

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**TRANSITION SERVICES INFLUENCING SCHOOL COMPLETION FOR
LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES FROM SELECTED
BASIC SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN GHANA**

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Augustina Mawusi Glover-Akpey, hereby declare that this thesis represents my own original research. With the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and acknowledged, it is entirely my own work and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere or other qualifications.

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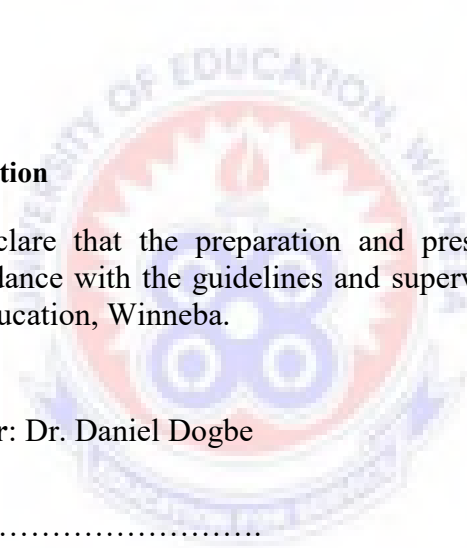
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines and supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Daniel Dogbe

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Date.....



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Angel Kwaku Dieudonne.



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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| AAIDD | American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities |
| ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act |
| ID | Intellectual Disability |
| SPE | Special Needs Education |
| IEP | Individualized Education Program |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| CRPD | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| WIOA | Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act |
| HEOA | Higher Education Opportunity Act |
| PSE | Post -Secondary Education |
| DEECD | Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria) |
| FFYA | Futures for Young Adults |
| NDCO | National Disability Coordination Officer Program |
| TTE | Transition to Employment |
| SSG | Student Support Group |
| DSN | Disability Support Network |
| RCDO | Regional Career Development Officer |
| DHS | Department of Human Services (Victoria) |

ABSTRACT

This study determined how transition services influence school completion for learners with ID in Three Kings Special School in Battor, Garden City in Kumasi, and Twin City Special School in Sekondi-Takoradi, all in Ghana. Specifically, the study identified (a) available transition services for learners with ID in the curriculum of basic special schools, (b) ways basic special schools prepare learners with ID towards completing school, (c) factors that affect parents' hopes, desires and expectations about educating their children with ID, and (d) how ready employers are to engage learners with ID after their training from basic special schools. A mixed approach, involving cross-sectional design, was used. Fifty-one participants including 3 head-teachers, 17 special education teachers, 25 parents and 6 craftsmen were involved in the study. Questionnaire and interview guides were used. The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS) to generate frequencies, charts and percentages from the responses gathered while qualitative data from the interview were transcribed to explain the verbatim quotations from the respondents. The findings were that; (a) the basic special schools face difficulties in preparing learners with ID towards non-existing school completion programmes and transition services in their school curriculum; (b) parents were disappointed that their children were unable to complete school; (c) even though some employers were ready to employ students with ID if they possess the required skills and abilities to work. Recommendations were that schools must provide adequate job training to learners with ID to make them employable after they leave school; teachers should continue to teach vocational skills as part of transition services; and schools must prepare learners with ID towards school completion.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter elaborates on the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, study objectives, research questions, relevance of the study, delimitations of study, limitations as well as format of presentation of work.

1.1 Background to the Study

When one completes school, it is expected that he/she exits the school system and gets prepared for other educational transitional services or walk into the world of work, which basic special needs schools for learners with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) are of no exception. Basic special schools for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in Ghana provide functional academics, pre-vocational and vocational skills training to these learners. The training, mainly in vocational skills as part of transition services for students with ID, provides the students with skills for school completion and job opportunities that lead to independent living in adulthood. Transition services enhance skills training, promotes school completion, and offer better opportunities for learners with ID to at least experience life after school.

Pincelli (2012) pointed out that learners with ID have been overlooked in schools. Post-school consequences for this marginalized population and how educational institutions prepare them for the future is of great concern to many and society at large. There are several indicators that determine whether a learner with ID will live a productive adult life after completing school. Examples of these indicators are school-based transition services, family involvement, and learned self-determination skills by students with ID.

It is widely acknowledged that all learners with ID have shortfalls in intelligent work and face trials in adaptive behaviour. In other words, one major challenge that confronts these learners is the slow learning and acquisitive abilities, which make it hard for them to recollect, take a broad view of activities and skills, and low motivation. Other adaptive challenges they tend to have included problems with social skills, abstract skills, and hands-on skills acquisition. In most basic special schools, learners with ID find it tough to socialize with peers, and grasp abstract ideas. Additionally, learners with ID often show inconsistencies in independence skills and difficulties in skill areas like decision-making, goal-setting and resolving problems (Haegele & Park, 2016).

Learners with ID grow up in a restricting environment where they are confronted with many carnal and societal barriers every day. These include the incapacity to take part in leisure pursuits, intimidating attitudes or circumvention from other learners without disabilities, demeaning behaviour from adults and segregation from mainstream schools (Obiakor & Mukuria, 2006).

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010), 0.5% of Ghana's entire population of about 24 million, who were of school-going age, had ID. Out of this number, people without formal education recorded the highest prevalence rate (0.9%). Also, 0.5% of the workforce had ID, and those who were unemployed (1% of males and 0.9% of females) were more likely to have ID.

The school placement of learners with ID often determines the kind of programming they receive. Placement should be geared towards the provision of programmes that maximize the potentials of exceptional individuals (Obiakor & Mukuria, 2006). The prospects of students with ID completing basic special school

are often grim. Learners with ID, unlike their peers from other disability groups, do have lower success rates of education, and gainful employment in the job market (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2012).

According to Dominica (2010), learners with ID have challenges to complete the regular educational system that could make them employable in well-paying jobs. Since most of them cannot cope in senior high schools, colleges or tertiary education and Ghana, transition services has become necessary to help equip them towards independent life after completing school.

However, Baker, Rivera, Morgan and Reese (2015) believe that learners with ID in a formal educational environment can equally achieve highest levels of education if the needed supports are given. Since this will enable them live the high quality of life that gives satisfaction, modification of curriculum and instructional methods becomes important in order to assist them accomplish their full potentials in academics and careers for self-independence.

In Ghana, the curriculum for students with ID is designed mainly to equip them with functional academics, pre-vocational, and vocational skills towards careers, but without any emphasis placed on transition services that can prepare for life after completing school.

Transition services are defined as coordinated set of activities that prepare learners with intellectual disabilities to adulthood. These may include development of post-secondary education and career goals, technical and vocational training while in school, collaboration between technical and vocational training or rehabilitation centres to provide the requisite practical base skills training relevant to modern job market and self – employment. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), transition services for learners with ID should begin at

age 16 or younger to provide the learner with a synchronised vocational skill that assist the individual to transit from school to independent work life. This means that learners with intellectual disabilities will have higher preparation towards completing school.

Transition services for learners with ID, according to IDEA (2004), ensures that schools assist learners and other significant others to design “transition plans and services” at the beginning of age 14 to deliver technical vocational training to enable them live productive adult lives. Ghana does not provide senior high school education for learners with ID, therefore, many adults with ID still remain in basic special schools without completing. Consequently, they are not employed or self-employed. Coordinated set of services to help move from youths from school to independent adult life means that students who receive transition services are better prepared towards complete school than those who do not.

Parents, by nature, are often determined to support their children to attain high self-accomplishment in their chosen professions. Parents become disappointed if their children do not achieve their goals, and this is often the case with parents with children who have ID. Meanwhile, Suresh & Santhanam (2011), cited in Mathatha et al. (2017), observed that parents’ participation in the education of children with ID causes improvement in academic and post-school outcomes. Again, Mathatha et al. (2017), citing (Doren, Gau & Lindstrom, 2012) on the other hand examined the extent to which parental expectations of learners with ID impacted the actual results attained. The findings demonstrated that parents predict outcomes, even though the type of disability influences the connection between parents’ prospects and consequences. The study stipulates that parents’ hopes influence career pursuit but neglects the “how” part.

If technical vocational skills training are taught in these basic special schools, then there must be a way for learners to exit or complete school at a point in time and get employment or be self-employed to live an independent adult life. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2008) and International Labour Organization (ILO), convention on vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities (PWDs)- (1983 - No. 159), made provision for learners with ID and learners with other kinds of disabilities, but much has not been achieved in spite of emphasis on social inclusion. To a large extent, basic special schools in Ghana have deprived these learners of the opportunities to receive transition plans and services, and acquisition of requisite vocational training. This presents additional disadvantages in terms of completing school, gaining employment or living independently after school. Moreover, experiences in many other countries show that, with the right training, transition services, and relevant care at workplaces, creating enabling opportunities, these learners can contribute invaluable towards productivity at the workplaces and general growth of their country's economy. Meanwhile, evidence from across the globe suggests that learners with ID are less likely to participate in the labour market, more likely to be unemployed and earn less than their counterparts according to according to World Health Organization (WHO, 2011).

Opoku (2016) debated the relevance of vocational training to learners with ID at basic special schools in Ghana. General opinion buttresses the fact that vocational training is the surest way to make learners with ID competitive in the labour market after completing school. This, according to Opoku, is missing in basic special schools in Ghana and must be emphasized to enable them get along with their peers without disabilities in skills acquisition and career development. Opoku also found that

inadequate resources and logistics, attitudes, perceptions and stigmatization by the general public about the academic and adaptive skill limitations of students with ID contribute to their woes in society. Two head teachers at different basic special schools for students who are intellectually disabled remarked:

We have not been able to graduate any of the children. They will just be in the school and drop out at some point. We are not training them to take up job outside but only giving them basic life skills. We don't have teaching and learning materials. So, we use whatever we can get around the environment. (Head teacher 1, male)

We have them (children with disabilities) here so when they are fed up, then they will go home or drop out. Their retention memory is very low which can just absorb a few things. Always some people have to be on them keeping an eye on them. From here, it becomes discouraging to employ them. The problem is that our children never graduate. They become fed up and drop out of the school. (Head teacher 2, male)

It is obvious from the above that the authorities in these basic special schools have low prospects for students and, possibly, doubt if they can make it in life without any employable skills. Hence, there is the need to emphasize vocational training in basic special schools in Ghana that educate students with ID. However, Blacher (2001) concluded that no vacuum existed between the infantile and maturity for learners with ID, and therefore proposed that researchers should „fill the gap“ in literature to examine the transition period for students with ID, aged 18-26 when they complete formal education and have to integrate into society. Blacher's proposal was intended through employment and/or other avenues of socialization. Findings in related studies will provide relevant data to guide policy formulation and implementation that will ensure general benefits for learners with ID.

Gadagbui (2008), Oliff (2004), and Porters (2001), also confirmed that basic special schools do not provide relevant vocational skills training to learners with ID to make them productive after completing school. Other studies also have indicated that basic special schools do not have tailor-made or well-designed technical skills training for learners with ID. For that matter, the schools have become dumping grounds of these learners by their parents, in many instances, for life since they cannot complete to become productive adults. Hayford's (2000) study on vocational programmes revealed that most of the activities included very basic skills in clothing, tailoring or weaving, bead and soap making, and poultry farming. Hayford was of the view that the limited nature of these activities might limit the learner's choices on the job market after school.

According to information the researcher had previously obtained prior to the present study, about the 13 public basic special schools in Ghana had reported that some of their students had completed their programs. For example, Three Kings Special School-Battor 20 learners with ID from Three Kings Special School in Battor completed school in 2005, 19 learners with ID from Garden City Special School in Kumasi completed school in 2006, and 10 learners with ID from Twin City Special School in Sekondi-Takoradi completed school in 2007. Incidentally, the three schools were the first to organize school completion programmes for learners with ID over a decade. Today, the numbers of learners in these schools are increasing but are not completing school to make way for others to be admitted.

It is out of these challenges faced by public basic special schools to provide appropriate transition plans and services towards completion of school for improved post-school outcomes, such as work, and post-secondary education and training that ignited the researcher's interest to investigate transition services that possibly

influence these learners' school completion at the selected basic special schools in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teachers in public basic special schools have acknowledged the inadequate transition services towards completing school, as a bane in educating learners with ID. According to IDEA (2004), by age 16, students with ID should complete basic special school education and that of post-secondary education by age 22. However, Ghana only practices the former. In Ghana, transition services and IDEA's age requirements are limited in terms of the vocational skills training being offered and the age by which a learner exits a special school system. Currently, the curriculum and other teaching and learning materials do not contain transition plans and services. Teachers adapt teaching and learning materials according to their suitability and convenience. This research studied the perspectives of selected educational personnel, parents, and employers. These groups of people have suitable knowledge about the transition services that influence the education required to preparing learners with ID to successfully complete basic special schools with relevant employable skills.

In Ghana, students with ID remain in basic special schools even after age 22, regardless of them going through vocational skills training as specified in the curriculum, which is designed to empower them with skills to use for daily living, vocational life, and independent living. However, transition planning and services towards completing school for this category of learners have not been given much priority in Ghana because the students continue to remain in school even after training. This necessitated a research into transition planning and services that prepare these learners towards successful completion of school for post-school outcomes.

1.3 Research Purpose

The study was conducted to determine ways transition services influence school completion for learners with ID in Three Kings Special School in Battor, Garden City Special School in Kumasi, and Twin City Special School Sekondi-Takoradi, all in Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study include the following;

1. To identify the available transition services in the curriculum for learners with ID towards completing basic special schools.
2. To determine ways public basic special schools prepare learners with ID towards completing schools.
3. To ascertain factors that affect parents' hopes and expectations on educating their children with ID.
4. To find out the readiness of employers to engage learners with ID after their training from basic special schools.

1.5 Research Questions

The study provides answers to the following questions;

1. What transition services are provided in the curriculum for learners with ID towards completing public basic special schools in Ghana?
2. How do basic special schools prepare learners with ID towards completing school?
3. What factors affect parent's hopes and expectations on educating their children with ID?
4. How ready are employers to engage learners with ID after school?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Education in general provides many benefits to individuals by equipping them to pursue separate career paths of interest after successful school completion to live a productive life (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2011), cited in Grigal and Hart (2013). Daunting and low anticipations, joined with less opportunities, inhibits learners with ID from attaining higher education in order to obtain the equivalent rewards.

Contemporary perspective on skills development and employability for learners with ID is miserable. For instance, among other groups of individuals with disabilities, learners with ID have the lowest percentage of post-secondary enrolment (Newman et al., 2011), cited in Grigal & Hart (2013). Therefore, this study is intended to provide an insight into transition services and planning processes for learners with ID that influence their school completion from basic special schools in order to gain employment and live independent lives. Even though many of these learners are confronted with systemic and environmental challenges, it is crucial to note that many of them can successfully complete their education, work productively, and to live independently if they receive adequate support from society (AAID, 2013). Findings from this study would contribute positively by offering data that provides relevant information to different stakeholders and education policy-makers, so they can improve policy formulation in the area of transition services and school completion school at basic special school levels. Additionally, these findings may serve as benchmarks in determining which transition services could be offered to learners with ID that would best address their post-school outcomes such as- future employment and independent living.

It is expected that the findings could guide policy-makers and educational stakeholders to realize the urgency in reviewing the existing curriculum, syllabi, and transition services being offered to these learners in basic special schools. Eventually, teachers who teach this category of learners would have reflective practice on comprehensive transition plans and services for suitable adaptation. Also, this study might help enrich parents to understand the needs of children with ID, the importance of their participation in the transition team, and gearing their hopes and expectations towards successful school completion for their children.

