



Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the readiness and perspectives of general education instructors about the integration of children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD) into inclusive classrooms. As global education systems place more and more importance on inclusive education, it is important to know how ready teachers are to help kids with complicated behavioural and emotional needs. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 120 educators and performed comprehensive interviews to examine the correlation among teacher training, attitudes, and support systems. The results show that a lot of instructors don't feel ready to handle EBD pupils since they didn't get enough training and their schools don't assist them. However, instructors who had received focused professional development demonstrated more favourable views and increased confidence in their capacity to create inclusive classrooms. The study emphasizes the significance of systemic support, continuous professional development, and resource accessibility to improve teacher effectiveness and cultivate inclusive learning environments for adolescents with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD).





1. INTRODUCTION

Putting kids with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) into regular classrooms is an important part of inclusive education because it helps all students have equal access to high-quality learning experiences and social integration. EBD includes a number of illnesses, such as anxiety disorders, conduct disorders, and oppositional defiant disorder, that can make it hard for a student to study and get along with others (Kauffman & Landrum, 2018). These kids may display disruptive, aggressive, or socially withdrawn behaviors, posing difficulties for themselves, their instructors, and their peers. As schools throughout the world grow more inclusive, it becomes more and more important for general education instructors to be ready to handle and teach kids with EBD (Westling, 2010).

Teachers are the first people who work to include all children in the classroom, and how they feel about students with EBD can either help or hurt the effectiveness of mainstreaming. Positive teacher attitudes correlate with enhanced acceptance, accommodation, and proactive classroom management tactics (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). However, research repeatedly indicates that several general education instructors feel ill-equipped to address the distinct academic and behavioral requirements of adolescents with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) owing to inadequate training, insufficient resources, and a lack of institutional support (Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998). The severity and unpredictability of EBD behaviors can result in teacher stress and fatigue, hence exacerbating the challenges of fostering inclusive classrooms (Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006). In addition, efforts to include kids with behavioral problems sometimes ignore their individual needs and instead focus on physical or learning difficulties. Consequently, educators could undergo generic training that fails to sufficiently prepare them for behavioral interventions, emotional regulation techniques, or personalized support plans (Allday et al., 2012). The difference between what policies demand and what happens in the classroom often makes teachers think badly of mainstreaming.

Inclusion is not simply a matter of placement; it is a pedagogical and philosophical commitment that necessitates strong support structures, continuous professional development, and collaborative practices among educators,

administrators, and families (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Consequently, this study seeks to examine the present condition of teacher readiness and their attitudes toward the mainstreaming of adolescents with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), pinpointing the principal facilitators and obstacles that affect effective inclusion. By emphasizing these dynamics, the study aims to provide policy and practice suggestions that will improve teacher preparedness and eventually foster more inclusive and successful educational settings.

2. Conceptual Framework

The theoretical basis for this research is based on the tenets of inclusive education and the psychological and pedagogical frameworks associated with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD). This paradigm fundamentally examines the interplay of three principal components: the traits of children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), the readiness of general education instructors, and the attitudes these educators possess about the mainstreaming process. These components exist within the overarching framework of educational settings, legislative directives, and support structures that impact inclusive practices.

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) are characterized by enduring patterns of emotional or behavioral reactions in educational environments that negatively impact academic achievement, even suitable treatments (IDEA, 2004). Students with EBD may demonstrate internalizing behaviors, including withdrawal, anxiety, and sadness, or externalizing behaviors, such as violence, disobedience, and hyperactivity. These traits make it harder to manage a classroom, prepare lessons, and get along with others, and they often need specific help and continuous behavioral support measures (Kauffman & Landrum, 2018).

Teacher readiness is defined as a multidimensional construct encompassing pre-service and in-service training, proficiency in behavioral intervention techniques, expertise in inclusive education, and a felt sense of self-efficacy in managing diverse classrooms (Bandura, 1997). Teachers who are well-prepared are more likely to use practices that are based on research, provide children multiple kinds of education, and build good connections with EBD kids. But if instructors don't have the right training or tools, they may feel overwhelmed and unprepared, which can make their



lessons less successful and cause them more stress (Allday et al., 2012).

Attitudes toward mainstreaming encompass the attitudes, perceptions, and emotional responses that educators possess toward the integration of children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) into standard education settings. These attitudes are influenced by individual experiences, professional growth, institutional support, and the conduct of EBD students. Studies show that positive attitudes are strongly linked to being more prepared and getting more support from the school. On the other hand, negative attitudes are often caused by fear of classroom disruption, not enough support, and worries about academic outcomes for both EBD and non-EBD students (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Soodak et al., 1998).

