

Research Article

# Psychosocial Problems of Students with Disabilities Face and Available Psychosocial Support They Receive in Yem Zone Primary School

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## Abstract

**Background:** Students with disabilities face significant psychosocial challenges, including social isolation, bullying, and low self-esteem, which negatively impact their educational progress, academic performance, and emotional well-being. In Yem Zone, inclusive education policies exist but are poorly implemented due to inadequate training, resources, and collaboration among educators. This study seeks to address this gap by identifying challenges and proposing actionable solutions to improve support systems. **Method:** The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining structured surveys of 75 students with disabilities and semi-structured interviews with 12 educators and 9 stakeholders. Data collection focused on psychosocial challenges, their impact on academic performance, and barriers to support. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to provide a detailed understanding of the issues. **Results:** The findings revealed that students with disabilities face critical psychosocial challenges, including social isolation (86.7%), bullying (48%), and low self-esteem (97.3%), all of which adversely affect academic performance. Barriers to effective support included a lack of training, insufficient resources, and poor communication among school personnel, with 100% of respondents highlighting these issues. **Conclusion:** The study highlights the urgent need for effective support systems to address the psychosocial and academic challenges of students with disabilities. Recommendations include training educators, allocating more resources, promoting collaboration among stakeholders, and conducting awareness campaigns to foster inclusive attitudes. Recruiting and training psychology professionals and exploring the use of technology for support are also critical. Future research should focus on long-term interventions and their impact.

## Keywords

Students with Disability, Psychosocial Problems, Psychosocial Support, Inclusive Education, Primary School

## 1. Introduction

Disability has been defined in various ways by scholars and professionals worldwide, with the "social model of disability" playing a significant role over the last 40 years. This model

views disability as a socially constructed form of oppression, distinguishing between societal exclusion and the specific physical or mental impairments of individuals. Disabled

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People's International Delineated (DPID) defines disability as limitations caused by physical, mental, or sensory impairments, which lead to the loss or limitation of opportunities to participate in community life [29].

Students with disabilities tend to have higher absenteeism rates and lower educational attainment compared to their peers without disabilities. Those with intellectual disabilities, in particular, have lower educational and employment outcomes. However, research on school absenteeism among students with disabilities remains limited, though evidence suggests that absenteeism risks vary by disability type [30]. Studies in the U.S. highlight the importance of academic integration for students with disabilities, noting that factors such as the type and visibility of impairment and official recognition significantly influence academic success [25]. In Australia, the identification and support for students with learning challenges are approached differently across states, with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) defining learning disabilities as neurodevelopmental disorders [13].

Globally, disability has gained attention due to its impact on individuals and families, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where cultural beliefs may stigmatize disability [31]. The importance of providing high-quality science education to children with disabilities is emphasized, as it fosters both personal growth and inclusion [28]. Research also points to the significance of early identification and intervention for students with reading difficulties, and teachers' confidence in supporting these students is linked to their beliefs and self-efficacy [32].

International initiatives, such as Finland's support for inclusive education in Ethiopia, have resulted in increased enrollment of students with disabilities [26]. Ethiopia's "Master Plan for Special Needs Education/Inclusive Education" aims to enhance inclusive education structures, though challenges persist in converting regular schools into inclusive environments due to limited resources [27]. Negative attitudes towards students with disabilities can result in bullying and exclusion, underscoring the need for educators to provide psychological and educational support [33].

In summary, various studies reveal gaps in research and practice, particularly regarding psychosocial support and methodology. Notably, there is a lack of trained professionals and research on these issues in Yem Zone, Ethiopia. Therefore, further investigation into these gaps is crucial to improving inclusive education for students with disabilities in the region.

## 2. Method and Material

### 2.1. Design

The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. A cross-sectional research design was employed to collect data from the target

groups at a single point in time, using a concurrent mixed-method triangulation design to integrate both data types for enhanced insights.

#### 2.1.1. Stud Area

The research was conducted in Yem Zone, located in Central Ethiopia, bordered by the Oromia Region, Gurage, and Hadiya. The study focused on educational institutions within the zone, particularly in eleven cluster resource center schools.

#### 2.1.2. Target Population

The study targeted students with disabilities in resource center primary schools in Yem Zone, including Saja, Fofa, and Toba primary schools. Additionally, the study involved special needs educators, school principals, core team leaders, and parents of students with disabilities.

### 2.2. Sample and Sampling Technique

The study used a cluster sampling technique to select schools based on geographic proximity and the number of students with disabilities. A total of 75 students with disabilities were selected from three primary schools. Purposive sampling was used to select special need educators, parents, core team leaders, and school principals, making the total sample size 96.

#### 2.2.1. Data Collection Tools/Instrument

##### *Questionnaire:*

Both open and close-ended questionnaires were developed to gather data on psychosocial problems, available support, and the impact of support on academic achievement. These questionnaires were translated into Amharic and then back into English for analysis.

#### 2.2.2. Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the experiences and perspectives of students with disabilities, parents, and core team leaders. These provided in-depth qualitative data on psychosocial issues and support received.

#### 2.2.3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGDs were conducted with groups of school principals, core team leaders, parents, and special needs educators to discuss the challenges and support mechanisms for students with disabilities.

#### (i). Observation Checklist

The researcher observed written and visual materials, including reports, policies, and educational resources, to understand how disabilities are addressed in primary schools.

## (ii). Data Collection Procedure

Data collection involved obtaining permission from the education bureau, obtaining informed consent from participants, and conducting interviews and FGDs. Data were recorded, transcribed, and stored for analysis.

## 2.3. Data Analysis Method

The data was analyzed both quantitatively (using SPSS version 26, including percentages, means, standard deviations, and paired t-tests) and qualitatively (using thematic analysis).

## 2.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were upheld throughout the study, ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for participants'

privacy. Informed consent was obtained, and all sources were properly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism. The research was conducted with the highest regard for ethical integrity.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Back Ground of the Respondents

The participants in this research were selected from five distinct sources that were closely associated with the psychosocial issues faced by students with disabilities and the psychosocial support they receive in primary school. In to the initial research inquiry, a total of 96 participants; comprising 75 students with disabilities, 6 school principals, 6 special need education teachers, 6 parents of students with disabilities and 3 core team leaders took part as shown in the table below.

**Table 1.** Back ground of the respondents.

| No | Characteristics of respondents | Sex  |        | Total | Frequency in % |
|----|--------------------------------|------|--------|-------|----------------|
|    |                                | Male | Female |       |                |
| 1  | Students with disabilities     | 35   | 40     | 75    | 78.12          |
| 2  | School principals              | 3    | 3      | 6     | 6.25           |
| 3  | SNE teachers                   | 3    | 3      | 6     | 6.25           |
| 4  | Parents of SWD                 | 3    | 3      | 6     | 6.25           |
| 5  | Core – team leaders            | 2    | 1      | 3     | 3.13           |
|    | Total                          | 46   | 50     | 96    | 100%           |

As the data indicated in the above table one; the number of respondents from students with disabilities was high. Since they were target population and directly taken from the selected resource center primary schools by cluster sampling method. The diverse composition of respondents ensures that multiple perspectives are considered in the study. The majority representation of students with disabilities (78.12%) highlights the study's emphasis on directly capturing the experiences and needs of the primary beneficiaries of special needs education. The balanced gender distribution in most categories indicates a deliberate effort to include both male and female perspectives, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the data.

The involvement of school principals and SNE teachers provides a dual perspective on both policy implementation and classroom challenges, which is critical for formulating effective educational strategies. Similarly, the inclusion of parents helps in understanding the support dynamics outside

the school environment.

The relatively smaller number of core-team leaders (3.13%) suggests that while leadership perspectives are considered, the focus remains predominantly on those directly involved in the educational process, including students, teachers, and parents.

In conclusion, the respondent profile in this study is well-rounded and designed to capture a holistic view of special needs education from various stakeholders. This comprehensive approach is expected to yield valuable insights that can inform policy and practice in special needs education.

