

**MANAGING PECULIAR PSYCHOSOCIAL BEHAVIORS OF LEARNERS
WITH AUTISM: PARENTS AND TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN
SELECTED SPECIAL UNITS OF LUSAKA.**

BY

VICTOR MACHA

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the award of a Degree of Master of Education in Special
Education**

The University of Zambia

LUSAKA

2019

DECLARATION

I, Macha Victor, do declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has neither in part nor in whole been submitted for an award of any degree at the University of Zambia or any other University.

Signed:

Date:

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

All rights reserved. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means- electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise-without prior written permission of the author or the University of Zambia.

APPROVAL

This dissertation of Victor Macha is approved as a partial fulfillment of the Requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Education (Special Education) of the University of Zambia.

Examiners' Signatures:

Signed: Date.....

Signed: Date.....

Signed: Date.....

ABSTRACT

This was a study of parents and teachers' experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism in two selected special units of Lusaka. The objectives of the study were to: determine the nature of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism; establish the parents' experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism; and to find out about teachers' experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism. A qualitative research design based on a holistic multiple case study was used to collect data. The sample size comprised eighteen (18) participants consisting of six (6) Special Education Teachers; six (6) parents and six (6) learners with autism. All participants were selected through purposive sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection were interview guide for parents and teachers and an observation check-list for learners with autism. Data was analyzed according to themes that were guided by the objectives of the study. The study revealed that parents had challenging experiences of anxiety and stress derived from reduced free time; sleepless nights, controlled movements and socialization; self-blame; marital challenges and economic pressure in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of autism. On the other hand, the study found out that parents employ certain management strategies on autism behaviors. These include being vigilant with security and safety of a child; acceptance; provision of most favorite toys, food stuffs and television programs; tolerance; patience; kindness, spiritual and friends support and showing unconditional love in fulfilling the child's needs. The study further revealed that teachers like parents had numerous experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism. The experiences were both positive and negative. Positive in the sense that some teachers saw it as an exciting and an opportunity to learn to appreciate a variety of presented unique behaviors by learners with autism. To some teachers it was a phase of experiencing stressful moments due to ever busy school schedules; risk factors involved of losing a child and personal safety; self-injuries by the child and classmates; litigations; and stagnant learning process. The study also found out that among the measures teachers employed to manage peculiar psychosocial behaviors included always being security conscious; furthering own knowledge and skills training about autism; modified instructional strategies; using both negative and positive reinforcements; collaboration with parents, teamwork, tolerance; patience; acceptance, peer to peer support, respect for a child's choice and interest and practicing unconditional positive regard. Recommendation for the current study is that there is need for a supportive learning environment to curb inattentiveness and disruptive behaviors common among learners with ASD due to boredom created by traditional approaches to learning. Parents need to go through well-arranged psychosocial counselling, training and economic support to minimize on the negative impact of raising a child with ASD. There is need for a school policy which allows facilitators within class to help teachers so that the stressful task of managing the psychosocial peculiar behaviors of learners with autism can be lightened on teachers. Teachers equally need to go through quality assurance training and mentorship refresher courses to equip them with more viable knowledge and skills of managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of autism.

Key Words: *Parents' experiences; Teachers' experiences; Management Strategies; Peculiar; Psychosocial behaviors; Autism Spectrum Disorders; Special Unit*

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, my lovely wife Bridget Zyambu, who was deprived of my special attention during this study, and my children: Moonga, Christine, and Juliet for their encouragement and support given to me throughout the study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am exceedingly happy to have this opportunity to acknowledge how much the completion of this dissertation is owed to others who persistently rendered their support to me. It is important from the onset to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Kenneth Kapalu Muzata for his openness, guidance and prompt feedback in the process of the preparation of this dissertation. I wish also to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the parents, teachers and pupils who took part in the study. Their willingness to allow me to ask about their family and personal life issues was humbling and encouraging. Many thanks to many others too numerous to mention, who assisted and encouraged me throughout the study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
APPROVAL	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
ABBREVIATIONS	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Overview	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Purpose of the study	3
1.4 Objectives of the Study	4
1.4.1 General Objectives of the Study	4
1.4.2 Specific objectives.....	4
1.5 Research Questions	4
1.6 Significance of the Study	4
1.7 Theoretical Frame Work	5
1.8 Delimitation of the Study	7
1.9 Limitations of the study	7
1.10 Operational Definitions of Terms	7
1.11 Summary of the chapter	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.0 Overview	9
2.1 Autism and the Nature of Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors	9
2.2 Parents experiences with management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in Autism	12
2.3 Teacher experiences with peculiar behaviors of learners with Autism.....	16
2.4 Summary of the chapter	22

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	23
3.0 Overview	23
3.1 Philosophical Frame Work.....	23
3.2 Research Design.....	23
3.3 Target Population	24
3.4 Sample size.....	24
3.4.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants	24
3.5 Sampling Procedure	26
3.6. Instruments for Data Collection	26
3.7 Procedure for Data Collection.....	27
3.8 Data Analysis	27
3.9 Ethical Consideration	28
3.10 Credibility and Trustworthiness	29
3.11 Summary of the chapter	30
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	32
4.0 Overview	32
4.1 Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors Observed in Learners with Autism.	32
4.2 Parents experiences with peculiar psychosocial behaviors in children with autism in the family.	36
4.2.1 Anxiety and disbelief.....	36
4.2.2 Physical and Mental Stress.....	38
4.2.3 Social Impact of Raising a Child with Autism.....	39
4.2.8 Parental Future Perspectives	40
4.2.6 Stigma and Self-Blame.....	42
4.2.3 Marital Challenges.....	43
4.2.8 Costs	44
4.2.9 Management strategies by parents.....	46
4.3 Teachers experiences of managing peculiar behaviors in learners with autism.	48
4.3.1 Teachers’ negative experiences in managing behaviors in learners with autism	48
4.3.2 Teachers’ positive experiences and expressions of handling learners with autism.	50
4.3.3 Management Strategies used by teachers	52

4.4 Summary	59
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	61
5.0 Overview	61
5.1 Nature of Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors in Autism.	61
5.2. Parents experiences with management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in autism	64
5.2.1 Anxiety and Disbelief.....	64
5.2.1 Physical and mental well-being of parents.....	65
5.2.2 The social impact of raising a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).....	65
5.2.5 Parental future perspectives.....	68
5.2.6 Stigma and Self-Blame.....	70
5.2.7 Marital challenges	71
5.2.9 The Cost of raising a child with autism.....	73
5.2.10 Parents Management Strategies of Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors of a Child with Autism.	74
5.3 Teacher experiences with management of autism peculiar psychosocial behaviors.	76
5.3.1 Teacher Training in Autism	76
5.3.2 Challenges faced by teachers handling learners with autism.....	77
5.3.3 Management strategies employed by teachers on peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism.....	80
5.4 Summary	86
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	88
6.0 Overview	88
6.1 Conclusions	88
6.2 Recommendations	89
6.3 Suggestion for Future Research	91
REFERENCES	92
APPENDICES	101
INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION	101
Appendix (I): Interview guide questions for parents/guardians	101

Appendix (ii): Interview Guide Questions for Teachers	103
Appendix (iii): Autism Observation Checklist.....	105
Appendix (iv): Ethical Clearance	108
Appendix (v): Permission Letter	110

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participants Gender	24
Table 2: Age of Learners.....	25
Table 3: Teachers' Number of Years in Service	25
Table 4: Teachers' Qualifications	25

ABBREVIATIONS

ZAMISE	Zambia Institute of Special Education
UNZA	University of Zambia
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
MoE	Ministry of Education
SEN	Special Education Needs
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
W H O	World Health Organization
ISCDRP	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter focuses on the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Furthermore, it covers the theoretical framework, limitations of the study and operational definition of key terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Hannah (2001) defined Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as a complex developmental disability that essentially affects the way a person communicates and relates with other people. The term ‘autistic spectrum’ is often used because the condition varies from person to another. Hannah further elaborates that the word autism emanates from the Greek word “auto” which means self” and was first used by an Austrian psychiatrist, Leo Kanner in 1943.

Jordan (1997) describes Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as a term used to describe the variables of autism of which while there is a wide range of differences among children with an ASD, they share common impairments in the ability to interact socially and appropriately; to understand and use language for effective communicate; think imaginatively, enjoy and participate in a range of activities often shown in repetitive and restricted behavior patterns. Altwood (1998) indicated that children with an ASD also differ in their intellectual abilities. Many have severe learning difficulties and are educated in special schools, while others have average or above abilities and are taught in mainstream schools.

WHO (2013) states that Autism spectrum disorders encompass a range of developmental disorders characterized by impairment in functions related to central nervous system maturation. This umbrella term covers conditions such as autism, childhood disintegrative disorder and Asperger syndrome. The disorders are characterized by a varied mixture of impaired ability for mutual socio-communicative interaction and a restricted, stereotyped repetitive range of interests and activities. Further, WHO (2013) elaborates that these conditions currently belong to the category in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related

Health Problems (ISCDRHP) of pervasive developmental disorders, within the broader category of mental and behavioral disorders.

Janzen (1996) indicated that individuals with autism spectrum disorders may have decreased general intellectual ability and adolescent-onset epilepsy. The level of intellectual functioning is extremely variable, extending from profound impairment to superior non-verbal cognitive skills. Specific cognitive aptitudes, most frequently associated with music or numbers, are common in autism. Autism spectrum disorders begin in childhood but tend to persist into adolescence and adulthood. In most cases development is abnormal from infancy and, with only a few exceptions, the conditions become manifest during the first five years of life.

Reid and O'Connor (2003) explains that the identification of an autism spectrum disorder is difficult before the age of about 12 months but diagnosis is typically conceivable by the age of two years. Characteristic features of the onset include delayed language development and social skills and repetitive stereotyped patterns of behavior. The study further elaborates that it is frequent for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder to show a range of other non-specific problems such as fears or phobias, sleeping and eating disturbances, temper tantrums, aggression and self-injury.

The findings by WHO (2013) were that neurodevelopmental impairments in communication, social interaction and cognition seriously hinder daily functioning of people living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and severely impede their developmental, educational and social attainments.

Thus Myers and Johnson (2007) indicated that the treatment or intervention rendered to children with Autism is aimed at minimizing the core characteristics of the disorder to help the child live an independent life. Myers and Johnson further argued that educational interventions, including behavior strategies and rehabilitative therapies are cornerstones of management. Busiku (2018) also alluded to the fact that management of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is important because it not only helps the child's functioning but also promotes development of the child to learn, socialize and control behaviors and so help the family of the autistic child with strategies to cope with the disorder.

Autism spectrum disorders therefore impose a huge emotional and economic burden especially on parents and teachers to the children with autism. Caring for children with these disorders can be demanding, especially in contexts where access to services and support are inadequate. The burdensome and demanding nature autism poses on the parents and teachers prompted the researcher to further find out on what the experiences of parents and teachers were in managing the peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism in the two selected special units in Lusaka. The Ministry of Education has made some frantic efforts to broaden access to education for learners with disabilities through various educational policy documents and acts (M.O.E, 1977; 1992; 1996; 2011 & 2012) but no specific attention was given to the welfare of learners with autism. This study was therefore conducted to establish the experiences of teachers and parents in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The overarching aim of education is to promote the full and well-rounded development of the physical, intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of every child for own personal fulfillment and the good of society (M.O.E 1996:29). The role of parents and teachers as key stakeholders in the learning and development of a child living with autism cannot be overemphasized. Policy documents since independence highlight the traditional disabilities. Limited studies on autism in Zambia show findings on experiences of parenting and educating children with autism among Lusaka Parents (Wonani & Muzata, 2019, Nyoni, 2012). Limited awareness and Knowledge of Autism among University Students (Chansa-Kabali and Nyoni 2019). Individualized and grouped management of autism using sensory objects (Busiku, 2018). However, with these limited studies on the management of psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism condition, service provision may be compromised. With this knowledge gap, the researcher was left to wonder how parents and teachers experience the management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish the experiences of parents and teachers in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of the study was to establish the experiences of parents and teachers in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism in two selected special units of Lusaka district.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To determine the nature of peculiar psychosocial behaviors exhibited by learners with autism in two selected special units of Lusaka district.
- ii. To establish the experiences of parents in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism in two selected special units of Lusaka district.
- iii. To establish teachers' experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors exhibited by learners with autism from two selected special units of Lusaka.

1.5 Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following research questions:

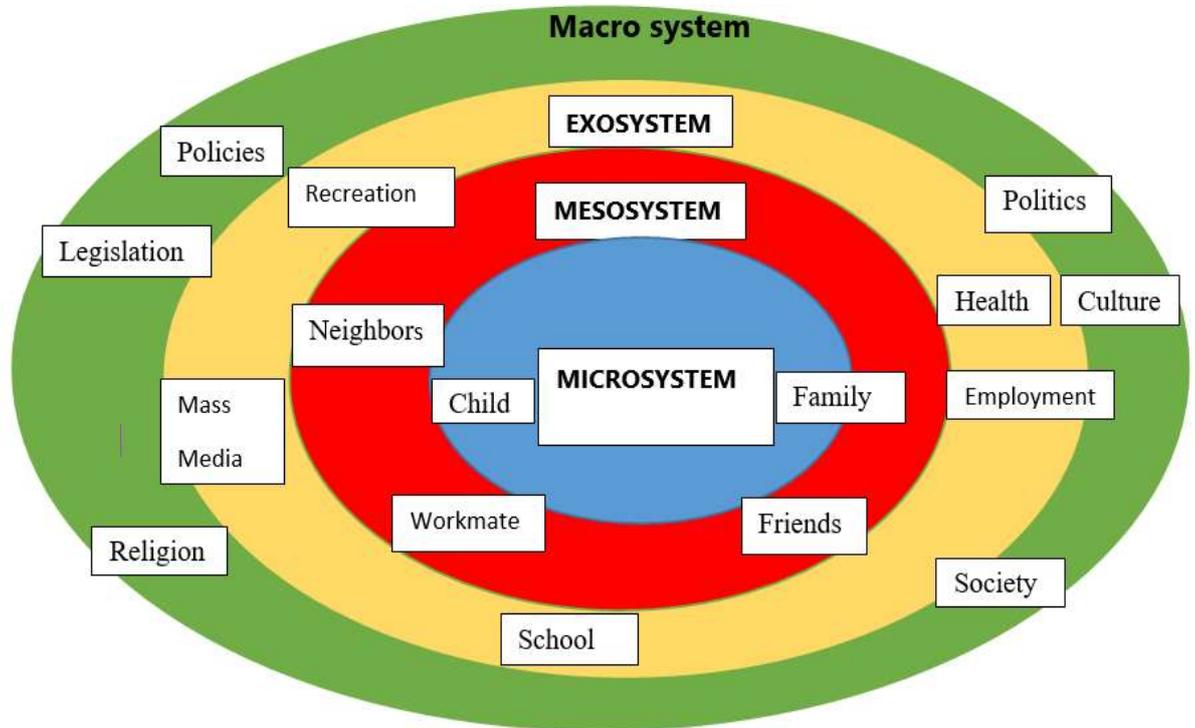
- i. What is the nature of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism?
- ii. What are the experiences of parents in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of children with autism?
- iii. What experiences do teachers have in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It was worthwhile conducting the study so that curriculum developers can consider incorporating methodologies and programs aimed at combating challenging behaviors of learners with autism when designing a curriculum. This would later benefit the parents, the teachers and the children with autism where caring, fruitful teaching and learning process are concerned.

1.7 Theoretical Frame Work

The study made reference to Ecological Systems Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979).



This theory is relevant in explaining the family dynamics and the potential impact of the family system on typically developing siblings. The Ecological Systems Theory elaborates that the environment affects a child's development. It also explains that there is reciprocity in the child's effects on his or her surrounding environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The primary system that a child is surrounded by is known as their microsystem. This includes individuals that the child interacts with most often at first instance. In early years of life, the family is typically the primary environmental influence on a child. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory can be employed to assist in explaining the numerous ways that a child is affected, as well as the various ways that these environments can be incorporated into methods of intervention.

Bronfenbrenner's theory acknowledges that the environment influences a child's behaviors, while the child also plays a role in influencing his or her surrounding environment (Brendtro, 2006). This idea applies to relationships with others, as well as the behaviors and ideas that the child forms. This theory also focuses on the importance of changes over time with regard to an individual's development, rather

than the importance of single and isolated events in an individual's life (Bendtro, 2006).

Bronfenbrenner's concept of the exosystem is also incorporated into Sibshops through the knowledge and assistance of professionals related to the fields of ASD and Child and Family Development. The exosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing child lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the setting of "Sibshops" professional assistance can be carried over into the home environment for children.

In this study therefore, the researcher explores more of the family (microsystem) in which the child lives and grows and the school (exosystems) in which the child learns and interacts to form relationships. However, these cannot be discussed in isolation of the other levels since all levels such as mesosystem, exosystem and the macro system reciprocate in interaction. For stance, Muzata (2018) argues that weaker policies at macrosystems level can affect the child's development be it at micro, meso or exo stage of interaction.

To substantiate further on the ecological theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979), the resulting factor is that a developing child with autism will have two settings of the environment to live and survive in. The two environments are the non-supportive environment and the supportive environment. The supportive environment for the child with autism condition will have characteristics of being accepting, understanding of the condition, effective provision of education, positive social and print media, access to health care services and favorable policies affecting all levels of the ecological system. All of these which will have a positive effect on a child with autism condition. To the contrary, a child with autism condition may have a non-supportive environment created with elements such as deficiencies in needs within family, negative neighborhood attitudes, denied social services such as education, health and positive media coverage and weaker policies at macrosystems level all negatively affecting a child living with autism condition.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study was limited to two selected Special Units in Lusaka District. The study sites were purposively selected with the view that it was going to provide the needed population sample capable of providing relevant data to the study.

1.9 Limitations of the study

This study had some limitations. Since the study sample was only 18 participants in Lusaka District, transferability of the study findings could not be done to other population samples around the country although lessons can still be learned. The other limitation to the study was the cultural aspect where families are culturally restricted from revealing certain family experiences like that of a disability condition, more also conversations that related to sexual matters. The other limiting factor to the study was the fact that in Zambia, a few studies have been conducted in the area of autism to specifically investigate on the management of psychosocial behaviors in Autism. This therefore creates an information gap with regard to reviewed literature.

1.10 Operational Definitions of Terms

Autism: A developmental disorder demonstrated by a pervasive lack of responsiveness to other people where social interaction, communication and reading of emotions are concerned.

Autism Spectrum Disorder: A developmental obstacle caused by abnormal brain function, which usually manifests before three years of age, often accompanied with mental disability, epilepsy, hyperactivity, reclusion, and acting out.

Disability: restriction or limitation in ability to perform given tasks arising from impairment or condition.

Individuals with Exceptional Needs: legislative term for students with special needs.

Peculiar: Comes from the Latin word ‘Peculiaris’ meaning one’s own, or personal.

Peculiar Behavior: Notably unusual, special and remarkable behavior in comparison to the widely accepted type of behavior.

Peculiar Psychosocial Behavior: Behavior relating to the interrelation of social factors and individual thought.

Special Teacher: Teacher specifically trained to handle learners with special educational needs.

Specialized services: Psychological services, Physiotherapy, Audiology and Social Services.

Special Unit: a special class or designated room equipped with special teaching and learning resources for children with special educational needs within a regular school.

1.11 Summary of the chapter

This chapter gave the peculiarity nature of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASDs), its challenges and need for intervention. The chapter also presented a statement of the problem; purpose of the study; research objective; research questions; significance of the study; theoretical framework; delimitation; limitation and definitions of operational terms used in this study. Therefore, the next chapter endeavors to review literature deemed relevant to the study based on global, Africa and Zambian context.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews some important literature according to objectives based on the experiences of parents and teachers in managing psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism.

2.1 Autism and the Nature of Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors

Muller, Schuller and Yates (2008) indicated that children with autism display a variety of abnormal psychosocial behaviors. The study reports that while these behaviors may not be vital to the diagnosis of autism, they cause serious distress for both the child and the family. In order to achieve a greater understanding of peculiar behaviors in the context of autism, it is important to better distinguish their incidence and development as well as to discover their relationship to other facets of children's functioning including language, intelligence, and severity of autism symptoms.