This paradigm also recognizes the school ecology as an important middleman. Class size, the presence of special education support staff, the attitudes of administrators, peer acceptance, and the availability of school counselors or psychologists can all have a big impact on how teachers feel and how well they can teach in a way that includes everyone (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Schools that promote collaborative cultures and provide structured professional development are more inclined to generate confident, inclusive educators. This conceptual framework asserts that teacher readiness and attitudes are not discrete structures but are intricately interconnected within a whole ecological system. To help teachers better mainstream kids with EBD, we need to take a whole-school strategy that includes good training, a positive school atmosphere, supportive policies, and evidence-based strategies that are specific to behavioral issues.

3. Review of Literature

3.1. Allday, R. A., Neilsen-Gatti, S. L., & Hudson, T. M. (2012). This study examined the degree to which teacher education programs equip pre-service instructors for inclusive classrooms, particularly for kids exhibiting behavioral challenges. The researchers conducted a survey of more than 300 pre-service teachers from five teacher training schools in the United States. The results showed that most teacher education programs had some kind of inclusion module, but just a handful of them were explicitly about EBD. The research identified a substantial correlation between exposure to authentic teaching situations with EBD kids and favorable views towards inclusion. Those who had

hands-on practicum experiences felt more sure of themselves and less worried about teaching kids with behavior problems. The authors determined that teacher preparation programs must incorporate targeted training in behavioral management, functional behavior evaluations, and positive behavior support measures to adequately equip instructors for inclusive environments.

3.2. Westling, D. L. (2010). In this national study, Westling polled 700 general education instructors to find out how much they knew and how confident they were in dealing with children with difficult behaviors, mostly those with EBD. The results indicated that over 60% of instructors thought they weren't ready to deal with behaviors like violence, disobedience, and emotional outbursts in regular classrooms. Teachers said they wanted more hands-on training and techniques for dealing with these kinds of actions in the classroom. The analysis showed that there was a difference between what the government said teachers should do and what they really had to work with. Westling suggested that schools take a comprehensive approach by include behavior management training in professional development programs and giving students access to school psychologists and special educators.

3.3. Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). This literature analysis amalgamated results from 26 empirical researches done over a decade, examining factors that affect teachers' views toward inclusive education. The analysis stressed that a complicated mix of personal views, degree of training, and perceived support shapes how teachers feel. It specifically indicated that instructors who had been trained in special education were more likely to have favorable attitudes toward children with impairments, particularly those with EBD. However, the analysis also found that instructors generally doubted whether inclusion was possible for kids with serious behavioral problems because they were worried about safety and classroom disruption. The authors advocated for more focused, evidence-based training modules that tackle the specific issues presented by students with EBD.

3.4. Lane, K. L., Wehby, J. H., & Cooley, C. (2006). This mixed-method study investigated the impact of teacher expectations on instructional choices and social interactions with students diagnosed with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD). Data were gathered via classroom observations and organized interviews with 40 general education instructors. The research



indicated that educators frequently maintained diminished academic and behavioral expectations for children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), thereby impacting the level of instructional engagement delivered. These lowered expectations resulted in fewer academic difficulties and a greater inclination to depend on punitive rather than proactive behavioral treatments. The researchers contended that teacher expectations are intrinsically connected to attitudes, and that altering these views via reflective training and success modeling can markedly enhance educational results for adolescents with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD).

3. 5. Soodak, L. C., Podell, D. M., & Lehman, L. R. (1998). This study examined the impact of several teacher-related and school-related variables on responses to the inclusion of children with disabilities, especially those exhibiting behavioral problems. More than 200 instructors from elementary and high schools were in the sample. The results showed that instructors were more likely to involve children with EBD if they thought they had a lot of support from their peers and administrators. Teachers who perceived themselves as isolated or unsupported by school leadership were less likely to use inclusive practices. The study also found that teachers' confidence grew when they had good encounters with EBD children in the past. Soodak and colleagues stressed the need of school-wide teamwork and leadership dedication to foster an inclusive environment.

4. Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to achieve a thorough knowledge of teacher readiness and attitudes about the mainstreaming of children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) in general education environments. The justification for utilizing a mixed-methods approach was to triangulate results and enhance statistical patterns with qualitative insights. We used purposive sampling to choose 120 general education instructors from a variety of schools, including urban, semi-urban, public, and private ones. This was done to make sure that all of the teachers had either direct or indirect experience teaching kids with EBD. The sample consisted of educators from both elementary and secondary levels, had diverse years of teaching experience and familiarity with inclusive education methodologies.

