

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**Support services available for promoting independent functioning in persons
with multiple disabilities at multikids inclusive academy.**



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**SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR PROMOTING INDEPENDENT
FUNCTIONING IN PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES AT
MULTIKIDS INCLUSIVE ACADEMY.**



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Education and Life-Long Learning, submitted to the school of
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, DOREEN KWOFIE, declared that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree 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.

DR. YEKPLE (SUPERVISOR)

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

DEDICATION

To my mother and my family, especially my grandmother who stood by me throughout the course of this study.



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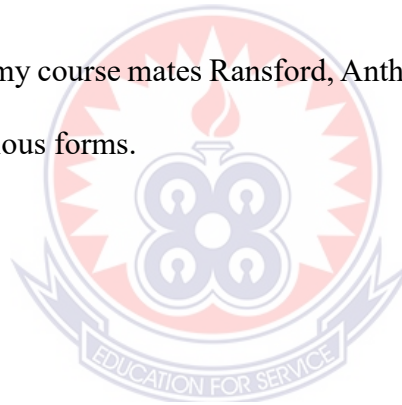


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ABSTRACT

Support Services Available for Promoting Independent Functioning in Persons with Multiple Disabilities at Multikids Inclusive Academy, Ghana. These services include specialized educational programs, personalized healthcare, and community-based initiatives. This thesis aimed to identify the support services available for individuals with multiple disabilities, examine the role of teachers in delivering these services at Multikids Inclusive Academy, explore the challenges teachers face, and identify the coping strategies they adopt. A qualitative research approach was employed to explore personal experiences rendering support services to help people with multiple disabilities, A Case study design was employed to have an in depth understanding of how support services help individuals with multiple disabilities function independently. Using expert purposive sampling to select four participants. The researcher used a semi-structured interviews procedure and an observation guide to collect data for the study. Data collected from participants were analyzed thematically through verbatim transcription, coding, drawing of themes and analyses of findings were made. The findings highlight the importance of adopting a comprehensive and individualized approach to support, with teachers playing a central role in facilitating access to specialized interventions and promoting inclusive education. Despite the challenges they encounter, such as limited resources and training, teachers adopt various strategies to cope and effectively support learners with multiple disabilities within the school environment.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Study

There are generally over 800 million people with disabilities living in the global south. Out of this number, an estimated 300 million are thought to live in Africa (African Studies Centre Leiden, 2016) and at least 740,000 reside in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 2018). In the past, learners with multiple disabilities were excluded from public schools until the implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This Act facilitated the education of individuals with disabilities and has since influenced public schools in America and many parts of the world, including Ghana, to serve large numbers of students with severe and/or multiple disabilities. The American Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2018) used the term Multiple Disabilities (MD) to describe children who have a combination of intellectual disability and blindness, intellectual disability, and orthopedic impairment:

“Under IDEA, Multiple Disabilities means concomitant [simultaneous] impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedics impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf blindness” (IDEA, 2018, 34 C.F.R., sec. 300 (b), p. 6).

The term multiple disabilities refer to a condition that combines two or more disabilities affecting the individual child. Challenges make it difficult to identify how many disabilities a child has. Poor understanding of the causes, such as genetic or metabolic disorders, poor maternal health during pregnancy, the abuse of drugs, tobacco usage, and poor maternal nutrition, contrasts with the literature. In African nations, people with disabilities struggle with marginalization, social exclusion, human rights violations, and

violence (Eide & Loeb, 2011). As a case in point, in Ghana, according to Grischow, Mfoafo-M'Carthy, Vermeyde, and Carmmaert (2019), the causes of multiple disabilities are often attributed to supernatural reasons, such as gods punishing for hidden crimes or other supernatural reasons. Most studies attribute stigma to negative attitudes towards Ghanaians with disabilities, highlighting beliefs that disability is caused by spiritual and supernatural forces. The consequences, according to many authors, are social, economic, and political (Reynolds, 2010; Kassah, 2008; Naami & Hayashi, 2012; Sackey, 2015). Disabled children in Ghana are, therefore, mostly not exposed to the public for fear of stigmatization. Reynolds (2010) also attests that Ghanaian attitude towards persons with disabilities improved after Ghana passed the Disability Rights Act in 2006. Many more scholars, such as Kassah (2008), Reynolds (2010), Naami and Hayashi (2012), and Sackey (2015), believe that stigma resulting from superstition and religious beliefs such as disability being a punishment is still a major problem. Those who believe in the latter also think that Ghanaian traditional culture is a major root cause of stigmatization among the disabled in society (Botts & Evans, 2011).

1.1.1 Support Service for Children with Multiple Disabilities

Children with multiple disabilities often need some level of help and support throughout their daily lives. How much support a child needs will depend on the disabilities involved. Children with multiple or more severe disabilities are likely to need continuous support. A similar notion is expressed by Deutsch-Smith (2013), who argues that:

“People with multiple disabilities require ongoing and intensive support across their school years and typically across their lives. For some, these supports may well be in only one life activity, but for many of these individuals, supports are needed for access and participation in mainstream society. Supports are necessary because most individuals

*with multiple disabilities require assistance in many adaptive areas”
(Deutsch-Smith, 2013, p. 67).*

Support rendered by family, school set-ups, and general society is thus very important for the survival of individuals with multiple disabilities. In Ghana, special education for disabled children began in 1936, and a school for the blind opened in 1946 in Akropong-Akwapim (Gomda, Sulemana, & Zakaria, 2022). The provision is based on the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). People with disabilities, thus, have the right to education under Article 24 of the CRPD (UN, 2006). The Ghana Education Service’s Special Education Division, for example, was founded in 1962 to meet and support the educational needs of Ghana’s persons with disabilities (Avoke, 2001). To fulfill this provision of accessible education, Multikids Inclusive Academy in Ghana, the site for this study, is one of the few schools that admit children with disabilities. However, due to stigmatization and cultural reasons, as previously mentioned, many such children are not allowed to survive. If not, many disabled children are in school, this study believes that the situation justifies the need to examine the nature of support services available to the few children with disabilities in Ghanaian educational setups. When considering what support a child needs, it’s helpful to think about major life activities.

Caregivers play a crucial role in caring for children with disabilities, but it's important to recognize that no caregiver can handle everything alone. When caring for a child with multiple disabilities, caregivers often need to seek support from family members and friends, both formally and informally. Families raising young children with multiple disabilities often rely on informal support from extended family, friends, and community members (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). Multiple disabilities are a combination of two or more disabilities, which can vary greatly from child to child. The level of functioning of the child affects the caregiver as well, and when there are

multiple disabilities present, challenges can be interrelated and span across developmental domains (Roy, 2020).

Once a child and caregiver receive the diagnosis of multiple disabilities, they find themselves in a new territory. They must adopt a new mindset that enables them to form an effective caregiver-professional collaboration that helps both the child and caregiver to function independently in society. Families often collaborate with professionals to facilitate meaningful engagement for their children with multiple disabilities. They establish effective home-school partnerships with the school and share relevant information about the child's education and development. Together, the family and school monitor the child's progress and periodically ask for reports to track whether the child is progressing (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). Education for children with multiple disabilities is crucial. Special education teachers play a very important role in impacting the knowledge and self-sufficiency skills of children with multiple disabilities. Education is the right of every child because it equips them to meet the challenges of life (Roy, 2020). To supplement the needs of children with multiple disabilities and their differential talents, which will enable them to function independently, children with multiple disabilities need education and training just like regular children. Children with multiple disabilities are unique in their own way. Their needs are based on their degree or severity ranging from mild to severe. The special teacher is to appropriately care for children with multiple disabilities given their degree of severity, providing them with reasonable accommodation. Special education teachers can manage students with multiple disabilities (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). Because multiple disabilities involve the combination of two or more disabilities, it is difficult for teachers to use a curriculum designed for teaching regular school children to effectively teach children with multiple disabilities. The latter needs an individualized educational program (IEP)

based on the severity of their disability. Therefore, in a class with three students with multiple disabilities, there will be a need for different teaching strategies, methodologies, and curriculum adjustments for each of them. These demands make it very difficult for teachers to cope with teaching children with multiple disabilities. Such a demand is one of the key factors that motivated the goal of this study to examine the nature of school support available to children with multiple disabilities at Multikids in Accra.

1.1.2 Challenges and Coping Strategies for Special Education Teachers

In the formal school system, special education teachers must be astute and insightful to identify and understand the needs of children with multiple disabilities. These children possess unique skills, strengths, and educational needs (Centre for Parents Information and Resources, 2013). Therefore, special education teachers must be aware of the strengths, weaknesses, and interests of these students. Research indicates that inadequate teaching and learning materials are among the challenges faced by many teachers in special schools (Mount & Dillon, 2014). In an educational setting for a child with multiple disabilities, using insufficient materials can impede the student's ability to function effectively in class. Difficulties in grasping concepts and applying them can also arise (Mount & Dillon, 2014).

Another significant challenge is communication, which is crucial for expressing or exchanging information and ideas (Mount & Dillon, 2014). Children with multiple disabilities often struggle with communication skills. Students with severe disabilities present a range of physical, sensory, cognitive, and communication needs that impact their interaction with and experience of the world (Erickson & Geist, 2016). A non-conducive classroom environment, such as poor arrangement of furniture, broken equipment, and overcrowding, can exacerbate communication issues. This can make

lessons monotonous and unengaging, leading to a lack of attention and failure to complete tasks, which may be misinterpreted as inability (Erickson & Geist, 2016). This study will investigate how teachers cope with these challenges, their strategies for helping children with multiple disabilities, and the effectiveness of their impact on the students.

Stigmatization presents a severe challenge for teachers of children with multiple disabilities. Woodman and Hauser (2013) highlight that stigmatization makes it uncomfortable for these children to be integrated into the community. This often leads to labeling and isolation, making it difficult for schools to expose the children to a broader society. This study will also explore how the sample school manages social stigmatization and its impact on children with multiple disabilities.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Early identification of children with multiple disabilities is crucial. Unfortunately, these children are often hidden due to fear of stigmatization (Smith, Brown, & Jones, 2020). Many are concealed at home and are rarely seen by the public or society (Smith et al., 2020). By the time they are identified, they may have already missed critical school years. Additionally, caregivers frequently do not send these children to school due to a lack of specialized institutions (Johnson, 2018). Most regular schools are also unwilling to accept these children due to insufficient training for handling their needs (Jones & Brown, 2019).

Supportive services are essential for enabling these children to reach their full potential. Effective support can help them learn and function similarly to their peers. However, there is often a lack of effective communication between teachers and caregivers, which undermines the value placed on these children's education (Smith et al., 2020). Many

caregivers do not perceive the importance of joining the support team, which affects the development of their children's capabilities and communication skills (Johnson, 2018). Going through literature around this study, less attention has been paid to the nature of support systems available to children with multiple disabilities. This study therefore aims to research the nature of the support system available to children with multiple disabilities at Multikids Inclusive Academy and evaluate how this support system helps these children achieve independence.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find support services for people with multiple disabilities that allow them to function independently when they grow up.

1.4 Objective of the study

1. Identify the support services available for persons with multiple disabilities to function independently at Multikids Inclusive Academy.
2. To investigate the role, teachers render in supporting people with multiple disabilities at Multikids Inclusive Academy.
3. Establish the challenges teachers face in supporting persons with multiple disabilities at Multikids Inclusive Academy.
4. To find out the coping strategies teachers use in supporting people with multiple disabilities at Multikids Inclusive Academy.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What supportive services are available for people with multiple disabilities to function independently in Multikids?
2. What roles do teachers render in supporting people with multiple disabilities at Multikids?
3. What are the challenges teachers face in supporting people with multiple disabilities at Multikids?
4. What are the coping strategies teachers use in supporting people with multiple disabilities?

