SPECTACULAR JOURNALS
www.spectacularjournals.org

Original Research Article

Teacher's perception of inclusive education and its influence on the teaching learning process in Secondary Schools in Kumba I Subdivision

Ajongakoh Raymond Bella PhD.

Abstract

Senior Lecturer (Educational Psychology), HTTTC Kumba, University of Buea.

E-mail: ajongraymond@yahoo.com

Inclusion is a growing aspect in our educational system because of the need for all learners with (their differences)diversity to learn in the same classroom. There are however challenges in its implementation given that the teachers who should implement it are limited in terms of knowledge and applicability. This paper was aimed at investigating teachers' perception of Inclusive Education and how this influences the teaching/learning process in secondary schools in the Kumba Municipality, Meme Division. The study was focused on finding out how teachers' training, and teachers' experience affect their ability to handle diverse learners in the teaching/learning process. The survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of all teachers of secondary schools in the Kumba municipality. A sample of 150 respondents was randomly selected from eleven secondary schools classified as public, denominational and lay private. Data for the study was collected using the questionnaire which was divided into sections based on the objectives of the study. The data gathered was analyzed descriptively and inferentially using simple frequencies, means and standard deviations. The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using the Chi-square test at 0.05% level of significance. Findings revealed that, teachers' training has a significant effect on how teachers handle diverse learners in the teaching/learning process; the more experienced teachers are both in terms of longevity in service and training, the more they are able to positively impact the teaching learning process. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that teacher training institutions should integrate courses in special needs education so as to better prepare would be teachers and practicing teachers should be given further in-service training on inclusion to help them help the learners.

Keywords: Diverse Learners, Inclusive Education, Perception, Teaching Experience, Training.

INTRODUCTION

This paper examined teachers' perceptions of including children with special needs in their schools. The education of children with special needs has been a concern to the international community since the 1994 United Nations Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education (UNESCO, 1994). World nations are committed to provide access for children with special needs to be educated with their peers without special needs. The education of individuals with special education needs was introduced in

Cameroon in 1975 with the creation of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA), which was responsible for the well-being of individuals with disabilities (Yuh and Shey, 2008).

Cameroon's Law No. 83/13, Article 3, of July 1983, provided for the needs and protection of individuals with disabilities with three major provisions: integration of children in ordinary schools, admission in special classes, and admission into specialized institutions (Protection of Disabled Persons, 2003). Understanding teacher perceptions towards children with disabilities continues to be one way to assist with making progress in educating children with disabilities.

Historically, individuals with special needs were not educated in the general education setting. In the school setup, students with special education needs were neither categorized nor registered in the school. As of 2003, only 10 institutions (segregated schools for more significant disabilities such as visual impairments, multiple disabilities (mostly physical), deaf/hard of hearing, and behavioral disorders existed in Cameroon that served the needs of individuals with disabilities; out of the ten, only two were government institutions (Yuh and Shey, 2008). The lack of specification in the legislation for the education of students with special education needs leads to the general belief that individuals with disabilities are to be educated in a segregated environment.

The attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards students with disabilities in both developed and developing countries has been researched (Fakolade et al., 2009; Gal et al., 2010). Teachers attitudes were found to contribute to the success of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Dupourx, Hammond, Ingalls, and Wolman (2006) discussed that the attitudes and beliefs of teachers contributed to their abilities to accommodate students with disabilities in their classes.

Education of children with disabilities has seen a shift from segregated special schools to inclusion in general education schools and classrooms. Educating children with disabilities in the regular schools is an important goal for many countries today. The drive to achieve Education for All (EFA) by 2015 has led to a focus on the barriers to participation in basic education for marginalized groups (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010).

Approximately 10% of the world's population has a disability, and 80% of those with disabilities live in the developing world (World Health Organization, 2005). Since the mid-twentieth century, there has been a growing international disability movement that has advocated for the inclusion of people with disabilities within society. Countries have developed policies related to education, employment, income support, anti-discrimination, and other policies intended to improve the position of people with disabilities within their own society. This is sometimes based on international agreements and programs, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons of 1975 (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1975) and the African Decade of Disabled Persons, 2000-2009. (African Union, 2005)

Inclusion in education is the education of persons with special education needs together with children without special learning needs in an inclusive setting. Under the inclusion model; children with special needs spend most or all of their time with non – special pupils. The implementation of these practice varies in the sense that most schools frequently use inclusion for selected students with mild to severe special needs programs instead of the school being restructured so that all pupils learn together.

During the past 25 years, there has been an interest in the inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools (Ballard, 1998; Booth and Ainscow, 1998). In the past, children with special needs were educated in special schools and institutions separately from their peers. The philosophy has been strengthened in the 1990s (for example UNESCO, 1994), to treat all children with special needs as individuals who have equal rights to education. UNESCO defines inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from educational setting. This was also adopted at the Salamanca world conference on special needs education (1994) and restated in the Dakar Framework of Action.