### 3.2. Back Ground of Participants in Each Tool

Respondents participated in the study tools as shown in the table below.

**Table 2.** Respondents participation in each tool.

| No | Types of tool  | Types of participants      | Sex  |        | Total | Percentage |
|----|----------------|----------------------------|------|--------|-------|------------|
|    |                |                            | Male | Female |       |            |
| 1  | Questionnaires | Students with disabilities | 35   | 40     | 75    | 70.16      |
|    |                | School principals          | 3    | 3      | 6     |            |
|    |                | Teacher of SNE             | 3    | 3      | 6     |            |
|    |                | Total                      | 41   | 46     | 87    |            |
| 2  | Interview      | Students with disabilities | 3    | 3      | 6     | 12.10      |
|    |                | Parents of SWD             | 3    | 3      | 6     |            |
|    |                | Core-team leaders          | 2    | 1      | 3     |            |
|    |                | Total                      | 8    | 7      | 15    |            |
| 3  | FGD            | School principals          | 3    | 3      | 6     | 16.94      |
|    |                | Parents of SWD             | 3    | 3      | 6     |            |
|    |                | SEN Teachers               | 3    | 3      | 6     |            |
|    |                | Core team leaders          | 2    | 1      | 3     |            |
| 4  | Observation    | Total                      | 11   | 10     | 21    |            |
|    |                | The researcher             | 1    | -      | 1     |            |
|    |                | Toal                       | 61   | 63     | 124   |            |

The data from Table 2 highlights the effective use of various research tools to gather diverse perspectives in the study of special needs education (SNE). Here's a breakdown of the key findings:

**Questionnaires (70.16% of participation):** Primarily used to collect quantitative data, this method was effective in reaching a large number of participants, particularly students with disabilities (75 out of 87). The balanced gender distribution ensures inclusivity, and the involvement of school principals and SNE teachers provides a broader perspective on the educational experience.

**Interviews (12.10% of participation):** Used for in-depth qualitative data, interviews involved students with disabilities, parents, and core-team leaders. This method allowed for deeper insights into personal experiences and the role of the family in education.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) (16.94% of participation):** These discussions fostered dialogue among key stakeholders, including school principals, parents, SNE teachers, and core-team leaders. The interactive nature of FGDs helped capture consensus and differing viewpoints on SNE policies and practices.

**Observation (0.80% of participation):** A supplementary tool used by the researcher, observation provided an objective view of real-time interactions in the educational environment, adding depth to the data from other methods.

The study's comprehensive approach, using a mix of questionnaires, interviews, FGDs, and observation, ensures robust data collection. The balanced gender representation and stakeholder diversity enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, offering a thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities in special needs education.

**Table 3.** Demographic variables of students with disabilities, including sex, age, grade, and school along with their corresponding frequencies and percentages.

|       |        | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|
| SEX   | Male   | 35        | 46.7    |
|       | Female | 40        | 53.3    |
|       | Total  | 75        | 100.0   |
| AGE   | 11-15  | 65        | 86.7    |
|       | 16-20  | 10        | 13.3    |
|       | Total  | 75        | 100.0   |
| GRADE | 5      | 17        | 22.7    |
|       | 6      | 22        | 29.3    |
|       | 7      | 16        | 21.3    |

|     |                    | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|-----|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
|     | 8                  | 20               | 26.7           |
|     | Total              | 75               | 100.0          |
|     | Sajaprimery school | 30               | 40.0           |
| SCH | Fofaprimery school | 24               | 32.0           |
| OOL | Tobaprimery school | 21               | 28.0           |
|     | Total              | 75               | 100.0          |

The demographic profile of the respondents with disabilities in the study reveals the following key findings:

*Gender Distribution:* The study had a near-equal representation of male (46.7%) and female (53.3%) students, ensuring a balanced perspective on gender-specific issues in

special needs education.

*Age Distribution:* The majority of students (86.7%) were aged 11-15 years, a critical developmental stage, while 13.3% were aged 16-20 years, offering insights into the transition phase of special needs education.

*Grade Distribution:* Students were fairly evenly distributed across Grades 5 to 8, with the highest participation in Grade 6 (29.3%). This spread allows for understanding grade-specific challenges and support needs.

*School Distribution:* The students were from three schools: 40% attended Saja Primary School, 32% Fofa Primary School, and 28% Toba Primary School, providing a comparative view of educational experiences across different settings.

This diverse demographic profile enhances the study's ability to offer comprehensive insights into the educational experiences and challenges of students with disabilities, helping to inform targeted interventions and policies for their support.

**Table 4.** Psychosocial problems faced by students with disabilities.

| No | Questionnaires  | Alternatives   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|---|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1  | Difficulties in making friends and socializing with classmates                | Strongly agree | 65        | 86.7       |
|    |   | Agree          | 10        | 13.3       |
|    |   | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
| 2  | Feelings of being left out or excluded by peers.                              | Strongly agree | 39        | 52.0       |
|    |   | Agree          | 34        | 45.3       |
|    |   | Not agree      | 2         | 2.7        |
| 3  | Bullying or teasing from other students.                                      | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
|    |   | Strongly agree | 36        | 48.0       |
|    |   | Agree          | 23        | 30.7       |
| 4  | Feelings of frustration or anger due to challenges related to your disability | Not agree      | 16        | 21.3       |
|    |   | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
|    |   | Strongly agree | 43        | 57.3       |
| 5  | Low self-esteem or lack of confidence in your abilities                       | Agree          | 31        | 41.3       |
|    |   | Not agree      | 1         | 1.3        |
|    |   | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
| 6  | Difficulty participating in classroom activities or expressing your ideas     | Strongly agree | 73        | 97.3       |
|    |   | Agree          | 14        | 18.7       |
|    |   | Not agree      | 4         | 5.3        |
| 7  | Struggles with managing emotions or dealing with stress                       | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
|    |   | Strongly agree | 72        | 96.0       |
|    |   | Agree          | 2         | 2.7        |

| No | Questionnaires  | Alternatives   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|---|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 8  | Challenges in accessing school facilities or participating in extracurricular activities. | Agree          | 3         | 4.0        |
|    |   | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
|    |   | Strongly agree | 46        | 61.3       |
|    |   | Agree          | 24        | 32.0       |
|    |   | Not agree      | 5         | 6.7        |
|    |   | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |

The study highlights significant psychosocial challenges faced by students with disabilities at Yem Zone Primary School, revealing the following key issues:

**Socialization and Isolation:** A large majority of students (86.7%) struggle to make friends and socialize, with 97.3% feeling excluded by peers. These difficulties contribute to social isolation and loneliness, impacting students' psychological well-being.

**Bullying and Teasing:** Nearly half (48%) of students experience bullying, a major factor affecting their mental health and academic performance.

**Frustration and Emotional Distress:** Over half (57.3%) of students feel frustrated or angry due to their disabilities, highlighting the emotional distress they endure.

**Low Self-Esteem:** An overwhelming 97.3% of students report low self-esteem, indicating a critical area for intervention.

**Classroom Participation Challenges:** A majority (76%) of students have difficulty participating in classroom activities, suggesting the need for more inclusive teaching methods.

**Emotional Management and Access Issues:** The majority (96%) of students struggle with managing emotions and stress, while 61.3% face challenges accessing school facilities.

These challenges underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to improve inclusive education, peer support, teacher training, and school infrastructure. Addressing these issues is crucial for creating a supportive environment that promotes the academic success and well-being of students with disabilities.

**Table 5.** Impact on academic performance.

| No | Questionnaires                                    | Alternatives   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|---|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 9  | Difficulty concentrating in class                 | Strongly agree | 39        | 52.0       |
|    |   | Agree          | 23        | 30.7       |
|    |   | Not agree      | 13        | 17.3       |
|    |   | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
| 10 | Feeling unmotivated to learn                      | Strongly agree | 26        | 34.7       |
|    |   | Agree          | 36        | 48.0       |
|    |   | Not agree      | 13        | 17.3       |
|    |   | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
| 11 | Struggling to complete assignments or homework    | Strongly agree | 51        | 68.0       |
|    |   | Agree          | 22        | 29.3       |
|    |   | Not agree      | 2         | 2.7        |
| 12 | Negative impact on grades or academic achievement | Total          | 75        | 100.0      |
|    |   | Strongly agree | 75        | 100.0      |

**Results**  
Psychosocial issues significantly impact the academic

performance of students with disabilities, as highlighted by the data:



**Concentration Issues:** Over half (52%) of students struggle to concentrate in class, which affects their ability to absorb and retain information.

