UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

EMPLOYERS' VIEWS ON SCHOOL-EMPLOYER JOB-ORIENTED COLLABORATION INVOLVING STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AT REVEREND FATHER JOHN SPECIAL UNIT, WINNEBA

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2023
UNIVERSITY OF   TION, WINNEBA

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COLLABORATION INVOLVING STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES AT REVEREND FATHER JOHN SPECIAL UNIT**

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220014939

**A thesis in the department of Special Education,
Faculty of Applied Behavioural Sciences Education, submitted to the School
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Special Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

SEPTEMBER, 2023
DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Anthony Appiah, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been accordingly identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree or other purpose elsewhere.

Signature……………………………

Date…………………………………

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Supervisor: Florence A. Mensah (Mrs.)

Signature…………………………

Date…………………………………

DEDICATION

To my lovely mother and younger brother Nicholas Tetteh

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

I could not have completed this work without the support and assistance of a number of people; prominent among them is my supervisor Mrs. Florence Akua Mensah, her supervision, genuine critique, valuable suggestions, devoted time and commitment demonstrated was the magic wand for the completion of this thesis. Special thank you to Dr. Daniel Fobi for his continuous prompt and varied assistance given me from the beginning to the end of this work. I'm eternally grateful to him. Not forgetting the instrumental role of Dr. Adam Awini in the successful completion of this work. Again, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my mother Gladys Gare for her financial support, didactic and inspirational messages shared with me, alongside her expressed goodwill gave me the impetus to complete this thesis. I am eternally grateful to her. Now, to my siblings, Kojo Aikins, Wim Augustine, Nicholas Tetteh, Evans Tettey, Kwabena Sulley and Linda Badu, I'm most grateful to you all for the encouragement and diverse support. One person I cannot gloss over her immense support, prayers and words of encouragement which played pivotal role in the completion of this work is my lady friend, Abigail Ewusi. May God bless her abundantly and replenish everything she lost on my behalf in the course of my education. Bismark Kwabena Nyame (DJ Kobbyrich), Andrews Acquah, Mathias Otoo, and Ransford Samovie may the Almighty God bless you gentlemen for all the diverse support.

Finally, my profound gratitude goes to the entire Opanin Kwaku Gare family and my friends for assistance, advice and encouragement, may God bless them all and make them great and strong

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ABSTRACT

This study sought the views of employers on school-employer job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disabilities at Reverend Father John Special Unit, Winneba. The study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm and adopted the qualitative approach, which employed the case study research design. A sample size of nine comprising three shoe makers, three food vendors, and three printing press owners were involved in the study. Semi-structured interview guide and observation were used to gather data for the study, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the employers' motivating factors to engage students in collaboration with from Reverend Father John Special Unit were that the students got employment for some income; serve as source of education, and social responsibility. Furthermore, source of employment, build connection, and means of advocacy were some of the benefits employers perceive about the collaboration. However, the employers stressed that they encountered some challenges such as theft issues, poor self-care skills, communication gap, and poor interpersonal relationships when they work with the students with intellectual disability. The study therefore recommended that the authorities at Reverend Father John Special Unit together with the parents of the students should identify and target employers in the community that engage in work experiences that align with the basic skills the students are taught in school and approach them for collaboration focused on fostering employment opportunities to the students.
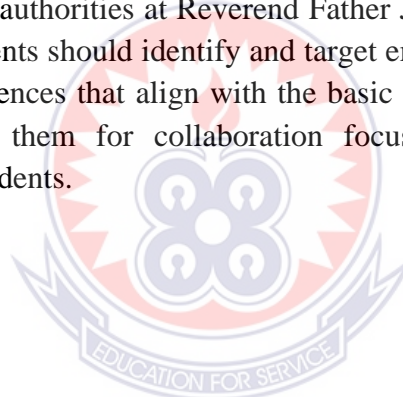
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Mazzotti et al. (2021), underscored collaboration as best practice in transition, and studies have demonstrated the use of collaboration to enhance post school employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. School collaborations have long been advocated as important component of effective schooling for youth with disabilities from early intervention through high school graduation (Turnbull et al., 2014). Carter et al. (2010, p.146), espoused that "the extent to which schools successfully draw upon the expertise, connections, and opportunities of area employers is likely to influence their capacity to deliver high-quality career development experiences for all youth, but especially youth with disabilities". Collaboration between schools and stakeholders like employers preparing people with disability for the world of Work is a critical component in creating employment opportunities. Interagency collaboration has been identified as one of the most frequently cited "best practices" in area of transition for students with disabilities (Kholer et al.,2016)., the absence of collaboration between community employers and schools, as well as low expectation that young people with disability have the capacity to deliver upon leaving school, contribute to poor employment outcomes for students with disability (Commonwealth of Australia Department of social Services, 2021).Unfortunately, on the part of teachers , research suggests many lack the confidence or training needed to establish effective community-based collaboration (Li, Bassett & Hutchinson, 2009; Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). Carter et al., (2008) highlighted the lack of collaboration between school and business communities and noted the need for more research on forming effective working

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relationships. Available literature suggest special educators may feel poorly prepared to establish these types of collaborations (Gripentrog, 2015), highlighting the challenges schools face in collaborating with other entities.

 Research has shown that even with a post-secondary transition plan with measurable employment goals, few students with intellectual disability transition into paid employment after high school (Plotner & Dymond, 2016). However, this is not different from Reverend Father John Special Unit, where some of the adult students with intellectual disability are integrated into the community and are now doing menial jobs with the employers in the community, which in the context of this study includes various food vendors, printing press owners and shoe makers in the community.

Over the years, the teachers, parents, and the researcher have observed that the students receive no payments or stipends from the employers. Neither are there any clear-cut plans of mentoring the students, this was a situation the headmaster reported at Parents Teacher Association meeting in the school. Following that, teachers have been lamenting high truancy and absenteeism among these adult students, however, upon follow-up, they see the students at the workplaces of the various kenkey sellers, fried rice sellers, shoemakers, printing press owners in the community.

In a similar development, there have been parents' outcry about their children running away from the house to these employers. However, the children return home in the evening with no money, yet visibly exhausted. The employers also complain about not knowing the parents or the teachers of these students whom they employ their services during class hours. Research has shown amply that several factors motivate employers to engage students with students with intellectual disability at the workplace. In Australia according to the Tickets to Work Stakeholders Report (2018) some

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organizations see employing people with disabilities as a community commitment and social responsibility. While Kantar (2017), argued that some employers engage individuals with intellectual disability at their workplace because it enhances their community or corporate reputation, hence a large majority of the employers support the concept of diversity and inclusion in their businesses

Another area of concern is how the employers would incorporate inclusive employment practices in the collaboration with Reverend Father John Special Unit for the students with intellectual disability due to the complexity and unique needs of these students which requires accommodation for them to thrive at the workplace. Usually, employers lack knowledge of how accommodations, and what accommodations they should provide to persons with disabilities, (Chen et al., 2016). Similarly, Telwatte et al. (2017) in their study postulated that employers are more likely to provide accommodation at the workplace and find that essential when the said employer has knowledge about disability legislation, has previous working experience with people with disabilities, and demonstrates a friendly attitude towards persons with disability.

Also, employers have some perceived challenges they face when providing employment experience for the students with intellectual disability. Noonan, Morningstar, and Erick (2008) noted that inaccurate perceptions about students with disabilities, schools and outside agencies inhibit effective collaboration, while Taylor et al. (2016) contend schools face many challenges collaborating with potential partners or convening their communities in productive ways to address these challenges. Ellenkamp et al. (2016), posited that companies are often hesitant to put in place support systems that are responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities, specifically those with intellectual disabilities because of additional organisational costs. Similarly,

business owners expressed concern about going through bureaucratic bottlenecks regarding disability service system and hiring managers' concern that training individuals with disabilities comes with extra burden on their co-workers without disabilities, which will further lead to a decline in their profit margins (Henry et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding, employers have some perceived benefits in collaborating with the school to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disabilities. Valentini et al. (2019) revealed how school-business collaborations presented an opportunity for all employees to learn more about the value of diversity within their business. This corroborates how employers see collaborative initiative with school as beneficial. Hendricks (2010), argued that employment for transition age youth irrespective of the status of disability is a topmost priority and desirable social achievement, indicating how beneficial it is to partners.

These revelations, however demands the school to refocus its transition outlook through dynamism, novelty, and a paradigm shift to explore collaborative mechanisms with major stakeholders such as employers in their vicinity. As supported by Nord et al. (2013) that employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities does not have a simple solution; it is a complex, nuanced problem that must be engaged on an individual basis, with support from schools, service agencies, prospective employers, families, and community.

It is based on the foregoing that this study seeks to explore the employers' views on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability at Reverend father John Special Unit in the Effutu Municipality of Central region of Ghana

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Globally, in the quest to enhance the employability of students with intellectual disability, several nations, and institutions have established legal and policy framework and procedures to drive this initiative. In the U.S, there is the Individuals with Disability Education Act, among other provisions, mandates schools to collaborate with related service providers to support students to be responsive to their transitional goals (IDEA,2004). According to the Norwegian White Paper Report (2016), approximately 10% of individuals with intellectual disability in Norway work in sheltered workshops. This initiative serves as a preparatory ground to the mainstream job market for the students with intellectual disability, even though they continue to be employed at lower rates when becoming adults compared to their peers without disabilities (Cease-Cook et al., 2015).

Similarly, Reine et al. (2016) contend that students with intellectual disability face harsh discrepancies between the desire to be employed and available opportunities. This phenomenon is evident at Reverend Father John special unit where some of the students with intellectual disability have overstayed in the school as the school authorities have tried several times to help their adult learners with intellectual disability complete school but it has not been successful for as long time as over 20 years (Mawusi, 2020). Mawusi further stressed that in Ghana these learners with special needs remain in basic special schools even after age 22, and this has degenerated into a different phenomenon of absenteeism and truancy as the students use the school hours to engage in menial jobs in the community.

As a result, teachers keep lamenting over absenteeism and truancy and this was highlighted by the headmaster's report at the school's second Parent Teacher

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Association meeting in 2023 and the Researcher's personal observation made when he was undertaking his national service in 2021 and later voluntary service in the year 2023. Parents at their regular visit at the school have also been complaining over their children running away from the house and lack of menial job for their children. Parents are also desirous that their children will grow and gain employment in order to enable them live meaningful independent lives in their communities (Mawusi, 2020). The community employers also according to the researcher's interaction with them complain they do not know the parents and teachers of the students they are engaging with at their workplace.

Amid this apparent lack of collaboration among these stakeholders, Newman et al. (2016), argued that over the past decades, research on transition of students with disabilities has revealed that postschool outcomes of students with disabilities increase when educators, families, community members, and employers in the community collaborate in transition planning. It is evident in literature that some factors motivate employers to engage students with students with intellectual disability at their workplace. Notwithstanding, there is limited understanding of the factors that would motivate employers to collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit. While literature shows factors such as community commitment and social responsibility can motivate employers (Tickets to Work Stakeholders Report (2018), Cartmet et al. (2016) opined that employers largely focus on previous working experience with individuals with disability to hire them and develop strong working relationship with them at the workplace. However, it is unclear what factors would motivate employers in this context to collaborate with the school to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability.

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In view of this, exploring how employers incorporate inclusive employment practices in the collaboration with Reverend Father John special unit for the students with intellectual disability ought to be explored. Bartram et al. (2019) noted that workplace accommodations, such as modified workspaces, can enable employees with intellectual disability maximize their potentials to improve the outcome of the organization, while Shen et al. (2009) argued that it is important for employers to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and creating inclusive environment at the workplace. However, there is limited understanding on how employers in this context will apply these practices at the workplace for the students with intellectual disability at Reverend Father John special unit

Employers have some perceived challenges they face when collaborating with Referend Father John Special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability. Leucking and Fabian (2015) postulate that employers consider employing students with intellectual disability as risk, despite the fact that they may potentially employ them when they have confidence that they will be supported and believe in the person who will be offering to support. In the same vein, Gilson et al. (2018) contend that some individuals with intellectual disability lack a number of skills, such as social skills, the ability to apply for jobs, and perform that job. This study focused on specific challenges faced by employers as they collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit including issues related to skill deficits and perceived risks of employing students with intellectual disability.

Despite the challenges, the employers perceived benefits in collaborating with Reverend Father John Special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disabilities is worth examining. Valentini (2019) opined the employers

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reported of how students with intellectual disability were helping to improve productivity at the workplace. It is important to assess the perceived benefits employers have as they collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability.

Following that, studies done in the U.S by Carter et al, (2021) focused on Examining School-Community Transition Partnerships using community conversations. This quantitative study gave room for an interaction with a lot of respondents who were not necessarily owning businesses, hence could not give responses that could improve the collaborations between the employers and the school, hence this study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the views of the employers to get nuanced and detailed understanding of the phenomenon.

Valentini et al. (2019), also researched into the employers' views on school-business partnerships involving students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The participants reflected on their experiences in collaborating with schools to enhance employment opportunities for students with intellectual disability and recommended the strengthening of the quality of school-business collaborations that is the layer of knowledge this study aimed to contribute.

The aforementioned studies provide valuable insight into this current study which sought to contribute to knowledge by exploring employers' perspectives on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability at Reverend Father John Special Unit in Effutu Municipality in the Central region of Ghana

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study sought to explore employers' views on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability at Reverend Father John special unit.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the factors that motivate employers to collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability

2. Explore how employers incorporate inclusive employment practices in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit for students with intellectual disability

3. Investigate challenges employers face in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit in providing employment experience for the students with intellectual disability

4. Identify the employers' perceived benefits in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability

1.5 Research Question

1. What factors motivate employers to collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?

2. How do employers incorporate inclusive employment practices in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit for the students with intellectual disability?

3. What challenges would employers face in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit in providing employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?

4. What are the benefits employers perceive in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of the study will reveal the potential collaboration between the employers and the school with regards to providing employment opportunities for the students with intellectual disabilities at Reverend Father John Special Unit by exploring the views of the employers

Enhancing Employment Opportunities: This study can shed light on the effectiveness of job-oriented collaborations between special education institutions like Reverend Father John Special Unit and employers. Understanding how employers perceive and engage with these collaborations can contribute to the creation of more employment opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. This is particularly important as

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employment rates for individuals with disabilities are often lower than for the general population.

Inclusion and Diversity: The study can help in fostering a more inclusive and diverse workforce. By investigating employers' views on hiring individuals with intellectual disabilities, it can inform strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion within workplaces. This aligns with the growing recognition that diverse workforces can lead to increased creativity, innovation, and overall organizational success.

Educational Curriculum Improvement: The findings can provide feedback to educational institutions like Reverend Father John Special Unit regarding the effectiveness of their programs in preparing students with intellectual disabilities for the job market. This information can lead to curriculum improvements that better align with the needs and expectations of employers.

Policy Implications: The study can inform the development or revision of policies and incentives aimed at encouraging employers to engage in such collaborations. It can provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers to create a more supportive environment for inclusive hiring practices. Community Integration: Successful collaborations can contribute to the social integration of individuals with intellectual disabilities. This not only benefits the individuals themselves by increasing their sense of belonging and self-worth but also promotes a more inclusive and accepting society. Economic Impacts: An increase in employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities can have economic benefits. It can potentially reduce the economic burden associated with unemployment and dependence on social welfare programs, leading to greater fiscal sustainability. Research Contribution: The study can contribute to the academic and research community's understanding of inclusive

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employment practices and the experiences of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the job market. This can lead to further research and knowledge dissemination in the field. Changing Perceptions: By highlighting positive experiences and outcomes of employers who collaborate with special education institutions, this study can help change perceptions and reduce stigma surrounding intellectual disabilities. This can lead to a more compassionate and accepting society

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

To maintain a manageable scope to avoid ambiguities, this work primarily explores the employers' views on school-employer job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disabilities at reverend father john special unit. The employers are used purposely to refer to food vendors, printing press owners and shoemakers already working with or willing to work with the students with intellectual disability in their neighborhood. Although the concept transition may be multidimensional activity, however, it is specifically used in this context to refer to the movement from school to employment because that is the major challenge in the school.

Also, the collaboration is looking at how the school and employers can partner to streamline the services the students are rendering in the community to enhance the employability of the students through sharing of information that will lead to smooth job placement and skill acquisition, exchange of services between Reverend Father John Special Unit and employers specifically in the Winneba community.

1.8 Limitations

1. The study only solicited the views of employers on school-employer collaborations without engaging stakeholders from the school to know their views on such initiative.

2. The study involved relatively small number of employers from a single municipal area and one school.

1.9 Operational Definition

Collaboration: Entities partnering to achieve a mutual benefit

Employers: For the purpose of this research, employers mean the food vendors, shoemakers and printing press owners in the community who are already working with or willing to work with the students with intellectual disability

Employment experience: to either train or employ

Employment: In this study refers to an activity that facilitate early work experience, career development and employment of the students with intellectual disability for independent living

Inclusive employment practice: anything that promote the respect for individual differences and accountability at the workplace

Intellectual disabilities: This is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18.

Special unit: is a community-based school that is designed to provide education for students with disabilities.

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Transition: Is a coordinated set of activities designed to move students from school to work.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. The Chapter One focuses on the introduction of the study. This entails the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the, research questions and objectives, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, operational definition of terms, and organization of the study.

The Chapter Two of the study involves the literature review and it presents the theoretical review of the study. Chapter three focuses on the methodology for the study. This Chapter presents the research design, the research approach, philosophy, the sample size and sampling technique, instruments and procedure for data collection and analysis. This Chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of the results of the study. Finally, the summary, conclusions, findings, and recommendations of the study were discussed under the Chapter Five of the study.
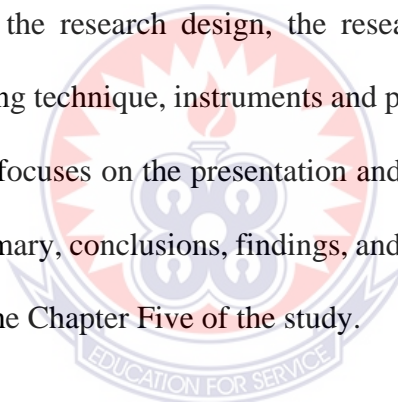
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a scope review of the study and focuses on student with intellectual disabilities and how employers and the school can collaborate to create employment opportunities for them in the community.it is in the light of this that this section of the study seeks to review what previous researchers and scholars have written related to school-employers job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disability. The literature review covered the following sub-headings:

Theoretical framework

1. Policy guidelines on Transition from School to work

2. Factors employers consider in employing individuals with intellectual disabilities

3. Transition practices that foster collaboration toward employment of students with intellectual disability

4. Employment related Inclusive Practices

5. Challenges that employers could encounter when they collaborate with school to employ students with intellectual disability

6. benefits employers consider in collaborating with schools that focus on employment opportunities for students with intellectual disability

7. Employers' expectations to enhance school-employer collaborations

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study hinges on the Human Capital theory. The theory contends that education or training imparts beneficial knowledge and skills to workers which invariably accelerate

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productivity and income. Aliaga (2001) posits that the human capital theory advocates for education and training as a means of investment in human resources and further made a proposition that people are considered a form of capital for development. Accordingly, this theory draws its relevance in this study as it inspires employers to make strategic decisions that focus on offering employment experiences to students with intellectual disability being it training them to acquire skills or paid employment opportunities as an investment that seeks to maximize their potential to improve the productivity of the business but not merely employing them just because of social relations or disability considerations as supported by Tickets to Work stakeholders report (2018), that some organizations see employing people with disabilities as a community commitment and social responsibility.

From this perspective, employers are expected to take the best decision when joining collaborative efforts with the school in relation to offering employment opportunities to students with disabilities. Similarly, parents and the school drawing on the insight of the human capital theory which advocates that human beings are huge assets when utilized effectively would also be motivated to groom or train their children and explore better options for securing employment opportunities for the students with intellectual disability in the community. Hence, when both stakeholders, that's employers, and the school collectively appreciate the value or worth of the goal each side is pursuing, it helps each partner to play their role well with the view of getting returns from investing in the student with intellectual disability.

According to Schultz (1961), the human capital theory believes that when resource is effectively utilized, the results are profitable for the individual, organization, and society at large. This underscores the fact that when employers refocus their business

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outlook and understand with a business lens that employing people with disability as individuals who have the capacity to deliver by deliberately establishing measures that focus on providing accommodation to meet their needs will inform their decision to collaborate with stakeholders like schools. Research and personal observation have proven that students with intellectual disability can of deliver desirable outcomes when given the appropriate support, but some employers are sometimes hesitant to employ them which is largely due to the fact that these employers do not focus on the strength of these individuals as suggested by the theory.