This work was carried out within the school context. Inclusive education in the context of the goal of education for all is a complex issue and no coherent approach is available in the literature. Inclusive education differs from previously held notions of "integration" and "mainstreaming" which tended to be concerned principally with disability and "special educational need" and implied learners changing or becoming "ready for" or deserving of accommodation by the mainstream. Inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the schools duty to accept the child. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate pupils with disabilities from pupils without disabilities.

In our Cameroon context, there are efforts made by the government at implementing inclusive education policies. There is however still a long way to go beginning at the infrastructural level which is observed not to be inclusive as to accommodate learners with certain disabilities. For example, classrooms in secondary schools and lecture halls in higher education are not equipped with rams which limits accessibility to learners on wheel chairs. Law No. 98/004 of April 14, 1998 to lay

down guidelines for education in Cameroon in its Section 32 states that "the teachers shall be the sole guarantor of educational quality". It is observed that many teachers in the field do not possess the adequate skills required to effectively teach in an inclusive classroom. Besides the teacher training courses offered in different institutions and colleges remains "traditional" with little training on how to handle special needs learners.

This knowledge gap necessitates us to find out how practicing teachers are coping with the implementation of inclusive education strategies in their classrooms. The teachers' classroom practices vis-à-vis special needs learners can greatly affect their self-concept and their overall attitude towards. In this way, the success of the teaching-learning process is also affected. According to Rogers (1951), self-concept encompasses beliefs, feelings, perceptions, attitudes and values that uphold an individual. In addition, self-concept also means thinking about yourself, and other people's thinking towards the individual. Self-concept is divided into two types: positive and negative self-concept. Individuals who have a negative self-concept are those who are not excited, irritable, and often associated with failure.

While individuals who have positive self-concept are those who are always happy, not easily deterred, optimistic and are often associated with success. Therefore, teachers should be concerned about the development of self-concept of students in school so that a positive self-concept can be formed. Self-concept of students in the school can be influenced by people who were in the vicinity of the students, teachers, parents and friends. Teachers can bring a huge influence in the formation of self-concept of students (Azizi and Jaafar Sidek in the study Nurul Ain and Azizi Yahaya, 2012) as the learning process in schools involves many interactions between teachers and students. In addition, the social environment, acceptance or allowance to students also influences the student's self-concept.

Furthermore, many disabled children are still observed not to be going to school, and the segregated schools for the blind or deaf still continue to exist. Despite the existence of regulations requiring that head teachers and principals are obliged to admit all students irrespective of their physical state, their application for the most part remain wishful thinking. This is because schools generally lack the skilled manpower to effectively teach inclusively or are restricted by the lack of specialized instructional resources for special needs learners. The result is that many special needs learners fall out of the school system or are simply not sent to the regular schools.

With these in mind, inclusive education has come to stay and teachers must stay abreast with its implementation strategies. The authorities on their part depend on the schools for the vision of inclusion to become a reality, and for this to happen, teachers by their teaching practices should be able to motivate and engage all learners in the learning process so as to improve its efficiency. Learners should naturally not fall out of the school system because they were or are being neglected by their teachers and even other learners as a result of their physical challenges.

Statement of the Problem

The idea that education for children with disabilities should be taken care of in ordinary schools has gained acceptance worldwide. In Cameroon, government regulations and prescriptions for implementing inclusive education program have been developed at the policy level. However, these regulations are for the most part still not being implemented at the school level. Implementation of such regulations constitute change and requires that teachers' as key players in the instructional process accept the change in order to be committed to its implementation.

One way to measure such acceptance and or resistance is through a survey of teachers' perceptions in understanding that positive perceptions means acceptance while negative perceptions means resistance towards the implementation of inclusive education. Since teachers differ according to training, attitudes, experience, educational practice, skills or knowledge and concern, it is important a survey is carried out within the context of these factors for the purpose of determining how they influence acceptance or resistance to change. This paper therefore sought to determine teachers' perception of inclusive education and how it impacted the teaching – learning process.

Inclusion Trends; IDEA (Individuals with Disability Act), and No Child Left Behind

Including students with disabilities in general education classrooms continue to be debated (WAC, 2001). IDEA (Individuals with disability Education Act) stated that if state and local education agencies provided special education and related services to children with disabilities, they would receive federal funds. IDEA mandated that children with disabilities should be provided an appropriate education designed to meet their needs in a LRE (less restrictive environment). Inclusion was not mandated, but IDEA interpreted the LRE to be the general education classrooms. Emotionally disturbed was included as one of the categories. Each student who was eligible for special education was to be provided a free, appropriate public education.

Parental participation, along with notices and

permissions, were required at different stages of the process, along with a comprehensive evaluation of the child's strengths and weaknesses. Every three years, a re-evaluation is required for each child with a disability who receives special education services. Parental rights, including mediation and due process hearings, were in IDEA. The IDEA was reauthorized with amendments (Council for Exceptional Children, 1997). Several changes were made to IDEA. The definition of serious emotional disturbance was changed to emotional disturbance. Supplemental aids and services, transition services, participation in assessment, determination of manifestation of disability, and reviewing existing data were some of the other additions to IDEA in 1997.