**Lack of Motivation:** A large percentage (82.7%) of students feel unmotivated to learn, which hinders their engagement and academic progress.

**Difficulty with Assignments:** 97.3% of students struggle to complete assignments, which could be due to comprehension

challenges or lack of support.

**Negative Impact on Grades:** All respondents (100%) agree that psychosocial issues directly affect their academic achievement, resulting in poor grades and emotional distress.

These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions, including specialized teaching, counseling, and peer support programs to help students with disabilities overcome these academic challenges.

**Table 6.** Psychosocial support practices.

|   |   |                                      |    |       |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|----|-------|
| 1 | Are you aware of any activities or programs in your school that aim to provide psychosocial support for students with disabilities? | Yes                                  | 11 |       |
|   |   | No                                   | 64 |       |
|   |   | Total                                | 75 |       |
|   |   | Frequently                           | -  | -     |
|   |   | Occasionally                         | -  | -     |
| 2 | How often do you engage in activities or programs that promote psychosocial support for students with disabilities in your school?  | Rarely                               | 13 | 17.3  |
|   |   | Never                                | 62 | 82.7  |
|   |   | Total                                | 75 | 100.0 |
|   |   | Social skills training or work shops | 12 | 16.0  |
|   |   | Inclusive classroom practices        | 63 | 84.0  |
| 3 | How effective do you believe theses psychosocial support practices or programs are in alleviating the issues faced by SWDs?         | Total                                | 75 | 100.0 |
|   |   | Highly Effective                     | 68 | 90.7  |
|   |   | Somewhat Effective                   | 7  | 9.3   |
|   |   | Total                                | 75 | 100.0 |

Despite the evident need for psychosocial support, awareness and engagement in such activities are notably low at Yem Zone Primary School. Only 11 students are aware of any activities or programs aimed at providing psychosocial support, while 64 are not. Engagement in these programs is minimal, with 82.7% of students reporting that they never engage in such activities and only 17.3% engaging rarely. The types of psychosocial support activities available are limited, with only 16% of students identifying social skills training or workshops and 84% recognizing inclusive classroom practices.

Interestingly, those who do engage with the available psychosocial support practices find them effective. A significant 90.7% of students believe that these practices are high-

ly effective in alleviating their issues, while 9.3% find them somewhat effective. These findings underscore the need for increased implementation and awareness of psychosocial support programs. Enhancing these programs and ensuring more students can access them could substantially improve the well-being and academic success of students with disabilities at Yem Zone Primary School. Despite the low awareness and engagement, those who are aware of psychosocial support practices overwhelmingly find them effective. A significant 90.7% of respondents believe these practices are highly effective in alleviating issues faced by SWDs, with 9.3% finding them somewhat effective. This positive perception underscores the potential benefits of expanding and improving psychosocial support programs in schools.

**Table 7.** Supportive environment.

| No | Questionnaires                        | Alternatives | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 6  | Do you feel that your school provides | Yes          | 11        | 14.7       |

| No | Questionnaires  | Alternatives   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|---|--|-----------|------------|
| 7  | a supportive environment for students with disabilities?  | No   | 64        | 85.3       |
|    |   | Total  | 75        | 100.0      |
|    |   | inclusive and accepting attitudes among students and staff | 43        | 57.3       |
|    | What aspects of your school environment contribute to a supportive atmosphere for students with disabilities? | accessible facilities and resources                        | 4         | 5.3        |
|    |   | supportive and understanding teachers                      | 23        | 30.7       |
|    |   | peer support and positive social interactions              | 5         | 6.7        |
|    |   | Total  | 75        | 100.0      |

**Table 7** The study results highlight the critical challenges and perceptions related to the psychosocial support environment for students with disabilities at Yem Zone Primary School. A majority of the respondents (85.3%) do not feel that their school provides a supportive environment for students with disabilities, with only 14.7% agreeing that the environment is supportive. Among the aspects that contribute to a supportive atmosphere, 57.3% of the students cited inclusive and accepting attitudes among students and staff. Supportive and understanding teachers were mentioned by 30.7% of the students, while accessible facilities and resources and peer support and positive social interactions were noted by 5.3% and 6.7%, respectively. The data presented in **Table 7** provides important insights into the perceptions of the school environment's supportiveness for students with disabilities (SWDs). Analyzing these findings alongside existing literature allows us to identify strengths and areas needing improvement to foster a more inclusive and supportive educational setting.

#### Perceived Supportiveness of the School Environment

A significant majority of respondents (85.3%) do not feel that their school provides a supportive environment for SWDs. This perception is critical as it underscores potential gaps in the implementation and effectiveness of support measures within the school. The limited perception of supportiveness can hinder the overall well-being and academic performance of SWDs, as a supportive environment is crucial for their success [15].

Research by Shogren et al. [19] emphasizes that a supportive school environment, characterized by inclusivity and accessibility, is essential for the academic and social development of SWDs. The finding that only 14.7% of respondents feel their school environment is supportive suggests an urgent need for schools to evaluate and enhance their support systems.

#### Aspects Contributing to a Supportive Atmosphere

The respondents identified several aspects that contribute to a supportive school environment for SWDs, highlighting the multifaceted nature of support:

##### 1) Inclusive and Accepting Attitudes Among Students and

##### Staff (57.3%)

The most frequently cited aspect is the presence of inclusive and accepting attitudes among students and staff. This finding aligns with research by Ainscow and Sandill [24], which suggests that fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance is fundamental to creating a supportive environment for SWDs. Schools should prioritize training programs that promote empathy, understanding, and acceptance among all members of the school community.

##### 2) Supportive and Understanding Teachers (30.7%)

A significant proportion of respondents (30.7%) highlighted the role of supportive and understanding teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in the day-to-day experiences of SWDs, and their attitudes and behaviors can significantly impact students' feelings of support and belonging [10]. Professional development for teachers focused on inclusive teaching practices and disability awareness can enhance their ability to support SWDs effectively.

##### 3) Peer Support and Positive Social Interactions (6.7%)

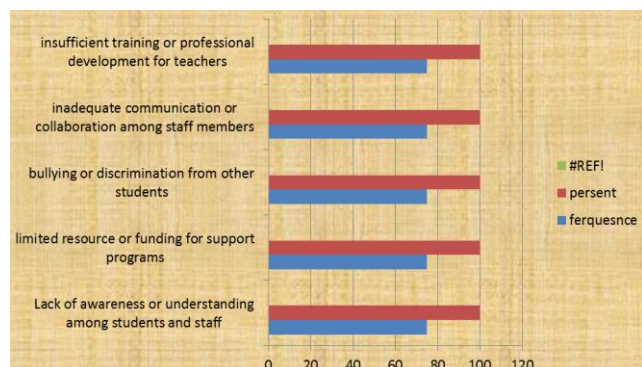
Peer support and positive social interactions were mentioned by a smaller percentage of respondents (6.7%). Peer relationships are vital for the social development and emotional well-being of SWDs [17]. Schools can encourage peer mentoring programs and facilitate social opportunities to strengthen peer support networks.

##### 4) Accessible Facilities and Resources (5.3%)

Only 5.3% of respondents identified accessible facilities and resources as contributing factors. This low percentage suggests that physical accessibility may not be adequately addressed within the school environment. Ensuring that facilities and resources are accessible is a fundamental requirement for supporting SWDs [23]. Schools must conduct regular audits and make necessary modifications to improve accessibility. Make necessary modifications to address any identified barriers to accessibility. While some aspects of the school environment are perceived as supportive by respondents, there is a clear need for improvement, particularly in promoting inclusive attitudes, supporting teachers, enhancing peer support, and ensuring accessibility. By addressing these areas, schools can create a more supportive and inclusive



environment for students with disabilities, ultimately contributing to their academic success and overall well-being.