1.6 Significance of the study

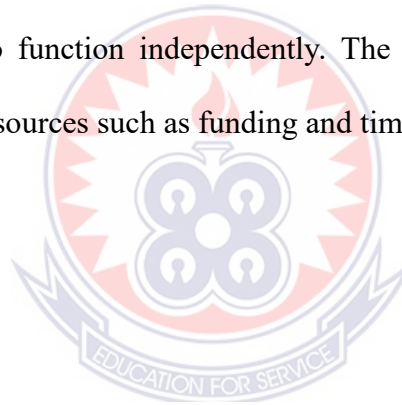
The result of the study would help to identify what support services schools are available for children with multiple disabilities in Multikids Inclusive Academy. This would enable the school system to review the school curriculum including the supportive services necessary for the independent functioning of the school. Also, the result of the study is to find out the role of teachers in rendering support services for children. This would enable the teacher to improve on the roles they play. The results of the study also revealed the inherent challenges faced by teachers providing supportive services for the children. Again, the result would enable the school administrator to find a solution to any challenge faced by the teacher. The results of the study would help identify the coping strategies used by the teacher in supporting the children. This would also enable their teacher to their strategies to support the teachers. Finally, the results of the study would add to the existing literature for any researcher interested in similar studies.

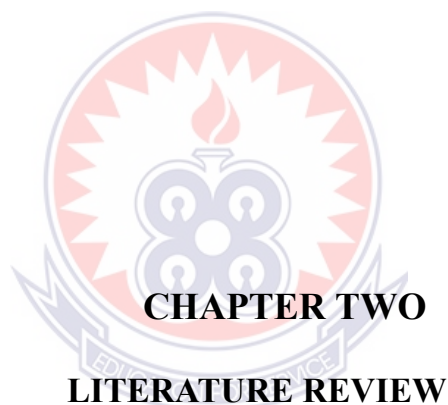
1.7 Delimitation

For this study, the research was delimited to special educators who provide support services aimed at helping individuals with multiple disabilities function independently. The study was also geographically limited to Multikids Inclusive Academy, located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. This focus allowed for an in-depth exploration of support practices within a specific inclusive educational setting known for serving students with diverse learning needs.

1.8 Limitation

Some factors were found to have limited the study. The study adopted a case study design of a qualitative method to find the support services available for persons with multiple disabilities to function independently. The willingness of Respondents to participate fully and resources such as funding and time was some of the limitations of the study.





2.1 Introduction

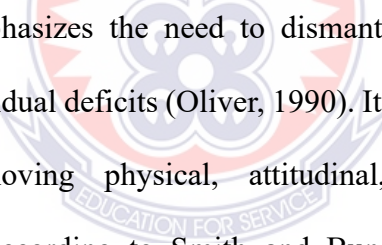
The preceding chapter laid the foundation for this study by presenting the research background, problem statement, objectives, guiding research questions, purpose, and significance. This chapter builds on that foundation by detailing the theoretical framework and reviewing related literature. The review addresses the following key themes:

- Support services are available for people with multiple disabilities to function independently.
- The roles played in supporting individuals with multiple disabilities.

- Challenges faced by teachers in supporting individuals with multiple disabilities.
- Coping strategies used by teachers in supporting individuals with multiple disabilities.

2.2 Theoretical Framework to the Study

The study is grounded in the Social Model of Disability, which offers transformative insights into support services for individuals with multiple disabilities. This model, pioneered by scholars like Mike Oliver, challenges the conventional medical model by positing that disability is not merely an individual impairment but a consequence of societal structures and attitudes (Oliver, 1996). This framework will guide the examination of support services available in school settings for children with multiple disabilities and how these services influence their abilities and overall independence.



The Social Model emphasizes the need to dismantle societal barriers rather than focusing solely on individual deficits (Oliver, 1990). It advocates for creating inclusive environments by removing physical, attitudinal, and informational barriers (Shakespeare, 2006). According to Smith and Bundon (2018), such an approach requires collaboration among individuals with disabilities, their families, and the broader community. This collaborative approach is central to the Social Model and promotes inclusivity by ensuring that services align with the unique needs and preferences of individuals (Oliver, 1996). The study will investigate how collaboration at the Multikids School fosters inclusivity and supports the independence of learners with multiple disabilities.

Relevance of the Theory

The Social Model of Disability is the most appropriate theoretical lens for examining how support services enhance independent functioning among people with multiple

disabilities at Multikids Inclusive Academy in Greater Accra. This model emphasizes that disability is caused not by a person's impairment but by societal and environmental barriers. It advocates for changing systems, attitudes, and environments to promote inclusion and equal participation. In education, this means providing the necessary support and removing barriers so that learners with disabilities can access and benefit from learning like their peers. Multikids Inclusive Academy exemplifies this approach by offering individualized education plans, therapy services, assistive technologies, and life skills training tailored to each learner's needs. These interventions reflect the social model's focus on empowerment rather than correction. In the Ghanaian context, where stigma and exclusion still limit opportunities for persons with disabilities, Multikids demonstrates how inclusive practices and support services can foster autonomy and meaningful participation. This makes the Social Model of Disability a strong framework for analyzing the school's efforts in promoting independent functioning.

2.3 Supporting Services for Individuals with Multiple Disabilities

Support for individuals with multiple disabilities can be broadly categorized into three essential areas: prevention, management, and treatment (Braithwaite & Eckstein, 2003). These categories offer a framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of care required to address the diverse and complex needs of individuals with multiple disabilities.

Prevention focuses on proactive measures to reduce the incidence and severity of disabilities. This can involve a range of activities, from public health initiatives like vaccination programs and prenatal care to genetic counseling and early childhood interventions. Early identification of potential disabilities is crucial, as it allows for timely intervention that can mitigate the long-term impact on the individual's life. For example, early developmental screenings can detect delays that may be indicative of a

disability, allowing for the implementation of support services that can improve outcomes. Preventative efforts are not only essential in reducing the prevalence of disabilities but also in minimizing the complications that may arise from co-occurring conditions, ultimately leading to better long-term health outcomes.

2.4 Multiple Disabilities

Multiple disabilities refer to the combination of various conditions that compound each other, leading to greater difficulties in functioning independently. Braithwaite and Eckstein (2003) argue that individuals with multiple disabilities face varied challenges in motor skills, cognitive abilities, social skills, and self-care. They require ongoing support due to these difficulties. Brazil (2006) defines multiple disabilities as two or more physical, sensory, or mental disabilities that contribute to the social functioning of an individual.

Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2012) emphasize that individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) face significant challenges in communication, often requiring interpretations from those who know them well (Raising Our Sights, 2013). The study will explore how Multikids School addresses these varied needs, including communication challenges.

The World Health Organization (1997) defines multiple disabilities as having more than one disability that impacts learning. Similarly, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004) highlights the need for advanced supportive education for individuals with multiple disabilities, emphasizing accessibility to specialized education programs. IDEA connects severe disabilities with multiple disabilities, indicating that both concepts are interrelated (Gargiulo, 2004; Bahçivanoğlu-Yazıcı, 2009).

Gilbert (2004) suggests that the perceived increase in individuals with multiple disabilities might be due to improved awareness and diagnosis. Additionally, advancements in medical technology have enabled the survival of premature or unhealthy babies, who may live with multiple disabilities (Batu & Kırcaali-İftar, 2005; Ayyıldız, 2007; Chaudhari, Bavdekar, & Chitale, 2003; Clark Gerken, 2004; Gresnight, 2007). Pawletco (2002) notes that individuals with multiple disabilities often have congenital or acquired impairments across several sensory channels, which can be associated with severe developmental and intellectual delays, motor deficits, behavioral disturbances, and additional organic pathologies.

2.5 Types of Support Services

Support services for individuals with multiple disabilities aim to address the unique needs arising from their various impairments. These services can be categorized into several types:

1. **Preventive Support:** Focuses on early intervention to address disabilities before they become more severe. This can include developmental assessments and early childhood education programs designed to minimize the impact of disabilities (Braithwaite & Eckstein, 2003).
2. **Management Support:** Involves ongoing strategies to manage disabilities effectively. This includes tailored educational programs, behavioral interventions, and personalized care plans designed to support daily living and functional independence (Smith & Bundon, 2018).
3. **Treatment Support:** Provides medical and therapeutic interventions aimed at alleviating symptoms and improving quality of life. This can include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and medical treatments (Collins, 2017).

2.5.1 Community-Based Support Services

Community-based support services play a crucial role in enhancing the lives of individuals with multiple disabilities by promoting their inclusion and participation in society. These services are designed to meet the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, enabling them to engage more fully in community activities, maintain their dignity, and live as independently as possible (Collins, 2017). The emphasis on community-based support recognizes that individuals with disabilities are not isolated from society but are integral members who contribute to and benefit from community life.

Inclusion and Dignity: Community-based services are foundational in ensuring that individuals with multiple disabilities are not marginalized but are instead provided with opportunities to engage in social, educational, and recreational activities. These services facilitate the participation of individuals in community life by removing barriers that might otherwise hinder their involvement. For instance, accessible transportation, personal care attendants, and adaptive recreational programs are just a few examples of services that enable individuals with disabilities to participate in everyday activities alongside their peers. The provision of these services also helps to uphold the dignity of individuals with disabilities by recognizing their right to participate fully in society, irrespective of their disabilities.

Collaborative Community Engagement: Effective community-based support services often arise from collaborative processes that involve both government entities and citizens. Like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this collaboration is essential in addressing the well-being issues that affect individuals with disabilities (Cavaye, 2004; USDHHS, 2011). Government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community members work together to identify the needs of individuals with disabilities and develop programs that meet those needs. This collaborative approach ensures that support services are tailored to the unique contexts

of the communities they serve, making them more effective and sustainable. Additionally, involving individuals with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes empowers them and ensures that their voices are heard in matters that directly impact their lives. Comprehensive Support Systems: According to Alberto, Smith, Johnson, Davis, and Clark (2023), community support systems comprise a wide array of services, products, organizations, and people dedicated to assisting individuals with disabilities in their daily activities and promoting their participation in community life. These support systems are comprehensive, addressing various aspects of life, from healthcare and education to employment and social interaction. For example, community-based rehabilitation programs provide essential health services, while local businesses and employers offer job training and employment opportunities adapted to the abilities of individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, community centers and advocacy groups often serve as hubs where individuals with disabilities can access resources, receive support, and connect with others in similar situations. Enhanced Quality of Life: The goal of community-based support services is to enhance the quality of life for individuals with multiple disabilities. By enabling them to participate more fully in society, these services help individuals develop a sense of belonging and self-worth. Moreover, community-based services can alleviate the burden on families and caregivers by providing respite care, support groups, and other resources that contribute to the overall well-being of the family unit.

2.5.2 Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) has emerged as a pivotal element in enhancing the quality of life for individuals with multiple disabilities. Defined as any device or service that improves the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities, AT plays a critical role in enabling access to education, employment, and social participation (Collins,

2017). The spectrum of assistive products is broad, encompassing high-tech solutions such as speech recognition software, communication devices, and computer applications, as well as low-tech aids like wheelchairs, hearing aids, and adapted utensils (Jaitely & Gaurav, 2024). The integration of AT into the lives of individuals with disabilities not only fosters independence but also aligns with global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by ensuring inclusion and participation across various life spheres (WHO, 2022).

One of the most significant areas where assistive technology has made an impact is education. Students with multiple disabilities often face challenges in accessing traditional educational resources and learning environments. AT can help bridge these gaps by providing tailored solutions that accommodate diverse learning needs. For example, text-to-speech software allows students with reading difficulties to access written material, while communication devices enable those with speech impairments to express themselves effectively in the classroom.

Moreover, AT facilitates the development of individualized education plans (IEPs) tailored to the specific needs of each learner. Educators can incorporate AT tools to create inclusive classrooms that encourage participation from all students. By integrating technology into the learning process, teachers can foster a more engaging and interactive environment, thereby enhancing student motivation and academic achievement. Research indicates that students who utilize AT in their learning experience show improved performance and increased engagement compared to their peers (WHO, 2022).