Information from this study could help educate employers by enlightening them on the capabilities and potentials of this group of workers and the need to take them up in their firms.

1.7 Delimitations

There are about 13 public basic special schools for learners with ID in Ghana. This research was carried out in only three of those schools namely, Three Kings Special School- in Battor, Garden City Special School in Kumasi, and Twin-City Special School in Sekondi-Takoradi because they were the first to organize school completion programme for learners with ID for close to two decades. The study included only learners with ID undergoing vocational skills training in the current curriculum in basic special schools because, among other group of learners with disabilities, they do not further their education to the senior high school level in Ghana.

1.8 Limitations

It was difficult, if not impossible, to collect data from these learners themselves due to the nature of their disabilities, so their parents who could read and write in the English Language, as well as special education teachers in the selected schools, responded to the questionnaire guide, while heads of those schools and employers (local craftsmen) responded to the semi-structured interview. Also, the public basic special schools are scattered across the country, therefore, the limited time for the study did not permit the researcher to use many of them.

1.9 Definition of Operational Terms

Transition: Carefully planned programmes that assist students to move from school to adulthood or career life in society.

Transition services: Coordinated set of activities for a child with disability that is designed to be results-oriented, focused on improving the academic and functional accomplishment of the youth with a disability to facilitate progress from school to post-school activities. These may include post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation (IDEA).

Curriculum: Subjects comprising syllabus for programs taught in a school.

Intellectual disability (ID): A condition characterized by substantial limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviours, which covers everyday communal and practical skills. It usually starts before the age 18.

School Completion- ability to exit a school system at a given period of time.

Post-school outcome: the results of learning after completing school.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Public Law Number 108-446, contains the federal regulations pertaining to special education. A subsequent revision is entitled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

1.10 Organization of the study

The output of the study was organized into five sections. Section one which is the introduction, consists of background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives/questions, the significance of the study, delimitation and limitations.

Section two reviewed related literature, particularly on transition services for learners with intellectual disabilities. The related literature was reviewed under eight areas including the concept of transition; transition services for learners with ID; transition goals and plans, the curriculum; curriculum content for learners with ID in Ghana, preparation towards school completion for learners with ID; factors affecting parents' hopes and expectations about their children's education and employers' readiness to employ or offer apprenticeship to learners with ID in their enterprises. The research approach and instruments that were engaged to collect data were illustrated in section three. The concurrent embedded mixed method approach was adopted to collect quantitative and qualitative data at the same time. Cross-sectional survey design was employed using questionnaire and a semi-structured (open-ended) interview as the main tools to elicit quantitative and qualitative results respectively. Section four marked out an in-depth analysis of the data collected from the targeted respondents. A thorough discussion was made about the findings as well. Section five

summarized the entire study, established conclusions inferred from the findings, and provided recommendations grounded on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a contextual review of the study. It focuses on learners ID and how transition services influence their future plans and job placements after completing school, transition goals and plans, and transition services. It also provides a brief review of the curriculum and its content currently used by the basic special schools in Ghana, preparing learners towards completing school, school completion requirements for learners with ID, factors affecting parents' hopes and expectations they hold towards their child's education, and employers' (local craftsmen) readiness to employ or offer apprenticeship training to learners with ID in their businesses.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Taxonomy for transition programming has a classification of transition services which is grounded on activities that have the objective to improve post-school results and change for learners with intellectual disabilities and a model for planning, organizing, and evaluating transition education services, and programmes (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler & Coyle, 2016).

In this model, Kohler et al. (2016) described predictors of post-school success, strategies to increase school completion and reduction in dropout rates, school environment, and vocational reintegration services with emphasis on successful transition of youth with disabilities in special schools for self-employment career

development. The model reiterates five main exercises, which include student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, family engagement, and programme structure. Student-focused planning comprises activities that use evaluation data, student self-determination, and learner post-secondary areas to develop an individualized education plan. Student development buttresses on life, employment, and professional skills development through education and vocational learning, in addition to student evaluation and accommodation. Inter-agency collaboration activities enable participation of communities in transition education that emphasizes roles, responsibilities, communication, and other policies to foster partnership and enhanced programme development. Programme structure relates to efficient and effective delivery of transition-focused education which includes policies, and the structures and attributes of school. Focus on cultural relevance, empowerment, and family preparation to work with teachers and service providers in planning transition services are also emphasized (Kohler, 2016).

The usefulness of this model in the study is that it helps to fill the gap identified by Blacher and the researcher, that is, the critical transition period between school learning outcomes (adolescence period) and completing school (adulthood) of learners with ID at basic special schools in Ghana. Adoption of this model as the “gap filler” shows transition services adequately preparing and influencing the movement of the learner with ID from school to adult life in the community. This also will eventually provide educational stakeholders with information on diverse ways of training these learners exclusively, work on developing them within the context of career, independent living or even post-secondary education, if possible, in Ghana. The individualized education programme (IEP) and individualized transition

programme (ITP) to learners with ID is the most critical aspects that need to be successful.

Communities, in which learners with ID live, may have many agencies and organizations that can help in vocational training (apprenticeship), self-employment, and financial assistance.

2.2 Transition Defined

Transition in special education is the change from one programme stage to another. That is, transition from education-based programme to another, or to world of work. IDEA's programmes require that school-based transition services should begin when the child is 16 years of age, (and must continue through age 22. Thereafter, when the major transition might have occurred, learner's transition service needs should be served, instead, by adult vocational and developmental agencies. This planning goes far beyond educational considerations with younger learners, and it includes concerns about independent living, integrated employment and community participation.

Putting IDEA's requirement into perspective, it is clear to observe that this group of learners at public basic special schools enter school based on the admission requirements but remain in these schools without moving from one programme to another even after they attain 22 years of age.

2.3 Transition goals for learners with ID

Setting transition goals for planning involves soliciting for and provision of resources by all stakeholders that form the basic transition team. To plan for better transition results for learners with ID requires that all stakeholders deliver what is

expected of them, in terms of providing adequate resources that create enabling environment for them to thrive. Relevant provisions such as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (98524) and IDEA emphasized career evaluation and vocational training for these learners (Maina, 2010).

The family needs to play an active role and be keenly involved in the transition process since they provide the day-to-day nurturing of the learner. The preparation of individualized vocational transition planning (IVTP) should be a collective duty for school authorities, the community, parents and the learner. All stakeholders must collaborate in implementing activities that are results-oriented in order to achieve the goals and visions for these learners as they enter adulthood (Gargiulo, 2009). Parents should know their role in planning transition goals for their children, and actively demand answers as to why the entire process is not being implemented. Parents must not leave the responsibility of educating their children solely on teachers and head-teachers of basic special schools.

2.4 Transition planning for learners with ID

Many teenagers with ID and other forms of disabilities are confronted with lots of challenges (Chambers, Rabren, & Dunn, 2009; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; cited in Karrie & Plotner, 2012). It is a great challenge for adolescents with ID to go through the transition period to adulthood as they progress from school to various post-school settings, such as college, employment, and community living. This therefore, means that these services must begin as early as possible and must be purpose-driven for greater outcomes.

IDEA stresses the relevance of the learner and the parents' involvement in educating students with ID, recognizing the learner's interests in preparing post-

school goals. A variety of coordinated activities can be used in transition planning and services. Additionally, IDEA requires that transition planning begins at age 16 for learners with disabilities with quantifiable post-school goals prepared and included in the IEP for transition-age learners. Though Ghana adopted IDEA's policy in practicing special needs education in pre-vocational and vocational training at the basic special school level, learners with ID do not practically benefit from skills learned to achieve better post-school outcomes.

Several researchers have identified adolescents with autism and ID, and their families particularly, as individuals who struggle with transition to adulthood) Karrie and Plotner (2012), citing Blacher, Kraemer, and Howell (2010), and Neece, Kraemer, and Blacher (2009). Ghana partly adopted the transition requirements established by IDEA to ensure that transition planning is demand-driven and emphasizes on skills development that gives self-employment after completing school, yet not much priority is given to it. Several studies have found that involvement of parents, educators, and communities at large in transition services helps to improve the standard of vocational education for learners with disabilities. Practical skills-based concept for these learners is the most appropriate strategy to guide the education of these special learners instead of continuous activities for them between the ages of 14 and 16 (Kohler et al., 2016).

According to Fowler et al. (2009), emphasis must be placed on research into transition planning in disability policy to provide statistical data for real transition planning, school completion consequences, continuation of education, work opportunities, and self-reliance. Karrie and Plotner (2012), citing Billstedt, Gillberg, and Gillberg (2005), Wehmeyer and Palmer (2003) concluded that understanding the

characteristics of transition planning involving the learner is a critical characteristic suitable for setting transition goals for that learner.

According to the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the process of transition planning is mandatory under the IDEA 2004 for learners with IEP in Kindergarten through Grade 12 since the purpose is to enable learners' transition into productive adulthood. The U.S. National Council on Disability (2000) reported that the improvement in education policy for learners with ID included support services from government, such as adequate funding of programmes those with disabilities, yet post-school outcomes were still poor. This situation was no different in Ghana. One of the strategies of IDEA (2004) was to help learners with disabilities transition from school to post-school environments, and ensuring that during the last two years of their basic special school, learners would participate in technical and vocational skills development, acquisition of relevant skills, and work experiences towards transitioning.

There have been few studies in Australia to investigate school completion evolution programmes for learners with ID (Beamish et al, 2010; cited in Clerke, 2015). Beamish also pointed out that strategies to enhance employability of students with ID were being developed. Schools in Australia were implementing programmes to facilitate post-school transition and the research found that successful post-school outcomes could be achieved through programmes aimed at developing skills that prepare students for the workplace. In the US, Kohler (1996) undertook extensive research in this area and developed a framework to identify quality transition practices. The framework is the current available research-based model of transition practise (Clerke, 2015).

To be able to achieve results, there is the need to give employable skills to these learners in schools, create enabling environment for them to participate in community settings without any hindrances in order to healthily compete with their peers with other forms of disabilities or without disabilities. Eventually, this will enable them socialize by establishing social networks that will inure to mutual benefits. To this end, their education should be demand-driven with the aim of impacting relevant skills that will help them complete school in order to be gainfully employed to live the desired standard of life.

2.5 Transition services

IDEA 2004, PL 108-446; 2005 Wisconsin Act 258; Senate Bill 529; Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (ADA), amended in 2008 and Rehabilitation Act of 1992 (Act 504), amended in 1998, are federal laws that emphasized the transition of learners with ID from school to adult life., Out of all these Ghana adopted some requirements from IDEA such as technical vocational training to learners with ID. Six critical principles of the IDEA include (1) free appropriate public education (FAPE), (2) appropriate evaluation, (3) individualized education program (IEP), (4) least restrictive environment (LRE), (5) parent and student participation, and (6) decision-making procedural safeguards combined with multidisciplinary and multi-agency collaboration.

The IDEA (2004) further buttressed the need to focus on technical vocational skills development as the major transition activities which, when carried out in a coordinated approach, could create opportunities for learners with ID to easily integrate into society with sharp employable skills and prospects for continuing education. In doing these, there is the need to take cognisance of the individual

learner's needs, strengths and weaknesses, preferences, and interests. Methods of instruction, activities, environment, practical skills-based training that makes employment easy should be the main objective for basic special school education. (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Transition services for learners **with special** needs are known to prepare them for gainful employment and facilitate independent living. Programmes such as internships, tutelage, vocational skills training create opportunities for them to have learning experiences relevant for employment (Aliza, 2013).

Students with ID tend to be severely disadvantaged socially, vocationally, economically, and educationally Shaw, Chan, and McMahon (2012), citing, ADA (1990; amended in 2008). Many researchers such as Rooney (2016, citing Grigal, Hart, and Migliore (201, Janiga and Costenbader (2002), and Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Rifenburg, and Little (2015) indicated the challenges students with ID face, in terms of stigma and social exclusion at school, in their community and workplace that hinder transition services.

Inequitable access to post-secondary education and work is the objective of research findings that encourage inclusion and post-school accomplishment to learners with ID (Carter, Austin & Trainor, 2011) cited in Rooney (2016) though basic special school education for them have been the main focus for many countries in Africa including Ghana.

In August 2005, The Australian government under the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) effected the disability standards for education and developed strategies aimed at strengthening transition from school to work, developing social skills and work readiness training, involving

parents/guardians in the training of learners with ID to equip and support them to become useful in society. These standards are reflected in the educational initiatives and career framework by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). The guidelines for implementing the Victorian career curriculum framework for young persons with disabilities were designed to provide quality career development programmes in schools for all young people, including learners with ID. The most recently published, strengthened pathways planning (DEECD, 2014) were developed specifically for learners with disabilities. These initiatives align closely with Kohler's 2016 theory, where there is a strong emphasis on building work-readiness skills; encouraging external organizations and stakeholders to participate in transition processes and services; supporting work and career focused activities and encouraging student self-development.

Special schools that enrol learners with ID are required to implement a student support group (SSG). This group is made up of parents, teachers, and support professionals to give hope and future to learners with IDs. Transition planners from the Department of Human Services (DHS) provide post-school support to help learners to identify and document transition goals. Their roles vary depending on a learner's transition needs. Regional career development officers (RCDOs), a service which is available to all learners in all sectors, promote strategies to improve learner engagement, retention and school completion, leading to sustainable pathways and effective transitions.

Future for Young Adults (FFYA) is a government funding organization that provides post-school support for young learners to help them acquire requisite employable skills. The transition to employment (TTE) is being developed as part of the FFYA programme and provides a clear pathway for learners with disabilities

completing school and ready to acquire employable skills. The disability support network (DSN) supports special schools to form partnerships with service providers and the community and external providers are accessed through councils and the DHS. Schools are also able to access disability employment services (DES) through this network (Clerke, 2015).

Information gathered from the basic special schools in the present study Three Kings Special Schools, Garden City Special Schools and Twin City Special School show the lack of transition services for learners with ID making them unequipped with the necessary skills that can make them employable as they move into society hence, they continue to be in school without completing.

2.6 The curriculum for learners with ID

Curriculum can be defined as an attempt to prepare the learner's aptitudes and needs, as well as societal needs hence satisfying the goals of education (Kelly, 2009), cited in Ware (2014). Theressiakutty & Rao (2001) asserted that appropriate functional curriculum, depending on learners' needs and ability is key to effective development of transition from school to work. The conceptualization of curriculum varies in different traditions. However, in its simplest form, curriculum can be viewed as a course of study (Jung & Pinar, 2016).

Curriculum does not exist in a vacuum-even for learners with moderate and severe ID (Bouck, 2008; Milner, 2003), cited in Shurr et, al. (2013). Aside from shifting philosophies, curriculum, practice, and research are influenced by a range of factors, including federal legislation (e. g., IDEA, 2004).

Literature from Australia and the U.S. indicate that transition-focused education should prepare learners with disabilities for their lives after school, should

be an essential aspect of regular school activities, should begin early in schools and be fundamental to the curriculum being delivered to learners with ID (Kohler & Field, 2003; Meadows, 2006). Further research by Luecking (2009) in the US and Parmenter (2011) in Australia found that the provision of work and life skills programmes, when preparing young learners with ID for adult and work roles, was a significant factor to help them thrive outside school (Clerke, 2015).