**Figure 1.** Barriers to Psychosocial Support / main challenges of psychosocial support.

The main challenges or barriers encountered in implementing psychosocial support for students with disabilities, as indicated by respondents, include:

- 1) **Lack of Training or Professional Development Opportunities:** All respondents (100.0%) identified a lack of training or professional development opportunities as a significant barrier. This suggests a need for enhanced training programs to equip educators and support staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively address the psychosocial needs of students with disabilities.
- 2) **Insufficient Time and Resources:** Similarly, all respondents (100.0%) cited insufficient time and resources as a challenge. This underscores the importance of allocating adequate resources, including time, staffing, and funding, to support the implementation of comprehensive psychosocial support programs in schools.
- 3) **Limited Awareness or Understanding of Students' Psychosocial Needs:** All respondents (100.0%) identified

limited awareness or understanding of students' psychosocial needs as a barrier. This highlights the need for increased awareness and education among school staff about the unique challenges and needs faced by students with disabilities in order to provide more effective support.

- 4) **Inadequate Collaboration and Communication Among Staff Members:** All respondents (100.0%) reported inadequate collaboration and communication among staff members as a challenge. This underscores the importance of fostering a collaborative and cohesive school environment where educators, support staff, and administrators work together to address the psychosocial needs of students with disabilities.
- 5) **Lack of Support from School Administration:** Finally, all respondents (100.0%) identified a lack of support from school administration as a barrier. This highlights the crucial role of school leadership in prioritizing and supporting psychosocial support initiatives, including providing guidance, resources, and advocacy for the needs of students with disabilities.

The study reveals that the majority of students (82.7%) identify school counselors or psychologists as the appropriate authorities for providing psychosocial support, with only small percentages attributing this responsibility to school administration (1.3%) or the special education department (1.3%). Most students (98.7%) are aware of the availability of psychosocial support in their schools, but the effectiveness of these services is questioned. Only 1.3% view the support as highly effective, while 44% consider it not very effective.

Peer support or mentoring programs are the most commonly received services (97.3%), while group counseling is minimal (1.3%). This highlights a reliance on peer support over professional interventions. The study emphasizes the need to improve the effectiveness of psychosocial support by strengthening professional roles, expanding services like group counseling, and improving the implementation of support strategies.

**Table 8.** Psychosocial Support and Authorities.

|   |   |                                    |    |       |
|---|---|------------------------------------|----|-------|
| 1 | In your opinion, who do you believe is the appropriate authority responsible for providing psychosocial support in Yeme Zone primary schools? | school administration              | 1  | 1.3   |
|   |   | special education department       | 1  | 1.3   |
|   |   | school counselors or psychologists | 62 | 82.7  |
|   |   | class room teachers                | 11 | 14.7  |
|   |   | Total                              | 75 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Are you aware of any authority or person in your school who provides psychosocial support to students?  | yes i am aware                     | 74 | 98.7  |
|   |   | no i am not aware                  | 1  | 1.3   |
|   |   | Total                              | 75 | 100.0 |
| 3 | If you are aware of an authority or person responsible  | highly effective                   | 1  | 1.3   |

|   |   |                                    |    |       |
|---|---|------------------------------------|----|-------|
| 4 | for providing psychosocial support, how effective do you think they are in fulfilling their responsibilities? | Neutral                            | 1  | 1.3   |
|   |   | not very effective                 | 33 | 44.0  |
|   |   | not applicable                     | 40 | 53.3  |
|   |   | Total                              | 75 | 100.0 |
|   | What specific psychosocial support services or activities have you received in your school?                   | group counseling or support groups | 1  | 1.3   |
|   |   | peer support or mentoring programs | 73 | 97.3  |
|   |   | None /6/                           | 1  | 1.3   |
|   |   | Total                              | 75 | 100.0 |



**Figure 2.** Represented pre- and post – exa.

**Table 9.** Psychosocial support services and academic achievement.

|   |  |  |    |       |      |       |
|---|--|--|----|-------|------|-------|
| d | Are you aware of any psychosocial support services provided in your school to support students with                    | yes i am aware                             | 10 | 13.3  | Mean | St.d  |
|   |  | no i am not aware                          | 63 | 84.0  |      |       |
|   |  | 4  | 2  | 2.7   |      |       |
|   |  | Total                                      | 75 | 100.0 |      |       |
|   | How do you believe psychosocial support services contribute to the academic achievement of students with disabilities? | Motivation and Engagement in Learning      | 75 | 100.0 |      |       |
|   |  | Self-esteem and Self-confidence            | 75 | 100.0 |      |       |
|   |  | Emotional Regulation and Stress Management | 75 | 100.0 |      |       |
|   |  | Social Skills Development                  | 75 | 100.0 |      |       |
|   |  | Classroom Participation and Interaction    | 75 | 100.0 |      |       |
|   | Pre-test   |  | 75 | 100   | 1.19 | 0.049 |
|   | Post –test   |  | 75 | 100   | 2.21 | 0.048 |

The study reveals that awareness of psychosocial support services among students with disabilities in Yeme Zone pri-

mary schools is low, with only 13.3% aware of the services. Despite this, students strongly believe that psychosocial

support significantly contributes to academic achievement, including enhancing motivation, self-esteem, emotional regulation, social skills, and classroom participation.

The pre- and post-test scores show a marked improvement in academic performance after receiving psychosocial support, with the mean score increasing from 1.19 to 2.21. This demonstrates the positive impact of psychosocial support

services on students' academic outcomes.

While awareness is a major gap, the findings emphasize the critical role of these services in boosting various aspects of academic success. Increasing awareness and improving the delivery of psychosocial support could lead to better academic and emotional outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Table 10.** Satisfaction and perception.

| No | Questionnaires  | Alternatives          | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|---|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1  | How satisfied are you with the psychosocial support services provided in your school to support students with disabilities? | very satisfied        | 2         | 2.7        |
|    |   | Neutral               | 10        | 13.3       |
|    |   | somewhat dissatisfied | 63        | 84.0       |
|    |   | Total                 | 75        | 100.0      |

The study reveals low overall satisfaction with psychosocial support services for students with disabilities (SWDs) in Yeme Zone primary schools. A striking 84% of respondents are somewhat dissatisfied, 13.3% are neutral, and only 2.7% report being very satisfied. These findings highlight significant inadequacies in the availability, quality, and effectiveness of these services. To address these issues, schools must focus on improving service quality, accessibility, and stakeholder engagement while conducting thorough assessments to meet the specific needs of SWDs, ultimately enhancing their academic and social outcomes.

#### *Quantitative Analysis:*

The study included 75 students with disabilities, with 46.7% male and 53.3% female, reflecting a balanced gender distribution.

#### *Qualitative Analysis:*

Interviews revealed significant challenges faced by students with disabilities:

A Grade 6 student reported various psychosocial issues, including worry and depression, stemming from lack of peer and school support. They highlighted the absence of accommodations (e.g., electronic devices), poor academic performance, lack of trained psychological counselors, and exclusion of disability issues in school strategic plans.

An 8th grade female student shared experiences of stress and anxiety caused by cultural labeling and inadequate school prioritization. She expressed feeling ashamed, unsupported by peers and teachers, and noted her low academic performance due to unmet unique needs.

These findings highlight the urgent need for inclusive strategies, proper accommodations, psychosocial support services, and awareness to address the challenges faced by students with disabilities.



**Figure 3.** Interview with students with disabilities.

The above quantitative and qualitative response of students with disabilities suggested that psychosocial challenges outlined in this study were experienced by students with disabilities in primary school.