Assistive technology also plays a crucial role in promoting independence for individuals with multiple disabilities in their daily lives. Devices such as adapted

utensils, voice-activated home automation systems, and mobility aids empower individuals to perform daily tasks more effectively. For example, smart home technology allows users to control lighting, heating, and appliances through voice commands, thereby enhancing their autonomy and self-sufficiency.

In addition, AT can support the development of essential life skills, including personal hygiene, cooking, and financial management. For instance, applications that provide step-by-step guidance can help individuals with cognitive disabilities learn to manage their daily routines. By equipping individuals with the skills necessary to navigate daily life, AT not only fosters independence but also contributes to overall well-being and quality of life.

The importance of assistive technology extends beyond education and daily living; it also plays a vital role in facilitating employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Access to AT can significantly enhance employability by addressing barriers that may hinder individuals from participating in the workforce. For instance, job-specific software can help individuals with cognitive disabilities manage tasks and schedules more effectively, while ergonomic tools can assist those with physical limitations in performing manual tasks.

Moreover, the workplace can benefit from the incorporation of AT by creating inclusive environments that value diversity. Employers who provide assistive technologies demonstrate a commitment to fostering a diverse workforce, which can enhance productivity and creativity within the organization. Positive workplace culture, in which employees feel valued and supported, leads to greater job satisfaction and retention rates (Jaitely & Gaurav, 2024).

Social participation is another critical aspect of life where assistive technology can make a significant difference. Individuals with multiple disabilities often face challenges in engaging with their communities, leading to social isolation. Assistive devices, such as communication aids and social media platforms, can facilitate connections and interactions with others, promoting social inclusion.

For example, technology that enables individuals with speech impairments to communicate through text or symbols can enhance their ability to engage in conversations and form relationships. Social networking platforms and online communities can also provide a sense of belonging and support for individuals with disabilities, allowing them to connect with others who share similar experiences.

Despite the numerous benefits of assistive technology, several challenges and barriers to access remain. One major issue is the lack of awareness and understanding among individuals, caregivers, and educators regarding the availability and functionality of assistive devices. Many potential users may not be aware of the options available to them or how to effectively integrate AT into their lives.

Additionally, financial constraints can pose significant barriers to accessing assistive technology. High costs associated with AT devices and services can limit their availability to individuals with disabilities, particularly in low-income settings. As a result, it is essential for governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector to collaborate in providing funding, resources, and training to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access the necessary technologies.

2.5.3 Educational Support

Quality of life encompasses various dimensions, necessitating an exploration of diverse life domains and their interconnectedness. Kruse, Davis, and Wilson (2024) argue that

quality of life within a specific context influences other facets of life to varying degrees. Similarly, Taconet, Martin, and Naylor (2024) highlight that transforming the education landscape for children with multiple disabilities involves focusing on inclusive education within both mainstream and special schools. Inclusion aims to enhance educational quality and has been a key theme in educational restructuring globally (Taconet, Martin, & Naylor, 2024).

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) General Comment No. 4 to Article 24 (UNCRPD, 2016), inclusive education is a fundamental human right of all learners, not merely a service. Education is a right of the individual learner, not just a parent's or caregiver's right. Recent years have seen a shift towards removing educational barriers for all students by promoting inclusive education (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020). This approach underscores the role of education in fostering social justice, particularly for people with disabilities (Miles & Singal, 2010). Inclusive education generally involves reorganizing regular schools to meet the needs of a diverse range of students (Deku & Ackah, 2012). The Ghana Education Act (Act 778, 2008) Section 5(4) describes inclusive education as a value system ensuring equal opportunities for all patrons.

To ensure quality education for all, international human rights frameworks have been adopted to guarantee that children with multiple disabilities receive a high-quality education in an inclusive environment. Alansuutarri et al. (2019) emphasize that such frameworks enhance children's learning in familiar settings, fostering positive learning experiences and social interactions. The 2006 CRPD aims to develop inclusive education as a crucial mechanism for ensuring access to education for children with disabilities (WHO, 2012; UN, 2006). Article 24 of the CRPD mandates that individuals

with disabilities have equal access to inclusive education systems and receive necessary accommodations and support services (Banks & Polack, 2013).

The Salamanca Framework (1994) advocates for the inclusion of all children, regardless of their circumstances or disabilities, and marks a significant moment in the debate on inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). This framework emphasizes that various factors such as ethnicity, language barriers, and poverty can affect a child's learning ability. The Salamanca Framework expanded discussions on education systems and barriers to education (Wapling, 2016). Consequently, SDG 4 aims to ensure access to high-quality education and promote lifelong learning for all (Osborn, Cutter, & Ullah, 2015).

Moreover, the existing literature points to the fact that the adoption of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to inform pedagogy is one of the techniques school administrators use to make quality education accessible to students with disabilities and/or additional needs. IEP accommodation refers to the modifications made in a typical learning environment to support students with disabilities. These adjustments ensure that students can access the same education as their peers.

For example, according to research by Kauffman and Badar (2014), the IEP is a written document specifically developed for students with disabilities. It contains learning objectives for the student, including facilities and resources needed to achieve these objectives. The IEP is vital for leveling the playing field for students with disabilities, providing equal opportunities for individuals to participate, learn, and succeed in school. Without IEPs, students with disabilities might struggle to keep up with their peers due to barriers that hinder their learning process. Additionally, the implementation of IEPs has helped children with varying learning needs and abilities, and its

effectiveness in regular classrooms is enhanced through the collaboration of parents, co-educators, and professional training of teachers (Yell, 2016). Therefore, it is relevant that as part of this study, the individual learning plans for research subjects are studied for their effectiveness.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2024) proposed that students with disabilities possess distinct learning requirements. Introducing options for varied learning approaches, such as the choice between watching videos or reading books, could enhance intrinsic motivation (Miller, 2020). The review by Mitchell et al. (2010) suggests that IEPs are widespread, being a fundamental component of almost every country's special education program for students with special educational needs. Kruse et al. (2024) indicates that in all jurisdictions where IEPs are used, they assume collaboration and partnerships among a variety of stakeholders, including special education teachers, general education teachers (in the case of inclusive education settings), parents/caregivers, students with special educational needs, specialists, teachers' aides or assistants, and community agencies. Mitchell (2012) argues that educating students with special educational needs necessitates collaboration among many professionals; indeed, few areas of education require such extensive teamwork. In the study by Alasuutari et al. (2019). "The essential role of teachers in Inclusive Education," the authors assert that as nations worldwide strive to promote inclusive education within their unique circumstances, they engage in partnerships with various international organizations, including the World Bank, UNICEF, IIEP, UNESCO, donors, and local and international Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs). This collaboration aims to foster a shared understanding of the imperative for systemic transformations both on a global scale and within local contexts. Therefore, the varied nature of professionals involved, including therapists, nurses, and counselors, reflects

an understanding that individuals with multiple disabilities require multifaceted assistance. These findings underscore the need to examine the IEPs used by the sample schools and the role of teachers as support staff in ensuring quality education for the study subjects.

2.6 Independent Living Skills

Independent living skills are a critical component in the development and long-term well-being of children with multiple disabilities. These skills not only allow individuals to manage day-to-day activities but also play a crucial role in facilitating their transition from childhood to adulthood. The mastery of independent living skills fosters autonomy, boosts self-esteem, and contributes significantly to an individual's ability to integrate into society. As Taconet et al. (2024) suggest, independent living skills encompass a wide range of basic tasks, such as tying shoes, maintaining personal hygiene, toileting, eating, bathing, and performing household chores. These foundational skills are the building blocks for a more independent and fulfilling life, particularly for those with multiple disabilities who face unique and complex challenges.

Children with multiple disabilities often have diverse and individualized needs. Therefore, it is essential that these needs are addressed on a case-by-case basis. Salido and Breviescas (2024) underscore the importance of creating specific intervention programs tailored to target these individual needs. Such programs are not one-size-fits-all; rather, they must be meticulously designed to meet the specific requirements of everyone, considering their unique physical, cognitive, and emotional conditions. By focusing on personal independence and self-efficacy, these intervention programs empower individuals with multiple disabilities to tackle daily life challenges with greater confidence and competence.

Developing independent living skills is a gradual process, and as educational processes evolve, so too does the individual's ability to manage tasks independently. Taconet et al. (2024) argue that with the appropriate guidance, support, and motivation, individuals with multiple disabilities can gradually gain the independence they need to thrive. The role of educators, caregivers, and support professionals is crucial in this developmental journey. Through consistent and patient instruction, individuals can learn to perform tasks that may initially seem daunting. Over time, these skills become second nature, enabling the individual to engage in daily activities with minimal assistance. This gradual acquisition of skills is vital for reducing dependency on others and promoting social integration, as highlighted by Ashby (2010).

Social integration and peer interaction are other significant outcomes of developing independent living skills. When children with multiple disabilities can perform daily tasks independently, they are more likely to engage with their peers and participate in social activities. This social participation is critical for their overall development, as it provides opportunities for learning, growth, and the formation of meaningful relationships. Ashby (2010) emphasizes that reducing dependency on others not only benefits the individual with disabilities but also enriches the broader community by fostering diversity and inclusion.

To effectively teach independent living skills, additional training practices are necessary. Taconet et al. (2024) emphasize that these training practices should be grounded in scientific methods of intervention and systematic evaluation of outcomes. This approach ensures that the methods used are evidence-based and effective in meeting the specific needs of individuals with multiple disabilities. Ayres and Cihak (2010) support this view, noting that the expertise of professionals is essential in developing and implementing successful intervention programs. These professionals

bring specialized knowledge in areas such as daily living skills, educational behavior, and therapeutic interventions, which are crucial for the effective teaching of independent living skills.

Motivation and encouragement are also key components in the development of independent living skills. Salido and Breviescas (2024) highlight the importance of fostering a positive and supportive environment that encourages individuals to push beyond their comfort zones and take on new challenges. When individuals with multiple disabilities are motivated to learn and grow, they are more likely to engage actively in the learning process and achieve greater success in developing independent living skills. Ayres and Cihak (2010) further assert that systematic, evidence-based practices are essential for creating such an environment. By utilizing proven methods and regularly assessing progress, educators and caregivers can ensure that individuals with multiple disabilities receive the best possible support in their journey toward independence.

In conclusion, independent living skills are indispensable for children with multiple disabilities as they navigate the complexities of daily life and prepare for adulthood.

2.7 Challenges Facing Support Service for People with Multiple Disabilities

The challenges faced by caregivers and individuals with multiple disabilities in educational settings are significant and multifaceted. As Abdella (2018) notes, every individual has a fundamental right to education, including those with disabilities. This right is underpinned by the United Nations' recognition that approximately one billion people worldwide experience some form of disability, positioning them as one of the largest and most marginalized groups globally (UN, 2015). The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol aim to promote

and safeguard these rights, ensuring that people with disabilities can access education and other essential services (UN, 2016). Despite these legal frameworks, students with disabilities encounter various difficulties—physical, mental, psychological, and social—that hinder their ability to effectively engage with life tasks and educational pursuits (Salido & Breviescas, 2024).

One of the primary challenges faced by students with disabilities in educational settings is the impediments to achieving academic success. Al-Adra (2016) highlights that these obstacles are not merely personal but arise from broader systemic issues. Social challenges, for instance, often involve deviations from community values that can stigmatize or marginalize students with disabilities. Cultural challenges may impede the cultural progression of individuals with disabilities, preventing them from fully participating in their communities. Additionally, educational challenges can stem from deficiencies within educational systems that fail to accommodate diverse learning needs (Ahmed, 2020).

Schools often face a myriad of issues when attempting to support students with disabilities. These challenges include outdated methodologies that do not reflect current educational best practices, limited integration of new technologies, and entrenched negative attitudes towards disabilities (Rofiah, 2023). The attitudes of faculty and staff can significantly impact on the experiences of students with disabilities. Negative perceptions can lead to low expectations for these students, which, in turn, can affect their motivation and academic performance. Inadequate assessment systems also contribute to the challenges faced by these students, often resulting in misidentification of their abilities and needs (Ahmed, 2020).