The major focus of No Child Left Behind is to close student achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. This Act was ratified by most countries in the world including Cameroon. The U.S. Department of Education emphasizes four pillars within the bill:

- Accountability: to ensure those students who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency.
- Flexibility: Allows school districts flexibility in how they use federal education funds to improve student achievement.
- Research-based education: Emphasizes educational programs and practices that have been proven effective through scientific research.
- Parent options: Increases the choices available to the parents of students attending primary and secondary schools.

Experiences and Teacher's Perceptions

The debate over inclusion versus full inclusion for children with disabilities continues. The attitudes of general educators play a major role in the success of children who are disabled and their educational programming. In the beginning stages of integration or inclusion, negative attitudes often existed among many general educators due to their lack of knowledge and training in working with students with disabilities (Stainback and Stainback, 1996).

Positive teacher attitudes were often also paired with concerns about the integration of children who were severely disabled. General education teachers were more in favour of inclusion when a child did not require additional responsibilities on the part of the teacher. When more was asked of the educator, resistance was more common. Positive attitudes that were promoted were often short lived.

According to Shapiro (1999), attitudes and beliefs from years ago continue to affect how society treats children with disabilities. For years, people with disabilities

were often treated cruelly until the Americans with Disabilities Act came into effect. Persons with disabilities continue to be denied the same opportunities as a result of earlier attitudes and myths.

The definition of attitude has three parts: behaviour, emotional or affect, and a belief. A person can act positively or negatively based on their emotions. Isolating or separating children with disabilities from general education classes adds to making them appear different, leading to behaviours such as others shying away from them. Children with disabilities who are negatively looked upon can be affected by these attitudes. The self-esteem of individuals with disabilities could be affected as a result. Negative attitudes can affect children's' self-esteem. "A child who is the victim of prejudice experiences not only emotional pain and social and economic barriers, but also permanent damage to his or her confidence and sense of self-worth" (Brodkin, 1993, as cited in Shapiro, 1999). Teachers need to promote acceptance and positive attitudes toward all children.

The success of inclusion in schools depends greatly on how teachers view children with disabilities in their classrooms and promote a positive learning environment. Teachers set the stage to promote positive peer interaction and learning to take place. Educators prepare children to accept all individuals and respect their individual rights (Shapiro, 1999). Individuals' self-worth can be influenced by the interactions they have with teachers, friends, and family. If an individual continues to have negative encounters, he or she will see herself or himself as abnormal or worthless.

Inclusion and Teacher Training

Teaching and working with children identified with disability often can raise the anxiety of teachers more than any other issue in education. Children with disability present teachers with the most disturbing behaviors which violate rules and social norms. The effects of children with disability on inclusion should be considered (Landrum and Kauffrnan, 1992). It is likely that education and training will help educators increase their positive attitudes toward children with disabilities. Personnel in inclusive schools need to provide guidance to teachers to promote their positive attitudes toward all children. Teachers need to be aware of the children's' needs beyond just academic learning as they can make a difference in their students' lives by promoting positive attitudes (Gearheart, 1996).
Teacher attitudes can have a large impact on the success of inclusive programs for children with disabilities, (Larrivee and Cook, 1979; MacDonald and Hardman, 1989; Parrish et al., 1982 as cited in Stoler, 1992). There exist academic programs for Special

Education in Universities such as the University of Buea, but unfortunately practicing teachers in the field do not have adequate training in the area of inclusive education classrooms. Logically therefore, their ability to attend to learning diversity is limited by their skills.

Teachers' Perceptions toward Inclusion

The teacher's attitude is important in determining the success of special education programs (Stoler, 1992). However, few studies have been done on how teachers feel about inclusion (Jobe et al., 1996). Many surveys conducted in the 1970s and 1980s indicated that a high percentage of general educators believed students with disabilities should remain in separate special education classrooms.

One example of this would be the survey that was conducted by Ringleben and Price (1981, as cited in Hewitt, 2004). The results showed 30% of the teachers surveyed believed mainstreaming had negative effects on their attitudes toward teaching.

In the 1980s, there was an emphasis on school reform (Home, 1985). The general education initiative (REI) was an effort to promote more inclusive placements with new teaching methods for children with disabilities. The REI was based on the following assumptions:
a. Students are more alike than different, so special instruction is not needed;
b. Good teachers can teach all students; all students can be provided with quality education;
c. General education classrooms can manage all students without any segregation; and
d. Physically separate education was discriminatory.

Many educators opposed the views of the REI and arguments against the REI occurred. Opponents felt more competent teachers did not necessarily have more positive attitudes about students with disabilities (Kavale, 2000). Due to the involvement of the government with the REI, advocates for full inclusion influenced school policies and more students with disabilities were included in general education classes (Heflin and Bullock, 1999).

According to Heflin and Bullock (1999) teachers are resistant to inclusion due to their lack of ability to teach children with disabilities in the classroom. More and more requirements are being placed on the classroom teacher today, and inclusion adds to the demands. Many teachers are concerned about being able to meet the needs of children with disabilities along with their other general education children. Children with disability require skilled professionals to support their needs. Teachers are concerned about dealing with severe behaviors exhibited by children with disability in the classroom and their lack of training in dealing with this disability.

