TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE PROGRAMME AT ODUKPONG KPEHE CLUSTER OF SCHOOLS IN AWUTU SENYA EAST MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated teachers' opinions about implementation of inclusion of children with special education needs in regular schools in the Awutu Senya East Municipality of the Central Region, Ghana. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which purposely involved forty-five teachers from four clusters of pilot-inclusive schools in the Central Region of Ghana. Data was collected through questionnaires and statistics were used to analyze data from the survey instrument or questionnaires. The study revealed that majority of the teachers thought that inclusive education was a sound or good educational practice. The teachers believed inclusion would improve the academic abilities of students with disabilities, and so teachers were willing to tolerate or cope with special needs students placed in their classrooms. Availability of resources and other support services required to make inclusion workable, were however, inadequate. The study found out that teachers had not been adequately trained for inclusion and that there was the need for additional in-service courses to prepare them to implement it. Insufficient administrative support was also identified by teachers resulting in their anxiety about the future of the inclusive program. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education of Ghana designed programmes that would provide school districts with the need to incorporate staff development as part of the on-going professional development provided to school teachers.

Keywords: Implementation, Educational Practice, Resources, Statistics.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the desire and commitment to ensuring that every Ghanaian child has access to education, in the years 2003 and 2010, the Government of Ghana by policy introduced pilot-inclusive schools across the country (MOE GHANA, ACT 778-2008). The policy on new educational reforms directs District Assemblies and heads of educational institutions to ensure that designs for schools are user friendly for all children including those with disabilities. Also, all parents and guardians are to take advantage of the inclusive education facilities to send their children with disabilities to these schools. In September, 2010 some Basic schools in Ghana were mandated to run inclusive programmes on pilot basis in the country. The District Education Directorates are, in pursuance of the Constitution of Ghana and the Education Act (2008), mandated to cater for all groups of children with diverse, differential and special educational needs. The Odukpong Kpehe Cluster of schools in the Awutu Senya East District are among such schools that have been mandated to offer admission to children with disabilities to access education in their community basic schools. With the introduction of pilot inclusive programmes in Ghana, teachers are now expected to teach all children, including those with

disabilities, in the same classes. There are however, key challenges that confront education delivery, some of which include huge number of teachers not trained in special needs education, inadequate specialized teaching and learning materials, and high teacher-pupil ratio of one teacher per class of about 80 pupils that remain in many basic schools. These issues are predominantly, common phenomenon in some developing urban communities, such as Kasoa, located in the Awutu Senya District in the Central Region of the Republic Ghana. Often, many well-designed programs meant to improve upon the educational system do fail. One reason could be because such programs designed to bring that change are externally initiated, which make school, and individuals within it become the victims of change. As a result, effort to renew school fails (Dalin, 1998). An example of such programme failure in some part of Ghana, was carried in a report published in the Awutu Senya District Directorate of Education Second Annual Report (2011). The report highlighted that some pilot inclusive schools established to accommodate the increasing number of children with disabilities, have suffered various challenges leading to their collapse. It is documented that most of the studies about school development with even strong centralized reforms, depend completely on keeping in close touch with the grassroots (Dalin, 1998). It is not known whether teachers in Awutu Senya East District, as key actors in inclusive education, have favorable opinion or otherwise, towards the inclusive programme as it is being implemented. As implementers of an educational curriculum, there is the need for a study to glean information from the teachers on what their opinion are about their practice of inclusive education programmes. This approach goes in line with what Fullan (1993) stated "a total teacher, a total school" (page, 63) in which the voices of teachers are taken into considerations in their professional practices. There is the need for a study to glean information from the teachers who remain major stakeholders in the educational process to ensure that their concerns are addressed to prepare the grounds for a nation-wide take-off, since inclusive schools are all currently running on pilot basis in Ghana

Statement of the Research Problem

Inclusive Education in Ghana is a centralized initiative and currently being run on pilot- basis. Many scholars of educational change especially, Dalin (1998) stated that adopting new practices, such as inclusive education, assigned centrally or externally is not as important as implementation phase, which needs more concerns (Dalin, 1976). Several studies indicate teachers' reactions and willingness to accept pupils with differential leaning needs in their classrooms, availability of resources to support the work of teachers in the classrooms, the level of skills acquired of teachers, including administrative support as some critical factors for a successful inclusion program. An example of such studies was conducted by Harris, Shirley and George (2004) and Reported in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Report (2007). Interactions with some teachers in some of the pilot inclusive schools before this study have indicated that teachers have concerns about proper and effective ways of handling these children. While some teachers are willing to work with such children, others are showing certain amount of unwillingness to work with special needs children in their classes. Whilst the researcher ponded on these issues there was another report published in the Awutu Senya District Directorate of Education Second Annual Report (2011), which revealed that the District wass experiencing increasing school enrolment of pupils, including those with disabilities. The report highlighted however, that some pilot inclusive schools established to accommodate the increasing population of children with disabilities had suffered various challenges leading to their collapse. Some of the challenges highlighted includes teachers' ability and wiliness to handle the special need children. It is in the light of these issues that the researcher found it imperative to assess the opinion of teachers on critical factors that are likely to make the implementation of inclusive programme a success or otherwise in the study area.

Purpose of study

The findings from the study may provide information for teachers and school administrators on the importance of accepting children who have special need to study alongside their non-disabled peers in the same school environment. The finding from the studies will bring out what teachers' opinion are about inclusion program. This will inform stakeholders, including Ghana Education Service in the formulation of policies to improve upon existing condition in inclusive schools. The study will provide basis for future research to contribute to existing knowledge that would prove useful for planning inclusive programme to improve upon the education for people with special needs in the area. Inclusion is viewed as a strategy for learners with special educational needs to attend, participate, and contribute to the learning process in any ordinary school. Hence adjusting and changing the practice in the home, schools and the society at large in order to meet the needs of all children/individuals regardless of their differences (Mahopatra, 2004). This study is located in the social model of disability and theories of educational change.