To mitigate these challenges, several studies suggest leveraging information and communication technology (ICT) and distance learning to enhance the integration of students with disabilities into the educational system (Roberts et al., 2011). ICT can provide flexible learning opportunities, enabling students to engage with educational materials at their own pace. Nunes (2003) emphasizes the effectiveness of communication strategies in managing misunderstandings that may arise in diverse learning environments. Effective communication is vital not only within the classroom but also in fostering relationships between educators, students, and caregivers.

Another critical area of concern for individuals with disabilities is employment, which is essential for income generation and social integration. Jameson (2005) and Waterhouse et al. (2010) argue that employment opportunities significantly influence the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. However, these individuals frequently encounter substantial barriers in job acquisition due to persistent misunderstandings and negative attitudes towards their abilities (NDACA, 2023). Ahmed (2020) identifies that negative perceptions among employers often stem from a lack of training and awareness regarding the capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Creating a more inclusive workforce requires a multifaceted approach. Wang et al. (2021) advocate for fostering positive social attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, which can be achieved through education and awareness-raising initiatives. Purdie (2009) discusses the ongoing issue of discrimination faced by individuals with disabilities, emphasizing the need for proactive measures to create equitable employment opportunities. Effective communication and awareness campaigns are essential to cultivate inclusive work environments that recognize the diverse skills and contributions of individuals with disabilities (Stephen et al., 2011).

Accessibility remains a significant challenge for individuals with physical disabilities, as it directly affects their freedom of movement and participation in various aspects of life, including education and employment (Ahmed, 2020; Rofiah, 2023). Physical barriers in schools and workplaces can prevent individuals with disabilities from accessing essential services and resources. The CRPD serves as a crucial framework for addressing these accessibility challenges within the broader context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015).

Moreover, socio-economic disparities between individuals with and without disabilities are widening, exacerbated by factors such as lower educational attainment and higher unemployment rates among individuals with disabilities (Lieberman et al., 2024). The impact of climate change and other global challenges raises further questions about how educational institutions and caregivers can effectively support individuals with disabilities in adapting to changing circumstances (Rofiah, 2023). These socio-economic inequalities can create a cycle of disadvantages, limiting access to education, employment, and essential services.

2.8 Coping Strategies in Supporting Persons with Multiple Disabilities.

Individuals with multiple disabilities face a complex array of challenges, encompassing physical, emotional, social, and economic obstacles. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates various support services and coping mechanisms. Fostering greater inclusion in society is crucial, as it positively impacts the lives of individuals with multiple disabilities and their advocates. According to Alansutrari et al. (2019), initiatives aimed at humanizing experiences, challenging stereotypes, and promoting a more inclusive society that recognizes and values the contributions of individuals with disabilities are essential. This approach necessitates a thorough examination of the range of support services and coping strategies available

to enhance the welfare and life satisfaction of individuals with multiple disabilities. Ensuring access to healthcare, including regular check-ups, screenings, and adaptive tools, is fundamental for these individuals (Penedo & Dahn, 2005).

Engaging in regular physical activity is recognized as essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle and contributes significantly to physical and mental well-being across various life stages (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). Lieberman (2024) emphasizes that comprehensive healthcare not only manages existing conditions but also aids in early detection of potential health issues. Furthermore, sensory circuits utilized as coping strategies can help calm individuals and reduce stress for both the individuals and their caregivers. Gordon (2023) notes that sensory calming and de-escalation rooms are designed to provide a tranquil environment with engaging distractions, minimizing the risk of injury during moments of emotional distress.

Physical therapy is pivotal in enhancing mobility and independence, addressing specific physical challenges through tailored exercises, and promoting overall physical well-being (Lieberman, 2024). Such therapy should be integrated into healthcare services to offer a holistic approach to managing the physical aspects of multiple disabilities. Activities promoting physical well-being, including therapeutic engagements, are vital for managing daily life (Hsieh & Rimmer, 2004). Engaging in physical activity has been shown to improve social skills, emotional well-being, and behavioral challenges (Heller, Hsieh, & Rimmer, 2004; Hutzler & Korsensky, 2010). Enhanced exercise self-efficacy and increased life satisfaction resulting from physical activity may contribute to reduced stereotypic behaviors and increased sociability (Lai et al., 2020). Close collaboration with healthcare professionals and support networks is essential for developing personalized care plans that address specific needs.

Social inclusion is another critical component that encompasses community engagement programs, inclusive educational initiatives, and the establishment of peer support networks (Hsieh & Rimmer, 2004). Advocating for the accessibility of public spaces ensures equal participation in community life (Yeboah, 2005). Successful collaboration between service systems and communities leads to better outcomes by customizing interventions to community values and concerns (Hsieh & Rimmer, 2004). Specialized education programs incorporating tailored education plans, assistive technologies, and vocational training are necessary for addressing the diverse needs of individuals with multiple disabilities (Finkelstein, 2001). Article 24 of the CRPD supports the right to education and equal access to an inclusive education system, highlighting the importance of reasonable accommodations and individual support services (United Nations, 2016).

Counseling and education are vital for supporting families of individuals with multiple disabilities, providing resources, support groups, and respite care to alleviate caregiver stress and reduce discrimination (Yeboah, 2005; Finkelstein, 2001). Financial assistance, including disability benefits and grants, can help alleviate financial burdens, with employment support enhancing financial independence where applicable (Salido & Breviescas, 2024). Advocacy and legal support from disability rights organizations are essential for inclusive policies and legal protection against discrimination, while awareness campaigns contribute to a broader understanding of disability rights.

Healthcare access for individuals with multiple disabilities is paramount. Regular health check-ups and screenings can lead to early detection of health issues, allowing for timely interventions that can significantly enhance quality of life (Penedo & Dahn, 2005). It is also essential to provide access to adaptive tools and technologies that facilitate daily living activities, enabling individuals to achieve greater independence.

These technologies may include mobility aids, communication devices, and sensory equipment, all of which can greatly enhance the individual's ability to engage in daily activities and social interactions (Lieberman, 2024).

Physical activity is particularly beneficial for individuals with disabilities, as it promotes not only physical health but also emotional and mental well-being. Warburton et al. (2006) emphasize that engaging in regular physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic diseases and improve overall quality of life. Community-based programs that encourage participation in physical activities can help individuals with multiple disabilities develop social skills, build self-confidence, and foster a sense of belonging. Additionally, promoting active lifestyles can help mitigate some of the physical challenges associated with disabilities, improving mobility and functional abilities (Heller, Hsieh, & Rimmer, 2004).

Incorporating sensory circuits into daily routines has been shown to have calming effects and to enhance emotional regulation. Sensory rooms equipped with calming stimuli such as soft lighting, soothing sounds, and tactile objects can provide individuals with a safe space to relax and self-regulate during times of distress (Gordon, 2023). These sensory strategies can benefit both individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, creating a more harmonious environment and reducing the potential for crisis situations.

The importance of social inclusion cannot be overstated. Individuals with multiple disabilities often experience social isolation and exclusion, which can significantly impact their mental health and overall well-being. Community engagement initiatives that promote inclusivity can help combat these issues by fostering connections among individuals with disabilities and their peers. These initiatives may include inclusive

recreational programs, community service opportunities, and social skills training, all of which encourage participation and interaction in community life (Hsieh & Rimmer, 2004).

Advocating for accessibility in public spaces is crucial for ensuring that individuals with multiple disabilities can participate fully in community life. Efforts to improve infrastructure, such as adding wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, and public transportation options, can facilitate greater mobility and independence (Yeboah, 2005). Furthermore, increasing awareness and understanding of disability rights within the community can help challenge stereotypes and promote a more inclusive society.

Educational initiatives that focus on inclusive practices are also essential. Schools that adopt inclusive education models create environments where individuals with disabilities can learn alongside their peers, fostering understanding and acceptance. Tailored education plans, assistive technologies, and specialized training for educators are critical components of these initiatives, ensuring that the diverse needs of students with multiple disabilities are met (Finkelstein, 2001). Additionally, vocational training programs can equip individuals with the skills necessary for meaningful employment, enhancing their sense of purpose and independence.

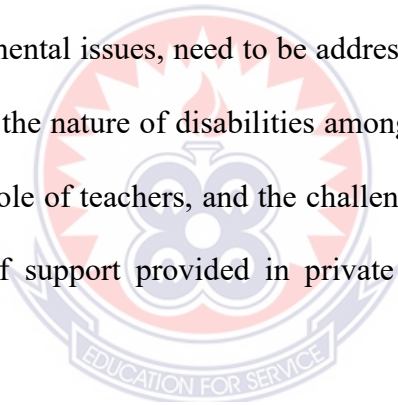
Supporting Families and Caregivers The role of families and caregivers is central to the well-being of individuals with multiple disabilities. Caregiving is often a demanding and exhausting role, and without adequate support, caregivers can experience burnout and stress, which can negatively impact their ability to provide care. Providing resources such as respite care, support groups, and financial assistance is crucial for alleviating the burden on caregivers and ensuring they have the energy and resources to care for their loved ones effectively. Respite, care programs offer much-needed relief

to caregivers by providing temporary care for individuals with disabilities, allowing caregivers to rest and recharge. This is especially important for caregivers who may be providing round-the-clock care, as it helps prevent burn-out and ensures that they can continue to provide high-quality care over the long term. Support groups also play a vital role by connecting caregivers with others who understand their challenges, offering emotional support, practical advice, and a sense of community. Financial support is another critical aspect of caregiver assistance. The costs associated with caring for an individual with multiple disabilities can be substantial, including expenses for medical care, adaptive equipment, and special educational services. Disability benefits, grants, and employment support for caregivers can help alleviate these financial pressures, allowing families to focus on providing the best possible care for their loved ones. Additionally, employment support can enable caregivers to balance their caregiving responsibilities with work, contributing to their financial stability and well-being. Legal Advocacy and Policy Development Legal advocacy is essential for ensuring that individuals with multiple disabilities have their rights protected and are free from discrimination. Advocacy efforts are necessary to enforce existing laws that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities and to push for the development of new policies that address the evolving needs of this population. Legal support services can help individuals, and their families navigate the complexities of disability law, ensuring they receive the benefits and protections to which they are entitled. Advocacy efforts also play a crucial role in raising awareness about the challenges faced by individuals with multiple disabilities and promoting societal change. Awareness campaigns can help challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about disability, fostering a more inclusive and accepting society. By highlighting the contributions that

individuals with disabilities can make to society, these campaigns can help shift public perception and encourage greater support for inclusive policies and practices.

2.9 Summary

The support needs of individuals with multiple disabilities are diverse and depend on the nature of their disabilities. Tailoring support to individual needs is crucial, involving technology integration, assistive technologies, and customized solutions. Special needs educators require training on these devices and advancements to empower individuals with multiple disabilities. Inclusive recreational programs, adapted sports, and accessible cultural events offer opportunities for social engagement and a sense of belonging. Challenges faced by caregivers, such as inadequate training, heavy workload, and environmental issues, need to be addressed to improve support quality. This study will explore the nature of disabilities among research subjects, the support systems available, the role of teachers, and the challenges faced by caregivers, with a focus on the quality of support provided in private establishments like Multikids School.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature relevant to this study. This chapter focuses on the research methodology and outlines the philosophical paradigm underpinning the study, the research design, sample size, sampling technique, instrumentation, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm: Philosophical Paradigm

Research involves a systematic method to acquire new information or answer questions. Cohen et al. (2011) describes research as a systematic, controlled inquiry used to gather, analyze, and interpret data to better understand an existing condition. Adopting a research paradigm is crucial for ensuring that appropriate data is collected and analyzed effectively. According to Johnson et al. (2020), Kuhn (1962) defines a paradigm as a conceptual framework that a group of researchers share. It represents an integrated cluster of concepts, variables, and problems with corresponding methodological approaches and tools. Kuhn (1977) and Jamshed (2014) suggest that a paradigm refers to a research culture with shared beliefs, values, and assumptions about research.