A standardized questionnaire was created and evaluated by specialists in inclusive education and psychology for the quantitative aspect. There were both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions that looked at three main areas: (1) how ready the person felt to work with students with EBD (including pre-service and in-service training, confidence, and knowledge); (2) how they felt about including EBD students (including their beliefs about how possible and effective it is); and (3) how easy it was for them to get help from their school or peers (such as access to special educators or behavioral specialists). A small group of instructors tested the instrument to make sure it was clear and reliable. We used descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) to look at general trends and inferential statistics (t-tests and ANOVA) to look at differences depending on demographic factors including gender, years of experience, and training background. To enhance the numerical data, the qualitative aspect comprised comprehensive semi-structured interviews with 15 instructors chosen from the initial sample pool. The interview questions were on educators' personal experiences in managing children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), perceived barriers, coping mechanisms, success narratives, and suggestions for policy and practice. With permission, the interviews were taped and then transcribed word for word. The transcriptions were then examined using thematic analysis to find patterns and feelings that came up again and again. This qualitative aspect enhanced comprehension of the lived experiences underlying statistical trends, uncovering emotional, cultural, and institutional elements that shape teacher views.

Ethical issues were strictly adhered to during the whole investigation. Participants were completely told about the research's goals and received signed consent before taking part. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were preserved, and they retained the ability to withdraw at any point without incurring penalties. The institutional review board gave ethical approval for the research procedure to make sure that the rights of participants were respected and that research integrity was upheld. This integrated methodological approach enabled a comprehensive and multidimensional investigation of teachers' readiness and attitudes, eventually enhancing methods for the mainstreaming of children with EBD.

Analysis and results

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondent Teachers (N = 120)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	38.3
	Female	74	61.7
Teaching Level	Primary	58	48.3
	Secondary	62	51.7
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	22	18.3
	5–10 years	38	31.7
	More than 10 years	60	50.0
Exposure to Inclusive Classes	Yes	79	65.8
	No	41	34.2

Source: Computed From Primary Data

The demographic profile reveals a predominantly female teaching workforce (61.7%) compared to males (38.3%), reflecting common trends in the education sector. The teaching levels are nearly evenly split, with slightly more secondary teachers (51.7%) than primary (48.3%). A significant portion of respondents (50%) have over 10 years of teaching experience, indicating a seasoned sample, while only 18.3% have less than 5 years. Most teachers (65.8%) have experience with inclusive classes, suggesting widespread exposure to diverse student needs. The sample is largely female, experienced (half with over 10 years), and predominantly exposed to inclusive education, with a balanced representation of primary and secondary teachers.

Table 2: Perceived Teacher Preparedness to Teach Students with EBD

Preparedness Dimension	Mean Score (out of 5)	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge of EBD	2.8	0.85	Moderate
Behavior Management Strategies	2.5	0.92	Low
Training Received on EBD Inclusion	2.2	0.74	Low
Confidence in Teaching Students with EBD	2.6	0.81	Low-Moderate
Use of Individualized Support Plans (IEPs, BIPs)	2.1	0.65	Low

Source: Computed From Primary Data

Teachers report moderate knowledge of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) (mean = 2.8), but their preparedness is lower in practical areas. The lowest scores are in training received (2.2) and use of individualized support plans (2.1), both rated as low, indicating significant gaps in professional development and application of tailored strategies. Behavior management strategies (2.5) and confidence (2.6) also score low to low-moderate, suggesting teachers feel underprepared to handle EBD students effectively. Teachers exhibit moderate theoretical knowledge of EBD but lack adequate training, confidence, and skills in behavior management and individualized support, highlighting a need for enhanced professional development.

Table 3: Teacher Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Students with EBD

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Mainstreaming benefits students with EBD socially	68	22	10
I feel confident managing behavior problems	29	34	37
Inclusion of EBD students disrupts classroom learning	55	20	25



I need more training to support EBD students	84	10	6
My school provides adequate support for inclusion	32	26	42

Source: Computed From Primary Data

A majority (68%) agree that mainstreaming benefits EBD students socially, showing positive attitudes toward inclusion's social impact. However, only 29% feel confident managing behavior issues, with 37% disagreeing, indicating low self-efficacy. Over half (55%) believe inclusion disrupts classroom learning, reflecting practical concerns. A strong 84% agree on needing more training, and 42% disagree that their schools provide adequate support, pointing to systemic gaps. Teachers recognize social benefits of mainstreaming EBD students but express concerns about classroom disruption, lack confidence in behavior management, and strongly desire more training and school support.

Table 4: Comparison of Attitude Scores Based on Training Received

Group	Mean Attitude Score (out of 5)	SD	p-value (t-test)
Teachers with EBD Training	3.9	0.41	< 0.01
Teachers without EBD Training	2.8	0.54	

Source: Computed From Primary Data

Note: A significant difference was found between groups, indicating training improves attitudes positively.