Teachers' Attitudes and concerns

Globally, many studies have been carried out on teacher's attitude towards inclusion of learners with special education needs into ordinary schools. When disabled students are integrated into general education classrooms, a major concern that emerges is the potential impact of the attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward these students (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber,1999) The attitudes and behaviors of educators toward any individual student can either enable the pupil to progress intellectually, socially, and emotionally, or can inhibit the child's opportunities for learning and growth. Since a teacher's positive attitude toward a disabled child may facilitate the child's functioning and a negative attitude can magnify difficulties, the identification of teacher attitude is particularly crucial to the integration process (guskey, 1999). Because teacher responses to disabled students reflect their attitudes, building principals must be aware of the attitudes regular education teachers possess concerning the integration of disabled students. Without considering these attitudes and expectations, administrative decisions will result in inappropriate placement and poorly implemented programs. A significant portion of the literature on inclusion indicates that general education teachers generally feel ill prepared to handle the various special needs of the students in their classrooms (Lewis, 2004). Many teachers believe that they have not been given adequate time to learn how to work with students with disabilities before implementation occurred (D'Alonzo & Giordano, 2006). Myles and Simpson (2009) reported that 85% of the general educators they surveyed were willing to accept a student with disabilities in their classrooms on a full time basis, given appropriate training. Without support and training, less than 33% of the respondents were willing to accept these students in their general education classes. Mitller (2000) indicated that teachers may experience negative feelings about inclusion, such as: (a) resentment for extra responsibility; (b) incompetent due to lack of training and preparation ;(c) overburdened by additional demands on already heavy workloads; and (d) stressful and upsetting to their regular schedule. In a study carried out by Mushoriwa (1998) on the attitudes of primary school teachers in Harare towards the inclusion of children with disability in regular classes the researcher reported that although regular teachers understood the problem associated with their condition such as blindness, 58.25% of the participant did not make appropriate educational provisions for the children in the regular classrooms because of heavy workload and lack of resources. The majority of teachers 94% indicated that they were not prepared to teach such children. These children were seen as a burden and as interfering with the normal flow and routines of regular class activities. Van Reusen, Shoho and Barker (2000) state that teachers who feel less positive towards the idea of inclusion will not implement effective instructional strategies as often as teachers with positive attitudes. In another study carried out by Opdal and

Wormnaes (2001) in Palestine on the teachers opinions indicated that 60% of the teachers who participated in the study were positive about the inclusion of learners with special needs into regular schools with those with physical disabilities, visual impairment and hearing impairment more includable than those with behavioral problems and learning difficulties in specific areas such as reading and writing. Factors such as: nature and severity of disability, teachers' experience and their beliefs about the power of teaching, professional training of teachers, number of subjects taught, gender of the teachers and characteristics of the schools influenced the teacher's perspectives towards inclusion of children with disabilities. Though these researchers did not indicate any category of teachers who participated in the study, this current research involved participants at the basic level of education in Ghana.

Wilezenski (1992), cited in Booth and Winslow (1998) conducted a study in Australia on teacher's attitudes towards inclusive education. He found out that the teachers were more positive about students whose programmes focused on social inclusion than those requiring physical changes in their school or classroom. The teachers were also more accepting to students with physical disabilities than to those who necessitated academic modifications. He then concluded that such research findings indicate that the type of disability, and the demands it eventually makes on a teacher, will influence teacher attitude towards including a child with such a disability in a regular class. Another study carried by Vaughn and Hughes (2007), in America on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion indicated that teachers who were not participating in inclusion programmes had strong negative feelings about inclusion and they felt the decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities. Class size, inadequate resources, teacher's attitudes towards Persons with disabilities, severity of the disability and lack of adequate preparation would affect the success of inclusion. Furthermore, a study carried in Uganda indicated that school administrators were positive in including children with visual impairment into the regular classrooms although most parents seemed to have preferred having their children in the boarding sections where the conditions were favorable than the regular school where they commute from their homes (Vaughn & Hughes, 2007). As classrooms become more inclusive, major adjustments have been necessary to prepare teachers for more diverse student populations. Research findings suggest that universities (or other teacher training institutions) and their students will become pivotal in ensuring the success of inclusion (Sharma, 2006). Consequently, many universities have undergone a major pedagogical shift in recent years. One such shift is that universities are including more inclusive education content areas within their courses (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2007). However, there is a growing concern internationally about whether the preparation teachers receive for inclusion is adequate (Lancaster, Huff & Mararse, 2004), Although professional development remains a prominent approach to prepare teachers for inclusive education, a greater focus has been placed on university lecturers and course designers to prepare new teachers for teaching in inclusive classrooms (Vaughn & Hughes,2007). According Sharma (2006) in which pre-service teachers are trained though their initial course seems to play a critical role in how they employ inclusive education strategies when teaching full-time in schools. To elaborate, many new teachers express apprehension in regards to their ability to teach students with diverse needs in mainstream classrooms and apportion blame on their preparation for inclusion (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Although the inclusion of compulsory inclusive education subjects has been shown to have a positive effect on the preparation of pre-service teachers, research has also shown that these findings may be limited. To exemplify Daniel and King (1997) claim that single university subject on inclusion or special education cannot adequately prepare teachers to successfully implement the various aspects of inclusion and its associated practices. Similarly, Thousand and Villa (2005) concluded that a one-year postgraduate teacher training course had very little impact on participants' feelings about disabilities specifically and

inclusion more generally. Their findings support the work of Hasting and colleagues (1996) who reported that an information-based course did little to change the perceptions of pre-service teachers over a nine-week period. Two main reasons have been acknowledged for why change has not been readily forthcoming. First, some researchers claim that there is a specific body of knowledge and skills for working within inclusive classrooms and that the pre-service teacher training courses do not adequately cover these (Thousand &Villa, 2005). And second, newly qualified teachers do not have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to execute tasks in inclusive settings (Forlin, 2001;