Objectives of the study

This study was designed to investigate teacher's perception of inclusive education and its influence on the teaching learning process in selected secondary schools in Kumba I municipality. More specifically, it sought;
1. To find out the effect of teachers' educational training on their attitude towards inclusive education practices.
2. To determine whether teaching experience affects teachers' attitudes towards the handling of special needs learners.

Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the following research questions were posed:
1. How does teachers' educational training affect their attitudes towards inclusive education in secondary schools in Kumba I?
2. To what extent does teaching experience affect teachers' ability to handle special needs students in secondary schoolst in Kumba I?

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to provide a blueprint as to how the objectives of the study were to be achieved. The descriptive survey research design was used in this study which allowed for rapid collection of data about an issue over a large area, community or population within a short time using questionnaires, observation techniques etc. Descriptive research design was appropriate because the researcher could generalize the findings to the whole population.

Population of the Study

This study targeted all Lower Sixth Science students and their teachers effectively enrolled in Public, Lay Private and Denominational secondary schools in Meme as at September 8th, 2016. About 350 teachers made up the target population of the study. The researcher collected data from a total of 11 randomly selected schools (four public, four private and three faith based).

Sampling

Data was collected from a total of 150 respondents using a structured questionnaire. This sample was selected from the parent populations using the simple random sampling and the purposive sampling techniques. Data for the study were collected using a Teacher Perception

Table 1. Gender of respondents by school type attended.

School Type	Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Public	Male	60	70.58
	Female	47	72.31
Denominational	Male	15	17.65
	Female	12	18.16
Lay Private	Male	10	11.76
	Female	06	9.23
Total	**Male**	**85**	**56.76**
	Female	**65**	**43.24**

Table 2. Ages of respondents.

	20-30	31-40	41-50	50^+	Total
Frequency (f)	11	88	38	13	150
Percentage (%)	7.33	58.67	25.33	8.67	100%

of Inclusive Education (TPIE) questionnaire. A four point Likert Scale was used in constructing the instruments.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure that the instrument measured consistently what it was designed to measure, it was trial-tested using 30 respondents selected at random from GHS Kumba Mbeng. These were no longer used during the main study. The data collected was tested for reliability using the Chronbach Coefficient Alpha method. The reliability estimates ranged from 0.74 to 0.85. These reliability estimates were considered high enough to justify the instrument for use in this research.

Procedure for Data Analysis

The data analysis was done descriptively and inferentially to establish the relationship between teacher perception of inclusive education and learning outcomes with the assistance of the SPSS. The Chi square test of independence was used for the verification of hypotheses in view of establishing the link between these variables as the main statistical tool.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Demographic characteristics of respondents

An analysis of the demographic information about the respondents (participants) reveals the following:

Table 1 shows that 56.76% of respondents selected for the study were males while 43.24% of them were females. There are more males than females in each of the schools sampled for the study. The distribution of respondents varies significantly form one school type to the other within the subdivision. Details of the above distribution are presented in the figure below:

The result on Table 2 reveal that the vast majority of teachers sampled were aged between 31 and 40 (58.67%) followed by the age range 41-50 (25.33%) while 7.33% of them fall within the ages of 20 – 30. A significant 7.3% of the respondents are aged above 50.

The result in Table 3 below show that 40.67% of the respondents had a teaching experience of between 6-10years, 18.67% of them are still in their first 5years of teaching. 27.33% and 9.33% of the teachers respectively have accumulated working experiences of 11-15 and 16-20 years. Only 4.00% of the respondents have more than 20 years of working experience. The highest proportion of most experienced teachers teach in the public schools followed by Denominational schools and least in the lay private schools.

The result in Table 4 below shows that 54% of teachers in secondary schools in Kumba I subdivision have no training whatsoever in inclusive education while 32% of them have an average training. Only 14% of the teachers have a good knowledge or training on inclusivity in the classroom.

Data Analysis and interpretation from the questionnaire

The data obtained from the main questionnaire was

Table 3. Teachers' teaching experience.

Type/years		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20^{+}	Total
Public	f	15	44	33	10	05	107
	%	10.00	29.33	22.00	6.67	3.33	71.33
Denominational	f	08	10	05	04	00	27
	%	5.33	6.67	3.33	2.67	00	18.00
Lay Private	f	05	07	03	0	01	16
	%	3.33	4.67	2.00	00	0.67	10.67
Total	f	**28**	**61**	**41**	**14**	**06**	**150**
	%	**18.67**	**40.67**	**27.33**	**9.33**	**4.00**	**100**

Table 4. Training in Inclusive Education.

	None	Average	Good	Total
Frequency (f)	81	48	21	150
Percentage (%)	54.0	32.0	14.0	100%

Table 5. Distribution of responses on teachers' educational training affects their ability to handling diverse learners in the teaching learning process (N=150).

