Early Grade Educators' Perception and its Influential Factors in Implementing Inclusive Education in the Akuapem South District, Ghana

Joseph Kofi Baidoo [a], Maxwell Kontor Owusu [b*], Dauglas Fofie [c], Joana Anokyewaa [d] and Lawrence Oscar Gaisie [e]

[a] *Ghana Education Service, Akuapem South District Directorate, Aburi, Ghana.*
[b] *Department of Education, St. Louis College of Education, Kumasi, Ghana.*
[c] *Department of Educational Studies, Akrokerri College of Education, Ghana.*
[d] *State Experimental Basic School, Dakojom Ahodwo Nhyiaeso, Kumasi, Ghana.*
[e] *Department of Educational Studies, Enchi College of Education, Ghana.*

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Aim: The main aim of the study was to examine the perceptions and the determining factors of these perceptions in the implementation of inclusive education among early grade educators in the Akuapem South District of Ghana.
Methodology: For this study, a descriptive survey design was employed. After reviewing extant literature, self-crafted questionnaires were validated and piloted to obtain internal consistency cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.930 and 0.752 for perceptions of early grade educators and the

_____

*Corresponding author: Email: mkowusu@slce.edu.gh, mkowusu108@gmail.com;

factors influence the Perceptions respectively. These instruments were used to collect quantitative data from all 248 early grade educators in the district. Descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviations) were used to analyze data to answer both research questions.

Results: The findings of the study indicated that the majority of early grade educators held the perception that inclusive education related to children with disabilities only. They lacked a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical concept of inclusive education. With respect to the factors that influenced the perceptions of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive school practices, the study revealed that learners' attitude, working experience with children with disabilities, availability of counsellors and counselling services and in-service training were identified.

Conclusion: It is recommended that massive capacity-building programs be organized for early grade educators so as to equip them with knowledge and skills in inclusive education. Again, more Special Education coordinators and counsellors should be sent to the circuits in the district to facilitate education on inclusive education to help teachers work effectively with children with disabilities and also to promote a conducive learning environment, especially for children with disabilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a crucial drive in the provision of education for children with Special Education Needs (SEN). Inclusive Education is a global movement aimed at improving the education of children with special needs in both developed and developing countries [1]. Inclusive education has been described as a social movement against exclusion from the mainstream educational system [2]. The Salamanca Statement, which was signed by 92 countries and of which Ghana was a signatory, called on governments to adopt the principle of Inclusive Education (IE), thus enrolling all children in regular schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise (Rix, [3]). Avramidis and Norwich [4] opined that teachers' perceptions were important to successful implementations of inclusive education. Cross et al. [5] pointed out that one of the important conditions needed for the successful inclusion of children with SEN was the positive perspective of school staff who worked with these children. On the other hand, the negative perspective of these professionals could be an intriguing factor that might impede the process of including children with SEN in regular classrooms.

Most industrialized nations have practiced inclusive education for a long period of time; however, the concept of inclusive education in Ghana seems to be on the periphery. Ghana let in the inclusive education model and its practice in the Education Strategic Plan of 2010–2020. This was done because it was a primary objective in education for the Ghanaian government and all stakeholders in education. The main reason for adopting the plan was to include students with learning challenges in general education classrooms. General classrooms are identified as those attended by students without disabilities where the implementation of the national curriculum is carried out [6]. More recently, in 2013, Ghana drafted its inclusive education policy; however, not much has been done to implement the policy's directives [7]. Furthermore, there appears to be a gap between policy intent and actual practices, as some Ghanaian traditions have produced firmly established practices that have negative views about people with disabilities [8], making Inclusive Education difficult to implement.

The concept of inclusive education has evolved from integration to inclusiveness. Various social theories and educational models propose the need to improve educational inclusiveness. Policies dealing with inclusiveness in educational settings face a slew of challenges and fail to meet modern international standards and the paradigm drive of inclusive education outlined by Gadagbui [9]. The implementation of FCUBE provided many children with the opportunity to attend school. But the important question is whether this has provided what is required to run an effective inclusive education. Various studies have indicated that access to special schools was possible for some and that those integrated had no equal opportunity [10,11,9].

Additionally, teachers are important "stakeholders" in education. However, studies on

inclusive education have overly concentrated on trying to provide equal opportunities to children. Other studies have highlighted children outcomes, classroom practice variables and social and educational policy implications [12,13]. This suggests that issues with educators' perceptions of inclusive education and factors influencing their views on its implementation have not been significantly examined. Meanwhile, the success of inclusive education can never be exclusive to educators. This is because every project, policy, or framework drawn with the aim of improving inclusive education looks to educators as the final implementers. The situation was quite pronounced in the Akuapem South District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. In the various schools within the district, educational administrators preached the concept of inclusive education. However, the views of teachers on inclusive education and the challenges, as well as how the concept has so far been successfully implemented, were yet to be investigated in the district. As a result, it was critical to conduct a comprehensive assessment of inclusive education from the perspective of district educators. It was again crucial to consider inclusive education at the early grade levels because these levels nurtured the interest and/or continuity of the learners in school [14].

Moreover, not focusing on the educators' perceptions on inclusive education might have far-reaching implications for personnel preparation, curriculum, pedagogy, learning environments, funding, and management. Therefore, examining the perceptions of educators in inclusive education is very necessary, especially in this technological stage where early-grade education is moving from integration to inclusiveness [10]. A report from the early grade coordinator in the Akuapem South District directorate of the Eastern Region of Ghana indicated that most of the teachers in the district were not willing to welcome children with disabilities into their classroom. This was also confirmed by all-inclusive four circuit supervisors in the district. It was against this background that the study was conducted to explore the perception of early grade educators on the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Akuapem South District of Ghana.

1.1 Research Objective

The main objective of this study was to examine the perception of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive education in all four circuits in the Akuapem South District of Ghana.

1.2 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive education in the Akuapem South District?
2. What are the factors that influence the perceptions of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive education practices in the Akuapem South District?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study focused on early grade educators' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in the Akuapem South District of Ghana. This framework comprised two main variables: perceptions of early grade educators and factors influencing perceptions of early grade educators, with the implementation of inclusive education as the dependent variable.

Avramidis and Norwich [4] opined that teachers' perceptions are important to successful implementations of inclusive education. Furthermore, Cross, et al. [5] pointed out that one of the important conditions needed for successful inclusion of children with SEN is the positive perspective of school staff members who work with these children. On the other hand, the negative perspective of these professionals could be the main factor that impedes the inclusion of children with SEN in regular classrooms. Research suggests that, given the necessary legislation and resources, teachers play a pivotal role in the effective implementation of inclusion [15].