Though the curriculum for learners with ID in basic special schools in Ghana outlines some vocational skills needed to enhance their independent living and employability skills, yet there are no preparations towards their school completion. Therefore, they remain in these schools unprepared to complete in order to join the world of work or live independent life. The researcher, as a special educator, prior to conducting the present study, had observed that many past learners from basic special schools were not able to demonstrate skills they had learned. <https://nanopdf.com>

2.7 Curriculum content for learners with ID

According to Moljord (2017), the content of basic special school education curriculum for learners with ID should be user friendly and practical in nature with a perspective span for life's preparation. Similarly, pedagogy operation should be geared towards imparting into the learner practical skills and knowledge that is useful for modern survival (Biesta, 2014).

IDEA (2004) required that learners eligible to be in special schools must have access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible, in order to meet developmental goals. The general access to education curriculum by all was questioned by some scholars (Ayres et. al, 2011). Others have held the view that it was meant to promote inclusion and high expectations for

learners with ID (Courtade, Jimenez, Spooner, & Browder, 2012), not neglecting even those with the most severe ID to make it possible for them to be at par with their peers (Shurr & Bouck, 2013). These conflicting views are still being debated by scholars and researchers in the field (Shurr & Bouck, 2013).

Many researchers have proved that the syllabus provided influences the performance of the learner in school and upon completing school (Ayres, Lowrey, Douglas, & Sievers 2011). Amedzake (2011), cited in Novignon (2014) identified that many public basic special schools in Ghana are basically established to provide functional academics, pre-vocational and vocational skills; aimed at transitioning such learners into independent lives after school. Nevertheless, very few prospects are available for such individuals after school. The big question therefore is, if they are being provided with these skills, why do they still not complete school?

Additionally, Hayford's (2013) study on assessment of occupational services in four special schools for learners with ID revealed that most of the activities only included basic skills in batik or tie dye, weaving, bead-making and poultry farming. According to Hayford, the limited nature of these activities might limit learner's choices on the job market. This might pose a problem to preparing these individuals to take on vocational programmes in agriculture, trade, and clerical work, sales, health, and other technical occupations (Szymanski & Parker, 2003). The above, according to Hayford, are important in training and preparing youngsters with ID for life after completing school.

An interim curriculum, which is currently used by the basic special schools in Ghana, was first launched in 2001 and has since not been reviewed. It does not contain transition programmes as required by IDEA adopted by Ghana, according to transition-age development, to successfully help learners with ID complete school.

The vocational training that is being given to these learners“ limits them to fit into the ever-changing labour market demands, hence they remain in these special schools without completing.

2.8 Preparing Learners with ID towards Completing School

After leaving school at a point in time, one can continue to have a higher education or walk into the job market. This does not happen easily among learners with ID since they are often not well prepared or given the needed support by parents and special educators to enable them continue their education or to take up a job, or even a vocation. With adequate transition planning services and infrastructure, these learners can also make choices for their future about pursuing technical vocational training or further academic education, or having a gainful employment and live a decent life.

Despite efforts to salvage the situation as indicated, the challenges persist and live much to be desired (Thressiakutty & Rao, 2001). The surest approach is to adopt modern transition planning processes that can produce results for them. Learners with ID who acquire the relevant knowledge and skills after completing school can equally join the workforce and successfully compete with their peers in job placement since some of them are exceptionally talented or gifted. With the appropriate transition services being carried out for them, many students with ID, especially the older ones, can transition or exit the school system to create avenues for admission of new entrants.

It is possible that learners with ID can invariably function properly, perform any given task if only the requisite knowledge and skills set are impacted before they complete basic special school in Ghana. Emphasis should also be placed on the

interpersonal and behavioural attitudes of these learners to enable them integrate easily at any environment they find themselves in order to demonstrate their full potentials (Gargiulo, 2009), cited in Maina (2016).

A study conducted by Acromond (2016) on “teachers’ views on vocational training programmes for students with intellectual disabilities in Catholic Special Vocational School Fijai-Takoradi in Western Region, Ghana”. The author used a qualitative approach involving a case study that included a headmaster of the school, 3 special education teachers, and 5 vocational teachers as participants. Data, which were collected through observation, document review, and semi-structured interview exposed the unavailability of learner preparedness towards school completion. Results from the study espoused showed that the school authorities had tried several times to help their adult learners with ID complete school, but they had not been successful. Rather, the school completion preparations always turned out to be a mini exhibition show during parent teacher association (PTA) meetings or at other programmes in the school where visitors were invited. For this reason, most of the learners who were able to come out of school did not go through any official school completion process. This had also led to lack of follow-up programmes for such learners. The only monitoring and followed-up services they had been conducting is on the learner who completed and had been employed by the special school authorities to work in the school. The findings further support the fact that with the appropriate and requisite knowledge and skills, learners with ID can also do well when given the opportunity after completing school (Targett, 2006, cited in Acromond, 2016).

Yeboah (2015) conducted a similar study on the topic, “Assessing the competency levels of students with intellectual disabilities in the vocational training programmes at Garden City Special School, Kumasi” which employed a qualitative

and quantitative approach with a case study, including 15 students and 5 special education teachers. Information was collected through in-depth interview and teacher-made tests. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 16) and interviews respectively. Descriptive statistical methods were used to present the findings. Qualitative data collected using interviews were analysed thematically. The findings from the study demonstrated that in Ghana, in terms of vocational training programmes in specific basic special schools, Garden City Special School in Kumasi (Ashanti Region), Three Kings Special School at Battor (Volta Region) and Twin City Special in Sekondi-Takoradi (Western Region) provided basketry, batik and tie-dye making, envelop making, broom making, poultry, sewing, wood work and home management. The programs of study aimed at preparing individuals with ID for the job market after completing school. Moreover, the curriculum for these public basic special schools for individuals with ID in Ghana outlined some vocational skills needed to enhance independent living and employability for these learners. The curriculum made for the vocational training programmes seemed not to be in tandem with best practice; hence individual special educators adapted the teaching and learning materials according to the suitability of the syllabus. However, it seems very few of the learners were able to demonstrate the appropriate skills after leaving the school as they transitioned into the work setting. It is therefore, necessary to assess the competency of learners in the vocational training programmes at these basic special schools.

From the above literature, it became clear that the curriculum content being taught to learners with ID in basic special schools in Ghana do not match Gargiulo's 2009 assertion, as cited in Maina (2016), that instructional programming for learners with ID must be geared towards addressing the current needs and future goals of the

learner; based on a realistic assessment after completing school, being sensitive to education requirements and school completion goals.

2.9 School Completion Requirements for Learners with ID

At its best, education equips learners with knowledge and skills that allow them to define and pursue their own goals, and prepares them for participation in the life of their communities (Phillips & Siegel, 2015). The basic special schools in Ghana have no laid down document of requirement for preparing their learners towards school completion as it is for the regular schools. This is so because Ghana do not have high school or post- secondary education for this category of learners as practiced in the developed countries in accordance to IDEA requirement.

Research conducted by Novignon (2014) revealed that over the past 10 years, or more, two public and one private basic special schools have managed to prepare just a handful of their learners with ID to complete school: Dzorwulu-public (4 learners), Castle Road- public (2 learners) and New Horizon- private (5 learners). The above information speaks volumes of what the actual problem is on the ground. Additionally, close to two decades now three other public basic special schools namely: Three Kings Special School managed to prepare 16 learners to complete school in 2005, Garden City Special School prepared 20 learners in 2006, and Twin City Special School prepared 10 learners to complete school in 2007.

Similarly, a research conducted by Maina (2016) using descriptive survey design adopting exploratory approach on the topic, “Challenges facing transition for learners with ID from special schools to work in Nakuru County, Kenya”, with quantitative data analyzed through descriptive statistics by percentages, 32 respondents including 2 educators, 20 parents, and 10 vocational trainers were

interviewed to collect questionnaire data, got something to support earlier propositions. The findings from quantitative data revealed that many special schools do not prepare learners with ID towards school completion such that most of these learners continue to remain in school even after crossing the required age to leave school.

Though, there is a global appeal to stop this menace and ensuring all learners, as well as those with ID, complete high school or be in the position to progress to college and into vocations approved by policy makers, employers and society, this could be even more challenging to achieve in basic special schools in Ghana. This is because completing school from basic special schools has been of a difficult task.

The public basic special schools in Ghana open admission to learners with ID after thoroughly undergoing assessment from the National Assessment and Resource Centre which is under Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.), and also fulfilling a medical report from a reputable hospital. The learner goes through functional academics (reading, arithmetic, and writing) training for six years and later moved to a vocational class for training in (sewing, carpentry, bead weaving, batik tie-dye, doormats weaving, etc.) for another three years. After these nine years of pre-vocational and vocational training respectively, the ID learner is left to continue to remain in the school because there is no transition plan and service programmes first of all to begin with, neither there is post-school outcome like job placement or apprenticeship for them. The information the researcher gathered from these three basic special schools involved in this study indicated that, most of these learners either drop out of school or attend the school intermittently (break from school for about one, two, three or even more years and come back to continue).

Many of these learners are older than the IDEA required transition-age (that's age 22). In spite of the international call that every learner with ID in school completes and be equipped to further education or for career by 2018; IDEA's IEP transition planning process do not and may not have a place in basic special schools for those in Ghana. Literature discussed earlier in this study by (Gadagbui, 2008; Hayford, 2013; Opoku, 2016) confirmed that lack of good programmes in the basic special schools for learners with ID keep them in these schools without completing into apprenticeship or the work world. Consequently, despite the legislative efforts, these learners remain severely disadvantaged socially, vocationally, economically, and educationally (ADA, 1990) as amended in 2008.

2.10 Factors affecting Parents' hopes and Expectations on Education of Children with ID

The dream of every parent goes beyond growth. The parents also dream that their children will grow, have education and gain employment in order to enable them live meaningful lives as individuals in their communities. The Special Education Amendment Act (1998) specified that IEPs which provide transition services to learners with ID must be developed for each learner with disabilities, and that parents must be invited to participate in.

Research findings revealed that education and employment results for learners with ID reduced as related to other disability groups. This breach occurs due to the fact that many of these learners find it difficult to compete with their peers in gaining employment in the competitive job market after completing school. This requires that all stakeholders should get involved in the education and employment of these learners so that they do not become a burden on society. In view of this parents,

educators, employers, and other key stakeholders must change their perceptions about this group of learners and rather provide the needed support that will make them responsible and useful citizens of the nation. Almutairi, (2016) agrees with Kohler that best practice is for all stakeholders to have positive perceptions about learners with ID and encourage them to give off their best in both education and career since these are achievable through an arrangement of best transition service practices.

An investigation done by Donna (2012), citing (Grigal & Hart, 2010) had examined that a relationship exists among parents' participation, information sharing, expectations for adult with ID after completing school and a successful independent life after school for the learner being the paramount expectation by most stakeholders. Kausar, Jevne, and Sobsey (2003) also observed that for stakeholders' perceptions and expectations can guide or shape the life of this group of learners through appropriate transition services that can positively influence their future. Additionally, Ellman (2015) in his findings indicated those parents and other key stakeholders rarely or do not even fully get involved in the transition planning processes and service provision for the learner with ID. As a result, many of these learners remain in school whilst they are supposed to complete and join their peers either in senior high schools if there is any or walk into the world of work in order to become a human capital for the nation as many parents for that matter stakeholders expect them to also make it in life Ellman (2015), citing (Hurst, 2009).

However, there are socio-economic factors that make it impossible to giving the needed care to this group of learners by many parents or guardians. Other inhibiting factors includes, the loss of community connectivity, the increased fragmentation of family life, the competing often conflicting pressures on parents' daily lives according to (Boyer, 19914) cited in Barbour (2007) discourage parents in

raising children with ID. Parents or guardians do not only need societal assistance but also suffer stigma that is detrimental to proper care for their children. All these factors do not inure to the successful completion of school by learners with ID to join employment train or have post -secondary education in the future.

Moreover, some researches also revealed other barriers that impede parents' expectations, perceptions, hopes and dreams as far as educating their children with disabilities are concerned. Snyder (2014) identified insufficient information as a contributing factor for the inadequate contribution by parents in the education of their children. This was indicated by Downer and Myers (2010) who defined communication as a regular, bi-directional and meaningful interactions between parents and schools that ensure parents play a central role and are encouraged to actively be involved in their children's educational experiences as a requirement to achieve desirable targets. Parents' knowledge about transition planning processes and services and the special education system is very relevant. This will enable them to have necessary information needed to support their children. Parents are expected to ask most serious questions and demand answers from special school personnel as far as their children's education and school completion programmes are concerned.

Yet, only limited families are educationally and financially prepared to take up this challenge. Hyde, Carpenter, & Conway (2010) realise that it is the parents who have the most knowledge of their children and who bring in valuable information to the planning, implementation and evaluation process of transition. Similarly, research from the U.S., Luecking (2009) and Stewart, Freeman, Law, Healy, Burke-Gaffney, Forhan, Young, and Guenther, (2010) also found that it was important to engage families in planning for work experiences, to create mutual expectations and to help parents navigate through the many disability service providers. It is the wish of many

parents to see their children grow and become responsible adults to live in order to affect other people who come their way. According to Lombardi (1992), there are three factors that ensure progress of the child's education. These include developmentally appropriate curricula, parent and school collaboration, and community support and services provided by social service agencies. Educators with coordination skills affect these three components. They can help parents understand and sanction developmentally appropriate curricula, adopt appropriate guidance strategies in the home, develop long-term patterns of collaboration with schools, establish supportive networks with other parents, and utilize community social services.

To Griffin, McMillan, and Hodapp (2010) involving parents in the provision of special needs services create access to information about the future plans for the learner with ID. However, previous researches indicated that parents normally lack the awareness of transition services coupled with other factors thereby reducing their opportunities for inputs (Kraemer et al., 2001).

Kohler's (1996) theory on the third category- family involvement, also stressed on the importance of empowering parents, carers and families and involving them in planning for the future and in the career development journey of their children. Wehma, (2006) maintained that parents' involvement is perhaps the most significant factor in the transition outcomes for learners with disabilities from youth into adulthood.

Some parents develop low expectations about the education their children receive. The crucial role that parents play in the transition process was again buttressed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines (2014). DEECD recognises that better outcomes are achieved

when key persons in the learner's life are included and engaged with planning, supporting and implementing the educational programme. The Australian National Council on Intellectual Disability, in its report, *From school to real work* (2009), indicated that empowering young learners with ID to participate in decision-making, in conjunction with their families, is key in the successful implementation of the transition process. This report also offers reasons why creating a collaborative and informed parent-teacher partnership is essential. Parents' knowledge and participation in the entire process will shape their desires, hopes, perceptions and expectations about their children with special needs and to enable them contribute meaningfully towards accomplishing their transition goals. This will affect the perceptions, hopes and expectations of their children's education outcomes.

2.11 Employers Readiness to Engage Learners with ID after Completing School

Learners with ID, like any other learners, should be adequately prepared for the modern job market in readiness for the enormous competition in getting employment or be self-employed. The student with ID must be physically, mentally, as well as emotionally ready to work in any environment, even though some level of support and encouragement would still be needed. Decisions about career choices in the future must always be thoroughly discussed by parents, educators and employers. This will enhance interest and best career choices after school to make them suitably placed in their employment areas. Employers must also be ready and willing to accept and embrace this category of learners and provide all supportive and conducive environments to aid their work (Dominica, 2010).