For this study, the philosophical paradigm is interpretivism. Unlike positivism, which focuses on quantitative processes and objective truth, interpretivism emphasizes understanding and interpreting data within its context (Cohen et al., 2011). Interpretivism allows for multiple perspectives and analyses phenomena from various angles. This study employs interpretivism to gather data from various sources, including documents and individuals such as learners with disabilities and teachers, to explore the provision of support services and associated challenges at Multikids School.

3.2 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was adopted for this study within the interpretivist paradigm. Qualitative research is described as a systematic empirical inquiry into meaning (Ary et al., 2010). It is planned, ordered, and follows rules agreed upon by the qualitative research community, grounded in the world of experience (Creswell, 2007). The term "empirical" refers to data collected through observation, experience, or scientific instruments (Prasad, 2008).

In this study, a qualitative approach was used to explore the support services for people with multiple disabilities at the selected school. Research questions were formulated to capture respondents' experiences. Primary data was collected through interviews with a small number of individuals. Data were then analyzed using text analysis and interpretation of findings.

3.3 Research Design

Qualitative research encompasses various designs, including phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, historical, case study, and action research (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). This study adopts a case study research design. Creswell (2012) describes a case study as an inquiry approach that explores in-depth a program, event, activity,

process, or one or more individuals bound by time. For this study, the case study is bound by a three-month school term, focusing on the support system provided to people with multiple disabilities at Multikids School.

Case studies can examine individuals, groups, institutions, or communities (Ary et al., 2010). In this research, both individuals (teachers and learners) and the institution (Multikids School) are studied. The case study approach provides a holistic view, aiming to understand the unity and wholeness of the support services in the selected school (Punch, 2005). According to Avoke (2005), case study research involves in-depth, interactive knowledge about a single case or a small group using multiple data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. Therefore, this study focuses on Multikids as the site to explore caregiving practices and the associated challenges.

3.4 Area of Study

The research was conducted at Multikids Inclusive Academy and Multikids Pediatric Clinic, collectively referred to as Multikids School. This institution, located in Ghana, West Africa, is an accredited international school that caters to both special needs and mainstream children. Established in February 2010, the school offers inclusive education (Multikids School, n.d.).

3.5 Population

The study targets special educators who teach individuals with multiple disabilities. Creswell (2013) defines a population in research as the group of individuals or entities sharing specific characteristics and the focus of the study. It represents the larger group from which a sample is drawn. Neuman (2014) further explains that the population comprises all individuals, objects, or events that share characteristics relevant to the

research. For qualitative studies, Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest a sample size of 15-30 participants. In this study, the total population consisting of 20 special educators were selected randomly. The target population includes four special education teachers, who were selected for their direct involvement with students with multiple disabilities and accessibility (Yaya, 2014).

3.5 Sample Size

The sample size refers to the number of respondents included in a study and is crucial for ensuring the study's validity and accuracy (Creswell, 2014). For this study, the sample size is four special education teachers from Multikids Inclusive Academy.

3.6 Sampling Technique

The study employs expert purposive sampling, a technique used to select participants who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research (Palinkas et al., 2015). Special education teachers were selected purposively due to their regular contact with students with multiple disabilities and their ability to provide detailed data on caregiving. Purposive sampling was chosen for its effectiveness in identifying individuals who could offer valuable insights into the support services provided. Learners were also purposively sampled and observed to understand the nature of the support services they received from the teachers.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

3.7.1 Instrumentation

Data collection is a critical step in research, involving the use of tools and techniques to gather information relevant to the study (Creswell, 2014). For this study, data were collected using a combination of interviews, observations, and document analysis. As

a qualitative study, the primary instruments included an interview guide, an observation checklist, and a content analysis guide (Matoskov, 2016).

3.7.2 Interviews

Interviews are a qualitative research method where the researcher engages in a structured conversation with respondents to collect in-depth information, insights, and perspectives on specific topics (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Fontana and Frey (2005) describe interviews as purposeful conversations that enable respondents to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to the research topic. In this study, interviews were conducted with all four special education teachers to explore the nature of support provided to learners and the challenges faced in delivering this support. The study used a semi-structured interview format, allowing flexibility and the ability to ask follow-up questions to gain deeper insights (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The interview guide included key themes:

- Support services available for people with multiple disabilities.
- The role of teachers in supporting individuals with multiple disabilities.
- Challenges faced by teachers in providing support.
- Coping strategies employed by teachers.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded, and transcribed for analysis. Additional notes were taken to capture issues not recorded and were analyzed accordingly.

3.8 Trustworthiness in Research Instrumentation

Trustworthiness in qualitative research ensures the accuracy and credibility of findings, reflecting the phenomena studied authentically (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell

(2014) emphasizes the importance of rigor and transparency in research design, data collection, and analysis. According to Shenton (2004), trustworthiness includes:

Credibility: Ensures findings accurately reflect reality. To enhance credibility, triangulation was employed, involving multiple data sources and methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This included collecting data from different respondents, using field notes, and involving an independent researcher for analysis. Respondents were encouraged to share their perspectives fully.

Dependability: Ensures that findings are consistent over time and across different contexts. Dependability was addressed by applying the same methods and procedures consistently, allowing future researchers to replicate the study.

Confirmability: Involves ensuring findings are based on data rather than researcher biases. An audit trail was maintained, documenting the coding process, theme development, and rationale for coding decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Conducting research on support services for individuals with multiple disabilities requires adherence to ethical principles to protect participants' rights and dignity.

Autonomy and Informed Consent: Respect for autonomy and informed consent is crucial. Beauchamp and Childress (2019) emphasize the importance of ensuring participants understand the research procedures, risks, and benefits. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their active involvement in the research process.

Confidentiality and Privacy: Protecting participants' personal and medical information is essential. The American Psychological Association (2017) underscores

the importance of confidentiality. In this study, participant identities were anonymized using codes (R1-4 for learners and T1-5 for teachers) to safeguard privacy.

Cultural Competence: Understanding and respecting cultural backgrounds is vital in providing appropriate support (Betancourt et al., 2003). The study was designed to acknowledge and address the diverse cultural experiences of participants, ensuring culturally sensitive interactions.

In summary, ethical considerations, including autonomy, confidentiality, and cultural competence, were integral to the research design and implementation, maintaining the study's integrity and respect for participants.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a critical phase in research, aimed at interpreting and deriving meaning from collected data. In this study, a qualitative research approach was utilized, and thematic analysis was employed to analyze data from interviews, observations, and documents such as lesson plans.

3.11 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this study, interview data were transcribed from audio recordings into text format. Thematic analysis was then applied to the transcriptions to identify recurring themes related to the research questions and objectives. This process involved several key steps:

Transcription: Audio recordings from interviews with the four special education teachers were transcribed into text.

Initial Review: The transcribed data and observation notes were reviewed to familiarize them with the content and to start identifying preliminary themes.

Theme Identification: Data was mapped onto themes derived from the research objectives. This step involved coding the data and grouping codes into categories that reflect the key themes.

Thematic Mapping: Themes were refined and checked for relevance by cross-referencing with the data. Patterns were identified and analyzed to provide deeper insight into the support services and challenges faced by teachers.

Document Analysis: Documents such as lesson plans and school plans were also analyzed thematically. The content was mapped onto the established themes to supplement the insights gained from interviews and observations.

Interpretation and Discussion: The analyzed data were discussed in relation to the existing literature reviewed in the previous chapter. This interpretation helped in contextualizing the findings and drawing meaningful conclusions.

3.12 Procedure for Data Analysis

Transcription: All audio recordings and notes from the four teacher respondents were transcribed into text format.

Data Mapping: The transcribed data were reviewed and mapped onto themes derived from the study's objectives and research questions.

Data Analysis: The mapped data were analyzed through interpretation, identifying patterns and relationships relevant to the study's focus.

Observation Notes: Notes from observations were similarly mapped onto the themes and analyzed.

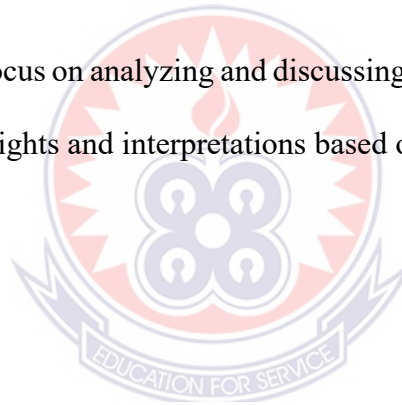
Document Analysis: Lesson plans and other documents were analyzed based on the identified themes.

Integration: The data analyzed were integrated with the literature reviewed earlier to provide a comprehensive discussion of the findings.

3.13 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology employed in the study, including the philosophical paradigm, research design, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. It detailed the process of thematic analysis, from transcribing and coding data to interpreting and discussing the results in the context of existing literature. The chosen methodologies and procedures were informed by the empirical literature reviewed in the previous chapter, ensuring that the study's approach was robust and aligned with the research objectives.

The next chapter will focus on analyzing and discussing the data collected through these methods, providing insights and interpretations based on the thematic analysis.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter captured the research methodology employed in this study. It explained the philosophical paradigm that underpins the study, the research approach, research design, population and sampling procedure, data collection strategies used and the limitation of the study as well as the data analysis procedure adopted in the study. This chapter presents data gathered from the participants of the study. It also covers the analysis, and discussions emanating from the data. The first part deals with the biodata of participants which is needed to establish the defining characteristics of the research subjects as people with multiple disabilities. The second part presents the support services research participants rendered the persons with multiple disabilities, the challenges they face in the process, and coping strategies teachers use in supporting people with multiple disabilities.

4.1 The Biographic Data of Participants

The biographical data of participants in the study in terms of their identity, occupation, rank, years in service under the Ghana Education Service, years in charge of a multiple disability child as a caregiver, and class taught by the teacher. These details were very significant since these indices enable the researcher to have insights into the variables in the study's context and their implications for the study. Consequently, table 1 portrays the biographical data of the participants as stated earlier on.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Identity	Designation	Rank	Years (in-service)	Class (taught)
TR- 1	Teacher	Principal sup	05	BS 4
TR-2	Teacher	Not ranked	02	BS 2
TR-3	Teacher	Superintendent	04	BS 3
TR-4	Teacher	Superintendent	02	BS 5

Source: Field Data, collected 2022.

Table 1 shows the biographical data of the participants of the study. It shows that TR-1 has been teaching with the GES for 5 years on the rank of Principal Superintendent and is responsible for instruction at the Basic 4 class in the school where the study was conducted. TR-2 on the other hand indicated that he is not a professional teacher but has been with the GES for 2 years as a teacher at the basic school class 2. TR-3 also revealed that he is on the rank of Superintendent with 4 years of teaching experience with the GES and is responsible for instructional delivery at Basic 3. TR-4 also indicated that he is a Superintendent with a rank of 2 years of teaching experience with the GES and overseas Basic 5 as a class teacher. These experiences shared by the participants in the study are indications that their contribution to the people with multiple disabilities combating two or more disabilities entrusted in their care has been very impactful and is very significant to the study.

4.2 Support Services

Inquiries were made about the support services made available to people with multiple disabilities by their teachers and caregivers in the following process.

4.2.1 Support Services Made Available by Teachers to Persons with Multiple

Disabilities “Support services made available to persons with multiple disabilities”

was the theme coined from the first research question (What is/are the support services available for a person with multiple disabilities to function independently?)

Consequently, participants' responses to the question are presented, analyzed, and discussed as follows.

In the process of the study, the support services available for people with multiple disabilities to function independently were taken up. Consequently, “the Support Services for individuals with multiple disabilities” was generated as a theme for research question one’s analysis and discussion as follows.

This theme aims to uncover the various support services available to individuals with multiple disabilities to enable them to function independently. The responses from four teachers shed light on the diverse range of services provided in educational institutions in the study. The four teachers emphasized the support services. Their responses were as follows.

