me feel incompetent	14 (17.5%)	39 (48.8%)	21 (26.3%)	6 (7.5%)	2.24
Makes me feel physically exhausted	6 (7.5%)	22 (27.5%)	36 (45.0%)	16(20.0%)	2.78

N=80 NB: SD-strongly disagree, D-disagree, A-agree, SA-strongly agree  
 Mean values in a scale of 1 – 4 (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree)

Table 4.12 shows that the significant impact of behaviour problems of EBD learners on the teachers was that it increases the workload excessively and that it also consumes a lot of time for other learners, as indicated by a mean response of 3.11(55%) and 3.04 (28,8%) respectively. This response implies that teachers were complaining about their heavy workload and the behaviour problems of the learners. This finding supports the study of Sutherland, Lewis-palmer, & Morgan (2014), in the USA. These researchers found that due to heavy workloads and behaviour problems of learners with EBD, most teachers find it challenging to provide practical instruction in the classroom.

Other impacts include; posing additional stress, impeding the teacher from paying attention to other children, Making the teacher feel emotionally exhausted and feeling helpless. Indicating that teachers feel affected by the behaviours of learners with EBD. These results tend to be aligned with Elisavet, (2016) in the USA who stated that no one in the educational setting is exempted from the behaviour problems of learners with EBD when they are included in the mainstream classes.

**Examining the relationship between teachers' predictors' variables of gender, age, teaching experience and the impact score using Multiple Regression.**

Multiple regression was also conducted to examine the relationship between the teachers' predictor variable of gender, teachers age, teaching experience and the type of programme trained in, and the dependent variable impact score on teachers.

**Table 4.13 Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.138 <sup>a</sup>	.019	-.033	4.669

a. Predictors: (Constant), In which programme were you trained in? What is your gender? What is your teaching experience? What is your age?

b. Dependent Variable: impact score

**Anova<sup>a</sup>table**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	31.840	4	7.960	.365	.833 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	1635.047	75	21.801		
Total	1666.887	79			

a. Dependent Variable: impact score

b. Predictors: (Constant), In which programme were you trained in? What is your gender? What is your teaching experience? What is your age?

In the model summary Table 13, the R Square value was .019. It signifies that 1.9% of the variance in the dependent variable impact score is explained by the four predictors. The significance level in the ANOVA Table is .833<sup>b</sup> a figure higher than 0.05, indicating that on overall, the predictors; age, gender, teacher training programme and the years of teaching experience did not influence the teachers' views regarding their feeling of being affected by the behaviour problems. The following coefficients table provides further findings on the individual predictor variable.

**Table.4.13 Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	25.079	3.608		6.950	.000	17.891	32.267
What is your gender?	-.367	1.281	-.033	-.287	.775	-2.919	2.184
What is your age?	.502	.760	.087	.661	.511	-1.011	2.016
What is your teaching experience?	-.024	.454	-.007	-.053	.958	-.929	.881
In which programme were you trained in?	.379	.382	.115	.993	.324	-.381	1.139

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher impact score

Table 4.13 shows that the predictors' gender, age, teaching experience and the type of programme trained in, had significant levels of above  $p > 0.05$  which were .775, .511, .958, .324 respectively. The results indicated that each predictor variable had no statistically significant effect on how teachers felt impacted by the behaviour of learners with EBD. The results were consistent with the findings of Giangreco, M., Broer, S., & Eldelman, S., (2006), in the USA who stated that attitudes of teachers might be influenced by diverse variables due to the cultural, organizational, and normative conditions present in different contexts, not only age, gender or years of teaching experience. However, in the unstandardized coefficient column, for the predictor years of teaching experience had negative  $\beta$  coefficients meaning that a unit decrease in their values culminates in the level of impact declining by 0.367. These results signify that those who had fewer years of teaching experience felt less impacted by the behaviour problems of learners with EBD.

The  $\beta$  coefficient for age (.502) was positive. It signifies that an increase in the age unit value will result in a positive impact of 0.502. The results entail that older teachers felt being affected by the behaviour problems of learners with EBD than younger teachers. These results indicate that more former teachers were overwhelmed by the principles of inclusion, coupled with the unfamiliarity of the amount of adaptation needed for learners with SEN in one class, thereby challenging their confidence. These results agree with (Nyangoti, 2013), who found that the teachers' age influenced the inclusion of learners with special needs in regular primary school. Generally, younger teachers agree to the inclusion of learners with special needs than older teachers.