Benefits of inclusive education

The UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (2006) call on all states parties to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. This call is justifiable and beneficial for the fact that segregation teaches children to be fearful, encourages ignorance and breeds prejudice. Only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and build friendship respect and understanding. All children need education that will help them to develop relationship. Peetsma et al. (2001) matched primary students with disabilities educated in a separate class to those in an inclusion setting over a four year period in the Netherlands. Their results indicated more progress in the academic performance of students educated in an inclusive setting compared to their matched pairs in a separate special education setting. Daniel and King (2001) reported similar results tracking third and fifth grade inclusion students who experienced higher gains in reading scores. Other studies have determined that social outcomes for students with disabilities increase in the inclusion setting as well (Klingner et al., 1998; Vaughn et al., 1998). Holmes (1999) conducted a case study of the implementation of inclusion in five elementary schools located in a North Louisiana parish. Through reflective journals, review of documents, and interviews with teacher and administrators, she reported that with the proper modifications most of the students placed in an inclusion setting progressed well and received positive comments from a majority of the general education teachers who indicated that inclusion was an excellent choice for many students with special needs. This study also indicated academic gains equal to or better then past achievements in a self-contained setting and general education students appeared to gain as well through peer tutoring. In 1998, Vaughn conducted a study of 183 elementary students under the assumption that students with disabilities will be better accepted, have more friends, and feel better about them if placed full time in the general education classroom. Using rating scales, student reporting and observations, he compared students with disabilities from two different placement options. One group of students with disabilities received consultation/collaborative services only while the second group was involved in a co–teaching model. Vaughn concluded that students in the consultation/collaborative teaching model demonstrated more positive outcomes on friendship quality, peer acceptance, improved self-concepts and had an increase in reciprocal friendships when compared to their peers in a more restrictive environment. Klingner et al. (1998) reported their findings of 32 students with special needs and their views of their own inclusion placements. Through interviews, the researchers discovered that these students believed that learning was stressed more in the inclusion classroom, previous experience in the special education classroom proved not to be challenging enough, and they were able to make more friends with in the inclusion model. Klingner et al. concluded that inclusion was viewed by many students as beneficial and preferable while maintaining support for a continuum of service delivery options and for considering the placement of each child individually based on their unique needs. In a similar study, Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993) interviewed 19 general education teachers who have included students with disabilities into their classrooms. Initially, all the teachers reacted negatively towards accepting educational responsibility of students with disabilities. By the end of the first year, 17 out of

19 teachers interviewed reported an increase in ownership, involvement and personal interaction. The teachers indicated higher skill acquisition including communication, social skills, motor activities and academic skills in students with disabilities. The overall impact on both disabled and non-disabled students was positive according to their teachers (Giangreco et al., 1993). Students with disabilities in an inclusion setting out perform their peers who receive instruction outside of the regular classroom setting (Klingner et al.,1998; Lindsay, 2007). Regular students also appear to benefit from inclusion practices both academically and socially (Salend, 2005). According to this line of research, inclusion seems to have a positive effect on all students academically and socially. Inclusive education can be beneficial to all students in inclusive class not just students with special education needs. Inclusive education helps students understand the important of working together and foster a sense of tolerance and empathy among students   and seek to actively engage all students within a community to participate to the fullest of their ability. In many respects, this approach to education attempts to unify children, parents and the community by bridging the gap between disabled and non-disabled children and the community as a whole body (Jorgensen,Schuh & Nisbet, 2005).

Methodology
This section describes the methods and procedure that was used in collecting data for the study. It includes the description of research design, the population sample and sampling procedure. It also discusses the instrumentation, gaining access, administration of the questionnaires, data analysis and challenges encountered during data collection. The researcher used descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey method set out to describe and to interpret what is, and a cross sectional study is one that produces a snapshot of a population at a point in time (Cohen, Manion &Morrison, 2003). Avoke (2005), add that descriptive surveys are designed to portray accurately the characteristics of particular individuals, situations or a group. He notes that survey research in education involves the collection of information from teachers, members of group students, or other group of persons associated with educational issues. As the study sought to gather information from teachers about their opinions on inclusion, it is appropriate to use a descriptive survey research design. The choice of the survey design for this study is useful because of the relatively large number of respondents that participated in the study.

The target population for this study comprised of 55 teachers in the entire six clusters of schools who were teaching and helping to implement inclusive programme in the school. These teachers teach in the schools that have been mandated to run inclusion for pupils with disabilities.

Distribution of teacher population according to schools in the study area.