The study by Myers and Johnson (2007) in the United States of America found out that individuals with autism tend to be highly individualistic and have trouble with language. In addition, the study also found out that some children with autism may never learn to speak while others may use speech inappropriately and not understand the social conventions of language or the understated symbols and symbolic usages.

Similarly, the study by Hartmann (2012) identified a number of peculiar behaviors in autism which includes social communication, social interaction, social-emotional deficits, aggression, and temper tantrums. Meanwhile Seltzer, Shattuck, Abbeduto, and Greenberg (2004) have indicated that aggression in children with autism is related to gender, age and expressive communication. The study suggests that among children with mental retardation, a diagnosis of autism is associated with a higher incidence of tantrums, aggression, and destruction of property. Most case studies attribute violence to deficits in theory of mind explained as a lack of empathy and inability to appreciate the victim's point of view, although this interpretation is controversial.

Hartmann (2012) has posed that while new scientific technologies have been applied to better understand causative mechanisms, important areas of behavior remain

largely unstudied. One such domain is the sexual development, atypical eating behavior, and abnormal sleeping patterns. Sleep problems are more common in children with developmental disabilities than in typically developing children. Among developmentally disabled children, sleep problems tend to be more common in younger children and are associated with self-injury, aggression, screaming, tantrums, noncompliance, and impulsivity. It is unknown whether these associations occur in children with autism as well. Research based upon parental report suggests that children with autism are more likely to have sleep difficulties than children with other developmental disabilities and children with no developmental diagnosis (Seltzer et al; 2004).

The study by Cosser (2005) found out that students with autism can exhibit challenging behaviors in the school environment such as spitting, biting, hitting, throwing objects and self-harming. The study further highlighted that these challenging behaviors can be detrimental to the learning process and teachers may try a variety of procedures to deal with these behavioral problems. Thus the current study endeavored to find out on the presence of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism and how parents and teachers managed such peculiar behaviors.

The study conducted by Khasakhala and Galava (2016) in Kenya concluded that learners with emotional and behavioral problems may engage in truancy and other anti-social behaviors such as delinquency, and drug abuse. The current study had a lot to learn from the aforementioned studies in that both studies involved autism learner's behavioral problems which the current study intended to investigate further.

Janzen (1996) reveals that students with autism usually differ from others in their sensory experiences. Students 'responses to sensory stimulation may range from hyposensitivity to hypersensitivity and that environmental stimuli may be disturbing or even painful to someone with autism. Harrington (1998) also reported that many parents and teachers identify anxiety as a characteristic associated with autism. This anxiety may be related to a variety of sources, including inability to express oneself; difficulties with processing sensory information; fearing some sources of sensory stimulation; high need for predictability; and having difficulty with changes and understanding of the social expectations. The current study differed with the above studies in that in finding out about the nature of peculiar behaviors in autism it took a holistic multiple case study approach.

Meanwhile, Carolyn, Casey and Ashley (2017) did find out that students with autism do face the challenge with tactile system. The cardinal information in the ATRB is that when students with autism are affected in the tactile system, they may withdraw when touched hence applying tactile defensive. The students with autism therefore exhibit a wrong tactile system which does not allow them to perceive and respond appropriately to the environment. Thus individuals with autism may overreact to the texture of objects, clothing, or food. Thus Seltzer et al; (2004) equally elaborates that Peculiar eating behavior occurs so frequently in children with autism with most common feeding problem being excessive food selectivity, by type and texture while other abnormalities are rituals surrounding eating and food refusal. Hence children with autism may have inadequate nutrition as a result of their limited diets which may begin to affect their parents.

The study by Yark, Sutton, and Acquilla (1998) has also reported that students with autism may be hypersensitive to sounds and that parents and teachers report that seemingly inoffensive sounds can cause extreme responses in some children with autism. This is said to be particularly problematic in a school setting, which normally includes so many different sounds. Yark et al; (1998) further exemplifies that the scraping of a chair, bells between classes, intercom announcements, and sounds of machinery fill a normal school day though to persons with autism such sounds do seem agonizingly intense to them.

The study by Fisher, Murray and Bundy (1991) indicated that different responses to sensory stimuli may also be apparent in students with autism's reaction to visual information and smells. Some students were found to react to odors such as perfumes and deodorants. Others used smell to seek out information about the surroundings in ways that other people do not ordinarily expect. Fisher et al; (1991) further stated that some students with autism cover their eyes to avoid the effect of certain lighting, or in response to reflections or shiny objects, while others seek out shiny things and look at them for extended periods of time.

The study by Carolyn, Casey and Ashley (2017) observed that some learners with autism show heightened sensitivity to many things, including light, texture and certain food stuff. Furthermore, individuals with autism often have deficits in social attachments, even with family members. The study also revealed that autistic

children may not show emotion, make eye contact, respond to their name or engage in normal social play with others and as such are perceived to be in their own world.

The reviewed studies above have respectively looked at the nature of peculiar behaviors in autism which includes social interaction and emotional deficits, aggression, temper tantrums, inappropriate sexual development, truancy, delinquency, drug and substance abuse. The current study however has not limited itself to exploration of features in autism but also focused on management of such peculiar behaviors by parents and teachers.

Similarly, the study by Busiku (2018) highlighted a number of issues on management of learners with autism with specific reference to their learning and the need for active teacher and parental involvement. The study brought out more of autism behavioral description based on reviewed literature without conducting actual physical observation of learners so as to make comparison between the actual presented behaviors in the learners with autism and those revealed by literature. The study was more of an investigation on parents and teachers' knowledge about autism, availability of personnel; teaching materials; relevant curriculum; and enrolment rate of autism learners into school or class. The gap therefore remains in the sense that the current study focused more on parents and teachers experiences in the management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism.

2.2 Parents experiences with management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in Autism

The study by Hartmann (2012) did explore on parents' relationship with children with autism. The findings were that parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) often report increased levels of stress, depression, and anxiety. The dissatisfied parents' mental health needs are reported to pose a significant risk to the psychological, physical, and social well-being of the parents of the child affected by ASD and so does jeopardize the adaptive functioning of the family as well as the potential of the child affected by ASD.

Hartmann (2012) further reveals that family members of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) often have mixed feelings about labeling their loved ones with the term autism as this represents a life-long disability. Family members are reported to be concerned about stigma, fearing that others will avoid, judge, or

exclude their family member with autism. Additionally, the study through its evaluative assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder did find out that family members may also worry that the label will be affixed to the child for the duration of his or her educational experiences or for his or her lifespan.

The above study by Hartmann (2012) is insightful in that it has demonstrated that family members of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) often have mixed feelings about labeling their loved ones with the term autism as this represents a life-long disability. Furthermore, Family members are reported to be concerned about stigma, fearing that others will avoid, judge, or exclude their family member with autism. In addition, the study through its evaluative assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder did found out that family members may also worry that the label will be affixed to the child for the duration of his or her educational experiences or for his or her lifespan.

The study by Aylaz, Yilmazd, and Polat (2012) reveals that caring for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affected the relationship that parents had with siblings to the child with ASD. Parents reported their children feeling they were not treated the same as their brother or sister with ASD. The study has also indicated that some parents reached out to these children to compensate for the extra time they spent with their child with ASD. The study further found out that in some families, the impact of living with a brother or sister with ASD affected the sibling's health. However, in some families, an older sibling assisted parents in the care of their brother or sister with ASD. The study by Aylaz et al (2012) have shown the consequence that caring for a child with ASD affected the relationship that parents had with their other children. Therefore, the current study differs from the above study as it additionally focuses on experiences of parents and teachers in managing peculiar behaviors in learners with autism.

Sivbec (2002) has highlighted that parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) do experience higher stress levels than parents of children without ASD. Understanding the experiences parents go through is critical because it provides a glimpse into daily family realities and the ways that Autism Spectrum Disorders can impact parent child dynamics (Hartley, Barker, Sheltzer, Floyd, Greenberg, Orsmond & Bolt 2010).

The study by Nyoni (2014) investigated on parents lived experiences of raising a child with Autism using a phenomenological approach. The study revealed that parents to children with Autism experienced challenges ranging from frustration, pain, confusion, doubt and disempowerment at pre-natal stage of child development. The study also revealed that at peri-natal stage, the same parents experienced shock, refusal, denial, and loss while at post-natal the experiences by parents had some element of acceptance. Nyoni, (2014) further stresses that parents of children with ASD face challenges both at home and in the community. The study emphasizes that compared to parents of children without ASD, parents to children with autism are at increased risk of financial strain and poor physical and mental health and are more likely to experience higher divorce rates.

On the other hand, Nyoni (2014) did compare literature between the Western and African family arrangement and expectation towards caring for a child with Autism. The conclusion was that within the African and Zambian context, some families still relied on siblings and grandparents to help in caring for a child with Autism. Meanwhile the Western cultured saw this to be a source of stress, loneliness, lowered self-esteem and maladjustment on part of the siblings.

The study by Nyoni was insightful to the current study in the sense that it did look at parents' experiences in line with challenges they faced in raising a child with Autism. However, little attention was paid to the management strategies parents used to curb the vice of undesirable behaviors in their children with ASD. The current study further extended its focus by including the teachers' experiences of managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with ASD in the two selected special units.

The study by Depape and Lindsay (2014) highlighted that in certain instances parents' relief was mixed with feelings of devastation as parents processed the implications of their child's diagnosis. Some parents felt devastation only as they started to worry about the long-term impact of the diagnosis. Some parents spoke about lost dreams for their child, including marriage and family. Depape and Lindsay (2014) also reported that for some parents, the devastation was so overwhelming that they compared it to a death in the family. The study further found that parents often blamed themselves; mothers, especially, reflecting on factors that occurred during or

after their pregnancy, such as lack of breastfeeding. Cultural and religious beliefs sometimes factored into suspected causes such as autism resulted from a curse by the gods or God.

Similarly, Denise, Linda and Elias (2018) echoed the remarks by Depape and Lindsay (2014) by revealing that some parents felt over-whelmed by family demands. Some felt apprehensive, such that they were always waiting for the next crisis to occur while others experienced a range of behavior problems with their child, such as tantrums, that they were uncertain of how to manage. Hence the need to investigate experiences of teachers and families in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with Autism in special units.

Hartmann (2012) reports that just as the autism spectrum varies, so does each family's experiences with autism. Hartmann further states that upon hearing their child's diagnosis, some parents, feel relieved, some feel grief and loss, while others get shocked and surprised.

The study by Banach, Iudice, Conway and Couse (2010) did report that often, parents are relieved that they were given an answer in regards to their child's symptoms but this does not erase the stress that they endure while raising a child with autism. The study elaborates that Parents often experience stressful situations upon the initial diagnosis that relate to their child's behavior. More also the study has stated that adapting to this new lifestyle and the complexity of finding access to the appropriate services useful to the family stressed the parents so much. Stressors from an ASD diagnosis are said to cause a strain on parent's marital relationship, increase financial burdens in the family and result in parents socially isolating themselves from others (Banach et al; 2010).

In another study by Lindsay, Proulx, Scott and Thomson (2014), it is reported that parents experienced stress as a result of modifying goals and activities for their child diagnosed with autism and themselves. Parents have to implement different arrangements for the child's education as well as grief due to limited opportunities offered to their child. The study found that mothers reported having more stress than fathers related to their child diagnosed with autism as mothers are usually the primary care givers of these children and were more active in the child's education.

The study by Rukuye, Sevbic and Ulvye (2012) explored on the difficulties experienced by parents of children with autism on their sexual life. Using the method of focus group interviews and face-to-face in-depth interviews, the study found out that the parents to children living with autism experienced difficulties in their family marriage relations especially where sexual life is concerned. It was observed that a large part of the responsibility for giving care to their children was assumed by women and their interaction and sexual relation with their husbands diminished for this reason of being ever stressed psychologically and physically. The current study differs from Rukuye et al; (2012) in that the formal explored on a wider net of parental experiences and not just the sexual aspect.

Equally, the qualitative study by Hulya and Leyla (2010) in Turkey elaborates that mothers expressed feelings of burden and stress because of their child's behaviors associated with autism, as well as their own role and future expectations, and the complexity of care needed by their children at home. This study provided new knowledge about the difficulties and experiences of mothers of autistic children in Turkey. In Zambia particularly in Lusaka District, it was not known to what extent mothers to the children with autism are stressed and what strategies they as parents employ to combat their stressful moments. Hence this study took the task of finding out about experiences of parents and teachers in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with Autism.

2.3 Teacher experiences with peculiar behaviors of learners with Autism.

Studies by Khasakhala and Galava (2016) reveals that autism does present emotional behavioral problems which may involve truancy, delinquency, drug and substance abuse and other antisocial behaviors so challenging to teachers. In addition, the study by Sigafos, Arthur-Kelly, & Butterfield, (2006) did find out that a number of children with autism initially present with little to no functional speech. This may present particular challenges for school staff because communication impairment has been linked to an increased risk of challenging behavior and reduced opportunities for school involvement. The study further indicates that individuals with autism struggle to gain meaning from linguistic and social information due to the transient nature of these domains which later poses a challenge in communication between teachers and learners with autism. This study sought to bring out some of the

management strategies teachers have in place for such behavioral deficits as described above in learners with autism.

The study by Bowe 2004, Wilmshurst and Brue (2010) similarly revealed that teaching students with ASD often highlights concerns in important areas of development including social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, creative play and sensory processing. The study further reports that children with ASD often have difficulty in understanding or communicating their needs to teachers and classmates and thus face challenges in the area of classroom instruction, along with the subtle vocal and facial cues of teachers. Furthermore, the study has indicated that sensory issues among children with autism often result in difficulty in coping with being touched by others, maintaining eye contact or managing noisy environments (Bowe 2004; Wilmshurst and Brue, 2010). The current study went beyond the mere exploration of challenges learners with autism face but further searched for management strategies teachers employ in curbing peculiar behaviors in autism.

The study by Lynch and Irvine (2009) has also indicated that the difficulties of understanding the social world for children with ASD may limit the development of relationships with their peers, which can result in further stress and anxiety. The study suggested that given the difficulties in the social and emotional understanding of students with ASD, teachers need successful strategies for including children within classrooms. Thus, more work needs to be done to create 'autism friendly' inclusive social environments within classrooms (Lynch and Irvine, 2009). The current study however differed with the above study in the sense that it focused squarely on learners with autism in special units within Lusaka and not those in the mainstream.

The study by Goodrow (2016) revealed that most of the teachers had low knowledge about autism due to lack of in-service training and lack of seminars. As such, using the phenomenological design with semi-structured interview, the findings did real that teachers faced challenges with the difficult behaviors of autism, feelings of despair and the general poor academic performance by autistic learners. In Zambia, particular in special units within Lusaka District, it is not known whether or not teachers had low knowledge about autism due to lack of in-service training and lack of seminars. My study therefore hoped to fill up this gap.

The study by Geraldina (2015) specifically revealed that Most of teachers responded that poor pre-service training, lack of seminars, limited time, lack of relevant teaching and learning materials, lack of cooperation between parent of children with autism and teachers, and general curriculum are perceived to be major challenges when it comes to teaching children with autism in regular classes. The studies however did state that these experiences were unique to every individual teacher. In Zambia, particular in Lusaka District, it is not known whether poor pre-service training, lack of seminars, limited time, lack of relevant teaching and learning materials, lack of cooperation between parent of children with autism and teachers, and general curriculum are perceived to be major challenges when it comes to teaching children with autism in regular classes.

The study by Roberts (2007) in South Africa took the form of a qualitative analysis of the perceptions of both mainstream and specialized teachers in terms of the mainstreaming of autistic students in South African schools. This study recommended that on the premise that all autistic students were going to be included, a number of changes would need to be made. These changes included the provision of paraprofessionals, smaller classes and a stronger emphasis on safety and that teachers would also need to receive extensive training in dealing with behavioral problems like those exhibited by learners with autism.

Hendricks (2007) evaluated special education teachers' knowledge and implementation of educational practices critical for the improvement of students with Autism. and determined areas of training needs. A total of 498 special education teachers were surveyed, Participants reported a low to intermediate level of knowledge as well as implementation of practices. The most frequently reported was a need for training in social skills development, and the least frequently reported was training in individualization and support strategies. The study further explored the relationships between the level of knowledge, implementation, and training needs and teachers' occupational characteristics. In this study, numerous occupational characteristics were found to have a relationship with level of knowledge and implementation, including area of endorsement, educational level, educational setting, and number of students with Autism taught, and student learning characteristics.

The study by Weber (2013) has highlighted ten barriers to learning of autistic learners and one of these barriers to learning was a lack of skills among teachers or others who are supposed to contribute to learning and teaching. The study also explains that historically the majority of teachers in South Africa have been trained according to the old system of special and regular education, this system being based on the medical model, where the barrier to learning is placed within the child. The study further argues that teachers have therefore not been trained to accommodate children with different cognitive, psychological, emotional and physical development. Thus, teachers were reported to have acknowledged that they lacked personal development and a need to know how to understand and address different barriers to the learning of children with autism in the classroom. The need for teachers to constantly improve the skills and knowledge which will assist them in the development of such children's strengths and competencies as well as in dealing with the behavioral, sensory, emotional, communicative and social balances were highlighted. The study has pointed out to the need for quality teacher training and development which results in positive learner performance and teacher attitudes. A major challenge identified to have been faced by teachers was reported to be stemming from their ignorance towards the policies underpinning inclusive education in South Africa.

The study by Webber (2013) differs with the current study in the sense that the former focused on inclusive education in mainstream schools in South Africa while the current study focused on parents and teachers experiences in the management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism in Special Units.

The study by Haimour and Obaidat (2013) in Saudi Arabia found out what school teachers know about Autism and if any significant differences in school teachers' knowledge about Autism existed depending on teachers' gender, position, education level, teaching experience, and contact with students with Autism variables. The findings of the study were that school teachers had an acceptable approaching to weak level of knowledge about Autism disorder. The results also indicated significant differences in the teachers' knowledge about Autism depending on teachers' position, education level, teaching experience, and contact with students with Autism favoring special education teachers, those with more advanced level of education and teaching experience, and those with previous contact with students

with Autism. The current study however intended to find out on teachers' experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism.

The study by Symeonidou and Robinson (2018) in Scotland investigated on the use of nurture groups as an effective early practice for the development of children with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties (SEBD). Early educators outlined enhanced social and emotional development, academic attainment and secure attachments with peers and adults although there was limited data reported on the efficacy of this approach for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The small-scale phenomenological study reported Scottish primary teachers' experiences of Nurture Groups in promoting well-being in autistic pupils. Data gathered through an online questionnaire gave mixed results in that they suggested some significant progress in academic attainment, with slight improvements in emotional and social functioning among autistic learners. After the inclusion of pupils in Nurture Groups, continued positive impact appeared to persist with both difficulties in emotional expression and in forming secure attachments with peers and adults. The study further recommended that for good Nurture Groups practice for autistic pupils there is a need for structural modifications and curriculum adaptations to create an 'autism friendly' environment.

The study by Thompson, de Boer-Ott and Smith-Myles (2003), revealed that reduced class size facilitates increased student success, particularly for children and youth with autism. Therefore, teachers cry for reduced class sizes in general education classes in the United States, as it allows for more individualized teaching methods and a diversity of instructional approaches so as to accommodate a variety of educational needs, including those of ASD learners. Thus, Weber (2013) has argued that the challenge educators face is an inability to recognize and respond to individual differences. Weber further contested that educating learners with autism requires educators to be dynamic, creative and reflective which also requires that teachers learn new ways of teaching, including team teaching and collaboration with other educators.

The study by Dawson and Osterling (1997) stresses that teachers have the vital job of compiling a curriculum that meets the needs of the autistic student whose content should address the ability to attend to elements of the environment, the skill of

imitating others, the use and comprehension of language, appropriate play with toys, and social interaction. Dawson and Osterling (2007) also says these skills should be taught in highly supportive teaching environments that are predictable and routinized and employ generalization strategies. Thus students with autism require specialized instructional techniques due to their extreme sensory sensitivity which makes them be intolerable to noise and visual stimuli in in the environment. The study emphasizes that teachers need to structure environmental conditions so that autistic children can attend to, and comprehend, instruction.

Jordan (1997) added that the structured environment for learners with autism may include making use of isolated and visually bare work spaces, physical barriers that separate work and play areas, small groups of individual instruction, and a reliance on visual and gestural communication. Furthermore, children with autism need to be motivated and reinforced through specific techniques. The study also emphasized the importance of fostering independence in learners with autism and that teachers need to design and organize environments so that students look for and understand routines, visual cues and organizational strategies.