### **3.3. Qualitative Analysis of Parent Response**

One parent responded to the question of factors that influence to implement an effective psychosocial support for students with disabilities in primary school; the parent said that “I had just heard now about the professional you mentioned. “To me, this question is as a man akin to searching for a cow 'cube' in a field where it has never been utilized”. Meaning that without a professional; giving an effective psychosocial support in primary school is un expected”

Another parent Ato W/Brihan, who had 8th grade special need student named Bedilu. W/Brihan; was asked about the psychosocial problems faced to students with disabilities in primary school. “He responded by expressing his fear of sending Bedilu to school due to the lack of friends, constant loneliness, boredom, and overall unhappiness experienced by Bedilu. He highlighted that Bedilu was preoccupied with thoughts of his limitations, leading to constant worry and despair. Ato W/Brihan also noted that schools failed to adequately comprehend the needs of students with disabilities and provide them with the necessary support. Bedilu faced repeated academic setbacks, such as being held back in the 7th grade for three consecutive years.”

### 3.4. Qualitative Analysis of Core- team Leaders Responses



**Figure 4.** Responses from parents and core-team leader.

Another participant, who was the core- team leader received other question, responded that “the main challenge preventing the effective delivery of psychosocial support

services was the absence of professionals in primary school.” By agreeing the above idea; another core team leader added the following response to the influence of psychosocial support on the academic success of students with disabilities. He highlighted that “having a qualified psychology counselor in primary schools has a significantly impacts on the academic performance of students with disabilities”.

### 3.5. Qualitative Analysis of FGD

Other research tool in addressing the research query was focus group discussions (FGDs). It was employed with school principals, core-team leaders, special education teachers and parents of students with disabilities. The collective feedback from these participants highlighted that “students with disabilities encounter a range of psychosocial problems both within and outside of the school environment, stemming from their peers and school personnel. These challenges include the issues such as negative attitudes, feelings of isolation, the perception of incapability/stereotyping/, and the belief that they cannot excel academically.” These insights validated that the psychosocial difficulties outlined in this study were indeed experienced by students with disabilities in primary schools. All participants in the conversation unanimously supported this idea. At the same time during the discussion on the third agenda, group participants were presented with the following viewpoints. Special educational teacher W/ro Mamitu Mengistu emphasized that “While we special need and regular teachers can offer a few irregular supports, which does not equate to the supports provided by a psychologist”. Therefore, having such a professional in the primary school setting would enable the provision of suitable psychological counseling services to students with disabilities that potentially improving their academic achievement and boosting their psychological wellbeing.

Analysis of teacher’s response

**Table 11.** Psychosocial Problems Faced by Students with Disabilities.

| No | Questionnaires                                 | Alternatives   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|--|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1  | Difficulties in social interactions with peers | Strongly agree | 10        | 83.3       |
|    |  | Agree          | 2         | 16.7       |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
|    |  | Strongly agree | 1         | 8.3        |
| 2  | Low self-esteem and lack of confidence         | Agree          | 8         | 66.7       |
|    |  | Not agree      | 3         | 25.0       |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
|    |  | Strongly agree | 1         | 8.3        |



| No | Questionnaires   | Alternatives   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|--|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 4  | Feelings of isolation or exclusion.                                      | Agree          | 6         | 50.0       |
|    |  | Not agree      | 5         | 41.7       |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
|    |  | Strongly agree | 6         | 50.0       |
|    |  | Agree          | 3         | 25.0       |
|    |  | Not agree      | 3         | 25.0       |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
| 5  | Emotional challenges such as anxiety or depression                       | Strongly agree | 11        | 91.7       |
|    |  | Not agree      | 1         | 8.3        |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
|    |  | Strongly agree | 3         | 25.0       |
| 6  | Lack of motivation or engagement in school activities                    | Agree          | 8         | 66.7       |
|    |  | Not agree      | 1         | 8.3        |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
|    |  | Strongly agree | 7         | 58.3       |
| 7  | Difficulties in adapting to classroom routines and expectations          | Agree          | 5         | 41.7       |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
|    |  | Strongly agree | 2         | 16.7       |
|    |  | Agree          | 9         | 75.0       |
| 8  | Challenges in accessing and participating in extracurricular activities. | Not agree      | 1         | 8.3        |
|    |  | Total          | 12        | 100.0      |
|    |  | Agree          | 9         | 75.0       |

Students with disabilities (SWDs) at Yem Zone Primary Schools face significant psychosocial challenges impacting their academic performance and well-being. Key issues include difficulties in social interactions (83.3%), low self-esteem (66.7%), bullying or discrimination (58.3%), and feelings of isolation (75%). Emotional challenges such as anxiety or depression affect 91.7% of SWDs, while a lack of

motivation (91.7%) and challenges adapting to classroom routines (100%) are prevalent. Additionally, 91.7% face barriers to extracurricular participation. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions, including mental health support, inclusive practices, anti-bullying programs, and greater accessibility to extracurricular activities to foster an inclusive learning environment.

**Table 12.** *Impact on academic performance.*

|    |   |                |    |       |
|----|---|----------------|----|-------|
| 9  | psychosocial problems affect the academic performance of students with disabilities | Strongly agree | 3  | 25.0  |
|    |   | Agree          | 7  | 58.3  |
|    |   | Not agree      | 2  | 16.7  |
|    |   | Total          | 12 | 100.0 |
|    |   | Strongly agree | 3  | 25.0  |
| 10 | Decreased focus and concentration   | Agree          | 8  | 66.7  |
|    |   | Not agree      | 1  | 8.3   |
|    |   | Total          | 12 | 100.0 |

|    |   |                |    |       |
|----|---|----------------|----|-------|
| 11 | Reduced motivation to learn                         | Strongly agree | 3  | 25.0  |
|    |   | Agree          | 8  | 66.7  |
|    |   | Not agree      | 1  | 8.3   |
|    |   | Total          | 12 | 100.0 |
| 12 | Impaired ability to participate in class activities | Strongly agree | 9  | 75.0  |
|    |   | Agree          | 3  | 25.0  |
|    |   | Total          | 12 | 100.0 |
| 13 | Negative impact on overall academic achievement     | Strongly agree | 11 | 91.7  |
|    |   | Agree          | 1  | 8.3   |
|    |   | Total          | 12 | 100.0 |

Results Psychosocial problems significantly affect the academic performance of students with disabilities. A majority of students (58.3%) agree that these problems impact their academic performance, with 25% strongly agreeing and 16.7% not agreeing. Decreased focus and concentration are notable issues, with 66.7% agreeing and 25% strongly agreeing. Reduced motivation to learn is reported by 66.7% of students, with 25% strongly agreeing and 8.3% not agreeing. Participation in class activities is impaired, with 75% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing. Overall academic achievement is negatively impacted, with 91.7% strongly agreeing and 8.3% agreeing. Table 12 presents the impact of psychosocial problems on the academic performance of students with disabilities (SWDs) in Yeme Zone primary schools, as perceived by their teachers. The responses shed light on how various psychosocial factors affect SWDs' academic performance, highlighting critical areas that need attention to support their educational success.

#### Psychosocial Problems Affecting Academic Performance

The majority of teachers (83.3%) either strongly agree (25.0%) or agree (58.3%) that psychosocial problems significantly affect the academic performance of SWDs. This high level of agreement underscores the importance of addressing psychosocial issues as integral components of educational interventions for SWDs [1].

#### Decreased Focus and Concentration

Teachers overwhelmingly acknowledge the impact of psychosocial problems on SWDs' focus and concentration, with 91.7% either strongly agreeing (25.0%) or agreeing (66.7%). Difficulties in maintaining focus and concentration can significantly impede students' ability to engage with ac-

ademic content and perform well in class [12].

#### Reduced Motivation to Learn

Similarly, a combined 91.7% of teachers (25.0% strongly agree and 66.7% agree) believe that psychosocial problems lead to reduced motivation to learn among SWDs. Motivation plays a crucial role in driving academic achievement, and addressing psychosocial barriers is essential for fostering a positive learning environment [11].