Stream		Number of teachers
Primary Section		
Odukpong Kpehe M/A Primary	'A'	7
Odukpong Kpehe M/A Primary	' B'	7
Odukpong Kpehe M/A Primary	'C '	7
Odukpong Kpehe M/A Primary	'D'	7
Odukpong Kpehe M/A Primary	'E'	8
Total		36
JHS Section		
Odukpong Kpehe M/A JHS	'A'	6
Odukpong Kpehe M/A JHS	'B'	6
Odukpong Kpehe M/A	'C'	7
Total		**19**

The schools chosen for the study were located in Kasoa in the Awutu Senya West Metropolitan area in the Central Region of Ghana. The Municipality was chosen because it was the investigator's workplace and conversant with school system in the area. This made it easy for the researcher to interact with the participants during the data collection. The Awutu Senya West Municipality is one of the fastest developing communities in Ghana and the Whole of the West African Sub-region (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Census Report). According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2010 Census Report), the municipality is one area that is most attracting settlers from the rural areas including those who are relocating from nearby urban centres including Accra and Cape Coast areas. This migration trend affect increasing school enrolment leading to large class sizes with an average class enrolment ranging higher than 70-90 at each grade levels in the schools (Municipal Directorate of Education, 2013 Annual Report). The special education need students enrollment comprises approximately 2 % of the total Student population. The special need students are all pupils with partial to total hearing loss. The Students' needs are met through a variety of program service models that range from school based support provided by resource teachers attached to classes to support teachers and students to ensure quality teaching and learning. Three mainstream head teachers are assigned headship responsibilities of the six clusters of schools. Streams 'A'&'C' are assigned to one head, with streams 'B','D'&'E' under another head and the JHS section being headed by a headmistress. The schools for the study were purposively selected. The school had enrolled children who have disabilities and could hitherto, be enrolled in the traditional unit schools Criterion based or purposive sampling was used to select the elementary schools for purposive sampling, the non-probabilistic selection of subjects or situations, allows for information rich cases in which the researcher can glearn a significant amount about issues related to the purpose of the investigation (Patton, 1987).

Instruments used for the collection of data
Descriptive survey, accordingly, employs a variety of data gathering techniques such as questionnaires, observation and interviews (Nworgu, 1991). Data were therefore collected using questionnaires as the sole instrument. A questionnaire can be defined as "a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents" (Kumar, 1999). The respondent receives the questionnaire, reads the questions, interprets what is required and then writes down her answers. It is crucial that the questions asked are easy to read, understand and follow, as unlike in an interview situation, the respondent cannot ask questions or receive answers immediately. There are also differing types of questions that are available for use in questionnaires, and these includes open-ended and closed-ended questions. In closed-ended questions the respondent is provided with a choice of responses to choose from with a space to select the most appropriate answer. Before choosing which type of questions to use, one needs to be clear on how one plan to use the completed data. Closed-ended questions are useful if one requires statistical, factual information. The data obtained is easy to tabulate and analyze. The researcher carefully constructed structured questions (questionnaires) to collect data from the teachers. The well structure questionnaires sought to solicit information from teachers generally on their professional qualifications and work experience over the years in the school and their employer – Ghana Education Service. Secondly the structured interview questions sought to elicit responses on teachers' opinions regarding their work in the implementing pilot-inclusive in the school. A 34 item questionnaires was constructed by the researcher. Some of the question statements were similar to those used in surveys by Walker (2012)

The researcher therefore adopted closed–ended questionnaires which are referred to as the likert scale. A Likert-type scale was developed to allow respondents sign on to statement at their own convenient since most of the teachers work under pressure due to large class sizes in

the schools. The static portion required individuals surveyed to indicate their agreement level for each statement using a four-point Likert scale with a range of responses: 1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree,3 =Agree   4 = Strongly Agree. The development of the instrument was also informed by a literature and an expert panel review. Littrell's (1994) survey to measure administrative support was adopted and used. This required participants to indicate their agreement level for each statement using a three-point Likert scale indicating *1 = extent, 2 = some extent, 3= great extent.* Pilot study was done in another complex school with 32 teachers who were not going to participate during the actual study. The purpose was to try out the tools designed for data collection whether it would provide the information it was intended for. That was validating the instrument so that any necessary adjustments could be made. It was also to test the efficiency of the procedure used in data collections.

Data Analysis

Merriam (1988) describes data analysis as "a very complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 147). The process of analysis involves bringing order to the data, organizing what there is into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units (Patton, 1987). The data analysis for this study involved the use of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). The responses to each of the research questions were analyzed contextually. Some of the responses were presented using charts and graphs.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This chapter deals with the presentation of data, analysis and the discussion of findings of the study. The findings are presented according to the five research questions to guide the study. The study sought to glean information on teacher's opinion on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular basic schools in the Awutu Senya District in the Central Region. The findings of this study showed the opinion of teachers on inclusion with specific information from the respondents and analyzed as follows:

Demographic and other contextual information
Table 1. Gender distribution of respondents.

Demographic factor	Responds subgroup	Total	Percentages
Gender	Male	12	30%
	Female	28	70%
Total		40	100%

Table 1. Presents demographic data on respondents who participated in the study.
In all there were 12 male teachers (30%) and 28 females (70%) that participated in the study. The high ratio of females' ratio to that of males reflects the current trend of female teachers' domination in public schools in many urban communities in Ghana(Ghana education service journal,January,2012- 2nd edition).

Teaching experience
Table 2. Distribution of teaching experience of participants

	Number of years of teaching	Total Frequency	Percentages %
	0-5	12	30%
	6-10	14	35%
	11-15	8	20%
	16-2	4	10%
	21 & above	2	5%
	Total	**40**	**100%**

An analysis of the teaching experience of the respondent shows that 30% of them have taught for up to five years, 35 % have taught for 6-10 years, 20% have taught for 11-15 years, 10% have taught between 16-20 years, whilst 5 % have21 or more teaching experience in the Ghana Education Service. From table 2, the respondents could be described as having some experienced with regards to knowledge in Special Education courses as introduced in the curriculum of teacher training institutions in Ghana.

Table 3. Educational/professional qualification of respondents.