Early Grade Education has inherent issues, and it is still in development in Sub-Saharan Africa [16]. When it comes to inclusive education involving early grade educators, there is a lack of proper skills and knowledge on adequate teaching methods to work with children with special needs; however, it is perceived as an essential process and an excellent opportunity for all children [16]. Other problems that have been detailed in the literature include indiscipline cases, heavy workloads demanding more time, teachers' negative attitudes towards the disabled, no facilities for teachers and learners, the perception of disabled learners having low self-esteem, time-consuming tasks, absenteeism

among learners, and so on. All of the mentioned challenges impact the success or failure of inclusive education. Adopting inclusive education as a guiding principle necessitates the transformation of educational systems, which is frequently thwarted in a variety of encounters. To understand change within the school, it is important to discern what change looks like from different points of view [17]. Reforming school systems to become more inclusive entails not only implementing inclusive policy guidelines that meet the needs of students, but also transforming the schools' strategies, beliefs, and values [18]. Thus, the use of such strategies in the implementation.

2.1 Perceptions of Early Grade Educators in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

As IE becomes the norm for meeting the needs of children with diverse needs, all teachers' involvement becomes critical as their roles have expanded to include screening, referral, designing, leading, managing, and implementing programs for all children [19]. If teachers are fully involved and supported, inclusive programs have a much higher chance of success. Salisbury et al. [20] found that if all teachers take a keen interest in the planning and implementation, the transition to inclusion will be a successful change process. Teachers' roles included how to develop the curriculum activities and materials in such a way that they are accessible to all pupils, structure and teach the curriculum in such a way that all children can access it, refer children with SEN for medical examination and/or treatment, identify the

number of students to be included, analyze the impact on children with and without disabilities, identify the specific needs of students with disabilities, develop strategies and provide supports necessary for successful inclusion, identify the roles of educational personnel, meet the training and staff development needs of all teachers, and remove barriers and potential costs and resources. Unfortunately, few teachers have the necessary preparation to be able to carry out such responsibilities [21]. Salisbury et al. [20] also found that the attitudes of school personnel and students toward inclusion frequently mirror those of the administrator.

Moore [22] discovered that teachers' roles and supports contributed significantly to the success of exceptional children's education. The study identified the sources and components of organizational support needed to implement the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. The primary resources identified in the study were funding, special curriculum, and adaptive technology. Training time and the hiring of additional personnel to assist the students were the two organizational supports found to have been significant in the success of inclusion. It is important for all teachers to be involved in an attempt to educate all children in their home school in the regular education classroom before considering placement in other settings. Stakeholders, especially teachers, must find ways to provide the necessary support to educate all children, including those who will need assistance and modifications to the curriculum.
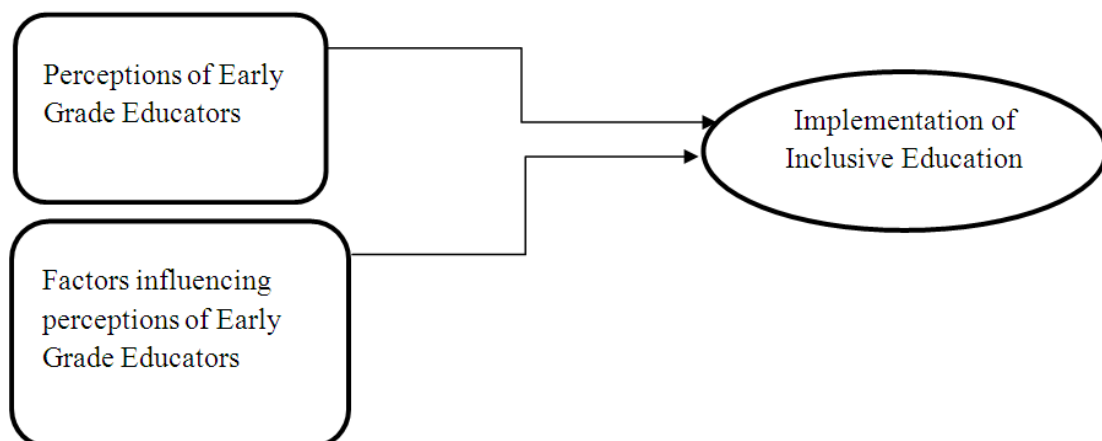

Fig. 1. Framework of the study

The concept of inclusion promotes acceptance of all students and a willingness to restructure the school curriculum in response to their needs [23]. These changes have had considerable implications for education professionals, culminating in the government's view that "all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs," according to the Department for Education and Skills [DFES] [24]. Thus, the role of teachers in the successful implementation of inclusive education cannot be overemphasized. The inclusive curriculum makes considerable demands on teachers. For instance, teachers have to become involved in curriculum development at the local level and skilled in curriculum adaptation in their own classrooms; they have to manage complex ranges of classroom activities; they have to be skilled in planning and preparing to allow the participation of all students; and they have to know how to support their students' learning without simply giving them predetermined answers. They are also expected to go outside traditional subject boundaries and in culturally sensitive ways [18].

In spite of constitutional provisions and other provisions in the various international documents for access, participation, and equal opportunity for all children, including those with SEN and disabilities, Flem, Moen, and Gudmundsdottir [25] argued that what teachers do to facilitate a good learning environment and adaptive education for everyone is critical if inclusive education is to succeed. Their study found that the teachers they studied created a positive atmosphere in the classroom and also had good academic insight. According to Meijer [26], teachers are critical in facilitating adaptive education and determining the quality of the classroom environment. This implies that to deal with diversity among children in schools today, teacher education and systematic teacher development in terms of theory and practice are very critical, and it is therefore likely that teacher education is one of the first steps in the achievement of inclusive education. For all countries, teachers are the most costly and powerful resource that can be deployed in the education system. Thus, appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as a key factor in promoting inclusive schools [18]. A study by Kuester [27] confirms earlier findings that teachers believe that quality training will enable them to more effectively teach all students. Professional development, including field experiences with those with disabilities, has

been found to lead to the acquisition of adequate knowledge and skills as well as greater perceived confidence [28]. Teachers need more than just subject knowledge. They also need to know how children learn, how to understand individual differences, and how to match teaching to those differences. The management of the curriculum in an inclusive classroom is a major pedagogical and organizational challenge.

