

**CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN
GHANA: THE CASE OF SELECTED SENIOR HIGH
SCHOOLS IN CAPE COAST METROPOLIS**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	1
ABSTRACT	2
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	3
Background to the study	3
Statement of the problem	5
Purpose of the study	6
Objectives of the study	6
Research questions	6
Significance of the study	7
Delimitations	7
Organization of the work	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Theoretical Framework:	
Vygotsky Theory of Proximal Development	9
Empirical Review:	
Educationists Perception of Inclusive Education	13
The State of Inclusive Education	14
Challenges Confronting Implementation of Inclusive Education	15
Conclusion	

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	17
Research Design or Method	17
Sample and Sampling Procedure	20
Data Collection Instrument	21
Data Analysis	22
Ethical Considerations	23
Conclusions	23
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	25
Introduction	25
Response to Research Question 1	26
Response to Research Question 2	29
Response to Research Question 3	32
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary	36
Conclusions	40
Recommendations	41
REFERENCES	43
APPENDIX	
Structured Interview Guide	50

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study is to conduct an in-depth investigation into challenges affecting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. The study was carried out among selected teachers and students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It was guided by three-pronged research questions. A qualitative research paradigm was adopted for the study. Using a purposive sampling technique, twenty-four (24) participants were selected for the study comprising 4 head-teachers and their assistants, 8 classroom teachers, and 12 students. Findings of the study revealed that there is a dichotomy of understanding regarding what inclusive education entails among stakeholders, students with disabilities are marginalized due to impractical policies and programs and the government is limited financially to fully implement inclusive education nationwide. The researcher also discovered that though there are different forms of inclusive education practiced in Ghanaian Senior High School, most of them are not compatible with inclusive education. However, there are few cases of mainstream schools with special resource teachers handling both children with SEN and their pairs without SEN. This means at present, inclusive education has not been fully implemented in Ghana due to several crippling limitations. These limitations range from lack of result-oriented curriculum to a serious lack of physical structures and facilities to foster inclusiveness in the classroom. Hence, it is recommended that policies, programs, and curriculum on inclusive education should be revised. Sensitization programs should be organized to mitigate stereotypical norms against people with disabilities in Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Over the years, the government of Ghana made concerted efforts to provide the citizenry quality education in Ghana. Children without disabilities attend regular schools in their communities while those with disabilities attend segregated boarding schools located in urban areas in the country (Opoku, 2016; Nketsia, 2017; Ofori, 2018). Upon reflection on this arrangement, it was discovered that about 2 percent of children with school-going age were with a disability and are marginalized. Adult literacy among people with disabilities was low making them a target for marginalization, stigmatization, and discrimination. Hence, the government of Ghana by means of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) amply adopted and implemented policies driven purposely for the achievement of universal primary education for all.

Several programs were tailored by the government towards improving a lot of children with disabilities. Firstly, the government adopted the resolution at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain (1994) which demands the adaptation of the regular schools to include every child, celebrate differences, support learning, respond to individual needs and effectively mitigate discriminatory attitudes (UNESCO, 2009, 1994). As a result, a national policy framework on inclusive education was launched by the ministry of education and major progress has been achieved because, in 2011, there were

only 29 districts in 7 regions of Ghana involved in the program, but recently the program has been expanded to include 46 districts in all the ten regions of Ghana (MoE, 2015; Nketsia, 2017). District staff, headteachers and teachers were given specialized training on the use of ICT and other forms of pedagogy to facilitate inclusive education and amply improve the educational experience of individuals with a disability.

In effect, currently several students without disabilities and those with disabilities are attending the mainstream schools together and according to Opoku (2016), there has been a drastic reduction in the number of children with disabilities enrolled in special schools in Ghana. Also, Opoku indicated that the academic performance of children attending special schools was far worse than their counterparts involved in inclusive education with the opportunity of enjoying a friendly classroom.

Notwithstanding, there is little coursework on inclusive education in most of the universities and colleges of education that can effectively enhance teachers' ability to adequately facilitate inclusive learning. Also, the attitude of teachers is nothing to write home about, because some feel it is tedious to teach children with special needs and avoided them as much as possible (Nketsia, 2017; Opoku, 2016; Botts & Owusu, 2013). Essentially, there is no consensus on what inclusive education entails, the curriculum is inappropriate for inclusiveness, teachers' lack of requisite skills, and enabling environment is limited (Agbonyega, 2007; Ntuli & Traore, 2013). Some, scholars and educationists (Pekeberg, 2012, Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017) strongly feel the curricula of teacher training institutes in

Ghana should be redesigned to adequately to equip teachers towards catering for these children with special needs which in turn will reduce the level of negative attitude among teachers regarding inclusive education. This will aid the formulation of policies on inclusive learning in a friendly classroom can be achieved.

In view of this recent development regarding effective implementation of inclusive education in Ghana, the present study will conduct an in-depth investigation into factors contributive to the present challenges confronting the implementation of inclusive education.

Statement of the problem

Pekeberg (2012) and Deku and Vanderpuye (2017) discovered that there is no consensus among educationists on what inclusive education entails. Ntuli and Traore (2013) and Lamptey (2015) indicated that the curriculum for inclusive education is impractical and rigid, unable to properly address the needs of learners with Special Education Needs (SEN). Vuuro (2017) and Ofori (2018) posited that a larger percentage of teachers lack the requisite skills for teaching students with severe disabilities due to lack of adequate training regarding inclusiveness in special education. Several studies (Oguntade, 2017; Adedoyin & Okere, 2017) demonstrated that students in inclusive education lack the needed resources and physical facilities to promote academic achievement.

Upon reflection on the result of the studies reviewed above, it is pertinent to conduct an in-depth investigation into factors mitigating the successful

implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. The study was conducted in selected senior high schools in Cape Coast, Central Region of Ghana.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to explore the challenges affecting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to conduct an in-depth investigation into challenges affecting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. Specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore educationists' perceptions of inclusive education in Ghana.
2. Ascertain the current condition of inclusive education in Ghana.
3. Enumerate the challenges confronting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana.
4. Recommend practical approaches to alleviating challenges confronting the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Research questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, it was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of educationists on inclusive education in Ghana?
2. What is the current condition of inclusive education in Ghana?