In this study the human capital theory is relevant in highlighting human beings as the major resource of the organization, however, that is dependent on how effective their efforts will be utilized to improve the desired outcome of the organization. To achieve this, employers and other stakeholders like schools and parents with intellectual disability students have a role to play in helping the students acquire the prerequisite skills and appropriate attitudes to enhance job performance in the workplace. When employers accept responsibility as major stakeholders to offer employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability and the school involves itself in training their students to be functional, it will then serve as a driving force for collaboration.

2.2 Factors Employers Consider in Employing Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Several factors influence employers' decisions when engaging students with intellectual disabilities at the workplace. Corroborating this, Wakeford and Waugh (2014), catalogued five factors with respect to offering job experience and other forms of work exposure to employees with disabilities and it includes 1. Previous experience

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in employing people with disability. 2. History of personal connection to disability.3. when there is an established relationship with a disability employment organization. 4, whether the business has inclusive employment policies and whether employment has a sense of community commitment. The issue of previous experience in employing people with disability and history of personal connection to disability as factors that influence certain employers to employ individuals with disabilities as argued by the researchers, confirms the realities the researcher has observed. It is very common to see Students with intellectual disability work with employers in the community due to a relationship that they have developed with some of these employers over time.

The point of departure is this phenomenon of the employers' unwillingness to properly train these individuals for future employment or even pay them for the work done. Yet, supporting Wakeford and Waugh's assertion, Kantar Public (2017), notes sometimes you can empathize with a person with a disability and you can think this person merits a chance more than the others. This means personal connections to disability sometimes influence employers' decision in employing individuals with intellectual disabilities. This usually happens in certain developed societies where they see people with disabilities beyond their disabilities and offer them equal opportunities to maximize their potential which is the reverse of what happens in a typical Ghanaian society. In Australia according to Tickets to Work stakeholders report (2018), some organizations see employing people with disabilities as a community commitment and social responsibility. ''we wanted to give someone a go, I knew that opportunity and structure would work for both of us and for her (the employee)''. These are happening in other countries due to the orientation of the citizens towards persons with disabilities and there are structures and systems in place to support these categories of people as far as employment and other transitional issues are concerned. Meanwhile, Kantar (2017)

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argued that some employers engage individuals with intellectual disabilities at their workplace because it enhances their community or corporate reputation, hence a large majority of the employers support the concept of diversity and inclusion in their businesses. Supporting this, Ticket to Work Stakeholder Report (2017), revealed that some employers in Australia find employing persons with disability as a prestige in the community and shows a commitment to their customers and invariably projects their brand in a unique way given the competitiveness in the business space. Just as both researchers agreed on how employers in other jurisdictions cherish working with persons with disabilities, it is equally possible in this modern Ghana that employers may also want to employ persons with disabilities or offer to train them for future employment but that option has not been explored given the perception society has that employer in Ghana do not want to employ persons with disabilities.

In the U.S, Toad and Company, a California-based warehousing business that hires individuals with intellectual disability was inspired to integrate individuals with disability into the workforce when he realized that the company was falling short of its motto, Planet, People, and Profit. Seabury recognized they neglected the PEOPLE part of the motto. Seabury designed a programme to employ individuals with disability and the corporation has employed 338 individuals with disabilities since 2004. Seabury worked tirelessly to make his company least restrictive to people with diverse abilities by finding ways and creating job opportunities for individuals with intellectual disability to be able work optimally while enhancing the company's productivity. Seabury stated that hiring managers who do not employ individuals with intellectual disability are falling short of real impactful employees and glossing over valuable human resource (Chhbra, 2017).

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Research has echoed that employment of an individual with intellectual disability facilitate meaningful community participation, meet the societal norm of adult employment and potentially offer financial independence and security (Heyman et al., 2016; Nota et al., 2014). Other researchers also have argued that organizations with diversity and inclusion policies as integral to the overarching organizational outlook tend to employ students with intellectual disabilities as supported by Ticket to Work School Leavers Report (2018), that employers with diversity and inclusion framework in their organizations are accepting difference and candidates with disability as part of the mix of diversity in the workplace. It's a good experience and we helping people to become aware (about being inclusive).'' I personally feel that everyone has the right to an opportunity to work and we are giving that here'' (Ticket to Work Stakeholders, 2018).

If the various organizations in our society have inclusive outlook in terms of their hiring and recruitment practices, persons with disabilities wouldn't be neglected when seeking employment in the community as a compliance measure. Several researchers have argued that one factor employers consider in engaging students at their workplace is the previous experience to have worked with a person with disability. Employers who have ever worked with persons with disabilities tend to demonstrate responsive attitude toward persons with disabilities as against those who have no previous experience of working with a person with disability. In agreement to this position, Cartmelet al. (2016), intimated that employer with past experience in hiring persons with disability evince strong commitment and good working relationships with them.

Zappella (2015), also postulates that positive past experiences enhance employers' readiness to hire people with disability, whereas negative experiences make them

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unwilling to work with them. Domzal et al. (2008) contradicted these assertions by saying that even with no previous experience in this area of recruitment, many employers are ready and willing to employ people with disability. Given the arguments advanced by these authors, clearly the employers have the will to employ persons with disabilities, but that would not happen automatically, stakeholders like teachers and parents have to make the effort to routinely engage the employers in the community in search of jobs for their children. ''Transition specialists play a critical role in helping young people with disability connect with employers in the community and their ability to respond to the direct practices that employers find most important in the hiring process will facilitate success" (Luecking & Fabian, 2015).

2.2.1 Soft skills considerations

Soft skills are prerequisite for all manner of persons particularly potential employees seeking to join the corporate world which is made up of people from diverse background or the community for employment. According to Dixon et al. (2010), soft skills are a person's ability to be a team member, make decisions, relate well with people, and communicate verbally and nonverbally with other workers. Students with intellectual disability largely exhibit maladaptive behaviour across all settings and so to be able to secure employment or trained by employers, it becomes imperative for them to acquire soft skills to propel them thrive in the workplace environment full of people with different orientations.

In our contemporary time, employers are constantly looking out for employees who possess unique and relevant skills to help improve their businesses and we have a lot of people who are nondisabled out there who possess the skill set and therefore qualify for employment who persons with intellectual disability must compete with. Confirming

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this Lindsay and DePay (2015), highlighted that when employing individuals with intellectual disability, it is important to equip them with soft skills which then make them job-ready to prospective employers.

Research has shown that soft skills are necessary attribute to successful employment yet there are few studies showing how to equip learners with soft skills (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Ju et al., 2014). Sometimes the competency and ability levels of persons with disabilities and their nondisabled are similar or comparable. There is one thing having the capacity and another thing being able to execute a task when the need arises. Students with intellectual disability though may have the ability to work and produce the desired results but may be denied employment over a deficiency in social skills such as poor communication, indecisiveness, and poor interpersonal relationships.

Similarly, Lindsay and DePay (2015) stressed that individuals with ID differed from nondisabled peers only in describing their disabling condition, where they cited examples like teamwork ability, and some difficulty explaining the problem-solving scenarios to the prospective employer. Contrastingly, Jans et al. (2011), in their study recommended that business policy reviewed so that the interview process would allow individuals with disabilities to respond to issues that project their skill set, job readiness, highlighting the talents the individual brings on board.

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2.2.2 Accommodation of students with at intellectual disability at the workplace

Students with though intellectual disability can work competitively with their nondisabled peers but are always at risk of unemployment for varied reasons. Some employers are concerned with how to accommodate them at the workplace. Employers despite the numerous benefits associated with working with persons with disabilities such as enhanced reliability, productivity, and lower turnout, they are always reticent to employ persons with disabilities due to misconceptions about the cost of accommodations, that's according to Burke et al. (2013). The enhanced reliability, productivity, and lower turnout as suggested by Burke and colleagues converge with my position that persons with intellectual disability have the capacity and are always committed whenever you assign them a task with clear instruction in a disability-friendly workplace and can produce results for the benefit of employers. Supporting this, Katz et al. (2012), indicated that employing individuals with intellectual disability benefits employers in diverse ways because these people are proven to be more stable, dependable, and prolific employees. In the same vein, Chhabra (2017) argued that company leaders who are determined to employ persons with intellectual disability have experienced success and have a strong conviction that their preconceived fears about the capabilities of these people are a mirage.

Despite the abilities of students with intellectual disability to work, Chen et al. (2016) rather asserted that employers usually lack knowledge of how accommodations, and what accommodations they should provide to persons with disabilities. This assertion is contestable because, currently, employers are exposed to persons with disabilities and so their capabilities are not necessarily a major concern. Employers who believe in the capabilities of persons with disabilities find means to make the appropriate accommodation for them at the workplace. In agreement, Telwatte et al. (2017), in their

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study postulated that employers are more likely to provide accommodation at the workplace and find that essential when the said employer has knowledge about disability legislation, has previous working experience with people with disabilities, and demonstrates a friendly attitude towards persons with disability.

On the contrary, there are instances where persons with disabilities themselves either consciously or unconsciously fail to let employers know their weaknesses to necessitate corresponding support or accommodation. For instance, persons with intellectual disability ordinarily have issues with adaptive behaviour, hence are not able to explain to the people around them the specific support they need. As a result, being able to accommodate them calls for consistent observation and engagement by employers to identify their needs and specific accommodation to be provided for them at the workplace. Lindsay et al. (2017), argued that disclosing one's disability status comes with a lot of benefits like increased job retention, enhanced company moral, creating acceptance, and above all inclusivity at the workplace, notwithstanding all these benefits, some persons with disabilities are still hesitant to disclose their disabilities just to avoid potential negative outcomes. It is partly agreeable for one to disclose his or her disability status to employers for support but should not necessarily be the sole responsibility of the person with a disability.

Other stakeholders like the family, parents, school, teachers, employers, and the community have major roles to play in helping persons with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disability to disclose their disability status to employers so that the appropriate accommodation can be made for them. it should be seen more as a collective responsibility than an individual. Employers must also be ready and willing to accept and embrace this category of learners and provide all supportive and

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conducive environments to aid their work (Dominica, 2010). In consonance with this preceding argument, Lindsay et al. (2013), stated in their study that prioritizing the youth with disabilities is key because they are susceptible to not able to explain or state their disability status which make them vulnerable not to receiving the appropriate workplace accommodation.

Shen et al. (2009), are rather of the view that it important for employers to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and creating inclusive environment at the workplace. This buttresses the point that employers should always have to endeavour to create conducive and responsive environment to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, especially students with disabilities at the workplace.

2.3 Inclusive Employment Practices that Foster Collaboration toward Employment of Students with intellectual disability

2.3.1 Paid and unpaid work experience

Kohler (1993) in her review of 29 literature pointed out paid work experiences as a substantiated transition practice. This serves as a guide to stakeholders like schools, teachers, parents and employers to know what to expect when entering into any collaboration initiative on behalf of persons with disabilities who sometimes because of the nature of their disability status are not able to engage employers on their expectations despite working with them.

Meanwhile, students with intellectual disability are people who like working with employers with alacrity and apparently tend to be more productive when you how to interact with them. Holwerda et al. (2013), asserted that employment can lead to positive psychological and economic benefits for individuals with, intellectual disability which ignites their aspiration in life, presents opportunity to establish new

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friendships while learning new skills, as well as enhanced opportunities for financial independence, good health and greater sense of self-esteem. This goes to buttress the point of Kohler's suggestion that paid work experience is substantiated transition practice just to avoid the exploitation of the services of people with disabilities especially those with intellectual disability, hence should be considered by transition service stakeholders.

According to Kapur et al. (2005) students who had paid or unpaid work experiences while in school are better placed and likely to have better post school outcomes. Corroborating this, Carter et al. (2010) intimated that it is indispensable that paid work experiences in integrated settings be accessible to students with intellectual disability to enhance their chances of getting employment that involve individuals with intellectual disability a competitive employment. Carter et al. (2012) contradicted the argument as they found unpaid, school-sponsored work experiences in school were not correlated with postschool employment among young adults with intellectual disability. Furthering the argument, Rooney (2016) postulated that unpaid work experiences are valuable and important as it prepares the youth with disabilities for future employment, however, participating in volunteer work alone is insufficient if not accompanied by either simultaneous or subsequent paid work experiences. When students with intellectual disability get the opportunity to work with community employers while in school not only will it make them independent but enhances their employability.

Apparently, Students working with employers at scheduled period under supervision through collaboration between major stakeholders like parents, teachers and employers are unexplored which has necessitated the conduct of this study. Rabren et al. (2009) also interviewed former special education students and found having a job experience

before exiting high school was a predictor of gaining employment one year later. Hence the need to expose students with intellectual disability to work experience either to be paid or not, the exposure alone with employers enhances their employability. Agreeing with this assertion, Zafft et al. (2004) in their study found that youth who had postschool employment experience in the community and were competitively employed were less likely to require accommodation in the workplace than their competitively employed counterparts who did not have any work experience while in school.

According to Grigal et al. (2011) participation in postschool education greatly improves the employment outcomes and financial stability (Flannery et al., 2008) of youth with intellectual disability, which is important considering that a chunk of intellectual disability struggle to secure employment and earn competitive wages. Fourqurearm et al. (1991), conducted interviews to determine predictors of postschool employment. Interestingly, they found that employment during high school was a predictor of a successful postschool employment as demonstrated by postschool employment stability. Based on the foregoing it clear that when students with intellectual disability are given the opportunity to work with employers in the community while in school either to be paid or not will directly or indirectly equip the student to be job ready and this is the very gap this current study seeks to fill to make a case for students with intellectual disabilities at Rev. father John special unit in the Effutu Municipality.

2.3.2 Family involvement

As the journey of life of persons with intellectual disability transition to adulthood, the role of the family become indispensable in shaping and modelling the lifelong impact the disability will have on the life of the person. Employment issues become the central and pressing as they are always at risk of securing a job, which is in consonance with U.S Department of Labor (2019), report that individuals with intellectual disability are largely underrepresented in employment. This makes the involvement of parents in helping their children with intellectual disability secure a job extremely crucial.

According to Kohler (1996) successful transition planning includes family involvement. Kohler advanced the argument by stating that empowering families to take a responsibility is a major driver to improve the transition process and planning for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Emphasizing on the major role the family plays in the transition services of students with intellectual disability, Lindstrom et al., (2007), revealed that youth participants with their parents as active advocates, those playing leading role in planning and support tended to experience successful transition to employment and earns higher wages and better equipped with skills than youth participants with protective or removed parents. On the same wavelength, Shallock et al. (1992), argued that adults with moderate to severe disabilities worked more hours earned higher wages and live independent life when there is parents' involvement in their transition planning process. This echoes instrumental role parents or the family plays in the transition services of their children with disability especially in the area of employment.

In the case of students with intellectual disability whom due to the nature of their disabilities are sometimes not able to look for jobs and even if they secure the job how

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to negotiate for better wages become difficult, hence the need for parental or family involvement. Similarly, Heal et al. (1990) found that adults with intellectual disability who had sustained their job for 6 months had families who were highly front and center in their transitional process from high school to adulthood. In agreement with this assertion, Lindstrom et al. (2007), indicated that parents are one of the top four priorities, utilizing transition services and postschool supports by bridging students with the appropriate services and supports found in community agencies.

Highlighting the important role families play in the scheme of transition services of students with intellectual disability, Defur (2012), furthered the argument that parents' involvement in transition services not only improve transition services and outcomes for youth with disability, but also are essential for families to develop the knowledge and skills that will be needed to continue in an appropriate support duty for their adult son or daughter with a disability. Which means parents should not only merely represent themselves on transition teams when planning for the lives of their children with disabilities but should advance their knowledge and skills in a manner that can help them independently appreciate the capabilities, interest, and needs and the appropriate support the children with disabilities require. This can be done when parents accept the responsibility and avoid overprotection, and rather expose their children to the routine activities at home to help them identify the capabilities and needs of the children which will then place them in a position to share with other transition service providers for the appropriate support to be initiated.

Apparently, some families or parents consciously or unconsciously do not take it upon themselves to study the mannerisms of their children at home, hence are not able to identify the talent or potentials their children possess and rather are fixated on the

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disability which make them think these individuals are incapable. Lindstrom et al. (2007), review of research on parents' knowledge of the transition process that no matter how early parents receive information about a transition planning meeting or admission and release committees, parents perhaps still do not appreciate the information related to student needs. This goes to confirm how some parents seemingly not in touch with the needs of their children. Hetherington et al. (2010) in their study revealed that parents consistently felt like outsiders in the transition process and when they received information from schools, they felt it was ''too little, too late''. I disagree on this score because, sometimes stakeholders like employers and schools do not involve parents or families when planning for a meeting.

 Parents are major stakeholders in the transition planning team and so if there is going to be any meeting, they should be notified so that issues about the scheduling and agenda for the meeting will be known to them so they can plan accordingly. Yet sometimes they do not get the prior notice only to be told later which sometimes coincides with their routine activities.

2.3.3 Social skills development

Social skills involve the soft skills for employment and are prerequisite social competencies critical to successful participation in adult community life. Employers lament that inability to meet the social expectations of the community and workplace remains a top reason why employees, disabled or not, lose their job. Social competencies are skills, behavoiur, and attitudes that facilitate communication and cooperation (e.g.; body language, responding, social conventions, listening, social problem solving engaged in social interaction verbal and written communication). According to Crites and Dunn (2004) individuals with intellectual disability have

deficits in their social skills, and targeted social skills training is therefore a necessary component of transition planning for these students. Similarly, people with intellectual disability commonly fall short at social interaction due to various factors both biological and environmental, as result to enhance the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disability, social skills must be improved (Assunta, 2013). As argued, students with intellectual disability generally have significant limitation in adaptive behaviour which manifest itself in their behaviour and relations with others. The workplace also constitutes people from diverse background, which makes it imperative for one to demonstrate good interpersonal relationship skills. The workplace requires individuals to work hand in hand, be in talking terms, and communicate effectively to achieve results at the workplace.

In agreement, Wagner et al. (2005) asserted that providing social skills training to students with disabilities was identified as a substantiated transition planning practice when students have poor social skills. This emphasizes the need to consciously equip students with intellectual disability with social skills to survive at the workplace and community participation at large and should not be seen as a mere behaviour deficit that is coterminous with their disability. Social skills is a skill that every individual must acquire, however, in the case of students with intellectual disabilities it is a precondition that employers expect them to meet before employing them. Mostly, employers tend to have low confidence in employing students with intellectual disability as supported by Leucking and Fabian (2015), that employers see employing persons with intellectual disability as a risk, though they consider employing them when there is the assurance that they will be supported and have confidence in employment support staff or a caretaker representing the person with. intellectual disability

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However, it is not entirely true that individuals with intellectual disability must get employment support staff before they can function at the workplace. Baker (n.d) argued that students who had support from self-family friend network to find a job were more likely to be engaged in post school employment. In continuation, Baker stated that youth who do not easily generalize concepts from one environment to another are likely to need repetition of instruction on specific social skills in a variety of situations and environments. Notwithstanding, some youth may need ongoing prompts and supports for the appropriate use of social skills expected in diverse settings. Adding to the essence of equipping youth with disabilities with social skills, Test et al. (2009) in their study found that youth who possess higher levels of social skills had better postschool success in terms of education and employment

2.3.4 Self-determination training

Self-determination includes choice making skills; decision making skills; problem-solving skills; goal setting and attainment skills; independence; internal locus control; risk-taking and safety; self-observation, evaluation, and leadership skills: positive attribution of efficacy and outcome expectancy; self-awareness; and self-knowledge (Wehmeyer et al., 2006). Self-determination is a comprehensive skill that students with intellectual disability are expected to acquire to enable them fit in the workplace environment.

However, students with intellectual disability largely fall short of these skills and as results affect their employability and even community participation. Meanwhile self – determination is a skill that the 21st century citizen, including students with intellectual disability are required to possess to make them job ready. However, this skill appears

to be the most glossed over skill that stakeholders such as schools, parents, teachers and other transition team members mostly do.

It appears most of the special schools in Ghana today for students with ID appears to be more focused on training the students in literacy and numeracy skills more than to build their capacity in self-determination skills. Wehmeyer, Gradoudas and Shogren (2006), intimated that possessing self-determination skills indicates that the individual is self-reliant in taking decisive decisions that directs his or her life. Another confirmation of the fact that self-determination is one skill that every individual including those with intellectual disability need to navigate their way in life especially on employment related issues. Relatively, another researcher postulated that many skills could facilitate the development of self-determination such as the ability to accept the consequences of actions, evaluate options, solve problems, set goals, make choices and take initiative to reach goals.