Response subgroup		Total Frequency	Percentages (%)
Teachers	Cert A	4	10%
Diploma	(DBE)	16	40%
B.ED	(Degree)	20	50 %
Total		40	100%

From Table 3, it was revealed that all respondents had some professional training, 10%percent have the least professional qualification of the Teachers Cert. A, 40 % had diploma Certificate, and 50% had bachelor of Education degree. The Ministry of Education, Ghana, by policy initiative envisaged that by the year 2015, every Ghanaian teacher would be required to possess a minimum of diploma qualification in education before being accepted to teach in any public pre-tertiary institution in the country. It is therefore not surprising that majority (90%) of the teachers who participated in study the met the required status. With the majority of respondents having professional training and completing their courses within recent years this could be speculated that they were exposed to Special Education as introductory course in their training from the various colleges and universities. There is evidence however that, some teacher education courses offering little in the form of inclusive education and/or even fail to address key aspects of inclusion (Haugh, 2003).

Research question 1: What is the reaction of teachers towards the process of inclusion?
Six statement were framed to address research question one. The responses are shown in table four.

Table 4. Teachers' reaction to the process of inclusion.

Statement	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Total
1. I think inclusion is a good educational practice.	8(20%)	2(5%)	30(75%)	(100%)
2.It is necessary for all Ghanaian children to attend the same school (inclusion), Whether they are disabled.	7(17.5%)	2 (5%)	31 (77.5%)	40(100%)
3. I believe such a school as in (2) above will be a good idea	8(20%)	2 (5%)	30 (75%)	40(100%)
4.Teachers will not be happy in such a school where disabled students are enrolled/included.	16(40%)	3 (7.5%)	31 (52.5%)	40(100%)
5. Inclusion would improve the Academic abilities of all Students including those with disabilities	4(10%)	6 (15%)	30(75%)	40(100%)
6. Inclusion would retard the academic progress of students who do not have disabilities	30(75%)	8 (20%)	40(100%)	2(5%)

Analysis of responses from table 4 show that 8(20%) of the teachers disagreed, only 2(5%) were undecided and majority, 30 (75%) thought that inclusion is a good idea. Also, 7 (17.5%) disagree, 1 (2.5%) undecided and 31 (77.5%) agreed to the statements that it is necessary for all Ghanaian children to attend the same school (inclusion), even if they were disabled. were responses to the third statement which stated that teachers will not be happy in a school where student with disabilities are enrolled. Furthermore, the teachers responses to the statement that inclusion would improve the academic abilities of included students were; 4 (10%) disagreed, 6 (15%) undecided while 30 (75%) agreed. Moreover, when asked their opinion on whether with inclusion, the academic progress of non- disabled student will be retarded, teachers responses showed that, 30 (205%) disagreed 8(20%), undecided, and 2 (5%) agreed. It was noted that majority of teachers, 30 (75%) agreed that inclusion is a good idea. Put in another way the teachers were saying that the practice of inclusion is worthwhile and so did subscribe to it. That is, majority, 31 (77.5%) of them again agreed that it is necessary for all Ghanaian children to attend the same school even if they were disabled. Further interpretation of the analysis indicated that 8 (20%) of them disagreed that an inclusive school will be a good idea.

8 (20%) of the teachers agreed that teachers will not be happy in a school where disabled students were enrolled. 30 (75%) of the teachers agreed that inclusion will improve the academic abilities of non- disabled students, and 30 (75%) of them also disagreed that inclusion will retard the academic progress of their non- disabled peers. Teachers' attitudes are critical in determining the teachers' acceptance of children with special needs in mainstream activities. The findings in this study show that teachers have positive dispositions towards inclusion. The findings of this study agreed with Mitchel (1999) when he noted that if teachers have positive attitudes in providing the best education, the inclusion will be more likely to succeed. This finding is further reinforced by Van, Reusen, Shoho and Barker (2000) when they pointed out that teachers who are less positive towards inclusion will not implement effective instructional strategies as those who have positive attitudes. They easily lose temper towards children who are blind do the given tasks. They use abusive   learners'; 'un-teachable' and so on. This has a negative influence of self-esteem. Learners with low self-esteem seldom participate in the school activities.

4.1 Research question 2: To what extent are teachers willing to cope with students with disabilities placed in their class?

Four statements were framed with the aim to find out teachers position on this issue. The responses are displayed below.

Table 5. Extent to which teachers are willing to cope with students with disabilities.

Statement	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Total
7. I am comfortable in the presence of person with Disabilities	14 (35%)	2 (5%)	24 (60%)	40(100%)
8. I am willing to accept and or Teach a child disability Place in my class	10 (25%)	4 (10%)	26(65%)	40(100%)
9. A teacher of special Patience and ability is Required to teach or work with special needs students	12 (30%)	2(5%)	26(65%)	40(100%)
10. With inclusion students With disabilities will be teased, Ridiculed and or isolated	31(77.5%)	2(5%)	7(17.5%)	40(100%)

The statements found out teachers' views regarding their preparedness to cope with special need students placed in their classes. One of the prerequisites for the success of inclusion is teacher's willingness to accept students with disabilities in their classes. In the opinion of this investigator, the first hurdle to surmount in the attempt to affect the practice of inclusion is for the teacher to say 'yes' to inclusion. This study researched into the willingness of teachers to accept to teach special needs students. The results from the table illustrate the teachers' responses to the four (4) items. Item 7 enquired whether teachers were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities. An analysis of the responses to the items shows that 14 (35%) of the teachers disagreed that they were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities. A negligible number of 2 (5%) were undecided, while 24 (6o %) agreed that they were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities. Then the next item (8) sought for the teachers to state whether they were willing to accept and or teach special needs students placed in their class. The analysis shown that 10 (25%) of the teachers disagreed that they are

willing to accept and or teach special needs students placed in their class. However, 26 (60%) of the teachers agreed that they were willing to accept special need students in their class. Again, 4(10%) of the teachers were undecided. Item 9 asked if teachers thought that to teach special need children, one needs extra ordinary patience. From, the analysis, twelve (12) representing 30% of teachers responded that it did not need a teacher of special patience and ability to handle children with disabilities To test how teachers coped with inclusion. Items 10 was purposely included to find out if children with disabilities were teased, ridiculed and isolated, that might be enough for teachers to reject inclusion. Only 7 (17.5%) of the teachers agreed that children with disabilities will be teased, ridiculed and isolated. Thirty one (77.5%) disagreed with the statement. Though more teachers were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities, which was an indication that, they tolerate special needs students. It has been emphasized earlier that for inclusion to succeed, teachers must show their willingness to accept children with disabilities in their classes.