3. What are the challenges confronting the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana?

Significance of the study

The study is critical to the identification of several inhibiting factors affecting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. It is envisaged that the result of the study will augment knowledge on the status of inclusive education in Ghana. It will also facilitate the formulation of result-oriented curricula and concretize arrangements for equipping teachers with requisite skills.

Delimitation

The study is limited to Senior High School in Ghana being the second-cycle education which is very crucial in the lives of Ghanaian youths since it determines their level of achievement in adults, especially in the labor market. Being the capital of secular education in Ghana, the study is limited to Cape Coast in the Central region of Ghana.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One deals with the background of the study, the problem and the purpose of the study. It also deliberated on the objectives of the study, research questions as well as the significance of the study with how it has been organized. Chapter Two reviews extant literature or previous studies underpinning the present study while Chapter

Three focuses on the general methodology of the study, the characteristics of the population, the sample which will be used for the study and the type of research design applied in the study.

The instrument to be used for the collection of data, as well as the procedure for data collection, is also enumerated under this chapter. Chapter Four focuses on the analysis of the data to be provided by the questionnaires and the interview. Chapter Five, which is the final chapter for the dissertation, embodies the summary and conclusion of the study coupled with relevant recommendations for stakeholders in education. Suggestions for future research were also incorporated in chapter five.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section comprises the review of related literature relevant to the study. It dwelt on adequate examination and evaluation of the existing literature as it underscores the focus of the study. Since the essence of review is an attempt at surveying scholarly articles, books and other sources such as dissertations and policies that are relevant to inclusive education. The thrust of this chapter was theoretical and empirical. The two frameworks underpin the objectives of the study.

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky Theory of Proximal Development

As a constructivist, Vygotsky (1962) believes that learning takes place with the help of the mind and therefore stresses what goes on in the mind of the learner during the learning process. Constructivists are of the view that learners are active agents that construct their own knowledge in their mind irrespective of disability. They also believe that learning is a social activity and the environment that people learn has a great influence on them.

In the same vein, Vygotsky (1978) sees intellectual abilities as being much more specific to the culture in which the student is reared (Dahms, Geonnotti & Passalacqua, 2007; Bunyakarte, 2010). Vygotsky came to understand through observations and study that people adapt to their surrounding environment based

on their interpretations and individual perceptions of it. By this, he meant that humans are not born with knowledge nor are knowledge independent of social context. Rather, knowledge is gained as one develops by way of socially interacting with peers and adults.

Vygotsky also sees social interaction and language as the two primary means of learning. Social interaction among students is enhanced via language which takes different forms such as verbal, written or sign. Experiences are shared and enhanced among students. Nothing this basic fact about human existence, which is often based on inclusiveness, Vygotsky postulated zone of proximal development (ZPD) to underscore how humans gain knowledge through social interaction. He defined the zone of proximal development as the distance between the actual developmental level of a student (cognizance of disability) through personal effort and the level of potential development when supported by the teacher and other students with no disability.

It can otherwise be explained as the difference between what the student can learn on his or her own considering his or her inability due to health conditions and what he or she can learn with the help of others (teacher and students without disability). This, therefore, indicates that as long as a person has access to an adult or a more capable peer, any problem can be solved. This brings in the relevance of inclusive education.

Vygotsky refers to what disabled students or those with limited understanding, can do on their own in the learning process as their '*level of actual ability*' and what they can do with the help of 'others' as their '*level of potential*

ability'. The *'others'* refers to what he refers to as the *"More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)."* The *MKO* is anyone who is not affected by the particular disability the disabled student is subjected to, has a better understanding. This will readily refer to the teacher or other learners without a disability. For example, in Figure 1, the teacher and the student sitting by the student with Down syndrome



Figure 1: Inclusive education at the Gaare Gbani School Northern Ghana
Source: VSO, 2018



Figure 2: Inclusive education at Presentation Primary School, Northern Ghana Source: VSO, 2018

was being assisted. The teacher instructed the child without Down syndrome to help her colleague hold the pencil very well. On the other hand, in Figure 2, the teacher took her time to explain certain concepts to the student in a wheelchair. Students without a disability were also patiently watching and adopt a supportive posture so that their friend can be helped by the teacher. This is the essence of Vygotsky's theory. This individual with higher ability can be the teacher, an adult, peers, siblings, a younger person or even a computer-aided instruction (Bunyakarte, 2010).

Implications for the study

Vygotsky's postulation underpins the present study since it demonstrated that it is counterproductive when students with disabilities are kept in a separate school such as special education schools. Rather children should be integrated into the mainstream schools. Vygotsky theory also shows that there is a need for



**Figure 3: Inclusive education in Ghana (Students with a disability has suitable reading tables different from other students without disability).
Source: Oguntade, 2017 (sbfphc.wordpress.com)**

regular and effective training of teachers in special education so that they can address issues a student with a disability may possess.

The theory also shows that the classroom should be designed so as to accommodate students with disability and they should be provided with amenities and tools to aid improved understanding. For example, as shown in Figure 3, classrooms, corridors and walkways should be designed to accommodate a wheelchair, teachers should be trained in sign language so as to help hearing-impaired students. Freden and Vogel (2006) opines that teachers should not shy away from assisting the student with disability rather they should willing to go through training and help these students. When these are applied, then inclusive education will be functional and aid students with disabilities in achieving profound academic progress (Oguntade, 2017).

Empirical Review

This section deals with the review of studies that have been conducted on the effectiveness of group discussion. The review is based on the research objectives that were formulated.

Educationists perception of inclusive education

In their studies, Pekeberg (2012) and Deku and Vanderpuye (2017) discovered that there is no consensus among educationists on what inclusive education entails. Ntuli and Traore (2013) and Lamptey (2015) indicated that the curriculum for inclusive education is impractical and rigid, unable to properly

address the needs of learners with Special Education Needs (SEN). Vuuro (2017) and Ofori (2018) posited that a larger percentage of teachers lack the requisite skills for teaching students with severe disabilities due to lack of adequate training regarding inclusiveness in special education. These studies demonstrated that educationists are not conclusive on the effective way of implementing inclusive education in Ghana. While some feel special education schools should be built for students, others felt they should be included in the mainstream. Yet, others claim that it is difficult to teach students with disabilities since they are ill-equipped in terms of teacher training and infrastructural needs.