School Type	Number of respondents	Number of items	Mean opinion	Percentage Agree (%)	Percentage disagree (%)
Public	107	5	2.95	71.21	28.79
Denominational	27	5	2.69	63.70	22.30
Lay Private	16	5	2.80	68.75	31.25
All	150	5	2.81	67.96	32.04
Critical mean opinion			2.50		

analyzed and interpreted according to the research questions. This presentation is followed by the test of specific research hypothesis formulated for each research question.

Specific Research Question One

The first specific research question addressed the teacher's ability to handle diverse learners and how this affects the teaching learning process in the Kumba I subdivision. This question was investigated using five questionnaire items whose frequencies and mean opinions were calculated and tallied to either agree or disagree with the extent to which the teacher's ability to effectively handle diverse learners affect the teaching learning process. The distribution of responses pertaining to this research question is presented in Table 5 above:

The results show that 67.96% of all the respondents generally agree (mean of 2.81) that the teachers' educational training affects their ability to handle diverse

learners in the classroom in secondary schools in Kumba while 32.04% of them disagree. This opinion is comparatively most profound in public schools and respectively 63.70% and 68.75% for denominational and lay private schools.

The chi-square statistic that follows is to establish whether or not the teachers' training in to handle diverse learners significantly affect the teaching learning process in secondary schools in Kumba. (Table 6)

H_0: Teachers' training does not significantly affect their ability to handle diverse learners in the teaching/learning process in secondary schools.

Ha: Teachers' training significantly affects their ability to handle diverse learners in the teaching/learning process in secondary schools.

Conclusion

Since the alternative hypothesis is accepted (and the null rejected), it can be concluded that teachers' training

Table 6. Summary of Chi Square Statistic for Contingency.

Df	$(3-1)(4-1) = 2 \times 3 = 6$	
χ^2_{crit}	12.592	Since χ^2_{cal} (**21.860**) $> \chi^2_{crit}$ (12.592), H$_o$ is rejected and H$_a$ is accepted.
χ^2_{cal}	21.86	

Table 7. Distribution of responses on the teachers' experience in handling diverse learners and the teaching/learning process (N=150).

School Type	Number of respondents	Number of items	Mean opinion	Percentage Agree (%)	Percentage disagree (%)
Public	107	5	2.90	68.10	31.90
Denominational	27	5	2.57	50.34	49.66
Lay Private	16	5	2.87	66.11	33.89
All	150	5	2.78	61.52	38.48
Critical mean opinion			2.50		

Table 8. Summary of Chi Square Statistic for Contingency.

Df	$(3-1)(4-1) = 2 \times 3 = 6$	
χ^2_{crit}	12.592	Since χ^2_{cal} (**20.21**) $> \chi^2_{crit}$ (12.592), H$_o$ is rejected and H$_a$ is accepted.
χ^2_{cal}	20.21	

significantly affects their ability to handle diverse learners in the teaching/learning process in secondary schools in Kumba I subdivision. Irrespective of the secondary school type attended, this influence is significant at 0.05% level of confidence.

Specific Research Question Two

This specific research question was designed to investigate the effects of teachers' experience in handling learners with diverse needs on the teaching/learning process secondary school in Kumba I subdivision. This question was investigated using seven questionnaire items whose frequencies and mean opinions were calculated and used to establish the extent to which teachers' experience in handling diverse learners affect the teaching/learning process in secondary schools. The responses are presented in Table 7.

The results show that a little above three-fifths (61.52%) of all the respondents generally agree (mean of 2.78) that the teacher's experience in teaching diverse learners the teaching learning process in secondary schools while 38.78% of them disagree. This opinion is comparatively most profound in public schools, just

average in denominational schools (mean=2.57) and 66.11% in lay private schools (mean=2.87).

The chi-square statistic that follows is to establish whether or not teachers' teaching experience significantly affects their ability to handle diverse learners in the teaching-learning process in secondary schools in Kumba I. (Table 8)

H0$_2$: Teachers' experience in teaching diverse learners does not significantly the teaching/learning process in secondary schools.

Ha$_2$: Teachers' experience in teaching diverse learners has a significant effect on the teaching/learning process in secondary schools.

Conclusion

Since the alternative hypothesis is retained (and the null rejected), it can be concluded that the teacher's experience in teaching diverse learners significantly affects the teaching/learning process in secondary schools in Kumba I subdivision. Irrespective of the school attended, this influence is significant at 0.05% level of confidence because the critical value of the chi-square statistic (12.95) is less than the calculated

value of 20.210.

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the analysis of data obtained from respondents in search of how teachers' perception of inclusive education impacts on the teaching/learning process. The findings from the data obtained are summarized as follows:

1. There isa significant relationship between teachers' training and their ability to effectively handle diverse learners in the teaching/learning process in secondary schools in Kumba I subdivision.

2. The more experienced teachers are, the more likely they are to effectively handle diverse learners and positively impact the teaching/learning process in secondary schools.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is enough evidence to support the fact that teachers' perception of inclusive education affects their practices in the inclusive education classroom as reported by findings in this study and significant others conducted by other researchers. These findings tied with past writings and findings of other authors, as demonstrated below:

1. There is a significant relationship between teachers' training and their ability to effectively handle diverse learners in the teaching/learning process in secondary schools in Kumba I subdivision.