Teachers require hands-on experience and knowledge, as well as ongoing support, to integrate effective techniques into their daily practice. It is reported that in many countries, teachers are not adequately prepared to successfully implement, monitor, and individualize curriculum for children with special educational needs in an inclusive setting. A case in point was the situation in Canada reported by Kuester [27]. The study reported that in Canada, "the provincial education degree does not require the vast majority of teachers to take any special needs courses; only those majoring in physical education are required to take one course, while those who teach children with special needs undertake a special education degree" (p. 80). She argued that, yet, inclusion requires that all teachers be special educators in order to facilitate the successful learning of all students. Thus, Barton [29] recommended that professional development is essential for all teachers and must be ongoing and comprehensive, as this will provide and maintain a qualified and motivated teaching force. As well as having expertise on particular disabilities, special education has developed individualized curricula and instructional and assessment methods that need to be part of all teachers' methodologies [30,17]. Because all teachers are now responsible for all students, all teachers and others must be thoroughly prepared through ongoing professional development if full inclusion is to be realized. According to Mittler [1], it is becoming increasingly important to evaluate pre-service teacher training (PTT) in order to continuously improve the preparation of teachers of tomorrow and today in order to help them feel equipped to meet the educational needs of all children.

Pearson [31] has indicated that, whereas previously, involvement with pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was something that teachers could largely opt into, it is now an almost universal role. He argued that for inclusive education to be effective, all pre-service teachers need to be aware of the expectations of

inclusive education. They should have started to develop the knowledge and skills to respond to a typical pupil. Beyond these, trainee teachers need positive attitudes toward inclusion in general and particularly toward the pupils with whom they interact. An understanding of the ideological and historical background of SEN, [31] would provide the necessary contextual background. This is a challenging agenda, and concerns have consistently been raised about the preparation of pre-service teachers during their courses [32]. Consequently, Ainscow [33] posed the question, "Is there a properly funded staff development and training strategy that recognizes the importance of continued professional development and ensures that all of its members of staff are provided with awareness raising and role-specific training opportunities on inclusive issues?" Connell [34] and Barton [29] maintain that teachers are faced with educating a diverse student population.

Barton [29], in his concluding remarks, contends that the position of teacher training in relation to its contribution to the development of inclusive thinking and practice on the part of student teachers is of fundamental importance. Garner [35] is particularly concerned about how pre-service teacher education does little to promote inclusive thinking among newly qualified teachers. In a publication concerned with issues of teacher education and inclusion and drawing on the experiences of several societies, Booth, Nes and Stromstad [36] examined some crucial questions, including: to what extent does the curriculum of teacher education encourage the development of inclusion in schools?, what preparation and support do teachers need to implement inclusion?, and how are barriers to learning and participation overcome in teacher education? According to research, in many countries, significant effort is put into training teachers and other professionals in the early stages of the transition to inclusive education.

Despite the apparent benefits of inclusion and regardless of the teachers' commitment and positive attitudes, and notwithstanding their having the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the educational needs of diverse students with disabilities, teachers were concerned about the academic, social, and behavioural adjustment of the students with disabilities in inclusive classes. Some teachers felt that inclusion would bring little benefit to students with disabilities, and consequently, they questioned the advantages of inclusion [37,38]. Other teachers stressed their concern that, as more students are included, teachers would need additional tools and skills for coping with the social and emotional problems that accompany inclusive schooling [39]. Blecker and Boakes [40] mentioned several aspects that might cause teachers to raise objections to inclusion, such as the large number of students in the class, budget shortages, the teachers' work load, and difficulties in standardized evaluation. Still, others pointed to the lack of teamwork or asked for guidance in dealing with students with special needs [36].

In Ghana, Nguyet and Ha [41] indicated that elements of special education were introduced in the country's colleges of education for all teacher trainees. The essence, according to Obi and Mensah [42], was to prepare teachers to effectively function in mainstream and inclusive education settings. Fobih [43] also pointed out that the educational system in the country is equipped with enhanced and flexible curriculum programs at all levels. The curriculum of the College of Education has also been enhanced and expanded to meet the needs of people with disabilities and those with special educational needs (SENs).There are also massive capacity-building programs for teachers and officers in mainstream schools. This is to prepare and equip pre-service teachers and all regular school teachers with knowledge about special needs children and how to adapt the regular education curriculum to benefit children with special educational needs (SEN). The question of the position and function of teacher education institutions is a central concern of Sachs's [44] argument for the development of an "activist teaching profession," one in which teachers can be viewed as change agents. Drawing on research findings from several societies as well as Australia, she maintains that teachers in the modern world will need to respond to and manage change in creative and responsive ways. This, according to Barton [29], implies that teacher educators will need to reconceptualise that task and restructure how they undertake their work, including the establishment of vibrant relationships with schools, trade unions, and other interested groups. Some of the mainstream teachers claimed that they had chosen to teach a specific discipline and not special education, and the inclusion policy forced them to enter areas they were unsure about or not interested in Vaughn et al. [45]. Mock and Kauffman [46] described the *catch* in which teachers were trapped: on the one hand, teachers cannot be

prepared to answer the unique educational needs of every student with special needs, and, on the other hand, teachers in inclusive classes teaching students with special needs might function beyond their training and their specialization.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design with the quantitative research approach was used in this study. The descriptive research design was primarily used to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, interpret, and present it for the purpose of clarification [47]. Descriptive design was selected because it has the advantage of gathering useful information from a relatively large group of people. Also, this design enabled the researchers to have broad views sampled from educators on the implementation of inclusive education and the factors that influenced these perceptions. Descriptive design was used again because, according to Bryman [48], this design can be used in a short time in which investigators gather data from the sample in order to describe the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the population.

3.2 Population

The population for this study was 32 early grade centres, which comprised 248 early grade educators and head teachers inclusive in the Akuapem South District in the Eastern Region. The population was chosen because they were engaged in the early-grade programme in the district. The total number of teachers in the various circuits has been captured in Table 1.

Table 1. Population of educator in the circuits

Circuit	Number of teachers
Aburi Circuit	71
Kitase Circuit	63
Nsabaa Circuit	59
Pakro Circuit	55
Total	**248**

Source: GES, Akuapem South District, 2021

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation, as well as the suitability of the sampling strategy used, determine the quality of any research [49]. A census sampling technique was used to include all 248 early grade educators in the Akuapem South District in the Eastern Region. According to Cooper and Schindler [50], "census sampling involves the use of all members in any population of interest." The census sampling technique was used due to the nature of the sample for the study. Again, this sampling technique makes it easier to reliably generalise findings. The survey questionnaire was sent to all early grade educators at the selected schools. In all, a total of 248 educators were sampled for the study. Table 2 shows the sample distribution of the early grade educators in the Akuapem South District of the Eastern Region.

