Factors Affecting Effective Social Inclusion Of Pupils   With Intellectual Disabilities At Adukrom Methodist Basic School In The Eastern Region Of Ghana

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the factors that affect effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities at Adukrom Methodist Basic School in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Qualitative method and case study were used to guide the study. The sample size for the study was 21, including teachers, with and without intellectual disabilities. The data was collected using interview and observation. The purposeful sampling technique was used to select the sample size. Data was analyzed using themes and data from the respondents. The results of the study showed that the major factors that affected effective social inclusion were inadequate sports facilities, inadequate special needs teachers, perception and attitudes of some teachers in the school. It was recommended that teachers with special educational needs background should organize sensitization programmes for other teachers in the school. In addition, the school administration and opinion leaders connected with the school must appeal to the Ghana Education Service and other non-governmental organizations for appropriate sports facilities, and suitable teaching and learning resources.

Keywords: Factors, affecting, intellectual disabilities, social inclusion,

I.   INTRODUCTION

Social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities is having access to social activities, social roles, and relationships (Partington, 2005) as well as having valued presence and participation in society (Lemay, 2006). However, persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana experience disrespect, societal exclusion, and a devalued self-worth. (Baffoe, 2013)   He further pointed out that stigma attached to persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghanaian societies has created barriers for their inclusion in community life. The extent to which adolescents interact with their peers may be influenced by (a) the social and related skills students possess, and (b) the environmental contexts within which students spend their school day (Brown & Klute, 2003). For

students with intellectual disabilities, these two factors may be particularly salient, contributing to limited social interaction with their peers without disabilities. First, although considerable diversity exists among individuals sharing the label of intellectual disabilities, substantial limitations in social interaction skills are widely prevalent (Leffert & Siperstein, 2002). Adukrom Methodist basic school may not be an exception.

Fuchs' (2010) stated that about 75% of the teacher participants believed that inclusion would not succeed and were not in favor of if inclusion of pupils with disabilities. This might be as a result of the quality of the instruction and the social interactions that occur in these settings are often contrary to best practice. That is, the child with a disability does not always receive specialized training or handling

and/or is isolated or treated differently by both staff and pupils (Bricker, 2000). Singal (2006) stated that many teachers believe that pupils who need academic moderation would be unable to cope with the level of academic demand in the mainstream schooling system. Singal argued that such children should be taught in a separate system of segregated education. She also noted that inclusion programmes are not fruitful for the average teacher or child. There is a negative correlation between learners' academic ability and their level of disability such as intellectual disabilities or autism (Slavin, 2011). However, from a comparative study in inclusive and separate settings, the Canadian Council on Learning (2009) found that there was a favorable academic outcome for learners with special education needs educated in inclusive settings.

Ross-Hill (2009) shared the same view after examining the different attitudes of elementary and secondary school teachers towards inclusion, and how best to develop an inclusive environment based on these attitudes. The results indicated that most teachers either supported inclusion practices in regular classrooms or did not have strong views on inclusive education. Agbenyega (2006) established that many regular teachers feel unprepared and fear to work with learners with disabilities in regular classes. The teachers further believe that learners with disabilities will affect academic performance of learners without disabilities

There is need to incorporate special education curriculum in teacher training colleges and in-service those already in the field to equip the rest with knowledge and skills to enable them handle children with special needs (Kadima, 2006). Agbenyega (2007) established that teachers' abilities and attitudes are major barrier for inclusive education. Agbenyega also found that training of teachers at all levels was often not adequate. Where there was training, it often tended to be fragmented, uncoordinated and inadequate. He argued further that where teachers did not have positive attitudes towards learners with special needs, it was unlikely that those children would receive effective education. Research shows that adequately-trained professionals are required for pupils with special educational needs (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). In addition, Eleweke & Rodda asserted that support personnel for training programmes such as audiologists, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, communication support workers and interpreters are very scarce in many developing countries.