The curriculum for students with ID in basic special schools in Ghana basically prepares them for vocational life, daily-living skills, and for independent living. Moreover, several sources reviewed from the literature established that the skills that are taught in the schools are not enough to match these learners with the actual job demands after school so they either continue to remain or drop out of school.

Unlike other groups without disabilities, learners with ID find it very difficult to get employment after school due to the fact that they are always neglected because they do not have the requisite knowledge and skills required by employers. The education system does not create an enabling environment for these learners to also thrive and develop talents in order to achieve their fullest potentials. Aliza (2013) believes that most of these learners have the potential to develop their technical vocational skills but Lindstrom, Doren, & Miesch (2011) spotted limited job avenues available to this group of individuals as the challenge. Even if the opportunities exist this group of persons rarely have the requisite knowledge and relevant work experiences to fit into the employment opportunities.

However, the modern work setting, and work tasks are evolving in society and it is expected that by 2018, 63 percent of workers will need post-secondary education (Carnevale et al., 2011). It therefore, means that higher education will no longer be a prerequisite for employment especially for learners with ID; it is becoming a necessity. This necessity is a mirage to basic special schools for these learners in Ghana as they only equip them inadequately with vocational skills and daily living skills for life after school and not being prepared for higher institutions of learning and hitherto, will remain in the school without completing. Even though, there is high demand for post-secondary graduates in the job market, if care is not taken these

demands cannot be met due to lack of qualified personnel for employment (Carnevale, et al., 2011). According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, the situation is worse for these learners who may not even acquire any relevant skills for the job market. In relative terms, about 17 percent of learners with ID are employed whilst 64.6 percent are persons without ID are employed (Siperstein et al., 2013).

The 2014 national snapshot of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the labour force, published in the Vocational Rehabilitation Journal, presented results which indicated a troubling low employment rate for adults with ID, and a puzzlingly low number who are even in the labour force.” It was recommended that “until new ways are found to meaningfully incorporate this population into the labour force”, the trend will still exist (Siperstein, 2014).

Though, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2008) and the International Labour Organization [ILO] (2012) confirmed that provisions were made for learners with ID to benefit from transition services and relevant vocational skills, they were often not well placed in order to gain from these services. just as Ghana is doing and this further presents them with disadvantages of living an independent life or seeking for job after school.

Some transition services can only be provided by outside organizations, but not the school. So, during planning of transition services the circle of people involved in the learner’s IEP and transition team meetings may expand to include people from the community, such as local employer and craftsmen. These may include counsellors, job specialists, employment agencies and staff that are ready to offer apprenticeship or employment to learners with ID (Lee, 2019).

2.12 Summary

Several studies have been done on transition planning and transition services of learners with ID. In Australia, and the USA, several diverse provisions of transition-focused education and the provision of work and life-skills programmes, when preparing young learners with ID for adult and work roles, were significant factors in successful school completion for learners for work life in the future.

Most researches that were reviewed as part of this chapter touched on transition services for learners with ID after high school or college. The present study aimed at establishing how transition services can influence school completion for learners with ID at basic special schools, which Ghana only practices. It was also to establish the impact of transition services on preparing learners with ID for school completion. This study therefore, assessed transition services available in the curriculum in preparing learners with ID towards school completion, and for post-school life (obtaining a job, or to be self-employed) and for independent living. Parental involvement in transition planning and services received much emphasis from IDEA's requirement as it is a critical guide to affect the learners' educational progress and how parents' hopes and expectations affect the educational outcomes of their children with ID. Lastly, the literature presented studies on employers' readiness to employ these learners in their companies or firms after they complete school.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The selection of a suitable study methodology is critical in social science research since this can affect the acceptance or rejection of a study within the scientific community. The present study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a cross-sectional survey. The population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis, logistical, and ethical considerations for the study have been thoroughly discussed under this chapter.

3.1 Research Approach

Concurrent embedded mixed method approach was used by the researcher to study different groups at different levels. The researcher collected two types of data concurrently, during a single data collection phase. In an embedded mixed method approach, one data set provides a supportive, secondary role in the study. The purpose of this approach is that a single data set is not sufficient, suggesting that different questions need to be answered, and that each type of question requires different types of data.

Using a mixed methods approach, the researcher combined both qualitative and quantitative ways in data collection and analysis. The combination of these methods in the study made it possible for the researcher to ensure consistency in the instruments and responses gathered from the field. This research approach was selected to contribute to the collection and analysis of more comprehensive data on

transition services and its impact on learners with ID in three selected basic special schools in Ghana.

3.2 Research Design

Data collection was grounded in a cross-sectional survey selected from 3 public basic special schools to represent all 13 of such schools across Ghana. With this design, the researcher aimed at generalizing the findings to all the 13 basic special schools since they all had populations with similar characteristics (Creswell, 2014). By this design, data were collected only once on all variables that the researcher focused on in the study; namely, s to find out how transition services influenced or prepared learners with ID towards completing basic special school in Ghana.

Self-administered questionnaires were emailed to participants in the three settings, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the target groups. Participants answered questions themselves in the structured questionnaires they were given (Sudman Bradburn & Schwarz, 1996).

3.3 Population

Three public basic special schools for learners with ID; namely, Three Kings Special School in Battor, Garden City Special School in Kumasi, and Twin City Special School in Sekondi were selected for the study. These schools were selected because they had in the past prepared learners with ID towards school completion and also could give account of the challenges and reasons why they no longer provided transition services as part of their curriculum. The population for the study was 104. This included the 3 head teachers, 47 special educators in all 3 schools, 45 parents or guardians of children with ID in the vocational classes in the selected basic special schools, and 9 local craftsmen who offered vocational skills training to students in the

schools. Nine employers with different vocations in the local communities were consulted to seek their views on offering employment or apprenticeship to these learners after completing school. These participants were deemed necessary because the main goal of the present study was to determine whether there were transition services available for learners with ID to complete school and to become independent after exiting school.

3.4 Sample Size

Fifty-one participants were selected for the study. They included 3 heads of the selected basic special schools, 25 parents of children with ID in the vocational skills classes aged 16 years and above, 17 special educators who had been teaching only vocational skills from five years and above, and 6 employers (2 each) from the communities who could offer vocational skills training opportunities as these schools.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The multi-stage technique was adopted, where census and purposive sampling techniques were used for the study. The names of individual respondents, institutions, and groupings were sampled within the cluster (Creswell, 2018). At the time of the study, there were 39 public basic special schools for learners with ID in Ghana. These included 24 integrated special schools, 2 private and 13 public special schools. Three of the 13 public basic special schools were selected. The features of the three selected schools were similar and relevant for the study. They followed the same interim curriculum for learners with ID and, also, they were the first to prepare learners with ID towards school completion in Ghana. Heads of the three schools were sampled through census because they posed as key persons in the day-to-day administration of their respective schools. Purposive sampling, which focused on particular

characteristics of a population of interest, usually quite small, was also used to select special educators, parents and local craftsmen for the study. Seventeen (17) special educators who have been teaching various vocational skills from five years and above were purposively sampled because they had the expertise in using the curriculum for learners with ID. Later, 25 parents of children with ID in vocational classes of the three selected basic special schools were also purposively sampled. Additionally, six craftsmen (employers), two each from the communities where the three selected schools were located, and who offered similar vocations as in the schools, were purposely consulted to find out their opinions and readiness to employ this category of learners after completing school.

3.6 Construction of Research Instruments

As a social science research, the researcher made use of self-constructed questionnaire for this study. Numeric scores were attached to each response category or themes using single-item scores. Semi-structured interview helped obtained specific qualitative information from the participants.. An interview guide was developed based on the research objectives.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires with closed-ended question in which pre-coded responses and answers were used to collect the quantitative data. The items were Likert-type of scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Strongly Agree (SA) or Agree (A). Likert-type scale was used because it is easy to construct and more reliable than other scales (Tittle & Hill, 1967). The scale also provides the researcher the opportunity to use frequency and percentage as well as means scores to compute the data.

Copies of the questionnaires were distributed to parents and special educators who could read and write for their responses. Each group (parents and educators) had different questionnaires to answer. Questionnaire for the special educators was characterised with teaching experiences, and transition planning and services for learners with ID. Parents, on the other hand, answered questions on their expectations, and post-school outcomes for their children with ID. The questions were purposely outlined in the questionnaire in addressing each research question and objective. Items on the questionnaire which were not clear to respondents were explained to them in order to elicit the right responses. A detail of the questionnaire is found in Appendix II, III and IV.

3.6.2 Semi- structured interview

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect mostly the qualitative data for this study, as recommended by Keller and Conradin (2018). In that regard, demographic and other salient data that addressed the objectives of the study were collected from school heads and craftsmen through face-to-face semi-structured interview to obtain high quality data (Mathers et al., 2009).

3.7 Validity

The researcher's supervisor offered the needed support in checking the validity of the research instruments. The instruments were carefully examined by the researcher and her supervisor to ensure that the content indeed addressed the issues in the study questions to establish their relevance and validity, since the findings and recommendations were dependent on the validity of the instruments. Eventually, recommendations and necessary corrections were incorporated in the final research instruments as suggested by Orodho (2010).

3.8 Reliability

The test-retest technique was adopted to establish the reliability of the instruments in order to ensure accuracy minimal to margin of error if a different test should be conducted (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure and an item or instrument is considered reliable if the same result is achieved repeatedly. To ensure the reliability of the items, the questionnaires were administered on students in the Garden City Special School in Kumasi to assess the consistency of the items during its trial testing.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher who teaches learners with ID was actively involved in assessing the challenges in the learner's vocational skills acquisition, transition service provision, and preparedness for school completion. Also, there were interactions with parents or guardians of the learners to give their opinions and expectations about their child's education.

Introductory letters were distributed to heads of the selected basic special schools; permission was sought from special educators and parents through school heads via phone calls about the questionnaire, which was later sent to them to complete; and the craftsmen whose shops are situated near these basic special schools were contacted by the researcher with an introductory letter and informed about the interview and the importance of their involvement in this study. A date was scheduled for their interview respectively.

3.10 Pilot Study

The research instruments were piloted on respondents with similar characteristics to be contacted in the study at Gbi Kledzo basic special school at Hohoe in the Volta Region of Ghana. Both the questionnaire and semi-structured interview guides were piloted on ten percent of the sample size (Orodho, 2010). The pilot study was able to detect and ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments designed for the main study. It gave an opportunity for corrections for shortcomings to be validated. To this effect, appropriate changes were made to ambiguities and inconsistencies in content of the instruments designed for the study. To a large extent, the pilot study offered the researcher first hand familiarity of research instruments administration in identifying possible challenges and, data analysis.

3.11 Data Collection

PTA meeting times were scheduled for data collection from parents at the three basic special schools, respectively. The researcher, on the first day, administered the interview guide with the head-teacher whilst the special educators provided answers to their questionnaire guide at Three Kings Special School in Battor, where the researcher teaches. Before the PTA meeting started, parents who received emails of the questionnaire guide sent to them with the help of the school authorities after granting the researcher permission were contacted for collection of the answered document. The researcher met the two local craftsmen in the Battor community for face-face interviews the next day, after convenient scheduled meeting times, were reached between them and the researcher. Following the same schedule as agreed by the two other basic special schools, the researcher met special educators and the head-teachers at Twin City Special School at Sekondi-Takoradi and Garden City Special

School at Kumasi, parents at PTA meetings and craftsmen in the various communities at their workshops to respond to the questionnaire and the interview respectively as well.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The three schools in this study were visited to be informed about the research purpose. Special educators were reached through their head-teachers after they received the introductory letters. Parents who could read and write were reached before the PTA meeting day via phone calls by school heads to be informed about the questionnaire guide, which was later to them to their email addresses. Therefore, upon arriving at the school for the PTA meeting, the answered questionnaires were collected from them. Local craftsmen were contacted in their various workshops to be informed and asked for their permission as far as this study was concerned. The researcher guaranteed all these respondents actively involved in the study that whatever information they shall provide, would be for academic purposes, but not for any non-educative motive and asked for their unflinching support and cooperation to make the research exercise a success. The researcher was able to establish very good working relationship with respondents, freely engaged them in discussions on the subject and did not influence their views in any way that did not give a true reflection of answers to the questions as required.

All distributed and administered research tools were collected by the researcher before leaving each study school premises and workshops. Data analysis started immediately after its collection. Other ethical considerations include confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent was duly observed.

3.13 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were duly collected and analysed in order to meet the requirements of the objectives outlined in the study. The data or information provided by respondents per the questionnaire and semi-structured interview guides were coded and organized into a usable format. Data were adequately analysed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, charts, and frequency tables. Interview responses or data collected were transcribed and analysed thematically. Thorough discussions resulted in findings, policy recommendations and conclusions.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

Adequate analysis of data, and discussions that resulted into accurate findings were done under this chapter. Objectives of the study, which was to assess how transition services that influenced school completion for learners with ID in Three Kings Special School in Battor, Garden City Special School in Kumasi, and Twin City Special School in Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana were met through the critical analysis made. The researcher found out how learners with ID were prepared for school completion and what hindered them from gaining employment after school. The data analysis and findings have been done thematically based on these objectives:

1. To identify the available transition services towards completing basic special school in the curriculum for learners with ID.
2. To determine ways basic special schools do prepare learners with ID towards completing school.
3. To ascertain factors affecting parents' hopes and expectations on educating their children with ID.
4. To find out the readiness of employers to engage learners with ID after their training from basic special schools.

4.2 Discussions

Table 4.1

Gender of special education teachers and head-teachers

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 9 | 45 |
| Female | 11 | 55 |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.1 describes the gender distribution of respondents from the three selected special schools who responded to the interview and the questionnaire guide respectively. A total of 20 special educators and head-teachers responded represented (100%). Out of the entire percentage 45% were males whereas the remaining 55% were females. These indicated that more females were present at the time of research than their male counterparts.

Table 4.2

Teaching experiences of respondents

| | Years | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Teaching experience | Less than 5 years | 2 | 10 |
| | 6 – 10 years | 5 | 25 |
| | 11 – 15 years | 5 | 25 |
| | 16 – 20 years | 6 | 30 |
| | Above 20 years | 2 | 10 |
| | Total | 20 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.2 shows that, 10% of the special education teachers had less than 5 years teaching experience, 25% had between 5–10 years teaching experience, 25% had between 11–15 years teaching experience, 30% had between 16-20 years

teaching experience, and 10% had taught for over 20 years. It could be deduced from the table that special educators and head teachers, had more teaching experience which formed the majority representing about 30% with 16 years and above experiences as teachers in these basic special schools. This means that the average number of special educators with five years and above teaching experiences in vocational skills..

Table 4.3

Areas of respondents' areas of specialization

| Areas | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Learning disabilities | 2 | 0 |
| Intellectual disabilities | 16 | 80 |
| Visual impairment | 2 | 10 |
| Hearing impairment | 0 | 10 |
| Inclusive education | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.3 depicts areas of specialization of the respondents involved in the study. Sixteen (80%) of the respondents had specialised in the education of individuals with ID, 2 (10%) of the respondents had specialised in the education of individuals with hearing impairments, and 2 (10%) of the respondents had specialised in the education of individuals with visual impairments.