2.3.5 Self-care skills

Self-care skills are the basic personal skills necessary for adults or individuals to function effectively and safely for community participation and independent living. According to Baker (2021) self-care skills includes financial management skills, personal management needed to interact with others, daily living skills, and managing decisions about healthcare/wellness. A report by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services cited these types of skills as needed in everyday life and include personal care activities such as bathing, dressing, toileting, and eating. Wagner et al. (2005) furthered the argument by saying that possessing functional daily living skills has been linked to better postschool outcomes for individuals with disabilities. These are basic essential skills that stakeholders must pay critical attention to, because nobody

would want to associate or mingle with an individual who is unkempt or not well groomed. It could even be possible the deficit in self-care skills among students with intellectual disability is contributory factor to the high unemployment rate among their population.

Meanwhile in terms of capacity, research and general observation have shown that the persons with intellectual disability are industrious and diligent when you assign them a task. These are realities that society, stakeholders such as parents, family, schools, teachers and individuals should all take concerted effort to address to make persons with intellectual disability be given the opportunity by employers in the community to work with in order not to be seen as useless and liability in the community.

2.3.6 Integration of community work experiences

Work experience could include a variety of strategies that place the student in an authentic workplace such as work sampling, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and paid employment (Baker, nd). Paid employment while in school, when the pay is competitive and paid directly to the student by the employer, is highly correlated with improved post school outcome. The correlation between paid employment and improved post school outcome is quite understandable as the wages received sustain them at the workplace and as they continue to work it serves as preparatory grounds for the youth with disability to be better placed for future employment.

Parents, teachers, schools, and other stakeholders get motivated and support the youth with disability to function optimally at the workplace they know the child or student will receive a wage at the end of the day. However, the competitive paid employment as suggested can be implemented in jurisdictions that have better functioning systems

and structures for persons with disabilities. In the context of Ghana, there are no legislations that regulate the employment related issues of persons with disability and so persons with disabilities largely struggle to secure employment, as they have to compete with their nondisabled peers coupled with employers own seeming lack of confidence in the abilities of persons with disabilities especially those with intellectual disability.

Confirming this, Kantar Public (2017), conducted a study in Australia about employers' commitment to employing persons with disabilities and the findings of the study revealed that, almost two thirds of employers are largely unwilling to employ jobseekers with disability according to various reports. Leucking and Fabian (2015), postulated that employers view employing individuals with intellectual disability as a risk, though they may be ready to work with them when they have confidence, they (intellectually disabled) will be supported by caretakers or employment support staff person representing the person with a disability. Yet Bartram (2019), is of the view that when employers put in place appropriate workplace accommodations, such as modified or quieter workspaces, can enable workers with intellectual disability perform to their abilities. Alternatively, by way of creating integrated community work experiences for students with intellectual disability, the U.S Department of Labour (2020), revealed that one approach to employing people with disability is customized employment, which aim at connecting the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate or employee with the business needs of an employer. This model seeks to provide enabling environment for marginalized individuals seeking for job such as persons with disabilities, caregivers, single parents, mature workers, and others.

Leveraging their abilities to be responsive to the needs of the employers is the foundation of Customized Employment (U.S Department of Labour, 2009). Extending the argument on customize employment for persons with disabilities to gain work experience, Carter, Austin, and Trainor (2012), asserted that customized employment has been increasingly recognized as a valuable way to provide critical support for people with disability who does not have work experience, and has begun to be used in school to support transition to work.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (2014) defines customized employment as '' competitive integrated employment, for an individualized determination of strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with significant disability, and is designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and business needs of the employer.'' (p.1634). Customize employment is not a typical work that you find on the job market, but it is created to meet the strength and interest of the individual with disability in tandem with the needs of the employer.

2.3.7 Employment related inclusive practices

2.3.7.1 Customized employment approach

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (2014) defines customized employment as '' competitive integrated employment, for an individualized determination of strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with significant disability, and is designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and business needs of the employer.'' (p.1634).

Customize employment is not a typical work that you find on the job market, but it is created to meet the strength and interest of the individual with disability in tandem with

the needs of the employer. Bartram et al. (2019) noted that workplace accommodations, such as modified workspaces, can enable employers with intellectual disability maximize their potentials to improve the outcome of the organization. They advanced their argument to the effect that job analysis and structure be incorporated to meet the needs of the individual employees ''instead of the out-of-date practice of fitting the person to the job description''. Supporting this statement, Leucking (2015), asserts that match the person to a situation, not merely to a job. If employers consciously make provision for customize employment at the workplace purposely to accommodate students with intellectual disabilities, not only will it enhance their production capacity but also help them meet them cooperate social responsibility. Because according to Lead Center (2015) customized employment has been found to be an effective way of hiring and supporting employees with special needs.

Customized employment is one approach that gives room for businesses to hire individuals with intellectual disability (Riesen et al., 2015). Customized employment serves as a strategy to create a system where job assignment is bargained rather than competitive. Through customized employment approach, employers or hiring agencies could assess the abilities of individual with intellectual disability and provide job coaching and other employment assistance to the individual at no cost to the business (Riesen et al., 2013). Customized employment counselors work with the individual with intellectual disability to develop a job plan, create a portfolio on the day-to-day activities done by the individual with intellectual disability at work, and design a customized job description based on the individuals' abilities and interest. This initiative benefits not only the intellectual disability but helps to meet the needs of the employers, and results in helping the individual with intellectual disability work optimally at a very minimal cost to the employer.

However, employers will not necessarily design the structure of the workplace to accommodate persons with disabilities without receiving employment request from potential employees. Since persons with intellectual disability are largely not able to advocate for themselves, it then becomes imperative for the stakeholders like teachers, parents, schools to consciously approach these employers with the aim of looking for vacancy for their students for these employers to begin to consider redesigning their job structure in a manner that will accommodate persons with disability interests and strengths while meeting the needs of the employers. Research has proven that with or without disability is not the preoccupation of employers when making decision to employ people. Instead, the main concern is matching a person to a specific employer's needs.

2.4 Challenges that Employers Could Encounter When They Collaborate with School to Employ Students with intellectual disability

2.4.1 Setting expectations

Taylor et al. (2016), contend schools face many challenges collaborating with potential partners or convening their communities in productive ways to address these challenges. Both school and especially employers are always hesitant in establishing collaborative initiative due to varied expectations. Ranging from liability concerns, behaviour of students with intellectual disability, and abilities. Kantar (2017), contends that employers lack of confidence rather than overt prejudice prevents them from employing persons with intellectual disability. According to Australian Human Resource Institute Report (2011) nearly a quarter of the Human Resources professional surveyed believe there is a perception in their organization that people with disability would not perform well as compared to their counterparts without disabilities.

Also, employer attitudes and perceptions about the capabilities of individuals with intellectual disability and lack of available support and personnel within their agencies were both cited as critical barriers to providing students from school with work experience (Scheef et al., 2018; Valentini et al., 2019a) in their study noted that before collaborating with a community transition programme, some employers held specific concerns related to expectations. They cited the unpredictable behaviour of persons with intellectual disability could negatively impact the outcome at the workplace coupled with employers' uncertainty about the strengths and behaviour of students with intellectual disability. It was revealed in their study that none of the participants gave evidence of actual occurrence. Instead, all these were mere perceptions they had even before entering collaborations with other stakeholders.

Contrastingly, Noonan et al. (2008) noted that that inaccurate perceptions about students with disabilities, schools and outside agencies inhibit effective collaboration. Carter et al. (2009) highlighted in their study that employers network representatives' views about collaborating with schools to offer youth with work experience and career development were influenced by disability status as participants viewed involvement in such activities as less feasible if working with youth with disabilities. Clearly, some employers have been more fixated on their perceptions which influence their low expectations about working with persons with disabilities without recourse to their abilities. The issue of varied expectations appears not to be related to employers but families and their children with disabilities. In the work of Rooney (2017), he intimated that finding a common grounds between encouraging students to have dreams and helping them identify realistic achievable goals seems to be a major challenge when working with transition age youth with intellectual disability. To the extent that families can also have unrealistic expectations for their children, placing a great deal of pressure

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on the youth. Following the argument advanced so far, it can be deduced that employers, families and even the students with intellectual disability have different expectations, a situation that militate against entering into collaborations that focus on ensuring employment for students with intellectual disability.

2.4.2 Communication

Communication is very essential in every human endeavours. It binds people together and improves or sustains relationships among two or more entities. In the same vein Valentini et al. (2018) contends employers did highlight the essence of open and continuous communication in their school-business partnerships. Meanwhile Pallisera (2012) in their study interviewed 5 professionals with responsibilities in post-school services and they admitted that they ought to create awareness about the work they are doing in schools: '' it's also us, we have to explain well what it is we do, how it works, we need to be informed about what they do, communicate with the schools and see on what points we can, where we can reach an agreement or do something together''. The obvious phenomenon here is that both employers and the school are not aware of each other especially on the kind of service they provide. If there is an employer who has a vacancy in the workplace or aware of a vacancy somewhere, it means that the schools will not be aware.

Meanwhile the usual rhetoric has been that students with intellectual disability are underemployed yet the school and the businesses in community are working in parallel because of lack of exchange of information largely due to absence of collaboration. In the work of Pallisera and colleagues, other interviewees said there are a lot of things about other services I don't know. Lack of information, and if you do not know the other centres in the area, you can't inform the families properly. Communication should

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be more fluid, there's a need to investigate which channels of communication might found to connect everyone in a more practical way. Pallisera and colleagues in their study recommended that there is the need to improve communication processes between employers, but also be extended to young people with disabilities and their families.

Moreover, Valentini et al. (2019b) after interviewing some employers, it was revealed that there were some employee's that feared they could be replaced by student workers. This calls for schools to explore options in terms of employment opportunities in the community to ascertain their needs, workplace culture of businesses to assess if the training giving to the students will be a good fit for the employer. They further stated that these candid comment from the employers indicate the instrumentality of communication at the beginning of partnership to discuss expectations, logistics and responsibilities.

2.4.3 Employer s' attitude

To foster collaboration effort between employers and schools to facilitate the employability of students with disabilities the attitude and disposition demonstrated by employers towards the disability status of the individuals involved is key. Musima (2014) study findings revealed that 88.9% and 86.1% of private and public organizations respectively in Nairobi County were less willing to work with persons with intellectual disability. When asked how they rate workers with disabilities and other workers, they said they fared well though with challenges such as communication, interpersonal relationships, teamwork as some lacked the concept of sharing a working tool is considered his or hers as opposed to the firm and should not be used by any other worker. Reisen and Oertle (2019), confirmed this assertion in their study that some

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employers have demonstrated to have issues regarding transition-age youth with disabilities' capabilities to complete a given task, as well as liability-related concerns. The point of disagreement of their assertion is the mistrust in the abilities of persons with disabilities. Their perception or the prejudice obviously is skewing their judgement regarding the capacity of persons with disability to deliver when you assign a task to them. The issue of liability has been overstretched because the so-called nondisabled peers can equally be liabilities at the workplace. There is no point in particularizing persons with disabilities as incapable and liabilities.

Similarly, Henry et al. (2015) argued that employers raised issues on the value of disability employment services, candidates' qualification for the job, and employers' knowledge on employers' needs. Adding to this argument, Henry and colleagues contend that given the concerns and reservations employers have about persons with disabilities regarding their capacity to work, they then recommend coordinators to engage the persons with disabilities first before referring them for employment. This assertion is debatable because those proposed to coordinate these activities, do they have the capacity to determine the abilities of the persons with disabilities to know whether they can work effectively or not? what is the guarantee that they will discharge their duties on a fairground without denying these people the opportunity to work because of their disabilities?

Contrastingly, if there are coordinators to liaise between the employers and persons with disabilities looking for job, it will also help both stakeholders, that's employers and persons with disabilities looking for job to know who to contact when the need arises. Meanwhile, Wakeford and Waugh (2014) noted that a basic factor influencing employers is the consideration of the costs and the benefit related to young people with

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disability at their workplace. In the same vein, Ellenkamp et al. (2016), posited that companies often drag their feet to put in place support systems that are responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities, specifically those with intellectual disability because of increased organisational costs and the belief that individuals with disabilities do not have the required skills to complete tasks optimally (Scheef et al., 2018). Leucking (2010) contradicted this by arguing that organisations recruit those with prerequisite skill and suitable for the job without recourse to whether the person has a disability or not. In the same way Scior and Werner (2016), argued that those stigmas (including the belief that most people with disabilities are unproductive or should be made to work in special workshops) that largely put these people in a disadvantage position regarding low employment outcomes.

This goes to buttress the point that employer's general attitude is a high determinant of collaboration that focus on employing students with intellectual disability, as opinions were divided regarding decisions employers take to employ. Where some employers' consideration was the competence and merits of persons with disabilities, others were denying same people employment on grounds of disability and liability concerns. As agreed by Kantar (2017), it is employers lack of confidence as against overt prejudice is preventing employers from employing people with disabilities.

Chan et al. (2010), intimated that inadequate knowledge and training about antidiscrimination legislation and accommodation, and the absence of disability as a defined group in an organisation's mission, policies, and procedures. The emerging increase in job requirement and standards, which occasioned the plight of matching these standards with capabilities of the individuals with intellectual disability, and thus negative influence on their job prospects, coupled with the ever-increasing digital

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evolution pursued by some organizations and companies has led to the reduction 0f manpower in the business operations (Kocman et al., 2018). Indicating that though employers may have their reservations regarding the employment of individuals with intellectual disability, however, giving the digital transformation wave which is blow across the globe and pursue for high standards necessarily will influence employers to directly or indirectly sideline the individuals with intellectual disability especially when they don't meet the requisite requirements. This is one of the reasons why schools and other stakeholders like the family should consider community collaborations with the local employers for special arrangement that focus on providing employment experiences for the students with intellectual disability in this context.

Some employers due to their skepticism about the capacity of individuals with intellectual disability to deliver optimally usually assign them very simple responsibilities and tasks which leads to underemployment and stunt their skill development. This is corroborated by Hemphill and Kulik (2017), that this practice demotivates individuals with intellectual disability from aspiring to work in the mainstream or integrated work climate and thus impedes their skill development and their transfer out of secured work. Employers' previous negative experiences with the individuals with intellectual disability was also a major factor in predicting their willingness and attitudes towards employing these individuals, as familiarity with an individual with an intellectual disability may negatively influence one's attitudes towards employment of other individuals with intellectual disability (Duvdevany, et al., 2016).

Moreover, the employment of individuals with intellectual disability largely hinges on the employer's readiness to handle risk and cope with the difficulties involved in their

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work, like infrastructure issues and other economic related consequence (Vinzer & Roth, 2013). The emotional aspect, including the feeling of individuals involved, lack of knowledge of peculiar to the needs of workers with disabilities and lack of understanding of the reason behind their behaviour was main concern of some employers. Some employers find this issue troubling due to the lack of appreciation of the appropriate way to way to engage with individuals with intellectual disability. Similarly, employees with intellectual disability did not know how best to interact with their employers which compelled them to leave work or stop work within the environment (Zapella, 2015). In all, employers have differing expectations and reservations towards employing individuals with intellectual disability, as their actions portrays their preference to employ the so-called individuals without disabilities, even though the basis for their expectations and reservations are mostly on wrong assumptions about individuals with intellectual disability. In support of this assertion Kocman et al. (2018), argued that many employers acknowledged their ignorance about how to engage appropriately with individuals with intellectual disability and highlighted the role of media campaign to enhance the projection of job availabilities for individuals with intellectual disability and promoting inclusive or integrated employment experience.

Students with intellectual disability have the aspirations and capacity to be employed to propel them to live a dignified life. Employment can lead to positive psychological and economic benefits for individuals with intellectual disability, the feeling that there is a goal in life, provides platform to meet new friends while building their capacities, as well as enhanced opportunities for financial independence, health and greater sense of control self-reliance (Ellemkamp et al., 2016; Holwerda et al., 2013).

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Employment provides many incentives for individuals with disabilities, specifically those with intellectual disability , such as financial rewards, access to benefits and social insurance programmes, while reducing their independence on social care, adding that employment of individuals with disabilities enhances their self-esteem and provides them with access to professional and social networks, coupled with improving their standard of living Notwithstanding, for students with intellectual disability to realize their aspirations focused on employment, they will need enabling environment that will embrace their unique abilities where they can maximize potential not only to their benefits but the overall growth of the business or entity they engaged with. In support of this assertion, Aliza (2013) argued that most of these students have the potential to develop their technical vocational skills, instead there are limited job avenues to accommodate this category of students as the challenge (Lindstrom, Doren & Miesch, 2011). Even if there are more job opportunities to absorb or recruit employees, the students with intellectual disability are usually underrepresented While many federal laws attempted to support paid employment for individuals with intellectual disability, they have not been afforded the minimum right to obtaining employment with the community in which they live (Duvdevany et al., 2016).

In the U.S, a former Governor of the Massachusetts state Deval Patrick formed a task force on Employment to initiate a targeted Employment plan for the individuals with disabilities focused on making Commonwealth of Massachusetts a model state for the employment of persons with disability population especially those with (Henry et al., 2014; Massachusetts Disability Task Force on Employment, 2009). Through Community engagement, Henry et at. (2014) asked businesses what they can do to hire more people with disabilities. The results highlighted the constraints and possible discrimination in the hiring process for individuals with disabilities (Henry et al., 2014).

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Some business owners expressed concern about going through bureaucratic bottlenecks regarding disability service system and hiring managers' concern that training individuals with disabilities comes with extra burden on their co-workers without disabilities, which will further lead to a decline in their profit margins (Henry et al., 2014). Other business owners expressed concerns over the strict provisions in the ADA legislation, which they felt was yet another layer of impediment to individuals with disabilities (Job Accommodation Network, 2012).

Notwithstanding, the Massachusetts Task Force participants agreed that business leaders have a responsibility to hire individuals with diverse disabilities to achieve diverse, inclusive 21st century workplace, and that inclusion strategies have potential to bring a new dimension to employment (Henry et al., 2014). On the other hand, the attitudes of prospective employers on the hiring of individuals with intellectual disability vary based on the fluctuating job market, technological advancement, and the global market at large (Nota et al., 2014). Similarly, employers describe their employees with disabilities as incapable than their nondisabled peers performing the same job (Louvet et al., 2009).

However, Houtenville and Kalargyrou (2014) revealed that the hospitality and service industry, hiring employers grappled with accommodation constraints, lowered work expectation, and a productivity challenge. In the same study, Houtenville and Kalargyrou opined that employers must assign individuals with disabilities jobs that match with their abilities and not the other way round where the job conflicts with their disability (for example assigning reading to a visually impaired worker and asking intellectual disability person to take roll of members who are present at work). Despite all these differing employers' attitudes toward the employment of individuals with

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intellectual disability especially those with intellectual disability, a survey by Kaye et al., (2011) indicated that employers' attitudes toward employment of individuals with intellectual are favourable. Additionally, a survey of private businesses indicated a positive orientation toward the employment of individuals with intellectual disability in the workplace (kaye et al., 2011; Sima et al., 2014).

2.4.4 Time investment

Livermore et al. (2020) suggest notwithstanding the benefits of collaborations, entering into partnerships can be stressful for some stakeholders due to the time and continued effort need to form collaborative relationships to employers skepticism about the abilities of persons with disabilities to work coupled with the need to sometimes modify the workplace to accommodate persons with disabilities which amount to time investment, employers usually are hesitant not to collaborate with other stakeholders. ''Although many employers indicated the partnerships required few resources, we found that time investment was a significant challenge early on in the partnerships. They argued this was largely due to the length of time required to learn about each students' individual ability and interests (Valentini et al., 2019, p. 372)''.

The argument about time investment to learn about the interests and abilities of students with disabilities should not be a hinderance to entering partnership between employers and schools. Just as the so-called nondisabled peers irrespective of how equipped they are, they all go through orientation process at the workplace as standard practice to enable them to be familiarized with the basic details or nuances of the job and setting before commencing full work without reservations whatsoever, same should be done for persons with disabilities. The missing link in their argument is the fixation on the disability which is preventing them from considering the fact that they need to make

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equitable accommodation for persons with disability. When they begin to consider it as such, the argument on time investment will not even arise.