#### Impaired Ability to Participate in Class Activities

A significant majority of teachers (75.0%) strongly agree that psychosocial problems impair SWDs' ability to participate in class activities. Active participation is vital for learning and social integration, highlighting the need for interventions that address psychosocial barriers and promote inclusive classroom practices [7].

#### Negative Impact on Overall Academic Achievement

An overwhelming majority of teachers (91.7%) strongly agree that psychosocial problems have a negative impact on SWDs' overall academic achievement. This consensus underscores the pervasive nature of psychosocial challenges and their significant influence on students' educational outcomes [8]. The data from Table 12 underscores the significant impact of psychosocial problems on the academic performance of students with disabilities in Yeme Zone primary schools. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes comprehensive support services, inclusive classroom practices, individualized interventions, teacher training, and involvement of parents and the community. By addressing psychosocial barriers effectively, schools can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that promotes the academic success of SWDs.

**Table 13.** Psychosocial support practice.

|   |   |       |    |       |
|---|---|-------|----|-------|
| 1 | Are you familiar with the concept of psychosocial support for students with disabilities? | Yes   | -  | -     |
|   |   | No    | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |   | Total | 12 | 100.0 |



|   |  |  |    |       |
|---|--|--|----|-------|
| 2 | Are you aware of any policies or guidelines in place that emphasize the importance of psychosocial support for students with disabilities? | Yes  | -  | -     |
|   |  | No   | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |
| 3 | To what extent do you believe that psychosocial support is important for students with disabilities?                                       | Extremely Important  | 6  | 50.0  |
|   |  | Important  | 5  | 41.67 |
|   |  | Not very important   | 1  | 8.33  |
| 4 | How often do you engage in activities or strategies that promote psychosocial support for students with disabilities in your classroom?    | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | Rarely   | 5  | 41.7  |
|   |  | Never  | 7  | 58.3  |
| 5 | What types of psychosocial support activities or strategies do you implement in your classroom?  | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | facilitate peer interactions and inclusive socialization                     | 1  | 8.3   |
|   |  | encouraging open communication and creating supportive classroom environment | 6  | 50.0  |
|   |  | Implementing individualized behavior management plans                        | 5  | 41.7  |
| 6 | How effective do you believe these psychosocial support practices are in alleviating the issues faced by students with disabilities?       | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | Highly effective   | 7  | 58.3  |
|   |  | Somewhat effective   | 5  | 41.7  |

Results Awareness of psychosocial support for students with disabilities is lacking, as 100% of respondents are unfamiliar with the concept and are unaware of any policies or guidelines emphasizing its importance. Engagement in activities promoting psychosocial support is minimal, with 58.3% never engaging and 41.7% rarely engaging.

Various psychosocial support activities or strategies are implemented in the classroom. Encouraging open communication and creating a supportive classroom environment is practiced by 50% of teachers, while individualized behavior management plans are implemented by 41.7%. Facilitating peer interactions and inclusive socialization is practiced by 8.3%. Despite these efforts, teachers believe these practices are effective, with 58.3% rating them as highly effective and 41.7% as somewhat effective. Table 13 provides insights into teachers' familiarity with, awareness of, and engagement in psychosocial support practices for students with disabilities in Yeme Zone primary schools. The responses shed light on teachers' perceptions of the importance of psychosocial support, their engagement in related activities, and their beliefs about the effectiveness of such practices.

#### Familiarity and Awareness of Psychosocial Support

**Familiarity with the Concept:** All respondents (100.0%) reported being unfamiliar with the concept of psychosocial support for students with disabilities. This lack of familiarity suggests a potential gap in teachers' understanding of the holistic support needs of SWDs.

**Awareness of Policies or Guidelines:** Similarly, all respondents (100.0%) reported being unaware of any policies or guidelines emphasizing the importance of psychosocial support for SWDs. This lack of awareness highlights a need for increased dissemination of information and training on this topic among teachers.

#### Importance of Psychosocial Support

**Perceived Importance:** Half of the respondents (50.0%) rated psychosocial support as extremely important, while 41.67% considered it important. Only one respondent (8.33%) viewed psychosocial support as not very important. These responses indicate a generally positive perception of the importance of psychosocial support for SWDs among teachers.

#### Engagement in Psychosocial Support Activities

**Frequency of Engagement:** A majority of respondents (58.3%) reported never engaging in activities or strategies that promote psychosocial support for SWDs in their classrooms. Additionally, 41.7% reported rarely engaging in such activities. These findings suggest a limited integration of psychosocial support practices into classroom routines.

**Types of Support Activities:** Among the activities implemented by teachers, encouraging open communication and creating a supportive classroom environment was the most common (50.0%). This was followed by implementing individualized behavior management plans (41.7%) and facilitating peer interactions and inclusive socialization (8.3%).

#### Perceived Effectiveness of Support Practices

Effectiveness: A majority of respondents (58.3%) believed that the psychosocial support practices they implemented were highly effective in alleviating the issues faced by SWDs. The remaining respondents (41.7%) considered these practices somewhat effective. This indicates a generally positive perception of the impact of psychosocial support interventions among teachers who do engage in such practices.

Table 13 highlights the current status of teachers' familiarity with, awareness of, and engagement in psychosocial support practices for SWDs in Yeme Zone primary schools. While there is a positive perception of the importance and effectiveness of psychosocial support among some teachers,

there is also a notable lack of familiarity, awareness, and engagement among others. Addressing these gaps through targeted training, policy dissemination, promotion of engagement, and diversification of support strategies can contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for SWDs.

Qualitative analysis of core- team leader's responses

Another participant, who was the core- team leader received other question, responded that "the main challenge preventing the effective delivery of psychosocial support services was the absence of professionals in primary school."

**Table 14.** Supportive environment.

|   |   |  |    |       |
|---|---|--|----|-------|
| 1 | Do you feel that your school provides a supportive environment for students with disabilities?  | Yes  | -  | -     |
|   |   | No   | 12 | 100.0 |
| 2 | What aspects of your school environment contribute to a supportive atmosphere for students with disabilities?   | Inclusive and accepting attitudes among students and staff | 4  | 33.3  |
|   |   | Accessible facilities and resources                        | 3  | 25.0  |
|   |   | All contributed  | 5  | 41.7  |
|   |   | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |
| 3 | What support or intervention strategies have you found effective in addressing the psychosocial problems faced by students with disabilities in school? | Group counseling or support groups                         | 1  | 8.3   |
|   |   | Social skills training                                     | 1  | 8.3   |
|   |   | Peer mentoring or buddy systems                            | 3  | 25.0  |
|   |   | Inclusive classroom practices                              | 7  | 58.3  |
|   |   | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |

Table 14 illustrates None of the students feel that their school provides a supportive environment for students with disabilities, with 100% responding negatively. Aspects that contribute to a supportive atmosphere include inclusive and accepting attitudes among students and staff (33.3%), accessible facilities and resources (25%), and a combination of all factors (41.7%). Effective support or intervention strategies identified include inclusive classroom practices (58.3%), peer mentoring or buddy systems (25%), group counseling or support groups (8.3%), and social skills training (8.3%). These barriers indicate systemic issues that need to be addressed to improve psychosocial support for students with disabilities.

Perception of Supportive Environment: None of the students feel that their school provides a supportive environment for students with disabilities, with 100% responding negatively. This indicates a significant gap in the provision of support and highlights the need for improvement in creating

inclusive and supportive school environments.

Contributing Factors to Supportive Atmosphere: While the overall perception of a supportive environment is low, some aspects contribute positively. These include inclusive and accepting attitudes among students and staff (33.3%), accessible facilities and resources (25%), and a combination of all factors (41.7%). Acknowledging these positive aspects is crucial for building upon existing strengths in fostering a supportive atmosphere.

Effective Support Strategies: Teachers identify several support or intervention strategies that have been effective in addressing psychosocial problems faced by students with disabilities. These include inclusive classroom practices (58.3%), peer mentoring or buddy systems (25%), group counseling or support groups (8.3%), and social skills training (8.3%). Implementing and expanding upon these strategies can enhance psychosocial support within the school environment.