The government resources are inadequate to meet the basic needs in education (UNESCO, 2003). There are notable difficulties faced by children with special needs and teachers in inclusive education such as physical accessibility. Centers of learning are physically inaccessible to many pupils, especially those who have physical disabilities (UNESCO, 2011). UNESCO points out that in poorer communities, particularly in rural areas, the centers of learning are often inaccessible largely because buildings are run down or poorly maintained, and therefore unhealthy and unsafe for all learners. Children with special educational needs require special facilities in the schools to help cope with barriers in learning. Inadequate or ineffective physical access and learning environment affect the implementation of inclusive education. There is need for simple ramps and internal classroom arrangement. These include barrier-free environments with compounds used by children, adopted toilets and bathroom with added bars to assist the children to hold on while toileting or showering ramps with the recommended gradients to entries and exits to classrooms, spacious classrooms which are well lit and ventilated, large classrooms to allow use of wheel chairs, in- built group hearing mechanisms and feedback mirrors, for pupils with intellectual disabilities there should be a water point for training in activities of daily living like washing of hands and face (Ministry of Education, 2003). For instance, Kadima (2006) and Kithuka (2008) found that physical facilities were inadequate; classrooms were overcrowded while toilets were narrow and had no seats for comfortable use by special needs learners. According to the authors, schools need to be restructured to cater for all learners.

The inadequacy of resources could make it difficult for school authorities to perform their functions adequately. These include inadequate and badly constructed buildings; lack of proper school furniture particularly desks; poor or sometimes non-existent maintenance and repairs; over-crowded classrooms. Shortage of these resources therefore, could compromise the quality of instruction. For instance, inadequate classrooms would mean overcrowding and making the classroom environment unfavorable for learning.

An appraisal exercise on special needs education (Kochung Report, 2003) noted that learners with special needs and disabilities required a barrier-free environment to maximize their functional potentials. The physical environment where learners with special needs and disabilities operate should be accessible and or be disability friendly. It is important that learners with special needs and disabilities operate in educational environments with minimum support. Learners with special needs require more conducive material resources for their education than their non-disabled peers. Resources to meet the needs of these children should not be expressed in general terms, but rather in what they need (Wanjiru, 2012).

Antia, Stinson, and Gaustad (2002) stressed that the goal of inclusive programmes should be to assist all students to reach their maximum potential in educational and social development. This requires that students actively and regularly interact with one another with respect to meaningful membership in school and classroom setting. However, students with disabilities in most cases experiences neglect and bullying in our regular schools.

Bullying is a form of aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim that occurs largely in the context of the peer group (Mishna, 2003). Bullying is identified as one of the most prominent problems faced by children in the education system, as well as one of the most significant health risks (Raskauskas & Modell, 2011). Professionals agree that children with disabilities are harassed by peers at higher rates than their peers without disabilities. Bullying can have an overwhelming impact on students' performance, emotional health and well-being, and ability to reach their true potential. Victimization can also hinder a student's ability to learn in the school environment and can impede on the ability of students with disabilities to obtain the education critical to their development.

Block (2014) investigated the impact of bullying on academic success for students with and without exceptionalities. Data for this research study were collected by conducting face-to-face interviews with two teachers; one mainstream, one special education. Findings suggested that students who were bullied feared going to school because they felt unsafe; thus, they were unable to concentrate and their academic success was hindered. Additionally, students with exceptionalities were bullied more often than students without, which placed them at a double disadvantage. According to the participants, these students did not have the social skills to stand up to bullies to protect themselves. Baffoe (2013) confirmed that persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana experience disrespect, societal exclusion, and a devalued self-worth. The study pointed out that stigma attached to persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghanaian societies has created barriers to their inclusion in community life. Also, participants in the study experienced disrespect in hospitals and faced both physical and cultural barriers in society. These has informed the researcher to investigated into the factors that affect effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities at Adukrom Methodist basic school in the eastern region of Ghana.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Inclusive education has become an international agenda for schools to accommodate all pupils regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions (UNESCO, 2003). Despite this intention, it seems there are some underlining factors affecting effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities which had not been explored to determine how they influence the implementation of inclusion in Adukrom Methodist Basic School in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