In Zambia, the study by Mbewe (2016) investigated the effectiveness of picture exchange strategy on the communication skills of autistic children. The study revealed that communication is an important aspect of human interaction and that children with autism responded well to picture exchange strategy in communication. Hollins (2007) cited by Mbewe (2016) elaborates that the inability to communicate by children with Autism is neither due to deafness nor speechlessness but rather due to a neurological condition that impedes the brain from generating meaningful speech and sound at the required moment. In order to overcome this communicative difficulty, researchers, teachers and clinicians have made an attempt to use the picture exchange method developed in 1994 by Andy Bondy and Frost in America, as an Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) system that teachers, children and adults with autism and other communication deficits can use to initiate communication.

Mbewe (2016) explains that picture exchange strategy uses any picture drawing, photograph or any picture cut out of a news magazine. The user of the strategy initiates conversation or makes their needs known by giving a picture of what they want to communicate to another person across all environments. The person given or

shown the picture will respond accordingly by providing that item to the child or adult who initiated the communication. The study by Mbewe (2016) is insightful to the current study in the sense the current study did review communication deficit aspect as one of the peculiar features of Autism.

2.4 Summary of the chapter

The chapter reviewed some important literature according to the set objectives based on the nature of autism, experiences of parents and teachers in managing peculiar behaviors in learners with autism. The next chapter will focus on the methodology which comprises the philosophical framework, research design, target population, sampling technique, sample size, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, ethical consideration, credibility and trustworthy.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The previous chapter gave a review of some important literature on autism according to the set objectives. The objectives were to determine peculiar psychosocial behaviors of autism, to establish parents and teachers experiences in managing peculiar behaviors of children with autism. However, the current chapter presents the methodology used in the study which includes the philosophical framework, research design, target population, sampling technique, sample size, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, ethical consideration, credibility and trustworthy.

3.1 Philosophical Frame Work

The study adopted the constructivist philosophical paradigm. Becker (1996) explains that all social scientists, implicitly or explicitly, attribute a point-of-view and interpretations to the people whose actions are analyzed. That is, qualitative researchers always describe how they interpret the events their respondents participate in, so the only question is not whether it should be interpreted, but how it is done. A researcher can find out, although not with perfect accuracy, what people think they are doing, and what meanings they give to the objects, events and people in their lives and experiences (Creswell, 2009). This is done by talking to them, in formal or informal interviews, in quick exchanges while participating in and observing their ordinary activities, and by watching and listening as they go about their business; it can even be done by giving questionnaires which let them say what their meanings are or choose between meanings given to them as possibilities. Thus, the nearer the researcher gets to the conditions in which they actually do attribute meanings to objects and events the more opportunity researchers and respondents have to engage in meaning making together.

3.2 Research Design

Kombo and Tromp (2006) defines a research design as a glue like structure that holds all the elements in a research. The study took a qualitative approach and employed the holistic multiple case study because it was more concerned with

understanding individuals' perceptions of the world and seeking insights rather than statistical analysis (Silverman, 2005). Since the sample comprised of parents, teachers, and learners with autism, it was important to handle each category of participants separately. Hence the use of multiple case study. The study used multiple case study method so as to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life experiences that parents, teachers and the learners with autism go through.

3.3 Target Population

The target population of this study comprised Special teachers and learners with autism in special units and parents to the children with autism within Lusaka district. This population was chosen with the view that the learners with autism are the ones with behavioral characteristics the researcher was interested in. The parents and teachers have a closer interaction with children with autism and they know their children better than anyone else hence the researcher was hopeful of collecting quality data from such a population.

3.4 Sample size

The study sample comprised six (6) Special Education teachers from two special units and six (6) parents to the children with autism and six (6) learners bringing the total study sample to eighteen (18) participants. Creswell (2009) indicates that sample size refers to the number of participants selected from the population. This sample should have the characteristics, know-how and be accessible to help in the study under investigation.

3.4.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

Participants' information by gender is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Participants Gender

	Teachers	Parents	Learners	Total
Gender				
Male	2	1	5	8
Female	4	5	1	10
Total	6	6	6	18

Source: Field work, (2019)

Table 2: Age of Learners

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-7	0	0	0
8-15	2	1	3
16-21	3	0	3
Total	5	1	6

Source: Field Work, (2019)

Table 3: Teachers' Number of Years in Service

Number of Years	Number of Teachers
0-10	4
11-21	2
22-32	0
33-43	0
Total	6

Source: Field work (2019).

Table 4: Teachers' Qualifications

Qualification	Special Unit A	Special Unit B	Number of Teachers
Masters	1	0	1
Degree	1	4	5
Diploma	0	0	0
Certificate	0	0	0
Total	2	4	6

3.5 Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling procedures on the parents, teachers and learners with autism. The researcher purposely targeted the population and sample size believed to be reliable in sourcing the required data for the study. Therefore, the homogeneous purposive sampling technique was used for this study. The researcher was of the view that homogenous purposive sampling would yield the needed results especially that the participants possessed characteristics in relation to the sought information about peculiar behaviors in autism.

The researcher sought clearance from the University of Zambia Ethics Committee and authorization from the DEBS office to visit the two selected special units. The administration in the two selected special units assigned only some teachers handling learners with autism to take part in the research. Special Unit A assigned two teachers while Special Unit B assigned four teachers to participate in the study. Using learners' profile records, the administration found it easy to assign learners and their Parents to be part of the study too. Therefore, parental authority and consent was equally sought and highly respected in this study. Upon getting parents contact details from the two Special Units authority, parents were contacted through phone calls. Those parents who escorted their children to these two special units were directly approached and requested to take part in the study voluntarily.

3.6. Instruments for Data Collection

The instruments used for data collection were interview guide technique on both parents and teachers and observation checklist on learners with Autism.

3.6.1. Interview guide for Parents: Interview guide techniques were used on parents/guardians to provide information regarding their experiences in managing peculiar behaviors in children with autism as parents. Parents being the custodians of the children with Autism were interviewed face to face by the researcher to provide information of how they find leaving with a child with Autism.

3.6.2. Interview guide for teachers: Teachers too were interviewed face to face by the researcher in person to provide information regarding their experiences in

dealing with learners with autism as they act as parents while the child is in school.

3.6.3. An observation check-list: A self-generated observation check-list was used in observing learners with autism in a natural setting and classroom environment for a month to determine the nature of peculiar psychosocial behaviors exhibited by the learners with autism in the two selected special units. The behaviors observed in learners with autism were later categorized and reported in form of descriptions.

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection is the gathering of specific information aimed at proving some facts on how a researcher collects data with instruments (Silverman, 2005). Therefore, in trying to follow the data collection procedure the researcher sought permission to conduct the research from the University of Zambia Ethics Committee and District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) as well as the respective school managers of the two special units selected. The school managers were requested to provide a link between the researcher and parents. A voice recorder was used to record the conversations to capture opinions and views of the participants like parents and teachers.

3.8 Data Analysis

Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007) define data analysis as a manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study. Data collected from the field through unstructured interviews on teachers and parents regarding their personal experiences in managing psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism was manually analyzed. The researcher collected data in form of field notes, audio tapped data and transcriptions. The researcher had to read the data, mark it by hand, and divided the data into categories of participants. This helped the researcher stay closer to the data and have a hands-on feel for the data without the intrusion of a machine. The researcher then carried out data transcribing process described by Creswell (2007) as a process whose aim is to make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes as an inductive process of narrowing data

into a few themes for report generation. From the collected data, some of the responses from participants like parents and teachers were quoted in verbatim form using codes. The codes for parents were P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6 while teachers were denoted by codes like T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6. For the learners the codes used were L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6 respectively. Through data coding and the responses from participants, data was divided into text, narrowed down into themes derived from the major findings of the study based on the study objectives. The following themes were developed under objective two: anxiety and disbelief; physical and mental health of parents; impact on social life of parents; parental future expectations, parental self-stigma; marital challenges; Costs and management strategies by parents. From the third objective of the study, the major themes that emerged were teacher training in autism; teacher challenges with autism behaviors; and management strategies teachers apply when dealing autism learners' peculiar psychosocial behaviors.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues were upheld in this study by getting clearance from the University Of Zambia School of Humanities Ethics Committee as evidenced from appendix IV. The researcher also sought authorization to collect data from the two selected special units through the Lusaka District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) evidenced in the appendix V. Before an individual became a subject of research, he or she was notified of the confidential nature of his or her responses and were requested to sign a consent form. The participants were informed of their voluntary involvement in research and their right to abstain from participation and continuity with research as they may deem it right to do so.

During data collection by observations of learners with autism, the researcher avoided taking photos or recording sounds of these learners due to their inability to express or defend themselves on their right to say something. The researcher avoided to breach the ethical requirements on consent issues. In a qualitative research study, this principle is honored by informed consent explained by Silverman (2005) as the means of making a reasonable balance between over-informing and under-informing the respondents. Furthermore, participants' right to confidentiality and privacy were upheld through usage of code names rather than their real names (L1, P1, and T1).

The researcher omitted any information which could have led to the personal identity of participants.

After data collection, the recorded and transcribed data were only accessible to me as researcher and my supervisor. Throughout the study, all hard copies of data were stored in a locked cabinet and all digital data were stored safely on my computer as pass word-protected documents. The researcher made it a point to avoid any form of data falsification too by making sure data collected was only from the participants who actually took part in the study.

3.10 Credibility and Trustworthiness

In order to establish credibility and trustworthy within this study, the following steps were

implemented. In data collection, the researcher did not end by interviewing parents and teachers. He went ahead to conduct observations of learners with autism as a measure of trying to arrive at credible and valid data. The researcher also utilized member checking to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of collected data. It was hoped that by asking for participant feedback at multiple stages in the research process, the collaborative relationship between the researcher and the participants would increase and thus establish trustworthiness and credibility of collected data. Participants' feedback also served as an excellent check necessary to achieve a balance between the participants 'voices and the researcher's interpretation of the meaning from collected data. Therefore, in establishing the integrity of the data, the researcher presented evidence on how the interpretations fit the data based on direct quotes so that participant's voices are heard while ensuring that fabrications are avoided at all cost. Furthermore, the researcher stayed close to the collected data from interviews with the hope that this was going to bring out the exact feelings, attitudes and concerns of the participants.

The credibility and trustworthiness of the study was enhanced through further review and interpretation of data by the use of a peer de-briefer. The researcher approached a conversant peer de-briefer to help carry out the interpretation of data beyond the researcher. This added to the credibility and trustworthiness of data which the researcher used to generate the report. Additionally, credibility and trustworthiness of data was enhanced through consultation with experts on issues pertaining to the

study design and progression of the study. The expert review was applied at the initial stage of the study topic refinement and tools development process before the study was fielded and along the research process and progress. This was done to ensure that the designed topic was researchable and tools developed were capable of collecting the information needed to meet the analytic objectives of study.

In this journey, the researcher made several submissions of the work to his supervisor, who in turn gave building criticism on which the researcher had to make corrections from time to time. Additionally, the researcher made two presentations at departmental, and school level where further criticism to the study was given and suggestions for corrections were unpretentiously received and acted upon. The feedback from experts helped to stimulate the researcher's plans and in coming up with the final document.

The study took a month and half due to certain circumstances beyond the researcher's control. However, the researcher did data collection simultaneously in which he had to interview teachers during their spare time from class and some parents within the school courtyard while some were comfortable to be interviewed from their work place or home environment. These face to face interviews lasted between 45 to 120 minutes and were done within a week. Teachers and parents were interviewed separately according to the appointments that were arranged. Learners' observation lasted for a month within which each Special Unity was allocated 15 days to carry out learners' observation. The observations took place both within and outside class environment. The researcher only had an opportunity to observe two learners both in the school and home. Learner observation was made possible in collaboration with the teachers to the children and parents themselves when they brought their children to school and while waiting for their children. This way parental consent was gotten.

3.11 Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed the methodology employed in this study. Under methodology, the following items have been captured; philosophical assumption, the research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments data quality assurance, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical issues, credibility and trustworthiness.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

The previous chapter outlined the methodology employed in this study. This chapter therefore presents the findings of the study. The findings are presented according to the study questions. The study questions were as follows:

- i. What is the nature of these peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism?
- ii. What could be the experiences of parents in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of children with autism?
- iii. What experiences do teachers have in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism?

4.1 Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors Observed in Learners with Autism.

The first objective of the study was to determine the nature of peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with Autism. The learners observed were of the ages between 10 years and 19 years old. The observed learners with autism were given the code names L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6. The study findings based on observation of peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism is that the learners exhibited the following behaviors: individualistic/ social interaction disorder; in adaptive behavior; communication challenges; hypersensitivity; obsessiveness; screaming; spinning; ritualistic; anxiety; aggressiveness; truancy; eating disorder; tantrums; and sexual disorder.

Behaviors such as individualistic/social interaction disorder; in adaptive behavior; communication challenges; hypersensitivity; obsessiveness; anxiety; and eating disorder were common in all the learners L1, L2, L3, L4 L5 and L6. The findings on some of these behaviors actually relates with teachers' remarks during interviews:

These are children in their own world, unique even from each other in the manner of behaving. They are smart people and usually keep feelings and things to themselves" (T1, 15-03-2019).

Similarly, another interesting behavior was one displayed by the learner L6. Learner L6 had the habit of writing very quickly and leave the task incomplete rushing to the

outside to go and sing the same praise song while going round a circle with hands joined together confusing an onlooker as though the boy was casting out demons from a congregant. This behavior went on daily basis and a teacher had a task getting such a one back to class. L6 too was however not aggressive though he portrayed truancy by refusing to get back to class most of the time. A male teacher had this to say:

Some of these children despite their disruptive behaviors are very good at writing and friendly at times. Like this boy, he is also brilliant at expressional language, artistic and gifted in a way (T3, 17-03-2019).

The study also reviewed that all the observed learners (L1-L6) with autism had quite a serious challenge in concentration during lessons. A slight noise from within class or outside class really took away learners' attention and at the same time a teacher could have a task restraining individual learners from leaving their desks to go and see or touch other items of interest during learning time. This confirms what one female teacher said during the interview:

These children are interested to see, hear or touch anything within their reach. You make a mistake of letting your phone ring in front on the table or in the bag, the child will jump from his or her desk coming to search for that phone.....I really have to be vigilant all the time restraining such desires! (T5, 29-03-2019)

Communication difficulties through either verbal or gestures was commonly exhibited among learners with autism L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6. This confirms the words of a male teacher during the interview:

We teach learners who cannot show or ask a question to signal that you are with them or not. They fail to give a direct facial look, a nod for yes or no though at times you would know they are not interested in something when you see one close his or her ears and perhaps scream at once! (T2, 17-03-19).

The observation findings also showed that aggressive behavior was present in learners L2, L3, L4 and L5. This aggressive nature of the behavior portrayed

involved hitting and kicking of objects, shouting, showing rude face especially when a learner was provoked or had his interest to do something infringed upon by a teacher or a classmate. It is this same category of learners that some ended up injuring themselves. The father to child L2 had this to say in confirming his child's self-injurious behavior:

This boy likes biting himself on the left breast nipple of which sometimes I used to think that he had a muscle problem or something was itching. But the boy writes and draws very well! (P2, 17-03-19).

Tantrums were present in learners L1, L2, L4 and L5 in form of anger, shouting and walking away to some solitary corner while truancy behavior was only present in learners L1, L3, L4 and L5 respectively. Truant learners openly refused to be guided in an activity, could not respond when called by name or told to stop what they were doing unless a parent's name was mentioned or the teacher pretended to call a parent on phone.

From the study observations, Learners L1, L3, L4 and L6 presented spinning behavior and carrying of objects like strings, sticks, and wires while closing of ears and screaming was only common in two learners L2 and L4 with inappropriate sexual behaviors being present in learners L2 and L3 only. This inappropriate sexual behavior was with L2 a 10-year-old boy who could touch his genitals from time to time during lessons. Learners L3 was a 19 years boy with the habit of quizzing breasts in some intellectually impaired female classmates and nieces at home. One female teacher narrated her own ordeal with L3:

You know these children are socially and emotionally disengaged by society including the homes they come from. So I had developed a friendly habit of giving each one a hug every time they reported for school. I noticed the boy could keep holding on to me to the extent that one day he pushed down his trousers while looking into my eyes.....I pushed him off and since then I avoid these bigger boys because one can embarrass you publicly (T4, 25-03-2019).

The observations of learners with autism also revealed that some of the learners like L1, L2 and L5 had ritualistic behavior. They liked spitting saliva on teachers and

friends and then rub with their fingers as though it was some body lotion. A female teacher added her voice over this behavior saying:

Careful my brother some of these children have bad manners! You can be seated on the same desk and the child may just spit saliva on you, something I find very strange and offensive! (T5, 29-03-19).

Furthermore, the observed learners L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6 were all found to be highly unique regarding their selective feeding habits. These children were seen to have the habit of getting any food towards their nose, smell it before eating or throwing it away. At the same time these children were seen to have the liking and preference of hard food stuffs like snacks and certain types of drinks. One female teacher added her voice to say:

Some children are even selective on who should feed them every break-time (T1, 15-03-19).

Lastly though not the least, Learners with autism were observed to have the challenge of anxiety control. The learners were under pressure and nervous especially when one failed to perform or complete a task or to articulate oneself over his/her needs. One of the male teachers from Special Unit B elaborated on this finding by saying:

You have to be conscious always timing on a child to ensure that he stays at ease because they tend to have unnecessary pressure and demands (T6, 18-04-2019).

Based on the above findings, it come out clear that some peculiar behaviors are present in learners with autism. The most common of these behaviors observed were the individualistic behavior, in adaptive, obsessiveness, communication challenge, social interaction disorder, and over sensitivity to sensory stimuli. The least present behaviors observed were inappropriate sexual behaviors and screaming. The above stated peculiar psychosocial behaviors made the learners with autism to be so hyperactive, disruptive, inquisitive and irritating to some parents and teachers. This gave parents and teachers a hell of a time and moments to manage these peculiar behaviors of learners with Autism. It must however be stated that these behaviors

and many others that were observed in the six learners with autism do vary from one learner to another even in terms of severity.

4.2 Parents experiences with peculiar psychosocial behaviors in children with autism in the family.

Individual parents and guardians expressed different kinds of experiences in raising up their children with autism. These parental experiences are presented below using the themes anxiety and disbelief; physical and mental stress; the social impact of raising a child with ASD; parental future perspectives; parental self-stigma; marital challenges; cost of raising a child with autism; future concerns and management strategies. Some parents narrated that these negative experiences were triggered by overwhelming demands of the undesirable behaviors children with autism presented to them (parents).

4.2.1 Anxiety and disbelief

Some parents interviewed described living with a child with autism to be a source of anxiety upon their discovery that a child had delayed developmental milestone where speech, language and socialization aspect are concerned. This brought in the eagerness to know what the problem is and for how long such a problem would remain with the child.

A grandmother to one of the boys said:

At first we were not so sure of what really the problem was with the boy until age 3 when we felt the boy was delayed with language and other social mannerisms common to other children of his age. Right there and then we developed there to know what the problem was.....we passed through Beitcure hospice, Chainama, University Teaching Hospital and finally the University of Zambia for assessment after assessment. And you know all this journey required finances and it's just that we were so anxious to know and compare the findings from one center to another” (P1, 21-03-2019).

One female parent had this to say;

Imagine my only son living in his own world in which no one understands him not even himself. At one point the sisters found him

masturbating in his own bedroom and at another point he was caught by his elder sister fondling a 12-year-old niece's breasts. This has made his own sisters hate the boy for life to an extent of denying him food or talking to him except in the mornings when the sisters shout at him to come out of the bath room as he is fond of staying in there for more than two hours doing his own business. This has really shaken us where family love and unit are concerned! (P4, 25-03-2019).

Similar sentiments were echoed in the words of a single mother (P6) who said:

At first I questioned God as to why me and why this child in particular of the four I have had without any problem? Though her father abandoned us the time she turned eight. I survive through her elder sister's love and care and the school this school she comes to. Otherwise I wouldn't have managed as a single mother! (P6, 29-03-2019).