**Table 15.** Barriers to psychosocial support.

|   |  |  |    |       |
|---|--|--|----|-------|
| 1 | In your opinion, what are the main challenges or barriers in providing psychosocial support for students with disabilities in your school? | Lack of awareness or understanding among students and staff    | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | limited resource or funding for support programs               | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | bullying or discrimination from other students                 | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | insufficient training or professional development for teachers | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | inadequate communication or collaboration among staff members  | 12 | 100.0 |

Table 15 illustrates the main barriers to providing effective psychosocial support include a lack of awareness or understanding among students and staff (100%), limited resources or funding for support programs (100%), bullying or discrimination from other students (100%), insufficient training or professional development for teachers (100%), and inadequate communication or collaboration among staff members (100%). These pervasive issues suggest significant systemic obstacles that hinder the provision of adequate support for students with disabilities. Table 15 presents the main challenges or barriers identified by teachers in providing psychosocial support for students with disabilities in Yeme Zone primary schools. The responses highlight various systemic issues that hinder the effective provision of support, impacting the overall well-being and academic success of students with disabilities.

#### Main Challenges or Barriers

**Lack of Awareness or Understanding:** All respondents (100.0%) identified lack of awareness or understanding among students and staff as a significant barrier to providing psychosocial support. This highlights the need for increased education and awareness initiatives to foster understanding and empathy towards students with disabilities.

**Limited Resources or Funding:** Similarly, all respondents (100.0%) cited limited resources or funding for support programs as a major challenge. Insufficient resources can hinder the implementation of effective support initiatives and limit access to necessary accommodations and services for students with disabilities.

**Bullying or Discrimination:** Bullying or discrimination

from other students was identified by all respondents (100.0%) as a barrier to psychosocial support. Negative social interactions can have a detrimental impact on the well-being and academic performance of students with disabilities, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive school culture.

**Insufficient Training or Professional Development:** Lack of training or professional development opportunities for teachers was cited by all respondents (100.0%) as a significant barrier. Adequate training is essential for equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively support students with disabilities and address their psychosocial needs.

**Inadequate Communication or Collaboration:** Inadequate communication or collaboration among staff members was identified by all respondents (100.0%) as a barrier to providing psychosocial support. Effective collaboration is crucial for implementing coordinated support strategies and ensuring that students with disabilities receive holistic support across various school settings.

The barriers identified in Table 15 underscore the complex challenges involved in providing psychosocial support for students with disabilities. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including awareness-building, resource allocation, anti-bullying initiatives, professional development, and collaborative practices. By addressing these challenges, schools can create more inclusive and supportive environments where all students, including those with disabilities, can thrive academically and emotionally.

**Table 16.** Responsibility for Providing Psychosocial Support.

|   |   |  |    |       |
|---|---|--|----|-------|
| 1 | Who, in your opinion, is the appropriate authority responsible for providing psychosocial support in your primary schools?  | School counselors or psychologists                 | 12 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Do you believe there is a clear designation of roles and responsibilities for the authority responsible for providing psychosocial support in your school?                  | Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined | 12 | 100.0 |
| 3 | If there is a designated authority responsible for providing psychosocial support in your school, how effective do you think they are in fulfilling their responsibilities? | highly Effective                                   | 9  | 75.0  |
|   |   | somewhat Effective                                 | 3  | 25.0  |
|   |   | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |

**Table 16** illustrates There is a consensus among teachers regarding the appropriate authority for providing psychosocial support. All respondents (100%) believe that school counselors or psychologists should be responsible. However, the roles and responsibilities of these authorities are not clearly defined, as reported by all teachers (100%). Despite this ambiguity, 75% of respondents consider the designated authorities to be highly effective in their roles, while 25% find them somewhat effective. **Table 16** presents insights into the perception of teachers regarding the responsibility for providing psychosocial support in primary schools, the clarity of roles and responsibilities, and the effectiveness of designated authorities in fulfilling their responsibilities. These findings shed light on the organizational structure and effectiveness of psychosocial support systems within the school environment.

#### Authority Responsible for Psychosocial Support

**School Counselors or Psychologists:** All respondents (100.0%) identified school counselors or psychologists as the appropriate authority responsible for providing psychosocial support in primary schools. This aligns with established practices in many educational settings where trained professionals such as counselors and psychologists are tasked with addressing the mental health and psychosocial needs of students [20].

#### Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

**Undefined Roles and Responsibilities:** Similarly, all respondents (100.0%) indicated that roles and responsibilities for the authority responsible for providing psychosocial support are not clearly defined in their schools. This lack of clarity can lead to confusion and inefficiencies in the delivery of support services, highlighting the need for clear organizational structures and guidelines [21].

#### Effectiveness of Designated Authorities

**Perceived Effectiveness:** Among respondents who reported the presence of a designated authority for psychosocial support, the majority (75.0%) perceived them as highly effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. This positive perception underscores the importance of competent and dedicated professionals in supporting the psychosocial well-being of students [3].

The findings from **Table 16** highlight the crucial role of school counselors or psychologists in providing psychosocial support in primary schools. However, the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities poses a significant challenge. By addressing this issue and enhancing the effectiveness of designated authorities through professional development and interdisciplinary collaboration, schools can better support the psychosocial well-being of all students, including those with disabilities.

**Table 17.** Collaboration and Resources.

|   |   |  |    |       |
|---|---|--|----|-------|
| 1 | Do you collaborate with other professionals (e.g., counselors, therapists) to provide psychosocial support for students with disabilities?                        | Yes  | -  | -     |
|   |   | No   | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |   | Total  | 12 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Are there any specific resources or support systems available in your school to assist teachers in providing psychosocial support for students with disabilities? | Special education resources or support teams | 12 | 100.0 |

**Table 17** illustrates Collaboration with other professionals is notably absent. All respondents (100%) reported that they do not collaborate with counselors, therapists, or other professionals to provide psychosocial support. Furthermore, essential resources and support systems are lacking. None of the respondents (0%) reported the availability of professional development or training programs, access to counseling or mental health services, or opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. The only support available is from special education resources or support teams (100%). **Table 17** provides insights into the collaboration among professionals and the availability of resources to support teachers in providing psychosocial support for students with disabilities in primary schools. The responses shed light on the extent of collaboration and the availability of support systems within the school environment.

#### Collaboration with Other Professionals

**Limited Collaboration:** All respondents (100.0%) reported that they do not collaborate with other professionals, such as counselors or therapists, to provide psychosocial support for students with disabilities. This lack of collaboration may result in missed opportunities to leverage the expertise and resources of multidisciplinary teams in addressing the diverse needs of students [9].

#### Availability of Resources

**Special Education Resources or Support Teams:** All respondents (100.0%) indicated the availability of special education resources or support teams in their schools to assist teachers in providing psychosocial support for students with disabilities. These resources and teams play a vital role in offering specialized assistance and guidance to teachers in supporting students with diverse needs [6].

The findings from **Table 17** highlight the need for greater collaboration among professionals and the utilization of

available resources to support teachers in providing psychosocial support for students with disabilities. By promoting collaboration and ensuring access to specialized support

teams and resources, schools can enhance their capacity to meet the diverse needs of all students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

**Table 18.** *Psychosocial Support and Academic Achievement.*

|   |  |  |    |       |
|---|--|--|----|-------|
| 1 | How do you perceive the contributions of psychosocial support services to the academic achievement of students with disabilities | Motivation and Engagement in Learning      | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | Self-esteem and Self-confidence            | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | Emotional Regulation and Stress Management | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | Social Skills Development                  | 12 | 100.0 |
|   |  | Classroom Participation and Interaction    | 12 | 100.0 |

Teachers unanimously recognize the critical role of psychosocial support in enhancing academic performance for students with disabilities. All respondents (100%) agree that psychosocial support contributes significantly to: **Table 18** provides insights into the perception of teachers regarding the contributions of psychosocial support services to the academic achievement of students with disabilities. The responses highlight various aspects of academic achievement that are perceived to be positively influenced by psychosocial support services.