II. METHODOLOGY

Case study research design as well as qualitative method as an approach were used for the study. When it goes to the choice of the sources of data qualitative researchers prefer multiple methods. This helps to develop a complex picture of the problem and identify complex interactions and larger pictures of the issue. This explains why qualitative data was chosen to help answer the research problem; namely, social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities. The study therefore limited its scope to investigating the phenomena of factors that affect effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities at Adukrom Methodist Basic School in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

The sample size for the study was 21. This consisted of 5 teachers (3 males and 2 females), 16 pupils (8 pupils with intellectual disabilities and 8 without intellectual disabilities). Out of the pupils without intellectual disabilities, 4 were girls and 4 were boys; while out of pupils with intellectual disabilities, 2 were girls and 6 were boys. The 8 out of 12 pupils with intellectual disabilities were chosen based on their ability to speak and their regular school attendance.

A. PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Informed consent was obtained from the authorities of the school prior to the commencement of the study. The teachers and the pupils were duly informed that their participation was voluntary and were free to abstain or even withdraw from the study, if they felt so. The interview was conducted in the school premises using a semi-structured interview guide. The teachers and the pupils were assured the necessary confidentiality throughout and permissions were sought to use a tape-recorder. The face to face interviews which lasted between 15 to 20 minutes each was conducted and responses were tape recorded for transcription. In the case of the observation component, the researchers secured the services of one of the teachers to serve as the forth observers to the researcher since they handled the classes and were the best people to observe and assess the extent to which pupils with intellectual disabilities were being involved in school activities. They observed the pupils during break times and other social activities using a checklist. The two observation scores were compared and a coefficient of inter-observer reliability computed. The researchers engaged the services of other observers in other to gather reliable data through observation (Alberto & Troutman, 1990),

B. DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the semi-structured interview data was guided by key themes that emerged from the data collected. The process started with transcribing all interviews and highlighting words, sentences, and thoughts that served as units for more detailed coding. The analysis primarily, an interactive process of reading, reflecting, and coding the transcripts, and then drawing out major themes and patterns of views from it.

With the observation component, the researchers met with other observer who was a teacher in the school to analyze the data. An inter-observer agreement was determined by calculating the percentage of agreement among the researchers and other observer.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question: What factors affect effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities and their non-disabled peers?

FACTORS EFFECTING EFFECTIVE SOCIAL INCLUSION

Interaction with the teachers on the factors that affect effective social inclusion of pupils with and without intellectual disabilities showed the following; (1) inadequate special needs teachers, (2) bullying and name calling, (3) inadequate sports facilities, (4) lack of suitable and adapted teaching resources, and (5) negative perceptions and attitudes of some teachers.

INADEQUATE SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHERS

Inadequate special needs teachers and lack of trained teachers revealed during the interaction with the teachers. One of the teachers acknowledged this way.

The teachers too we have only four who had some training on pupils with disabilities but majority of the teachers are not and this is affecting the inclusive policy. For example, last week a boy with epilepsy feel on the ground and all the teachers there were just standing calling some of us to come and take control of the situation because they don't know what to do. (A verbatim response from teacher 'C').

From the analysis of the perspective of the teachers, it was revealed that the teachers who were trained to handle pupils with disabilities were not enough and it was affecting effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities.

BULLYING AND NAME CALLING

Concerning bullying and name calling, two of the teachers revealed that it's one of the factors that the pupils exhibit towards their peers with intellectual disabilities that affects effective social inclusion. One of the teachers remarked this way.

Their peers are also another factor though they play with them but they sometimes look down upon them by saying that they are afraid of them and they also call them names like" agimifo" means stupid. (A verbatim response from teacher 'B')

Another teacher commented this way.