Table 4.4**Qualifications of special education teachers and the head-teachers**

| Highest qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Doctorate | 1 | 5 |
| Masters' degree | 2 | 10 |
| Bachelor degree | 13 | 65 |
| Diploma | 2 | 10 |
| NVTI | 2 | 10 |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.4 shows a summary of the qualifications of the special education teachers and head-teachers. From the table, only one (5%) of them held a doctorate degree, 10% of them had master's degrees, and 65% being bachelor degree holders. However, 15% and 10% of the respondents had diploma and NVTI certificates, respectively.

Table 4.5**Background information of parents**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 9 | 36 |
| Female | 16 | 64 |
| Total | 25 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

From Table 4.5, showed that 16(64%) of the parents who were involved in the study were females and the remaining 9(36%) were males. This indicated that more female parents were available than their male counterparts during the period of answering the questionnaire.

Table 4.6
Academic qualification of parents

| Highest qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Master's degree | 0 | 0 |
| Bachelor's degree | 5 | 20 |
| Diploma | 3 | 12 |
| NVTI | 4 | 16 |
| SSSCE | 7 | 28 |
| BECE | 6 | 24 |
| Total | 25 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.6: shows that none of the parents hold master's degree while 5(20%) of them had first degree certificates. Besides, 3(12%) of the parents had diploma certificates and 4(16%) had NVTI certificates. Also, 7 parents representing (28%) are SSSCE graduates with 6(24%) of them possessing BECE certificates. The data above thus indicated that the parents sampled for the study were literates.

Table 4.7
Gender of employers

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 5 | 83 |
| Female | 1 | 17 |
| Total | 6 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4:7 showed that 5(83%) of the employers used for the study were males and the remaining 1(17%) were females. This indicated that more males were present in the interview.

Table 4.8**Academic qualification of employers (craftsmen)**

| Highest qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Master's Degree | 1 | 16.7 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 1 | 16.7 |
| Diploma | 1 | 16.7 |
| NVTI | 2 | 33.2 |
| SSSCE | 1 | 16.7 |
| BECE | 0 | 00.0 |
| Total | 06 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.8 showed that 1(16.7%) of the craftsmen held a masters' degree, 1(16.7%) had first degree certificates and 1(16.7%) had diploma certificates. Besides, 2(33.3%) of them had NVTI certificates, 1(16.7%) had senior high school certificates. The data thus show that the craftsmen had a wide range of academic qualifications, and on the whole, were able to read and write in English.

4.2 Basic Special School History**Table 4.9****Admission and school completion by learners with ID before 2007**

| School | Year established | Average age a learner gained admission | Number enrolled in that year | Year of completion | Number who completed in that year | Average age they completed with | Average number of years a learner stayed in school before completing |
|----------------------------|------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Three Kings Special School | 1995 | 15 | 20 | 2005 | 20 | 25 | 10 |
| Garden City Special School | 1977 | 11 | 19 | 2006 | 19 | 40 | 29 |
| Twin City Special School | 1977 | 13 | 10 | 2007 | 10 | 33 | 30 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

The average age a learner completed school with during that time was between 25 and 40. Most of them stayed in these basic special schools for as long as 30 years. It could be deduced from the finding that most of these learners might have had admission at a far older age, and with no school completion programme therefore, stayed longer in school.

Head teachers were asked whether school completion programmes were ever held for these learners in their various schools after the first one, these were the comments each had to make towards the question.

One of them said:

After 2005, there hasn't been any preparation towards school completion for learners with ID because it involves a lot of preparation and funds which government is not ready to pay. The school is public and what government provides is what is given to them. (Semi-structured interview, head teacher 1)

Another also said:

Since 2006, the school hasn't graduated any learner till date. This is because there is no clear-cut programme as to what is to be done for these children. (Semi-structured interview, head teacher 2)

One also had this to say:

The school didn't prepare any learner for school completion since the last one. Actually, it is difficult preparing them for that because it takes lots of money to do that. (Semi-structured interview, head teacher 3)

4.3 Basic Special School Admissions after 2007

Before a learner with ID is admitted into any of these basic special school, age among other factors is considered. The National Assessment and Resource Centre under Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) on special schools in Ghana, has the mandate

for placement for learners with ID before being enrolled in any of these special schools.

Table 4.10

Age learners were admitted after 2007

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 9-15 | 10 | 50 |
| 16-21 | 7 | 35 |
| 22-35 | 3 | 15 |
| Total | 25 | 100 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.10 showed the age a learner was admitted into any of these special schools after 2007 which was the last year any of the three special schools prepared their learners for school completion. It was clearly indicated that 10(50%) of learners were admitted between the ages of 9 and 15 years. Also, 7(35%) were admitted between the ages of 16 and 21 with 3(15%) of learners between the ages of 22 and 25 were sent to school for admission. It could be inferred from the above that most learners with ID stay longer at home before their parents send them to school for admission.

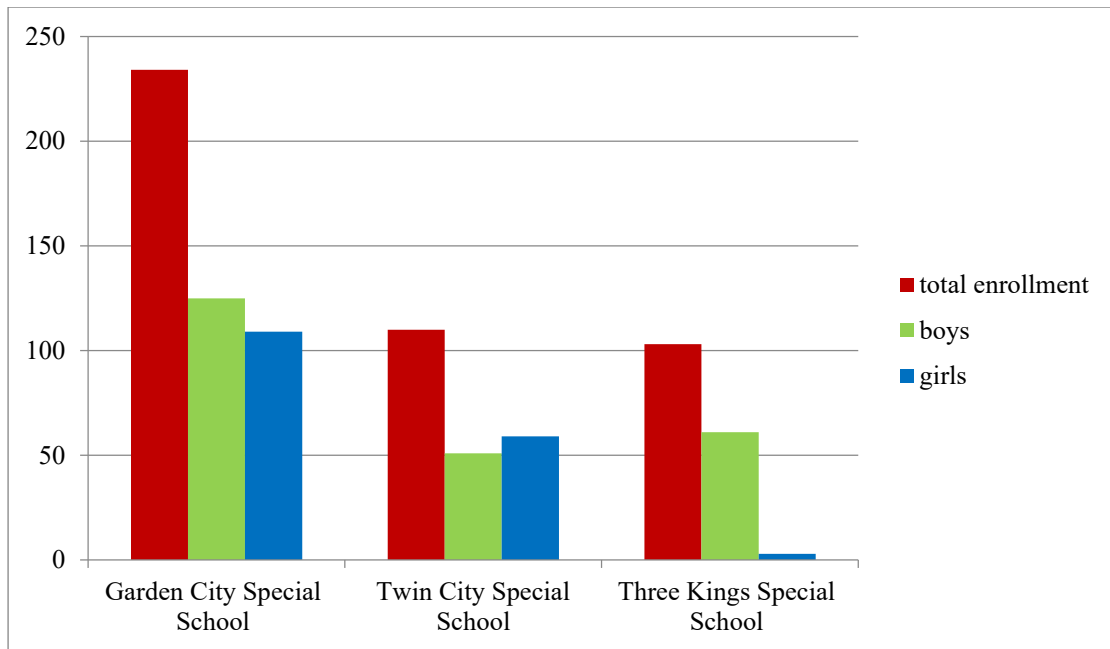


Figure 4.1: Number of learners in special schools as at April, 2019
Researcher's field note, 2019

Garden City Special School which is with the highest number of learners with ID has 234 (109 girls and 125 boys). This was followed by Twin City Special School with 110 learners made up with 59 girls and 51 boys. The Three Kings Special School has 103 (61 boys and 42 girls). These schools had in total, 447 learners with ID. This numbers were made available as at the time the research was conducted in the month of April, 2019. It is evidently clear that there were more boys in most of the schools than girls. The finding also shows clearly that the number of this group of learners have increased over the years and they must be provided with the necessary skills in order to complete or leave school for other post-school activities.

Table 4.11**Number of years a learner with ID is spending in basic special school**

| Number of years | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 9-12 | 5 | 20 |
| 13-15 | 10 | 40 |
| 16-19 | 8 | 32 |
| 20 and above | 2 | 8 |
| Total | 25 | 100 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Table 4.11 depicts the number of years a learner with ID spends in school, therefore, 5 parents representing 20% asserted that their children had been in school for between nine and twelve years. Aside that, 10(40%) of the parents indicated that their children have been in school between thirteen and fifteen years. Eight parents representing 32% stated that for close to nineteen years their children have been in school and 2(8%) indicating that their children have been in school more than twenty years. Inferring from the above analysis it could be deduced that more than 40% of the parents affirmed that their children with ID have been in school for more than fifteen years without completing. Their children with ID's inability to complete school as expected are a worry to them.

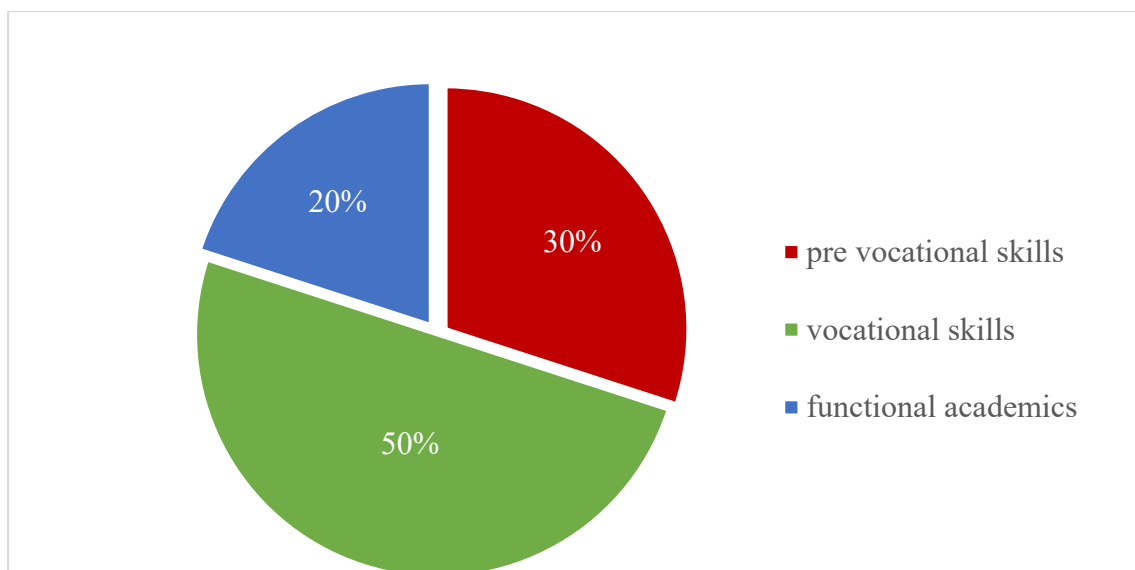


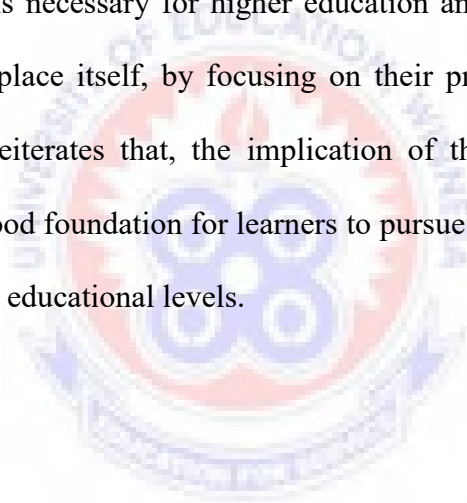
Figure 4.2: Skills training areas handled by special educators
Researcher's field note, 2019

The pie chart showing the skills training areas handled by special educators indicated by the green colour formed the major part of skills in vocational training to learners with intellectual disabilities. Closely followed was pre-vocational skills coloured in red portraying pre-vocational skills being taught by some of these special educators. The blue colour indicated functional academic work being done in these basic special schools. It could be inferred from the pie chart that vocational skills related programmes form the large part of the learning skills being taught in these schools.

This finding is in line with Akyeampong (2002) who explained that vocational training also comprises the visual arts and the home sciences. Subjects such as textiles, leather works, sculpture, etc. are all areas considered under the vocational subjects. Even though the technical subject areas like engineering may also be included.

Preparing these learners with vocational skills is in line with the taxonomy for transition programming theory with the second primary category of student development which emphasizes on vocation, and professional skill training as part of assessment (Kohler et al., 2016).

Besides, Asante-Kyei (2006) who offers explanation on the concept of vocational education exercises confidence that this kind of education affords learners the chance to acquire academic, technical knowledge and skills that prepare them for further education or career. This definition explains that vocational education is not an end in itself but a means to an end. This means that, learners acquire a fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for higher education and training in post-secondary institutions or workplace itself, by focusing on their present or future employment needs. He further reiterates that, the implication of the above for visual arts for example, is to lay good foundation for learners to pursue further knowledge and skills acquisition in higher educational levels.



Theme 1: Transition services towards completing basic special school being ensured in the curriculum for learners with ID

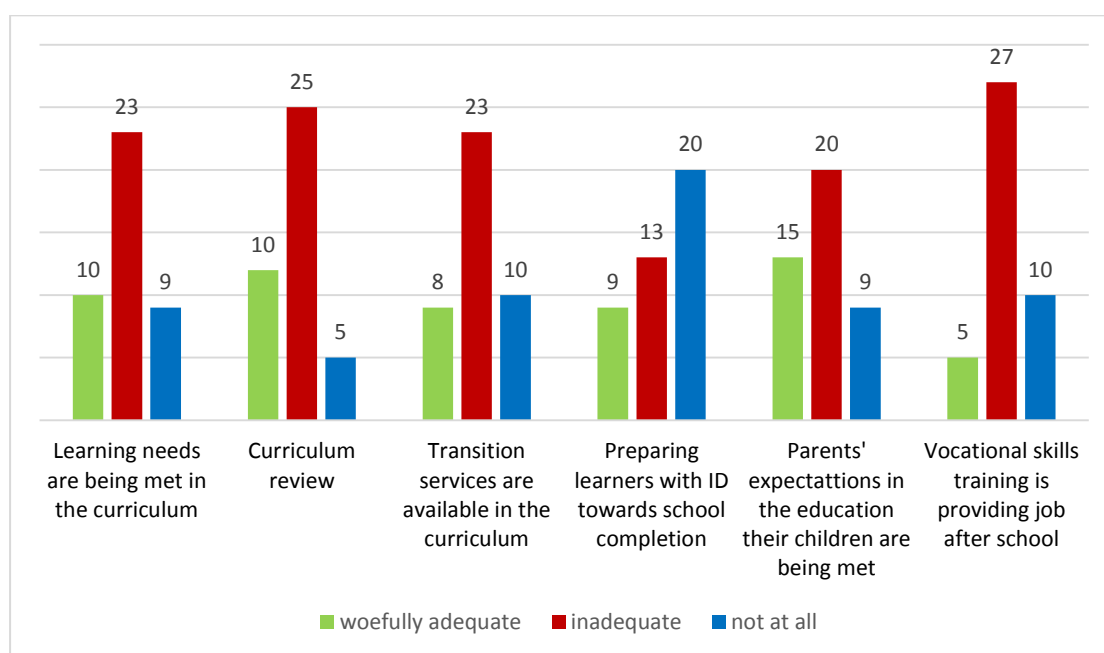


Figure 4.3: Transition related services in the curriculum

Researcher's field note, 2019

The multi-bar above outlines the transition services and its related activities in these three public basic special schools in Ghana. This chart converted the answers gathered from parents and special educators' responses. The first bar graph from the extreme left indicated the way learning needs of learners with ID are being addressed in the special schools. The bar with the red colour which indicated that the learning needs are inadequately addressed had the longest bar. Closely followed is the blue colored bar minimally showing that learner needs are woefully adequate. The green colored bar showing that the needs of these learners are not being addressed at all had the shortest among the group. From the above, it is clear special educators in these schools have difficulties addressing the learning needs of these learners which could be due to their level of intellectual abilities and or lack of teaching and learning

materials. Special educators as a result adopt various teaching and learning methods to achieve their goals of impacting them with relevant knowledge.