Parent P1 actually qualified her thoughts by say:

The danger is that my boy is very fast at things. Before you realize he will have opened the car and started moving without knowing the direction..... touches things, greets strangers anyhow and my job will be to start chasing in the eyes of other people. This usually embarrasses me so much! (P1, 15-03-2019).

From the above findings, we learn that indeed anxiety hit the parents upon the discovery of some signs of autism in a child prior to the diagnosis of the condition to the post diagnosis stage. Parents worry a lot about the impending disclosure of the condition and what else may follow the declaration of the results by the assessment team of professionals.

From the findings above, the peculiar psychosocial behaviors of a child with autism really vexed the mind of a parent before and after the diagnosis of the autism condition. This leaves parents in a state of denial raising questions such as why me Lord.

4.2.2 Physical and Mental Stress

The presence of a child with autism in the family was also said to be a source of physical and mental stress to some parents. A male parent (P5) lamented as how much a stressful challenge it was to live with his 11 year old boy on daily basis:

You know my brother am married quite alright but as you can see that this boy is too hyperactive and he gives us little time to rest well in the night due to his challenges with sleep such that certain nights am forced to sleep in the sofa to curb his behavior.....without enough sleep I woke up fatigued in the morning yet with another awaiting task of driving the boy to school and waiting in the school campus for him to knock off then proceed to the market place for my business. Anyway, he has taught us what it means to love another person unconditionally with my wife! (P5, 27-03-2019).

A single female mother had this to say:

My brother you can't imagine life where by all the time you have to lock your doors and ensure the key is safely hidden for fear that this boy would break out of the home into the neighbors' homes or the streets where danger of any kind awaits. We see our friends leave their children to manage themselves but not with us! It is not easy to live with a child with this condition of behavior (P2, 17-03-2019).

The findings above shows how parents find the management of autism condition to be a tough and exhausting task which leaves both their muscle and mind worn out due to less opportunity of peaceful thoughts and enough rest as a result of continuous day and night cycle of caring for a child with autism.

A female parent (P2) also added her voice by saying:

At church my boy is so used to our pastor such that you to restrain him from accompanying the pastor during the service. I don't know he just changes from nowhere and becomes so cool and observant of the happenings. Thank God the church members have also gotten used to

the boy and as days went by we got used just to let him accompany us to church on Sundays (P2, 17-03-2019).

A mother to one of the boys with autism hinted on the aspect of child abuse by some community members when she said:

My boy enjoys moving aimlessly all-over the neighbors' homes and market places such that when he knocks off from school at 16 hours he reaches home around 22 hours or beyond that. He chats and enjoys escorting any person he meets on the way. These days are quite risky. There are serial killers and I don't know how he survives it Only by God's grace my son! (P6, 29-03-2019).

The findings as above shows how deep the effect of autism behaviors is on parents. It robs parents off the joy and pride other parents experience when going shopping or worshipping in company of their lovely children.

4.2.3 Social Impact of Raising a Child with Autism

The study reveals that parents to children with autism were both positively and negatively impacted upon by the presence and behaviors of a child. On the positive aspect, some parents found living with a child with autism to be a phase of learning to be patient, accepting and tolerating those perceived to be differently abled as an individual or group. Parents learnt what it means to give unconditional love and what it means to experience the moment of testing a marriage or family bond while anchoring one's faith, trust and hope in God. Some parents gave the following views in line with the above finding:

I have brothers and sisters in some of my neighbors and church mates who have helped me pull through. Yes, stigma can be there but what really matters is how you regard yourself before people can place you with a tag. Otherwise, not everybody is bad! (P2, 17-03-2019).

My child is my child whether other people regard him not that normal. He is a God given child and therefore like the other children I

have had, I wish to see him develop into an independent and responsible adult (P5, 27-03-2019).

However, on the negative aspect some parents especially mothers had their freedom of movement and association limited due to their everyday demand for their presence next to the child with autism. Parents had little opportunity to go for social outings and gatherings like party functions, church services, and funerals. Some of the parents were often worried each day as it came that their child might offend the neighbors to an extent of destroying their property. Some parents were no longer at peace with some relatives who exhibited a negative attitude towards the kind of experiences they passed through with their children. Hence the following remarks by some parents:

It is dangerous to leave such a child all by himself looking at his behavior and life of nowadays in the community we live in (P2, 17-03-2019)

We restrain the boy from overstepping the neighbors and relatives homes for fear that he may disturb them or destroy their property (P4, 25-03-2019).

His own sisters and a brother refer to the boy as 'this baby of yours' 'your son' and so forth, so everything about him is hipped on my shoulders as a mother. Holidays come and go but he can't be received anywhere by the sisters and a brother. So he is ever with me (P6, 29-03-2019).

Articulations of such nature as above by some parents are a clear indication that their social life was not that easy and that they lacked the peace and expected social networking with the surrounding environment. This also made some parents hesitate from seeking communal support for their children.

4.2.8 Parental Future Perspectives

During the interviews, it was also revealed that some parents had serious worries about the future of the children. One mother narrated:

Really, I am afraid that this problem will be more difficult later in life. It rings in my mind all the days the child still fails to control his bowels and messes on himself. I keep thinking about that and people think I have simply failed to train him on good manners. (P3, 17-03-2019).

Another female parent also said:

My every day prayer is that God may one day restore my daughter's mind so that she grows into freedom of good choice making on a number of issues which affects her life especially in adulthood. But I know one day things may not be the same (P4, 25-03-2019)

The third parent had also some positive expectations which were revealed in these words:

I may not demand much but just that restoration of decency in the boy to avoid certain behaviors which leaves him and us a laughingstock in the eyes of other people. That would be a plus on my part (P2, 17-03-2019).

Other parents expressed their expectations for their children in the area of academic and economic independence:

I wish my child would retain the mental power and self-control in completing tasks given be it at school or home so that in the near future the child would complete school and become employable (P4, 25-03-2019).

Surprising enough this boy is capable of counting numbers and can manipulate computer games at a higher rate than myself. Now given a chance that all this works to his advantage academically, the boy can be somebody great in the near future (P5, 27-03-2019).

From the above revelations, it is clear that parents to children with autism still have a burning heart and desire to see their children lead a normal life like any other child in society. They feel and wish a solution would be found either medically or spiritually for the benefit of the child and his family too.

4.2.6 Stigma and Self-Blame

The interviewed parents also revealed that they experience an uphill battle against stigma perpetuated by themselves and some of their neighboring community members and close relatives. A father to one of the children with autism explained that:

The behavior observed in the boy is something you cannot ignore rest you embarrass yourself publicly. You can't go with him to church or market place because he will disturb other worshippers or customers especially where touching of other people's things and screaming is concerned. It is a serious challenge my brother (P5, 27-03-2019).

One female parent had this to say regarding this stigma:

Sometimes I just overlook when I hear some children playing with my child call him all sorts of nick names while some elderly persons carry round a community gossip and accusations that we are practicing magic and want to get reach that's why we made the child the way he is! (P3, 17-03-2019).

One female parent said:

Sometimes when the child goes out, he or she is mistreated by other people because of poor communication with members of the public and returns home crying and he or she will not be able to explain what happened. So if you are not careful as a couple you may begin blaming each other, develop tempers and exchange bad words (P3, 17-03-2019).

A female parent expressed displeasure at the level of stigma and abuse to the children with Autism by society:

People enjoy laughing at him and at one point I was irritated to learn that someone had hired him to draw water for a coin you can imagine! (P6, 29-03-2019).

It is clear from the findings above that living with a child with autism have turned both the child and his or her family into a laughing stock by society.

The stigma imposed by society also leaves a child with autism dehumanized forcing parents to withdraw from the much needed social engagement. In the long run this diminishes the opportunities of parents and the child finding support from the community.

4.2.3 Marital Challenges

The interviewed parents revealed that their love affection was somewhat affected by the presence of the child with autism in the family. Some men had to opt for a separation, and others divorced their wives and vowed never to have another child with the same woman. The words of a 27-year-old single mother puts it this way:

I never knew whom I married until the day we experienced the disability in this child. He completely changed and gave me a back while blaming me for our child's condition. Only God can judge us. My husband left me just when the child turned 6 years although he had already stopped rendering any help to the child even much earlier. In this world, it's like when a child is born without a disability then such a one belongs to both of you as husband and wife and the community at large. But when a child has a disability then he or she is yours alone as a mother! (P2, 17-03-2019).

Another female parent gave out her thoughts and feelings about stigma when she said:

The relatives to my husband especially the mother and sisters advised him to leave me on allegations that it is possible I was practicing juju (traditional medicine) to win love from my husband hence I could have missed the instructions from the witch doctor thus the suffering of the child as punishment from God! (P2, 17-03-2019)

The above sentiments from the findings shows how the disability or healthy condition of a child is treated as a baby to nurse by the mothers. Mothers to the child with are perceived by their husbands and society at large to be the cause of any condition that attacks a child.

4.2.8 Costs

The interviewed parents expressed that they incurred various costs in trying to manage their living with a child with autism. Such costs included material/financial costs, social-emotional costs, employment cost, to mention but a few.

A female parent remarked that:

The boy has given us a hard task of buying items to replace certain home equipment's and kitchen utensils because there I shouldn't cheat he has been destructive whenever his tantrums occur but he has taught us a smart way of relating with such individuals through needs satisfaction and avoidance to avoid chaos in the home. His own brothers know that too because he can hit anyone provoking him with any object nearby. So we really spend our times with the boy carefully and consciously! (P4, 24-03-2019).

The interview with parents also revealed that parents they faced some economic challenges in trying to fend for themselves and a child. One mother said:

It is an expensive venture to manage the needs of a child with autism especially as a mother without much support from my husband. I have to take the child to and from school all by myself every day unless one of us is sick. This consumes a lot of my income as a self- employed business single lady especially when it comes to school fees, toys, computer games, hospital bills and special food stuffs (P6, 29-03-2019).

One mother when asked on financial matters had this to say:

My brother, we have spent a lot of money on this boy especially that he is selective on food stuffs and he at times develops tantrums and smashes anything he comes across in the home. He has so far broken four flat screen television sets, a number of glass cups, mag cups and

dressing mirrors.....eshi! You can't like it at all! It's just that your own blood is your own and you can't help it (P2, 17-03-2019).

I have given up on company employment in town for the reason that my supervisors could not take any more my excuses for late coming and absenteeism and worse our maid couldn't accept to continue taking care of such a child when I left home for work. It was tough for me to continue with the job in town. In the night I experienced less sleep and so could work up fatigued which gave a challenge of reporting late for work and dozing. I fear for his life in my absence! (P4, 25-03-2019).

A male parent also narrated his ordeal by saying:

In most cases we find ourselves in a situation where we literally fail to engage in many of society's activities. We avoid outings, be it weddings, church, overnight funeral gatherings.....and a lot more bro! (P5, 27-03-2019).

Away from financial costs, some parents narrated how living with a child with autism has denied them the happiness and joy they looked forward to when expecting the birth of a child. A female parents lamented:

Sometimes I feel confused, frustrated and depressed because I do feel like I have lost my 'typical' child and never to regain him anymore. It's so painful except I have no choice but to carry the misfortune on my back. (P2, 17-03-2019).

The above findings clearly indicates that parents found the task of living with a child with autism to be such an enormous challenge. It is something which has given them a variety of costs resulting into pressure of the body, mind and soul so unbearable at times. Parents' verbatim express the need for urgent relief either through material help, financial, spiritual or psychological counselling.

4.2.9 Management strategies by parents

Despite some negative reactions from some family members and neighbors, parents still found some survival strategies to lead a normal life with a child living with autism. For instance, some of the parents responded to the situation using the follow words:

P6: The instigated stigma by society has actually built me strong in faith and belief in God and whatever people can say has no impact on me because my conscious tells me am innocent (27-03-2019).

P5: Worrying about what other people say can just worsen the burden you already have as a parent. People give up on their negative thoughts why they realize you don't care much about their demeaning remarks. So I mind my own business with my child and this has been the source of my strength and joy! (29-03-2019).

Parents also expressed various ways they used to address the challenges they were facing by living with children with autism. Findings of the study revealed that a variety of coping mechanisms were engaged in different situations depending on what seemed to be helpful to the parents. When asked on the same matter, one female parent said:

It is the school, it's the school that has helped him (the child) to be what he is now. If it were not for the school his condition would have been worse. I keep connecting and collaborating with the school especially his grade teacher in order to address my child's behavioral problem (P1, 15-03-2019).

The interviewed parents also revealed that other measures they took in managing autism behaviors included training a child in some activity for daily living such as toilet visiting, dressing, feeding and bathing oneself. This kind of training involved other family members such as siblings in the care of the child. One female parent said:

We try our level best as a family especially with the help of his brothers and a sister to try and put him in the line at least where basic self-care is concerned. He may not do what he is being told to do right

away or seeing friends doing but you will see the child try to do the same activities later in the day or even the next day. So I have learnt a lot from this autism behavior and these children with autism are actually like any other except they present their own uniqueness (P2,17-03-2019).

I have brothers and sisters in some of my children, neighbors and church mates who have helped me pull through. Yes, stigma can be there but what really matters is how you regard yourself before people can place you with a tag. Otherwise, not everybody is bad! (P4, 25-03-2019).

Some of the parents interviewed revealed that providing extra care to a child with autism was one strategy that parents used to manage autism behavior. One grandmother explained that:

Each child needs parental care from the attachment figure mainly the primary care giver. If the care is not enough, a child may be affected and be insecure. Apart from showing him (child) unconditional love, we (parents) put the child's interests and needs within the home as a priority. We provide him with his favorite cartoons, objects, and food stuffs. For example, when it comes to relish this boy just accepts to eat one part of the chicken (the wings) and nothing else! One parent who happens to be a grandmother added by saying "As a parent one need to be patient and realistic with these children for the behavior generally won't change overnight (P1, 15-03-2019).

Interviews conducted with parents revealed most of them depended on the school so much in molding their child's undesirable behavior. One parent said:

The teachers are doing a great job. They do help the child feed, go to toilet, rest and hold him back till the time I show up to pick the child. Personally I do miss the help teachers render to my child when it is a holiday because you have to know now the task is by yourself.....no camp shifting (P5, 27-03-2019).

These similar views were echoed by parents P3 except with an addition to say:

Teachers do help us a lot though the time of interacting with them is so limited because they have other things to do as well within the school day (P3, 17-03-2019).

Basically, the majority of the parents said their relationship with teachers to their children was generally good. While a section of society may have stigmatized a child with autism and his or her family, a good number of parents interviewed indicated positive hopes in their children just like any other good and loving parent would love to see his or her child succeed in life. A female parent said:

My child is my child whether other people regard him to not that normal. He is a God given child and therefore like the other children I have had, I wish to see this one develop into an independent and responsible adult (P2, 17-03-2019).

The study findings above shows that parents to children with autism experienced psychological and physical stress in parenting a child with autism. They further faced some financial drain, stigma related challenges and general embarrassment caused by the routine behavioral activities the children engaged in. Parents however found some coping strategies in living with their children with autism through means such as relying on the siblings, friends, the church, school, self-motivation and perseverance. This is a clear sign that parents, especially the female folk holds so much of unconditional love to their children with autism.

4.3 Teachers experiences of managing peculiar behaviors in learners with autism.

Teachers interviewed were from special unit A with codes (T1, T2 and T3) while teachers with codes (T4, T5 and T6) were from special unit B. The researcher began the interview by finding out on teachers' negative and positive experiences in interacting with learners with autism.

4.3.1 Teachers' negative experiences in managing behaviors in learners with autism

A male teacher from Special Unit B said:

As you can see this class has only three learners with autism condition while the rest are not. While we appreciate the aspect of

inclusiveness in school, the autism learners do disturb the learning process through self-ejection from the learning or abrupt shouts and screaming (T5, 01-04-2019)

A female teacher at Special Unit B had this to say regarding educating the learners with autism:

It is not easy to meet the individual needs of learners with autism in an overcrowded classroom environment like this. However, given a one to one contact, some of these learners would definitely make it academically to a certain extent (T4, 21-03-2019).

The study revealed that teachers were indeed overwhelmed with strange behaviors in autism. One female teacher from Special Unit A said:

The behaviors in these children can leave one completely exhausted such that if you have two learners with autism in class it's like you are managing forty or fifty of them. We get tired when it comes to intervening in such disturbing behaviors like changing nappies, screaming amid lessons, forcing a child to do a task, walking about in class, general lesson disruption, touching objects and sometimes one's private parts as though something is itching. These are really unique individuals! (T3, 20-03-2019).

The interviewed teachers also revealed that matters of safety and security in their classes were compromised due to the presence of learners with autism.

One male teacher from Special Unit A had this to say:

If you take lightly the matter of security, then you should be ready for court cases and police investigations if one child goes missing and worse if that child loses his or her life through untimely death while in astray! (11-03-2019)

One male teacher from Special Unit A said:

Some children have made themselves disabled by biting their lips or hands when they are throwing tantrums and some become weak that they will sleep most of the time while in school (T2, 11-03-2019).

The interviewed teachers especially from Special Unit A expressed their feelings on how they found the task of teaching and caring for a child with autism at reception level. The teachers at this Unit had not only the task of teaching in class but they also had to feed, clean and change nappies for the reception learners with autism. The views by teachers (T1, T2, and T3) were as follows.

T1: Here we give all the motherly care to the child as you can see the school is without a social worker for now. We feed and clean up when a child messes of himself (T1, 11-03-2019).

T2: Am really a special teacher tasked with a special task without any special allowance. That's the arrangement and I wish I could change this whole arrangement because at home I have a maid but here at work am more than a maid! (T2, 11-03-2019)

From the above findings on sub theme 4.3.1, it is clear that teachers do appreciate their interaction with learners with autism except for their challenging behaviors which are so exhaustive, risk taking, and a drawback to an effective learning-teaching process.

4.3.2 Teachers' positive experiences and expressions of handling learners with autism.

Through interviews, teachers had the opportunity to express their mixed personal experiences and motivation in dealing with learners with autism. Most of the teachers gave out their views that they found teaching learners with autism to be challenging, interesting and worthwhile experience they have had in their teaching career. One male teacher said:

The behaviors in these guys' interest me so much despite the fact that you have teach, teach and reteach hoping one day they can grasp the concept but just knowing you are hammering rocks because their behavior distracts their learning so much (T4, 21-03-2019).

One female teacher said:

We accept to receive these children just as they come from their home. We agree to change their nappies, bath them (learners) and feed them one by one. What else can a teacher do? Very few of us agree to

handle such learners with inadequate skills for self-upkeep! (T1, 03-2019)

Comments from one male teacher were that:

We also deserve to receive learners who can fluently speak and take care of themselves like any other teacher under the ministry of education. So, we are fair enough to accept such an enormous responsibility of handling learners with autism. We agree to take up the parental role of which one without a good heart cannot manage even with all the highest qualifications on the land! It's like a vocation for us! (T6, 10-04-2019).

One female teacher said:

It is difficult for a learner with autism to excel academically because they have too much breaks in between their learning process. They can scream, cry, leave a lesson at any time or decide to answer or to a question or do a given task later or even the next day. So how can such a one progress academically? It is practically impossible!" (T6, 10-04-2019)

Another female teacher elaborated by saying:

Most of us teachers you see tend to have wrong expectations of the learners with autism. Some teachers are too academic and hence expect these learners to speak, read, write and pass exams and proceed from one level to the next. Some teachers are literally being forced to teach such learners and sometimes would hesitate to escort autism learners during the public gatherings like sports activities due to stigma because even other teachers and some head teachers like referring to these children as 'our children' 'your children'. You request for permission to be off for just a day or so but the administration will say 'who will remain with your children?' So it's not easy and some teachers end up abandoning such classes with autism" (T3, 20-03-2019).

4.3.3 Management Strategies used by teachers

Teachers interviewed used management strategies to curb undesirable behaviors in learners with autism. For instance, a female teacher said:

There needs to be more workshops. We need to be trained but at the same time the training is really expensive. It's definitely a learning curve for myself as a new teacher to figure out how to manage kids with autism. Having people in the school to help me and different strategies like visual supports really help because they can kind of gain some independence in knowing what to do next in their routine (P6, 10-04-2019).

Other teachers also noted the importance of extra training to learn more about autism to adapt teaching styles and environments to support successful learning.

You undergo all the training but then you create kind of your own philosophy and pedagogy. I think it's incredibly important not just to learn about autism but to learn what makes these kids tick and how to reach them. You don't have to be an autism expert but you really get a sense of how they learn (T4, 21-03-2019).