The state of inclusive education

In a study by Deku and Vanderpuye (2017) and Oguntage (2017), it was discovered that, currently, inclusive education is still at the rudimentary stage. The government has integrated educational program for learners with low vision, built special schools for the deaf and few blind learners with hostel support, initiated programs involving learners with and without SEN attending mainstream school with the availability of special resource teacher and programs involving learners with and without SEN attending mainstream school without special resource teacher support.

In 2011, according to a report by the Ministry of Education in Ghana (MoE), there were only 29 districts in 7 regions of Ghana involved in the program, but recently the program has been expanded to include 46 districts in all the ten regions of Ghana (MoE, 2015; Nketsia, 2017). Additionally, according to Deku and Vanderpuye (2017), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2012)

has been working tirelessly with the MoE in implementing inclusive education in 14 additional districts, so that as of 2017, 3,022 inclusive schools are operative in all the regions of Ghana. Though progress has been made towards the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana, its full realization, in terms of access, participation and support are crippled by several limitations as enumerated by the findings of several studies.

Challenges confronting implementation of Inclusive education

In his study, Agbonyega (2007) discovered that several teachers do not fully understand what inclusiveness entails. His findings reveal that inclusiveness should comprise access, equity or participation, and support. It means teachers must be proactive and adapt to the condition of their students so as to achieve these three cardinal features of inclusive education as depicted in Figure 4 where there is no blackboard, chairs, and tables in the classroom yet the teacher improvised materials to provide access to education, ensure all students participated and provided needed support for them. That is inclusiveness.



Figure 4: Inclusive education in Ghana

Source: VSO, 2018.

Several studies (Oguntade, 2017; Adedoyin & Okere, 2017) demonstrated that students in inclusive education lack the needed resources and physical facilities to promote academic achievement. Lamptey (2015) and Ofori (2018) stated that teachers also lack adequate training and curriculum to teach students.

Conclusion

Vygotsky theory revealed that special education school deprives students with disability enhanced academic process. The review also showed that there is a dichotomy of opinion in relation to how policies and programs on inclusive education should be carried out resulting in some teachers favoring the construction of special education schools while several others felt disable students should be integrated into mainstream schools. The review also revealed that teachers lack adequate training, suffers from limited resources and poor curriculum on inclusive education. These gaps will be addressed during the course of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In order to critically explore the various challenges identified in the literature review such as lack of adequate training for teachers, difficulties arising from limited resources and poor curriculum, there is a need for a chapter on methodology. Methodology, according to Mohajan (2018), is the “logic of development of the process used to generate theory that is the procedural framework within which the research is conducted” (p.15). Cresswell & Poth (2018) provided a clearer understanding by stating that methodology entails the logical steps and procedures through which the research problems are resolved.

Hence, this chapter on methodology outlines the procedure adopted in exploring the several challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. It covers the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, and the instrument used for the study. It further looks at the data collection and data analysis procedures. The researcher attached much importance to the work due to its national relevance, hence, extant studies from peer-reviewed and credible sources were used.

Research Design

Sarantakos (2005) and Cresswell and Poth (2018) defines research design as the basic structure of a study, the nature of the hypothesis, and variables involved in the study. Providing additional insight into what constitutes research

design, Fink (2000), research design refers to all the stages and processes involved in reaching the participants. Hence, from the view of Fink (2000) the focus of research design entails attainment of the following goals: 1) Offering a guide that directs the research activities and helps rationalize the use of time and resource and reduce cost, 2) Helping to introduce a systematic approach to the research question, 3) Enabling accurate assessment of the validity and reliability of the study among others. Research designs are grouped under three types of research methodologies, namely: quantitative, qualitative or a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methods. For this study, the qualitative research method is selected.

Sauro (2015) and Creswell and Poth (2018) posited that qualitative research methods entail exploration and in-depth comprehension of the meanings of individuals or groups associated with human or social problems. This means, qualitative researchers often take note of “emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s settings, data analysis (inductive) based on emerging themes and patterns. As a result, inductive analysis, participants’ individual meaning and clarity of report on the complex and naturally occurring phenomenon under study are paramount in qualitative research. Depicted in Table 1 are five types of qualitative research designs (Sauro, 2015; Hoelzle, 2018).

Considering the aforementioned, a phenomenological approach to qualitative study was employed for data analysis. Through rigorous and highly critical, phenomenological approach aids an in-depth understanding of the

meaning of participants’ lived experiences regarding inclusive education (Tuffour, 2017; Mohajan, 2018).

Table 1: Types of qualitative research approaches and their characteristics

Approach	Focus	Sample Size	Mode of Data Collection
Case Study	Organization, entity, individual, or event	-	Interviews, documents, reports, and observations
Ethnography	Context or culture	-	Observation & Interviews
Grounded Theory	Development of a theory based on field data	20 – 60	Interviews, open and axial coding
Phenomenological	Participants with lived experience of a phenomenon	5 - 25	Interviews
Narrative	Individual experience in sequential order	1 – 2	Stories from individuals (primary source) & documents (secondary source)

Source: Adapted from Creswell & Poth (2018)

The appropriateness of phenomenological approach was informed in view of Creswell and Poth (2018) and Mohajan’s expression that this type of approach helps in gaining insight into challenges involving inclusive education in Ghana, by in-depth inquiry and exploration participants can rehash their experiences

concerning inclusive education and its challenges (Sarantakos, 2005; Chilisa, 2011; Constant & Roberts, 2017).

Appropriateness of this research design can also be seen from the perspective that in-depth interview helps researcher probe deeper into participants' feelings, emotions and motivations. This limits biases in study leading to rich, reliable, and well-validated research findings.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Babbie and Mouton (2001) indicated that population refers to “theoretically specified aggregation of study elements” (p. 247). This means the population entails individuals with specific characteristics common to the focus of research. For the study, the target population comprises headteachers, teachers, and students in senior high schools within Cape Coast Metropolis. This group of individuals is relevant to the study.

Punch (2013) and Latham (2013) indicated that since it is not possible to study every stakeholder and students in the senior high schools, it is paramount that a sample must be selected. Sarantakos (2005) posited that participants selected should be representative of the entire population related to the study. Latham (2013) indicated that in a qualitative study, once the saturation point (usually 12 participants) is reached, it is assumed that the sample is enough.