Even though they play together but their peers without disabilities sometimes bully them by calling them names and teasing them which they sometimes retaliate by throwing stones at them. (A verbatim response from teacher 'C')

On bullying and name calling, there were mixed reactions on this issue. While some of pupils revealed that they were bullied, others revealed otherwise. These were the comments of the pupils:

…….. Sometimes when we are playing together with our peers they do laugh at us and call us kinds of names. (A verbatim response from pupils with ID '4')

When we are playing games they sometimes beat me but for me I don't beat them and they also laugh at me. (A verbatim response from pupil with ID '3')

Our peers without intellectual disabilities don't laugh at us and they don't beat or treat us bad when playing with them. (A verbatim response from pupil with ID '2')

I sometimes insult them when they are misbehaving but for beating I can't because they are stronger than me. Due to that, I sometimes avoid them. (A verbatim response from pupil without ID)

They sometimes exhibit some behaviors which make us to insult them and even call them some names and the moment we do that, they would chase us away. (A verbatim response from pupil without ID 'a')

Another problem is that when you are playing with them your own friends will be saying that why are you playing with "these sick people" but the respond that I always gave to them was that, are they not human beings. This sometimes affects our friendship with them. A verbatim response from pupil without ID 'b')

For me I like them very much so I don't insult them nor calling them names. (A verbatim response from pupil without ID 'c').

From the views of the teachers and the pupils, it was revealed that pupils without disabilities do bullied and called their peers with intellectual disabilities all kinds of names but one of the pupils without disabilities gave different version of the issue by stating that for her she liked them and she doesn't call them names.

INADEQUATE SPORTS FACILITIES

In terms of inadequate and adapted sports facilities, majority of the teachers interviewed confirmed that, it's a factor that affects effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities. One teacher acknowledged that:

What I can also say about the school is that in the classroom they have some of the material but they are not enough and outside the classroom to they lack some sporting facilities that can help improve their participation in games. The field too is not all that smooth which affect the pupils with intellectual disabilities especially those who have problem with movement. (A verbatim response from Teacher 'A')

Another teacher remarked this way.

The school too is another factor because there are some facilities that the school need in other to improve their inclusion in any activities that the school will undertake. Facilities like sports equipment are not enough, and well furnish play grounds. (A verbatim response from Teacher 'B')

In view of another teacher:

We have some of the sports equipment but they are not enough. So we need additional materials like footballs and jerseys. (A verbatim response from Teacher "C").

Concerning inadequate sports facilities, two pupils with intellectual disabilities and one pupil without intellectual disabilities confirmed that during the interaction. These were their remarks:

Yes, we have balls and other things, they are about two but they are not enough. (A verbatim response of from pupil with ID '2')

The balls are only two but we want more. (A verbatim response from pupils with ID '3')

We have some of the materials that they use to play but they are not enough. We have one football now, so when they are playing the rest of us will just be standing looking at them but if they are to be more than that we can also organize ourselves including our peers with intellectual disabilities and play small post. (A verbatim response from pupils without ID 'b').

Another key issues which also emerged as a factor of affecting effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities was inadequate sports facilities. Most of the teachers and the pupils revealed that.

LACK OF SUITABLE TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

On lack of suitable teaching and learning resources, one of the teachers revealed that the school lacked those resources which affected effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities. One teacher noted that:

when take our school here, we have furniture which are not suitable to some of the pupils with intellectual disabilities. You know the school was not a unit school until sometime now. The school lack suitable furniture, sports materials like footballs, jerseys and others. (A verbatim response from Teacher 'D').

The perspective of this issue which was revealed by the teacher indicated that even though some of the materials were there and those materials were not adapted to be more suitable for all the pupils.

PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE OF SOME TEACHERS

On the perception and attitude of some teachers, three of the teachers revealed that it's one of the factors that affects effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities. One teacher noted that:

The perception of the teachers is also a problem. As at now some of the teachers in the school still doubt how pupils with intellectual disabilities can learn. (A verbatim response from Teacher 'A')

Another teacher acknowledged this way.

The perception that some teachers still have about pupils with intellectual disabilities is affecting their inclusion even though we are in the 21st century where there are programs on radio and television but some of the teachers and the people still have the old mentality about pupils with intellectual disabilities. (A verbatim response from teacher 'C')

Comment of one of the teachers:

… some of the teachers were having some negative attitudes towards the pupils with intellectual disabilities, thinking that they can't learn or do anything. (A verbatim response from Teacher 'D')

On the analysis of the perspective of the perception and attitudes of teachers a, it was revealed as a factor which was affecting the inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities despite the education which was going on in both print and electronic media.

Statement on factors affecting social inclusion	Number of obs. Made: Times	Outcomes
1. pupils label their peers with intellectual disabilities	10	uncertain
2. pupils don't accept their peers with intellectual disabilities	10	No
3. pupils without intellectual disabilities choose their own mates as friends	10	Uncertain
4. pupils bully their peers with intellectual disabilities	10	Uncertain
5. some teachers have poor attitudes towards pupils with intellectual disabilities	10	Uncertain
6. some teachers lack the needed skills to handle pupils with intellectual disabilities	10	Yes
7. some teachers do not accept pupils with intellectual disabilities during sports and games	10	Yes
8. the school do not have enough playing grounds for pupils	10	Yes
9. the school do not have appropriate sports facilities for inclusion	10	Yes
10. the school do not have enough and adapted teaching and learning materials.	10	Yes

Source: Field data, 2018

Table 1: data collected on factors affecting inclusion

Data from table 8 shows that the observers were uncertain about the statement that pupils labeled their peers with intellectual disabilities, and disagreed with the statement that, pupil don't accept their peers with intellectual disabilities. Regarding choosing own mates as friends, bullying and teachers' poor attitudes towards the pupils, the data shows that the observers were uncertain. All the observers indicated that some of the teachers lacked the needed skills to handle pupils with intellectual disabilities. Relating to whether some of the teachers do not accept pupils with intellectual disabilities during sports and games, all the teachers agreed to the statement ticking yes according to the data. Also, with Regards to enough playing grounds, appropriate sports facilities, and enough and adapted teaching and learning materials, all the observers agreed to the statement that they were not enough.

From the analysis of the perspective of the teachers, it was it shows that the teachers who were trained to handle pupils with disabilities were not enough. This was confirmed by the observation checklist which two of the observers agreed to the statement and it was affecting effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities. Yekple and Avoke (2006) stated that a number of teachers expressed concern and apprehensions as to whether they are practically confident in teaching pupils with special needs effectively. For this reason, teachers feel that any child identified to have some form of impairment should be sent to special school. A study by Avramidis et al. (2000) on the influence of teachers' professional training on inclusive education established that majority of e teachers did not have training on special needs education. This implies that the teachers were not prepared to implement inclusive education in their schools.

Again, bullying and name calling of pupils with intellectual disabilities. From the views of the teachers and the pupils, it was suggested that pupils without disabilities bullied

and called their peers with intellectual disabilities all kinds of names such as *"these sick people."* One of the pupils without disabilities however stated that she liked them and she did not call them names. MacArthur et al. (2007), found that bullying was a common feature of school life for pupils with disabilities and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission Report (2004) cited evidence that pupils with disabilities experienced issues of bullying in regards to their impairment. Bullying has been mentioned as a major factor associated with exclusion of pupils with disabilities (MacArthur & Gaffney, 2001). Baffoe (2013) confirmed that persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana experience disrespect, societal exclusion, and a devalued self-worth. This was embedded in the social constructivist theory that students with disabilities educated in regular classrooms are less accepted than their classmates without special educational needs, and are more socially isolated. Baffoe's study pointed out that stigma attached to persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghanaian societies has created barriers for their inclusion in community life. Such exclusionary and disrespectful experiences, as well as physical and cultural barriers, occurred even in hospitals and other health delivery settings.