Interviewed teachers stressed much on the use of meaningful reinforcements.

Learners with autism may not be motivated by common reinforcements that work with other students. A child might prefer some time spent alone, time to talk to a preferred teacher, a trip to the cafeteria or snack shop, an exercise routine, time to play with a desired object, music, playing in water, getting to perform a favorite routine, items that provide specific sensory stimulation, or sitting at the window. It is important to know what works as reinforcement for each child in terms of likes and dislikes (T3, 20-03-2019).

The importance of setting individualized goals and rewarding socially acceptable behavior was highlighted as a mechanism of behavioral management in learners with autism. A female explained,

Kids with autism need an external motivator and finding that motivator is really difficult. I usually carry sweets in my bag which I give when a child completes a particular given task (T2, 11-03-2019).

Generally, all the interviewed teachers acknowledged that use age-appropriate materials to learners with autism was key to behavioral management and learning in itself. One male teacher emphasized by saying:

It is important to honor the dignity of a learner with autism through the choice of instructional materials. Even if the instruction must be modified significantly, the learning materials should be appropriate to the age of the student (T1, 11-03-2019).

The interviewed teachers also highlighted the need to break tasks given to learners with autism through what they called task analysis. Teachers emphasized on the need to break complex tasks down into subtasks and reinforce in small, teachable steps. Teachers gave an illustration of teaching a self-help skill such as brushing teeth, the task may need to be broken down into sub-skills:

Getting the toothbrush and toothpaste, turning on the water, wetting the toothbrush, opening the lid of the toothpaste, putting the toothpaste on the toothbrush, brushing and rinsing with water (T1, 11-03-2019).

Another male teacher said:

Life skills, social skills, and academic skills can all be analyzed and approached as tasks and sub-tasks, with each step taught and then linked to the next in a chain of sub-tasks (T2, 11-03-2019).

Others recommended that new teachers should observe more experienced teachers.

If they're a new teacher coming in definitely talk to a teacher who has students in the classroom, even possibly observe a classroom that has a child in it 'because sometimes just seeing the behavior is much better than talking about it (T5, 01-04-2019).

Teachers also narrated how they prevent meltdowns in autism learners. One teacher reported that:

It is critical to let children with ASD know about transitions, letting them know when something is going to change in routine' (T6, 10-04-2019).

Another teacher gave an example of how they dealt with unexpected outdoor activities which can be overwhelming for children with ASD:

I do find my learners particularly vulnerable to anxiety and intolerant of feelings of frustration if they cannot perform the tasks assigned. Increasing the level of difficulty bit by bit through visual information does assist in minimizing the child's frustration (T5, 01-03-2019).

When we have a class outdoor activity, we have to tell the learners with ASD it's coming so that they prepare to go. We avoid surprises for such learners to avoid resistance. This same applies to going for break and knocking off time. You just need to make them (learners) ready. (T3, 20-03-2019).

For teachers who did not have as much experience in working with children with disabilities, they explained the need to have a flexible teaching style. One female teacher recalled her experience:

Teachers have to be willing to sort of adapt. Like, for example, if you've been kind of teaching or thinking the same way for 20 years and all of a sudden you have an autistic child in class and you can't quite use the same plan as you used to . . . There's a lot of just being flexible and being creative and planning (T4, 21-03-2019).

Meanwhile, other teachers possessing a wealth of experience in teaching learners with autism stressed the importance of being flexible to several different learning styles. A male teacher with 14 years of teaching experience said:

The conditions that I see represented in my classrooms are so diverse. I don't really have one approach. I have taught learners with a wide range of autism conditions. (T6, 10-04-2019).

Some teachers mentioned the level of patience and consistency it takes to teach a child with ASD:

It takes lots of patience usually. You have to work with any abrupt changes to their schedule and that doesn't go over well. So you have to keep everything kind of consistent for them and give them lots of time (T5, 01-04-2019).

Undeniably, creative planning is a requirement when structuring a classroom activity for the benefit of learners with autism where supporting of good behavior is concerned. Such planning will help to create opportunities for all students while enhancing the suitable environment of the class.

Focusing on children's abilities rather than their limitations or differences is another key finding in the study that teachers strongly emphasized. Children with ASD often have very specific interests and it can be difficult to engage them in other topics. Six teachers stressed the importance of learning about students' special interests and building on them to keep them engaged in lessons:

I think incorporating the child's interest into whatever you're teaching is critical. . . Especially if it's an activity that they're not going to prefer, you've got to get their interest involved in it. So if a kid hates reading or counting then you better well find some books on their special interest like writing or drawing (Male teacher (T6, 10-04-2019).

Another male teacher shared a similar example of building on autism learners' interests by saying specifically, you have to:

Motivate a child through whatever his or her passion is. So he was very passionate about writing and drawing. So every assignment I would spin it to be about that automatically. It always comes back to knowing the kids and knowing what they're passionate in and being interested in (T1, 11-03-2019).

These examples highlight how using grouping strategies can support every child in the classroom while minimizing opportunities to single out students requiring extra support. Some teachers believed that all of the children could make progress, and with appropriate supports children with disabilities would not hold back the progress of others.

In contrast to the usage of pedagogical approach, four teachers described how essential it was to have plans in place to avoid or minimize distress or behavioral outbursts, a common behavioral occurrence among children with ASD. For four teachers this required something as simple as a ‘special toy’:

If they're distracted because their focus is everywhere then it can help to give them some kind of manipulative to play with, whether it's a squeeze ball or something to put in their hands to help them release the tension (T2, 11-03-2019).

Some teachers used a distraction strategy of sending the child to a different classroom where they will release tension by being an assistant teacher:

Instead of waiting for that meltdown to happen, I do send a child to another classroom to help to be an assistant to the teacher. One of our Grade 2s, who is on the spectrum, goes to the reception classroom to help the teacher and that's a reward for him. So the teacher tries to do it before anything happens" (T6, 10-04-2019).

Teachers also recognized that it is essential to give the child space so they can compose themselves. A female teacher said,

Without adequate space, a learner with autism gets mad and stomps back to his desk and he'll start to cry. The other kids are bothered. They're not afraid of him but they're bothered, like 'what's wrong with him?' I say, he'll be ok in a little while let's give him some space (T4, 21-03-2019).

The interviewed teachers highlighted the need for teamwork to enhance the conducive learning environment of the classroom. One female teacher captured the importance of teamwork for successfully educating children with ASD:

In all my career, there's been no other disability or condition that has required as much of a village to raise a kid. I've just never seen a disability where you really need everybody's input (T1, 11-03-2019).

Teachers said they employed a strategy of building a warm and caring relationship with the child with autism so they felt comfortable within the class. A female teacher said:

Let the children know they have someone safe they can lean on and talk to. . .You should build a really good relationship with the child and with the parents and make sure the child has some friends at least to talk to, you know, try to be a fair father or mother to all in the classroom (T5,01-04-2019).

One male teacher described how critical it is for children to feel safe and comfortable:

I really think building a good solid relationship with the kids with any kind of disability really helps to cement things and makes them feel more confident and more comfortable in the classroom (T1, 11-03-2019).

Building an open communication system with the parents was also critical to successfully manage the peculiar behaviors in learners with autism. This helped teachers to gain a better understanding of the child and their specific needs. One female teacher said,

A good dialogue with parents is important because it is really interesting how different behaviors at school and at home can be and finding out what works in the one place (T2, 11-03-2019).

Two teachers mentioned how a home visit was important to gain a better understanding of how the child functions in a familiar environment or discussing with parents which strategies work best with the child:

For me, I have to meet with the parents. I always did home visits because I wanted to see a child in their own environment. You can learn a lot by how the parents interact with them and what little things they do at home that will help or hinder. I also ask the parents to come up with a list of interest inventories (T4, 21-03-2019).

Teachers commented that parental support and communication is essential for the successful management behavior a child with ASD. Specifically, one male teacher said,

If you've got the parental support, it's easy to help with the successes of the child because there's carry over between home and school' (T3, 17-03-2019).

The 'buddy system' where a child with ASD is paired with a typically developing child or 'circle of friends' approach was also helpful to the teachers at Special Unit B in managing strange behaviors in autism. It also gave other children in the class the opportunity to get to know the students with ASD and develop tolerance for differences while recognizing similarities.

A female teacher explained:

What I find really helps is creating like a buddy system..... that buddy sits with you. I've found pairing that whole buddy system really works because it helps the student see the student just like them. We've had a lot of success with that (T4, 21-03-2019).

There's always kids in the class who are willing to be a peer buddy . . . Really plan out who's going to be the peer buddy and I think you have to change it up because no one wants to be hooked on to somebody forever (T5, 01-04-2019).

The above findings reveals that teachers generally found the teaching of learners with autism to be an exciting and challenging thing all together. To some teachers, it was an opportunity to learn more about a variety of strategies to employ in behavior management of autism. To some again, it was described to be more of a burden especially for reception learners where teachers played more of the role of a maid in taking care of a child. To such teachers, handling a learner with autism was described to be a more tasking and stressful activity especially that such learners find it difficult to excel academically as expected by such teachers. Still to others teachers the whole task taught them the need to apply tolerance, love, patience and other virtues to those perceived to be differently gifted.

4.4 Summary

The data presented in this chapter were according to the set objectives, observation of learners with autism and interviews conducted with parents and teachers to the learners with autism respectively. The results from learner observation showed that learners with autism exhibited peculiar behaviors in varying degrees from one learner to another. The most common peculiar behaviors across all the six learners were the individualistic or social interaction disorder, failure to adapt to minor environmental changes, communication challenges, sensory sensitivity, and obsessive behavior. The second in ranking group of undesirable behaviors observed were truancy, spinning, tantrums and aggressiveness. The behaviors that were observed though not common to all the six observed learners with autism were self-injury and inappropriate sexual behaviors found only with two of the learners.

Some of the learners exhibited ritualistic behavior where they could spit on teachers and fellow learners as well as leaking their palms with their tongues. Some of the learners were also found to have feeding problems whereby they smell food before taking it with a preference of dry food stuffs like snacks.

The study findings also revealed that parents do have experiences of anxiety; stress; reduced free time; sleepless nights, controlled movements; self-blame and financial constraints in managing peculiar behaviors in autism. On the other hand, the study found out that families' employ management strategies on autism such as being vigilant; acceptance; house locking; provision of most favorite toys and television programs; through tolerance; patience; kindness and showing unconditional love in fulfilling the child's needs.

The study further revealed that teachers like parents faced numerous experiences in managing peculiar behaviors in learners with autism. Teachers' experiences included ever busy school schedules; risk factors of losing a child or being injured by the child; child injuring himself and classmates; litigations; and stagnant learning process. The study also found out that among the measures teachers employ to manage peculiar behaviors include always being security conscious; using both negative and positive reinforcements; tolerance; patience; acceptance and unconditional positive regard. Teachers also said they applied other behavioral control techniques which included keeping the learners busy, collaboration with

parents, working with learners and sometimes they used simple disciplinary measures on learners with autism.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter focuses on the discussion of the findings, presented in line with the objectives which were to; to determine the nature of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in autism, to establish family experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors in autism and to find out about teachers' experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors of learners with autism. The order of the discussion follows the order in which the findings have been presented in the previous chapter. The findings of this study revealed various peculiar psychosocial behaviors in autism, family experiences and teachers' experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism. The reviewed literature on the nature of autism behaviors, teachers and family experiences in managing peculiar psychosocial behaviors have also helped the study in coming up with emerging themes.

5.1 Nature of Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors in Autism.

The study findings through observation revealed that learners with autism did exhibit some behavioral traits such individualistic, obsessiveness to things and events and over sensitivity to sensory situations such as light, noise and objects. As such these learners with autism were observed to have difficulties to learn because such behavioral traits gave them (learners) hard time to be seat and concentrate during lessons. These study findings are consistent to the findings by Myers and Johnson (2007) whose findings were that individuals with autism tend to be highly individualistic in their self-presentation and that autism individuals find it hard to deal with change in their environment and need to be prepared for a change in routine. The study further indicates that autistic individuals often comfort themselves by following their own routine obsessively. The findings actually reflect the study by Carolyn, Casey and Ashlea (2017) who observed that some children with autism were over sensitivity to many things, including sound, light reflection, texture and certain food stuff.

Similarly, the findings from observation are in line with the study findings by Yark et al. (1998) who revealed that students with autism may be hyposensitive or hypersensitive to sounds and that parents and teachers reported that seemingly mild

sounds can cause extreme responses in some children with autism. This was seen to be particularly problematic in a school setting, which normally includes so many different sounds. Fisher et al. (1991) also confirms that different responses to sensory stimuli may also be apparent in learners with autism's reaction to visual information and smells of food stuffs, perfumes and deodorants. It is further stated that some students with autism could cover their eyes to avoid the effect of certain lighting, or in response to reflections or shiny objects, while others could seek out shiny things and looked at them for extended periods of time.

The extent to which oversensitivity to stimuli is a menace in children with autism is equally highlighted by Whitaker (2001) that in some instances, the child may be oversensitive to certain stimuli or may experience anxiety, fears, develop eating and sleeping problems and may engage in rituals and obsessions or aggressive behavior to themselves and others.

While it is appreciated that such peculiar behavioral traits are exhibited by learners with Autism, it calls for concerted efforts by the Zambian Ministry of General Education to create conducive environments capable of curbing such peculiar behaviors in Autism. To the contrary, the learning environment at one of the visited special units operates an inclusive kind of setting in which learners with Autism are exposed to a variety of noise pollution. Lack of technological materials suitable for the learning of learners with Autism was identified to be critical too. The classroom environment itself is too open for many other disturbances including light itself creating an unconducive learning environment for learners with Autism.

Thus, Muzata (2010) remarked that without making the learning environments conducive with necessary material for the teacher and the learners in the teaching learning process. Giving the teacher all the knowledge on how to teach without the tools for teaching and learning is like training a soldier and commanding him or her to go to war with a gun without ammunition. Muzata lamented that schools have been built; teachers have been trained but have neither the resources nor the means to create the resources necessary for learners' effective construction of information. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s ecological model strongly emphasized on the impact of the macrosystem where policy formulation is concerned and the exosystem under which policy implementation takes place at the school level on the developing child. The good policy statements on need for quality education for learners with

Special Needs are at variance with the quality output in special units in terms of quality and suitable learning materials and infrastructure. Therefore, the reluctance by the Ministry of General Education to bring to fruition the designed policies on special education in Zambia has become a barrier to the desired quality education for children with Special Education Needs like those with Autism.

The study findings revealed that learners with autism had serious challenges social interaction by failing to recognize personal space and reading others' facial expression. This finding is in line with Carolyn et al. (2017) who revealed that some children with autism often have deficits in social attachments even with family members and are perceived to be in their own world. The study further reveals that learners with autism exhibit tactile defensives hence they tend to be irritable and withdrawn when touched. Given such behaviors in a child with Autism, one would expect to find viable programs such as the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) aimed at helping both the learner and the parents in the area actual learning and counselling. There was however little evidence from the interviewed teachers that the use of IEPs was a common practice in addressing the peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with Autism. It is therefore difficult to achieve a positive child development where there is no meaning reciprocity between the microsystem (child and family) as an immediate first environment of the child and the exosystem comprised of the school and other professionals.

Hartmann (2012) and Khasakhala and Galava (2016) identified a number of peculiar behaviors in autism which includes social communication, social interaction, social-emotional deficits, aggression, and temper tantrums as key disruptive behaviors in Autism. These same behaviors were discovered to be prominent in learners with Autism though in varying degrees from one child to another. Such behaviors in learners with autism can be disruptive to the learning process and quite stressing on part of the teacher and a parent unless a critical measure is taken by two partners in the learning of a child. This is so especially for the kids who scream a lot when attacked by temper tantrums. However, to the opposite, visited special units had no policy regarding the use of facilitators, and the parents to children with high functioning Autism to be present in helping the teachers handle a child with less difficulties.

Self-talk alongside repetitive behaviors such as self-rocking, hand flapping, and use of meaningless phrases which later results into communication difficulty which to an extent tends to be sort of telegraphic language was seen to be common in learners with Autism. This finding is consistent with Myers and Johnson (2007)'s findings that individuals with autism can be highly individualistic.

Levels of anxiety were also seen among learners with autism. This finding is consistent with Harrington (1998) who revealed that many parents and teachers identify anxiety as a characteristic associated with autism. This anxiety may be related to a variety of sources, including inability to express oneself; difficulties with processing sensory information; fearing some sources of sensory stimulation; high need for predictability, and having difficulty with change and difficulty in understanding social expectations.

The development of communication skills in a learner with autism is very important. Mbewe (2016) indicated that communication strategies such as picture exchange communication skill can be utilized across all environments to minimize on communication barrier in learners with autism. This means that both the school and the home can ably share communication skills to enhance the learning of a child with Autism. The visited special units were implementing the picture exchange communication strategy to enhance speech in learners with autism although no evidence existed to show whether the teachers and the school at large transferred these skills parents as well. The school and home linkage is vital if meaningful child development is to be realized. Therefore, the failure by the Special Units professionals to effectively share communication skills with parents is contrary to Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s ecological model which has emphasized the need for reciprocity kind of linkage across the all the surrounding environments that influences child development. The home work policy is very clear on how teachers and parents can share the responsibility of educating a child.

5.2. Parents experiences with management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in autism

5.2.1 Anxiety and Disbelief

From the study findings, parents to children with autism expressed their high levels of anxiety and disbelief upon the discovery that their child had the condition which

before and after the diagnosis process they could not understand well. This finding relates well with Prince (2007) who found out that parents to children with autism also experience periods of disbelief, deep sadness and depression and self-blame and guilt whereas others experience helplessness, feelings of inadequacy, anger, shock and guilt. They further highlighted that specific stressors that contribute to parental distress include concerns over the permanency of their child's condition, poor acceptance of autistic behaviors by society and, other family members and low levels of social support received by other parents. It is in this same vein that Kourkoutas et al. (2012) has stated that mothers to children with autism appear to be the most affected and experience distress, conflicting and even indecisive emotions. He however argues that depression is often elevated at the time of diagnosis of a child's disability but may decline substantially over time and that chronic sorrow and a sense of failure are emotional states often reported by parents of children with autism.

5.2.1 Physical and mental well-being of parents.

The study findings show that parents to children with autism experienced stressful moments due to sleepless nights and a busy routine schedule of caring for their children. The study findings are in line with Hartmann (2012) who revealed that parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) often reported increased levels of stress, depression, and anxiety. The dissatisfied parents' mental health needs were reported to pose a significant risk to the psychological, physical, and social well-being of the parents of the child affected by ASD and so did jeopardize the adaptive functioning of the family as well as the potential of the child affected by ASD. The good and sound mental and physical health of every parent is key for better choice making and maintenance of a harmonious home environment. Once the health of parents is compromised, the relationship between the child with autism and the family together with the surround environment may not be that sound. The connection of a child to the outside environment is highly dependent on the parents (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

5.2.2 The social impact of raising a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The study findings reveals that the social life of parents was impacted both positively and negatively. Living with a child with autism brought a new phase of exciting life experience to some parents. This challenged some parents to become more patient,

tolerating and to exhibit unconditional love for their children with autism. Parents also found the presence of a child with autism in the family to be a greater opportunity to experience the moment of testing their family bond amid a negatively perceived disability or condition by most of society's members. Additionally some parents regarded the presence of a child with autism condition to be a source of anchorage of faith, trust and hope in God that one day things may not be the same. The above study findings are in line with Myers and Johnson (2007) who enlisted that a family living with a child with autism need natural supports such as spouses, extended family members, neighbors, religious institutions, and friends who can help with caregiving and who can provide psychological and emotional support.

On the negative aspect, the presence of a child with autism in the family was perceived to be disruptive on parents' freedom and leisure time. Sometimes parents avoided going with the child to social gatherings such as church because of the child's disturbing behavior. How a child interacts with the social environment provisions can be a matter of great concern for every well-meaning parent. Some parents showed more love to their child with Autism than any of their siblings by way of over-protecting and over-caring to the child. While this was the case with some parents and guardians, others hated and rejected their child with autism altogether as was the case with some fathers who could not support their child to the extent of preferring for a separation or divorce with their wives or not escorting such a child to school.