However, for the efficacy of the research investigation, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) and Sauro (2015) recommended that fewer participants (5 to 25) are appropriate for a qualitative study. As a result, the researcher employed

24 participants for the study comprising 4 head-teachers and their assistants, 8 classroom teachers and 12 students.

There are different types of sampling techniques such as simple random, stratified, systematic and snowball. These techniques are inappropriate for the study because they are based on probability suggesting that individuals relevant to the study may be missed or not selected (Cresswell, 2014). Hence, this study employed a Judgmental or purposive sampling technique. Sarantakos (2005), Tongco (2007) and Mohajan (2018) asserted that this sampling technique involves selecting only individuals or participants that meet the criteria for the study and that would generate rich data to augment knowledge on the study. Hence, by means of a purposive sampling technique, I selected participants most suitable and relevant to the focus of the study. It facilitated the collection of rich and well-validated data.

Data Collection instrument

The instrument for data collection was a structured interview guide. The structured interview guide was employed for data collection as it is deemed very useful and appropriate for the study. Sarantakos (2005), Creswell and Poth (2018) and Kamwendo (2018) posited that unlike unstructured interview guides, the structured guide helps in reducing the volume of information retrieved thereby facilitating retrieval of the most valuable information for the study. Creswell (2008) also indicated that it helps the researcher understand the nature of challenges, the objective feelings of educationists (without fear or favor) and the extent to which it affects the successful implementation of inclusive education.

The structured interview is also easy to administer since it follows a specified pattern and aids the researcher from rigmarole (Kamwendo, 2018).

Employing interviews for the study aided the researcher in critically evaluating respondent's non-verbal behavior, attitude and habits and develop the strategy of handling the respondents. It is also considered to be the most appropriate technique for revealing information about emotionally laden issues or for probing the sentiments that might underlie an expressed opinion. Moreover, since the interview will be on a personal basis, there is the possibility of a high level of co-operation (Montrieux, Vanderlinde, Schellens & Marez, 2015). It is envisaged that a high response rate will be obtained since the approach to the study will foster a forum for participants to freely express themselves.

The structured interview guide will be divided into three sections. Section A will elicit relevant information pertaining to the participant's biography. Personal information of the participant will be retrieved. Section B will elicit relevant information on the participant perception of inclusive education in Ghana. Section C will cover issues pertaining to the current state of implementation as far as inclusive education is concerned in Ghana. Section D, on the other hand, will dwell on the numerous challenges confronting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana.

Data Analysis

In achieving the objectives of the study, the present study employed content analysis of data collected. After a thorough examination of the data collected from respondents in the field, they were sorted, grouped, relevant

themes and patterns were underscored. This was thoroughly analyzed and inferences were made in relation to their implications for the study. Pictorial illustrations where appropriate were used so as to buttress findings of the study.

Ethical Considerations

For each of the participants of the study and appropriate authorities were provided letters and forms required by the ethics committee for the successful completion of the research. These letters and forms dwelled on seeking permission from school authorities and participants and intimating participants of what the study entails and their rights if they decide to participate. The participants were assured of confidentiality and given the information that the findings of the study will be used for academic purposes only. The researcher will also ensure that respondents will not be coerced to participate and will inform them about the procedures involved in research and therefore elicit their consent to participate.

The researcher will maintain logical objectivity throughout the study. All respondents involved in the study will be entitled to the right of privacy and dignity of treatment. No personal harm will be caused to respondents in the research. The research will employ all avenues and opportunities to ensure that all issues that are considered unethical in the context of the study are addressed. Questions to be included would be ethically considered to avoid personal sensationalism and sentimentalism.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that a qualitative research design was selected for the study. Face-to-Face Interviews will be conducted using a structured interview guide as a research instrument. The analysis will be done via content analysis of data with painstaking attention given to emerging themes and patterns. This forms the focus of chapter four.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter constitutes the analysis of responses and discussion of the research findings in relation to the research objectives of the study. Qualitative analysis of primary data was adopted with the primary aim of linking the responses of participants with the research objectives of the study.

Essentially, the focal point of analysis and discussions were on unveiling the challenges confronting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghanaian schools. The study was confined to 24 participants comprising headteachers (4), teachers (8), and students (12) in senior high schools within Cape Coast Metropolis. The research instrument (structured interview guide) was submitted to the researcher's supervisor for her expert appraisal and constructive criticism. This enabled her to give a face and content related evidence to the items examined so as to ensure that the items were related to the research questions, and comprehensively covered the dimensions of the study.

Suggestions made were incorporated to refine the content and improve the guide so as to enhance the focus of the study. As a result, a pilot study was not conducted because the constructive criticism by the supervisor facilitated data collection and enriched the findings of the study.

The data collected was transcribed sorted and collated. Emerging themes, trend and patterns were noted. Thematic analysis of the processed data followed

with appropriate inferences made on noted themes and patterns from the transcribed interview. The thematic analysis helped the researcher to substantiate the four objectives of the study. Approach to analysis aided deductive reasoning, logical conclusion, and recommendation of result-oriented techniques to addressing challenges mitigating successful implementation of inclusive education based on research findings.

Research Question One: What are the perceptions of educationists on inclusive education in Ghana?

The primary focus of this research question was to elicit relevant information regarding how educationists in Ghana view inclusive education. This means, under this segment of the study, efforts were made to uncover what head-teachers and teachers feel about inclusive education with its concomitant impact on the way they teach in the classroom.

The result of the study revealed that the majority of the stakeholders in education (head-teachers and teachers) interviewed have varied opinions regarding inclusive education. While some (44%) claimed that inclusive education should be implemented to allow learners with or without disability to attend mainstream schools with special resource person, others (38%) claimed special schools should be built for students with a disability because they affect the academic progress of students without disability in mainstream schools. Yet, few (18%) claimed that some students with disability can be allowed to attend mainstream schools. Other students with disabilities should attend special

schools. The following excerpts are representative of their responses to how they define inclusive education:

I feel inclusive education should enable students, irrespective of their condition to be together in mainstream schools. This will increase accessibility to education especially for students with disabilities.

(Head-Teacher with 13 years of working experience)

I strongly feel that inclusive education should cater to the needs of students with a disability which is very lacking in mainstream schools, hence based on my experience as a teacher, students with disabilities should be kept in special schools designed purposely for their type of special educational needs. For example, blind students should be kept in a serene environment with clearly demarcated buildings and walkways to enable students to navigate their classrooms and hostels.