TR-1 stated that

Different therapies like speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy as well as other community-based services are some of the support systems provided the persons with multiple disabilities with the hope of enabling them to function physically and independently with little or no support.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 highlights that

Assistive technological devices like wheelchairs, braille displays, magnifiers, memory aids, audiobooks, walkers, mobility canes, crutches, communication boards, and laptops which are physical needs are often provided to people with multiple disabilities to facilitate their movements, and day-to-day activities through

collaborative efforts by professional personnel and other educational service deliverers.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 reinforces the significance of educational services by indicating that.

The school collaborates with professionals in MKA to provide formal and informal educational support services like the individual educational program (IEP), daily living skills (toileting skills, bathing skills, eating skills, and personal hygiene)

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR -4also expands the spectrum by stating that.

Educational services including vocational training services, art, gymnastics, swimming services, drumming, music and dance, independent living, and sensory circuits are some of the support services made available to the disabled persons in the school with the anticipation of helping them to acquire skills that can enable them to become independent. These collaborative therapies help in the school's efforts to support "multiple disabilities" persons to live independent lives. For instance, the vocational skills acquired can help them to engage in income-generating activities without depending on any other person or person for financial support. Gymnastics also could enable them to improve their physical fitness to be able to live up to the demands of psychomotor.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

4.2.2 Delivery of Support Services to Persons with Multiple Disabilities

Equally, a further probe was conducted on "how teachers deliver these support services to the pupils with multiple disabilities". Participants subsequently provided the following responses.

TR-1 mentioned that.

I deliver instruction to my class and in the process give a helping hand to pupils who are confined to wheelchairs and find mobility to and from the place of convenience very tasking. So, in school, I double as "in loco parentis" when it comes to the provision of critical services.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 also stated that.

I am responsible for all the children in my class in the performance of formal and other services that are not so much related to instruction in school to let them have a sense of belonging and confidence in carrying out their activities in school within the duration of schooling on a given day.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 stressed that.

It is my responsibility to see to it that every support the children in my class require to successfully engage in their learning activities and other co-curriculum activities throughout the period they attend school is effectively dispatched. When they are catered for with little or no stress, they develop closer relations with us and trust that our presence in school guarantees their comfort and continuous stay till the time school closes for their parents and dependents to come for them.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 suggested that.

I doubled as a teacher and a caregiver in school since during that period, the children were under our care. So, everything within our ambit as teachers that we need to offer to let them feel comfortable in their presence in school is availed to them.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The study revealed that,

In sum, it could be stated that teachers in the study render various forms of support ranging from teaching and offering other related services within their jurisdiction as and when it becomes necessary.

4.2.3 How Teachers Support Persons with Multiple Disabilities

This theme was coined from research question two (what roles do teachers render in supporting people with multiple disabilities). In this regard, “what support services do the teachers offer persons with multiple disabilities to help them become independent”? was one of the interview items generated as a way of aiding in the answering of research question two effectively.

4.2.4 How Teachers Offer Support Services to Persons with Multiple Disabilities

The role teachers offered to people with multiple disabilities witnessed the following responses from the participants. Consequently, “the role teachers offer to persons with multiple disabilities” set the motion in the researcher’s bid to answer the research question. The ensuing were the responses given by the participants and the analysis and discussion that followed.

In the delivery of support services to people with multiple disabilities,

TR-1 stated that.

We have a broad collaborative agenda involving ABA therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, dancing therapists, school counselors, as well as nurses in our resolve to avail our services to the disabled child entrusted in our care so they can become self-sufficient in carrying out their daily activities in life without relying on any individual or group of persons. So, their welfare is very paramount to us as teachers.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 also mentioned that.

I am responsible for the oversight and supervision of a diverse team of therapists. As a teacher, I offer speech, physical, Behavioral, and other forms of specialized therapy to multiple disability learners as a way of supporting them to become independent in their daily activities.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 too voiced out that

I see to it that the children under my care get access to tablet applications, as well as AAC, and other assistive technologies needed to enhance communication, learning, and self-reliance are in place and effectively utilized. My inability to see to the performance of these functions to the best of my ability may not auger well for the children entrusted in my care. We work as a team where each of us performs specific functions geared towards improving the ability and self-reliance of these children.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR -4put forward that

I work closely with a staff of professionals involving therapists, healthcare givers, as well as educators collaboratively to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to caregiving of the child. By so doing, we helped to create adapted strategies to cater to the exceptional wants and wishes of the disabled child academically.

Source: Field Data: 2022.

It could be observed that the responses given by the participants show that, irrespective of their specific roles, each of them emphasizes collaboration as a cornerstone for supporting individuals with multiple disabilities. TR-1, TR-2, TR-3, and TR-4 highlight the importance of working with various professionals, including therapists, counselors, and nurses for the good of the child with multiple disabilities. This collaborative approach ensures a comprehensive and multidimensional support system for the disabled child with multiple disabilities.

Moreover, TR-3 sentimentally agrees with TR-4, when they echo that collaborative and coordinated work in their performance as instructors in a special school help them to focus on the services, they need to render to the children entrusted to their care. Despite differences in emphasis, all teachers converge on the idea of comprehensive support. In support of this view shared by the participants of the study, Ainscow and Sandill (2010) observed in their study that as countries globally strive to enhance inclusive education, they collaborate with international agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, alongside local and international disability organizations, to foster a common understanding of the need for systemic change at both global and local levels. This collaboration among diverse professionals, including therapists, nurses, and counselors, reflects an understanding that individuals with multiple disabilities require multifaceted assistance. This aligns with the concept of addressing diverse needs within a unified support framework as emphasized by Ainscow and Sandill (2010). They further maintained that through their diverse roles, all educators and organizations contribute

to helping individuals with multiple disabilities become independent while dismantling structural barriers. This collaborative approach supports the social model of disability, which posits that disability results from societal barriers, and by working together, educators aim to create an inclusive educational environment.

The participants in the study emphasize the importance of collaboration and comprehensive support. While differences exist, these variations enhance the overall support system, allowing for a more holistic approach to addressing the diverse needs of individuals with multiple disabilities. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) assert that this approach supports children's learning in familiar and comfortable environments, fostering positive educational and social interactions. Through their collective efforts, teachers contribute to creating an inclusive and accessible educational environment where children with multiple disabilities can thrive independently.

In summation, teachers perform supervisory and oversight roles, collaborating with healthcare providers, therapists, educators, and other specialized professionals to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to caregiving, thus promoting independence for individuals with multiple disabilities.

4.2.5 Benefits from the Support Services According to Their Condition

This theme aims to answer research question two (What benefits do the support systems render to people with multiple disabilities?). To explore whether people with multiple disabilities benefit from support services according to their condition, the teachers' responses were analyzed and discussed as follows:

TR-1 highlights his view this way:

Tailored interventions addressing behavioral issue's yield noticeable improvements. These interventions helped in the removal of attitudinal, environmental, communication, and organizational barriers. The removal of these barriers to some extent ensures smooth conduct of the

multiple disability child's affairs in the best of comfort and independence.

Source: Field Data: 2022.

Such insights align with the social model of disability, emphasizing the importance of addressing environmental and societal factors that contribute to challenges (Oliver, 1996). Oliver's observation acknowledges the support services made available to children with multiple disabilities in a society setting.

TR-2 also insisted that:

Speech and occupational therapy given in school contribute to the well-being of the students. These therapies ensure the effective organization of the child's speech and general well-being in terms of communication with peers and their performance of activities around their surroundings.

Source: Field Data: 2022.

This statement made by TR-2 is in harmony with the principles of inclusive education, which emphasize the role of specialized services in ensuring equal participation and access to education for all students (UNESCO, 2005). This contribution by the teachers also attests to the fact that the support services rendered by the teachers in the educational process of the disabled child are beneficial, not only to the child but also to members of the societies these children are part of.

TR-3 shared his view as follows:

The support systems rendered to children with multiple disabilities help them accommodate individual differences through various activities as they typically exhibit a person-centered approach.

Source: Field Data: 2022.

This view expressed by TR-3 agrees with the social model, which recognizes the diversity of abilities and the need for flexible support structures to aid children with disabilities (Oliver, 1990). It is encouraging to see that the teachers depicted in the study are offering support services capable of helping these children become self-reliant.

TR-4 also portrayed her view as follows:

The financial investments made by governmental and non-governmental organizations towards the integration or inclusivity of the disabled in society are a testament to the benefits of the support systems available to them. A lot of financial inputs have been committed and continue to be committed to the cause of disability integration in society to avoid the element of self-inflicted societal "outcast" that some communities impose on disabled children. It is important to note that disability is not inability, so society cannot remain passive while these children suffer from circumstances they did not create. In this regard, the support systems have been very beneficial for catering to their immediate daily needs and helping them become independent as they grow up. While financial investments in these services underscore the value placed on support, they also raise considerations about equity and access to financially based services.

This demonstrates that people from different impairment groups face common issues and interests related to support services that could enable them to function independently as active societal partners (Barnes & Mercer, 2010). These support systems aim to address socio-political and cultural systemic exclusion and discrimination (Shakespeare, 2006). Institutions' efforts to ensure the functionality of these support systems are informed by the Social Model of Disability (Barnes & Mercer, 2010). Supporting the argument for inclusive support systems, Barnes and Mercer (2010) contend that moving away from blaming individuals for their perceived shortcomings is crucial. The presence of disability in society necessitates planning and organizing in a way that includes rather than excludes disabled people. The participants' emphasis on the positive impact of support services aligns with the social model principles of addressing barriers and promoting inclusion. However, the financial aspects mentioned by TR-4 raise concerns about potential disparities in accessing these

services, as discussed by Shakespeare (2006) in his broader discussions on social justice within the context of disability.

4.2.6 Specific Training Teachers Received on the Support They Can Give to Multiple Disabilities Children

In addressing “the benefits of the support systems made available to persons with disabilities,” the theme of “Specific training received by participants on the support services” emerged. The responses from the four participants provide insights into the training they have received to offer the desired support to individuals with multiple disabilities as follows:

TR-1 mentioned:

"I participated in recent training programs with a focus on dyslexia. This reflects a commitment to staying updated on relevant topics and addressing specific learning challenges. It accorded me the opportunity to be updated on current trends in providing support services to children affected by this type of disability."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

organized for us at a shorter time interval."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 commented:

"Having studied special education at university, and received comprehensive training in areas such as dyslexia, deaf education, and autism, this formal education background equips me with a fundamental understanding of various forms of disabilities. So, I see this on-the-job training as a revisional work to re-equip me with the key issues I need to deliver as expected of me as a specialist in special education."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 also acknowledged:

"Attending a dyslexia workshop and receiving training on using the Cambridge curriculum and ASDAN has been very helpful in my

endeavor as a teacher responsible for educating a child with special needs. Despite lacking a special education background, I actively engage myself in any accessible special education training program bordering on enhancing my teaching skills and know-how so I can be able to support students with special needs entrusted under my care to the best of my ability."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

A common thread found in a close observation of the responses given by the participants about “training programs offered to the participants to improve their services to the handicapped” was the recognition of the importance of professional development. Their responses show that they engage in a variety of on-the-job training programs, workshops, and seminars to update and enrich their knowledge so they can effectively respond to the “new knowledge” they are expected to transmit to the learners as dictated by the curricula in use. This represents a proactive approach to staying informed about the latest strategies and interventions in special delivery of education.

In alignment with the views shared by the teachers on training programs available to them, NDACA (2023) reiterated that rehabilitation workers need to be trained to ensure a sufficient supply of personnel who can enable people with disabilities to achieve their potential and have the same opportunities to participate fully in society. This assertion further endorses the idea that training and re-training programs for the facilitators in charge of persons with multiple disabilities are indispensable components geared towards ensuring that improved services are accessed by the handicapped to enhance their desire to be independent.

Categorically, the study shows that teachers in charge of people with multiple disabilities are privileged with on-the-job training, workshops, and seminar facilities to update their knowledge to improve their service delivery. However, the training programs, according to one of the teachers, are irregular. It was suggested that regular

training programs would go a long way to equip them since not all of them are specially trained to handle pupils with multiple disabilities.