Block (2014) conducted a study on the impact of bullying on academic success for students with and without exceptionalities. Findings from Block's study showed that students who were bullied developed a fear for coming to school because they felt unsafe; and as such, they were unable to concentrate and their academic success is suffered. Also, students with exceptionalities were bullied more often than students without, which placed them at a double disadvantage. According to the participants, these students did not have the social skills to stand up to bullies to protect themselves.

Additionally, inadequate sports facility was another issue raised by teachers and the pupils through the analysis. All the teachers mentioned that sports facilities were not enough, and this was confirmed by the pupils, For instance, one of the pupils without intellectual disabilities stated that:

... we have one football now, so when they are playing the rest of us will just be standing looking at them but if they were to be more than that we can also organize ourselves including our peers with intellectual disabilities and play small post.

A limitation though is inequality of access to sport by people with disabilities (Liu 2009). For example, the European Commission's White Paper on Sport (Mutembei, (2014) identified problems with access to sports premises as spectators as well as to sport facilities and activities as players.

Lack of suitable teaching and learning resources, one of the teachers revealed that the school lacks those resources which affect effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities. On this perspective, the teacher stated that some of the teaching resources were there but they were not enough and not suitable for all the pupils, this was confirmed by the observation checklist which all the observers agreed to the statement. This was in agreement with Mutembei (2014) on school factors influencing implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Magumoni division, Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya. From the study, it was established that; the majority of the schools did not have teaching and learning resources such as teaching aids and even

if some of the teaching aids were available, none of the schools had enough. Another study by Otie Mutembei, (2014) on institutional factors influencing implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Ugenya District, Kenya. Study found out that inclusive education implementation in public primary schools in Ugenya District was faced by numerous challenges and the most prominent challenges were lack of trained teachers in special needs education, lack of physical facilities suited for challenged learners and inappropriateness of teaching and learning materials.

On the perception and attitudes of some teachers and the people in the community, three of the teachers revealed that it was one of the factors that affect effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities. One of the teachers commented that:

The perception of some teachers is also a problem.

Another teacher also revealed from the analysis that

... Some of the teachers were having negative attitude towards the pupils with intellectual disabilities, thinking that they can't learn or do anything.

This was a response from one of the teachers in the analysis which was inconsistent with a study by Dukmak (2013) on regular classroom teachers' attitudes towards students with disabilities in the regular classroom in the United Arab Emirates. The findings revealed that, in general, teachers showed positive attitudes towards educational inclusion but male teachers showed more positive attitudes than females did. Teachers' years of experience were found to influence their attitudes towards educational inclusion as when the teachers' years of experience increase their attitudes towards inclusion become less positive. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes become the least positive when teachers view educational placement for students with intellectual disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders to be outside the regular school, and their attitudes become less positive when they view educational placement for students with visual impairment to be outside the regular school. This study agrees with Edusei et al. (2015) conduct a study on attitude of teacher trainees towards children with disabilities in the Northern Region of Ghana. The findings from the study indicated that, although attitude of teacher trainees towards children with disabilities seemed to be positive, the service teachers lacked deeper understanding of disability and issues about children with disabilities in general schools.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It was revealed that, inadequate special needs teachers and lack of trained teachers, bullying and name calling, inadequate sports facilities, lack of suitable teaching and learning resources, perception and attitudes of some teachers were among the factors affecting effective social inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities at Adukrom Methodist basic school. The study recommended that,school authorities should appeal to Ghana Education Services and non - governmental organizations for appropriate sports equipment and other teaching and learning resources for all the pupils to have access to sports facilities when is time for games and also

teachers with special education background should organize sensitization programs for their colleague teachers to help them understands issues relating to disabilities.

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