(Head-Teacher with 15 years of working experience)

There are several forms of disabilities. Hence in my own view, inclusive education should ensure access, support, and participation which can be achieved by allowing hearing-impaired students to attend mainstream schools with a special resource person skilled in sign language. However, blind students and other forms of disability requiring highly specialized attention should be kept in a special school so as to ensure the focus of inclusive education.

(Classroom Teacher with 10 years of experience)

Findings of the study revealed that the majority (84%) of the educationists felt the government cannot fully implement inclusive education due to lack of funds to finance the numerous projects associated with inclusive education while (16%) felt, the government can finance it. The excerpt below is representative of the above findings:

At present, the government is struggling with financing free education at SHS level, how can they finance inclusive education which requires special types of equipment, infrastructures tailored to the needs of students and highly trained resource persons

(Classroom Teacher with 8 years of working experience)

The number of students with disabilities kept on increasing with a greater need for funding in terms of special equipment, training of special resource person, and more importantly, construction of infrastructures meant addressing specific types of disability. And you know currently, Ghana borrowed several billion just to cater for issues not related to education. We do not need to beat the issue, from my own perspective; Ghana is limited in financial resources to fully implement inclusive education.

(Head-Teacher with 14 years of working experience)

Though it may appear that the government lacks the financial strength to implement inclusive education I feel it can be done gradually and within Ghanaian financial capacity. I mean the government can minimize cost by refraining from very expensive equipment overseas rather can purchase relatively cheap and functional equipment from China. Infrastructure should be modest and special resource persons can be trained by other Ghanaians at less cost.

(Head-Teacher with 11 years of working experience)

A closer look at the comments above regarding the financial strength of the Ghanaian government, it can be deduced that there is serious lack of monetary capability to fully implement inclusive education in view of the responses (84%) of the stakeholders in education.

A thorough consideration of the results of the study is divergent to Vygotsky's theory of proximal development which places stakeholders in education (head-teachers and teachers) at the forefront of effective training. If teachers do not fully understand what inclusiveness in education entails, then students with or without SEN are at a loss. As more knowledgeable other (MKO), stakeholders should be unified in their definition of inclusiveness in education (Freden and Vogel, 2006; Oguntade, 2017).

The result is also consistent with the findings of previous studies (Agbonyega, 2007; Ntuli & Traore, 2013; Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017; Nketsia,

2017) that the government lacks financial ability to fully implement inclusive education. Moreover, these studies also revealed that several educationists lack consensus regarding what inclusive education entails and some do not fully grasp the nitty-gritty of inclusive education.

In brief, it can be deduced from the results of the study that teachers vary in their conception of inclusive education and what it entails in Ghana. Policies and programs formulated for inclusive education foster marginalization and discrimination of students with SEN, government lack financial capability to fully implement inclusive education, socio-cultural conditions in Ghana limits support for inclusive education and integrating students with disability into mainstream schools.

Research Question Two: What is the current condition of inclusive education in Ghana?

The essence of this question was to unravel the prevailing circumstances regarding the implementation of inclusive education. In effect, information retrieved will be relevant in delineating how inclusive education is being run in the country and its varied nature.

The responses of interviewees revealed that there are different forms of inclusive education programs in Ghana. Some (34%) indicated that there is a program where *“few learners with SEN are integrated into regular or mainstream education”*. Others (42%) claimed that there are *“special schools built purposely to cater for deaf and blind learners with hostel support such as the one in Cape Coast School for the Deaf”*. A group of interviewees (14%) claimed that there

are programs where *“learners with or without a disability are provided special resource teachers (such as those skilled in sign language or brail reading and can handle students with down syndrome) while attending mainstream schools.”* On the other hand, few (10) of the interviewees identified inclusive program where *“learners with or without special educational needs are allowed to join mainstream schools although there is no special resource teacher to cater for those with SEN”*.

In essence, interviewees indicated that at present there are four types of education-oriented towards inclusiveness with vastly different objectives. However, only the one that allowed the integration of students with disability or SEN into mainstream schools with special resource teachers fully tally with the theoretical framework of Vygotsky's theory of proximal development. In this form of inclusiveness, students with or without SEN can readily participate in classroom discussions through the main teacher and special resource teacher. Moreover, education is accessible to all based on the provision of adequate support. These also tally with the focus of policies stipulated by World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain in 1994 and findings of studies conducted by Pekeberg (2012), Hornby (2015), and Deku and Vanderpuye (2017) that inclusive education should celebrate differences, adequately support learning and respond to students' individual needs. The theoretical framework for this study and the findings of the above-mentioned studies are divergent to the other three forms of inclusive education since it lacks important components of inclusive education as shown above.