4.3 Challenges Faced by the Teachers in the Support Services for Persons with Multiple Disabilities

Progressing further, the study inquired about “the challenges the facilitators of persons with multiple disabilities are faced with.” In this regard, the study investigated “the difficulties in the teaching of persons with multiple disabilities.” The ensuing outcomes of the probe were as follows:

4.3.1 Difficulties Involved in the Teaching of Persons with Multiple Disabilities

The probe conducted into this interview revealed the following outcomes:

TR-1 indicated that:

"The emotional complexities of teaching individuals with multiple disabilities have been one of the major stumbling blocks in our bid to avail our services to learners with multiple disabilities in the school. At certain times, moments of joy and fulfillment are contrasted with instances of self-questioning and doubt."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 also stated that:

"The difficulties encountered in expecting students to adapt and comprehend delivered content. These challenges are contextualized through the social model, emphasizing that societal barriers contribute to the struggles faced by both educators and students. An inclusive pedagogical approach is needed."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 shared the view that:

"Behavioral disorders and information retention among students with multiple disabilities pose a great challenge to us as teachers. You will teach the child hoping that what is taught can be remembered by them in the next day's lesson upon revision. But that is not the case. At times, a good number of them forget entirely what was taught the previous day. This recurring problem of poor retention makes their teaching very problematic."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 insisted that:

"As a teacher in a special education system, my challenge stems from a lack of a special education background. The absence of initial training poses a major challenge in my effective handling of the handicapped persons with multiple disabilities in my care. I would have wished that my lack of formal training in the handling of instructions and other duties, coupled with irregular re-training programs, made me feel uncomfortable at certain times as delivery pressure became intense.

Source: Field Data, 2022.

These views expressed by the participants are a manifestation of different forms of obstacles in performing their duties as instructors of people with multiple disabilities. These challenges are contextualized in the social model, emphasizing the societal responsibility to ensure that educators receive adequate training and support to perform their functions effectively.

Undoubtedly, the views expressed by the participants are in concord with Turnbull, Wehmeyer, and Shogren (2015), who support the idea of retraining teachers to equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills to meet expectations in their roles as instructors of persons with multiple disabilities.

In conclusion, teachers face issues such as irregular training programs, learners' inability to comprehend delivered content, and behavioral disorders and information retention problems among learners. These constitute major obstacles in delivering instructional services to people with multiple disabilities. Interestingly, the Social Model of Disability presents a theoretical perspective that enables teachers to address these challenges and support multiple disabled children towards independence. This analysis advocates for a paradigm shift towards inclusive practices, comprehensive support systems, and equitable educational opportunities. Consequently, the Social

Model of Disability put forward by Alasuutari et al. (2019) suggests that these challenges are not solely individual struggles but are deeply rooted in societal structures. The lack of comprehensive support systems and inclusive practices may contribute to the teacher's moments of self-reflection.

4.3.2 Accommodating Persons with Multiple Disabilities due to their Differences

According to TR-1:

"The significance of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in accommodating students with multiple disabilities. The IEP is presented as a comprehensive tool that not only identifies the specific needs of each student but also outlines academic and functional goals tailored to address those needs. The teacher suggests that referring to the IEP allows educators to have a clear understanding of a child's unique requirements, fostering a more inclusive educational approach."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 stated that:

"I use Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) as a crucial support mechanism for students with multiple disabilities to cater to individual differences. This mechanism helps me to accommodate my learners efficiently. The recognition of diverse abilities alone indicates how I put up with my learners, which helps to cater to their learning needs."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 also acknowledged that:

"The teacher approach I adopt in my handling of learners with multiple disabilities enables me to be responsive to individual abilities to foster a more inclusive and supportive learning atmosphere. In my opinion, this strategy accords me the opportunity to open up to and embrace the efforts of each child decisively to make teaching and learning more viable."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 maintained that:

"I can accommodate people with multiple disabilities by taking care of their differences. So, understanding them this way enables me to fashion out possible interventions to efficiently deal with their needs."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

Responses given by the participants all emphasized devising appropriate procedures needed to cater to individual peculiar circumstances in their rehabilitation processes in their school program, showing harmony in their submissions. By implication, they all make conscious efforts to ensure that their learners are adequately taken care of, considering their unique conditions. From the perspective of Oliver (1996), principles of the Social Model of Disability suggest that accommodation should not be a one-size-fits-all but should be tailored to the specific capacities and challenges of each student. The submissions made by the participants resonate well with the views on how they accommodate children with multiple disabilities.

In conclusion, all four participants emphasize the importance of personalized approaches, particularly using IEPs and individual assessments. These strategies align with the social model's emphasis on inclusivity, recognizing and accommodating individual differences in the educational setting.

4.3.3 Teachers' Take on the Cost of Rendering Support Services to Persons with Multiple Disabilities

The subsequent inquiry witnessed a probe into the views of teachers on the cost of rendering support services to people with multiple disabilities. The ensuing were the responses the teachers gave.

TR-1 mentioned that:

"The cost of rendering support services to people with multiple disabilities is enormous. Ensuring smooth and unimpeded movements from home to school, within the compound, and from classrooms to lavatories involve technological devices like wheelchairs, and other related gadgets to be secured for the children to facilitate such movements. All these gadgets are very expensive to produce considering individual parents' financial might."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 too said that:

"Specifically highlights the costliness of behavior therapy, emphasizing the economic strain associated with addressing behavioral needs. In addition, the emotional toll of providing support services is also a demanding issue to contend with in rendering support services to people with multiple disabilities. As such, the need for patience to be exhibited by interest groups is highly noteworthy."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 also voiced that:

"There is a need for professionals to understand the environment in which individuals with multiple disabilities find themselves. It is very significant to consider the environmental factors in the inclusivity process. So much cost is involved in an effort by the interested parties to render the desirable services to people with multiple disabilities to enable them to function independently in society."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 also insists that:

"All parties are determined to do what it takes to be able to provide the needs and comfort for the multiple disabilities' children irrespective of the financial strain such commitments present. The financial contributions of parents in payment of school fees to cover therapy sessions and additional expenses are a case in point. Their prime motive for this venture is to succeed in complementing the efforts of the institutions under their ward's care in bringing up these children to be able to live an independent life."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

These consensuses expressed by the participants underscore the broader financial, emotional, and other psychological burdens confronting teachers, parents, institutions, and other interest groups engaged in the welfare and upkeep of people with multiple disabilities, in their efforts to make them self-reliant. This insight brings attention to the collaborative nature of the responsibilities, with parents actively participating in ensuring the provision of necessary support services.

These shared propositions underscore the enthusiasm and resilience required in navigating the complexities involved in supporting individuals with multiple

disabilities. Hence, all the participants recognize the importance of collaborating with professionals in delivering support services. This collective emphasis is in line with the understanding that a multidisciplinary approach is crucial for comprehensive support (Mackenzie et al., 2020). It is in line with this that the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) stipulated in their report that recognizing disability as a cross-cutting issue involving all sectors and diverse actors, the Secretariat works with a broad range of partners across all its areas of work, for example, as it leads the development of community-based rehabilitation, by building capacity and fostering networks on a regional and global basis.

It could be concluded that the support services needed by people with multiple disabilities are very crucial and expensive; they are also influenced by external factors that must be taken care of if they are to become independent as they advance in age.

4.3.4 Ways by which Multiple Disabilities Students' Condition Affect a Teacher's Wellbeing

Further investigation into the study probed the ways by which multiple disabilities affect a teacher's well-being in the performance of his duties as a support service deliverer. Consequently,

TR-1 mentioned that:

"The emotional toll associated with teaching individuals with multiple disabilities is very huge. As a teacher, I am sentimentally attached to the learners I am supposed to take charge of academically. Not only that, no other related services I must render outside of academic work but within the school setting are an obligation to me. That of course makes the work very difficult as I empathize with them in so many ways. Failure to respond to any call within the ambiance of the school translates as negligence. So, that makes me compromise in many cases on my emotional make-up."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 too said that:

"The emotional challenges we go through have been the main condition that militates against our well-being as teachers in charge of the academic upkeep of the multiple disabled persons in the school. However, some of us teachers have become used to it in a way as we try to assume the position of parents while they are in school. That helps us to temporarily overcome such situations."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 provides a balanced perspective when he shares the opinion that:

"The impact on personal well-being is capricious depending on the situation at hand. I sometimes become very worried and emotionally disturbed when a good number of the learners are unable to recollect and respond to the revision questions posed in class as a preparatory activity that was taught the previous day to usher in the supposed lesson, due partly to poor mental cognition. It practically brings my work to nothing, implying that fresh activity needs to be conducted to see how best I could bring them on track. Such moments make me feel emotionally disgruntled."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 also suggests that:

"I have been suffering from psychological trauma for quite some time now as a result of some of the pupils' inability to comprehend and respond effectively to questions posed in class related to lessons conducted, which may be attributed to poor concentration and inattentiveness. Many a time, some of the students do not concentrate on what is being taught and prefer to engage each other in conversations. However, we do not use a cane or any physical corrective measure here in the teacher's desire to get the attention of the pupil. That makes teaching here very stressful."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

Generally, the responses given by the teachers show that teachers engaged with the multiple disabilities learners in the school mostly affect their psychological and emotional well-being. Some of them, according to their responses, particularly mentioned stress, which is in line with the outcome of a study conducted by Herman et al. (2020), which suggests that teachers' affect is complex with some teachers experiencing both, for example, high stress and high efficacy simultaneously in their handling of learners in special education settings. Again, studies of teacher burnout

suggest that teachers experience increased depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and lower levels of personal accomplishment when they report problems with student behaviors (Aloe, Shisler, et al., 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) and when they report higher stress due to student behavior (McCormick & Barnett, 2011).

These views shared by these renowned authors buttress the emotional challenges teachers face when working with students with complex needs. This recognition of challenging instances highlights the complex and dynamic nature of the teacher-student relationship. It also emphasizes that the effect on well-being is not uniform but contingent on specific circumstances. This perspective adds a layer of complexity to the discussion, emphasizing the demanding nature of the teaching context. By implication, teaching individuals with multiple disabilities involves a delicate balance between fulfilling professional responsibilities and managing the associated emotional and stress-related challenges. The Social Model of Disability aids in contextualizing these experiences within the broader societal framework. While shared stressors contribute to a collective understanding of the impact, the individualized and varied nature of teachers' experiences accentuates the need for tailored support mechanisms to protect their welfare.

4.3.5 Teacher Relationship with Children with Multiple Disabilities

The teacher's relationship with children with multiple disabilities revealed the following responses:

TR-1 sees teacher's relationship with the multiple disability person as:

"A consented effort whereas a caregiver, I see myself as being involved in the collaboration with other caregivers to provide special services to the handicapped to aid them to function in a way that is acceptable within the realm of social structure."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 on the other hand pointed out that:

"My relationship with the multiple disability students in the school is that of a person destined to bridge the 'needy identity' christened them to if not the level of an ability person, to a near ability one. So, issues relating to multiple disabled persons are very dear to my heart as I see them as my own."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 stated categorically that:

"Between me and my students is the prevalence of an atmosphere of cordiality and understanding in their relationships with caregivers in a friendly and respectable manner. So, there is a near-perfect understanding between me and them concerning the unique challenges and needs confronting them, and the need to avail themselves of assistance where necessary."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The idea of the participants in the interview session to categorize teachers as those actively involved and collaborating with other support service providers is in line with Finn's (2021) assertion that individuals with developmental disabilities rely heavily on caregivers to meet their physical, emotional, and social needs. This makes relationships with caregivers particularly critical for improving quality of life. Finn emphasizes that without appropriate interventions, social interactions may be limited, affecting relationships with caregivers and ultimately the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Similarly, Maes et al. (2007) states that many individuals with developmental disabilities require intensive support from caregivers, and those with severe disabilities may depend entirely on caregivers throughout their lives. This resonates with the perspectives of the teachers in the study, highlighting the significant role of collaborative caregiving.