This study findings above are consistent with Aylaz et al. (2012) revelations that caring for a child with ASD affected the relationship that parents had with other family members. Parents reported that other children felt they were not treated the same as their brother or sister with autism. The study has also found out that some parents reached out to these children to compensate for the extra time they spent with their sibling with ASD. The study further found out that in some families, the impact of living with a brother or sister with ASD affected the sibling's health. However, in some families, an older sibling assisted parents in the care of their brother or sister with ASD. The findings also confirm the revelations by some parents that caring for a child with autism was a daunting task which left a parent worn out both socially, mentally and physically. Furthermore, parents experienced conflicts in the community and sometimes were even confronted when the child destroyed

somebody's property. This created tension and resulted in lack of peace especially with people like neighbors who could not understand the condition of the child. Sometimes the love life of a mother was affected for reasons related to having a child with autism.

This finding above mirrors that of Hartmann (2012) who points out that parents were finding it difficult to manage their children with autism because of stigma and discrimination that was practiced by the members of the public and to a larger extent by themselves (parents/guardians). Thus the family becomes stigmatized because of the existence of a child with autism in their family. Parents and guardians are very particular with the manner in which other onlookers check on them as they try to put their level best in managing the autism condition in their child. The family gets so suspicious to an extent of feeling or thinking like some neighbors are talking or laughing their child. Due to this happening, the family with the child may to some extent limit on their socialization with the neighbors and friends. This is in agreement with Nyoni (2014)'s views that parents of children with autism face challenges both at home and in the community due to the negative attitudes by the community. This lack of community support implies that parents and guardians do hastate to seek assistance from the community.

Besides, findings in this study indicated that some parents and guardians are not at peace with the child's behavior whilst at home and at school. Most parents to children with autism feel guilt especially upon getting some gossip and rumors from society which accuses them of practicing witchcraft to gain riches by disturblizing the health of their own child. This finding is in agreement with the study by Muwana (2012) who reveals that traditionally, autism was seen as a psychiatric disorder, a curse or a consequence of witchcraft. The study further states that prevailing belief has been that individuals with disabilities were unnaturally conceived or bewitched, and therefore, neither fully neither human nor a part of the community. This explains the reasons why social acceptance and attitudes toward individuals with autism is a challenge both at family and communal level.

From the study findings, it came out clearly that children with Autism do face challenges of physical, psychological and verbal insults. This finding is mirrored in the revelations by Hartley (2010) children with autism are not only prone to self-injury but rather sometimes physical abuse of different nature by peers can take a

lead in causing harm to the child. Similarly, Newman (2007) also found that living with children with autism was associated with stigma. Parents and guardians were troubled by their child with autism being mistreated, discriminated against, and segregated in the community. Parents were laughed at and told bad things about the child. This hostile reaction from some of the neighboring community towards the child and the family with an Autistic child would make the family at microsystem level to close up in interacting with the surrounding environment. This trend eventually becomes a barrier where child development is concerned as.

The above finding is also consistent with Roberts (2002) who revealed that parents and children with autism were vulnerable and suffered mistreatment from people by being beaten, pushed from social contact. The children were also reported to be at risk of being physically and sexually abused. This finding is further consistent with Newman (2007) who states that the social security of the children was not very much guaranteed as a number of attempts to abuse the children sexually and physically was reported in some quarters of the community.

5.2.5 Parental future perspectives

The pride of every parent is to see his or her child achieve all the stages of development as expected. Parents and guardians to children with autism however somewhat get defeated by the behavior problems like tantrums, screaming, crying, inability to concentrate, aggressiveness, stubbornness and inappropriate sexual behaviors in some of their children with autism. Thus Sivberg (2002) has highlighted that parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) do experience higher stress levels than parents of children without ASD. In the same vein, Hartley et al., (2010) have remarked that understanding the experiences parents go through is critical because it provides a glimpse into daily family realities and the ways that Autism Spectrum Disorders can impact parent child dynamics. These behaviors make parents worry for the future of their children in case they leave them in an event death.

The above finding was as pointed out by Boushey (2001) who found out that parents' eagerness about the child's future slowly comes to be viewed with anxieties as their thinking is now more about the future of the child. Such a feeling becomes worse if that

is

their only child. Worrying about the future life of the child was a disturbing challenge for the parents and guardians that some parents experienced due to the inability of the child to accomplish personal and social needs such as self-care and education. They showed these concerns when the child could not do certain developmental tasks expected at specific ages such as feeding, toileting, bathing, and dressing. In addition to that is the parent's loss of Social life and fun. Due to inappropriate behavior of autism children, leisure activities such as participation in sports, clubs, weddings, picnics, and attending family gatherings like funerals were often affected.

This finding above is also consistent with the study by Gray (2003) which revealed that parents may really be over burdened by the child's behavior such that some parents have been reported to have had depression leading to psychopathology.

Living with a child with autism was described as emotionally distressful by parents. Varying degrees of emotional distress were experienced which included having feelings of sadness and inner pain or bitterness. This finding was consistent with Sivbec (2002) who found out that parents experienced these negative emotions due to disturbing behavior of the children, extra care-giving responsibilities, family, and social problems caused by the child, and people's perception about families having a child with autism. Parents described living with a child with autism as a disturbing and yet unavoidable situation. Though their initial challenge was the issue of acceptance, they had to cope with time, accept the child's condition since they had no other alternative. They viewed their caring duty for the child as very difficult and distressing.

The finding above is consistent with Gupta and Singhal (2005) who indicated that among the most important factors associated with parental stress in families of children with autism, include, feelings of loss of personal control, absence of spousal support, informal and professional support. Gupta and Singhal further highlighted that family members of children with autism are often perceived to experience negative psychological effects which may include higher risk for depression, social isolation and marital discord.

The inability of the child with Autism to express his or her needs contributed to psychological and emotional distress on part of the child, a parent/guardian to a child living with autism. This also resulted in child-parent misunderstanding each other. This finding brings to relevance the study by Mbewe (2016) who highlighted on the importance of communication even in a different form since children with ASD are limited with much of verbal accuracy.

5.2.6 Stigma and Self-Blame

Some parents exhibited levels of ignorance amid self-stigma about autism condition. Ignorance was mainly seen in fathers who were reported to have left their wives upon discovering that the growing child had autism condition. Self-stigma by some parents and guardians made them feel that a child with autism is a source of shame to them hence cannot be allowed out of the house anyhow or accompany to church or a shopping center. This was done out of fear that neighbors, relatives or others might make cruel remarks about the child and parents might feel isolated and lose the support they have always enjoyed. This finding correlates to Fletcher et al;(2012) revelations that some children with autism and their parents suffered both internal and external stigma and mistreatment out of ignorance by themselves and the general membership in the community.

To some extent some parents were experiencing self-blame as a result of their children living with autism. This was noted through mothers who wonder if they did something wrong during the course of the pregnancy or after birth, while taking care of the child. They wonder if God is punishing them for their sins. The children with autism were mistreated by people in various ways. This finding is in agreement with Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow (1997) who found that sometimes children with disabilities are labeled and made fun of in the community, considered to be useless and even sadly rejected by the parent because of the disability. Parents and guardians were sometimes held responsible for the child's behavior. They were thought to be spoiling the child by not being strict enough when the child was behaving strangely. Because of these reasons majority participants (parents) had some sort of an inner feeling of guiltiness thinking maybe they caused the condition of the child. Hence a serious parents-professional collaboration as advocated by (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is

needed under which parents would benefit from counselling services to lead an active role of interaction in society. This way others benefits would be accrued in terms of finding support for the child.

The study findings revealed that the challenge of raising up a child with autism left some parents and guardians somewhat powerless with little hope for the future. Parents developed anxiety and fears upon their child being diagnosed with the condition of autism of which they showed to have little knowledge about it. This finding is consistent with Banach et al; (2010) who argues that, the sense of anxiety and fears comes both from a lack of understanding about autism and a lack of information about the specialized facilities and resources available for children with autism. What disturbed parents most was the inability and inertia by their child to move at the same space in developmental milestones as other children of the same age. This to some extent reveals that parents and guardians had unrealistic expectations by failing to acknowledge each child is a unique individual. This finding is line with Hartmann (2012) who states that parental unrealistic expectations of what their child can and cannot achieve does lead to disappointment not only for them but also for the child.

However, some parents showed some signs of relief in that they now knew the condition their child was faced with unlike others without such kind of knowledge. This finding is also in line with Hartmann (2012) who revealed that just as the spectrum varies, so does each family's experience. Hartmann further states that upon hearing their (parents) child's diagnosis, some parents, feel relieved, some feel grief and loss, while others get shocked and surprised. One study by (Banach et al; 2010) did report that often, parents are relieved that they were given an answer in regards to their child's symptoms although this does not erase the stress that they endure while raising a child with autism. The study however elaborates that Parents often experience stressful situations upon the initial diagnosis that relate to their child's behavior.

5.2.7 Marital challenges

The study finding revealed that some couples had marital challenges as a result of caring for the child living with autism. Having a child with autism overloads married couples with extra responsibilities which leaves them exhausted due to divided

attention. Due to too much stress the spirit of happiness with a tighter bond of marriage between the couple sometimes breaks down. This finding of the study is consistent with Rukuye, Sevbic and Ulvye, (2012) who found that the marital relationship by couples to children with autism can become strained if the parents' attitude towards the child is antagonistic. In this study, some mothers indicated that they were not getting enough support from their husbands in taking care of the children. Some husbands for sure were reported to have gone into hiding or openly divorced their wives on the realization that as a couple they were now facing a life time challenge of raising up a child with autism.

The study finding above is also consistent with Fletcher et al; (2012) who found out that some parents reported that caring for a child with ASD had positive and negative effects on their spousal relationship. Some partners became closer to their spouse in the process of caring for their child with autism. In other cases, it pushed spouses away from each other, with mothers and fathers occupying distinct roles in their family. Filling these distinct roles sometimes fostered resentment, particularly among mothers who believed they received inadequate support from their husband. Additionally, Gray (2003) also highlights that tension also arose when one parent blamed the other for their child's diagnosis. Eventually, some parents divorced, others worried that the constant care they provided to their child with ASD would put their marriage at risk for divorce.

AlHorany et al; (2013) has stated that parents to children with Autism face many stressors and challenges especially couples with special needs children. The study has further revealed that marital stress around the child usually starts when one or both of the parents realize the child is not developing properly. Couples with a child who does not seek their attention in the usual way feel rejected or unimportant to the child.

From the study, it was found that a good number of parents or guardians escorting their children with autism were female parents which raised a question of where the fathers to these children were. This finding confirms the findings by Silice-Kira (2008) who argued that in most cases, a role of division takes place as one parent, usually mother, becomes the autism expert, while father works harder to earn money or opts out. Additionally, Silice-Kira states that subsequently, the father becomes frustrated at the demands of the mother to interact or play with a child who does not

know how, and mothers become frustrated at the lack of involvement of their partners. Conroy et al; (2005) have also added that because of the demands associated with caring a child with autism, parents do not have personal space and time. This results in a weakened affectionate bond between couples, depression, and withdrawal of one parent from care-giving responsibilities or even divorce. Conroy et al; (2005) further raised the concern that mothers usually wonder what they did wrong-drinking or taking medications during pregnancy, exercising too much, allowing the child to be vaccinated; thus adding feelings of guilt to an already stressful situation. The saddest part is that when couples are busy antagonizing each other as narrated above, a child with autism suffers the most. Similarly, Silice-Kira (2008) has remarked that eventually the couple feels isolated because they feel it is hard to take a child to people's homes and are uncomfortable inviting people over. The stress of dealing with autism and all it entails becomes a wedge pushing the parents further and further apart.

5.2.9 The Cost of raising a child with autism

Despite the condition of Autism in their children, parents are not exempted in any way from paying for medical bills, schools fees and any other requirement by the social institutions. Thus caring for a child living with autism is not only stressful to the body but both financial and career prospect. The study finding reveals that parents to children with autism reported changes in their financial position following their child's diagnosis. Some parents and guardians described the need to work to provide financially for their child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). For some, work also had a positive impact on their well-being as they found company and something to keep them busy and away from the stressful behavior of a child. However, some parents had to quit their job because the demands of caregiving for a child with autism were too great, and this produced mixed emotions among them. Additionally, compared to mothers, fathers reported less adjustment to their careers following their child's diagnosis. This finding correlates with the revelations by Gray (2003) that the commitment of some fathers to work increased following their child's diagnosis with autism as one way of dodging the home duties and a burden of caring for a child with Autism.

The finding above is also consistent with McCabe (2010) who indicated that relying on one income hit families financially, such that they had to use retirement funds or take a second mortgage. Eventually, some parents revealed they could not cover the expenses they incurred as a result of caring for their child with ASD. Parents and guardians spent a lot on selected food stuffs, health and education services, transport, books, toys, and computer games and other necessities. Some parents and guardians indicated higher degree of economic pain, depression, anxiety, anger, and frustration at the cost of child care.

Parents too lost a lot of time whilst caring for the child with autism. The finding of the study revealed that parents and guardians had faced economic and financial challenges particularly the complexity role of caring responsibilities that demanded a lot of work and being available most of time to meet the daily needs of the child. The finding of the study is related to Luong et al; (2009) findings that autism is associated with an enormous task of child care difficulties which greatly affect parental employment and well-being.

5.2.10 Parents Management Strategies of Peculiar Psychosocial Behaviors of a Child with Autism.

While some parents had this negative view regarding society's outlook on their child with autism, some parents showed a positive outlook and independent thoughts on what society said about their child. The finding above is consistent with Altieri & von Kluge (2009) who revealed that some parents saw benefits of caring for their child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The study also indicates that some parents became closer in their relationship with their child to the extent of kid grooving such a one. Some parents described how caring for their child with ASD had brought them closer to their spouse and the community at large. Other parents believed that managing the Autism condition of their child had somewhat impacted positively on their spirituality and personality by gaining increased patience, love, tolerance, kindness and so improved ability to cope with the child's condition.

The study revealed that parents, guardians and siblings managed peculiar psychosocial behaviors in their children with autism through means such as being vigilant all the time; acceptance; house locking; provision of most favorite toys, food stuffs and favorite television programs. Parents, guardians and siblings did their best

to help a child with autism in the family say a few words, get the skill in some activities such as dressing, toileting, feeding, bath and play. The study findings confirm the findings by Dyches et al; (2004) that Parents raising a child with autism face extreme difficulties in dealing with challenging behaviors, teaching their child to communicate, teaching basic life skills, guarding their child from danger, and preparing their child for adult life.

The study reveals that some parents used the strategy of having a close link with the schools or special units where their children were learning. They (parents) regarded the school as a healing center for their child. The study finding confirms the assertion by Epstein and Jansorn (2004) that the school and home mutual relationship as stakeholder in the learning of a child with autism is vital if a child is to develop holistically. Thus the duo have emphasized that Parents need educators who are not only knowledgeable about their child's disability and evidence based interventions, but one who will collaborate and advocate with them in order to best support their child. Through linkages with professionals like teachers as emphasized by Bronfenbrenner (1979), some parents indicated that they were coming to better understand their children's conditions which helped them be sensitive to their children's needs, welfare and demands.

From the study findings, some of the mothers revealed that in accepting the condition of the child and coping with stigma from society, they relied upon spiritual comfort and sharing of problems with well-meaning friends. This finding relates well with Hyden and Heller (1997) who found out that mothers and caregivers tend to seek spiritual support to lower their burden and depressive moods. On the other side, Blair (2003) also said mothers use support from others as an important factor helping parents to cope better with disability conditions. More also, the findings are in line with Thompson (2000) who indicated that parents who slowly accepted the child's condition, societal criticism and stigmatization towards their child helped themselves to cope with encounters of raising a child with a disability. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s ecological systems sees the bigger role friends to the family, religious beliefs and culture itself plays in the development of a child with conditions of disability.

What came out from the study is that parents love their children regardless of the level or degree of Autism condition. From the theoretical point of view by

Bronfenbrenner (1979), again the family to the child is seen as the immediate and first encounter environment. How the family responds to the child with disability matters a lot to his or her own personal acceptance of the condition, extended love to the neighbors and exposure to the available social services matters a lot. Failure by the family to deal with self-stigma would lead to institutionalization of an autistic child and so a child with autism would lag behind in terms of acquiring developmental milestones.

Although a variety of literature from the western world have revealed that siblings to the child with autism are normally affected greatly where low self-esteem, less intimacy, getting maladjusted and loneliness are concerned. These views have applied partly on some siblings from one particular home whose mother described the relationship between her son with Autism and the siblings to be pathetic. However, some parents described the social interaction between their child with Autism and brothers/sisters to be of major help in building a child's behavior and a consolation to parents. This finding echoes Nyoni (2014) who also found out that some African families and Zambian families to be specific still enjoyed strong family ties and communal responsibilities between parents and child to child care. The importance of strong family ties cannot be overemphasized as highlighted by Bronfenbrenner (1979) that the family which includes siblings and other extended family members is key to child development as it serves as the primary environment capable of either breaking or seeing the child get connected to various social services in the community. Therefore, on a positive note the role played by siblings to a child with autism cannot be undermine as they provide checks and balances on the individualistic, irritating, disruptive and destructive behaviors of Autism.

5.3 Teacher experiences with management of autism peculiar psychosocial behaviors.

5.3.1 Teacher Training in Autism

The study findings were that the teachers interviewed in the two selected special units were basically trained in general special education. Their training is more biased on handling the four traditional disabilities such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, physically challenged and intellectual impairment. They therefore relied on their basic knowledge and skills gained from the college, university and some seminars and workshops in handling autism. This finding is partly consistent with

the study by Geraldina (2015) who revealed that most of the teachers had low knowledge about autism due to lack of in-service training and seminars. Similarly, Kalabula (2007) also pointed out the inadequacies of initial teacher training in the field of special education by stating that many teachers of children with special educational needs were not able to meet the needs of their learners adequately because of several practical and technical problems one of which is limitation in the teacher's talent and skills.

Teachers agreed that training on how to effectively handle learners with ASD is essential to providing children with ASD with an appropriate education and to minimize social exclusion from their peers. This could be through formal workshops and training as well as informal training from peers and learning on their own.

5.3.2 Challenges faced by teachers handling learners with autism.

Teachers from the visited special units explained that they experienced tough and stressing time of managing peculiar behaviors in learners with autism. Given such behaviors as screaming, spinning, temper tantrums, impatience and aggressiveness in autism, teachers experienced restless moments. Besides, the classes handled were of mixed disabilities in the name of practicing inclusive education. Thus, teachers described their work as being overloaded.

The above finding about unconducive classroom environment goes against the views of Chaiti (2010) who contended that a good provision of education must take into account the environment in which pupils learn. Teachers and the pupils should be free to do their work properly and that any growth at the cost of physical facilities (environment) short-lives the victory of education system. Dwyer (2003) have also indicated that children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. The classroom, in many instances can be the only stable element in the life of a child not experiencing such security in other parts of his/ her life. Teachers model positive behavior, by treating children and adults with respect and building up a positive relationship with their pupils. These views by the scholars above matches with Bronfenbrenner (1979) who advocated for well linked environment for the child grow into a useful human being. For Bronfenbrenner, conducive environment has positive influences starting with the child all the way through to the nation at large. Therefore, looking at the open physical infrastructure of classrooms at special unit B

and the inadequate provision of specialized learning materials, one wonders how a child with autism would stay on in the lesson given the hyperactivity in such learners.

Learners with Autism benefit less from ordinary text books, chalk board and teacher exposition methodologies. Teachers revealed that shortage of modernized learning and teaching materials for learners with autism posed a great challenge in handling learners with autism. This clearly implies that most of the learning for children with autism is inadequate, somewhat traditional and of course compromised because their special educational needs are not being fully met. The study finding therefore is not in line with the stipulations by educating our future policy document on promotion of equal access and quality in education of all learners through provision of adequate and quality learning materials in learning institutions (M.O.E, 1996). Similarly, such finding is contrary to Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s emphasis that a good and responsive education plays a pivotal role in the development of a child with disabilities.

Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers faced the challenging behaviors such as inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Among the most common responses on teaching challenges by teachers related to inattention where learners' found difficulties in sustaining attention in tasks or games, not listening when spoken to directly, not following through on instructions from the teacher or classmates, failing to finish tasks in class. Some teachers indicated that learners with autism do have a dislike for activities that require sustained effort, and that they are easily distracted by external stimuli.