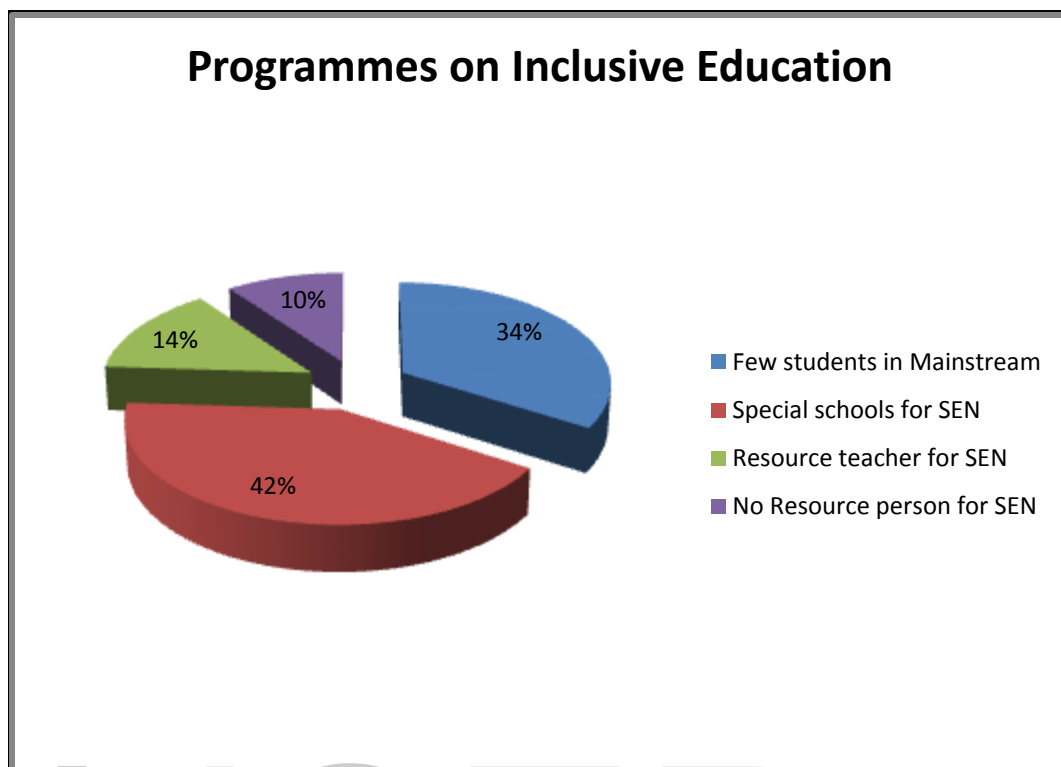


Figure 1: Status of inclusive education in Ghana
Source: Field Survey (2019)

A closer look at the chart in Figure 5 revealed that the majority (86%) of the interviewees indicated several forms of inclusive programs in Ghana that lacks the three focal components of inclusiveness – Equity, Participation, and Support. These programs are divergent and run contrary to the theoretical framework upon which the present study is based. Whereas (14%) of the interviewees indicated the form of inclusive education that tally with the theoretical framework of this study and the resolution adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain (1994) which demands the adaptation of mainstream schools to include every child, celebrate differences, support learning, respond to individual needs and effectively mitigate discriminatory attitudes (UNESCO, 2009, 1994; Hornby, 2015).

In brief, the result of the study revealed that out of the four types of inclusive education being run in Ghana at present, only one type (Students with or without SEN are in the mainstream schools with provision of special resource teacher) that truly fulfills the objective of inclusiveness in education.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges confronting the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana?

This research question was designed to elicit relevant information regarding several mitigating factors crippling the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. This means the researcher made effort at unveiling difficulties teachers and students are confronting as they strive to implement inclusiveness in their classrooms.

Several challenges were mentioned by interviewees of which after sorting and coding of the data, challenges mirroring one another are collated with resultant four major challenges. A representative of these challenges are the following excerpts retrieved from interviewees comments:

One critical component of inclusive education is the curriculum. Most of the items in the curriculum are not feasible or impracticable because we do not have the requisite equipment or infrastructure to implement them.

(Classroom Teacher with 6 years of working experience)

It is difficult for me to get to the classroom because I don't have a wheelchair, even when I get one, the way our walkways were constructed makes it difficult to use a wheelchair.

(Student in Form 1 who suffers from infantile paralysis)

We lack adequate knowledge regarding effective approach and skill in teaching some of the students with SEN because of a lack of training.

(Classroom teacher with 7 years of teaching experience)

There are different forms of educational needs students attending mainstream schools to come with, however, I am only trained in handling students with down syndrome. Students needing assistance with braille or those requiring sign language are beyond my reach and I am not equipped to handle them.

(Special resource teacher with 9 years of working experience)

On several occasions, I noticed that most of our teachers do not fully comprehend how to include a student with SEN in classroom discussion especially when there is no resource teacher and the student in question has a particular health condition that scares or difficult to control.

(Head-Teacher with 12 years of working experience)

What I discovered over a decade to this time is that at some point the government provided certain equipment and this equipment was not properly maintained leading to most of them spoiling. There is no maintenance culture, several types of equipment were donated from foreign countries but because we cannot maintain them, they become useless and we return to square one.

(Head-Teacher with 15 years of working experience)

Findings of the study revealed that majority (91%) of the interviewees indicated that lack of effective and result-oriented curriculum, functional infrastructures and facilities designed to address the educational needs of students are lacking, there is no consensus among stakeholders of education regarding appropriate educational program that will foster inclusiveness in classrooms and more importantly lack effective and on-going training on the various forms of disability and how to approach them effectively in the classroom.

From the comments of interviewees, it could be deduced that the government lack adequate finance to sustain the lofty goal of inclusiveness in classrooms. This means the provision of physical structures and facilities that would support learning is unavailable. For example, one of the students

(suffering from infantile paralysis) lamented his inability to benefit fully from the classroom due to the following: *“I don’t have wheelchair”*, and when they are available, they quickly go into irrelevancy due to lack of maintenance and proper care as indicated by the head-teacher who stated: *“we cannot maintain them, they become useless and we return to square one.”* These results tally with the findings of Oguntade (2017) and Adedoyin and Okere (2017), that there is an acute lack of resources and provision of requisite structures and facilities to catalyze inclusive education in Ghana.

It was also discovered that the formulated curriculum for inclusive education, though well prepared cannot be fully implemented because it requires special resource teacher and result-oriented training for others so as to handle such disability. This finding goes contrary to the underlining principle of Vygotsky's theory of proximal development which requires a qualified and well-trained teacher, a conducive learning environment alongside able and knowledgeable classmates, to foster the dissemination of relevant information to aid students with SEN to fully participate in and enjoy classroom discussions.

In summary, inclusive education is yet to be fully realized in Ghana due to lack of effective and result-oriented curriculum, limited knowledge of what inclusive education entails among teachers, lack of adequate ongoing and effective training for teachers, inadequate resources, physical structures and facilities to foster inclusiveness in the classroom. These challenges are encapsulated on the chart in Figure 6.