### Teachers views on the impact of the behaviour problem of learners with EBD in School/ Classroom Environment.

The teachers were asked to indicate their opinion on the impact of behaviour problems of learners with EBD in the inclusive school environment. The results are as shown in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14 Views of teachers on the impact of behaviour problem on the school environment**

Impacting environment	classroom	SD	D	A	SA	Mean response
Disturb the routine of the class.	5 (6.3%)		28 (35.0%)	44 (55.0%)	3 (3.8%)	2.56
Disturb the normal function of the school	8 (10.0%)		28 (35.0%)	37 (46.3%)	7 (8.8%)	2.54
Gives a negative impression on the school	8 (10.0%)		48 (60.0%)	18 (22.5%)	6 (7.5%)	2.28
I can include EBD learners in my class regardless of the above problems	8 (10.0%)		10 (12.5%)	45 (56.25%)	17 (21.25%)	2.89

N= 80 Mean values in a scale of 1 – 4 (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree)

Table 4.14 shows the majority of the teachers noted that the behaviour problems of learners with EBD disturb the routine of the class (mean response of 2.56.) The answer was indicated by 55.0% of the teachers who agreed and 3.8% who strongly agreed. Whereas, 46.3% agreed, and 8.8% strongly agreed that their behaviour also disturbs the normal functioning of the school (a mean response of 2.54). However, 60% disagree and 10% strongly disagree that the learners' behaviour gives a negative impression of the school with a mean response of 2.28.

The results are indicating that although the majority of the teachers acknowledged that learners with EBD disturb the routine of the class and its normal functioning, their behaviours do not give a negative impression to the school. That is why the teachers showed a willingness to include these learners in their classroom with a mean response of 2.89. The responses of the teachers support the study that was done in Pakistan, the study states that disruptive behaviour is a concern for many teachers because it interferes with the learning process for other students, retards the ability of teachers to impart knowledge efficiently, diverts the



energy and resources of teachers and school away from the goals and educational assignment (Rehman Ghazi, Shahzada, Tariq, & Qayum Khan, 2013)

**Teachers perceptions on the impact of behaviour problem on Peers**

An evaluation of the effects of behaviour problems of learners with EBD on peers as perceived by teachers was indicated, as shown in table 4.15.

**Table. 4. 15 Views on the impact of behaviour problem on peers**

Impact on peers	SD	D	A	SA	Mean response
Upsets and distract the peers.	14 (17.5%)	31 (38.8%)	31 (38.8%)	4 (5.0%)	2.31
Reduces peers learning opportunity and their performance.	4 (5.0%)	32 (40.0%)	37 (46.3%)	7 (8.8%)	2.59
Puts them in danger	15 (18.8%)	25 (31.3%)	30 (37.5%)	10 (12.5%)	2.44

N=80 NB: SD-strongly disagree, D-disagree, A-agree, SA-strongly agree  
Mean values in a scale of 1 – 4 (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree)

Table 4.15 shows that majority of the teachers noted that behaviour problems reduce peers learning opportunity and their performance with a mean response of 2.59. The teachers also pointed out with a mean response of 2.44 and 2.31, respectively that learners with EBD problem behaviours upset and distract the peers and put them in danger. These results align with the studies of Elisavet, (2016) in the USA who stated that other learners do not get the pleasant working atmosphere they are entitled to when learners with EBD are included in the mainstream school. The researcher said so because learners with EBD require too much of teachers' time and make the teachers discipline clamorously and frequently.

**Teachers perceptions on inclusion the effect of behaviour problems on learners with EBD themselves**

The teachers noted the behaviour of EBD learners affected learners themselves, as shown in table 4.16.

**Table 4.16 views of teachers on the effect of behaviour problems on learners with EBD themselves**

Impact on students	SD	D	A	SA	Mean response
Impedes access to their own learning	-	24 (30.0%)	50 (62.5%)	6 (7.5%)	2.78
Leads to his/ her rejection from peers	7 (8.8%)	26 (32.5%)	34 (42.5%)	13 (16.3%)	2.66
Gives a show to the audience, which strengthens the behaviour	6 (7.5%)	19 (23.8%)	49 (61.3%)	6 (7.5%)	2.69

N=80 NB: SD-strongly disagree, D-disagree, A-agree, SA-strongly agree  
Mean values in a scale of 1 – 4 (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree)