The study findings above relate well with Muller et al; (2008) findings that among the challenges teachers face with autism learners is the commonly known behavior to withdraw from social contact, preference for social isolation, and lack of the ability to establish and maintain age-appropriate relationships. These social impairments have been found to contribute to the child's emotional vulnerability, depression, and extreme stress or frustration. Additionally, Reid and O'Connor (2003) have also indicated that children with ASD do exhibit symptoms of Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder, strong preference toward certain sensory stimuli, over selectivity, and intense interests and deficits in fine and gross motor development which poses significant teaching challenges.

The study findings also revealed that when teaching learners with autism, teachers noted three types of teaching challenges related to emotional regulation difficulties which are anxiety and oppositional-defiant behaviors. Teachers indicated that anxiety occurred when a child was unsuccessful in performing a task, did not know what to expect from the lesson, was expected to interact with others, had to do a competitive activity or an activity he did not like, or was seeking attention from her or his peers, which created teaching challenges. Some of these behaviors included having a tantrum or a meltdown, being irritable or agitated, walking away -from the group, or lying on the floor.

The finding above is consistent with Webster-Stratton (1999) who stated that other times the children's behavior may cause irritation to the teacher teaching a large class with varying abilities and that sometimes such behavior of certain learners disrupts the normal operation of the class or school for a time.

Aggression, which took a form of negative verbal expressions, physical contact, or anger toward others or self, was noted by the teachers to lead to teaching challenges including social isolation. The study findings above are consistent with Khasakhala and Galava (2016) who revealed that among learners with autism, communication is tangled with many other aspects of education and development. These aspects include socialization, behavior, and academics. The study further found out that deficits in communication in students with ASD vary in severity ranging from monotone speech, limited to a specific preferred topic, and to a total absence of verbal communication and emotional behavioral problems which impedes learning.

The study findings above are similar to the findings by Lynch and Irvine (2009) who indicated that the difficulties of understanding the social world for children with ASD may limit the development of relationships with their peers, which can result in further stress and anxiety. The study by Lynch and Irvine (2009) further suggested that given the difficulties in the social and emotional understanding of students with ASD, more work needs to be done by teachers to create 'autism friendly' inclusive social environments within classrooms.

The study findings revealed that teachers found learners with autism to have narrow interest and inflexible adherence to routines and organization of work. Narrow interest seemed to create many instructional and managerial teaching challenges,

particularly in competitive learning situations. The interviewed teachers mentioned that learners with autism did not enjoy certain activities or would get fixated on certain colors, tools, or a process of the game. Therefore, both instructional and administrative tasks were impacted by such teaching challenges. The above study finding that teachers found instructional tasks for autism learners to be more often challenging during competitive activities, is consistent with Reid and O'Connor (2003), who reported that students with ASD often fail to develop a sense of competition. All the challenges as described above by teachers' demand that the inclusive kind of learning being attempted in special units be transformed into meaning kind of practice supported by modern materials and individualized programs in line with learners' interest.

5.3.3 Management strategies employed by teachers on peculiar psychosocial behaviors in learners with autism.

Due to the various challenges teachers faced where behavioral management in learners with autism is concerned, teachers employed certain remedial measures. Firstly, teachers acknowledged that their training from various learning institutions wasn't specifically about autism management but a general kind of specialization in special education. Thus teachers advocated to receive the extra training and, in some cases, had to personally cover the workshop costs associated with learning more about how to handle learners with ASD since the colleges and universities they passed barely scratched on surface about autism.

Secondly, teachers suggested that more formal training in handling learners with ASD is needed both through continuing education and training in teacher's colleges and universities. This study finding is supported by Shyman (2012) who stated that teacher training which focuses on overall certification without emphasizing on autism student might neglected the required special attention and treatment deserved by learners with autism. The views by Shyman (2012) are backed up by Toran et al; (2016) who stated that teacher training program has to be modified to increase teacher's competency in using teaching strategies correctly.

Similarly, Sewell and Wisconsin (1998) has emphasized that quality teachers are lifelong learners in their subject areas, teach with commitment, and are reflective upon their teaching practice. They transfer knowledge of their subject matter and the

learning process through good communication, diagnostic skills, understanding of different learning styles and cultural influences, knowledge about child development, and the ability to marshal a broad array of techniques to meet student needs.

In addition to being focused with further training, the study finding revealed that teachers used some tailored teaching methods as a management strategy to cope with undesirable behaviors in autism. One of the methods used by teachers was visual aids to support the learners with autism. Their explanation was that visual aids and symbols which range in complexity from simple and concrete to abstract enables the individual child to focus on the message. The continuum for visual aids used were from real object or situation, to copy, color photograph, picture, black and white picture, line drawing, and finally to graphic symbol and written language. The study finding relates with Hogdon and Quirk (1995) who indicated that the most strongly recommended approach for teaching students with autism is to use visual aids which helps learners demonstrate relative strengths in concrete thinking, rote memory, and understanding of visual-spatial relationships. Additionally, Hogdon and Quirk (1995) also emphasized that pictographic and written cues can often help the student to learn, communicate, and develop self-control especially that learners would use them for as long as they need to process information.

Teachers indicated that one of the key strategies in managing peculiar behaviors in autism is to stick to the utilization of age related resource materials. The study finding reveal that most of the teachers reported that when they faced undesirable behaviors' in the classroom, they focused on the positive action such as distract student with positive behavior or model, catch learners being good and trust, give praise like books, smart words, and give more attention/care to a learner. This finding is in line with Taylor (2001) who advocated for the use of applied behavior analysis (ABA) as the process of applying conditions under which they occur, teach new skills, and generalize behaviors to new environments or situations.

From the study findings, some teachers reported that to cope up with learners' undesirable behaviors' in the classroom, they played social games with the learners. Teachers had to utilize some interventions based on the principles of learning derived from experimental psychology research to systematically change behavior and to demonstrate that the interventions used are responsible for the observable improvement in behavior.

Similarly, Taylor (2001) explains that the ABA methods are used to increase and maintain desirable adaptive behaviors, reduce interfering maladaptive behaviors or narrow a direct talk with a learner with autism to know the causes of misbehavior, develop a student contact and rules at the beginning.

The finding above is consistent with Koegel, (2006) who indicated that using information in a socially appropriate manner may result in the student with autism being considered a valued member of a peer group and that more formal activities can be arranged on the playground that involve the child's interests and can only be played with a group of peers also result in improved socialization.

Most teachers emphasized that to deal with the undesirable behaviors learners show in the classroom, mutual work of all stakeholders is important. This the teachers called 'teamwork' amongst themselves and with parents to the children. The study finding above is partly consistent with Tia et al. (2016) who stressed that positive parent-professional collaboration is critical for the educational success of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Teachers indicated that they developed a strategy of building a climate of acceptance within classroom though with difficulties due to huge variations in learners' language abilities especially where repetition of said words is concerned. Through teaching of openness and friendly attitude among learners, some learners were taught how to be able to express their needs using a word or so and to interact effectively. Therefore, the teacher took advantage of the same repetitive kind of language in teaching these learners how speak. This finding is consistent with Whitaker (2001) who revealed that although children with an ASD repeat the words and conversations of others; this echolalia can be used to shape the child's language. Simon and Bolton (1993) have also indicated that reduction in language difficulties would therefore reduce on children's anxiety and stress and that since children with an ASD will have developed few coping skills to deal with situations or factors which cause them stress. Simon and Bolton (1993) further stresses that to avoid a number of unusual behaviors which will interfere with their (ASD) ability to learn, teachers need to employ strategies to ensure classroom conditions favor the child, are conducive to learning and are complemented by helping the child to cope with new and varying activities.

Weiss and Harris (2001) have also added that teachers should promote acceptance of the child with autism as a full member and integral part of the class, even if that student only attends class for a few hours a week. It is also important to create an atmosphere in which teasing, name-calling, and intimidation are not allowed. The idea of using circle of friends or peer support groups is also supported by Kluth (2003) who stated that there is no doubt that children with autism have social deficits and communication or language delays that make it more difficult for them to establish friendships than typically developing children. However, with appropriate assistance, children with autism can engage with peers and establish mutually enjoyable and lasting interpersonal relationships.

Sewell (2000) has similarly indicated that the most powerful tool to creating a positive environment and increasing positive social interactions between the child with autism and his or her peers is to educate the typically developing peers about the child's disorder. Furthermore, Stainback (1996) supports this assertion by asserting that the typically developing peers have more positive attitudes, increased understanding, and greater acceptance of children with autism when provided with clear, accurate, and straightforward information about the disorder to the extent that when educated about autism and specific strategies for how to effectively interact with children with autism, they are more likely to have frequent and positive social interactions with them.

Building an open communication system with the parents was also critical to successfully manage the peculiar behaviors in learners with autism by the teachers. This helped teachers to gain a better understanding of the child and their specific needs. A good dialogue with parents is regarded as important because it is really interesting how different behaviors at school and at home can be and finding out what works in the given environment. Teachers commented that parental support and communication is essential for the successful management behavior a child with ASD. The finding is related to the study by Kranowitz et al; (2001) who emphasized that Parents need educators who are not only knowledgeable about their child's disability and evidence based interventions, but who will collaborate and advocate with them in order to best support their child. The study further indicated that a planned parent-professional partnership within the school setting are necessary for increased parental involvement and advocacy. School personnel need to encourage

and guide parents on how to become involved in their child's education. Kranowitz et al; (2001) further remarked that an open, ongoing communication with families of students with autism creates a powerful alliance needed for the successful management of behaviors in students with autism.

Increasing awareness of the condition and support for children with ASD is another strategy teachers used since the classes they handled contained multiple disability. A large part of increasing condition awareness was also to encourage children to accept differences and diversity among themselves. Teachers tried to achieve this goal through peer to peer support and by pairing the learners with varying conditions within class and outside activities. The 'buddy system' or 'circle of friends' approach' was especially helpful to the teachers at Special Unit B in managing peculiar behaviors in autism. It also gave other children in the class the opportunity to get to know the learners with ASD and develop tolerance for differences while recognizing similarities. The findings above relate well to the study findings by Symeonidou and Robinson (2018) on the ability of nurture groups (NGs) as an effective early practice for the development of children with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties as it leads to secured attachments between individuals with ASD, peers and adults.

The buddying system has been supported also as a means of behavior control and teaching by Kluth (2003) who indicated that many of the social interactions occur outside the classroom in the cafeteria and on the playground. Without prior planning and extra help, learners with autism may end up sitting by themselves during these unstructured times. To ensure this does not happen, a teacher may consider a rotating assignment of playground peer buddies for the student with autism. The student will then have a chance to observe and model appropriate social behavior of different classmates throughout the year. Kluth (2003) equally suggested that this "circle of friends" can also be encouraged outside of school.

Teachers did their level best to create conducive friendship with the children they taught amid challenging behaviors which created stress to their work. This study finding correlates with Robertson, Chamberlain and Kasari (2003)'s findings and advocacy that if a teacher cultivates a positive relationship with her autistic students, the students are likely to display better behavior. Therefore, even how deep the child's misconduct was teachers used only some form of minimal disciplinary

measures consciously to manage autism peculiar behaviors in learners. Some of the disciplinary measures were in form of verbal warnings, brief isolating the child from group main activity, ignoring the child, withdrawing a favorite toy and sending the child to clean up the mess or to pick and throw rubbish into the bin even against his will. Only the learners who exhibited extreme levels of truancy and aggressiveness which really seemed a hazard to friends and the learning environment could stand a chance of being suspended or involving the parents to resolve the matter.

The above finding relates well with Lindsay et al; (2014) who elaborated that sometimes teachers used minimal to aversive disciplinary measures to ensure that children with autism learn and benefits from regular classes. This suggests that inappropriate teaching and treatments are to a certain extent and limits being instituted by the teachers themselves on learners with ASDs. Thus Kranowitz et al; (2001) did observe that the child with ASD will have fewer skills to cope with difficult situations and may have learned a number of unusual behaviors to deal with them. Hence it is important for a teacher to remember that the child is not the problem; it is the conditions that give rise to such problems of which the challenge to the teacher is to understand what might give rise to problem behaviors and respond appropriately. Bronfenbrenner (1979) also supports the idea of having professionals with enriched with knowledge on crosscutting issues across all layers of the environments which supports child development.

On the other side, some teachers had somewhat mixed feelings regarding how they found the handling of learners with autism amid their challenging behaviors. Teachers argued that learners with autism are only worth teaching activities for daily living such as feeding, toileting, wearing clothes, undressing, bathing and others and only the basics of such again. Some of the teachers argued that the issues of academics are not something to play to take lightly as it demands high concentration, commitment and a sound cognitive operations by learners. While the above assertions by some teachers could be said to be true, Perko and McLaughlin (2002) refutes such claims by arguing that children with ASD differ from their peers in a variety of ways though they may outshine them in particular areas. He argues that learners with ASD do have stronger rote abilities and can do spatial, matching and perceptual tasks with greater ease than their peers and given an opportunity would equally excel at mathematics and science.

Perko and McLaughlin (2002) have additionally argued further to say the task for the teacher is to recognize that the child with an ASD will have a mixed profile of strengths and weaknesses. Thus in the best practice, the teacher will focus on the child's strengths while attending to the learning weaknesses and ideally aim to assist the child to manage or generalize the strategies for himself.

Therefore, the assertions by Toran, Westover, Sazlina, Suziyani and Mohd Hanaf (2016) could also be true that it is challenging for schools to be able to provide autism teachers that are competent in the sense of being skillful, knowledgeable, and of positive attitude towards autism learners. Thus teachers' perception and over expectation from autism learners is equally contrary to Taylor (2001) who defined education as the fostering of acquisition of skills and knowledge to assist a child develop independence and personal responsibility which encompasses not only academic learning but also socialization, adaptive skills, communication, amelioration of interfering behaviors, and generalization of abilities across multiple environments.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study based on the set objectives and the developed themes. The study revealed that learners with autism portray peculiar psychosocial behaviors which include self-isolation, obsessiveness, aggression, tantrums, sensory sensitivity, hyperactivity, inappropriate sexual behavior, and self-injury. It was discovered that managing such behaviors in autism raises issues that borders on personal, social and economic spheres on part of the parents and the family at large. The Social issues are seen through personal and social stigma in parents and guardians, failing to accept diagnosis results of the child, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, restlessness, stress and loss of hope for the future. Parents and guardians to children with autism had their worries and stress increased by shortage of quality social services, and personal ignorance on how to access the available special schools/units, and specialized health services. Due to the high demands posed by caring for a child with autism, parents and guardians became so uncertain about their own future and that of the child. This in turn compromised their own health and eventually the same had an adverse impact on their marital relationships and communal life in general.

The study findings also indicated that caring for a child with autism brought in the unavoidable financial challenges due to expenses on transportation to and fro school and the health centers to those children that needed frequent attention of the health facility from time to time due to other condition associated with autism.

The study findings revealed that teachers had tough moments of the school day in trying to manage the behaviors in learners with autism. The hyperactive nature, self-injury and class dodging forced teachers to be ever present and vigilant under key and lock in their classes. For the early Grades or levels, teachers had no option but to assume the role of care giver responsible for the feeding, cleaning and changing of nappies for the child.

Teachers experienced stressful moments in dealing with hyperactivity, inattentiveness, screaming, and overall the unprogressive kind of the learning and teaching process common in classes for learners with autism. Teachers also lived under the fear of litigation in case something happened to the child while in school or class before the guardian or parent comes to pick the child.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations derived from the study findings and discussion of the study. The objectives of the study were to determine the nature of peculiar behaviors in autism, to find out on family experiences of managing peculiar psychosocial behavior and to find out on teachers' experiences with management of peculiar psychosocial behaviors in autism.

6.1 Conclusions

Centered on the findings, the study concludes that certain behaviors in autism are indeed unique and peculiar. Such behaviors include the individualistic nature, obsessiveness with things, over sensitiveness to stimuli, hyperactivity, sexual inappropriate, aggression, truancy, tantrums and selectivity on food stuffs, games and toys. It must however be mentioned that these individual traits were observed to be in variation from one child to another.

Parents and guardians to children with autism had both personal and communal experiences in living with their child with autism. Parents and guardians experienced social isolation due to stigma by themselves and by society. The disruptive behavior of the child with autism enticed some negative remarks from one's partner in marriage and general members of the community. The children were found to be exhibiting inappropriate behaviors in church and other important gatherings if they were taken there by their parents, guardian and caregivers. The unacceptable behaviors caused a lot of discomfort, shame, and embarrassment to both parents and guardian.

These behaviors by the children also led to the child and his family being isolated on version that such a one was violent and would end up injuring others. From the study, it is evident that parents, and guardians have serious financial constraints in the management of their children with autism. Some parents and guardians were forced to quit employment and other small enterprise for the sake of the child especially that finding maid to look after such a one was an unworkable solution. What followed in such a home was an economic stagnation due to the fact that

income generation went down against the rising demands of managing the child's needs.

However, the study also revealed that parents and guardians had developed some management strategies that helped them cope with encounters of raising a child with autism. Some parents attached themselves to the church, the school or a hospital for assistance in raising up the child. While some parents and guardians resorted to such means, others like the reported fathers simply quit the game of marriage and went into hibernation for good for fear of the life long process of caring for a child with autism.

Teachers too had their share of experiences with learners with autism. They had no choice but to brace themselves with the challenging behaviors of learners with autism. Teachers' experiences were described as exciting, strenuous, stressful and overwhelming. They had to deal with the isolate nature of the children who could not communicate ably. Teachers like parents and guardians found some management strategies in dealing with peculiar in learners with autism. They utilized a variety of behavioral strategies and methodologies as remedial measure to autism challenging behaviors.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ Parents indicated that living with a child with autism was stressful, exhaustive and an income drainer. A recommendation is made that the administrative wings in the two special units to help parents form and join social support groups to support them morally, psychologically and economic wise.
- ❖ Some parents revealed that their interaction with the teachers was inadequate and short. Teachers are encouraged to link closely with parents and guardians to help parents in the management and administration strategies of peculiar psychosocial of behaviors of children with Autism.
- ❖ Some of the parents interviewed exhibited some level of ignorance regarding autism condition thus this increased further their level of stress, self-stigma and anxiety. A recommendation is therefore made that the administrative

wings in the special units visited create a deliberate program to educate and counsel parents and guardians living with children with autism.

- ❖ A recommendation to the Ministry of General Education is that teachers should be provided with facilitators and social workers to minimize the burden of teaching and behavioral management especially when it comes to issues of feeding, and changing nappies as is the case with special unit A with reception learners.
- ❖ Teachers indicated they had a challenge of teaching and controlling undesirable in class as they depended much on oral mode of instruction which easily puts off the mood of learners with autism. A recommendation is therefore made that teachers be provided with autism learner centered modern infrastructure and learning materials such as computer programs to assist them curb the vice of inattention in learners with autism.
- ❖ Teacher training to should consider the imparting of skills to manage peculiar psychosocial behaviors of children with Autism.
- ❖ Teachers indicated they had a challenge in meeting individual needs of learners with autism due to overcrowded classrooms with multiple cases of disability. A recommendation is made that this kind of inclusion/integration aspect be supported with expansions in modern educational facilities and specialized human resource.
- ❖ There is need for special units to create and involve a multidisciplinary approach to help teachers in managing behavioral disorders in diverse among learners with autism. This will ease teachers and parents' efforts in managing peculiar behaviors in their children with autism.
- ❖ The government through the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare in liaison with the Ministry of General Education should ensure that parents to learners with Autism are provided with financial support to lessen the impact of expenses incurred in seeking both education and health services for the children.
- ❖ Basing it on the fact that special education teachers are not specifically specialized in autism training, the school management from both special units should ensure the enhancement of Continuous Professional Development (CPDs), seminars and workshops training to refurbish teachers' knowledge and skills in handling autism.

- ❖ Curriculum developers for learners with autism should center on rehabilitating peculiar behaviors in the children with autism.

6.3 Suggestion for Future Research

- ❖ There is need for research in the area of siblings' phenomenological challenges with their brothers and sisters living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs).
- ❖ There is also need for quantitative study to ascertain the prevalence of divorce cases resulting from having a child with Autism.