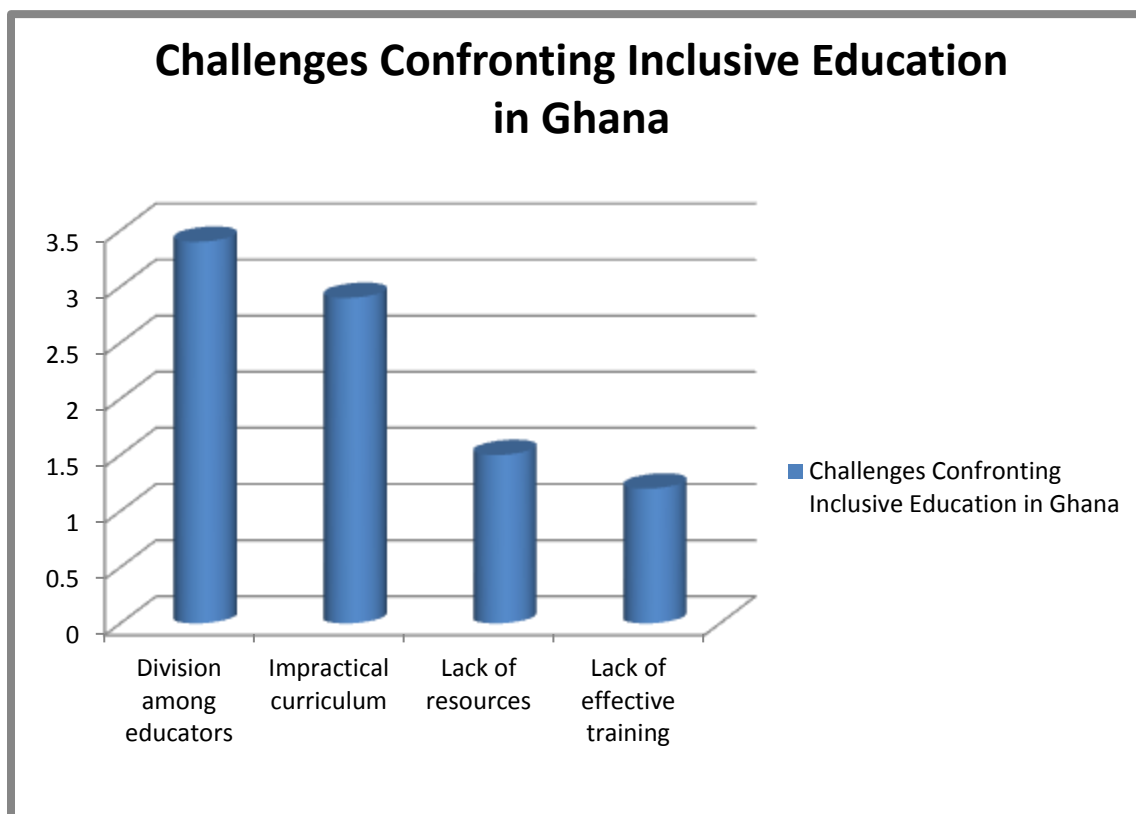


Figure 6: Challenges confronting inclusive education in Ghana
Source: Field Survey (2019)

A critical examination of items in Figure 1 revealed that there are four major challenges confronting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. Of all these challenges, division among educators regarding what inclusive education entails and how it is to be operated so as to fulfill the lofty resolution at the Salamanca Conference in 1994 ranks first. This is followed by the impractical curriculum due to the unavailability of resource materials and teachers to actualize or implement the comprehensively designed curriculum. Unavailability of effective and ongoing on-the-job training for teachers comes last on the list. Such training will also include approaches and techniques on how to handle various types of disability so as to foster accessibility, equity and enabling an environment in mainstream schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to provide a summary of the study, the conclusion drawn, suggestions and recommendations based on the findings. The conclusion, suggestions, and recommendations provided in this chapter are relevant to the challenges affecting the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana with selected Senior High School in the Cape Coast Metropolis being the study area.

Summary of the Study

The study was carried out among selected teachers and students in the Cape Coast Metropolis with the sole aim of exploring the challenges affecting the successful implementation of inclusive education in the Metropolis. The study was guided by the following research objectives: 1) explore educationists' perceptions on inclusive education in Ghana, 2) ascertain the current condition of inclusive education in Ghana, 3) Enumerate the challenges confronting successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana, 4) recommend practical approaches to alleviating challenges confronting successful implementation of inclusive education.

The study was guided by the following three-pronged questions. 1) What are the perceptions of educationists on inclusive education in Ghana? 2) What is the current condition of inclusive education in Ghana? 3) What are the challenges confronting the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana?

The study was phenomenological with the use of the qualitative research paradigm as the approach to data analysis. The appropriateness of the phenomenological approach was informed by the result of previous studies which demonstrated that it helps a research gain ample insight into challenges involving inclusive education in Ghana.

This paradigm facilitated the ability of the researcher to conduct in-depth inquiry and adequately explore the experiences of individual participants by means of in-depth interviews (structured). Such an interview brings back to the mind of participants their personal experience in relation to this form of education and they can rehash such experiences and provide ample input regarding the various forms of inclusive education the country has experimented alongside the thorny challenges encountered during such experimentation.

The selected approach to the study is also relevant in that by means of a well-structured interview guide, thought-provoking questions designed to elicit valuable information from the participants were captured. Such questions are instrumental in conducting a result-oriented interview which will help the researcher probe deeper into participants' feelings, emotions and motivations.

Since participants are allowed to express themselves without undue pressure or coercion from the researcher, biases regarding the findings of the study are drastically limited. More importantly, the study can retrieve invaluable data that will culminate into rich, reliable, and well-validated research findings.

The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to select twenty-four (24) participants for the study comprising 4 head-teachers and their

assistants, 8 classroom teachers, and 12 students. Amidst several types of sampling techniques such as simple random, stratified, systematic and snowball, the researcher selected purposively in view of its suitability for the focus of the study.

This sampling technique involves selecting only individuals or participants that meet the criteria for the study and that would generate rich data to augment knowledge on the study. Hence, by means of a purposive sampling technique, I selected participants most suitable and relevant to the focus of the study. It facilitated the collection of rich and well-validated data. A structured interview guide comprising open and close-ended questions were used to elicit relevant data from the participants so as to answer the four research questions that guided the study.

Major Findings

The results of the study revealed that teachers vary in their conception of inclusive education and what it entails in Ghana. Policies and programs formulated for inclusive education foster marginalization and discrimination of students with SEN, government lack financial capability to fully implement inclusive education, socio-cultural conditions in Ghana limits support for inclusive education and integrating students with disability into mainstream schools.

In effect, the study shows that the policies and programs implemented so far are ineffective in adequately fostering inclusive education either because there are not enough funds to sustain it or due to certain socio-cultural conditions

negatively affecting people with disabilities. Such a condition involves unfavorable stereotypes that view anyone disabled as incapable of any form of education or that such an individual should not be in the same school with those without disability or SEN. It may also involve name-calling, where students with disabilities are given undue names highlighting their disability indirectly tagging them as unfit for public education. The study also revealed that some stakeholders of education are inadvertently promoting these unfair treatments in Ghanaian society.