This results corroborates with the results of a study conducted by Odongo (May 2012) on Primary School teachers from 10 Primary Schools in a school district in Western Kenya which concluded that attitudes, perceptions, and concerns of the teachers influence their acceptance and commitment to the implementation and success of inclusive education. These attitudes were directly related to their training.

2. The more experienced teachers are, the more likely they are to effectively handle diverse learners and positively impact the teaching/learning process in secondary schools.

This result agrees with the views of Heiman (2004), who opined that students can be included in mainstream classes based on a multidimensional diagnosis including psychological and educational tests in consideration with the abilities and experiences of the teachers. The students in such classes usually receive additional academic support from a special education teacher in their regular classrooms or in a resource room. To provide flexible inclusion in the least restrictive environment, the schools need to train more mainstream

teachers to handle and cope with special needs students in their classes.

Again, despite the apparent benefits of inclusion, and regardless of the teachers' commitment and positive attitudes; and notwithstanding their having the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the educational needs of diverse students with disabilities, teachers were concerned about the academic, social, and behavioural adjustment of the students with disabilities in inclusive classes. Some teachers however, in this study felt that inclusion would bring little benefit to students with disabilities and, consequently, they questioned the advantages of inclusion (Heiman, 2002; Priestley and Rabiee, 2002).

Other teachers stressed their concern that as more students are included, teachers would need additional tools and skills for coping with the social and emotional problems that accompany inclusive schooling (Idol, 1997). Vaughn, Schumm et al. (1996) mentioned several aspects which might cause teachers to raise objections to inclusion, such as the large number of students in the class, budget shortages, the teachers' work load, difficulties in standardized evaluation. Still, others pointed to the lack of teamwork, or asked for guidance in dealing with students with special needs (Danne and Beirne-Smith, 2000).

Some of the mainstream teachers (Heiman, 2004),claimed that they had chosen to teach a specific discipline and not special education, and the inclusion policy forced them to enter areas they were unsure about or not interested in it (Vaughn, et al., 1996). Mock and Kauffman (2002) described the catch in which teachers were trapped: on one hand, teachers cannot be prepared to answer the unique educational needs of every student with special needs, and, on the other hand, teachers in inclusive classes teaching students with special needs, might function beyond their training and their specialization.

This finding is very significant in Inclusive Education and everywhere else in the education industry because, experienced teachers (either through in-service training, longevity in service etc.) are more likely to effectively handle disruptions in the classroom and amass a wealth of knowledge in different areas of learning as opposed to beginning teachers.

Furthermore, Mohd et al. (2006) in their study strengthens the above result when they found that teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education if they have received the required training. They agreed that inclusive education enhances social interaction and inclusion among the students and thus, it minimizes negative stereotypes on special needs students. The findings also show that collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important and that there should be a clear

guideline on the implementation of inclusive education. The findings of the study have significant implications to the school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders who directly and indirectly involved in implementing inclusive education and the provision of needed resources including human.

CONCLUSION

This study was very important because it showed that perception towards inclusive education has a significant effect on the teaching/learning process.

The study revealed that insufficient training, lack of knowledge and skills of teachers were the overreaching difficulties that resulted in teachers' feelings a sense of inadequacy to teach in an inclusive education classroom. It is of utmost importance that mainstream teachers who would be required to teach in an inclusive classroom receive relevant training to ensure they were equipped with the knowledge, skills and abilities to effectively execute best practice within the learning environment and to encourage the ideology of inclusion. The experience of the teachers showed that most of the teachers had positive attitude towards teaching children with special education needs due to their knowledge.

The result also showed that more experienced teachers were more accepting and positive towards children with special education needs being included in their classrooms than the other teachers. This may be due to the public becoming more aware of people with disabilities and their characteristics. This result could also be due to recent changes in pre-service teachers' training and emphasis on the importance of inclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:
1. Teachers should be encouraged to do in-service training in special needs education.
2. Teachers who have amassed longevity in teaching and relevant training should be encouraged to teach classes with significant number of special needs learners.
3. The teachers perception of the special needs learners must change progressively because they are able to do as much as will do "normal learners".

REFERENCES

Abosi CO (2003). Thoughts on action plan for the development of inclusive education in Africa. Council for Exceptional children: Division of International Special Education and Services. Retrieved from http://wwwced.sped.org/intlover.htm

Adams JL, Harre R (2001). Gender positioning: A sixteenth/seventeenth century example. J. theory of Soc. Behav., 31, 331-338.

Adéníyì H, Béllò R (2007b). Urban linguistics in Nigeria: A case of language use in Lagos metropolis. Iranian J. Language Stud., 2, 53-63. Available at: http:// ijols.znu.ac.ir/

Algozzine R (1990). Problem behavior management: Educator's resource services. Rockville, MD: Aspen

Ali M, Mustapha R, Jelas Z (2006). An empirical study on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Malaysia. Int. J. Special Educ., 21(3), 36-44.

Andrews A, Frankel E (2010). Inclusive education in Guyana: A call for change. Int. J. Special Educ., 25(1), 126-144.