3.4 Research Instrument

Following a thorough review of extant literature, a self-crafted questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire had two sections: Section "A" and Section "B." Section "A" had 4 statements that focused on background information about early grade educators such as gender, age, academic qualification, and teaching experience. Section "B" presented statements that helped gather data to address the research questions. Closed-ended statements were used in the instrument. Section B comprised 4-point Likert scale items, which were weighed as follows: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, and strongly agree = 4. However, negative items on the questionnaire used reverse scoring. This approach helped raise the reliability of the instrument. The researchers conducted a reliability measure using Cronbach's alpha reliability measure. The values obtained are in Table 3.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Question One

The first research question sought to elicit early-grade educators' perceptions on the implementation of inclusive education. As outlined in the preceding chapter, the respondents were asked a series of questions. Each of these questions requires a response on a 4-point Likert scale. The mean (m), standard deviation (SD) and skewness (Sk) statistics were employed to determine the direction of the responses and their level of agreement with the items.

Table 2. Sample size of early grade educators

S/n	Circuit	Number of Pre-school teachers	Number selected (Census, all sampled)
1	Aburi Circuit	71	71
2	Kitase Circuit	63	63
3	Nsabaa Circuit	59	59
4	Pakro Circuit	55	55
	Total	**248**	**248**

Source: GES, Akuapem South District, 2021

Table 3. Reliability test values

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceptions of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive school practices	12	0.930
Factors that influence the Perceptions of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive school practices	14	0.752

Table 4. Early grade educators' perceptions on the implementation of inclusive education

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Inclusive Education involves all children having the right to participate actively in school.	248	1.00	4.00	1.4032	0.52666	.750	.304
Inclusive Education is about education for all.	248	1.00	4.00	1.5161	0.50382	-.066	.304
Inclusive Education involves catering for the needs of all children in one classroom	248	1.00	4.00	1.5968	0.58561	.369	.304
Inclusive Education provides children access to appropriate aids, support and assessment.	248	1.00	4.00	1.6613	0.54151	-.044	.304
Inclusive Education is about presence, participation and achievement of all children	248	1.00	4.00	1.7097	0.63729	.726	.304
Inclusive Education is about whole school development and improvement	248	1.00	4.00	1.7581	0.61898	.203	.304
Inclusive Education removes barriers to learning	248	1.00	4.00	1.9355	0.80716	.699	.304
Inclusive Education requires significant change in regular classroom procedures	248	1.00	4.00	1.9839	0.63998	.014	.304
Inclusive Education benefits only children with disabilities	248	2.00	4.00	3.1935	0.64880	-.208	.304
Inclusive Education makes children with disabilities feel better about themselves	248	1.00	4.00	3.3710	0.55023	1.147	.304
Inclusive Education is about children with disabilities only.	248	1.00	4.00	3.4032	0.61297	-.941	.304
Inclusive Education is the process of finding better ways to respond to diversity	248	1.00	4.00	3.8387	0.57811	.011	.304
Total	**248**	**1.00**	**4.00**	**1.9476**	**0.26276**	**0.343**	**.303**

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The results in Table 4 revealed that most of the respondents (m = 1.4032; SD = 0.52666) disagreed that inclusive education involved all children having the right to participate actively in school. This means that, to most of the early grade educators, inclusive education means something different from all children having the right to participate actively in schools. The right to education is now accepted as a fundamental human right for everyone, and important developments have taken place that aim to address the educational needs of persons with disabilities [51]. The 1994 Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education Framework for Action stated that ordinary schools should accommodate all students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. The framework emphasised education for all disabled children in an inclusive environment within the regular education system. Inclusive education involves all children having the right to participate actively in school. The results from Table 4 also revealed that most of the respondents (m = 1.5161; SD = 0.50382) disagreed that inclusive education is about education for all. Education is the right of all children, and inclusive schools aim to ensure that all children have equal access to education. Teachers consider the needs of all the children when teaching. Inclusive education means giving the opportunity to students with special needs to attend general or regular school and be taught by the same teachers; the way teachers teach should be child-cantred and have the needs of all pupils in the classroom at heart, whether the child is able-bodied or disabled. The government strengthens the capacity of the inclusion schools and the entire education system to reach out to all learners in order to attain positive educational results.

Again, results from Table 4 also revealed that most of the respondents (m = 1.5968; SD = 0.58561) disagreed that inclusive education involves catering for the needs of all children in one classroom. Inclusive education accommodates all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. In the past, students with disabilities were taught in separate classrooms and, in some cases, separate schools. Due to the inclusion of education, students with disabilities are attending public school with their able-bodied peers. Teachers must ensure that all students can complete the instructional objectives of the lessons they teach. It is education for all and must therefore cater to the needs of all children in one classroom. Inclusive

schools place students with disabilities in classrooms with peers who do not have disabilities. As a result, teachers should teach all students in a way that they understand. The results further indicated that most of the respondents (m = 1.6613; SD = 0.54151) disagreed that inclusive education provides children access to appropriate aids, support, and assessment. The results are in consonance with Fobih [43], who indicated that teachers are of the view that mainstream schools do not have the resources to teach SEN pupils.

Also, the result agreed with that of Blecker and Boakes [40] and Opoku-Nkoom [52], who noted that resources were limited to teach students with SENs. Also, most of the respondents (m = 1.7097; SD = 0.63729) disagreed that inclusive education is about the presence, participation, and achievement of all children. This is in contradiction with Ali et al. [51], who defined inclusive education as a process of increasing the participation of all students in schools, including those with disabilities. Moreover, most of the early-grade educators disagreed that inclusive education involves the whole school's development and improvement. The mean of 1.7581 backs up this claim. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (m = 1.9355; SD = 0.80716) disagreed that inclusive education removes barriers to learning. The implication is that the implementation of inclusive education is not a conduit for learning. Additionally, the respondents indicated that inclusive education does not cater to the needs of all children in one classroom. Table 4 further reports that, according to the early grade educators, inclusive education is not all about the presence, participation, and achievement of all children. This assertion scored a mean of 1.7097 and a SD of 0.63729. It could also be seen from Table 4 that most of the respondents disagreed that inclusive education is about education for all, and an equal number disagreed that inclusive education provides children access to appropriate aids, support, and assessment. The mean and standard deviation values for these two statements are 1.6613 and 1.9476, respectively. Some, on the other hand, have expressed support for the implementation of inclusive education. The majority of the early grade educators shared the view that inclusive education benefits only children with disabilities. This is substantiated by the mean value of m = 3.1935 and the standard deviation of SD = 0.64880. Furthermore, most (m = 3.8387; SD = 0.57811) of the respondents indicated that inclusive education is the process of finding

better ways to respond to diversity. Moreover, Table 4 reports that most (m = 3.3710; SD = 0.55023) of the respondents were of the view that the implementation of inclusive education makes children with disabilities feel better about themselves.