In furtherance of the argument, ''some employers spoke about the demands the partnership made both on the resources and on their attention. Two employers were more concerned with the existing employees and had to devote to training them on diversity and inclusion.'' (p. 372). On the other hand, training of the employees with disabilities as reported should not be seen as challenging when it has nothing to do with their capacity to deliver. Training them to become abreast of the nuances at the workplace should rather be seen as necessary action undertaking to get the best out of them (persons with disabilities). Though it may take unusual time investment and resources to train persons with disabilities to be accustomed with procedures and nuances at the workplace as compared to the nondisabled peer employees. However, it must be accepted by employers as a gesture or cooperate responsibility towards inclusivity in society.
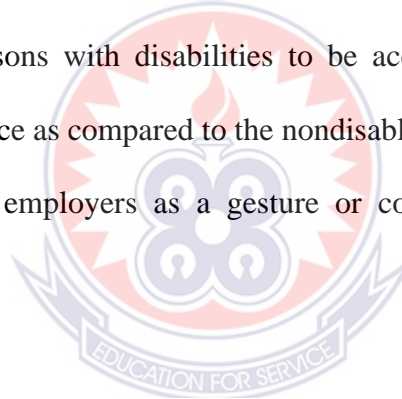
2.5 Benefits Employers Consider in Collaborating with Schools that Focus on Employment Opportunities for Students with intellectual disability

2.5.1 Business expansion

Employers largely have skeptical disposition relative to the productivity of students with disability when working with them. One employer asserted that employing individuals with disabilities required making changes in work and environment, such as making it accessible, which was an additional cost. From their point of view, the individual with disability is the sole beneficiary of this employment (Zappella, 2015).

However, in the work of Valentini (2018), the employers reported of how students with intellectual disability were helping to improve productivity at the workplace, "I cannot put it into a number, but there's definitely a benefit''. This highlights the belief that students with intellectual disability have the capacity to deliver and contribute to the output of businesses when given the opportunity. In the same work, some of the employers also reported that the students are highly motivated which sometimes inspired their colleague workers to enhance their work and become more engaged. By extension other employers reported that the students were able to focus on another time-consuming task that otherwise may have been left uncompleted.

All these are testament of how productive students with intellectual disability have proven to be at least restrictive workplaces. Students with intellectual disability need equal opportunity and supportive environment and they will deliver as backed research done by Dominica (2010), that employers must also be ready and willing to accept and embrace this category of learners and provide all supportive and conducive environments to facilitate their work.

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2.5.2 Springboard for employment

Collaborative initiatives focused on employment creating job opportunities presents the platform for career exploration for the students involved, in that it gives the employers opportunity to have close observation of the abilities of the students with disabilities as they work as corroborated in the work of Valentini et al. (2019), that many students with intellectual disability were found as having the capacity to deliver which made these school-business partnerships a potential avenue for recruiting new staff by the employers.

In furtherance, Valentini argued that employers noted that the opportunities that had to observe students on the job informed their decision to consider some students for future employment. This is a confirmation that collaborative initiatives between schools and employers serves a preparatory ground for the students to build their skillset while catching the eye of the employers for a potential employment. These early work experiences provide students opportunity to explore knowledge valued by employers; acquire skills; identify their career interests; appreciate workplace ethics, norms and expectations and ignites interest for future employment. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), vocational rehabilitation agencies and schools are also required to work collaboratively to provide the requisite pre-employment transition services that transition age youth with disabilities may require, long with engaging and supporting parents throughout the transition from school to work.

This reaffirms the potency of collaboration regarding how it helps to prepare students with disabilities with prerequisite skill needed for employment. It is for this reason that the school Reverend Father John Special Unit ought to explore options of engaging

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community employers with the aim of collaborating with them to create room for providing employment opportunities to the students with disabilities there.

2.5.3 Avenue for education

Stigmatization and marginalization are major concerns of individuals with disabilities and by extension their families in society. This attitude not only dehumanize the individuals with disabilities but also creates huge unemployment and underemployment rate to this population in society which further exacerbate their situation in society, a situation that has been corroborated by previous researchers like Fryers (2006), that employment indeed is crucial for both psychological and physiological well-being of individuals with disabilities and even their counter parts without disabilities. On the same wavelength, Hendricks (2010), argued that employment for transition age youth irrespective of the status of disability is a topmost priority and desirable social achievement.

Despite the potency and dignity of gaining employment bestows on the individual, persons with disabilities especially those with intellectual disability remain in the fringes or margins as far as employment is concerned over varied reasons including employers skepticism that these individuals are not capacitated enough as Reisen and Oertle (2019) confirmed this assertion in their study that some employers have demonstrated to have issues regarding transition-age youth with disabilities' capabilities to complete a given task, as well as liability-related concerns. Kantar (2017), intimated that employers lack of confidence as against overt prejudice is preventing employers from employing people with disabilities. It is the basis of this that sensitizing the public about the capabilities and potential of individuals with disabilities is imperative because individuals with intellectual disability have proven to be capable,

reliable, and productive when giving the opportunity. Confirming collaborative initiative as a means of education in a similar work done by Hughes (2017), reported that a collaborative project regarding MSPE project showcased positive changes in government and agencies policies and procedures as well as policymakers 'attitudes, knowledge, and awareness of employment for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In Spain, Valentini et al. (2019) revealed how school-business collaborations presented an opportunity for all employees to learn more about the value of diversity within their business. They felt that the presence of the students with intellectual disability at the workplace enhanced both knowledge about and acceptance of people with disabilities. There is a body of research that informs the reason for the successful employment of an individual with intellectual disability and the prestige it brings to the individual's life separate from wages earned (Kober & Eggleton,2005), in addition to reporting success with employing individuals with ID in their organisation's workforce (Duvdevany et al., 2016). Businesses who employ individuals with intellectual disability are viewed very positively by the public (Burge et al., 2007)

2.5.4 Broaden network

Collaborative initiatives involving schools and employers have the propensity to expand both human relations and business –to-business connections for the parties involved as supported by Valentini et al. (2019), that although rare but some employers shared ways in which their partnerships fostered building of valuable individual and relationships. In their study some of the employers recounted that "it's been rewarding now because not only does it give other employers maybe insight into achieving, it opens doors for me terms of personal relationships network and business-wise meeting

a lot of different people that had we not gone down that path, wouldn't be there''. This corroborates the assertion that engaging in this collaboration comes with varied benefits such as helping employers to establish new relationships either at personal level or for business purpose. However, Vinzer and Roth (2013), asserted that the employment of individuals with disabilities comes with apprehensions of direct interaction with them, also the fear if customer reaction in coming into contact with individuals with intellectual disability and largely their fear of meeting individuals with disability.

2.6 Employers' expectations to enhance school-employer collaborations

2.6.1 Work trial

This initiative focuses on assigning students with intellectual disabilities to work with employers in the community for the students to gain work experience while in school and presents opportunity for them to catch the eye of the employers, which then boost their employment fortunes. Corroborating this, Leucking and Fabian (2015) posited a key motivator to employ was the employer's perception about persons with disabilities capacity to deliver when given a task, work placement gives the employer an opportunity to see the person in action. This confirms the need for stakeholders to expose students with intellectual disabilities to work when in school. Employers are ready to experience students with ID displaying their talent, because already there are entrenched societal misconceptions about persons with disabilities especially regarding their ability to work.

Stakeholders like school can leverage on this initiative by engaging the employers to make special arrangement to regulate these activities either for the students to work with the employers to gain experience for future employment or paid work experience. According Kapur et al (2005), students who had paid or unpaid work experiences while

in school are better placed and likely to have better post school outcomes. Confirming this, Carter et al (2010), intimated that it is indispensable that paid work experiences in integrated settings be accessible to students with intellectual disability to enhance their chances of getting employment that involve individuals with intellectual disability in a competitive employment. Rooney (2016), postulated that unpaid work experiences are valuable and important as it prepares the youth with disabilities for future employment, however, participating in volunteer work alone is insufficient if not accompanied by either simultaneous or subsequent paid work experiences.

2.6.2 Continuous support for employers

Research has proven that employers are willing and ready to employ students with ID when the necessary support from other stakeholders like parents, teachers, schools, and community are made accessible to them. Leucking and Fabian (2015) postulated that employers consider employing students with intellectual disability as risk, even though they may potentially employ them when they have confidence that they will be supported and believe in the person who will be offering to support. In the same vein, Gilson et al. (2018), postulate that some individuals with intellectual disability lack several of skills, such as social skills, the ability to apply for jobs, and perform that job. Berry and Kymar (2012) contended that the conditions of the individuals with intellectual disability have consequences on their behaviour and this hinder their success and progress at work.

Obviously, not all employers have knowledge in how to handle individuals with intellectual disability, a situation that sometimes frustrate them as employers; likewise, the employees and the individuals with intellectual disability themselves. Employers' previous negative experiences with the individuals with intellectual disability was also

a major factor in predicting their willingness and attitudes towards employing these individuals, as familiarity with an individual with an intellectual disability may negatively influence one's attitudes towards employment of other individuals with intellectual disability (Duvdevany, Chen & Fine, 2016). Hence, Support for the employers should be ongoing and obligatory because the operations at the workplace keep changing and so if student with intellectual disability is employed it is expected that they will be able to adapt to the new changes at the workplace. This makes it imperative for stakeholders like the family, teachers, schools, and parents to be available to assist the students with intellectual disability to adapt to the job tasks change in order not to risk losing their jobs. Students with intellectual disability largely have deficit in adaptive behaviour, meanwhile the procedures and structures at the workplace is susceptible to changes to meet new trends, there is the need for support systems and mechanisms to be instituted in multidimensional ways to accommodate not only the students with intellectual disability but the employers and workers at the workplace to make the working environment conducive for all.

2.7 Policies and Guidelines of Transition

Transition of students with disabilities is a phenomenon that assumes global dimension; hence several countries have unique ways of implementing policies to regulate transition related issues for persons with disabilities. Given the complexity of transition related issues, parallel histories in every other nation and the nature of those histories are interwoven within the scope of those nations. In the case of U.S, as far back as 1975 a policy framework called Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) was passed by the federal government when about a section of the population of persons with special needs could not have access to public education. This policy was largely focused on empowering individuals with disability to have access to education in the

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general education classroom. Later in 1990 the EAHCA went under evolution and titled Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) this policy was passed to reauthorize and redirect the concept of transition to encompass self-determination and autonomy of learners, as well as the potentials and systems of support for seamless transition from one stage of life to another.

Transition is further supported by the amendment of EAHCA into IDEA of 1990 and this amendment created more mandates to enhance transitions among students with special needs (Ashbaker, 2011). Later in 2004 the IDEA was amended to focus on postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. Amid this period of evolution of the legal framework, came with more precise legislative mandate that spelt out the outcome of transition service for the students with special needs. As part of the dictates of IDEA (2014), schools were mandated to partner with related service providers (such as VR agencies, when appropriate) to support students in meeting their transitional goals. Ashbaker (2011) contends that the current IDEA requires that by the time a student reaches the age 16, his or her Individualized Education programme must address transition planning. This means the parents, the student (if appropriate), and the rest of IEP team collaborate to decide what student needs to prepare for the transition from school to adult life. Transition planning includes any community agencies and work experiences that will be part of the student's school day. To be effective the planning certainly should begin prior to the student's 16th birthday. (p.36).

Subsequently a more focused legal framework on employment of students with disabilities was passed and titled Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2014. What is striking about this Act is the fact that it mandates State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to reserve at least 15% of their federal program funds to ensure

the coordination and delivery of pre-employment transition services to all potentially eligible students with disability who need them.

 In light all these legislations and executive frameworks to ensure students with intellectual disability are employed to earn a living and dignified life, research has it that globally, these students are underrepresented in the area of employment, and this is buttressed by Domin and Butterworth (2013), that the rate of employment among individuals with intellectual disability round the globe remain lower as compared with their peers without disabilities. This is a testament to the fact that despite government and nongovernmental organizations efforts to provide employment for or create enabling environment for these individuals to be employed at various jurisdictions, they are markedly not represented in employment. For instance, the employment rate of individuals with intellectual disability in places like the United State of America, Canada and the United Kingdom range between 9% and 28%. Contrastingly, the employment rate for their counterparts which is the so-called persons without disabilities population range between 75% to 90% (Duvdevany et al., 2016). With this ample evidence, it shows that individuals with intellectual disability are disproportionately represented in mainstream employment and it's for which reason the training institutions such as the various special schools and other stakeholders like parents and local authorities must refocus the processes and procedures to facilitate the employment fortunes of these students through collaboration. On the same score of the statistical evidence of the underrepresentation of these individuals in the area of employment across the globe, Ellenkamp et al. (2016), revealed that the percentage of individuals with who are included in supported Employment services are between the ranges of 9% to 40% across different jurisdictions, while the data gathered from several studies corroborate that employment is not an available opportunity for many

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individuals with intellectual disability many areas (Kocman, Fischer & Weber, 2018). For example, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics asserted that, in 2018, the employment rate of individuals with disabilities reached 19.1%; as compared to the general population who do not have a disability 65.9% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).

In Swedish educational sector as well as the public sectors more generally, evolved from being governed by rules to managing according to goals and results (Persson,2008). In Sweden, the special needs upper-secondary school represents an independent form of schooling targeted towards students who are unable to meet the requirement of upper-secondary school because of an intellectual disability. Despite the introduction of programs , a 2014 survey of employer perspectives on the employment of people with disabilities, conducted by the Families and Work Institute (Matos, 2014), found that only 39% of companies had formal plans that included accommodation for hiring and retaining people with disabilities, 9% had a formal plan that did not include any provisions , and 50% did not have any formal staffing plan to hire or retain individuals with disabilities' (2011) reveals that there has been significant reforms in the Swedish education system that impacts on the special needs education in the country namely the new Education Act (2010) and 2013 reformation of the special needs upper-secondary school.

The rationale for the reform were multidimensional, to increase community followership and participation, the collaboration between upper-secondary schools and special needs upper-secondary schools, to level the education by creating new structures for national programs, provide flexibility to be responsive to the needs of every student, to provide good preparation for working life, and give meaning to adult life by getting a profession (Prop.2011/12:50). One of the main reasons for the

implementation of the new Education Act (2010) was that the target group entitled to special needs upper-secondary school changed to include only students with intellectual disability (2010:800l, chapter 29, section 8). Another signaling rationale that underpinned the 2013 reforms was to change the program structure and introduced nine nationals and replaced former Workplace-Based-Education with Workplace-Based-Learning (WBL) for students in national programs. This reform was largely executed to enable students like those with intellectual disability put theory to practice within the context of real-world what they have been taught in school. This educational reform presents opportunity for the students to spend a minimum of 22 weeks of education at workplaces with an assigned supervisor.

According to SOU (2011) this initiative will equip the students with vocational skills and then the vocational culture and how to become integral member of community at the workplace. Because in Sweden, the ultimate goal of the special schools is to provide each student the opportunity to prepare for employment in the labour market (National Agency of Education, 2016). Similarly, the primary aim for special needs schools for students with ID is to provide students with intellectual disabilities a customized education that will provide a good basis for gainful employment and further studies as well as personal development and active participation in society (Education Act, 2010, chapter 18, section 2).

Meanwhile, according to the Norwegian White Paper Report (2016) approximately 10% of adults with intellectual disability in Norway work in sheltered workshops. However, the paper reported that one benefit of sheltered employment in Norway is their mandate to provide transitional employment training programmes preparing employees for integrated or competitive employment. This means that it is a deliberate

initiative that the state is collectively supporting to serve as a preparatory ground for young adults with intellectual disability to not only earn income but also be job ready. This obviously will serve as alternative livelihood for them which will go a long way to enhance their financial independence and self-reliance. Especially, when according to Reine et al. (2016), students with intellectual disability face serious discrepancies between the desire to be employed and available opportunities. Sheltered employment can be satisfying (Rustad & Kassah, 2020). In 2001, the government issued a very comprehensive and popular act the Disabled Care System (Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2010), which largely centered on employment and educational rights of individuals with disabilities. On the issue of employment, the Disabled Care System states that all individuals with disabilities must receive training and rehabilitation services and provision of appropriate training courses. The act mandate stakeholders to provide jobs that suit their abilities and qualifications, to enable them the opportunity to reveal their capabilities, earn income, and to seek to improve their performance level through training while working (The Ministry of Education, 2006). This act has been a game changer for the employment fortunes of students with disabilities, as argued by Alnalhdi (2016), that until 2005, students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia were not receiving any vocational training.

In Africa, precisely, Kenya enacted the Persons with Disability Act 2003 which enjoins the public and the private sector employers reserve 5% of jobs for persons with disabilities (Mbeja, 2011). Despite this policy in force, Freedman (2010) noted that it is difficult to ascertain the number of youths with disabilities in training or employment, all records available indicates lower rate of labour participation higher levels of unemployment. In Ghana, the National constitution guarantee the right of education

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and employment for all citizens but it loose and vague on the issue of employment particularly for persons with disabilities.

Subsequently, a specific law was passed to regulate the life and activities of persons with disabilities which is the Persons with Disability Act; 2006 (Act 715). This legal framework largely echoes the need of persons with disabilities having access to physical, social, economic and cultural environment to health education, employment, transportation, and to information and communication for persons with disabilities. This particular law is too broad and does not touch on transition of persons with disabilities with a focus on employment of persons with disabilities just as other countries like U.S has specific law on transition which state categorically that students with disabilities must be provided transition plan at the age of 16 even before they exit school. This transition plan helps the transition team determine whether the person in question is eligible for vocational rehabilitation and proceed to secondary education.

In the Ghanaian context, there are no transition plan framework that regulate the movement of students with disabilities from one stage of life to another. In this literature review, it was revealed that in Norway one of the lucrative employment avenues for persons with disabilities is sheltered workshop, though ILO (2015) contends that typically majority of students with intellectual disability in sheltered employment do not get enough preparation for the open competitive labour market. Despite sheltered workshop not being the best of employment, one would expect but it is the better alternative to what transpires in Ghana where the students with intellectual disability are openly observed working in the community but do not earn any income out of their toil. This situation has occasioned some of the students overstaying in school and others drop out of school. It is this gap in knowledge that this study seeks to fill with a focus

on exploring the view of employers in the community on how they could collaborate with school to enhance the employment fortunes of students with. intellectual disability

2.7.1 Policy guidelines on transition from school to work

Transition is a multidimensional process that involves the movement from one stage of life to the other such as from home to school, adolescence to adulthood, family house to independent home, community participation, further education, and school to work. Transition continues to be a major hurdle in the lives of individuals with disabilities. According to Kirk (2008) there is ample evidence that reveals transition arrangements are often nonexistent, or, where present uncoordinated, young people may not always be involved in the process and favourable adult services are always not available.

Due to lack of proper structures and transition planning to regulate the movement of individuals with disabilities their life stages especially in the case of Ghana, Win and Hay (2009) contend that they (students with intellectual disability) find themselves either in falling through the cracks or in a frustrating loop of continual training. The UN (2014) asserts that policies have failed to address the unique social, psychological, educational, and economic needs of these youth. Among other things, transition to work remains the elusive and a difficult phase in life of individuals with disabilities especially students with disabilities to experience. Following this worrying trend, several countries have deliberately initiated policies and programmes as a response to the ever-challenging transition to work people with disabilities are facing.

 In Scotland the government implemented principles of good transitions (Scottish Transition Forum 2016), as a road map to guide individuals with disabilities in the country to receive individual centered support coordinated across all services. This initiative aims at bringing support and information to the doorsteps of the parents,

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caregivers, individuals with disabilities themselves to inform their choices towards attaining independent life. The Scottish Government reauthorized this policy by introducing the Independent Living Fund (ILF) Transition to enhance the living standards of individuals with disabilities as they exit school environment to the community for equitable and equal participation such as work. These are some support systems and structures other countries have initiated to help individuals with disabilities access to enhance autonomy and responsibility as they transition from school. The ILF transitions initiative, which was co-produced by the Scottish government, ILF Scotland, disabled people, careers, disability groups and local authorities is a discretionary monetary support with an annual budget of 5 million Euros given to individuals with disabilities as one-off fund to facilitate their activities, being it for establishment of their businesses or anything that will improve their lives as they move into next phase of life. Because, the Scottish government transition policy is to adopt individual focused approach, grounded in the belief that young adult with disabilities, parents and caregivers have better appreciation of the need of the individuals with disabilities since they live with them (Scottish Government,2019).

Similarly, 81% of young adults with intellectual disability in Norway receive a disability pension as their income, after the Norway Labor and Welfare Administration have assessed their working capacities (Wendelborg et al., 2017). Besides the benefit for persons with intellectual disability, according to the Norwegian White Paper (2017), 10% of individuals with intellectual disability work in sheltered employment. The white paper reported that the sheltered employment is mandated to serve as preparatory or training grounds for transitioning students with intellectual disability to the mainstream employment. Confirming this Garrels (2020), noted that sheltered employment can be satisfying.

Meanwhile, RENINCO (2011) argues that in Romania there are scanty information about transition issues for persons with disabilities as some field research confirms the fact that in Romania support services for transition from school to work are not formally and structurally organized and effective. Only NGOs are initiating transition services through funding from projects of the sheltered workshops activities as employment avenues for persons with disabilities. Yet, the Romanian Education law 2011 mentioned the possibility of Education and Labour ministries to set up sheltered workshops for vocational training and integration into active life learners with special educational needs. This is a clearest indication that Romania though do not have formally established transition service from school to work opportunities for persons with disabilities, however there are still NGOs in the country who are providing alternative employment support through sheltered workshops to help individuals with disabilities in the country to secure employment to earn a living when they exit school as it being implemented in Norway as well.