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2.It is necessary for all Ghanaian children to attend the same school (inclusion), Whether they are disabled.	7(17.5%)	2 (5%)	31 (77.5%)	40(100%)
3. I believe such a school as in (2) above will be a good idea	8(20%)	2 (5%)	30 (75%)	40(100%)
4.Teachers will not be happy in such a school where disabled students are enrolled/included.	16(40%)	3 (7.5%)	31 (52.5%)	40(100%)
5. Inclusion would improve the Academic abilities of all Students including those with disabilities	4(10%)	6 (15%)	30(75%)	40(100%)
6. Inclusion would retard the academic progress of students who do not have disabilities	30(75%)	8 (20%)	40(100%)	2(5%)

Analysis of responses from table 4 show that 8(20%) of the teachers disagreed, only 2(5%) were undecided and majority, 30 (75%) thought that inclusion is a good idea. Also, 7 (17.5%) disagree, 1 (2.5%) undecided and 31 (77.5%) agreed to the statements that it is necessary for all Ghanaian children to attend the same school (inclusion), even if they were disabled. were responses to the third statement which stated that teachers will not be happy in a school where student with disabilities are enrolled.

Furthermore, the teachers responses to the statement that inclusion would improve the academic abilities of included students were; 4 (10%) disagreed, 6 (15%) undecided while 30 (75%) agreed. Moreover, when asked their opinion on whether with inclusion, the academic progress of non- disabled student will be retarded, teachers responses showed that, 30 (205%) disagreed 8(20%), undecided, and 2 (5%) agreed. It was noted that majority of teachers, 30 (75%) agreed that inclusion is a good idea. Put in another way the teachers were saying that the practice of inclusion is worthwhile and so did subscribe to it. That is, majority, 31 (77.5%) of them again agreed that it is necessary for all Ghanaian children to attend the same school even if they were disabled. Further interpretation of the analysis indicated that 8 (20%) of them disagreed that an inclusive school will be a good idea. 8 (20%) of the teachers agreed that teachers will not be happy in a school where disabled students were enrolled. 30 (75%) of the teachers agreed that inclusion will improve the academic abilities of non- disabled students, and 30 (75%) of them also disagreed that inclusion will retard the academic progress of their non- disabled peers.

Teachers' attitudes are critical in determining the teachers' acceptance of children with special needs in mainstream activities. The findings in this study show that teachers have positive dispositions towards inclusion. The findings of this study agreed with Mitchel (1999) when he noted that if teachers have positive attitudes in providing the best education, the inclusion will be more likely to succeed. This finding is further reinforced by Van, Reusen, Shoho and Barker (2000) when they pointed out that teachers who are less positive towards inclusion will not implement effective instructional strategies as those who have positive attitudes. They easily lose temper towards children who are blind do the given tasks. They use abusive   learners'; 'un-teachable' and so on. This has a negative influence of self-esteem. Learners with low self-esteem seldom participate in the school activities.

Research question 2: To what extent are teachers willing to cope with students with disabilities placed in their class?
Four statements were framed with the aim to find out teachers position on this issue. The responses are displayed below.
Table 5. Extent to which teachers are willing to cope with students with disabilities.

Statement	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Total
7. I am comfortable in the presence of person with Disabilities	14 (35%)	2 (5%)	24 (60%)	40(100%)
8. I am willing to accept and or Teach a child disability Place in my class	10 (25%)	4 (10%)	26(65%)	40(100%)
9. A teacher of special Patience and ability is Required to teach or work With special needs students	12 (30%)	2(5%)	26(65%)	40(100%)

10. With inclusion students With disabilities will be teased, Ridiculed and or isolated	31(77.5%)	2(5%)	7(17.5%)	40(100%)

The statements founds out teachers' views regarding their preparedness to cope with special need students placed in their classes. One of the prerequisites for the success of inclusion is teacher's willingness to accept students with disabilities in their classes. In the opinion of this investigator, the first hurdle to surmount in the attempt to affect the practice of inclusion is for the teacher to say 'yes' to inclusion. This study researched into the willingness of teachers to accept to teach special needs students. The results from the table illustrate the teachers' responses to the four (4) items. Item 7 enquired whether teachers were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities. An analysis of the responses to the items shows that 14 (35%) of the teachers disagreed that they were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities. A negligible number of 2 (5%) were undecided, while 24 (6o %) agreed that they were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities. Then the next item (8) sought for the teachers to state whether they were willing to accept and or teach special needs students placed in their class. The analysis shown that 10 (25%) of the teachers disagreed that they are willing to accept and or teach special needs students placed in their class. However 26 (60%) of the teachers agreed that they were willing to accept special need students in their class. Again, 4(10%) of the teachers were undecided. Item 9 asked if teachers thought that to teach special need children, one needs extra ordinary patience. From, the analysis, twelve (12) representing 30% of teachers responded that it did not need a teacher of special patience and ability to handle children with disabilities. To test how teachers coped with inclusion. Items 10 was purposely included to find out if children with disabilities were teased, ridiculed and isolated, that might be enough for teachers to reject inclusion. Only 7 (17.5%) of the teachers agreed that children with disabilities will be teased, ridiculed and isolated. Thirty-one (77.5%) disagreed with the statement. Though more teachers were comfortable in the presence of persons with disabilities, which was an indication that, they tolerate special needs students. It has been emphasized earlier that for inclusion to succeed, teachers must show their willingness to accept children with disabilities in their classes.