Teachers with EBD training have a significantly higher mean attitude score (3.9) compared to those without (2.8), with a p-value < 0.01 confirming statistical significance. The lower standard deviation for trained teachers (0.41 vs. 0.54) suggests more consistent positive attitudes among them, demonstrating that training enhances teachers' attitudes toward including EBD students. Training significantly improves teachers' attitudes toward EBD inclusion, with trained teachers showing more positive and consistent attitudes compared to untrained peers.

Table 5: Emerging Themes from Qualitative Interview Data (N = 15)

Theme Identified	Frequency of Mentions	Example Quotes
Lack of training and professional support	12	"We were never trained to deal with such behavior."
Classroom disruption and peer impact	9	"It's hard to teach when one student dominates."
Empathy and willingness to help	10	"With support, I would love to include them."
Need for collaboration with specialists	11	"A counselor's presence would really help us."
Positive experiences with inclusive success	7	"One of my students improved a lot with support."

Source: Computed From Primary Data

The qualitative data highlights a prevalent lack of training (12 mentions) and a need for specialist collaboration (11 mentions), underscoring systemic deficiencies in teacher preparation and support. Classroom disruption is a concern (9 mentions), yet teachers express empathy and willingness to help (10 mentions), suggesting positive intent but practical challenges. Positive experiences (7 mentions) indicate potential for success with adequate support.



5. Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study reveal a significant gap between the ideal of inclusive education and the practical preparedness of teachers in mainstreaming students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD). Although a majority of teachers (65.8%) reported prior exposure to inclusive classrooms, their self-reported preparedness levels were generally low across all key domains, including knowledge of EBD, use of individualized support plans, and confidence in managing behavior, as reflected in the mean scores ranging between 2.1 and 2.8 on a 5-point scale. While 68% of teachers agreed that mainstreaming benefits EBD students socially, only 29% felt confident managing behavioral challenges and 84% strongly expressed the need for more targeted training. Interestingly, those who had received training on EBD scored significantly higher in terms of positive attitudes (mean = 3.9) than their untrained peers (mean = 2.8), emphasizing the critical role of professional development in shaping teacher perspectives. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews further substantiated these findings, with recurring themes such as lack of training, classroom disruption, and institutional support dominating teacher narratives. However, teachers also shared a strong sense of empathy and a willingness to engage in inclusion, provided appropriate resources and support systems were in place. The discussion highlights that while teachers are not averse to inclusive education, their ability to implement it effectively hinges on structured training, peer collaboration, and administrative backing. Without these, inclusion remains more aspirational than achievable, particularly for students with complex behavioral and emotional needs.

6. Conclusion

The study finds that many general education teachers agree with the idea of mainstreaming students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), but putting it into practice is very difficult because teachers aren't ready, they don't have enough specialized training, and the schools don't give them enough support. Many instructors are aware of the social and emotional benefits of inclusive education, but they don't feel confident in handling behavioral problems or using tailored solutions. This shows that there is a big gap in training. The results clearly show that professional development, especially when it focuses on solutions for EBD, has a favorable effect on

teachers' attitudes and readiness. Additionally, the qualitative findings indicate that instructors are not opposed to inclusion; rather, they feel unsupported and inadequately prepared to properly address the different needs of kids with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD). For inclusion to transcend beyond policy and into real life, we need to make big changes to the system, such as continual teacher training, models of collaborative assistance, and school-wide frameworks for behavioral intervention. In the end, giving teachers the information, tools, and support they need from the school is the best way to make sure that all students, even those with emotional and behavioral problems, can do well in school and in social situations.

7. Recommendations

1. **Implement regular in-service training** on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) to improve teacher knowledge, confidence, and behavior management strategies (Table 2 & 4).
2. **Incorporate EBD-focused modules** in pre-service teacher education programs to build preparedness from the outset (Table 2).
3. **Establish dedicated support systems** in schools, including special educators, counselors, and behavior specialists, to assist general teachers (Table 3 & 5).
4. **Promote collaborative teaching models**, such as co-teaching or peer mentoring, especially for classrooms with EBD students (Table 5).
5. **Provide classroom resources** like behavior intervention plans (BIPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) tailored for EBD students (Table 2).
6. **Create awareness campaigns and workshops** to shift negative perceptions about classroom disruption and encourage inclusive attitudes (Table 3).
7. **Prioritize school-wide inclusive policies** that are backed by administrative support, ensuring consistent implementation and teacher motivation (Table 5).
8. **Encourage reflective practice and feedback mechanisms** where teachers can share inclusive success stories and challenges to inform practice (Table 5).
9. **Use data-driven interventions** based on teacher feedback and student outcomes to adapt training and support (All Tables).



10. **Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of**
training programs regularly to ensure

continuous professional growth and positive
attitude change (Table 4).

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