Lastly, it could be observed that the early grades expressed the view that inclusive education is for children with disabilities only. From the foregoing analysis, as expressed in Table 4, it could be observed that the early grade educators have varied views concerning the implementation of inclusive education. Such diverse perspectives are consistent with the ongoing debate on inclusive education as documented in the literature. The term "premium" refers to a product that is more expensive than the standard "premium" product. It is therefore not surprising that early grade educators within the Akuapem South District share different opinions on the concept and its implementation. The views of a section of the respondents indicate that they hold the physical view on inclusive education, where attention is put on the physical disabilities of children. The physical view is consistent with a study conducted by Opoku-Nkoom [52], who noted that inclusive education refers in many professional and popular contexts to the mere placement of students with special needs in mainstream programmes alongside individuals who are not disabled. However, in his study, he found that where a student with disabilities is educated, it is more identified with inclusive education.

Additionally, the views of early grade educators on inclusive education in the Akuapem South District contradict a proposal as opined by Ainscow [33]. Ainscow noted that the process of inclusive education is about a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity and learning how to live with difference, hence concerns with the identification and removal of barriers. However, from the data, the majority of the respondents indicated that inclusive education does not remove barriers. Moreover, Ainscow indicated that inclusive education involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion, or underachievement, as well as the presence, participation, and achievement of all students. This suggests that inclusion is about valuing diversity and individual differences and ensuring equality and access.

However, the majority of early grade educators in the Akuapem South District expressed contrary views. As could be seen from the analysis, the views of the early grade educators have practical implications for inclusive education in the Akuapem South District.

One implication drawn from their views on inclusive education is that they lack the intent of the concept. It is therefore incumbent on the educational stakeholders (the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service) to deepen their sensitization on the concept. This would help broaden the knowledge of teachers and imbue in them the desire and impetus to promote inclusive education in their respective schools. Results from Table 4 are further consistent with the study of Flem, Moen, and Gudmundsdottir [25]. In spite of constitutional provisions and other provisions in the various international documents for access, participation, and equal opportunity for all children, including those with disabilities, Flem, Moen, and Gudmundsdottir [25] argued that what teachers do to facilitate a good learning environment and adaptive education for everyone is critical if inclusive education is to succeed. In a study Flem et al. conducted, they found out that the teacher they studied created a positive atmosphere in the classroom and also had good academic insight. According to Meijer [26], teachers are critical in facilitating adaptive education and determining the quality of the classroom environment. This implies that to deal with diversity among children in schools today, teacher education and systematic teacher development in terms of theory and practice are very critical, and it is therefore likely that teacher education is one of the first steps in the achievement of inclusive education. For all countries, teachers are the most costly and powerful resource that can be deployed in the education system. Thus, appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as a key factor in promoting inclusive schools (UNESCO, [18]).

4.2 Research Question Two

The second research objective was to assess the various factors that influence early grade educators' perceptions of inclusive education implementation. These factors have been presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Factors influencing the perceptions of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have interest in working with children with disabilities	248	1.00	4.00	1.1174	0.58741
Availability of teachers in special education helps me in the implementation of inclusive education.	248	1.00	4.00	1.4032	0.49455
I have work with children with disabilities for at least five years.	248	1.00	4.00	1.7581	0.84321
The school environment can influence the implementation of inclusive education	248	1.00	4.00	1.9355	0.84681
I have spent a longer- years in the service	248	1.00	4.00	1.9677	0.65205
I have children with disability in my school.	248	2.00	4.00	2.5806	0.69065
The experience that I acquire during training as teacher is enough to help me handle children with special needs	248	1.00	4.00	2.6129	0.92957
I have at least one child with disability in my school.	248	1.00	4.00	2.7419	0.84805
I have knowledge working with children with disabilities	248	1.00	4.00	3.1290	0.66490
I have experience working with children with disabilities.	248	1.00	4.00	3.1452	0.67379
Special education coordinators are available in the District that I work	248	1.00	4.00	3.5806	0.89714
Special education coordinators regularly visit my school.	248	1.00	4.00	3.8065	0.90243
Learners attitudes influence my view on the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy.	248	1.00	4.00	3.8387	0.57811
I have attended enough in-service-training on how to handle children with disabilities	248	2.00	4.00	3.8871	0.68004
Valid N (listwise)	248				

Source: Field Survey, 2021

It could be observed from Table 5 that several factors account for the views of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive education practices. Some of these factors are: experience with children living with disability; years of teaching; availability or otherwise of counsellors; teachers' interest; knowledge about the concept; and experience acquired during training. Table 5 shows that the factor that teachers are interested in working with children with disabilities had the lowest mean score of m = 1.1174 and the smallest standard deviation of SD 0.5874. The implication of this mean score is that the majority of the respondents do not have interest in working with children with disabilities; hence, they may be reluctant to spend more time teaching children with disabilities in the class or school. It could also be that they feel there is something wrong with including children with disabilities with other children in a general classroom setting. Maybe if they have their way, they will avoid teaching children with disabilities. The availability of teachers for special education follows the lack of interest among teachers.

From Table 5, though the availability of teachers for special education is regarded as one of the factors that influence inclusive education practices, the results indicate that most early grade educators in the Akuapem South district think otherwise. Ghana Education Service should make serious efforts to post teachers who are trained in special education to support regular teachers. Special Education Needs Coordinators should assist in providing in-service training for teachers on how to manage children with disabilities. They should demonstrate the techniques and methods of teaching some subjects for regular classroom teachers to adopt. Regular in-service training for regular teachers in special education will also help to upgrade their knowledge and skills and assist them in carrying out their roles very well.