Table 4.16 the teachers remarked that the problems of these learners with EBD mainly Impedes access to their learning (mean response 2.78), gives a show to the audience, which reinforces the behaviour (mean response 2.69) and leads to his/ her rejection from peers (mean response 2.66). This was illustrated by 62.5% of the teachers who agreed, and 7.5% strongly agreed that behaviour problems of EBD learners on students impede access to learning. The responses support the findings in Greece that the behaviours of learners with EBD were a setback to themselves for, in the long run, they tended to develop loneliness, not involved in the class activities because their peers were so devastated with their problem behaviours (Elisavet, 2016)

**Views on the emotional and behaviour problems noted by the teachers in class**

The regular teachers stated some of the emotional and behaviour issues they had experienced in their classrooms.

**Table 4.17 Emotional and Behavioural Problems in the Classroom**

Emotional and behavioural problems	Frequency (n = 80)	Per cent (%)
Aggression and antisocial behaviour	64	80.0
Assaulting teachers and peers	56	70.0
Exhibits withdraw, anxiety, depression or isolation	64	80.0
Attention seeking behaviour	66	82.5
A pattern of disinterest in learning	59	73.8
Bullying	61	76.3
Disobedience and lack of discipline	62	77.5
Display of uncontrolled behaviour such as screaming	61	76.3
Found in possession of pornographic materials	20	25
Shows lack of affection or disorganised emotions towards others	62	77.5
Insult or defame a staff member	55	68.8
Too easily influenced by peers or frustrated	50	62.5
Uses addictive substances	46	57.5
Juvenile delinquency.	45	56.3

Lack of motivation and interest being negative	42	52.5
Maliciously damages another person's property	50	62.5
Sexual harassment	50	62.5
Smoking on school grounds	51	63.8
Stealing	43	53.8
Storming out of the classroom without permission	52	65.0
Telling lies	50	62.5
Temper tantrums	58	72.5
Throwing stones	64	80.0
Truancy	56	70.0
Engages in any act of public indecency	47	58.8

N=80

Table 4.17 shows that all the teachers acknowledge the presence of diverse exhibitions of EBD problems in learners in varied dimension. Mainly they noted high percentages of; Attention seeking behaviour, aggression and antisocial behaviour, acts of withdrawing, anxiety, depression or isolation and the expression of throwing stones.

Other main EBDs were; Showing lack of affection or disorganised emotions towards others, disobedience and lack of discipline, and bullying. Indicating that their schools were not exempted from learners with EBD and that their willingness to include them in school was based on knowledge and experience that these learners existed in schools and that they needed the teachers to help. The results findings contradict with Cassidy (2011), in the USA, who found that the type and severity of students' disability influenced teachers' attitudes. Most teachers liked learners with autism to be included in their class than learners with EBD.

### **Responses from Teachers Focus Group Discussions**

The FDG was centred on the issue of teachers' perspective regarding the inclusion of learners with EBD in regular schools. The group involved a sample of eight teachers, where each one of them was required to give their views. The focus group discussion showed that the majority of teachers accepted the inclusion of learners' with EBD while giving out the reasons for their responses.

However, some teachers opted for special schools as a better placement for learners with EBD; one teacher said that *"You know madam, while in college, we were only trained to teach regular learners and not those with EBD. So I think that the government of Malawi should establish special schools for them since regular teachers are not well-equipped to cater for their learning needs in a school like ours"* (**Teacher 1**). Similarly, another teacher complained of overcrowding in the classrooms; therefore, suggested that learners with EBD have to be in special schools, not regular schools. The views were as follows *"I am a teacher of a class with more than 60 learners, which is more than the recommended teacher-learner ratio of 1 teacher to 30 learners. Therefore, I feel that learners with EBD should only be enrolled in special schools since they require additional attention at a time when teachers are constrained due to a large number of learners"* (**Teacher 2**).

However, another teacher had a different view and commended regular schools as a technique of behavioural management when learners with EBD observe and emulate other learners good behaviours compared to special schools where all learners do not have role models. The teacher said that *"separating learners with EBD from the rest of the learners is not a good idea since it makes them feel isolated and could worsen their situation. After school, they will have to lead their lives with others without this disorder, and thus their enrolment in regular schools is a way of training them on how to live with others who do not have such disorders. Therefore, Madam, I strongly support the enrolment of EBD learners in regular schools and with my little experience and in-service training acquired I have learnt how to handle them with rest of the learners"* (**Teacher 3**).