The finding of the study revealed that out of the four types of inclusive education being run in Ghana at present, only one type (Students with or without SEN are in the mainstream schools with provision of special resource teacher) that truly fulfills the objective of inclusiveness in education. The remaining forms of inclusive education lack inclusiveness in the classroom because it is either they keep all the students with disabilities in a separate school or they keep students with disabilities in mainstream school but with separate buildings disallowing interaction between those with or without a disability.

However, as the study shows, several teachers kicked against this type of approach to inclusiveness, in fact, they concluded that it is not inclusive education because students with disabilities are segregated from a student without a disability. The study reveals that inclusiveness requires that there should be ample interaction between a student with disability and those without disability with adequate resources and teachers available to cater to the needs of students with disabilities. This was well illustrated in figures 1 to 3. Inclusiveness should

also be designed totally with Vygotsky's theory of proximal development where qualified teachers and students without disability contribute to the academic progress of those with disabilities.

Result of the study revealed that inclusive education is yet to be fully realized in Ghana due to lack of effective and result-oriented curriculum, limited knowledge of what inclusive education entails among teachers, lack of adequate ongoing and effective training for teachers, inadequate resources, physical structures and facilities to foster inclusiveness in the classroom.

Conclusions

The critical exploration conducted regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Cape Coast Metropolis clearly demonstrated that there is a dichotomy of understanding regarding what inclusive education entails among stakeholders, students with disabilities are marginalized due to impractical policies and programs and the government is limited financially to fully implement inclusive education nationwide. The researcher also concluded that though there are different forms of inclusive education practiced in Ghanaian Senior High School, most of them are not compatible with inclusive education. However, there are few cases of mainstream schools with special resource teachers handling both children with SEN and their pairs without SEN.

Essentially, the study has demonstrated that, at present, inclusive education has not been fully implemented in Ghana due to several crippling limitations. These limitations range from lack of result-oriented curriculum to a

serious lack of physical structures and facilities to foster inclusiveness in the classroom.

Recommendations

In view of the deep insight garnered during the course of the study and investigative inquiry, the following recommendations are appropriate: The researcher recommended that the Ministry of Education should work in collaboration with other stakeholders in education to review policy direction on inclusive education so as unite the conception regarding inclusiveness in classroom and counteract the effect of socio-cultural situation of Ghana by fostering integration of student with SEN in mainstream schools without discrimination or marginalization.

It is recommended that the government should make concerted effort through sensitization policies and programs to promote and extend the activities of the few senior high schools practicing inclusiveness in their classroom to the remaining senior high schools that are yet to fully embrace inclusiveness in their classrooms. The researcher recommended that head-teachers and teachers should work collaboratively with curriculum designers with the aim of designing a practical and result-oriented curriculum engendering inclusiveness in classrooms. MoE should also help in the provision of requisite on-the-job training for teachers on special education alongside accessibility to resources and facilities fostering inclusiveness in classrooms.

Suggestions for further studies

In view of the scope and limitation of this study, areas for further research are stated below: The present study conducted an in-depth investigation into the exploration of certain challenges confronting inclusive education in Ghana. Further research can be conducted on the role of teacher motivation in the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. The present study was conducted among teachers and students in Senior High Schools. In the future, similar studies can be conducted among students in Teacher Training College to decipher the conception of pre-trained teachers on inclusive education. This will be helpful in quickly correcting any misconception before these teachers become trained teachers.

The present study carried out an investigative study on the implementation of inclusive education using only one instrument – structured interview guide, for collection of data. In the future, researchers could use several instruments, such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, achievement tests or Interactive Call-In Program, to do a similar investigation on the subject. The present study used the phenomenological research design for the study. In future research could consider adopting a descriptive or quasi-experimental research design for the study.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INSTITUTION: UNICAF MALAWI

DEPARTMENT: EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Thesis Topic: Challenges of Inclusive Education in Ghana: The Case of selected Senior High Schools in Cape Coast Metropolis

Introduction

This interview guide is being used as a tool for collecting information on challenges confronting the successful implementation of inclusive education at the Senior High Schools in Ghana. Selected schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis, which included your school, have been selected for this research work.

The information that would be obtained shall be used to examine the effect of the nature of challenges mitigating the successful implementation of inclusive education and proffer relevant recommendations on how this can be resolved. The research is purely academic and any information provided shall be treated as confidential and anonymous.

Section A: General Information

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Level of education
4. Working Experience

5. Position held
6. Years of training in inclusive education

Section B

Perception of educationists regarding inclusive education

1. From your point of view, how will you define inclusive education?
2. Are there policies, practices, and curriculum in place to adequately promote inclusive education?
3. In your perspective, do you think the government can finance inclusive education?
4. Do you think it is possible to successfully implement inclusive education in view of the socio-cultural condition of this region?
5. Do you think inclusive education it is difficult to handle students with disability in mainstream schools?

The state of inclusive education

6. At present, are there several inclusive schools in Cape Coast Metropolis?
7. Do you have information about the extent to which it is implemented in other regions?
8. What are the different forms of inclusive education currently implemented?
9. When compared with students in special schools, will you say children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms are better academically?

Challenges confronting implementation of inclusive education

10. Do you think the presence of disable students can affect the academic development of students in mainstream schools?
11. In your perspective, what impacts will segregating students in mainstream schools from students with disabilities have on their academic development and social interactions?
12. Do you think most of the teachers are not properly equipped to handle students with disabilities in mainstream schools?
13. In view of the high teacher-student ratio in several schools, do you think teachers can have enough time for students with a disability?
14. In your view, do you think the curriculum designed for inclusive education is realistic and viable to ensuring quality education in senior high schools?
15. What is your comment on governments' provision of infrastructure and classroom materials in connection with inclusive education?
16. How important are teachers and learning materials in the implementation of inclusive education?
17. Do you think there are certain indirect costs that affect the successful implementation of inclusive education?
18. With your knowledge of what it takes to implement inclusive education, do you think the government of Ghana has the resources and skilled manpower to continually sustain inclusive education?
19. What other comments do you have regarding inclusive education in Ghana?