Research question 3: What resources and other support services are available for general education teachers to meet the learning needs of included students?
Three statements were designed to address research question five. The responses are presented in table 6 below.
Table 6. Responses of teachers on availability of resources and other support Services for inclusion.

Statement	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Total
11. Resources and the Instructional support Services are available for students with disabilities in my school	33(82.5%	1(2.5%)	6(15%)	40(100%)

12. There are special education staff to assist regular teachers to handle special needs students in the regular classroom	30 (75%)	2(5%)	8 (20%)	40(100%)
13. Regular class size should be Reduced when special needs Students are placed in the Regular classroom	12(30%)	2(5%)	26(65%)	40(100%)

The items in Table 6 found out what teachers would say about availability of resources and support for inclusion to thrive. For teaching and learning to go on smoothly, resources must be available. The most basic resources required in a school for teaching and learning are school buildings such as classrooms, office, store, workshop, library, toilet and urinals. Furniture comprises tables and chairs, which are movable , made of the right size to ensure good posture, and stationery,(The Head Teachers Handbook, 2007). After analyzing the responses, it came out that 33(82.5%) teachers disagreed, 1(2.5) was undecided and 6 (15%) agreed to the statement. Concerning the availability of support, Item 12 asked if there were special education teachers to assist regular teachers to teach special needs students, 30 respondents representing 75% of the teachers disagreed, 2 (5%) were undecided and 8 (20%) agreed to the stamen. Class size is a very crucial issue for effective teaching and learning. It is even very critical when special needs students are involved. Item 13 asked if the teachers thought class size should be reduced when special need students are placed in the regular classroom. The responses show that 12(30%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 2 (5%) were undecided, and 26 (65%) agreed to the statement that class should be reduced when special needs students are placed in the regular classroom.

A summary of responses reveals that resources and other instructional support services were unavailable. The teachers indicated there were not enough special education teachers to support general education teachers to teach pupils with disabilities placed in the regular classroom.

Research questions 4: How are general education teachers prepared towards inclusive education practice?

In other to address research questions four, four statements were framed. The responses are presented in table 7 below.

Table 7. Responses on how teachers are prepared towards inclusive education practice.

Statement	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Total
14. Regular teacher training Programmes are enough to prepare teachers for inclusion	33(82.5%)	1(2.5%)	6(15%)	40(100%)
15. I consider myself capable and adequate to teach students with disabilities placed in my class.	30(75%)	2 (5%)	8 (20%)	40(100%)
16. In-set and workshops equip me to teach children with disabilities effectively.	2(5%)	0 (0%)	36 (95%)	38(100%)

The statements in found out the position of teachers regarding their training towards inclusion. Items were framed for the purpose. The items specifically sought whether regular teacher training program are enough   at all, if the training was adequate to make them capable of training children with disabilities and if they thought that with service training and workshops, they can acquire the necessary skills to function effectively in inclusive settings. The responses after analysis show that 33 (82.5%) teachers disagreed, 1 (2.5%) were undecided and 6(15%) agreed that regular training programmers are enough to prepare teachers for inclusion. The study wanted to know from teachers if they considered themselves adequate of capable to teach students with disabilities item was written for that purpose. The responses revealed that 30 (71%) disagreed, 2 (5%) undecided and 8(20%) agreed to the statement that they were capable themselves with the statement. The final statement, (16) sought to find out from teachers about in- service training   and workshops. Analysis of their responses indicate that two (2) of the respondents representing (5%) disagreed, none (0%) was undecided and 36 (95%) agreed that inset and workshops when organized for teachers could prepare them to effectively teach special needs students.

A summary of the analysis reveals that, majority of the teachers agreed that initial regular teacher training programme as they are currently structured are not enough to prepare them towards inclusion. The teachers consequently considered themselves inadequate to teach students with disabilities. Finally, the teachers believed that in addition to the training they have received which qualifies them as professional teachers, in- service training programmes are necessary to bring them to the standard required to function as competent teachers in inclusive settings.

4.6 Research question 5: What is the level of administrative support offered to teachers towards including students with special needs in the schools?
Seven statements were framed with the aim to find out teachers position on this issue on the extent to which they receive administrative/ Head teacher Support towards inclusion.

Table 8. Responses on how teachers are assisted administratively towards inclusive education practice

Statement	low extent	some extent	Great extent	Total
17 Allows me input into decisions that affect me	22(55)0%	16(40)%	2(5)%	40100)%
.18 Shows genuine concern for program and students	30(75)%	9(22.5%)	1(2.5)%	40(100)
19 Gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities	32(80))%	6(15)%	2(5)%	40(100)%
20 Helps me evaluate my needs	30(75))%	8(20))%	2(5)%	40(100)%
21 Provides knowledge of current legal policies and administrative regulations	32(80))%	6(15))%	2(5)%	40(100)%
22 Provides opportunities for me to attend workshops, attend conferences, and take courses	15(37.5))%	20(50))%	5(12.5%)	40(100)%
23. Identifies resource personnel to contact for specific problems he or she is unable to solve	32(80))%	6(15)%	2(5)	40(100)%