Additionally, the result from Table 5 illustrates that having spent more years in service does not necessarily guarantee effectiveness in the implementation of inclusive education. The mean value of m = 1.9677 and standard deviation of SD 0.65205 support this. The finding implies that it does not matter the number of years spent in the teaching profession. If the teacher does not have a good attitude towards the implementation of inclusion education, the programme will suffer. The results also revealed that the school environment does not influence the implementation of inclusive education. This is

substantiated by the mean value of m = 1.9355 and the standard deviation of SD = 0.84681. Although the respondents seem to suggest that school environment does not influence the implementation of inclusive education, creating a welcoming school environment is likely to have a positive impact on the implementation of inclusive education. It is therefore imperative for the government to provide school environment with enough resources to support inclusive education. Head teachers who are receptive towards special needs children help to make these children feel comfortable in their school environment, having received necessary and sufficient support.

Ofori [53] found that school heads and teachers` willingness and unwillingness to include children with disabilities in their classrooms is a result of personal and school-related factors. Factors identified as personal factors are related to teachers` behaviour, competencies, and skills as well as experiences, while school-related factors include school administration and organisation as well as the availability of resources. The authors recommended that more training of teachers and adequate support with resources and material will enhance school heads' and teachers` abilities to manage the diverse needs of students and increase learning outcomes. In spite of the fact that some factors did not receive much popularity among the early grade educators as factors that influence the implementation of inclusive education, some of the factors were observed to be great influencers. Some of these factors include the learners' attitude and the teachers' working experience with children with disabilities. These factors had mean values of 3.8387 and 3.1452, respectively. The implication is that when children without any physical disability behave positively towards their classmates with disabilities, the latter feel better in school and promote the concept of inclusive education. Moreover, teachers' working experience with children with disabilities is a moderately important contributing factor that influences the implementation of inclusive education. This is supported by the fact that the mean value of both exceeds 2.6129.

Experience Teachers working with children with disabilities are more likely to be confident than their colleagues who do not have such experience because of their continuous interaction with them. Experienced teachers can identify students' problems and be able to change their methodologies to aid effective

teaching and learning. Some teachers who have not worked with children with disabilities may feel reluctant to accept the children with special needs in their class. The finding contradicts Ofori's [53] observation that younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience have been found to be more supportive of integration. Boakye-Akomeah [54] showed that acceptance of a child with a physical disability was highest among educators with less than six years of teaching and declined with experience for those with six to ten years of teaching. The most experienced educators (greater than 11 years of teaching) were the least accepting.

Ametepee and Anastasiou [55] also found that, in general, teachers with 14 years' or less teaching experience had a significantly higher positive score in their attitude towards integration compared with those with more than 14 years. They found no significant differences in attitudes towards integration among teachers whose teaching experience was between one and four years, five and nine years, and ten and 14 years (no mention was made based on individual countries). Another study by Anastasiou, Kauffman, and Di Nuovo [56] compared the willingness of teacher trainees and primary teachers to accept children with SEN in their classes. His findings indicated that there was a clear reluctance on the part of the more experienced primary teachers compared to teacher trainees in their willingness to integrate such children. In this respect, it would not be unreasonable to assume that newly qualified teachers hold positive attitudes towards integration when entering the professional arena. However, although the above studies indicated those younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience are more supportive of integration; other investigators have reported that teaching experience was not significantly related to teachers' attitudes [57].

Similarly, the activities of counsellors influence the implementation of inclusive education. From Table 5, the respondents indicated that the availability of counsellors and the regular visits of counsellors make the implementation of inclusive education easier. This is supported by the fact that the mean value exceeds 3.000. The resulting implication is that the availability of counsellors to motivate teachers has a positive influence on the implementation of inclusive education. Motivation, support, and guidance from school counsellors should be encouraged; school counsellors should provide orientation for

non-specially trained teachers to manage special children alongside the normal children. In most cases, school counsellors have helped shape the attitudes of teachers towards students with special needs. The purpose of this article is to raise awareness of the importance of volunteering in the community.

Additionally, the early grade educators indicated that when teachers have enough in-service training on how to handle children with disabilities, it contributes to the effective implementation of inclusive education. This is supported by the fact that the mean value is greater than 3.8871.Most teachers are of the view that training influences their attitude towards inclusive education. Training is considered an important factor in improving teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of an inclusive policy. Without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with SEN, attempts to include these children in the mainstream would be very challenging. Inadequate knowledge, skills, and training discourage teachers from accepting inclusive education and playing their part well. The Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should organise regular inclusive education training for teachers to acquire more knowledge about inclusive education. The preceding paragraph illustrates that learners' attitudes, working experience with children with disabilities, availability of counsellors and counselling services, and in-service training are the major factors that influence the implementation of inclusive education. However, factors like the number of years of teaching and the teachers' interest and knowledge are not strong influences on the implementation of inclusive education.

The results on factors that influence the implementation of inclusive education have mixed similarities with existing literature. For example, the early grade educators' response to the presence of specialities contradicts the observation of Ainscow, [33]. The author indicated that the presence of specialists in special education encourages regular classroom teachers to pass on to others the responsibility for children they regard as special. Resources that might otherwise be used to provide more flexible and responsive forms of schooling are channelled into separate provisions [33]. On the other hand, the findings confirm that individualised educational plans and task analysis in special education tend to lower

teacher expectations of the students. In addition, task analysis and the associated behavioural teaching strategies introduce disjointed knowledge and skills, making learning less meaningful to students. The thinking that has evolved in the disability field over the last 50 years has had a significant impact not only on special education but also on practise in regular education. Current thinking and knowledge demand that responsibility for all learners remain with the regular classroom teacher.

The majority of the time, this is the case. This observation is consistent with Schumm and Vaughn [58] and Tomlinson [59]. These authors believe that many regular-school teachers have often demonstrated a considerable lack of knowledge about students with disabilities and inclusion, and teachers have often used more undifferentiated large group instruction with few adaptations to meet the needs of included students. Consistent with this, Mushoriwa [60], using Zimbabwe as an example, concluded that the use of such generic teaching practises resulted in mainstream teachers in Zimbabwe being unable to cater for the individual needs of students with disabilities. Furthermore, Moore [22] discovered that teachers' roles and supports contribute significantly to the success of exceptional children's education. The study identified the organisational support sources and components required to implement the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular education classrooms. One primary one that the current study identified is the use of counsellors. Moreover, time for training and the hiring of additional personnel to assist the students were observed as some of the organisational supports that were significant to the success of inclusion. Literature has also identified funding, special curriculum, and adaptive technology as some of the organisational supports that were not captured in the results.