Some teachers were of the view that the ministry of education should increase in-service training to regular teachers and recruit many trained teachers to lessen the problems teachers' encounter when teaching learners with SEN while learning how to handle learners with diverse needs. The teacher observed that *"having a child with EBD as a teacher or a parent is not by choice; hence, parents should be allowed to enrol their children with such conditions in regular schools. Furthermore, most of the special schools are few, very far and somehow expensive; hence, those from low-income households cannot afford. What the ministry of education should do is increase in-service training and recruit more teachers who are trained to teach all categories of learners"* (**Teacher 4**).

Likewise, another teacher observed that although teachers are willing to include learners with EBD, some are less equipped to teach these learners. The teacher said that *"even though being with the opinion that learners with EBD should be allowed in regular schools, less experienced teachers find challenges in teaching such learners a factor that leads to the enrolment of a bulk of them in classes taught by inexperienced teachers"* (**Teacher 5**). The teacher, on the other hand, seemed to express that those teachers with more years of teaching experience have fewer challenges regarding inclusion than teachers with fewer years of experience. In

agreement to this view, another teacher said “*Madam, with my teaching experience of over 21 years, I feel I am emotionally and cognitively empowered to teach learners with EBD. Being a parent in this school, I am comfortable to see my son learning together with others learners with EBD since I have knowledge of the condition and taught him on how to respond to different behaviours exhibited by them (Teacher 6).*”

One of the question for discussion was concerned with the teachers view on the inclusion and severity of the disorders. According to the teacher, “*some of the things the school looks out for when enrolling learners with EBD is the severity of the disorder in that in severe cases, teachers and the principle are opposed to their enrolment due to safety concerns for other children. Only those exhibiting mild symptom are enrolled. Gender of the learner is not considered as a requirement for admission (Teacher 7).*” The view indicated that the severity of the disorder might affect inclusion in regular school and the view was consented to by all the teachers present in the group discussion.

Another teacher outlined the critical challenges schools are facing due to the idea of inclusion, but still, the teacher supported the notion of including learners with EBD in regular schools. According to the teacher “*the key challenges facing the inclusion of learners with EBD in regular schools are many. They include; large teacher-student ratios, particularly in this zone and inadequate behaviour management skills. Other challenges are lack of adequate teachers trained to teach learners with and without EBD, inadequate infrastructure and lack of awareness regarding some of the disorders. As well as effective programs to help them learn adequately, but including them is proper, they are our children (Teacher 8).*” This view revealed that teachers had positive attitude regarding inclusion but they acknowledged the challenges they face in the course of inclusion.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The findings revealed that teachers felt affected by the behaviour problems of learners with EBD. The teachers also noted that the behaviour problems of learners with EBD also affect peers, classroom environment and learners with EBD themselves. Although teachers acknowledged the behavioural problems of learners with EBD in their classes, that did not change their mind set of including them in the regular school. The qualitative phase provided in-depth information regarding the reasons for the positive attitude of teachers and the challenges they faced. The results suggest that if teachers are given sufficient training in special needs education, then it can be anticipated that 100% of positive perceptions can be attained. Teachers stated in-service training as the substantial approach of improving the teachers’ knowledge of learners with EBD. However, the regular teachers highlighted some challenges that affected their ability when teaching learners with EBD such as; large teacher-student ratios, inadequate behaviour management skills, inadequately trained teachers with the skill set and poor infrastructure in the school to support learning. In summary, the findings suggested that although regular primary teachers had positive perceptions of including learners with EBD, they still had concerns that needed the government attention.

All in all teachers had a positive attitude on the enrolment based on their scoring, which was higher than 50% of the total possible. The overall hypothesised relationship between gender, teacher training program, teaching experience, age and the regular teachers' perceptions was significant. Testing each independent variable, the results revealed that the type of teacher training programme had a statistically significant effect on regular primary teacher perceptions. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected for the teachers training program. However, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis for gender, teaching experience and age because the relationship was not significant. Teachers acknowledged that behavioural problems of learners with EBD affect not only them but also other learners, classroom environment and learners with EBD themselves. All the same, on overall teachers, had positive perceptions. Despite teachers’ support to include learners with EBD in regular school, they raised issues which they thought would help improve the situation, such as increasing in-service-training of teachers to enhance the capability to handle learners with EBD — recruiting more teachers to reduce the teacher-learner ratio and provide learners with EBD with special attention.

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