Antonak RF, Livneh H (2000), Measurement of attitudes towards persons with disabilities, Disability and Rehabilitation 22, 211-224.

Arokiasamy CMV, Rubin SE, Roessler RT (2001) Sociological aspects of Rehabilitation. In S.E. Rubin and R.T. Roessler, Foundations of the vocational Rehabilitation process (5th ed., pp 151-183) Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed

Avramidis E, Bayliss P, Burden R (2000). A survey into mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school in one local education authority. Educational Psychology, 20(2), 191-211.

Avramidis E, Norwich B (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration / inclusion: a review of the literature. European J. Special Needs Educ., 17(2), 129–147.

Berger PL, Luckmann T (1966). The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge, Garden City, NJ: Doubleday and Co.

Brodwin MG, Orange LM (2002). Attitudes toward disability. In J.D. Andrew and C.W. Faubion (Eds.), Rehabilitation services: An introduction for the human services professional (pp. 145-173). Osage Beach, MO: Aspen Professional Services.

Campbell J, Gilmore L, Cuskelly M. (2003). Changing student teachers' attitudes towards disability and inclusion. J. Intellect. Dev. Disabil., 28, 369-379.

Chandler JP, Sideridlis GD (1997). Assessment of teacher attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities: A confirmatory factor analysis. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 14, 5 1 -64.

Council for Exceptional Children (1997). Summary of individuals with disabilities education act (7DEA). Retrieved October 19, 2003, fiom http://www.cec.sped.org Ippidea-a. htm

D'Alonzo BJ, Giordano G, VanLeeuwen DM (1 997). Perceptions by teachers about benefits and liabilities of inclusion. Preventing School Failure, 42(1), 63- 71. Retrieved February 13, 2005, http://web9.epnet.com,citation.asp

Davies B, Harre R (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. J. Theory Soc. Behav., 20, 43-63.

Dupoux E, Hammond H, Ingalls L, Wolman C (2006). Teachers" attitudes towards students with disabilities in Haiti. Int. J. Special Educ., 21(3), 1-13.

Dupoux E, Wolman C, Estrada E (2005). Teachers' attitudes toward integration of students with disabilities in Haiti and the United States. Int. J. Disabil. Dev. Educ. 52, 43-58.

Eiser JR (1994). Attitudes, chaos and connectionist mind. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Fakoland OA, Adeniyi SO, Tella A (2009). Attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of special needs children in general education classroom: The case of teachers in some selected schools in Nigeria. Int. Electronic J. Elementary Educ., 1 (3), 155-169.

Gearheart BR. (1996). The exceptional Student in the regular classroom. Englewood Cliffs, NJ : Merrill.

George OO (2012). Examining the attitudes, perceptions and concerns of teachers toward the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classroom. Survery from Kenyan teahers. Texas Tech university.

Hammond H, Ingalls L (2003, Winter). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion: Survey results from elementary school teachers in the south-western rural school districts. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 22(1), 255-261.

Harre R, van Langenhove L (Eds.) (1999). Positioning theory: Moral contexts of intentional action. Oxford: Blackwell.

Heflin LJ, Bullock LM (1999, Spring). Inclusion of students with emotional behavioral disorders: A survey to teachers in general and special education. Preventing School Failure, 43(3), 103- 111 .

Hegarty S (1995). Review of the Present Situation in Special Needs Education. UNESCO. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from http:// unesdoc. Unesco. org/ images 0010/001026/102688Eb.pdf

Hewitt MB (2004). Meeting the challenges of inclusion for students with emotional disabilities. Choices, 2, 32-39. Retrieved October 25, 2004, from www.edutech.org/choices/choicesf. htm

Hollway W (1984). Gender Difference and the Production of Subjectivity. In J. Henriques, W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Venn, and V. Walkerdine (Eds.), I. London: Methuen.

Home MD (1985). Attitudes toward handicapped contents: Professional, peer, and parent reactions. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hwang Y, Evans D (2011). Attitudes towards inclusion: Gaps between beliefs and practice. Int. J. Special Educ., 26(1), 136-146.

Ihunnah AC (1984). The status of special education in a developing country: Nigeria. Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Dissertation Abstracts International, 45(08), 2483.

Jobe D, Rust JO, Brissie J (1996). Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms. Education, 117 (1), 148-153.

Kalyva E, Gojkovic D, Tsakiris V (2007). Serbian teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Int. J. Special Educ., 22(3), 31-36.

Kataoka M, Kraayenoord CE, Elkins J (2004). Principles' perceptions of learning disabilities: A study from Nara perfectoure Japan. Learning Disabilities Quarterly, 27(3), 161-175

Kavale KA (2000, September/October). Disabilities; educational history; idusive schools, remedial and special education. Retrieved October 18, 2003, from http://libproxy.uwstoutiedu:2335/citation.asp?tb=1and-ug=dbs+0%2C2%2C 12%2C 13+l n+

Kiarie, M. W. (2004). Education of students with visual impairments in Kenya. Trends and issues. Int. J. Special Educ., 19(2), 16-22. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ852052.pdf

Landrum TJ, Kauffman JM (1992). Reflectives on "characteristics of general education teachers perceived as effective by their peers: Implications for the inclusion of children with learning and behavioral disorders." Exceptionaliil).: A Res. J., 3(3), 185- 188.