Contrastingly, transition from school to work in the U.S is formally and legally established. According to the IDEA (2004) all persons with disabilities must have IEP that outlines the transition goals and services of the student where a section of IEP ought to be developed at the age of 16. The transition needs assessment should factor in the following, community experience, academic preparation development of vocational and independent living objectives. Schools are obliged to report to parents about the students' progress per the transition plan goals so that the necessary intervention can be made to accommodate the needs of the student. The IDEA also makes provision for transition support services such as an opportunity for students with disabilities and specialists in employment to explore different employment climates, for short periods of time such as 3 months. The work can be full- or partial-time experience. Sometimes

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the school can make an arrangement with the employment for training. Specialist such as special educators and employment specialist are usually placed at the work place to provide special support for the students with disabilities at the workplace.

As part of the school to work initiative as stipulated by IDEA, a variety of community resources are made available to support the transition process such as summer jobs for youth programs, transition partnerships programs, youth employment programs, local vocational centers and adult programs. In the case of Saudi Arabia, in the 2000, the government implemented a more targeted and popular act the Disabled Care System (Bureau of Experts at Council of Ministers, 2021) which mainly focused on guaranteeing the educational and employment rights of individuals with disabilities.

On the issue of employment, the Disabled Care Systems states that all individuals with disabilities must receive training and rehabilitation services and provision of appropriate training courses. They must be included in jobs that response to their abilities and qualifications to maximize their potentials to earn income, to enhance their capacity through training while working (the Ministry of Education, 2006). In line with these policy and legal frameworks, according to Almalki (2021), in Saudi Arabia GAPEs form partnership agreements with community business agencies. ''By observation and based on teachers' perspectives, most GAPEs form partnership agreements with only two big companies in the country, panda (a grocery company) or MacDonald's (a food company)'' (Almalki, 2021). Though both teachers and other stakeholders criticize this employment initiative, that it limits the employment choices of the students with disabilities because the companies were only two which makes students compulsorily participate in it whether it is responsive to the unique needs of the students or otherwise. However, whatever be the case such initiatives are

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commendable as it helps to bridge the employment gap between the students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities as they transition from school to work.

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

In line with the first research question and its strands, the literature highlights several factors that motivate employers to hire individuals with intellectual disability. These include community commitment, previous experience with disability, and the enhancement of corporate reputation. However, the literature does not address whether employers consider employment and public education as motivating factors for engaging students with intellectual disabilities in the workplace an area this study explored.

Regarding the second research question, which focuses on incorporation of inclusive employment practices for students with intellectual disability at the workplace, the literature identified practices such as customized employment, paid and unpaid work experiences, and family involvement. Nevertheless, the literature overlooks aspects like sensitization and the presence of formal and informal agreements. This gap is significant as these elements may play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive work environment, an issue this study targeted to address.

The literature also examines the challenges employers encounter when collaborating with schools to employ students with intellectual disability. Key challenges included differing expectations about accommodations, poor communication, negative employer attitudes toward hiring students with intellectual disabilities, lack of knowledge about the capabilities of these individuals, and the time investment required. However, the literature did not delve into how interpersonal relationship skills and social skills of

students with intellectual disabilities manifest in the workplace, another gap this study seeks to fill.

Lastly, the literature discusses the benefits employers perceive when collaborating with schools to provide employment opportunities for students with intellectual disability. Identified benefits include business expansion, improved post-school employment outcomes for students, and opportunities for public education. However, the literature does not emphasize the economic value that employers perceive from engaging students with intellectual disability in their workplaces. This study explored this underrepresented aspect.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, research approach, research philosophy, sample size and sampling technique, the procedure for data collection and setting. Other aspects of the work that will be discussed under this chapter are the instrument for data collection, data analysis procedure and ethical considerations about the study.

3.1 Research Philosophy

This study is underpinned by the interpretivism paradigm, precisely, because the mode of data collection, analysis of the data and its application in this study sought to obtain in-depth knowledge through the verbal and nonverbal actions of the employers on school-employer job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disabilities to work in the community. Also, the research questions and the subsequent results which is the contribution to knowledge and the methodological gaps established in the literature review seeks to explore the issues from the lived experiences of the employers which is in line with the position of the interpretivist paradigm. This is largely because the interpretivist paradigm posits that social reality is constructed jointly through meaningful interaction between the researcher and the researched with focus on understanding the individual and their interpretation of the world around them as argued by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), that the key principle of the interpretivist paradigm is that knowledge is socially constructed.

Similarly, the interpretivist paradigm gives room for researchers with deeper appreciation of situations or behaviour from the point of view of the researched instead

of explaining behaviour through cause and effect (Grbich, 2007). The interpretivist paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from the subjective experiences of individuals. Moreover, the means of data collection and analysis of this study is undertaken through interview and contextual interpretation of data informed by the interaction with the participants, which is in consonance with the belief of the interpretivist worldview. In Corroboration, this approach employs immersive data collection techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions, and observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Elaborating on interpretive paradigm, Babbie (2021) notes that researchers and educators within this paradigm aim to promote a deeper understanding of how individuals and societies construct meaning and knowledge. In furtherance, Punch (2005) postulates that a researcher will construct knowledge socially as a result of his or her personal experiences of the real life within the natural setting where the data was collected. Above all, the study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm largely due to the fact that it facilitates detailed understanding of the researcher on the employers' view of employer-school job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disabilities.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted the qualitative approach to get detailed understanding of the lived experiences, observing the emotions, and other relevant subtleties of the employers through the interaction. conducting research consistent with the research questions raised that seeks to solicit information directly from the participants, in this case employers with respect to their views on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability. Qualitative approach is suitable for this

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study because the topic addresses the need to elicit in-depth responses directly from the participants, document and explore employers' views on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability. This is supported by Leavy (2023), that qualitative study is designed to provide the researcher with a means of understanding a phenomenon by observing or interacting with the participants of the study. Qualitative research is related to exploring and or explaining phenomena as they occur in the natural setting. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Thomas, 2021). Aikins and Wallace (2012), noted that qualitative approach to research enables the researchers and participants to maintain equal status while relating their stories, allowing the expertise to reside in the participants as well as in the researcher.

Also, the small sample size of the study necessitated for the adoption of qualitative study to enhance face-to-face in-depth interview with the participants and a deeper analysis of the data, which is corroborated in literature that most qualitative study designs, sample sizes in case studies are typically small (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Vasileiou et al., 2018) hence the choice of a qualitative approach to this current study.

3.3 Research Design

The study employed a case study research design. The study is suitable for case study design largely because it enabled thorough descriptions of the data through interviews and observations in a natural setting and presented the opportunity to interact with the employers to share their lived experiences on school-employer job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disability.

Also, the case study design was deemed appropriate for this study due to the small sample size of the study and it gave room for in-depth interaction with the participants as supported by Yin (1984) that case studies help in exploring real-life phenomenon in-depth, understanding complex issues, and generating rich insights. Despite all these strengths, the case study design has been widely critiqued that its findings are not generable as it usually focuses on a particular phenomenon with relatively small sample size.

However, in the context of this study, the case study provided the desired outcome as it helped the researcher to understand in deeply the views of the employers in school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability. The case study design has different types that can be used in research like this, however, the perfect for this study was descriptive case study design. This type of case study design presents the opportunity for researchers to delve deep into specific phenomenon within its real-life situation, providing a detailed elaboration and analysis of the situation. The relevance of the case study design in this study which focuses on exploring the views of employers on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability provide great insight about how employers appreciate and perceive the collaboration, benefits they envisage and the challenges they could encounter in collaborating with the school toward providing employment opportunities to students with intellectual disability. The school was chosen because they train the students with intellectual disability and also the employers who have experience engaging these students with intellectual disability. With interview, the researcher can engage in broader discussions with employers to find out their experiences, perspectives and beliefs regarding school-employer collaboration involving students with intellectual disability.

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The descriptive case study design is a perfect fit for this study as it gave room for the researcher to appreciate deeply the views of the employers regarding their willingness to provide employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability, highlighting the factors they could consider before collaborating with the school, the perceived benefits and challenges that may encounter in the collaboration were all revealed. It enables a contextual understanding of the transition and inclusive employment practices employers could incorporate in such collaborative initiatives.

3.4 Population

The study's population was 14 employers. They were comprising 10 females and 4 males with average working years of 6 years. The employers cover food vendors particularly kenkey sellers, banku and fried rice sellers, shoemakers, and printing press owners from the Winneba community. Even though there are different types of employers in the community, however, the researcher was selective in choosing this category of employers because they have experience in working with students with intellectual disability. The employers' average six (6) years' work experience with students with intellectual disability positions them with relevant practical experience with regards to their motivations for working with the students, the inclusive employment practices that must be incorporated, the challenges, and perceived benefits in their collaboration with the school. Also, these employers offer menial work that includes cleaning, washing, and other practical experiences that align with the skills the students are taught in school making them the ideal population to collaborate with in providing employment experience for the students with intellectual disability. Further to the preceding arguments, these employers work from morning to evening, and are located within the vicinity of the students. This accessibility and proximity facilitate flexible schedule for the students' easily participation, while enhancing

communication, and support between the school, parents, and the employers, leading to the success of the collaboration.

3.5 Sample Size

The study's sample size was 9 employers, made up of three (3) food vendors, three (3) shoemakers, and three (3) printing press owners working within the Winneba community. All the nine (9) employers were selected because they all have working experiences with or willing to work with the students with intellectual disability and have been in the business for averagely 6 years which means when they employ or offer to train the students, there will be continuity and sustainability of the collaboration. Also, the employers' businesses are situated within the vicinity of the students which makes it more secured because the students can easily walk to the workplace without transportation cost. Moreover, these employers had flexible schedules of working from morning to evening during the week which offers the opportunity to the students to continue with their schooling alongside going to work after school. Additionally, all the nine (9) participants selected were accessible and willing to share relevant data for the study.

3.5.1 Exclusion criteria

Five employers were excluded from the study because their workplace was not closer to the homes of the students and do not work in the afternoon which is not favourable for the students to work with them after school.

3.6 Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the study participants. This technique was employed to select the participants who had working experience with and willing to work with the students with intellectual disability and have their

businesses situated about 300 metres radius from the homes of the students with intellectual disability. Also, some of the participants chosen were those employers whom the researcher has observed the students frequenting their workplace for the past three years in the community, the researcher thinks they could provide very relevant information about their views on school-employer job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disability and they were willing to interact with the researcher. Rees (1997), noted that inclusion criteria are the specific features researchers want those in their sample to possess. Also, Patton (2002), purposive sampling is a sample technique in which the researcher depends on his or her own judgment when selecting members of population to participate in a study.

The types of purposive sampling vary, however, in the context of this work, the criterion purposive sampling was employed. According to Creswell (2012), the criterion sampling technique is relevant when the researcher wants to gain deep insights into specific features and perspectives that are essential to understanding the research topic. As the criterion sampling enables the researcher to select participants who possess the required criteria, the researcher was able to gather the relevant information that was responsive to the research questions and objectives.

This technique helped to purposefully select employers who have lived experiences and understanding of engaging students with intellectual disability at their workplace which will inform their decision to collaborate with the school to provide employment opportunities to the student. The employers provided valuable and diverse perspectives regarding sharing their views and experiences on school-employer job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disabilities.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

3.7.1 Semi-structured interview guide

Semi-structured interview guide was used in this study. The interview guide was self-created by drawing from relevant literature and in alignment with the research questions. The self-created semi-structured interview guide which reflects the relevant literature enables the interview capture detailed and pertinent data for the study. The semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions in the course of the interaction with the participants which brought flexibility and variety by asking critical questions to complement the original questions while enabling human connection with the participants (Brinkmann & Kvale,2014). The interview guide consisted of a formally prepared set of questions and all the participants responded to the same questions while serving as a guide to the research. The items on the interview guide comprised the four overarching questions with average of five subsequent questions corresponding to the overarching questions respectively, alongside some follow-up questions.

The overarching questions helped to address the research topic while the subsequent questions and follow-ups facilitated in providing detailed inquiries to gather nuanced information related to the overarching question. Semi structured interviews facilitate asking of follow-up questions, depending on the interview process and the interviewees' responses to the original questioning (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The major strength of this instrument is its adaptability to any given situation. According to Dillman et al., (2014) this quite helps the interviewer to ask clarifying questions, redirects the participants as and when necessary, and answers any participants' questions for clarity in the course of the interview. Despite the numerous advantages in employing the semi-structured interview guide for this work, it was largely time

consuming in conducting in-depth interview with the participants as some of the participants were given extraneous responses however, the researcher was able to prompt them to get them on track to provide the relevant responses.

3.7.2 Observation

Observation was also made as part of the technique used in the data gathering. The non-participatory observation technique was employed where the researcher observes participants without direct involvement in the activities being studied. The focus was to allow the researcher to have firsthand information regarding the interaction that ensue between the students with intellectual disability and the employers at the workplace with degree of objectivity and avoid influencing the behaviours of the participants at their natural setting which is the workplace. Observation not only captures details of the physical environment, but also social context (Silverman, 2006). In the process, this method helped the researcher to incidentally identify the students with intellectual disability at the various shops and how they interact with the shop owners and the people around. This was done by routine documentation of the interaction among the employers, students with intellectual disability, and the other people around.

The individuals observed were not quoted directly but were rather paraphrased. The documentation helped to gather pertinent information about the students who ordinarily could not have shared that information with the researcher due to poor speech. According to Merton (1968), the non-participatory method of data collection facilitates systematic and objective observation of social behaviour, emphasizing the need to observe and document social interactions and events without actively participating in them.

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3.8 Trustworthiness of the Interview

In ensuring trustworthiness in the study the researcher adhered to the constructs proposed by Guba (1989), and they are credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

3.8.1 Credibility

The researcher extensively explained the nature and purpose of the work to all the participants and made them aware of the particular questions the researcher will be asking. After the interview and transcription, the researcher returned to them at their workplace to read the transcript for them to confirm whether the transcriptions truly reflected their opinions which they all confirmed and according to Fobi (2023), you could make available the transcripts of the data for the participants to confirm whether the transcriptions accurately reflected their opinions. Also, some of the participants agreed and signed the consent form which detailed the purpose of the study which made them more prepared and aware of all that the study was about and the fact that participation is voluntary, yet they agreed to interact with the researcher.

Consistently, the researcher presented my work for peer review to establish all the weaknesses, inadequacies, and suggestions on the appropriate things to be done from the beginning to the end of the work. More ever, the researcher had regular review session with my supervisor for discussions and deliberations. Throughout these sessions, suggestions were made, and all corrections were affected accordingly. At the end of the transcription process, the researcher presented my data to my supervisor for her review and addition of expert knowledge.

3.8.2 Dependability

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The researcher provided the needed justification of the methodology used for the study, in doing so the researcher made sure that the appropriate references were made to authors and made meticulous description of the means in which the data were gathered and analyzed in a manner it reflected the views expressed by the participants. Also, the transcriptions were read repeatedly to the extent that they researcher became familiar with data shared by the participants which manifested in the description of the of the data analysis process presented in the report.

3.8.3 Transferability

To ensure transferability, the researcher carefully selected participants who have experience or have had engagements with the students with intellectual disability at their workplace to share their lived experience with me which gave a clear picture of employers in this setting view about school-employer collaboration involving students with intellectual disability , in support of this, Fobi (2023), argued the researcher can select participants who have relevant experience in the context of the study. In addition to that, the researcher compared and discussed the findings of the study with previous studies to establish the similarities and differences which gave a clear view of the extent of knowledge my study was contributing to or otherwise confirming the existing phenomenon. A detailed description of the procedure used to gather the data was also made which is in line with, Fobi (2023), that the researcher can provide a detailed description of the data collection procedure and the analysis of the results of the study.

3.8.4 Confirmability

To ensure confirmability in the study, the researcher kept detailed record of the research activities (Fobi, 2023). Also, the researcher gathered data from diverse participants which brought to bear different perspectives on the subject under discussion which is

the research topic. Moreover, data was frequently checked and rechecked throughout data collection and analysis to ensure results would likely be replicated by others. This was ensured during the coding process where codes were created, and patterns identified in the analyses.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher made casual visit to the participants at their workplace to inform them about the study to be conducted. The initial reaction the researcher experienced from these participants was a mix reaction. While some of them were skeptical about the researcher's identity and the true purpose of the study despite the thorough explanations and self-introduction made, others were eager to interact with him upon hearing the nature and purpose of study work.

Subsequently, all the nine percipients made up of three shoemakers, three food vendors and three printing press owners agreed to be interviewed and in demonstration of their agreement, five of the participants consented verbally and four agreed and signed the consent form. All the participants agreed to be interviewed at their workplaces at scheduled meeting time, however, despite all these assurances, the researcher spent an average 50 minutes in waiting for the three food vendors to be ready for the interview at their various shops at different times and the average time the researcher waited before interviewing the three shoe makers was 12 minutes, while the printing press owners waited time before the interview averaged 24 minutes. Before the interview begun, the researcher explained the nature, purpose, and the items on the interview guide thoroughly to the participants.

Also, to guarantee the anonymity of the participant, the researcher explained to the participants that the data collected will be used for research purposes only and that their

identities being it their names and location of their shops would not be revealed anywhere in the study. Since all the participants agreed to be interviewed at their workplace, before any of the interview with the participants started, they prompted their workers to remain relatively calm while the researcher also intermittently had to pause the audio recording for the participants to attend to their customers in order that the interview would not be disrupted by the people around. In the process, the researcher recorded the participants with a phone (Techno Camon 12 Air) which was always put on the table while the researcher interacts with the participants, because whenever the phone was held closer to the mouth of the interviewees, they were visibly seen to be tensed and uncomfortable. Due to the limited space on the phone all the recorded interviews were transferred onto the researcher's laptop for storage and further processing.

The interview was conducted in Twi with a blend of Fante because all the participants requested that, to be able to speak fluently and feel at ease in responding to the questions, they should use the local dialect which is Fante. However, the researcher could only speak Twi fluently and partial Fante, hence the blend of both the Twi and Fante languages for the interview. In all, the researcher spent one (1) month and three (3) days for the data collection

Concurrently, non-participatory observation for Data collection was made to gain a comprehensive understanding of the employers' views on a collaboration with Reverend Father John special unit in providing employment experience for students with intellectual disability. The non-participatory observation was employed as part of the data collection method. This method was aligned with the research objectives, which aimed to explore the factors that could motivate the employers to collaborate

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with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students, the incorporation of inclusive employment practices in the collaborative initiative, challenges faced by the employers as they engage in the collaboration to provide employment experience for the students, and the benefits employers perceive in such collaboration. The observation was made overs two-week period, with sessions taking twice a day for approximately one hour thirty minutes. This duration allowed for an in-depth exploration of dynamics across different work settings and provided the opportunity to observe the interactions between employers, employees, customers, and the students with intellectual disability across various settings. These settings were, shops of shoemakers, printing press and food vendors which have work experience with the students.

As non-participatory observer, the researcher maintained discreet presence within the workplaces to ensure that the observation did not influence the natural interactions and behaviours of the participants. This method was essential in capturing authentic data that suitably reflected the experiences of both employers and students. At each session, the researcher was keen on specific aspects related to the research objectives. Beginning with the research objective one, the researcher paid close attention to any explicit discussions or implicit actions that emphasize the reasons behind employers' decisions to collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit. During one session at the printing press, the owner was observed discussing with a customer how the involvement of the students with intellectual disability was driven by a strong sense of corporate social responsibility, which was highly valued by his wife and him as owners of the shop. In line with the objective, observation was made by closely monitoring how the employers incorporate inclusive employment practices within their workplaces. At the food vendors joint for instance, the employers intentionally created a table and bought basin

which students could use to watch their bowls with convenience. Also at the shoemakers' shop, the employers consistently seen were guiding the students on how to polish shoe which continued for almost every time the researcher went around. Moreover, at the printing press, the researcher observed that the workers were always assisting the students with intellectual disability on how to bind books. Another key focus was to identify challenges that the employers encounter in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability. A notable challenge was observed at one of the shoemaker's shops where students with intellectual disability was exchanging verbal assault with a coworker. Another challenge was that both the employers and their workers were always suspecting the students with intellectual disability when there was something missing at the shop. A food vendor also complained about some of the students not brushing their teeth. A printing owner was also observed complaining to customers how neither the parents or teachers of the students visit the students to know what they are doing there. Finally, the researcher documented any perceived benefits that the employers experienced for collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit. In an informal conversation captured during the observation at the printing press, an employer mentioned how because of the presence of the students with intellectual disability, customers who come there recommend others to come to their shop for transaction. Another employer also highlighted the general public is learning from them for engaging the students with intellectual disability at the shop, which is good for the collective good of the society.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

Interviews conducted in Twi were transcribed in English and read over and over for familiarization with the data. In line with the research questions and data, themes for

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the analysis of the data emerged and were accordingly developed. In all, seventeen codes emerged from the data transcribed, which were subsequently developed into seventeen themes. Similar data from the transcripts were coded with the same colors which helped in the analysis with respect to the number of occurrences of specific issues raised by the participants. The data were organized based on the views expressed by participants factors that could motivate employers to collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability, how the employers could incorporate inclusive employment practices in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit for students with intellectual disability, challenges employers would face in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit in providing employment experience for the students with intellectual disability and the employers' perceived benefits in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability.