More so, in the same multi-group bar graph on curriculum review, the green colored bar being the longest showed that though basic special schools use the interim curriculum designed for learners with ID since its inception in 2001, it has not been reviewed at all. Closely in height with the green coloured bar is the red colored bar which indicated again that this curriculum and its content is inadequate in meeting the learning needs of this group of learners. The number of respondents who agreed that the curriculum provides enough for these learners are few and is shown by the blue bar.

A comment made by one of the head teachers has confirmed the above finding:

The curriculum has not even been developed into syllabi for the basic special school. No effort has been made to do that. So, since 2001 to date, the same curriculum has been in use but not reviewed. (Semi-structured interview, head teacher 3)

Another also said:

Things have changed over the years but nothing has changed in the education for learners with ID. It's as if governments have forgotten about special school in Ghana. Recently, the curriculum for regular schools were reviewed but not for basic special schools. (Semi-structured interview, head teacher 2)

However, national council for curriculum and assessment (NaCCA) in Ghana, a body that reviews and revises national curricula every five years so as to reflect new learning, advances in pedagogical thought and technology activities contravenes the finding on curriculum review.

Furthermore, respondents' views were sought on whether transition services exist and are being practised in these special schools. The responses indicated in red coloured bar showed that transition services are inadequately done appeared. Closer

to the red bar is a green bar which portrayed that, not at all, meaning that there have not been any transition services in the special schools. The shortest bar among the group is a blue bar which means that transition services are woefully adequate. Inferring from the above, it is obvious that some schools have inadequate transition services whereas some schools do not have them at all. It could also be deduced from the above that transition services in basic special schools for learners with ID do not experience its practice as required by IDEA.

The analysis and findings above concerning transition services practice is in contraction with the views of researchers such as Kellems and Morningstar (2010), and Kohler et al. (2016), who believe that the use of assessment information and reviews regularly can address the individual needs. Also, in sharp contraction to this analysis and findings is the programme structure which is the fifth category of Kohler's theory that relates to efficient and effective delivery of transition-focused education and services.

The next group of bars in this multi-grouped bar graph was an option on the preparing of learners with ID for transition. Based on the responses the respondents gave on this theme as shown in red colored bar as the highest among the other bars, indicated that the guidelines schools provide on learner preparation towards school completion was inadequate. The blue colored bar which means the guidelines schools provide on school completion was woefully adequate was found in the middle. The green bar indicated that the school do not provide guidelines for preparing learners for school completion at all.

The other group of bars which is at the extreme right was about whether parents' expectations on the education of their children are being met. From this group, brown colored bar indicating inadequacy, emerged as the highest bar within

the group and this therefore, suggests that even though the schools provide skills training to learners with ID, they are not adequately meeting the impact parents expect for their children.

The last group bar at the extreme right showed that vocational skills training which is a part of transition services given to these learners meeting their needs in the job market after school. The red colored bar showed that the vocational skills are inadequate to provide job opportunities to this group of learners after completing school. Closely in competition in height was a green colored bar which means skills training are not creating job opportunities at all. Last bar among the group was the blue colored bar which means that skills training is woefully adequate to offer job to the learners with ID after school. Inferring from the above analysis it is obvious that skills training given to these learners in basic special schools could emanate from the basis that the current curriculum in use is not offering enough to them. Therefore, teachers should also consider this and other factors before introducing skills training programmes to this group of learners.

The comment from one of the employers is worth noting:

The schools should do well to train the learners with intellectual disabilities well so that they can get employment after school and become self-reliance. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 3)

Yet another respondent gave her view as:

The schools and other stakeholders should support the learners with intellectual disabilities through their learning to acquire more skills so as to help them become stable. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 5)

Theme 2: Ways by which basic special schools prepare learners with ID towards school completion

Table 4.12

Preparing learners with ID for school completion

| Characteristics | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Involvement of parents in preparing their children towards school completion | Meetings (PTA) | 5 | 11.9 |
| | Community collaboration with the school | 7 | 16.7 |
| | Forming transition team | 30 | 71.4 |
| Total | | 42 | 100.00 |
| Learners with ID remain in schools | No senior high school | 29 | 69.0 |
| | Entering school at a far older age | 2 | 4.8 |
| | No school completion programmes | 11 | 26.2 |
| | Total | 42 | 100.0 |
| Inadequate preparation towards school completion | Vocational skills training doesn't match existing job vacancies | 25 | 59.5 |
| | Inability to perform tasks after leaving school. | 10 | 23.8 |
| | Curriculum is proving adequate learning outcomes | 7 | 16.7 |
| Total | | 42 | 100.0 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

In all, 42 respondents (special educators and parents) were given questionnaire to share their views on ways by which special schools prepare learners

with ID towards school completion. 30(71.4%) representing a large number of the respondents, strongly agreed that being involved in transition team could help plan and prepare learners with ID for school completion. Community collaboration with the school was the second category to follow as respondents representing 7(16.7%) agreed that it could also help prepare these learners towards school completion. However, PTA meetings received the least consideration as 5 respondents representing (11.9%) strongly disagreed that it could offer a great way of determining the readiness and preparing of these learners to complete school.

DEECD guidelines have been written for parents as well as students, acknowledging that the parent role cannot be overemphasized and went on to recognise better outcomes are achieved when the key people in a learner's life are included and engaged with planning, supporting and implementing the educational programme.

The findings also support the National Council on Intellectual Disability in Australia in its report: *From school to real work* (2009), which indicated that empowering young persons with ID to engage in decision-making in conjunction with their families cannot be underestimated. It offers reasons why developing a collaborative and informed parent-teacher partnership is essential.

On the reasons why learners with ID remain in schools without being prepared to complete school, 29(69.0%) respondents strongly agreed that there are no senior high schools or post- secondary school programmes for the learners with ID in basic special schools. Besides, another 11(26.2%) agreed that, because of no school completion programme, these learners are not being prepared to leave school. Lastly, 2(4.8%) which formed the least of the respondents strongly disagreed that learners with ID entering school at a far old age could affect their school completion.

Still, under the preparation of learners with ID towards school completion, inadequate preparation towards school completion was one of the characteristics found. One of the categories under this was vocational skills not matching the job vacancies in the labour market. 25(59.5%) respondents strongly agreed that the vocational skills training being offered to learners with ID do not give them many job opportunities out there after school hence their not being prepared well enough to complete school. Yet, only 10(23.8) agreed that their inability to perform after leaving school could be the reason why they are not completing school while 7(16.7%) looked at the curriculum content as not providing enough for their learning needs.

In confirmation to the findings above, one of the school heads who provided an answer to the interview question on how often the school prepares their learners for school completion said this:

It was only once that the school prepared 19 learners with ID to complete school in 1977 and that was all. (Semi-structured interview data, head teacher 2)

Another also said something that is worth noting:

There are no specific school completion programmes for learners with ID in basic special schools as it is for those without disabilities in the regular schools. (Semi-structured interview data, head teacher 1)

One of the employers also made an interesting comment that:

I haven't seen any learner with ID completing school before. There is no other higher school for them apart from the basic school in my community here. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 3)

Similarly, a research conducted by Maina, (2016) on the topic, “challenges facing transition for learners with ID from special schools to work in Nakuru County, Kenya”, emphasized on the same findings. Most of evidences proved that it could be even more challenging to achieve this in basic special schools in Ghana because learners with ID completing elementary education has been of a difficult task.

Theme 3: Parents’ hopes and expectations on educating their children with ID

Every parent has positive expectation towards their children in all endeavours irrespective of the condition of that child. They therefore, express positive hope for their children and participation in their education and transition processes. Parental involvement in the education of their children is very significant because it helps to meet their emotional needs, love and belongingness.

It is widely accepted that parents have much knowledge about their children and therefore, bring useful information to the planning, implementation and evaluation process of transition strategies. Hyde et al. (2010) also reported significance of parental and family involvement in determining the future of these learners. Luecking (2009) and Stewart, Freeman, Healy, Burke-Gaffney, Forhan, Young and Guenther (2010) also found that it was important to engage families in planning for work experiences, to create mutual expectations and to help parents navigate the many disability service providers.

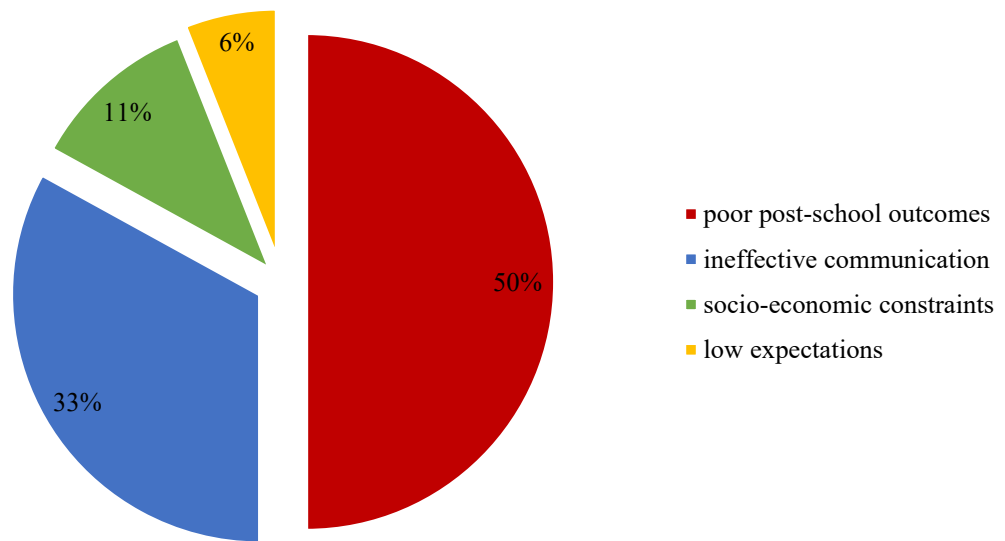


Figure 4.4: Determining factors affecting parents' hopes and expectations on the education of their children.

Researcher's field note, 2019

The above pie chart gives the overview of factors affecting parents' desires, hopes and expectations on their children with intellectual disabilities from acquiring sound education, to securing job to live independent life after they leave school. All these adversely impact on their expectations of how they want their education be. The less the factors, the more the expectations will help improve the way parents see the education of their children to be.

Inferring from the chart, it is obvious that lack of spelt out post-school outcomes for learners with ID disturb parents' expectations on education. This had the biggest share of the pie representing 45%. These respondents strongly agreed that no matter how well these learners are trained, if measures are not put in place to offer them opportunities to function after school, it would pose as threat to parents' expectations on their education. Parents expect their children to acquire skills,

complete school and get settled with a form of employment. This chunk of the chart showing lack of better post-school outcomes for these learners indicates why most of them are not completing school.

A comment from one of the head teacher's said:

Some worried parents often ask if their children will ever leave school and live an independent life. Some also want to find out whether their children can continue school up to the university level. These are tough questions to answer as the school is limited in many ways to meet their expectations. (Semi-structured interview data, head teacher 3)

DEECD recognises that better outcomes are achieved when the key people in a learner's life are included and engaged with planning, supporting and implementing the educational programme (Kohler, 1996).

Besides the lack of post-school outcomes, is another factor which is prominent with everyone but not different with parents and the school is communication. 10% of the respondents agreed that communication offers information and promotes active participation between parties involved. In most cases parents have challenges to willingly support their children (Thurlow et al., 1997). Moreover, there are inadequate coordination, information, parents often encountered a lack of coordination among service agencies, a lack of information regarding services available, request measures, systematic group of transition services, gap of services because of geographical areas, erratic planning cycles, and fiscal years posing as mirage of problems.

Also, deducing from the diagram is another equally important factor that can improve the expectations of parents as far as the education of their children is concerned. Respondents agreed that socio-economic factor can affect parents' inputs into the education of their children and this group forms 10% of the chart. The

analysis above is in line with Barbour (2007) citing (Boyer, 1991) saying that socio-economic dynamics affects the upbringing of children with ID. "The loss of community, the increased fragmentation of family life, the competition, often conflicting pressures" are some of the challenges that parents faced in taking care of their children. Again Barbour (2007) citing (Boyer, 1991) further opined that there is inadequate societal help which exacerbate the loneliness in the care of parents of these learners.

Inferring from the above chart, low expectations itself from some of the parents can impact negatively on the education of their children. 10% of respondents strongly disagreed to this. It is the hope that many IDs get vital skills which will help them get work to do after completing basic special school. Parents also, want their children become responsible persons after their education. Lastly, parents want their children to be very productive in order to live independent lives in the future.

One employer gave a comment that shows that parents expectations are not being met by the school so this has affected her believe in the school system:

A parent who is a friend told me, she's tired of continuously sending her child to school for over 20 years now because the child is not completing school. Nobody is telling her when the child will leave school and become independent. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 5)

Another employer said:

One parent told me, he thinks his child cannot have a good education like the other siblings without disabilities because he has been in the school for many years and nobody is telling me what's happening". (Semi-structured interview data, employer 4)

Grounded from the above analysis, it is in agreement with Kohler's (1996) third category, family involvement which refers to the importance of empowering parents, carers and families and involving them in planning for the future and in the career development journey of their children with ID. Wehman (2006) maintained that parents' involvement is perhaps the most significant factor in the transition outcomes for learners with disabilities from youth into adulthood.

The dream of every parent goes beyond growth. Parents also dream that their children will grow and gain employment in order to enable them live meaningful lives as individual and in their community. Additionally, the desire of many parents is to ensure that their children grow and become very productive people so as to serve themselves and their communities (Lombardi, 1992).

However, Barbour (2007) realised that though parents face many challenges in raising their children with disabilities they are still vital in the proper education of the children. Very few guardians are prepared educationally and financially to fully lead the learning of their IDs. It is certain that stigma, demeanour and other factors affect how guardians raise their ID children, such that even the role of teachers is greatly affected with these attitudes. It is therefore, worth noting that many other challenges mitigate the successful implementation of transition services which makes achievement of goals very difficult if not impossible (Gilliam & Coleman, 1981). Johnson, Bruininks and Thurlow (1997) pointed out the decreased level of involvement of guardians in the training of their wards as they age as a result of stigma, rejection, and so on.

It is therefore, worth noting that many other challenges mitigate the successful implementation of transition services which makes achievement of goals very difficult if not impossible (Gilliam & Coleman, 1981). Johnson, et al., (1997) pointed

out the decreased level of involvement of guardians in the training of their wards as they age as a result of stigma, rejection, and others. Grigal, Test, Beattie & Wood (1997) indicated that only 4.3 percent of parents have hopes and aspirations for the future since most of these parents are even unaware about the prospects for their children and as a result, opportunities for their children are dashed (Kraemer, et al., 2001).