#### *Contributions to Academic Achievement*

**Motivation and Engagement in Learning:** All respondents (100.0%) perceive psychosocial support services as contributing to the motivation and engagement in learning of students with disabilities. This suggests that effective psychosocial support can enhance students' interest and involvement in academic activities, leading to improved learning outcomes [16].

**Self-esteem and Self-confidence:** Similarly, all respondents (100.0%) acknowledge the role of psychosocial support services in fostering self-esteem and self-confidence among students with disabilities. A positive self-concept is essential for academic success, as it influences students' beliefs about their abilities and their willingness to persist in challenging tasks [18].

**Emotional Regulation and Stress Management:** All re-

spondents (100.0%) recognize the importance of psychosocial support services in promoting emotional regulation and stress management skills among students with disabilities. Effective coping mechanisms can help students manage academic stressors and maintain optimal levels of emotional well-being, thereby enhancing their academic performance [14].

**Social Skills Development:** All respondents (100.0%) identify psychosocial support services as contributing to the development of social skills among students with disabilities. Social skills are crucial for successful interaction with peers and teachers, collaboration on academic tasks, and overall academic and social integration [5].

**Classroom Participation and Interaction:** All respondents (100.0%) perceive psychosocial support services as positively influencing classroom participation and interaction among students with disabilities. Active participation and meaningful interaction in the classroom facilitate learning, engagement, and academic success [4].

The findings of the multifaceted contributions of psychosocial support services to the academic achievement of students with disabilities. By addressing students' psychosocial needs and enhancing their academic engagement, self-esteem, emotional regulation, social skills, and classroom participation, schools can create an inclusive and supportive learning environment conducive to academic success.

**Table 19.** *Collaboration and Integration.*

|   |   |                        |    |       |
|---|---|------------------------|----|-------|
| 1 | How effectively do you collaborate with the professionals providing psychosocial support services to students with disabilities in your school?           | Neutral                | 1  | 8.3   |
|   |   | not very effectively   | 7  | 58.3  |
|   |   | not at all effectively | 4  | 33.3  |
|   |   | Total                  | 12 | 100.0 |
| 2 | How well do you integrate psychosocial support strategies into your teaching practices to support the academic achievement of students with disabilities? | not very well          | 7  | 58.3  |
|   |   | not at all             | 5  | 41.7  |
|   |   | Total                  | 12 | 100.0 |



The effectiveness of collaboration with professionals providing psychosocial support services is generally poor. The majority of respondents (58.3%) reported that they collaborate "not very effectively," and 33.3% indicate [d they do so "not at all effectively." Only a small fraction (8.3%) felt neutral about their collaboration effectiveness. In terms of integrating psychosocial support strategies into teaching practices, most teachers (58.3%) reported that they integrate these strategies "not very well," while 41.7% stated they do so "not at all." [Table 19](#) provides insights into the collaboration with professionals providing psychosocial support services and the integration of psychosocial support strategies into teaching practices to support the academic achievement of students with disabilities. The responses shed light on the effectiveness of collaboration and integration efforts within the school environment.

#### *Collaboration with Professionals*

**Effectiveness of Collaboration:** Among respondents, 58.3% indicated that they collaborate not very effectively, while 33.3% reported not collaborating at all effectively with professionals providing psychosocial support services to students with disabilities. These findings suggest that there are significant challenges in fostering effective collaboration between teachers and support professionals [\[2\]](#).

#### *Integration of Support Strategies*

**Integration into Teaching Practices:** Similarly, 58.3% of respondents reported that they do not integrate psychosocial support strategies into their teaching practices very well, while 41.7% stated that they do not integrate them at all. This indicates a gap in incorporating psychosocial support strategies into the daily instructional routines of teachers, which may hinder the effective delivery of support services to students with disabilities [\[22\]](#).

The findings from highlight the challenges in effectively collaborating with professionals providing psychosocial support services and integrating support strategies into teaching practices to support the academic achievement of students with disabilities. By addressing these challenges through targeted professional development, collaborative planning, and supportive leadership, schools can enhance their capacity to provide holistic support that meets the diverse needs of all students.

## 4. Conclusions

Inclusive education for students with disabilities requires a multifaceted approach to address systemic, structural, and pedagogical barriers.

**Positive Insights:** Equitable representation across demographic groups, Enhanced academic outcomes from targeted interventions, Favorable perceptions of psychosocial interactions and academic performance.

**Challenges Identified:** Difficulties in implementing psychosocial support systems. Barriers to accessibility and active

engagement Limited awareness, inadequate resources, and insufficient training.

**Urgent Needs:** Systemic changes to develop more supportive and inclusive school environments, strengthening the roles of school counselors and psychologists.

**Key Recommendations:** Raising awareness and improving accessibility, Fostering collaboration and implementing anti-bullying policies, Conducting ongoing evaluations of interventions to ensure continuous improvement.

These findings emphasize the need for collaborative efforts from educators, policymakers, families, and the broader community to enhance inclusivity, academic performance, and the well-being of students with disabilities.

## 5. Recommendations

**Professional Development:** Continuous training for educators in inclusive teaching techniques and the use of assistive technologies.

**Infrastructure and Resources:** Develop accessible school infrastructure and provide assistive tools like Braille materials and adaptive technologies.

**Policy Development:** Implement policies that address curriculum adaptations, teacher preparation, and psychosocial support services.

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** Strengthen partnerships with advocacy groups, NGOs, and community leaders to enhance inclusivity efforts.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish mechanisms to assess and refine the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives.

**Parent and Community Engagement:** Involve families in planning and decision-making processes for education programs.

**Sensitivity and Awareness:** Promote cultural competency and acceptance of diversity through training and awareness campaigns.

**Inclusive Assessment Practices:** Develop alternative assessments, such as oral exams and performance-based portfolios, to accommodate diverse needs.

**Psychosocial Support Services:** Strengthen counseling services, peer mentoring programs, and personalized student support systems.

**Research and Innovation:** Invest in research to explore innovative practices, technologies, and policies to advance inclusive education.

#### **Future Research Priorities**

**Longitudinal Studies:** Track long-term academic, social, and emotional outcomes of students with disabilities.

**Teacher Preparation:** Investigate effective strategies for pre-service education and ongoing professional development for teachers.

**Technology Integration:** Assess the role of assistive and adaptive technologies in improving inclusivity and academic outcomes.



**Social Inclusion Strategies:** Explore methods to enhance peer relationships, empathy-building, and reduce stigma in classrooms.

**Policy Implementation and Transition Services:** Research the effectiveness of inclusive policies, culturally responsive pedagogy, and services supporting transitions to higher education or employment.

**Collaborative Partnerships:** Investigate the impact of partnerships between schools, advocacy groups, and government organizations on educational outcomes.

By addressing these priorities and implementing the recommendations, stakeholders can create inclusive, equitable, and supportive educational environments that empower students with disabilities to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. These efforts will also contribute to a more empathetic and diverse society.

## Abbreviations

|      |  |
|------|--|
| AAA  | Augmentative and Alternative Communication     |
| DEOs | District Education Officers                    |
| DPID | Disabled People's International Delineated.    |
| DSM  | Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.             |
| IE   | Inclusive Education                            |
| LD   | Learning Disabilities. /learning Difficulties/ |
| SIDs | Students with Intellectual Disabilities.       |
| SLD  | Specific Learning Disability.                  |
| SWDs | Students with Disabilities                     |
| UAE  | United Arab Emirates.                          |
| UDL  | Universal Design for Learning                  |
| IEP  | Individualized Education Program               |
| FGD  | Focal Group Discussion                         |
| SNE  | Special Need Education                         |
| SPSS | Statistical Product and Service Solution.      |

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## Author Contributions

**Addisu Shewaye Mengesha:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Methodology, Resources, Software, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

**Tagesu Gashe:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Methodology, Software, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

**Aminu Jibril:** Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing

## Conflicts of Interest

I now declare that this research report is my work toward the

executive Masters of Public Management and that, to the best of my knowledge; it contains no material previously published by another person nor material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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