Also, data gathered through observation where the interactions that ensued among the students with intellectual disability, employers, employees, and customers through documentations were analyzed to buttress the data gathered from the interview. Participant's expressions that illustrate Source of education, Provide Employment and Social responsibility were placed under the factors considered in working with intellectual disability which answers the research question that focuses on the participant' views on factors considered before working with intellectual disability. So, employers' expressions clearly stating factors considered in working with intellectual disability related to a situation where others will emulate the opportunity to work with the students with intellectual disability were coded under education.

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Employers' explicit expressions that demonstrate the factors considered in working with intellectual disability, which relate to training the student with intellectual disability to acquire a skill for a living were coded under employment. Social responsibility coded as employers' expressions explicitly stating the fact that it is the duty of the employer to help the student with intellectual disability to live a meaningful life in society as against becoming a burden was a factor considered in working with intellectual disability by employers. Hence, these codes helped in the generation of the sub-themes on the factors employers consider in working with intellectual disability, which were then analyzed under the overarching theme of employer's considerations in working with intellectual disability.

To address the research question related to transition and inclusive employment practices in working with intellectual disability in school-employer collaborations, the employers' expressions that clearly defined the inclusive employment practices as results of including major stakeholders were coded under family involvement. Unpaid work was coded for employers' expressions that clearly stated inclusive practice that focus on opportunity to train the students with intellectual disability. Expressions that reveal employers' inclusive practice with respect to employment were coded under paid work. Also, explicit expressions by employers that demonstrate inclusive employment practices of working with intellectual disability related to modification of workplace to make it accessible were coded under customize employment. Employer's expressions that reveal inclusive employment practices of working with intellectual disability with regards to signing agreement were coded under written agreement. Contrastingly, employers' explicit expressions that demonstrates inclusive practice in working with intellectual disability related to not signing agreement were coded under verbal agreement. Employers' expressions that reveal inclusive employment practices of

working with intellectual disability with regards to talking to the people at the workplace to respect individual differences were coded as awareness.

In all these codes helped in the generation of themes on employers' inclusive employment practices in working with intellectual disability, which were then analyzed under the broad research question on inclusive employment practices in working with intellectual disability. Poor self-care skills, poor social skills, thievery and communication were used to develop challenges in working with students with intellectual disability in collaborative initiatives theme. Poor self-care was coded as employers' expressions clearly stating the poor glooming among the students with intellectual disability. Employers' expressions clearly stating the challenges in working with intellectual disability regarding stealing were coded under thievery. Communication gap coded as employers' expressions explicitly stating lack of interaction between the school authorities, parents and employers that arises during collaborations. Then employers' expressions clearly stating the challenges in working with intellectual disability related to poor human relationships were coded under poor social skills.

Moreover, employment, advocacy and build network were used to develop the perceived benefits in working with intellectual disability in collaborative initiatives. For advocacy were coded as employers' expressions clearly stating the reorientation of the perception of the society that these students with intellectual disability are productive and capable of working and must be given the opportunity in wherever they find themselves in society. Build network coded as employers' expressions explicitly stating the fact that when students with intellectual disability are given employment opportunities at the workplace it helps to attract new customers to the business because

of the inclusion of the student with intellectual disability. In addition, Employer's expressions clearly stating the benefits of working with intellectual disability related to equipping the student with a skill to earn a living in order not to become a burden on the family and the society at large were coded under employment. These codes helped in generating the themes in line with the broad research question employers perceived benefits in working with intellectual disability in collaborative initiative and were used for the thematic analysis.

3.11 Table 1. Summary of the analysis

Research Questions	Themes	Codes	No.
What factors motivate employers to collaborate with RFJ Unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?	Source of education	Education	6
	Source employment	Employment	7
	Social responsibility	Commitment	6
How employers incorporate inclusive employment practices in collaborating with RFJ Unit for the students with intellectual disability?	Paid work experience	Paid work	3
	informal agreement	verbal agreement	5
	formal agreement	Written agreement	3
	customized employment	Customized employment	7
	unpaid work - experience	Unpaid work	5
	family involvement	Family involvement	4
	sensitization	Awareness	8
Investigate challenges employers face in collaborating with RFJ Unit in providing employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?	Poor self-care skills	Poor self-care	5
	Poor interpersonal relationships	Poor social skills	6
	Theft issues	Thievery	4
	Communication gap	Communication	3
What are the benefits employers perceive in collaborating with RFJ Unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?	Source employment	Employment	7
	Means of advocacy	Advocacy	7
	Build connection	Build network	8

3.12 Ethical Consideration

In this study, all principles and imperatives related to ethical matters in research were observed such as seeking the consent of the participants and this was done when the researcher visited the employers at their shop, sought their consent first and subsequently explained the intent and purpose of the study to the participant before interviewing them. Other pillars of research ethical considerations like confidentiality, neutrality, openness and responsibility were ensured. The researcher made sure not to meddle in the private affairs of the employers which has nothing to do with the study.

The researcher avoided asking emotion-ridden questions which facilitated the expected responses from the participants. To ensure confidentiality, all traces of identifying

personal information collected from the employers be it their names, location and other information were not captured in the work. All participants who were interviewed names were coded as employer with reference number to protect their identity. The exact information that was gathered from the participants through recordings were transcribed accordingly and these records were kept in remote area on my laptop just to prevent any third party from possibly changing the original data gathered. Moreover, all other information gathered through online portals, journals, theses, and books were duly referenced to avoid plagiarism which amounts to academic dishonesty.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discusses the findings of the study. The results are discussed in relation with the relevant literature aimed at exploring the views of employers in school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability at Reverend Father John Special Unit, Winneba. The results presented and analyzed will largely focus on the main data gathered from the participants.

4.1 Thematic Analysis of Data

This chapter presents the experiences of some of the participants engaged in this study. The interview results are focused on presenting the views of the participants in the context of this work and to deeply assess the views of the employers on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability at Rev. Father John Special Unit. This context of the study is centered on presenting the views of the participants and buttress it with relevant quotations to reflect their independent views in relation to the topic under discussion. By way of anonymity, all names given to the participants are not their real names but rather pseudo names and only relevant responses from participants will be discussed in this study. The data analysis is done in line with thematic analysis largely driven from the various themes that emerged from the coding process of the work. The data was analyzed to reflect all the four research questions of the study. A thorough review of the data shows absolute concession of the responses to several of the questions and the extent of agreement which demonstrate the credibility of the results.

The views of the participants on the research questions were delineated into sixteen major themes. The themes are as follows

1. Source of education

2. Source employment

3. Social responsibility

4. Paid work experience

5. Informal agreement

6. Formal agreement

7. Customized employment

8. Unpaid work -   experience

9. Family involvement

10. Sensitization

11. Poor self-care skills

12. Poor interpersonal relationships

13. Theft Issues

14. Communication gap

15. Source of employment

16. Means of advocacy

17. Build connections

4.2 Research Question One

What are the Factors that Motivate Employers to Engage in Job-Oriented Collaborations with Reverend Father John Special Unit Involving Student with Intellectual Disabilities?

This question highlights the factors that would motivate the employers to engage in job-oriented collaboration with Reverend Father John Special Unit involving students with intellectual disability. There are several collaborations that employers could engage in with other development partners. In this context, the focus is on how employers and the school can forge job-oriented collaboration involving students with intellectual disability. Ordinarily, employers have varied perceptions about students with disabilities, ranging from skepticism about their capabilities, stereotypes, customers' reactions, and among others. After the transcription and coding processes, *source of education, social responsibility and source of employment* emerged as the themes.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Source of employment

Employment in this context is the work these students could do to earn a living. It will also help to ease the burden of the parents while reducing the marginalization and stereotype these students and their families suffer in society. In line with what the employers think gaining employment does for students with intellectual disability in society, some employers said.

> *"I believe that when I collaborate with the school and train the child he will be equipped with a skill for a living. God says we should be each other's keeper, he cannot be roaming about freely like that, he has been eating randomly at different homes and as we speak, he is growing and cannot continue like that, and I think if I collaborate with the school and train the child to acquire a skill it will help him live a dignified life''* *[Employer one]*

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"I think this initiative will serve as employment for the students which help them live independent life and this is the most important thing for me'' [Employer three]

"If I'm able to train them to acquire *skill, it will prevent them from begging in the community which is, in fulfilment of God's will''* [Employer four]

"Some of these students do not have any skill and are being neglected by their family. So, if the school should approach me for agreement to cater for them, I think it will be something good. Well, in order not to be going round to be begging for money, become burden to family, community and the nation at large, I think it will be of advantage to train them than to sit idle'' [employer six]

"Some of the students were seen actively guided by the employers and workers to acquire basic skills in to repairing and polishing shoes" [Researcher's observation]

These participants' responses demonstrate their conviction that training the students with intellectual disability to acquire skills and or to employ them is key to their decision to collaborate with the school Reverend Father John Special Unit. Their decision will be largely driven by the fact that seeing these students roaming about in Town is not appropriate and to help minimize this situation is equipping the students with a skill or employ them through the collaborative effort with the school.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Source of education

With regards to the source of education as a factor that employers could consider before collaborating with the school, these are what some employers had to say:

"I will consider something like that, because mmm if you are doing something good, it motivates people to emulate from you. If I'm able to help in this regard, maybe some rich men would also see and help

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someone else and by so doing and we are helping this category of people live a better life" [employer one]

"I think it will also enlighten many others when they see you working with them, because others may see yours as exemplary and also practice it" [employer three]

"In the first place, they are human beings like us, and I also think when someone sees me to be training them it will motivate others to also do the same" [employer eight].

"Indeed, yes, it will be a source of education to many others. As people come over to see them working, it will help them appreciate that these children are capable of working" [employer nine]

From the above responses by the employers, it can be deduced that the most of the employer's decision to join hands with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students will be hinged on the fact that such initiative will serve as an education and exemplary to society to have a renewed perception about people with disabilities as capable and not useless as has been widely claimed. The employer's consideration of collaborating with the school on the basis that such an initiative will serve as a means to conscientize the people is laudable, simply because of the society we find ourselves in where there is widespread misconception about people with disabilities which pushes them further into the fringes leading to poverty and stereotype among people with disability population.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Social responsibility

In attempt to gather data on the factors that motivate employers to engage the students with intellectual disability at their workplace, the employers largely responded by saying that they see providing employment opportunities to the students as a social responsibility. Below are the responses sampled from the employers:

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"Even if he doesn't want to be trained here but another skill like shoe making, I can still support him on that so far as he is going to acquire a skill in order that he doesn't become a burden on the community" [Employer five]

"I see it to be a service to the country and I think it will help to reduce unemployment rate in the country" [Employer six]

"Well, in order not to be going round to be begging for money, become burden to family, community and the nation at large, I think it will be of advantage to train them than to sit idle. If they support me at the end of the day, I can give them stipends for a living at the end of the day.

However, in the end, you don't want these children to become a burden, so whatever happens, it is the country that will suffer the consequences and you are the country. So, we all need to help one another" [Employer nine]

It is better to eat all the time than to eat once, so the student cannot always be with me at the work place, so in my absence what will the student do? I think when I train him that will help" [Employer two]

The aggregated responses so far from the employers is encouraging as their comments largely demonstrate a goodwill and desire to collaborate with the school. Their willingness to readily reveal some factors that will motivate them to enter a collaborative initiative with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students is reassuring and tells their position to support the students with intellectual disability in the school. This gesture is a clearest indication that some of these employers already have full appreciation of the struggles these students and their families are facing in society raging from stigmatization, marginalization and acute joblessness that characterize the population of students with intellectual disability. Hence, they are ready to join hands with other stakeholders to support the students in

order that they can also live independent lives. The comments from these employers also indicate a sharp departure of the society long standing perception that students with intellectual disability are not capable of working. To the extent that some of them consider providing employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability as a social responsibility or community commitment which is a good sign.

All these indications from the employers should be a turning point for the school to move out of its shell to start conversation with community employers and other stakeholders to initiate programmes that focus on apprenticeships, mentorships, and employment opportunities for the students. Though the employers obviously have their reservation about the inclusion of students with intellectual disability at their workplace however, their comments demonstrate that they are aware of the students' needs and strength and are willing to give them the opportunity in order that they can maximize their potential.

4.3 Research Question Two

How Employers Incorporate Inclusive Employment Practices for The Students with Intellectual Disabilities in The Collaborative Initiative with Reverend Father John Special Unit?

This research question seeks to explore how employers could incorporate inclusive employment practices for the students with intellectual disability in giving employment opportunities to them at their workplace. Inclusive employment practices for students with intellectual disability are very instrumental as these students have unique needs, strength and weaknesses that necessitate commensurate accommodation for them to be able to work effectively. After the data transcription and decoding processes, *paid work*

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experience, informal agreement, formal agreement, customized employment, unpaid work experience, family involvement, and sensitization emerged as the themes.

4.3.1Theme 1: Sensitization

The researcher's focus was to find out from the employers on how they will ensure everybody at the workplace and those who visit there will respect and appreciate issues of disability and minimize stereotypes against the student at the workplace; below were some of the responses from the employers:

An employer said;

> *''In fact, they are very difficult but when you understand how they behave they are the nicest people to live with. I have been with them for long time so I know what they like and what they don't like, I will try and train my people here about their behaviour so that they can also understand them, after all they all like us'' [Employer two]*

Similarly, one employer said;

> *''Once you accept to stay with them, you need to understand them, if not you will always shout on them because you don't understand them. they are such that if you decide to shout on them, they will never mind you. If stop shouting and call him to come you will see him coming. I think I have to let everybody who come here understand this. They are very friendly'' Employer six]*

> *"What we need to know is that that how they were created. They are different just as we are also different. what I can do to help is to make sure the people and whoever comes here don't disrespect them" [Employer four]*

> *"I'm a Christian and I place humanity above anything, I'm happy to see them around. I don't discriminate against anybody so all the people you*

see around are working here and they understand the students and sometimes try to explain their mannerisms to our customers and visitors" (Employers seven)

"Some of the employers were seen interpreting the speech of the students with ID to the customers and further educate them that these students can do whatever you want them to do but they will always require your supervision and clear instructions" [researcher's observation]

Per the employers and their workers' responses, together with the researcher's observation indicate that, they understand the behaviour and attitudes of the students, hence can educate others on the peculiar behaviours of the students. This indicate how ready they are to create a workplace climate that embrace diversity, inclusion and empowerment in order for the students with intellectual disability to not only work with them but sensitize the society to give room for their community participation.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Customize employment

Ensuring adequate accommodation where the students are assigned duties that meet their needs in tandem with meeting the expectation of the employer at the workplace. In view of this the following responses were made by the employers.

One Employer said;

"Yes, because some of them are short and at my work place the water for washing of bowls and others are placed on tables so if I happen to work with them, I have to change it to meet their height so that they can work comfortably" [Employer three]

Another employer also indicated;

> *I will, I will assign or train him on specific skills that will meet his abilities so he can work well Eemployer four]*

Similarly, another employer stated;

> *I will do anything possible to make sure that the child will work under convenient conditions [Employer nine]*

> *I will do, for instance looking at this chair if I am to readjust it for the child to sit on it comfortably and work, I will do it [Employer six]*

Also, one employer commented;

> *oh, why not, I will go to that far to do it. If I see there is a gutter here and I have to cover it to protect the child I will do it or if I see stairs to be too steep and I have to shorten it, I will adjust it. Once I'm engaging or recruiting them for work, I have to make sure that they also feel comfortable so that they also execute whatever abilities they have. So, I will do it seriously [Employer two]*

some of the students were assigned with roles that meet their needs. For instance, at the printing press, they were always assigned to assist in binding of papers and cleaning spaces at the shop [Researcher's observation]

The views expressed by these employers together with the observation made show clearly their readiness to make the appropriate provision or accommodation at their workplaces to meet the unique needs of the students in order that they can be productive should they agree to accept to work with them. This makes it imperative for the school Reverend Father John Special Unit to approach these employers in the community with the view of collaborating with them to ensure that these students get secured and have least restrictive environment to exhibit their potentials.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Informal agreement

The employers also shared their views on the need to have an agreement with the school or parents of the students as a pre-condition to accept to provide employment opportunities to the students at their workplace.

On this issue one employer said;

> *"Verbal agreement is ok, yes, the verbal agreement is enough and I wouldn't need further written agreement" [Employer one]*

> *"It looks like the manner in which both the employers and their workers relate well with the students with intellectual disability, they will only need relatives of the students to sit and make the necessary arrangement to make sure that the effort of the students is not exploited" [Researcher's observation]*

Another employer also had this to say;

> *"I don't think we need to sign any agreement on paper. Because I did not sign any agreement with those who are already working here is only verbal agreement" [employer three]*

Also, one employer added;

> *"Verbal agreement with witnesses around is ok" [employer eight]*

> *"In my work, there is no documentation, even when I went in as an apprentice, I didn't sign any document so, if I'm a master today there is No need for me to sign any agreement with anybody. What I will only expect the parents to tell me their what they will do to help the child to be able to come to work all the time" [employer four]*

> *"Verbal agreement is ok, yes, the verbal agreement is enough, and I wouldn't need further written agreement" [employer one]*

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On the same wavelength one employer said;

> *"Oh, for that is not a problem, I think if two parties we agree on common issues, there is no need to sign any agreement" [employer nine]*

In a mixed reaction, some of the employers had this to say;

> *"May be the school which has a formalized structure would rather prefer to sign agreement, but I personally do not have problem signing agreement or agreeing on issues verbally" [employer five].*

Clearly, the above comments by the community employers reveal that they only need the presence of the stakeholders like the school authorities and parents of the children to arrange for the modalities on how to provide employment opportunities to the student. This would help in their job acquisition or training to avoid the exploitation of the students' services in the community especially by some of the employers in the community.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Formal agreement

On the issue of whether the employers will be ready to sign agreement with the school before accepting to provide employment opportunities for the students, below are some of the sampled responses by the participants.

One employer said;

> *"I will prefer we sign an agreement to as a witness that indeed the child is under my care, and it will also help to ensure the security of the child" [Employer six].*

In the same vein, another employer said;

> *"If the parents come and they can prepare a document, why don't we document something to serve as a proof that my child works here. So*

that can be an underlining factor, but not that we just agreed verbally, what if later something happens. I think that when I meet the parents and they can write letter or even if they cannot write, me myself I can write" [Employer seven]

Contrastingly, "some of the employers pretend as if they don't assign any duty to the students when asked but the researcher observed that some of the students were cleaning their shops and running errands on several occasions. Signing agreement with such employers would either help to know whether they are indeed exploiting them or are ready to give stipends to the students for the services rendered" [Researcher's observation]

In view of these responses from the employers, it can be said that some of the employers are willing to sign agreement with the school or other stakeholders like the family to make sure that the students will be secured when working with them, even though there are others too who pretend as if they are not working with the students as the researcher observed. It will also spell out the roles of the various stakeholders which will help to serve the interest of the students whiles sustaining the collaboration.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Family involvement

Here the researcher was interested in finding out the family involvement in this whole collaborative initiative, below are some of the comments the participants made.

One employer had this to say;

"No, I will not accept that, I won't be ready to engage any family member" [Employer two]

Conversely, one employer said this;

"If the parents come it ok or if both the parents and teachers come it is ok" [Employer four]

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Another employer said this;

> *"I expect to see the parents or guardian, at the end of it all the parent or guardian will get to know this is where my child works. So, I will love to meet the parent or the guardian so that we have an agreement so that it wouldn't be like I' m cheating the child because of his or her disability" [Employer seven]*

Looking at the comments, it is abundantly clear that some of the employers in the community are ever ready to engage the family members of these students with intellectual disability so that they can make the necessary arrangement to help both the child and the employers geared towards employment and so the onus is on the family to approach these employers for a discussion about employment opportunities for the students.