Theme 4: The employers' readiness to employ learners with ID

Learners with ID learners have to be psychologically prepared for job since it might be seen as daunting task for them. Employers and IDs must have very good communication to be able to understand each other's need, weaknesses and strengths so as to work in a positive atmosphere, <https://www.brightubeducation.com>

In a study documented by Wanjiru, Runo, & Wawire (2013) have it that persons with intellectual disabilities (PWID) come out from school but cannot get a job even though they acquire certain relevant technical skills development which prepares them for employment. In most advanced economies like the USA, PWID are supported through social inclusion programmes to gain employment after training in requisite vocational programmes (David et al., 2001).

In spite of all these interventions these learners continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in terms job placement. WHO (2011) buttressed the need to rigorously give practical based technical skills development for better job placement for PWID to improve integration in the direction of self-reliance (Mont, 2004).

Other international protocols such as the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (PWD), Article 27, (work and employment), emphasise the right to work and equal opportunity for all. It implies that there should

be a level playing field for PWID and their peers so that they can have the requisite knowledge and skills training relevant to compete in the modern job market with their peers.

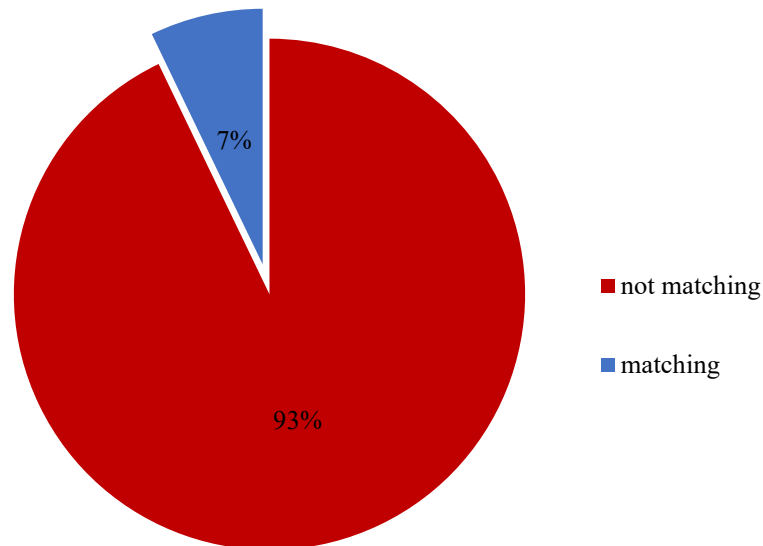


Figure 4.5: Vocational skills matching with job vacancies in the labour market for learners with ID who complete basic special school

Researcher's field note, 2019

The pie chart above showed how skills being taught in basic special schools to learners with ID are matching with those in the labour market to provide job opportunities for them or their ability to be self-employed. A majority of the respondents held the view that skills are not matching with what is available in the job market. This is represented by 39(93%) of respondents who answered the questionnaire. Only 3 of the respondents representing 7% believed that the skills these learners are acquiring could provide them job opportunities after completing school.

Most employers who were interviewed expressed the fact that basic special schools had not made any contact with them to talk about the nature of their work or bringing learners with ID to work with them after they complete school.

The comment from one employer is worth noting:

I do carpentry work but I don't know if what the special educators are teaching these learners is the same as what I am teaching my apprentices here. (Semi-structured Interview data, employer 6)

One employer also stated that:

I know they cannot learn very well so I don't think they can practice what they learn in school for them to be employed. (Semi-structured Interview data, employer 5)

One school head gave her view on the similar question as:

Most of the skills we offer to these learners are just basic life skills to perform in their daily lives. Therefore, under normal circumstances they are not able to acquire any substantive job as their peers without disabilities or those with other forms of disabilities. (Semi-structured Interview data, head teacher 2)

Another also answered that:

The skills these learners are taught in basic special schools doesn't necessarily match with what's available in the job market. The competition to gain employment is even high for those without disabilities in the country. How much more for this group of learners? (Semi-structured Interview data, head teacher 1)

Inferring from the findings above, it is clear that even though some respondents were aware that learners with ID are acquiring skill training from basic special schools, it is not enough or matching with what is available on the job market so as to be gainfully employed or be self-employed after leaving school.

The finding above is in line with Siperstein (2014) who argued that institutions which failed to employ learners with ID thought they are aware of the reasons why other organizations do not. This is discrimination and bias against this group of learners since they ought to be given equal opportunity just as their peers. According to Siperstein (2014), employing these learners, is a social inclusion measure, creating equal opportunity for all, and the probability that most of them have what it takes to contribute immensely towards productivity since they are very talented, creative and innovative as well as can work independently with less or no supervision at if only the conducive work environment is created.

Table 4.13**Post-school outcomes for learners with ID**

| Characteristics | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Learner's status after completing school | Self employed | 2 | 22.2 |
| | Employed | 1 | 11.1 |
| | Unemployed | 6 | 66.7 |
| Total | | 9 | 100.0 |
| Ability to perform to expectation | As expected | 3 | 33.3 |
| | Below expectation | 6 | 66.7 |
| | Not able to perform | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 9 | 100.0 |
| Ability to acquire a job | Yes | 3 | 33.3 |
| | No | 1 | 11.1 |
| | Rarely | 5 | 55.5 |
| Total | | 9 | 100 |

Researcher's field note, 2019

Based on the presentation of post-school outcomes for learners with ID to find out how ready employers are to engage them at work after school, it could be deduced that out of the total of 9 respondents (school heads and employers) 6(66.7%) believed these learners are unemployed. 2 of them representing (22.2%) agreed that some of these learners are self-employed with only 1(11.1%) believed that they gained employment.

The above finding is in conformity with IDEA (2004) which provides a foundation for school-based enterprises and including the school community in career education activities help to affirm students' skill sets and gain confidence as they prepare for entry into community employment. For example, students might set up a restaurant experience where they greet, serve and bus tables. Alternatively, students could host a car washing enterprise or design a landscape scheme for the school grounds. More so, (Ankeny, 2009) says early exposure to employment activities is important in the transition planning process while the goal of the individualized education programme (IEP) expects these learners to function after leaving school (Dore, Garcin, Goupil & Tasse, 2002).

It is the desire of all stakeholders, parents and the community as a whole that learners, irrespective of their conditions perform every task with ease. Therefore, in trying to find out possible reasons why large numbers of these learners are unemployed, a characteristic of their ability to perform a given task became a determinant. Majority of the respondents 6(66.7%) saw performing below expectation as the main reason why these learners are unemployed. 3(33.3%) believed that these learners can perform as expected when given a job. Amazingly, none of the respondents believed that these learners cannot perform at all when employed. This implies that they can perform some level of tasks if not all when given the

opportunity, therefore, employers level of expectation from them should be linked to what they can do at a time.

It came clear from the findings in table 4:13 above that many of this group of learners rarely gain employment after school. This is represented by a majority of 5(55.5%) of respondents while 3(33.3%) said “yes” which means they can acquire some job and 1(11.1%) chose “no” to mean they hardly get employment. This means that their prospects at acquiring job after school are very low.

Meanwhile, Pincelli (2012), citing (Bassett,1996) opines that it is difficult to teach learners with ID but the American Disabilities Act have made it possible to use the right teaching and learning materials with conducive environment to teach these learners as contained in the individualized education programme. Also, interesting occupational training, social skills development, leisure time activities are to ensure that learners obtain the relevant education that can well place them in the future as well as teaching autonomy ensuring inclusion that is cross-cutting. It therefore, behoves on the teachers teaching these learners to try their best to enable them acquire these requisite skills needed to transit into the world of work.

Head teachers were asked what other skills that these can these learners acquire apart from what they are already learning; this is what each had to say:

Learning skills like carpentry or being a shop attendant can help some of them to get quick job. (Semi-structured interview data, head teacher 1)

Another also said:

Cleaning offices, arranging items for people in offices or companies can make them earn a living. (Semi-structured interview data, head teacher 2)

Also one employer answered same question by saying:

They can work in depo by packing and arranging things for people, or they can do cleaning jobs for money. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 1)

When head teachers were further questioned whether their schools have employed learners with ID, two out of the three affirmed there weren't any employee, but one had to say this:

Only one former student has been employed to work as a security since 10 years ago. (Semi-structured interview data, head teacher 3)

When employers were asked similar question, one of them said this:

One of these learners were brought for apprenticeship but was not able to learn well as the others without disabilities so he stopped coming. (Semi-structured interview data, employer)

Another also said:

I can employ any of these learners if only they can learn from my training. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 2)

More than half of ID learners are thought in isolation (Dixon, 2005). ID learners must be taught very employable skills if only we want them also join the regular mainstream of work. Dore (2003), said without these skills, they become under-employed, have difficulty adapting to community, and have difficulty accessing education once they leave school, creating social relationships and experience profound feelings of loneliness.

Theme 4.1 Employers' suggestions to help make learners with ID gain employment to live independent lives after school.

The comment of one respondent is worth noting:

The schools should do well to train the learners with intellectual disabilities well so that they can get employment after school and become self-reliant. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 3)

Yet another respondent gave her view as:

The schools and other stakeholders should support the learners with intellectual disabilities through their learning to acquire more skills so as to help them become stable. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 4)

The comment of one participant is also worth noting:

The schools should teach learners with intellectual disabilities in order to make it possible for them to be independent and self-reliant thereby leading to dignified life after completing Basic Special School. (Semi-structured interview data, employer 4)

From the above it is clear that the prospective employers admonished schools to endeavour to give adequate training to learners with intellectual disabilities so as to make them gainfully employed after school.

Theme 4.2 Head teachers suggest to Ghana Education Service and other stakeholders in the education of learners with ID

Many IDs are most often not able to obtain tertiary education or even post-secondary qualification to enable them secure rewarding employment that can transform their lives but they can gain necessary skills to also survive in life. To this effect some teachers made encouraging suggestions such as these.

One head teacher suggested that:

Since there is no higher education for these learners after completing basic special school in Ghana, the curriculum should be immediately reviewed so that new skills training areas would be put in to meet the demands of society and job opportunities for them. (Semi-structured interview, head teacher 2)

Another head teacher suggested that:

Transition services are important as well as school completion programmes. I need these learners to also complete school and have something to show for themselves so Ghana Education Service and other significant stakeholders should turn and look at the education being offered to this group of learners in our special needs education system. (Semi-structured interview, head teacher 1)

Clearly deduced from the suggestions made by these head teachers, is that they believed there is the need to review curriculum since it offers much of the training these learners go through and the fact that they must also complete school at a point in time of their lives.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This is the last chapter of the study and it is devoted to presenting a summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations of the study. Also, recommendations for future studies are also presented under this chapter. Presentations are done under respective headings.

5.2 Summary

This study examined transition services influencing school completion for learners with ID in Three Kings, Garden City and Twin City Special Schools in Ghana. This study tried to find out:

1. How transition services towards completing basic special school are ensured in the curriculum for learners with ID.
2. Determine ways basic special schools prepare learners with ID towards completing school.
3. Ascertain factors affecting parents' hopes and expectations on the education of their children with ID.
4. Find out the readiness of employers to engage learners with ID after their training from basic special schools.

The study was a cross-sectional survey design with concurrent embedded mixed method approach. The population of interest were head teachers, special educators, employers and parents of learners with ID in Three Kings Special School in Battor, Garden City Special School in Kumasi, and Twin City Special School in Sekondi-Takoradi. Fifty participants, which comprised of 3 head-teachers, 17 special

educators who teach vocational skills in these schools, 25 parents (sampled from each special school) and 6 employers in the local school communities. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed where purposive sampling was used to select the special educators, employers and parents. Head teachers were selected by census. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, charts, and frequency tables. The semi-structured interview responses were analysed thematically and the findings were observed:

Findings from the data collected that basic special schools face difficulties in preparing learners with ID towards non-existing transition services in school curriculum and as a result of this, their educational needs and post-school outcomes are not met. The study also revealed that the curriculum content which is as old as two decades without any review is not preparing learners with ID enough for post-school life.

In the process of preparing learners with ID for school completion, teachers train learners in vocational skills using the interim curriculum in these schools in order to equip them with skills to live independent lives. This always ends at the training of technical, vocational skills level but no documented preparation towards exiting the school system after the training. It was also evident in the findings that after the first school completion programme, there have not been any to date. Therefore, many of them stay in school for as long as 19 years without completing. Also so these learners are as old as 25 years and above and still at the basic school level.

On parents' expectations about educating their children with ID, many of them expected that their children get vital skills which will help them get work to do after school. Parents also want their children to leave the school system at a point in

time in order to become responsible persons after their education. Even though parents showed positive expectations towards their children with ID there were some challenges hindering their participation in transition processes and services which include economic difficulties, ineffective communication, poor post-school outcomes for their children which do not encourage them to participate fully in their education.

The results of the study revealed that even though some employers were aware that learners with ID learn differently, they were ready to employ them if only they possess the required skills and abilities to work. It was found that these employers showed their readiness to support in the education of these learners when approached, and also admonished schools and the government to endeavour to give adequate training to them so as to make they can be gainfully employed after completing basic special school.

Employers (local craftsmen) advised schools and stakeholders to should endeavour to train and support learners with ID to acquire enough skills to make them successful in life. Some head teachers also suggested a curriculum review and implementation of school completion programme for these learners for a better post-school outcome.

5.3 Conclusions

The study revealed that many learners with ID who are over 25 years are still school without completing despite IDEA's requirement which Ghana adopted that they should leave school at age 16 when in basic special school. The study also concluded that transition services practice in the schools were not given any priority. The curriculum in use needs review to improve learning for these learners in order match the current needs of society. Preparing learners with ID through training in

vocational skills in these schools only ways of preparing them towards independent living is not enough as far as their transition into adult life is concerned. It was also clear that after the year 2007 to date no learner from all these three basic special schools has been prepared to complete school. Apart from some challenges hindering their full participation in transition processes and services, many parents are also worried about better post-school outcomes for their children as they continue to remain in these schools without completing. Finally, it was concluded some employers thought learners with ID do not have enough requisite skills for work and that would be the only basis for them not to be employed or hired.

5.4 Recommendations

1. The teachers should continue to train learners with ID in vocational skills relevant to the job market in order to enable them gain employment, be self-employed to live independent lives after completing school.
2. The school authorities in basic special schools should try and equip the vocational and technical departments so as to help minimise difficulties in preparing learners with ID towards completing school.
3. The basic special school authorities should also do well to establish and improve the transition services in the schools in order to help serve their intended purposes to these learners.
4. The school authorities, teachers, and parents should enforce, intensify and improve on the transition services they provide to learners with ID in the schools in order to enable parents' participation and involvement to achieve the expectations they have in mind about educating their children.
5. Schools should endeavour to give adequate training to learners with ID.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Approaches for enhancing transition services among learners with ID in Three Kings, Garden City and Twin City Special Schools in Ghana.
2. Practical ways for preparing IDs towards school completion.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Introductory Letter

 UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana | sped@uew.edu.gh
+233 (020) 2041059

27th May, 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MS. AUGUSTINA MAWUSI GLOVER-AKPEY


I write to introduce to you, **Ms. Augustina Mawusi Glover-Akpey** an M.Phil student of the Department of Special Education with index number 7170150012.