Furthermore, literature suggests that a major factor in determining whether inclusion will be successful or not is the preparation of teachers and other support staff. Consequently, research by Kuester [27] confirms the findings of past research that teachers believe that quality training will enable them to more effectively teach all students. Professional development, including field experiences with those with disabilities, has been found to lead to the acquisition of adequate knowledge and skills as well as greater perceived confidence [28]. Teachers need more than just subject knowledge. They also need to

know how children learn, how to understand individual differences, and how to match teaching to those differences. The results from Table 5 illustrate that teachers need practical experience and knowledge together with on-going support to help them embed effective techniques into their daily practice and enhance the implementation of inclusive education. It is reported that in many countries, teachers are not adequately prepared to successfully implement, monitor, and individualise curriculum for children with special educational needs in an inclusive setting. A case in point was the situation in Canada reported by Kuester [27]. She reported that in Canada. "The provincial education degree does not require the vast majority of teachers to take any special needs courses; only those majoring in physical education are required to take one course, while those who teach children with special needs undertake a special education degree." She argued that, yet, inclusion requires that all teachers be special educators in order to facilitate the successful learning of all students.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Florian, Young and Rouse [61] observation. Barton [29], in his concluding remarks, contends that the position of teacher training in relation to its contribution to the development of inclusive thinking and practice on the part of student teachers is of fundamental importance. Garner [35] is particularly concerned about how pre-service teacher education does little to promote inclusive thinking among newly qualified teachers. In studies that looked at the issues of teacher education and inclusion, drawing on the experiences of several societies, Booth, Nes, and Stromstad [36] examined some crucial questions, including to what extent does the curriculum of teacher education encourage the development of inclusion in schools?

5. CONCLUSION

The first research goal investigated early grade educators' perspectives on the implementation of inclusive school practices. The following conclusions were drawn based on the results: The study concluded that most of the teachers did not know that inclusive education involves all children having the right to participate actively in school. Moreover, most of the early grade educators disagreed that education involves the whole school's development and improvement. Additionally, the study concludes that the majority of the early grade educators shared the view that inclusive education benefits only

children with disabilities. The responses further helped to conclude that inclusive education goes beyond the presence, participation, and achievement of all children. Based on the views expressed by the respondents, the study concluded that teachers within the Akuapem South District lack a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical concept of inclusive education. From the second objective, which assessed the factors that influenced the views of early grade educators on the implementation of inclusive school practices, the following findings were made: The study revealed that learners' attitudes, working experience with children with disabilities, availability of counsellors and counselling services, and in-service training were the major factors that influenced the implementation of inclusive education. However, the study further concluded that factors like number of years of teaching and teachers' interest and knowledge were not strong factors that influenced the implementation of inclusive education.

6. RECOMMENDATION

With reference to the various observations made from the data analysis and conclusions drawn, the study makes the following recommendations: The recommendation is specifically made to the Ghana Education Service (GES), since inclusive education is an important national issue. With references to the revelations made in Objective 1, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that the Akuapem South District Education Directorate organise massive capacity-building programmes for teachers, head teachers, and officers in mainstream schools. This will help prepare and equip all head teachers and all regular school teachers with knowledge about special needs children and how to adapt the regular education curriculum to benefit children with special educational needs.
2. Additionally, the Akuapem South District Education Directorate should provide regular in-service training, most especially on inclusive education, for teachers and head teachers in the district from time to time. Again, more Special Education coordinators and counsellors should be sent to the circuits in the district to facilitate education on inclusive education to help teachers work effectively with children with disabilities and also to promote a conducive learning environment, especially for children with disabilities.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Mittler N. Teaching the 'invisible' disabled students in the classroom: disclosure, inclusion and the social model of disability. Teach Higher Educ. 2000;14(3): 229-39.
2. Slee R, Allan J. Excluding the included: A reconsideration of inclusive education. Int Stud Sociol Educ. 2001;11(2):173-92.
3. Rix J. Must inclusion be special?: Rethinking educational support within a community of provision. Routledge; 2015.
4. Avramidis E, Norwich B. Teachers' attitudes towards integration/ inclusion: a review of literature. Eur J Spec Educ. 2002;17(2):129-47.
5. Frazeur Cross AF, Traub EK, Hutter-Pishgahi L, Shelton G. Elements of successful inclusion for children with significant disabilities. Topics Early Child Spec Educ. 2004;24(3):169-83.
6. Lalvani P. Privilege, compromise or social justice: Teachers' conceptualizations of inclusive education. Disabil Soc. 2013;28 (1):14-27.
7. Agbenyega J. Examining teachers' concerns and attitudes to inclusive education in Ghana. Int J Whole Schooling. 2007;3(1):41-56.
8. Singal N, Mahama Salifu E, Iddrisu K, Casely-Hayford L, Lundebye H. The impact of education in shaping lives: Reflections of young people with disabilities in Ghana. Int J Inclus Educ. 2015;19(9):908-25.
9. Gadagbui GY. Inclusive education in Ghana: practices, challenges and the future implications for all stakeholders. Winneba: University of Education. Winneba Press; 2008.
10. Deku P, Vanderpuye I. Perspectives of teachers regarding inclusive education in Ghana. Int J Whole Schooling. 2017;13(3): 39-54.
11. Deppeler JM. Exploring preservice teachers' perceived teaching-efficacy, attitudes and concerns about inclusive education in Bangladesh. Int J Whole Schooling. 2012;8(2):1-20.
12. Pearce M, Gray J, Campbell-Evans G. The inclusive secondary teacher: the leaders'

perspective. Aust J Teach Educ. 2009;34 (6):101-19.

13. Brown M, Bergen D. Play and social interaction of children with disabilities at learning/activity centres in an inclusive preschool. J Res Child Educ. 2002;17(1): 26-37.

14. Opoku MP, Agbenyega J, Mprah WK, Mckenzie J, Badu E. Decade of inclusive education in Ghana: perspectives of special educators. J Soc Inclus. 2017;8(1): 4-20.

15. De Boer A, Pijl SJ, Minnaert A. Regular primary schoolteachers' attitudes towards inclusive education: A review of the literature. Int J Inclus Educ. 2011;15(3): 331-53.

16. Zabeli N, Gjelaj M. Preschool teacher's awareness, attitudes and challenges towards inclusive early childhood education: A qualitative study. Cogent Educ. 2020;7(1):1791560.

17. Winzer M. Including students with special needs: implications for social justice. In: Zajda J, editor. Globalization, education and social justice. Dordrecht: Springer; 2010.