4.3.6 Themes 6: Paid work experience

In finding out whether the employers will be ready to pay the students with intellectual during their collaboration with Reverend Father John special unit when working them or not. The employers provided varied responses. Below are the responses sampled from the employers:

One of the employers said;

> *"I will prefer to pay the child instead. They are very complicated, so I have to take my time to train him or her first. So, I have to pay them in the initial stages. If later they are able to adapt quickly to the instruction given, for instance how to keep themselves clean then the training also will follow" [Employer three]*

In a mixed reaction, one employer indicated;

"I can pay him, however, if I ask the student and he tell me he like my work, then I will train him but if he chooses a different work then I think the school authorities can help him in that regard" (Employer five)

In similar position, another employer said;

I can teach them in the process or they themselves can learn but alongside I will pay them. That's the idea I have, I want to support them. (Employer seven).

Based on the foregoing, it is obvious that some of the community employers are willing and ready to pay for the services of the students with intellectual disability as they work with them. Because the researcher observed that the menial job and services these students are doing in the community without pay, the so-called nondisabled people are doing the same thing and are being paid. This initiative will help to minimize that discrimination while reducing exploitation of the services of these students.

4.3.7 Theme 7: Unpaid work experience

In finding out whether or not the employers were willing to train the students instead of paying them for their service, these were some of the responses made by the employment'.

One employer indicated;

> *"I will prefer to train him instead of paying him. Because he does not know how to manage money, he just does not know what to use the money for and it is better I train him so that he can use it for a living"* *[Employer one]*

In support of the above, one employer also said;

> *"I will prefer to train the child instead so that he can acquire the skills to open his own shop one day"* *[Employer four]*

> *"I will prefer to train him. I also believe you can't blow a trumpet with empty stomach so as I train the student, I will continue to feed him"* *[Employer nine].*

Also, one employer said;

> *"It is better to eat all the time than to eat once, so the student cannot always be with me at the work place, so in my absence what will the student do? I think when I train him that will help"* *[Employer eight]*

From the above responses it can be deduced that some of the employers are ever ready to train the students with intellectual disability at their workplace. This makes the collaboration between the school and the employers relevant and promising because these children by the nature of their disability struggle to engage in rigorous academic activities, hence this initiative would serve as a better alternative to help them acquire skills for a living.

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4.4 Research Question Three

What challenges would employers face in collaborating with Reverend Father John Special Unit in providing employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?

The third research question sought to find out the challenges that employers encounter when engaging in collaborative initiative involving students with intellectual disabilities. Employers are instrumental in the growth and development of every society, especially in providing the basic needs of society. Despite employers being instrumental in varied ways including accepting to work with students with intellectual disability, there are certain challenges these employers could face in working with these students which were developed into themes as follows, *poor social skills, poor self-care skills, theft issues, and communication gap.*

4.4.1 Theme 1: Poor self-care skills

With regards to poor self-care skills and how challenging it is for the employers, the following comments were made by the employers.

> *"As I said, I don't like his way of dressing. He is getting to 30 years now but he doesn't know how to brush his teeth properly"* [Employer one]

> *"The reason why I can't work with this student is that some of them droll and imagine coming here to buy food and this person is the one serving you and the question is, would you buy, no you won't buy"* [Employer nine]

> *"As I said, some of them are very dirty. If the person is too dirty, I can't work with him or her"* [Employer three].

4.4.2 Theme 2: Theft issues

The employers at this point narrated their suspicion about the students for picking items from the workplace without prior notice. This assertion was corroborated by the researcher's observation where the students with intellectual disability were the first point of contact to be suspected when there was something missing. These are some of the employers' comments.

> *"What I hate is stealing. A child who has a habit of stealing anything at sight. In fact, any child with this behaviour will prevent me from collaborating with the school" [Employer five]*

> *"Some of the children are thieves, so I will first try him and see how he or she behaves. Maybe because the person is not staying with me, I wouldn't know whether or not he is a thieve, so when the person comes that is where I can verify such a behaviour. I hate thievery in my life, and I don't want to see such thing to happen in the work place here" [Employer four]*

> *"On different occasions whenever there was something missing, the students with intellectual disabilities were the first point of contact to be suspected. Usually, the students were accepting to have stolen such a thing in question whether it is true or not" [Researcher's Observation]*

> *"a child who is a thieve, in fact this is the worst behaviour I hate, and I don't want to see them do here" (Employer nine)*

> *"What I hate to see is a child who will take something without your knowledge and when you ask him or her, he tries to deny. It means that you have decided to steal that is why you are defending. In fact, I hate thievery and I don't want to experience such behaviour here when I agree to work with them here" [employer two]*

4.4.3 Theme 3: Poor social skills

Under this theme, the employers recounted their reservation about the in away students with intellectual disability portray some inti-social behaviour which makes it difficult to be with them sometimes. The following were some of the responses from the employers.

"Their attitude, some are timid when they see crowd, they refuse to talk. For instance, when a customer request something like water and liquid soap and the child refuses to talk to the person and I think the person will be left confused and draw conclusion that maybe we don't want to serve him or her and I think this is a challenge" [Employer three]

"Sometimes this student can insult you in front of the customers, but because the customers know him, even at a point when I'm angry, the customers rather talk to me and even try to coax the student too. Sometimes the customers even try to advise him. I must say it is something I don't like about him" [Employer five]

"They get angry easily, like teasing but they want to be teased" [employer eight].

Notwithstanding these poor social skills exhibited by the students with ID, in a further probe, the employers made these comments about the students' human relations and its impact on customers.

"The customers rather play with him; they understand it wasn't his choice to have been born with a disability. Because he likes roaming, he knows a lot of people. Most of the customers know him. They like playing with him. No one has ever complained about his presence here whether he smells or otherwise. They don't even think about him. sometimes the customers rather play with him. I have no problem with his presence here. The customers are comfortable with him" [Employer one]

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"Everybody is a parent and so when I see any customer react negatively to the child because of the disability, I will talk to that person in question. I have seen same children who are shoemakers and working actively. Nobody knows the end from the beginning, and nobody can determine his or fate. So, I don't think any customer will come here and behave impulsively toward the students here" [Employer four]

4.4.4 Theme 4: Communication gap

This section sought to gauge the employer's reaction on absence of communication in their collaboration with the school Reverend Father John Special Unit and the decision they will take thereof, below are some of the comments they made.

"Communication is very key, the reason being that, once you brought the child here to be trained you need to be checking up on him to be updated on whether the child is making progress. If they fail to follow-up here, I will be worried" [Employer six]

"How can you bring your child to be trained or employed and decides not to come and check on him or call to find out he is doing well or does not come to work at all" [Employer nine]?

Contrastingly, in a further probe, the employers did not report any negative customer reaction should they accept the students with intellectual disability at the workplace, below are some of the sampled responses.

"The customers rather play with him; they understand it wasn't his choice to have been born with a disability. Because he likes roaming, he knows a lot of people. Most of the customers know him. They like playing with him. No one has ever complained about his presence here whether he smells or otherwise. They don't even think about him. sometimes the customers rather play with him. I have no problem with his presence here. The customers are comfortable with him" [Employer one].

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"Some of them are studying about these special children course and so they love them. so, some of them may return to my shop and buy from me" [Employer three].

"Everybody is a parent and so when I see any customer react negatively to the child because of the disability, I will talk to that person in question. I have seen same children who are shoemakers and working actively. Nobody knows the end from the beginning, and nobody can determine his or fate. So, I don't think any customer will come here and behave impulsively toward the students here" [Employer four]

"I know how to engage my customers and at least we are all human beings just as the child. So, I know how to talk to the customers to embrace the situation and work together" [Employer six]

"I think they will even draw more customers to me because some of these students with intellectual disability intellectual disability are very lovely and very happy to live with and that will be advantage to me while other people believe system will think they are odd. Especially, those educated ones who know these individuals are not evil, they are like us but only the disability has made them to behave in this manner. As they think I will lose customers, I also think I will gain, it is also a strategy" [Employer nine].

"What will prevent customers from coming here has nothing to do with the student, but it will be dependent on you the employer your attitude and the kind of service or work you do. If the soup will taste good, it is dependent on the one who prepares it. It depends on the quality of product you are able to produce" [Employer eight]

The perceived challenges employers may grapple with when they collaborate with the school may have major effect on the employer's decision to offer employment opportunities to the students under the collaborative initiative.

Based on the comments made by the employers so far, one challenge that was revealed was poor self-care skills among students with intellectual disability which has the propensity to discourage the employers from collaborating with the school. Self-care skill includes financial management skills, daily living skills, and managing decisions about healthcare and the general well-being of an individual. Self-care skills is usually a missing link in the lives of individuals with intellectual disability, largely because of the nature of condition of the students with intellectual disability. For instance, adaptive behaviour is a major deficit among these individuals with intellectual disability coupled with certain families neglecting their duty to guide their children with intellectual disability to learn how to groom themselves.

Cognizance of the poor self-care skills among some of the students with intellectual disability, it will possibly make employers skeptical about providing these students job opportunities, largely because these employers engage with diverse customers on daily basis, who may not be happy to see any unkempt individual at the work space even though the above responses by the employers suggest that the customers are comfortable seeing the students with intellectual disability at the workplace. Hence, the school Reverend Father John Special Unit must pay critical attention to personal grooming of the students if there should be any attempt to collaborate with the community employers.

Another challenge that was highlighted by the participants was theft issues. In the interaction with the employers, they emphasized on their abhorrence of children who tend to take properties belonging to the entity without permission. Businesses are run to maximize profit and even beyond that it is not morally appropriate for children to steal in anyway, so for the employers to reveal they frown on thievery and how that

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would deter them from collaborating with the school is not out of place. Through observation, the researcher noticed that anytime there was something missing at the workplace, the students with intellectual disability were the first people to be suspected and you could see the people around interrogating them. This observations and responses from the employers' present opportunity to the school to heighten its duty to train the students to be responsible and morally upright that will propel them to fit in not only at the workplace but all social settings.

Another deduction made from the comments of the employers was the issue of communication gap. The employers revealed how a lack of effective communication between the school and them could deter them from such a collaborative initiative. The employers stated it clearly that when there is an agreement to work with the students with intellectual disability and later the school authorities and other stakeholders like the family fail to frequent the workplace to check on the students on how they are faring, especially whether the child comes to work or needs something that will help him or to be efficient at the workplace. Communication is key in such a collaborative initiative as it keeps all parties at the same page in terms of roles, current happenings and what to do to sustain the collaboration all geared towards helping the students to have employment opportunities.

Moreover, the employers also narrated that the issue of poor interpersonal relationships was attitude that could possibly deter them from collaborating with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability. How the students would be able to relate well with their co-workers, customers, and the employers themselves is of concern to them. If the students portray bellicose tendencies and divisive attitudes towards people which will directly or indirectly hamper the

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fortunes of their businesses, certainly, it will affect their desire to provide employment opportunities to them.

By way of remediating these challenges, the authorities at Reverend Father John Special Unit should focus on training their students to acquire daily living skills such as personal grooming as in regular brushing of the teeth; bathing regularly; dressing decently; managing personal finances and managing the general wellbeing of the students. This is imperative because these students are going to meet different people at the workplace and so they are expected to live a life that will create convenience for themselves and the people around them. Another way to remediate these challenges is for the school to train the students to be responsible and imbibe in them moral values that frowns on taking something which does not belong to you and not to be envious of anything they see. If the students are trained to acquire these values, it will help them to live with the employers and their co-workers without any hostilities and the employers will be in position to work with them.

Also, the school and other stakeholders like the family should as a matter of importance find means of frequently communicating with the employers when the students are with them at the workplace. All stakeholders are expected to play their roles to ensure the sustainability of the collaboration. Frequent communication between both parties will potentially reinforce their commitment towards the collaboration which will go a long way to help the students gain employment or build their capacity for a living in future. In addition, the school should focus on training the students on how to relate well with anybody they meet in their life. They should be trained to know that in this world no man is an island and so in one way or the other your path with cross with one another as human beings. They should be trained on how to control their emotions, especially,

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how to interact with people with the utmost decorum and decency and that fighting, shouting and insulting people over disagreement on an issue is never an option. The teachers and family should try to train the students on how to be assertive without necessarily being rude. All these will help the students to co-exist peacefully with the employers and all other persons at the workplace. If some of these soft skills are imbibed in the students, it will help the employers to take decision to collaborate with the school to provide employment experiences for the students with intellectual disability in the community.

4.5 Research Question Four

What are the Benefits Employers Perceive in Collaborating with Reverend Father John Special Unit to Provide Employment Experience for the Students with intellectual disability?

This research question focuses on exploring the employers' views on whether they perceive any benefits in the collaborative job-oriented initiative with Reverend Father John Special Unit. Following the transcription of data and the subsequent analysis made, *source of employment means of advocacy, and build connections* were the themes that emerged.

4.5.1 Theme 1: Source of employment

In interacting with the employers to find out some of the benefits they envisage about this collaborative initiative, one of the issues which was prominent in their responses was providing employment for the students with intellectual disability. Below are some of their responses.

> *"I think it will serve as a means of employment because they will receive*
> *salary in the course of the business, and you know not all parents have*

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money to take care of their children especially those with disabilities. So, if the school collaborate with me, I think it will help, because I will play salary to the student. They can use it to take care of the student I'm working with" [Employer three]

"They will be gainfully employed, but my fear is some of these students are sometimes lazy, but if they demonstrate seriousness and learn whatever I teach then I think it help really help them. The issue is some of these young guys usually show laziness attitude toward work to the extent to bath and come to work is a difficult task for them. imagine if you go to work and you refuse to work who will give you money. However, if they show seriousness, I tell you the work will take good care of them one day" [Employer four].

"If we collaborate to help the child acquire a skill, it will help the child secure his future. It will prevent him from begging, stealing and even seen as a burden in society" [Employer nine]

"As I said for example, he is able to bind papers, and so if I am not able to employ him, maybe somebody else could employ and pay him which will then serve as employment for him" [Employer six]

"At least it will help the students to gain employment and earn a living which prevent them becoming a burden on society" [Employer eight].

"Some of the students were seen washing bowls, sweeping and engaging in other cleaning exercises with the employers at their workplace" [Researcher's Observation]

"When you go to town the various shoes sellers and shop owners work with them, but those of us selling food cannot work with them. However, they can help me pack my stuffs and sweep here. so, I can consider them for the menial job such as sweeping and washing of bowls" [Employer two].

4.5.2 Theme 2: Build connection

"It will help me connect with different people, especially, how he always helps me pack my things into the room all the time, some people may admire and want to come and buy from me. Some may come and request to work with him or her. I think that is beneficial to me" [Employer one].

"Maybe because of the child some customers would deliberately want to come here for me to serve them so that I can get money and pay the child" [Employer six)

"Mostly students who have background in special education visited some of the workplace to transact business and also interact with the student" (Researcher's Observation)

"As I sit here a lot of people know me because of the kind of work I do and the people I'm training. I also believe that when they also learn this job well, a lot of people will know them. If they learn the work well people can identify them for the job, they are doing" (Employer four)

"This student even without collaborating with any entity, the child is very relatable and loved by many and so his presence here draws more customers. I think if we collaborate and train the child it will help him and my work too" (Employer five)

4.5.3 Theme 3: Means of advocacy

"Some people perceive them to be evil, and useless, in fact, you can't play with them, however when they see me talking and playing with him will change their negative perception of them and even begin to mingle with such individuals. I consider this a great education for many others" (Employer one)

"If they see such a person being trained for this job someone will also come and learn same job" (Employer four)

"It will serve as exemplary to others to help these kinds of children. As we speak some people d don't want to see any see of these students in their homes. But if we collaborate to train the child to acquire skills and

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later open his shop, it will reorient people's mind about these students that they are trainable and can equally work to earn a living as individuals. So, I think when I do that somebody will also emulate my action" (Employer five)

"Others will see what I'm doing and do the same or even the customers who have been coming here when they open their shop, they can equally know how to work with these children so that will be major relieve for the country" (Employer six).

"As they are found at the workplace working and people see them, it helps to reorient their mindset about these students and express interest to also work with them, so this makes it beneficial to me" (Employer eight).

"The employers, employees and customers were all seen playing and interacting with the students with intellectual disability at the workplace. It is surprising because there are other children in the community with same conditions but do not attract such love from the customers". (Researcher's Observation)

The benefits the employers perceive in collaborative initiative with Reverend Father John special Unit will be the catalyst for their acceptance to provide employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability. Ordinarily, as employers they have in mind the mutual benefits to derive in joining efforts with other entity. Rightly so, upon the interaction with the employers, they highlighted that one benefit they envisage in the collaborative initiative was employment for the students with intellectual disability. They stated that through the collaboration with the school, the mutual benefit for them is to see the students being trained to acquire skills and employed to prevent them from roaming about in the community. If this is the position of the employers, the onus is now on the school to approach these employers to have arrangement with them on how best they can work with the students while continuing

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their education. If this initiative materializes, not only will it help the students with intellectual disability earn a living and live dignified lives but will also help to reduce the truancy and absenteeism in the school.

Another perceived benefit the employers commented about was building connection through the collaboration. The employers intimated that because of working with the students with intellectual disability at their workplace, it could broaden their network with other people. Which means new customers will transact business with them on grounds of working with such individuals who have been marginalized in society. To view this collaborative initiative as a means to build connections is reassuring and demonstrate the employers' willingness to collaborate with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students, because they stand to gain which as well is in sharp contrast with the refrain in the society that these individuals are useless and burden to society. Hence, this response from the employers should set the stage for the school to move out of its shell and engage employers in the community whose jobs are in line with the training giving to the students in the school for negotiation of employment opportunities for the students in the community.

Moreover, the employers stated that this collaborative initiative with the school would serve as a means of advocacy for the public. The employers revealed that when they provide employment opportunities to the students through the collaboration, it will serve as exemplary for the public to emulate. By observation, the researcher witnessed almost all the people at the various workplace interacting and playing with the students with intellectual disability which is not easily seen in the community. Especially, when in this day and age, some people hold the view that these individuals are unproductive, cursed, and could only serve as subjects of charity. To engage them at the workplace

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will help to reorient the people in society to have believe in the potential of the students with intellectual disability that they are capable of working, but what they are lacking is the opportunity to showcase their talent.

4.6 Discussion of Results

This section presents the results of the study guided by the four research questions together with literature

4.6.1 Research question one: What factors motivate employers to collaborate with Reverend Father John Special Unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?

It emerged from the analysis of the data that the employers have certain factors that would motivate them to collaborate with Reverend Father John Special Unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability. These factors which were developed into themes range from source of education, social responsibility and means of education.

The analysis revealed that one of the motivating factors which emerged as theme that would make the employers collaborate with the school was the fact that they consider such initiative as a platform to provide employment for the students with intellectual disability. This is a revelation against the default perception of society including the other stakeholders like the parents and teachers who might hold contrary view that the employers may not accept to work with these individuals because of the students' condition for which reason they may not have attempted to approach these employers to discuss the issue of collaboration that focuses on securing employment opportunities for the students. This employers' position to collaborate with the school to serve as a means to provide employment for the students with intellectual disability is in line with

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the human capital theory. Schultz (1961) argued that investments in human capital such as training and education are critical for economic progress and prosperity of man in society. The employers were of the view that if through the collaborative initiative they employ the students with intellectual disability, it will help them to live decent lives and be productive to society as corroborated by some of the comments made by some of the employers ''I think this initiative will serve as employment for the students which will help them live independent live and this is the most important thing for me''. Another employer also said ''if I'm able to train them to acquire skill, it will prevent them from begging in the community which is, in fulfilment of God's will''.

Still on the issue of motivating factors that would make the employers collaborate with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability in the community, it was revealed through the data collected that they would consider working with the students with intellectual disability as a social responsibility. This indicates the willingness of the employers to engage the school authorities for a collaborative initiative geared towards helping the students get employment opportunities in the community and so the school should quicken its steps to approach them. In support of this argument, some of the participants commented that ''I see it to be a service to the country and I think it will help to reduce unemployment rate in the country''. Similarly, in Australia according to Tickets to Work Stakeholders Report (2018), some organizations see employing people with disabilities as a community commitment and social responsibility. According to Ticket to Work Stakeholder Report (2017) some employers in Australia find employing persons with disability as a prestige in the community and shows a commitment to their customers and invariably projects their brand in a unique way given the competitiveness in the business space. This suggests the employers' readiness to collaborate with the school to help the students

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have employment experience in the community. Ordinarily, the focus of the employers could have been on questioning the capabilities and accommodations to be put in place at the workplace for the students as corroborated by Chen et al (2016), that employers usually lack knowledge of how accommodations, and what accommodations they should provide to persons with disabilities.