REFERENCES

- AlHorany, A.K., Hassan, S.A. & Bataineh, M.Z. (2013). *A review on factors affected Marital Adjustment among parents of autistic children and gender effects. Life Science Journal*, 10 (1).
- Altiere, M. J., & Von Kluge, S. (2009). *Searching for acceptance: Challenges encountered*
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Accessed on October 30, 2013 from <http://www.casg.org.au/casg/documents/casginfo-otline/G/pdf>
- Attwood, T. (1998). *Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*. Jessica Kingsley 1. 85302-577-1.
- Aylaz, R., Yilmaz, U., & Polat, S. (2012). *Effect of difficulties experienced by parents of autistic children on their sexual life: A qualitative study. Sexual Disabilities*, 30(4), 395– 406.
- Banach, M., Iudice, J., Conway, L., & Couse, L. (2010). *Family Support and Empowerment: Post Autism Diagnosis Support Group for Parents. Social Work with Groups*, 33, 69-83.
- Becker, Howard & Blanche Geer, (1970). *Participant Observation and Interviewing: A comparison in Qualitative Methodology*, edited by W. J. Fieldstead. Cicago: Markham.
- Bendtro, L.K. (2006). *The Vission of Urie Bronfenbrenner: Adults who are Crazy about Kids. Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 15 (3), 162-166.
- Blair, C. T. (2003). *The use of religious coping and perceptions of family functioning of parents who have a child with a developmental disability*. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering. 64, 2907.
- Boushey, A. (2001). *The Grief Cycle: One parents" trip around. Focus on Autism and other developmental disabilities*, 16(1), 27-30.
- Bronfenbrenner, U, (1979). *The Ecology Of Human Development*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

- Busiku D.C. (2018). *Management Strategies of Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A Case of Selected Primary Schools of Lusaka District, Zambia*. University of Zambia.
- Carolyn, Casey & Ashlea (2017). *Self-reported Stress among Adolescents Siblings of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Syndrome*. <https://www.researchgate.net> publication.
- Chait. R. (2010). *Removing chronic ineffective teachers: Barriers and opportunities*. Washington, DC: Centre for American Progress.
- Chansa-Kabali, T., Nyoni, J. and Mwanza. H. (2019). *Awareness and Knowledge Associated with Autism Spectrum Disorders among University Students in Zambia*. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. Vol 49, (9) pp 3571–3581.
- Cohen L., Manion L. & Morrison K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. Sixth Edition. London and New York: Routledge.
- Conroy, M., Dunlap, G., Clarke, S., & Alter, P. (2005). *A descriptive analysis of positive behavioral intervention research with young children with challenging behavior*. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 25, 157–166.
- Cosser, C. P. (2005). *Raising a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. A parent perspective*, University of South Africa.
- Cresswell J.W. (2009). *Research Design; Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Approaches*. Loss Angels: SAGE.
- Denise C. Linda H., & Elias M. (2018). *Mental Health Interventions for Parent Careers of Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines from a Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS) Systematic Review*. US National Library of Medicine. V.15 (2); PMC 585840.
- Dwyer, P. (2003). *Achieving Positive Behavior, A Practical Guide*. Dublin: Centre for Education Services, Marino Institute of Education.

- Dyches, T.T., Wilder, L.K., Sudweek, R.R., Obiokor, F.E. & Algozzine, B. (2004). *Multicultural Issues in Autism. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 34(2).
- Fisher, A. G., Murray, E. A., & Bundy, A. C. (1991). *Sensory integration: Theory and practice*. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis.
- Fletcher, P. C., Markoulakis, R., & Bryden, P. J. (2012). *The costs of caring for a child with an autism spectrum disorder. Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 35(1), 45–69.
- Geraldina E. (2015). *Teachers' Knowledge and Perceived Challenges of Teaching Children with Autism in Tanzanian Regular Primary Schools*. International Journal of Academic Research & Reflection. Vol. 3, No. 5, 2015 ISSN 2309-0405.
- Goodrow (2015). *A Study of Teachers 'Challenges with the Inclusion of Middle and High School Students with Autism*. Walden University: Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Gray, D. E. (2003). *Gender and coping: The parents of children with high functioning autism. Social Science and Medicine*, 56(3), 631–642.
- Gupta, A. & Singhal, N. (2005). *Psychosocial support for families of Children with Autism. Asia Pacific Disability. Rehabilitation Journal*, 16(2).
- Haimour I. & Obaidat Y.F. (2013). *School Teachers' Knowledge about Autism in Saudi Arabia*. Retrieved from www.sciedu.ca/wje.
- Hannah, L. (2001). *Teaching Young Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A Practical Guide for Parents & Staff in Mainstream Schools and Nurseries*. NAS publication ISBN 1899280324.
- Hartley, S. L., Barker, E. T., Seltzer, M. M., Floyd, F., Greenberg, J., Orsmond, G., & Bolt, D. (2010). *The relative risk and timing of divorce in families of children with an autism spectrum disorder. Journal of Family Psychology*, 24(4), 449–457.

- Hartmann, Ashley (2012). Autism and its Impact on Families-Retrieved from Sophia, the St. Catherine University Repository Website:[https:// Sophia skate.edu/msw-papers/35](https://Sophia.stkate.edu/msw-papers/35).
- Hodgon, L. (1995b). *Solving social-behavioral problems through the use of visually supported communication*. In K.A. Quill (Ed.), *Teaching children with autism: Strategies to enhance communication and socialization*. New York: Delmar.
- Hulya and Leyla (2010). *Raising an Autistic Child: Perspectives from Turkish Mothers*. Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing 23(2): 92-9
- Hyden, M. F. & Heller, T. (1997). *Support, problem solving coping ability and retardation, 35, 364-372. Interventions*. International Journal of Special Education, 17 (2), 59-68.
- Janzen J. (1996). *Understanding the Nature of Autism: A Practical Guide*. San Antonio, TX: Therapy Skill Builders
- Jordan, R. & Jones, G. (1999). *Meeting the Needs of Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders*. Fulton press ISBN 1853465828.
- Jordan, R. (1997). *Educating Children and Young People with Autism* (Guides for Special Education No 10) Paris UNESCO.
- Kalabula. D. M (2007). *Education Standards Evaluation: Inclusion of Disabled Children*. Lusaka: Musumali Press.
- Khasakhala E. & Galava P. (2016). *Relationship between Teachers' Perception of Causes of Challenging Behavior and the Choice of Management Strategies among Learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders*. Journal of Education and Practice Vol.7, No.2, 80
- Kirk, A.S, Gallagher, J & Anastasiow, N.J. (1997). *Educating Exceptional Children*. Boston New York, 8th ed. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co.
- Kluth, P. (2003). *You're going to love this kid*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

- Koegel, R. L., & Koegel, L. K. (2006). *Pivotal response treatments for autism: Communication, social, and academic development*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Kourkoutas, E., Langher, V., Caldin, R., & Fountoulaki, E. (2012). *Experiences of parents of children with autism: Parenting, schooling, and social inclusion of autistic children*. Expanding Horizons. Current research on Interpersonal Acceptance.
- Kranowitz, C. S., Sava, D. I., Haber, E., Balzer-Martin, L., & Szklut, S. (2001). *Answers to questions teachers ask about sensory integration* (2nd Ed.). Las Vegas, NV: Sensory Resources.
- Lindsay, S., Proulx, M., Scott, H., & Thomson, N. (2014). *Exploring teachers' strategies for including children with autism spectrum disorder in mainstream classrooms*. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(2), 101-122
- Luong, J., Yoder, M. K., & Canham, D. (2009). *Southeast Asian parents raising a child with autism: A qualitative investigation of coping styles*. *Journal of School Nursing*, 25(3), 222–229.
- Lynch S.L & Irvine A.N (2009). *Inclusive Education and Best Practices for children with autism spectrum disorders: an integrated approach*, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13: 8, 845-859.
- McCabe, H. (2010). *Employment experiences, perspectives, and wishes of mothers of children with autism in the People's Republic of China*. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 23(2), 122–131.
- Ministry of Education (1977). *Education Reforms*. Lusaka Zambia Education Publishing House.
- Ministry of Education (1992). *Focus on Learning: Strategies for the development of school education*. Lusaka: Zambia Education Publishing House.
- Ministry of Education (1996). *Educating Our Future, National Policy on Education*. Lusaka: Institutional Suppliers.

- Ministry of Education (2011). The Education Act, No. 23 of 2011 419. Lusaka: Government Printers.
- Muller, E., Schuler, A.L., & Yates, G.B. (2008). *Social challenges and supports from the perspective of individuals with Asperger syndrome and other autism spectrum disabilities*. *Autism*, 12, 173–190.
- Muwana Florence Chuzu (2012). *Zambian Student Teachers' Attitude towards Including Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms*. Urbani, Illinois.
- Muzata K.K. (2010). *The Implementation of Interactive Methodologies in Teaching HIV and AIDS prevention to Learners with Hearing Impairments: A case of Two secondary schools for the Hearing impaired learners in Zambia*. University of Zambia: Lusaka.
- Muzata K.K. (2018). *Teaching Skills of Special Education Students During Teaching Practice*. Multi-disciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education. Vol. 1. University of Zambia.
- Myers S., Johnson C. (2007). Council on Children with Disabilities. *Management of children with autism spectrum disorders*. *Paediatrics*, 120(5).
- Myers, S.M & Johnson, C.P (2007). *Management of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2007-2362.
- Newman, M. (2007). *Family and Community Motivators'. The front line of support for vulnerable young children*. Cape Town South Africa. Or (visit [http. // www.elru.co.za](http://www.elru.co.za))
- Nyoni J. (2014). *The Impact on parents of raising a young child with autism*. International Journal of disability, community and rehabilitation.
- Perko, S. & McLaughlin, T.F. (2002). *Autism: Characteristics, causes and some educational*
- Prince, S. (2007). *Stress, Coping and Psychological well-being: The development of resource manual for parents of autistic children*. Accessed on October 30, 2013 from <http://gradworks.umi.com/3293113.pdf>

- Reid, G., & O'Connor, J. (2003). *The autism spectrum disorders: Activity selection, assessment, and program organization. Palaestra, 19*, 20-27, 58.
- Roberts. J.S (2007). *Autism and Inclusion: Teachers' perspectives on the Mainstreaming of Autistic Students*. University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: South Africa.
- Robertson, K., Chamberlain, B., & Kasari, C. (2003). *General Education teachers' relationships with included students with autism*. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 33*, 123–130.
- Rukuye, Sevic & Utviye (2012). *Effect of Difficulties Experienced by Parents of Autistic Children on their Sexual Life: A qualitative study* Article in *Sexuality and Disability 30* (4)
- Seltzer, M. M., Shattuck, P., Abbeduto, L., & Greenberg, J. S. (2004). *The trajectory of development in adolescents and adults with autism*. *Mental Retardation Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews, 10*(4), 234–247.
- Sewell K. Verona, & Wisconsin (1998). *Breakthroughs: How to Reach Students with Autism, a Hands-on How to Manual for Teachers and Parents by: Attainment Company, Inc.*
- Sewell, K. (2000). *Breakthroughs: How to reach students with autism*. Verona, WI: Attainment Company, Inc.
- Shyman E. (2012). *Teacher education in autism disorders: A potential Blueprint. Journal of Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities. 47*(2), 187-197
- Sigafoos, J., Arthur-Kelly, M., & Butterfield, N. (2006). *Enhancing everyday communication for children with disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Silice-Kira, C. (2008). *The Effects of Autism in Families and Partner Relationships*.
- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Simon Baron Cohen & Bolton, P. (1993). *Autism the Facts*: Oxford University Press. 0-901485-01-3.

- Sivbec, B. (2002). *Coping strategies and parental attitudes: A Comparison of Parents with Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Parents with non-autistic Children*. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 62, 36-50
- Stainback, S. (1996). *Inclusion: A guide for educators*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Symeonidou, C. & Robinson, A. (2018). *Scottish teachers' experiences of the effectiveness of nurture groups in supporting autistic children*. *International Journal of Nurture in Education*, 4(1) 45–56.
- Taylor, B.A. (2001). *Teaching peer social skills to children with autism*. In: Maurice C, Green G, Foxx RM, eds. *Making a Difference: Behavioral Intervention for Autism*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed; 83–96
- Thompson, C. E. (2000). *Raising a handicapped child*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Tia, R.S., Harriet, A.M., Merrissa, A.S., & Tamira, W. (2016). *Parent-Teacher Collaboration: Teacher Perceptions of What is needed to Support Students with ASD in the Inclusive Classroom*. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 51(4), 344–354.
- Toran,H., Westover,J.M., Sazlina,K., Suziyani,M & Mohd Hanafi,M.Y.(2016). *The Preparation, Knowledge and Self-Reported Competency of Special Education Teachers Regarding Students with Autism*. *Pertanika J.Soc.Sci.&Hum* 24(1): 185-196.
- Tromp, L.A.D & Kombo, D.K. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* Makuyu: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Weber .J. (2013).*Teachers' experiences of teaching learners with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the mainstream classroom*. KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
- Webster-Stratton, C. (1999). *How to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Competence*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing

- Weiss, M. J. & Harris, S. L. (2001). *Reaching out, joining in: Teaching social skills to young children with autism (topics in autism)*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House. *Journal of Intellectual Developmental Disabilities*, 34(2), 142–152.
- Whitaker, P. (2001). *Challenging Behavior and Autism; Making Sense and Making Progress* NAS publication. ISBN 1899280510.
- World Health Organization (2013). *Autism Spectrum Disorders & Raising awareness to Building Capacity*: Geneva, Switzerland.
- Yark, E. Sutton, S. & Aquilla P. (1998). *Building Bridges through Sensory Integration*. Toronto, ON: Print Three, distributed through the Geneva Centre.

APPENDICES

INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Appendix (I): Interview guide questions for parents/guardians

You are welcome to this interview. Feel free to participate and be assured that your identity shall be kept in confidence and shall not be published anywhere.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE PARENT

Sex:

Relationship with the child:

Grade Level:

Marital Status:

Number of Children in Family:

Occupation:

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE CHILD

Age:

Sex:

Grade:

Position of Birth in the Family:

Number of brothers and sisters:

1. What was your first reaction when you discovered your child had autism?
2. How would you describe a child with autism?
3. What feelings come into your mind when you mention or see a child with autism?
4. What could be the impact of your child with autism on other siblings and family members?
5. Does having a child with autism affect your family life? If so how?
6. What are the costs financially, socially, and emotionally of caring for a child with autism?

7. What coping strategies do you use to manage peculiar behaviors and the demands on your time and energy?
8. What have been the reactions from the community in relation to cultural beliefs about your child with autism?
9. What would you say could be your happier side of life in living with a child with autism?
10. What could be your future expectations of your child where development is concerned?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

Appendix (ii): Interview Guide Questions for Teachers

You are most welcome to this interview schedule. Please feel free to participate. You are assured that the interview information is purely for academic purpose and your identity shall not be revealed or published anywhere.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Gender:

Teaching Experience:

Position:

School:

District:

Type of Learners Taught:

Sex of Learners Taught: Boys..... Girls.....

Period of Teaching Learners with autism:

1. What do you understand about autism?
2. Explain how you can tell that the learner you have met in class for the first time could be autistic?
3. Are there any peculiar behaviors that learners with autism in your class exhibit which are usually not acceptable?
4. What are those behaviors and what are the dangers or implications of such behaviors?
5. How frequent do the learners show such behaviors?
6. How do you manage such behaviors so that learners behave well in a classroom environment?
7. What strategies in terms of class activities, punishments and rewards do you use to manage peculiar behaviors?
8. Have the strategies mentioned above helped to overcome undesirable behaviors in children? If not how and if yes explain how they have helped.
9. What challenges do you face teaching children with autism? Describe the challenges mentioned.

10. How best can you as teachers ensure that learners with autism concentrate on lessons and not on behaviors that distract their own learning and that others?
11. In your view, do you think it is worthy attempting to teach children with autism?
12. How do you generally describe the attitude of other teachers towards teaching learners with autism? (explain the reasons for such attitudes)

End of the Interview.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix (iii): Autism Observation Checklist

Child's Name:

DOB:.....

Completed by:.....

Date:.....

Communication

PECULIAR BEHAVIOR	FREQUENCY OF EXHIBITED BEHAVIOR	EXPECTED BEHAVIOR	TEACHER'S REACTION
<p>Individualistic/ Obsessive behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ child does things alone most time ▪ doing same things over and over ▪ <input type="checkbox"/> child masturbates 		Co-operate with others once in a while.	
<p>Failure to adapt to change within the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulty with minor change in routine ▪ Upset if objects are rearranged ▪ Difficulty with transitions 		show flexibility to slight changes in the environment.	
<p>Inability to carry out Social communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inconsistent eye contact (unusual quality or coordination) ▪ Doesn't nod for yes or shake head for no ▪ Doesn't direct facial expressions towards others ▪ Doesn't read others' facial 		Ability to share verbal cues and body language with others	

<p>expressions (e.g., feelings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doesn't go to others to be comforted when hurt ▪ Doesn't recognize personal space 			
Inability to carry out meaning Social interaction		At least make a small talk with sustained conversation in saying appropriate things	
<p>Unbalanced social-emotional exchange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doesn't respond to his/her name ▪ Doesn't enjoy/seek out social games ▪ Limited empathy towards others' feelings 		Read others 'emotions	
<p>Aggressive behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hits objects ▪ Shouts at objects or friends ▪ Shows rude face to objects that distracts own interest 		Be sociable	
<p>Exhibition of temper tantrums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gets angry easily ▪ Refuses to talk ▪ Walks away ▪ Shouts at others 		stay calm and approachable	
Inappropriate Sexual behavior		Respect his/her own privacy and that of others	
<p>Self-injury</p> <p>□ Often pricks, pinches oneself, hits against the wall or desk</p>		Stay safe in the environment	

Heightened sensitivity to many things at a goal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can't listen ▪ Can't concentrate ▪ Easily gets distracted to noise ▪ Goes for toys during learning 		Focus on one activity at a goal	
Truancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refuses guidance ▪ Can't respond when called by name ▪ Ignores simple class rules ▪ Can't perform a task given 		Ability to obey orders	
		Agree to minor changes in the classroom environment	

Social Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doesn't point to indicate wants (e.g., bottle, toys, etc.) ▪ Doesn't point to indicate interests (e.g., plane, dog, etc.) ▪ Doesn't share things with others ▪ Isn't interested in praise or compliments 			
OTHER OBSERVED BEHAVIORS			

Appendix (iv): Ethical Clearance

Conditions of Approval

- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.
- All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.
- Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled "late submissions" and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.
- When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.
- In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.
- Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on projects. Note that some funding agencies and sponsors require a notice of closure from the IRB which had approved the study and can only be generated after the Closing Report has been filed.
- A reprint of this letter shall be done at a fee.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC by way of an application for an amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address or methodology and methods. Many modifications entail minimal risk adjustments to a protocol and/or consent form and can be made on an Expedited basis (via the IRB Chair). Some examples are: format changes, correcting spelling errors, adding key personnel, minor changes to questionnaires, recruiting and changes, and so forth. Other, more substantive changes, especially those that may alter the risk-benefit ratio, may require Full Board review. In all cases, except where noted above regarding

subject safety, any changes to any protocol document or procedure must first be approved by HSSREC before they can be implemented.

Should you have any questions regarding anything indicated in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the above indicated address.

On behalf of HSSREC, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

However, as a legal requirement, you will need to have final study clearance and approval to conduct research to the National Health Research Authority (NHRA). You may call Tell: +260211 250309 | or Email: znhrasec@gmail.com | for inquiries. These offices are at Paediatric Centre of Excellence in the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) premises, Lusaka, Zambia.

Yours faithfully,
HSSREC IRB



Dr. Jason Mwanza
Dip. Clin. Med. Sc., BA., M.Soc., PhD
CHAIRPERSON

Appendix (v): Permission Letter

All Correspondence should be addressed
to the District Education Board Secretaries

Telephone: 0211 - 240250/240249/0955 023749
E-mail: desbnsk@yahoo.co.uk



DEBS/LSK/101/1/19

In reply please quote

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION**

**DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY
P.O. BOX 50297
LUSAKA**

16th July, 2019

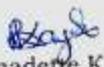
The Headteacher
..... School
LUSAKA

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH - MR. VICTOR MACHA
COMPUTER NO. 2017014399**

This serves to introduce to you Mr. Macha a student at the University of Zambia School of Education.

He has been granted permission to carry out a research in your school. However, ensure that the student's programme does not interfere with the learning schedules.

Kindly welcome him and give him all the necessary support accordingly.


Bernadette Kayombo (Mrs.)
Senior Human Resources Management Officer
For/ **DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY
LUSAKA DISTRICT**

/ts

17 JUL 2019