18. UNESCO. Inclusion in education: the participation of disabled learners. Paris: UNESCO; 2011.

19. Scruggs TE, Mastropieri MA, McDuffie KA. Co-teaching in inclusive classrooms: A metasynthesis of qualitative research. Except Child. 2007;73(4):392-416.

20. Salisbury C, Strieker T, Roach V, McGregor G. Pathways to inclusive practices. Systems oriented, policy-linked, and research-based strategies that work; 2001.

21. Saland B. In-service primary teachers' attitude towards inclusion: survey results from district KUrukshetra (Haryana). Gyanodaya J Prog Educ. 2005;5(2): 25-30.

22. Moore MM. Exceptional children: Developmental consequences and intervention in Kenya. Nairobi: Longman Publishers; 2006.

23. Göransson K, Nilholm C. A continuing need for conceptual analysis into research on inclusive education: response to commentators. Eur J Spec Needs Educ. 2014;29(3):295-6.

24. Department for Education and Skills (DFES). Statistics of education: schools in England; 2001. London: Stationary Office; 2001.

25. Flem A, Moen T, Gudmundsdottir S. Towards inclusive schools: a study of inclusive education in practice. Eur J Spec Needs Educ. 2004;19(1):85-98.

26. Meijer SJ. Preparing teachers for inclusive education: Some reflections from the Netherlands. J Res Spec Educ Needs. 2003;10:197-201.

27. Kuester VM. 10 years on: have teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities changed? Paper presented at the ISEC 2000. London. SAGE; 2003.

28. Lumpart JL, Webber C. Canadian schools in transition: Moving from dual education systems to inclusive schools. Exceptionality Educ Can. 2002;12(2-3):7-52.

29. Barton L. Inclusive education and teacher education. London: Institute of Education, University of London; 2003.

30. Anderson N, Adam R, Taylor P, Madden D, Melles G, Kuek C et al. Design thinking frameworks as transformative cross-disciplinary pedagogy. Brussels, Belgium: SAGE; 2014.

31. Pearson C. Social work with disabled people. Basingstoke: Macmillan; 2005.

32. Jones C. Teachers' perceptions of African American principals' leadership in urban schools. Peabody J Educ. 2002;77(1):7-34.

33. Ainscow M. Moving knowledge around: Strategies for fostering equity within educational systems. J Educ Change. 2012;13(3):289-310.

34. Connell RW. Working-class parents' views of secondary education. Int J Inclus Educ. 2004;8(3):227-39.

35. Garner P. Special needs, inclusive education and the deceit of initial teacher training. In: O'Brien T, editor. Enabling Inclusion: blue Skies…dark clouds? London: Stationery Office; 2001.

36. Booth T, Nes K, Strømstad M. Developing inclusive teacher education. Rome: Routledge; 2003.

37. Heiman T. Teachers coping with changes: including students with disabilities in mainstream classes: An international view. Int J Spec Educ. 2002;19(2):55-70.

38. Priestley M, Rabiee P. Hopes and fears: stakeholder views on the transfer of special school resources towards inclusion. Int J Inclus Educ. 2002;6(4): 371-90.

39. Idol L. Toward inclusion of special education students in general education: A

program evaluation of eight schools. Remedial Spec Educ. 2006;27(2):77-94.

40. Blecker NS, Boakes NJ. Creating a learning environment for all children: are teachers able and willing? Int J Inclus Educ. 2010;14(5):435-47.

41. Nguyet JL, Ha NEJ. Ecological aspects influencing the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. S Afr J Educ. 2010;33(3):77-112.

42. Obi FB, Mensah T. Inclusive education: the challenges of the 21st century, Nigerian-Ghanaian Teacher. Afr J Spec Educ Needs. 2005;4(1):19-27.

43. Fobih DK. Inclusive education: the way of the future, Ghana. In international conference on education, 48th session, UNESCO. 2008;20.
Available:http://www.ibe.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE/Messages/ ghana_MIN08. pdf.

44. Sachs J. The activist teaching profession. Buckingham, UK & Philadelphia: Open University Press; 2003.

45. Vaughn JS, Schumm J, Jallad B, Slusher J, Saumell L. Teachers' views of inclusion. Learn Disabil Res Pract. 1996;11:96-106.

46. Mock DR, Kauffman JM. Preparing teachers for full inclusion: Is it possible? Teach Educ. 2002;37(3):202-15.

47. Orodho JA. Elements of education and social science research methods. Bonn, Germany: SAGE; 2005.

48. Bryman A. Social research methods. New York: Oxford University Press; 2016.

49. Cohen L, Manion L, Morrison K. Research methods in education. 7th Ed. London: Routledge; 2011.

50. Cooper DR, Schindler PS. Business research methods. 8th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin; 2003.

51. Ali MM, Mustapha R, Jelas ZM. An empirical study on teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education in Malaysia. Int J Spec Educ. 2006;21(3): 36-44.

52. Opoku-Nkoom I. Examining preservice teacher preparation for inclusive education in Ghana; ([doctoral dissertation]. University of Cape Coast); 2010.

53. Ofori EA. Challenges and opportunities for inclusive education in Ghana [doctoral dissertation]; 2018.

54. Boakye-Akomeah E. Perception of teachers on inclusive education in selected basic schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana; ([doctoral dissertation]. University of Cape Coast); 2015 .

55. Ametepee LK, Anastasiou D. Special and inclusive education in Ghana: status and progress, challenges and implications. Int J Educ Dev. 2015;41:143-52.

56. Anastasiou D, Kauffman JM, Di Nuovo S. Inclusive education in Italy: description and reflections on full inclusion. Eur J Spec Needs Educ. 2015;30(4):429-43.

57. Agbenyega J, Deku P. Reimagining inclusive education for young children: A Kaleidoscope of Bourdieuian theorisation. International Education Studies. 2011;5(4): 71-9.

58. Vaughn S, Linan-Thompson S. What is special about special education for students with learning disabilities? J Spec Educ. 2003;37(3):140-7.

59. Tomlinson CA. Differentiating instruction for advanced learners in the mixed-ability middle school classroom. Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education; 1995.

60. Mushoriwa T. Research Section: A study of the attitudes of primary school teachers in Harare towards the inclusion of blind children in regular classes. Br J Spec Educ. 2001;28(3):142-7.

61. Florian L, Young K, Rouse M. Preparing teachers for inclusive and diverse educational environments: Studying curricular reform in an initial teacher education course. Int J Inclus Educ. 2010; 14(7):709-22.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/97202