Larrivee B, Cook L (1979). Mainstreaming: A study of the variables affecting teacher attitude. J. Special Educ., 13, 315-324.

MacDonald JD, MacIntyre PD (1999). A rose is a rose: Effects of label change, education, and sex on attitudes toward mental disabilities. J. Dev. Disabil., 6, 15-31.

Mary Z (2006). Teachers perception towards including students with emotional and behavioural disorder in general education classroom. The American psychology association 5th edition. University of Wisconsin-stoat.

Ministry of Education National Commission on Special Education (2005). Commonwealth of the Bahamas national census of special education population and related services report. Nassau, The Bahamas: Bahamas Government Printing Office.

Monsen JJ, Frederickson N (2003). Teachers' attitudes towards mainstreaming and their pupils' perception of their classroom learning environment. Learning Environment Research, 7, 129–142.

Obiakor FE, Offor MT (2011). Special Education Provision in Nigeria: analysing Context, Problems and Prospects. Int. J. Special Educ., 26(1) 12-19

Ocloo MA, Subbeya M (2008). Perception of basic education school teachers towards inclusive education in the Hohoe District of Ghana. Int. J. Inclusive Educ., 12(5-6), 639650.

Protection of Disabled Persons, Law No. 83-13, § 7/21/1983, Republic of Cameroon (1983). Print. Schumm, J., and Vaughn S (1995). Meaningful professional development in accommodating students with disabilities: Lesson learned. Remedial and Special Education, 16(6), 344-353.

Ringlaben R, Price JR (1981). Regular Education Classroom teachers' perceptions of mainstreaming effects. Exceptional Children, 47, 302-304

Rosenthal R (1997). Interpersonal Expectancy Effects: A 40 Year Perspective. American Psychological Association Convention. (Chicago, Illinois, August 16, 1997).

Shade RA, Stewart R (2001). General education and special education pre-service teachers" attitudes toward inclusion. Professional Development Collection, 46 (1), 264-273.

Shapiro A (1999). Everybody belongs: Changing negative attitudes toward classmates with disabilities. New York: Garland.

Stainback S, Stainback W (1996). Inclusion: A guide for educators. Baltimore, MD: P. H. Brookes.

Stoler RD (1992). Perceptions of regular education teachers toward inclusion of all handicapped students in their classrooms. The Clearing House, 66(1), 60-62.

Titanji P (2008). Education for all in Cameroon: What principals need to know and do. Afr. J. Special Educ., 1(1), 105-115.

Tournaki N (2003, May 1). Effect of student characteristics on teachers' predictions of student success. J. Educ. Res., 96, 1 - 12. Retrieved June 7, 2005, fiom http://web24.epnet.com~citation.asp

UNESCO (1994). The Salamanca statement and framework and action for special needs education. World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, (pp. 1-50). Salamanca.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2005). Ensuring access to education for all. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001402/140224e.pdf

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (1994). The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. Retrieved from www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF - France

United Nations Organization (2006). United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Paris: UNO. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml

Valeo A (2008) Inclusive education support systems: Teacher and administrator views. Int. J. Special Educ., 2, 23.

Van Reusen AK, Shoho AR, Barker KS (2001). High school teacher attitudes towards inclusion. The High School J., 84(2), 7–20.

Vygotsky LS (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

White MJ, Jackson V, Gordon PJ (2006). Implicit and Explicit Attitudes toward athletes with disabilities, J. Rehabilitation 72 (3) 33-40.

Wisconsin law and regulations (2006). Retrieved August 25, , from http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/idea.html

World Health Organization (2005). World report on disability and rehabilitation. WHO: Geneva.

Wotany JF (2012). Politics and schooling in Cameroon. Bloomington, IN: Trafford. Yuh, E., and Shey, P. (2008). The education of persons with special needs in Cameroon: A history. Afr. J. Special Educ., 1(1), 27-31.

Yell ML (1995). Least restrictive environment, inclusion, and students with disabilities: A legal analysis. The J. Special Educ., 28, 3 89-404.

Yoon B (2008). Uninvited guests: The influence of teachers' roles and pedagogies on the positioning of English language learners in the regular classroom. Am. Educ. Res. J. 45, 495-522.

Yoon B (2008). Uninvited guests: The influence of teachers' roles and pedagogies on the positioning of English language learners in the regular classroom. American Educ. Res.J. 45, 495-522.

Yuh, E., and Shey, P. (2008). The education of persons with special needs in Cameroon: A history. Afr. J. Special Educ., 1(1), 27-31.

Yvonne HJ, Norissa GLN (2004). Breaking the silence of Mainstream Teachers' Jonelle Cambridge. The college of Bahamas in Nasssau Bahamas.

Zalizan MJ(2000). Perception of inclusive practice. The Malaysian perspectives. Educational Review, 52(2), 187-196.