She is currently working on her dissertation on the topic: "**Transition Services to Influence School Completion for Learners with Intellectual Disabilities from selected Basic Special Schools in Ghana**". She needs to administer questionnaire and interview the students from your school.

I would be grateful if you could give her the needed assistance to enable her collect the data.

Thank you for the consideration and assistance.

Yours faithfully,


DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
P. O. BOX 25
WINNEBA
DR. DANIEL S. Q. DOGBE
Ag. Head of Department

 www.uew.edu.gh

SECTION B – SCHOOL’S HISTORY

1. Which year was the school established?
.....
2. In which year did learners with intellectual disabilities complete their basic special school in this school?
.....
3. What was the total number of learners with intellectual disabilities in that year?
.....
4. How many learners completed school in that year?
.....
5. At what average age a learner was given admission in that year?
.....
6. What was the average age a learner completed with?
.....
7. How long did an average age learner stay in the school before completing?
.....
8. Have there been any school completion programme after the first one in the year mentioned earlier?
.....
9. a. If no, what are the reasons?
.....
b. if yes, when was it done?
.....
10. Indicate the total number of learners with intellectual disabilities in your school currently.
Boys.....Girls.....
11. At what age do you give admission to a learner with intellectual disabilities after the last school completion took place?
.....

SECTION C

A. Transition services towards school completion being ensured in the curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities.

12. Does the current curriculum has teaching and learning plans that prepare the learners with intellectual disabilities for a better post-school outcome?

.....

13. Are teaching and learning resources provided by stakeholders for learners with intellectual disabilities adequate?

.....

14. How often do you plan transition programmes with transition service providers or team for learners with intellectual disabilities?

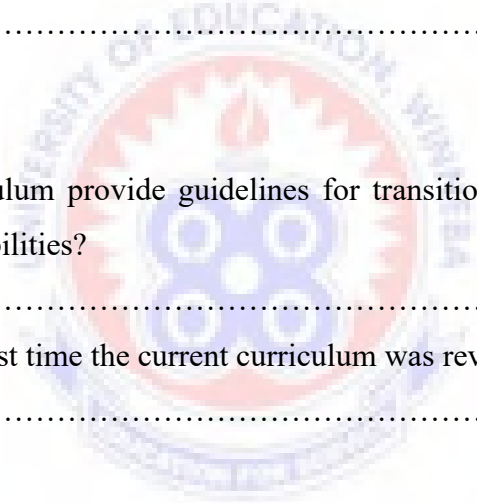
.....

15. Does the curriculum provide guidelines for transition services for learners with intellectual disabilities?

.....

16. When was the last time the current curriculum was reviewed?

.....



B. Preparing learners with intellectual disabilities towards school completion

17. Do you have some learners with intellectual disabilities who have been trained and ready to complete school?

.....

18. Do you have any school completion programme for learners with intellectual disabilities in the school currently?

.....

19. How do you determine the readiness of an individual learner to complete school?

.....

20. What could be the possible hindrances to preparing learners with intellectual disabilities from completing school?

.....

C. Parents' hopes and expectations in educating their children with intellectual disabilities.

21. What are the attitudes of parents of learners with intellectual disabilities who are not completing school?

.....

22. What fears do parents express as far as post-school outcomes for their children are concerned?

.....

23. How do you involve parents in planning for the education of their children?

.....

24. How often do you involve them in the planning you have chosen above?

.....

25. Are parents' expectations as far as the education of their children is concerned being met by the school's programmes?

.....

26. What are some of the post-school outcomes parents expect from the education of their children?

.....

27. Do many parents complain of financial constraints affecting their ability to take care of their children in school?

.....

D. Employers' readiness to employ learners with intellectual disabilities after school

28. From your experience as the head teacher of basic special school for learners with intellectual disabilities, can you say the skills that they are learning are matching with what is on the job market?

.....

29. What job vacancies are available to a learner with intellectual disabilities to occupy as an employee in your school?

.....

30. As a school head, have you employed any learner with intellectual disabilities to occupy any of the job vacancies mentioned above in your school?

.....

31. Is he/she able to perform to your expectations?

1. As expected 2. Below expectation 3. Not at all

32. When put under these categories, where would you put these learners after they complete school?

1. Employed 2. Self-employed 3. unemployed

.....

33. Can you say this group of learners often acquire a job?

1. Yes 2. No 3. Rarely

.....

34. Do you have any record on any of those learners who first left school whether employed or self-employed?

.....

35. Please, suggest on what you think should be done in order to make it possible for learners with intellectual disabilities to be independent and lead a more dignified life after completing Basic School

.....

APPENDIX III

Semi-structured interview for employers

This semi-structured interview is intended to investigate transition services towards basic special school completion for learners with intellectual disabilities to the world of work or live an independent life. The information gathered will be used for academic research purposes only. You are requested to provide answers that correspond to each question item. This exercise shall take about thirty (30) minutes. Thank you for taking time off to contribute to my research process.

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender Male [] Female []
2. What is your highest professional qualification?
- A. Master's Degree B. Bachelor's Degree C. Diploma D. NVTI
- E. Form four F. Junior High School Level G. Senior High School level

SECTION B- THE EMPLOYER AND THE SCHOOL

1. Is there any basic special school in your community that educates learners with intellectual disabilities?
.....
2. Have you ever visited that school?
.....
3. Has this basic special school in your community made any contact with your work to learn about what you do?
.....

A. Transition services towards school completion being ensured in the curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities.

4. Is there any learner with intellectual disabilities who has successfully completed from the basic special school in your community?
.....
5. Is this learner practicing the skills he/she has learned from school?
.....
6. Is he/she living an independent life?
.....
7. Do the skills he/she learned from school matches with your work?
.....
8. Will you be ready when contacted to get involved in a team that can help plan future goals for this category of learners in your community?

B. Preparing learners with intellectual disabilities towards school completion

9. What can hinder these learners from acquiring skills from you when they are offered apprenticeship?
.....
10. Do you think they can have higher education after completing basic special school?
.....
11. If any of them is offered an apprenticeship, will you give same training to him/her as you will to others without disabilities?
.....

C. Parents' expectations and involvement in educating their children with intellectual disabilities.

12. What are some concerns of parents of learners with intellectual disabilities in relation to their children's ability to gain experiences and skills for independent learning?
13. Have any parents expressed any fear to you as to what becomes of their children after school?

.....
14. Do you think some parents don't take care of their children with intellectual disabilities in school?
.....

15. Do you think it is expensive for parents to take their children with intellectual disabilities to school?
.....

16. What are some supports do you think parents need in educating their children with intellectual disabilities?
.....

D. Employers' readiness to employ learners with intellectual disabilities after school

17. From your experience as a local craftsman/woman, have you employed any learner with intellectual disabilities who has acquired same skills in what you do in your workshop?
.....

18. Is he/she able to perform to your expectations?
1. As expected 2. Below expectation 3. Not at all

19. What other jobs do you think these learners can perform better at apart from what you are doing in your workshop?
.....

20. Do this group of learners often acquire a job in your community?
1. Yes 2. No 3. Rarely
.....

21. When put under these categories, where would you put these learners after they complete school?
1. Employed 2. Self-employed 3. unemployed

APPENDIX IV

Questionnaire for teachers

This questionnaire guide is intended to investigate transition services towards basic special school completion for learners with intellectual disabilities to the world of work or to live an independent life. The information gathered will be used for academic research purposes only. You are requested to tick a box among alternatives that provides answers to each question item. This exercise shall take about 45 minutes. Thank you for taking time off to contribute to my research process.

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- 1. Gender** Male Female
- 2. Age**
- a. 25-30 b. 30-40 c. 40-50 d. 50-59
- 3. Level of education**
- a. Third Degree b. Second Degree c. First Degree
- d. Diploma/HND e. NVTI(PROF.1&2) f. SSSCE
- 4. Years of experience**
- a. 20 years and above b. 11-20 years c. 6-10 years d. 1-5 years
- e. Less than a year

SECTION B

Please tick appropriate box as it appeals to you

By use of a tick, please indicate whether you Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Strongly Agree (SA) or Agree (A) with the following statements.

Part I: Transition services towards school completion being ensured in the curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities.

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Transition planning and services must be one of the top priorities of special needs education and vocational training programmes for learners with intellectual disabilities in basic special schools in Ghana. | | | | |
| 2 | Statement of transition services, needs and courses of study that are intended to enhance the learner's post school success must be ensured in the curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities | | | | |
| 3 | Learners with intellectual disabilities must have an individualized transition plan (ITP) incorporated into their individualized education plan(IEP) | | | | |
| 4 | Instructional strategies towards transition services in the curriculum must be functional according to the requirements of the community settings i.e. the natural settings where these skills are to be exhibited. | | | | |
| 5 | The goal of the Individualized Transition Plan must be to link the curricular content to the demands of living and working in the community as an independent adult | | | | |
| 6 | If proper transition plans and services are implemented for every learner, older learners would easily exit the institution giving chance for new entrants thus rendering the instruction they go | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| | through more meaningful in addressing the future needs of the learner with intellectual disabilities. | | | | |
| 7 | There must be a National Vocational Transition Model involving systematic school instruction, planning for transition services, placement of learners into employment and rendering of ongoing support services for learners with intellectual disabilities. | | | | |
| 8 | Emphasis must be given to career assessment and vocational training outcomes for learners with intellectual disabilities. | | | | |
| | With the ever changing concepts of learning for learners with intellectual disabilities in basic special schools, the curriculum for these learners should be regularly reviewed as prescribed by National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) in Ghana in order to meet the demands of their learning needs. | | | | |
| 9. | The curriculum in use now provides adequate training to learners with intellectual disabilities for better post school outcomes. | | | | |

Part II: Determining ways by which basic special schools prepare learners with intellectual disabilities towards school completion

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|--|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Instructional programming for the learners with intellectual disabilities is forward looking to addressing the learner's current needs and future goals. | | | | |
| 2 | Every school level has an exit at a point in time in order to transit into another or for employment. This should be same for learners with intellectual disabilities in basic special schools as a determinant for readiness for school completion. | | | | |
| 3 | The learner with intellectual disabilities after leaving basic special school is in a position to perform tasks that they have learnt in their vocational classes. | | | | |
| 4 | Most learners with intellectual disabilities enter school at an older age and this affects their school completion period by staying too long in school. | | | | |
| 5 | The curriculum content is providing enough skills to learners with ID in order to live an independent life after school. | | | | |
| 6 | If proper school completion programmes are put in place for learners with intellectual disabilities, older ones would easily exit the institution giving chance for new admissions. | | | | |
| 7 | Forming a transition team in basic special schools to discuss and plan the future of learners with ID is a sure way parents would be involved in preparing their children towards school completion. | | | | |
| 8 | The community and the school must be in regular collaboration to showcase the capabilities and familiarize with learners with intellectual disabilities for an easy transition into the community after school. | | | | |

Part III: Parents expectations about educating their children with intellectual disabilities

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Parents active involvement in transition services as part of team members for their children with intellectual disabilities would encourage them to fully participate in the education their education. | | | | |
| 2 | Parents just asking questions about when their children will complete basic special school, is not enough to awake school authorities and other stakeholders to prepare these learners towards school completion. | | | | |
| 3 | The more parents are empowered through seminars, advocacy and outreach programmes, the more they would be prepared to give their best to the education of their children with intellectual disabilities. | | | | |
| 4 | Parents with low expectations and hopes for the education of their children contributes to their long stay in schools without completing. | | | | |
| 5 | Parents are not worried about when their children will leave school and live an independent life. | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | |

Part IV: Employers readiness to engage learners with intellectual disabilities after school

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | The skills being offered to learners with intellectual disabilities in basic special schools are matching with those in the labor market. | | | | |
| 2 | When basic special schools work in collaboration with local craftsmen in the communities who offer same vocations as these schools, it establishes familiarity between the two. | | | | |
| 3 | There are many other skill areas that can be offered to learners with intellectual disabilities apart from what they are currently acquiring to enable them gain employment. | | | | |
| 4 | Many learners with intellectual disabilities would be unemployed after leaving school. | | | | |
| 5 | Ability to perform to expectation is one of the requirements from learners with intellectual disabilities in gaining employment or to be self-employed. | | | | |

SECTION B

Please tick appropriate box as it appeals to you

By use of a tick, please indicate whether you Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Strongly Agree (SA) or Agree (A) with the following statements.

Part I: Transition services towards school completion being ensured in the curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|--|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | The curriculum for children with intellectual disabilities is equipping them with the necessary special needs education and vocational training programmes in basic special schools in Ghana. | | | | |
| 2 | Children with intellectual disabilities post-school outcomes must be outlined in the curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities so that parents would know when their children are leaving school. | | | | |
| 3 | Children with intellectual disabilities can have education that can make them leave basic special school system to live an independent life. | | | | |
| 4 | Parents must be invited to the discussion of their child's performance regularly in basic special schools | | | | |
| 5 | Transition service goals must be to link the curricular content to the demands of living and working in the community as an independent adult with intellectual disabilities. | | | | |

Part II: Determining ways by which basic special schools prepare learners with intellectual disabilities towards school completion

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | PTA meetings, school invitation and advocacy workshops can help basic special schools and parents plan transition services towards their children's school completion. | | | | |
| 2 | Other significant others in the communities such as local craftsmen, and employers must be involved in offering vocational skills training to children with intellectual disabilities | | | | |
| 3 | A collaboration must be reached between the school and the community where learners with intellectual disabilities and their peers without disabilities enter into a healthy competition of potentials and capabilities | | | | |
| 4 | Basic special schools often prepare children with intellectual disabilities to be able use their skills towards living a meaningful life school completion. | | | | |
| 5 | Forming a transition team in basic special schools to discuss and plan the future of learners with ID is a sure way parents would be involved in preparing their children towards school completion. | | | | |

Part III: Parents hopes and expectations about educating their children with intellectual disabilities

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|--|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Children with intellectual disabilities can continue to remain in basic special schools as long they want because there is no job or better life out there for them. | | | | |
| 2 | Children with intellectual disabilities at basic special school at a point in time must leave school in order to put into use what they have been taught in school. | | | | |
| 3 | Lack of post-school outcomes for children with intellectual disabilities can have negative impact their parents' hopes and expectations | | | | |
| 4 | Basic special schools authorities never discussed with parents any ways of preparing children with intellectual disabilities school completion programmes. | | | | |
| 5 | Parents are often faced with socio-economic constraints that negatively affect their full involvement in the education of their children with intellectual disabilities. | | | | |
| 6 | Parents high expectations from children with intellectual disabilities are the cause of their inability to complete basic special schools. | | | | |

Part IV: Employers readiness to engage learners with intellectual disabilities after school.

| No. | | SD | D | SA | A |
|-----|--|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Children with intellectual disabilities in basic special schools are acquiring enough skills that can enable them gain employment or be self-employed after school. | | | | |
| 2 | Apart from challenges in learning for children with intellectual disabilities, there are other factors like stigmatization, societal negative attitudes that hinder them from acquiring and using skills taught for independent living by the time they complete school. | | | | |
| 3 | Children with intellectual disabilities can perform to expectation after they leave school. | | | | |
| 4 | Parents with children with intellectual disabilities are always hopeful that their children would be employed by employers, be self-employed or continue to higher education after completing basic special school. | | | | |
| 5 | Many children with intellectual disabilities are likely to be unemployed after leaving basic special schools. | | | | |