General education teachers look to administrators and special education teachers for support as the inclusion movement expands (Irvine et al., 2010; Martin, 2010). Several studies indicate administrative support as a critical factor for a successful inclusion program. The statements were framed specifically to find out if administrative support is enough at all, to function effectively in inclusive settings. The first statement (item 17) was designed to find out if their head teacher allow them input into decisions that affect them, their response indicate majority 22(55%) rated low extent,16 of the respondents (40%) rated some extent, with only 2(5%) rating their head teacher great extent. The second statement (item 18) asked respondents as to whether their head teacher shows genuine concern for program and students. their response indicate a woeful response of 75% low extent ratings, 9 of the respondents representing 22.5% rating some extent, with only 1(2.5%) rating great extent. Item 22 was designed to find out if their head teacher provides opportunities for them to attend workshops, attend conferences, and take courses, their response indicate majority 22(55%) rated low extent,16 of the respondents (40%) rated some extent, with only 2(5%) rating their head teacher great extent. The final statement, (23) sought to find out from respondents if their head teacher identifies resource personnel to contact for specific problems he or she is unable to solve. Analysis of their responses indicate that 32 (80%) rated low extent, 6 (15%) some extent, with only 2 (5%) rating that item great extent. A summary of the analysis reveals that, majority of the teachers indicated that administrative support is rather on low extent towards inclusion.

Findings

This study set out to find answers to questions regarding teachers' opinion on implementation of inclusive programme on pilot phase in selected districts. In spite of the challenges the survey yielded necessary and sufficient information which is useful for effecting changes in the school system to accommodate learners with special needs. Teachers' reactions indicate a form of response that reveals their feeling or attitude. This reaction towards inclusion can therefore be said to be very central for the success or failure in the implementation of inclusive program.

It is noted that majority of teachers, 30 (75%) agreed that inclusion is a good idea. Put in another way the teachers are saying that the practice of inclusion is a worthwhile and so did subscribe to it. That is while majority, 31 (77.5%) of them again agree that it is necessary for all Ghanaian children to attend the same school even if they were disabled. Further analysis indicates that the teachers 8 (20%) of them disagreed that an inclusive school will be a good idea and it come

as no surprise that 8 (20%) of them agreed that teachers will not be happy in a school where disabled students were enrolled. Teachers responses, 30(75%) of the teachers agreed that inclusion will improve the academic abilities of non- disabled students, and 30 (75%) of them also disagreed that inclusion will retard the academic progress of their non- disabled peers. The response that inclusion would improve the academic activities of children with disabilities placed in inclusive settings suggests that inclusion is good after all. Stainback (2007) indicates that while educators consider inclusion to be ethnically and morally sound, a number of obstacles have interfered with its widespread implementation. When the other five of the six statements designed to address research question one is taken into consideration, the general picture that emanates is that, attitudes of teachers participating in this study about inclusion is positive. With majority of teachers (75%) agreeing that inclusion is a good educational practice and that inclusion will improve the academic abilities of included, is a very welcoming development. This finding collaborates what Mwamba and Kalabula (2000) in a similar research finding that teachers' positive response towards inclusion would increase teachers' interaction with pupils and learners would feel happy (Mwamba & Kalabula, 2000).

Summary

The study was descriptive survey which was carried out at Odukpong kpehe cluster of schools located in Kasoa Odukpong kpehe in the Awutu Senya Municipality of the central Region of Ghana. Forty-five (45) basic school teachers were purposively selected for the study. The instruments used to collect data were closed-ended questionnaires. The investigator personally visited the schools to administer the instrument after permission was sought from and granted by the Municipal director of education, and the heads of the schools. Out of the 45 questionnaires administered, 40 were retrieved and processed for analysis. This gave a response rate 77.7%. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The trend that emerged from the study was: The study revealed that majority of teachers have very encouraging disposition towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms. It emerged from the study that teachers believe inclusion would improve the academic abilities of students with disabilities. What came out of the study was that majority of teachers are willing to tolerate or cope with special needs students placed in their classrooms. The importance of resources and support for the success of inclusion has been recognized but these needed resources and supports are not accessible thus making teacher to call for support. Special education teachers are not in the schools to assist general education teachers to handle students with disabilities included. The study came out with the findings that general education teachers have not been adequately trained for inclusion and that there were the needs for additional in-service courses to prepare them to implement it. The study also identified that initial teacher training programs are not enough towards inclusion practice. However, the teachers taught that with in-service programme teachers would measure up to the standard required for inclusion to take off. Insufficient administrative support was also identified by teachers resulting in their anxiety about the future of the inclusive program.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study;

- Teachers have very encouraging disposition towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms. Teachers also believed that inclusion would improve the academic abilities of students included.
- Majority of teachers are willing to tolerate and cope with special needs students in their classrooms.
- Resources and support services are not adequate to assist and encourage teachers to efficiently handle included students.

- Teachers have not been adequately trained to be competent enough to achieve higher learning outcome for their included students.
- In-service programmes were also lacking.
- Heads of the schools do not have adequate knowledge and skills to support their teachers work efficiently.

Recommendations

- The government and other stakeholders should commit potential financial support for the inclusion agenda, including special incentive packages for teachers to promote and sustain their zeal towards the programme.
- The government through the Ministry of Education and Sports should strengthen the components of special needs education in Primary Teachers Colleges by staffing all of them with specialist teachers. This may help to equip the student teachers with the basic skills and knowledge necessary to support children with special needs in the mainstream.
- At the district level frequent and coordinated in-service training of teachers should be discussed with Teacher Education division to update teaching skills on delivery of inclusive education teaching methods
- Administrator preparation programs need to focus on inclusion as part of the course curriculum for school heads.
- School districts need to incorporate staff development in the area of inclusive practices as part of the on-going professional development provided to school leaders.
- The Government through the district local government should provide adequate support to the inspectors of schools in order to closely monitor and assess the special education needs in schools.

Area for future research

This study should be replicated at the senior high-school levels to determine whether the issues of administrative support for integrating special need students into the general education classrooms are similar to the findings of this study, which was conducted at the basic level.

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