Another motivating factor the employers revealed was the fact that this collaborative initiative when established could serve as a means of education to the public. They made this revelation cognizance of the issue of stigmatization and discrimination against persons with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disability in employment, as argued by Reine et al. (2016), students with intellectual disability face serious discrepancies between the desire to be employed and available opportunities. This stands as a major turning point and boost for the students with intellectual disability who equally have the capacity to deliver and aspirations to fulfil in life but because of barriers in society such as discriminations and low expectation about their output when given a job. For employers to lead the charge with the desire to use this collaboration to highlight the potential of these students is a significant milestone, and this must ignite the interest of the school to approach them in the community to initiate a collaboration focused on providing employment opportunities to their students. Especially, how it appears society have placed these students (with intellectual disability) on the fringes because of the perceived lack of capacity to even deliver tangible outcomes when engaged at the workplace.

Amid all these issues, the data gathered from the employers suggest that the employers largely would consider employment opportunity for the students; social responsibility, and source of education as the main motivating factors to engage in the job-oriented

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collaboration with the school Reverend Father John Special Unit should there be any attempt for a collaboration.

4.6.2 How employers incorporate inclusive employment practices in collaborating with Reverend Father John Special Unit for students with intellectual disability?

The focus of this section was to explore how would employers incorporate inclusive employment practices for the students with intellectual disability in the collaborative initiative with Reverend Father John Special Unit. The analysis of the interview held with the employers revealed inclusive employment practices that would be incorporated by the employers in the initiative were customized employment, sensitization, paid work experience, unpaid work experience, family involvement, formal agreement, and informal agreement.

 One of the findings like unpaid work experience indicate the employer's willingness to training the students to acquire the needed prerequisite skills that will propel them for future employment as corroborated by Rooney (2016), that unpaid work experiences are valuable and important as it prepares the youth with disabilities for future employment. Similarly, Rabren et al. (2002), also interviewed former special education students and found having a job experience before exiting high school was a predictor of gaining employment one year later. This assertion aligns with the human capital theory which emphasizes that investments in human capital, such as education and training are essential for economic development and growth and profitable to individual, organization, and society at large (Schultz 1961). Also, the findings revealed that the employers in order not to exploit the students they engage at their workplace would be ready to pay the students who cannot learn the job but are rendering other

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services with them. This finding reaffirms the assertions of many previous studies. This intervention not only will it help to minimize the rate of exploitation of the services of the students in the community but will also help the students to earn a living and live independent life in the at home and in the community at large. For example, Kapur et al. (2005), argued that students who had paid or unpaid work experiences while in school are better placed and likely to have better post school outcomes. Corroborating this, Carter et al. (2010), intimated that it is indispensable that paid work experiences in integrated settings be accessible to students with intellectual disability to enhance their chances of getting employment that involve individuals with intellectual disability in a competitive employment.

In addition, the results echoes family involvement as a practice that the employers could incorporate in such a collaborative job-oriented initiative that involve the students with intellectual disability to enhance the sustainability and achieving of successful outcomes. Supporting this assertion, Lindstrom et al. (2007), argued that youth participants with their parents as active advocates, those playing leading role in planning and support tended to experience successful transition to employment and earns higher wages and better equipped with skills than youth participants with protective or removed parents. Defur (2012), furthered the argument that parents' involvement in transition services not only improve transition services and outcomes for youth with disability, but also are essential for families to develop the knowledge and skills that will be needed to continue in an appropriate support duty for their adult son or daughter with a disability. Lindstrom et al (2007), indicated that parents are one of the top four priorities, utilizing transition services and postschool supports by bridging students with the appropriate services and supports found in community agencies.

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Moreover, the results indicated that the employers were willing to make the workplace inclusive by adopting customize employment approach in order to accommodate the students to be able to work optimally. According to the U.S Department of Labour (2016), one approach to employing people with disability is customized employment, which aim at connecting the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate or employee with the business needs of an employer. On the same wavelength, Lead Center (2015), argued that customized employment has been found to be an effective way of hiring and supporting employees with special needs. Shen et al (2009,) argued that it is important for employers to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and creating inclusive environment at the workplace.

Lindsay et al. (2013), stated in their study that prioritizing the youth with disabilities is key because they are susceptible to not able to explain or state their disability status which make them vulnerable not to receiving the appropriate workplace accommodation. Bartram et al. (2019) stretched the argument by opining that workplace accommodations, such as modified or quieter workspaces, can enable employers with intellectual disability maximize their potentials to improve the outcome of the organization. Creating accommodation for the students at the workplace as suggested by the employers not only will it help the students to maximize their potential to enhance the productivity of the entity but will also facilitate the sustainability of the collaboration as the students will feel comfortable working in a disability friendly environment.

Another inclusive employment practice that according to the findings employers highlighted was their willingness to engage with the school to champion sensitization at the workplace to help the students work with without facing discriminatory

tendencies by the people around. This drive to make the workplace inclusive was manifested when some of them revealed how they mingle with the students and just as it was observed by the researcher the efforts, the employers put in to interpret the students' poor speech to others for comprehension coupled with other notable behaviours of the students with intellectual disability just so there will be peaceful co-existence at the workplace and minimize issue of stereotype and stigma.

The employers shared varied opinions on their readiness to make formal (verbal) or informal (documented) agreement with the school. This agreement is largely to establish the requirements of both parties in order that there will be mutual benefit for all. This arrangement not only would it help the students to secure employment but will also minimize the rate of the exploitation of the students in the community because with this arrangement, the activities of the employers with the students will be regulated by both the school and the employers which will enhance transparency and continuity. Supporting this argument, Almalki (2021), revealed in his study that in Saudi Arabia GAPEs form partnership agreements with community business agencies. ''By observation and based on teachers' perspectives, most GAPEs form partnership agreements with only two big companies in the country, panda (a grocery company) or MacDonald's (a food company)'' (Almalki, 2021). This corroborates how schools can engage community employers either formally or informally to provide employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability. Based on the foregoing it would be prudent for both the school Reverend Father to engage and agree on common terms that will serve the interest of both parties geared toward proving employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability which will go a long way to reduce the issue of exploitation of the services of these students in the community.

4.6.3 What challenges employers face in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit in providing employment experience for the students with intellectual?

This section sought to answer the question of challenges that employers would encounter when engaging in collaborative initiatives involving students with intellectual disabilities at Reverend Father John Special Unit. Given the nature of the collaboration and the parties involved particularly the students with intellectual disability, obviously there may be differences and peculiar needs that will call for adaptation or accommodation. Notwithstanding, there are other issues that cannot be easily glossed over which could possibly deter the employers from collaborating with the school. The findings revealed that theft issues, poor interpersonal relationships, poor self-care skills and communication gap are the behaviours that will pose challenge to the employers from collaborating with Reverend Father John Special Unit.

Poor self-care skills are one of the challenging issues individuals with intellectual face largely due to their condition as the underlining factor coupled with sometimes the neglect of parents to supervise them to groom themselves. Hence, the public is always suspicious of their personal hygiene. The responses from the employers are not surprising in saying it could deter them from the collaboration. Confirming this in the previous studies conducted by, Wafner et al. (2005), furthered the argument by saying that possessing functional daily living skills has been linked to better postschool outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Another challenge that was highlighted was poor interpersonal relationship. This is about how the students with intellectual disability relate with the people around them and how they manage situations, share ideas, react to issues, and interact with others.

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No man is an island and so as human beings we are expected to live interdependent lives despite our uniqueness. To be able to survive at the workplace one must demonstrate good interpersonal relationship skills, however it appears most of the persons with intellectual disability have behavioural issues which affect their relationship with others as argued by Crites and Dunn (2004), that individuals with intellectual disability have deficits in their social skills, and targeted social skills training is therefore a necessary component of transition planning for these students. Meanwhile, the workplace requires teamwork, social cohesiveness and sharing of ideas to enhance productivity which is the ultimate goal of the business. Employers raising issue on the poor interpersonal relationship of the students as attitude that will deter them from working with the students is in order. In line with this responses, Lindsay and DePay (2015), highlighted that when employing individuals with intellectual, it is important to equip them with soft skills which then make them job-ready to prospective employers. People with intellectual disability commonly fall short at social interaction due to various factors both biological and environmental, so to enhance the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disability, social skills must be improved (Assunta, 2013).

Also, the employers hinted communication gap as major barrier to any attempt to collaborate with the school. In a situation where there will be break down of communication between both parties especially on the part of the school neglecting its role to follow-up at the workplace to check how the student is faring at the workplace and intervention to be made to help the student have comfort at the workplace. Valentini et al. (2018), contended how employers in Spain did highlight the essence of open and continuous communication in their school-business partnerships. Communication is key in all human endeavors and so for the employers to emphasize on it is not out of

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place, but it should be keenly considered by the school authorities if they are desirous to help their students secure jobs (menial) in the community.

In addition, the employers commented on theft issues as a major barrier that will demotivate them from collaborating with the school. Ordinarily, thefts issues are maladaptive and immoral behaviours that society frowns upon for which reasons the school should pay heed to this prompt from the employers and train the students accordingly. So far, it can be concluded that the employers have perceived challenges that they could encounter in the collaborative initiative with Reverend Father John Special Unit to provide employment opportunities to the students with intellectual in the community ranging from poor interpersonal relationships, theft issues, communication gap and poor self-care skills. Employer attitudes and perceptions about the capabilities of individuals with intellectual disability and lack of available support and personnel within their agencies were both cited as critical challenges to providing students from school with work experience (Scheef et al., 2018; Valentini et al., 2019a) in their study noted that before collaborating with a community transition programme, some employers held specific concerns related to expectations. Notwithstanding, these revelations present opportunity to the school to as a matter of urgency to heighten its instructional strategies towards providing remedial and targeted intervention measures to shape the attitude of the students so that they can fit not only in the job market but for community integration at large.

4.6.4 What are employers' perceived benefits in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?

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This question sought to reveal the benefits that employers perceived in collaborative job-oriented initiative with Reverend Father John Special Unit involving students with intellectual disabilities. Every collaboration involves two parties, more people or entities and expected to yield certain positive mutual benefit to the entities involved. It must be highlighted that every businessman's aim is to maximize profit and to enter into such a collaborative initiative, it is expected that these employers will seek their interests first as to what they stand to gain in this initiative either directly or indirectly. But it looks like these employers that were interviewed preoccupation to collaborate with the school does not necessarily focus on the direct economic benefits they will gain as the findings indicate that almost all of them said their perceived benefits from this collaboration were the fact that this initiative will help them build connections, serve as means of advocacy and source of employment.

The findings revealed that the employers consider this collaboration as a major platform that could help these students roll on to the job market to ease burden on their families and society at large. This reflect the fundamentals of the human capital theory which according to Schultz (1961), human beings are huge investment capital and as a result education and training makes them (human beings) valuable which then fosters prosperity, economic development and growth for individuals, businesses, and the society. Schultz advanced the argument by saying that human capital is a critical component in nation's economic progress and the increasing investments in people can lead to higher productivity and overall prosperity. The employers indicated that they are either willing to train the students or pay them which corroborate the philosophical position of the human capital theory and to the employers this is enough benefit, even though one would have expected the employers to calculate the direct economic benefit they would gain in return through this collaboration with the school.

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Also, the results revealed that one major perceived benefit the employers highlighted was how the collaboration has the potential to help them broaden their network with people and entities. They commented that when people see them working with such students with special needs it will motivate them to transact business with them which will yield economic benefits to them as confirmed in a previous study done in Spain, "it's been rewarding now because not only does it give other employers maybe insight into achieving, it opens doors for me in terms of personal relationships network and business-wise meeting a lot of different people that had we not gone down that path, wouldn't be there'' (Valentine et al, 2018). According to Katz et al., (2012), employing individuals with intellectual disability benefits employers in diverse ways because these people are proven to be more stable, dependable, and prolific employees. So, one way the employers felt they would benefit through this collaborative initiative was to build new social network with people which will directly or indirectly turn into economic benefit depending on how they would creatively leverage on such new relationships.

Another benefit that was brought to light through the interaction with the employers was the fact that they see this collaboration as means for public advocacy. They made this assertion on grounds that as they work with the students with intellectual disability, it will serve as exemplary for others to emulate. Because we live in a society where people believe systems and stigmatization tendencies make them perceive people with special needs especially those with Intellectual disability are useless and unproductive as corroborated by Leucking and Fabian (2015), that employers view employing individuals with intellectual disability as a risk, though they may be ready to work with them when they have confidence, they (intellectually disabled) will be supported by caretakers or employment support staff person representing the person with a disability. This is not different from a situation that happened in Australia as reported by Kantar

Public (2017), that a study conducted there about employers' commitment to employing persons with disabilities and the findings of the study revealed that, almost two thirds of employers are largely unwilling to employ jobseekers with disability.

Similarly, Australian Human Resource Institute report (2011), indicates that nearly a quarter of the Human Resources professional surveyed believe there is a perception in their organization that people with disability would not perform well as compared to their counterparts without disabilities. This is what solidifies the position of the employers that when people see students with intellectual disability actively working with them it will reorient their perception that these individuals equally have the potential and capabilities to deliver under the appropriate conditions and support. Such initiative will help to create equal opportunities for these students in terms of securing employment opportunities for themselves.

This development corroborates a situation at Spain where Valentini et al. (2018), revealed that employers reported of how students with intellectual were helping to improve productivity at the workplace, ''I cannot put it into a number, but there's definitely a benefit''. Hence It is a positive sign in this context where the employers also see working with the students as means of public advocacy with respect to how productive they are. It can be concluded that the employers perceived benefits in collaborating with the school Reverend Father John Special Unit are build connections, means of employment and source of advocacy. It will be appropriate for the school Reverend Father John Special Unit to approach the employers in the community for a collaborative initiative that focuses on creating employment opportunities for the students as the employers see more benefits in such in initiative.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, key findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study seeks to explore the employers' views on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disabilities at Reverend Father John special unit. The findings of the study revealed that.

1. The employers' motivating factors to engage in job-oriented collaborative initiative with Reverend Father John Special Unit involving students with intellectual disability were the fact that it will provide employment for the students with intellectual disability; serve as source of education, and social responsibility.

2. The inclusive employment-related practices that would be incorporated in the collaborative initiative are customized employment approach, sensitization, paid employment experience, unpaid employment experience, family involvement, formal agreement, and informal agreement.

3. The perceived challenges that the employers could encounter in this collaborative initiative include theft issues, poor self-care skills, communication gap, and poor interpersonal relationships.

4. Employers perceived benefits in the collaborative initiative with the school in line with the analysis of the data are the fact that it will serve as a source of employment, build connection, and means of advocacy.

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5.2 Conclusions

In line with the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

The findings suggest that provision of employment experiences for students with intellectual disability, means of education and social responsibility are the major factors that will motivate the employers to accept to collaborate with Reverend Father John Special Unit to provide employment opportunities to the students. This indicate that the employers in the community have goodwill and committed to helping the students with intellectual get employed or be trained to earn a living than to either exploit them or see them roam about in the community.

The employers are willing to create conducive and least restrictive environment at the workplace to meet the needs of the students as they mentioned inclusive employment related practices that will help the students fit in the workplace such as implementing customized employment approach, sensitization, paid employment experience, unpaid employment experience, formal agreement, informal agreement, and family involvement. All these indicate that the employers have clear intention to engage the students at the workplace through formalization of the initiative which is either formal or informal engagement with other stakeholders such as representatives from the school and parents to agree on common issues that will help the students maximize their potential under regulated framework while the employers also benefit. This presents opportunity to the school authorities to strategically approach the employers in the community, especially those employers whose work are in line with the basic skills the students are trained in school for arrangement towards giving the students employment opportunities at the workplace, be it full employment or skill acquisition.

Despite the employers' desire to engage the students with intellectual at their workplace through collaborative initiative with the school Reverend Father John Special Unit, they recounted some challenges that would deter them from engaging with the students at their workplace such as theft issues, poor self-care, communication gap and poor interpersonal relationship. The school authorities and other stakeholders must pay critical attention to these challenges espoused by the employers and make conscious effort that focuses on training and shaping the student's behaviour and attitude so that not only the employers will accept to work with them but to integrate or gel well in any social setting.

Moreover, based on the findings, it is obvious that the employers perceive engaging in collaboration with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students with intellectual disability as beneficial in varied ways such as build connections, means of advocacy and source of employment. This is in sharp contrast with the default societal perception that these students are useless even though the employers were silent on the economic benefits they would derive for engaging the students which is one consideration they could have mentioned. Once the employers perceive some benefits in collaborating with the school, it would be appropriate for the school to approach them to make the necessary arrangement that will give room for transparency and accountability as the students work with these employers. In all, the study's findings echo indispensable stakeholder voice which is usually glossed over in discussions about appropriate transition for students with intellectual disability as the employers viewed this collaboration positively especially for the students involved and their business.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study.

1. The authorities at Reverend Father John Special Unit together with the parents of the students should identify and target employers in the community that engage in work experiences aligns with the basic skills the students are taught in school and approach them for collaboration focused on giving employment opportunities to the students. This can be realized through dialogue at PTA meetings, planned visit at community businesses and invitation of employers to attend school events.

2. The school authorities should set defined expectations as they approach the community employers for collaboration focused on formalizing the collaboration through formal or informal agreement, involvement of the students family members, clarity on whether the student is going to be trained or work for payment, and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the students to the employers in order that they can allocate tasks that meet their needs while meeting the production target of the employers.

3. The school authorities and other stakeholders like parents should intensify the training of the students to acquire soft skills like self-care and social skills. Both teachers and parents should consistently shape the attitude of the students particularly on how to seek permission first whenever they want to take anything that does not belong to them, while developing open and routine dialogue with the employers before, during and after the collaboration is initiated.

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4. The school authorities should enhance training of the students and approach the employers in the community to highlight the students' capabilities and interest to the employers to affirm the economic benefits they will gain through the collaborative initiative.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies

Based on the findings of the study on the employers' views on school-employer job-oriented collaborations involving students with intellectual disability at Reverend Father John Special Unit, Winneba, there are grey areas that could be explored further to promote school-employer collaboration in Ghana.

Below are potential topics suggested for further studies.

1. Future studies should focus on exploring the employers' views on whether business productivity is enhanced through school-employer collaborations.

2. Explore customer reactions in school-employer collaborative initiative involving students with intellectual disability

3. Explore how school-employer collaborations grow, improve and dissolve over time.

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APPENDIX

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The purpose of this study is to explore the views of employers on school-employer collaborations involving students with intellectual disabilities to work at Reverend Father John special unit. Participation in the study shall be on a voluntary basis and the information provided shall be confidential. The information provided is strictly for academic purposes and will be used in this study only. You are also guaranteed that your identity will not be attached to any aspect of the research report. The research shall be of benefit as it will help in providing relevant information that will inform policy formulation guidelines to improve the employment fortunes of students with intellectual disabilities.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Interview Questions

1. Research Question 1: What factors could motivate employers to collaborate with Reverend Father John special unit to provide employment experience for the students with intellectual disability?

- Have you in any way had experience with a student with an intellectual disability during your business?

- Are there key factors that would motivate you to work with students with intellectual disability and would that have an influence on your decision to collaborate with the school?

- Are social skills something you would consider about students with intellectual disability in collaborating with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students?

- Would you be able to employ a student with intellectual?

2. Research Question 2: How could employers incorporate inclusive employment practices in collaborating with Reverend Father John special unit for students with intellectual disability?

- How would you ensure that the workplace is inclusive for the students with intellectual disability?

- Would you be able to pay the students with intellectual disability when working with them or rather prefer training them?

- Would you desire to involve the parents or school during your engagement with the students at your workplace?

- How would you prefer to engage the school to regulate the activities of the students at the workplace?

- Are the behaviour and appearance of the students with intellectual of concern to you and does it in any way affect your business?

- Would you be ready to modify the structure of your business operations to suit the abilities of the students to the extent that you would also benefit from it?

3. Research Question 3 What are some of the challenges employers face in school-employer collaborations toward the employment of students with intellectual disability?

- Could you share with me some of the behaviours of these students that put you off and hence wouldn't allow you to collaborate with the school to provide employment opportunities to the students?

- What is the key challenge you envisage could encounter when you collaborate with the school to employ the students with intellectual disability?

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- Do you think working with the students with intellectual disability could negatively affect the growth of your business?

- To what extent would you say the behaviour of the students with intellectual disability is concerning?

- Do you think the manner of communication in any way could affect your relations with the school?

4   What are some of the benefits employers consider in collaborating with schools that focus on employment opportunities for students with intellectual disability?

- Is it even relevant to collaborate with the school?

- Do you think the students with intellectual disability are productive enough to be employed?

- What would be the biggest benefit you envisage in this collaboration with the school involving the students with intellectual disability

- Do you see any benefit to your business because of engaging in this collaboration with the school?

- Could this collaboration in anyway set the stage of employment for the students with intellectual disability?