Herman et al. (2020) argue that disability is not an inherent trait but a result of the interaction between an individual and a society that fails to accommodate their needs. By categorizing caregivers based on their involvement and collaboration, the

participants recognize the importance of collective efforts in supporting individuals with multiple disabilities.

The emphasis on building rapport and fostering cordial relationships between teachers and students aligns with the social model of disability. This model advocates for creating a supportive and inclusive environment that acknowledges the unique challenges and needs of individuals with disabilities (Bunning, 2022). Understanding and addressing these needs through positive interactions and mutual respect are central to promoting inclusivity and holistic development.

The diverse attitudes towards caregiver involvement, stressors, and rapport-building reflect varying experiences within the broader societal context. Bunning (2022) highlights the importance of removing societal barriers and dismantling attitudinal obstacles to foster an inclusive environment that respects the uniqueness of individuals with disabilities.

4.3.6 The Behavior of Multiple Disability Students During Social Gatherings

The behavior of persons with multiple disabilities manifestations is categorized into three components in the context of this study as follows: 4.3.6.1, 4.3.6.2, and 4.3.6.3 respectively.

4.3.6.1 Teacher's Response to Behavioral Triggers of Multiple Disability Persons in Class

The following were the responses given by teachers when behavioral triggers of the students occur during a class activity:

TR-1 said that:

"There is a need for immediate communication with children with disabilities before transitions, particularly when going out of the classroom. As a teacher, communication, and preparation of the

psychological makeup of the child helps to minimize or prevent potential challenges during class sessions. Children may become restless if sitting extends for a prolonged period. This points to the importance of understanding the individual needs of each child during such moments. Proactive communication emerges as a key strategy for managing the behavior of children with disabilities during class activities. Individuals engaged in any form of a scuffle are normally advised to be of good behavior."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 too indicated that:

"I normally use extrinsic motivation as a means of promoting cordiality and incident-free situations during class activities. My presence in class always helps bring the incidence of behavioral triggers to the barest minimum due to the measures put in place to ensure friendliness among the children."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 also explained that:

"A good number of pupils comfort themselves and behave well throughout class activities. Unfortunately, poor retention of memory and inability to follow consistently are due partly to memory defects and other related psychological problems. In all, there is a good camaraderie between me and the children in class. Individual differences exhibited in approach to class situations are equally recognized."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 did share the view that:

"I enjoy every bit of my relationship with the pupils in my class during class activity. The children enjoy the cordial and friendly relationship we have during class activities. They are very obedient and abide by class instructions satisfactorily."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The participants' responses show that teachers acknowledge that the specific environment and circumstances play a crucial role in shaping the behavior of these children. This underlines the importance of considering the unique context of each social setting when anticipating or managing their behavior. Both TR-3 and TR-4

acknowledge the affectionateness in the behavior of children with disabilities in the classroom setting. However, the individuality of each child's response to class situations cannot be underestimated. Hence, the variability highlights the need for personalized approaches and an understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to managing behavior during social gatherings. It suggests that educators need to be attentive to the duration of specific activities to prevent restlessness and maintain engagement.

The examination of teachers' perspectives through the work of Kozleski and Huber (2022) highlights the importance of understanding the societal influences on the behavior of children with disabilities during social gatherings. Context dependency, the role of communication, variability in behavior, and challenges during transitions all accentuate the need for societal adjustments and inclusive practices. According to the Social Model of Disability, educators can actively contribute to creating environments that embrace diversity, break down societal barriers, and foster positive experiences for children with disabilities during social gatherings (Shakespeare, 2014).

4.3.6.2 Inclusive Interactions Outside Classrooms

Inclusive interactions outside of the classroom according to the teachers interviewed revealed the following responses:

TR-1 emphasizes that:

"The behavior of children with disabilities is context-dependent, with the external environment playing a significant role in shaping their responses. Educators are called upon to be mindful planners, considering factors such as sensory needs, physical setup, and overall atmosphere."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 also indicated that:

"The influence of the environment on the behavior of children with disabilities explains how these children respond to external stimuli and adapt their behavior accordingly. There is a need for educators to be mindful of their surroundings when planning activities outside educational settings. Communication is the tool used to manage behavior outside of school. Effective communication provides predictability, empowers children with disabilities, mitigates uncertainty and anxiety, fosters trust, and allows for individualized approaches."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 mentioned that:

"Educational activities have so much impact on the behavior of multiple disabled children outside the school. I normally extend inclusive education outside of the class so they can feel a sense of belongingness in all that they do."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 also stated that:

"The individual responses of children with disabilities emanate from the diverse environments they find themselves in. In this regard, personalized and individualized approaches are normally used to encourage positive behavior among them in a public context to control their behavior."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

By recognizing and addressing the impact of external stimuli, educators can actively contribute to facilitating positive experiences and interactions for these students outside the traditional classroom setting through the institution of clear and proactive communication strategies. This means that communication emerged as a fundamental factor in creating positive and inclusive experiences for children with disabilities beyond the school environment. The variability in behavior concepts according to the participants also has a significant impact on the behavior of children with multiple disabilities outside of the school environment. Hence, the interconnectedness of

learning experiences and behavior, as well as the importance of recognizing and accommodating individual differences in managing behavior outside the traditional classroom setting, are critical.

The findings suggest that societal transformations are crucial for creating environments that foster positive behavior and experiences for children with multiple disabilities. By embracing inclusivity, prioritizing accessible communication, and promoting individualized approaches, society can actively contribute to breaking down barriers and fostering a more understanding and inclusive environment for all, irrespective of one's physical characteristics. Studies on behavioral triggers outside of the class environment by Ageranioti-Bélanger et al. (2012) show that planned aggression responds best to an educational approach with clear limits within a consequence-based structure involving the withdrawal of privileges as good control measures needed to combat such behavioral triggers. Ageranioti-Bélanger et al. (2012) further suggest that reactive aggression tends to respond best to a modified behavioral approach, changing the settings that trigger the aggression, teaching an alternative, acceptable behavior to serve the same communicative function, and consistently rewarding the new, desired behavior. Furthermore, it is important to determine which changes to the environment will improve the situation and to warn the patient about impending changes to their environment. These findings support the remedial measures put forward by the participants.

4.3.6.3 Society's Attitudes Towards Multiple Disability Persons

The multiple disabilities child's interactions with other children during social events were also very vital to the lens of this study. Participants' responses to this inquiry are as follows:

TR-1 said that:

"For example, in this country that we are in, I think the public has limited education about these people, so they tend to see them as contagious, while it is not. They then avoid and reject them."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 also suggested that:

"At times when we go out for trips or to shop, some people ask themselves who these kids are. Some get scared when they learn about their condition and want to relate well with them. Educating society on multiple disabilities would give them more knowledge."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 proposed that:

"The attitude of society varies; those who understand the condition try to motivate us to have patience with them, while those who don't understand may neglect or reject them because they perceive them as having contagious identities. Their interactions with other students are often dictated by misconceptions, inhuman experiences, and stereotypical behaviors toward them by their 'normal' peers. As teachers, we often need to engage the children in a salvaging effort to counteract these negative attitudes."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 stated that:

"Society accepts these children to some extent, especially those who are educated about the condition. However, those who are not familiar with it often try to move away from them."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

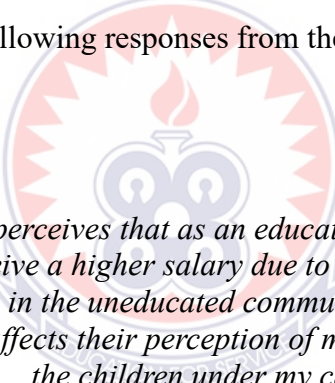
In summary, the experiences shared by these teachers reveal a range of societal perceptions and misconceptions surrounding children with multiple disabilities. From undervaluation of the role of educators to misconceptions about contagiousness and harmful stereotypes, these responses underscore the urgent need for awareness campaigns, education, and advocacy. Shifting societal attitudes requires challenging deep-seated biases and promoting a more accurate understanding of the capabilities and value of individuals with disabilities and those who support them.

The collective responses stress the challenging landscape of societal attitudes faced by educators working with children with multiple disabilities. Personal connections, empathy, and societal support are crucial in promoting the well-being of educators and enhancing the experiences of children with multiple disabilities in interactions with their peers who are considered "normal." Consequently, the Social Model of Disability supports efforts to humanize experiences, challenge stereotypes, and foster a more inclusive society that values the contributions of individuals with disabilities and those who support them (Alasuutari et al., 2019).

4.3.6.4 Public's Attitude Towards a Teacher of a Child with Multiple Disabilities

Further inquiry about the public's attitude towards the teacher of a person with multiple disabilities revealed the following responses from the teachers:

TR-1 stated:



"The community perceives that as an educator of a multiple disabled person; I receive a higher salary due to the nature of the job. Additionally, some in the uneducated community believe that I am also disabled, which affects their perception of my ability to connect with the children under my care."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 mentioned:

"Some community members find it difficult to come close to me because they think it might be contagious. They are extremely cautious about interacting with me, fearing that I may transmit disabilities to them. Unfortunately, it is very challenging to correct these misconceptions. However, my friends and family members appreciate my efforts in teaching these children."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 stressed:

"Society often views our work with children with multiple disabilities as futile, perceiving it as a waste of time. Some believe it is contagious and fear being affected. Others, however, recognize that these children

are human and need support and love to function comfortably in society."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 suggested:

"It is disturbing to see multiple disabilities children often isolated in our society. This is because people view them as contagious and having bad luck, necessitating caution when interacting with them. Such misconceptions pose significant challenges to our inclusive policies."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The responses from participants reveal that society often views children with multiple disabilities as outcasts. However, the policy of inclusivity is gradually leading to increased acceptance as these children exhibit exceptional characteristics at public events, surprising participants, and spectators. According to Wang et al. (2021), positive social attitudes facilitate inclusion and acceptance by family, friends, and employers, while negative attitudes may lead to low expectations, discrimination, and marginalization. Evidence shows that negative attitudes are a barrier to participation in various settings such as physical activity, fitness, and education. These observations align with the views expressed by the participants in this study.

4.4 Coping Strategies Teachers Use in Supporting Persons with Multiple Disabilities

On the coping strategies teachers use in supporting people with multiple disabilities, teachers noted the following strategies to improve independent functioning concerning persons with multiple disabilities. The sub-themes 4.4.1, 4.4.2, and 4.4.3 address how teachers manage individuals with multiple disabilities.

4.4.1 Managing Persons with Multiple Disabilities During Behavioral Triggers

The following are responses from participants about managing people with multiple disabilities during behavioral triggers:

TR-1 argued:

"Sensory rooms are a crucial coping strategy for supporting individuals with multiple disabilities and managing challenging behaviors. These therapeutic spaces offer a holistic and customizable approach, addressing diverse sensory needs and promoting emotional regulation. Pupils typically calm down after spending a brief period in these rooms."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 maintained:

"The standardized implementation of sensory rooms provides an effective mechanism for managing individuals with multiple disabilities. These rooms help release anxiety, stress, and tension in the child's environment. We also use activities such as swings on the seashore and trampoline jumps to aid in overcoming challenges."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 proposed:

"I use the de-escalation room provided by the school through an NGO. These specially designed spaces assist children with heightened emotional conditions, offering a safer environment to manage and overcome their emotional challenges."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 suggested:

"Children with autism, dementia, and profound learning disabilities often benefit from the sensory room facility, which helps in overcoming anxiety and stress. This facility is effective in managing such situations when they arise."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The responses from participants show that teachers consistently use sensory calming rooms and de-escalation facilities to help children with multiple disabilities cope with anxiety and heightened emotional conditions. These strategies reflect a commitment to

removing barriers, addressing environmental factors, and recognizing the diverse needs of individuals with multiple disabilities. Gordon (2023) notes that calming sensory and de-escalation rooms are designed to provide a calming atmosphere, offer stimulating distractions, and help protect users while reducing the chances of injury during emotional escalations. The participants' strategies align with Gordon's findings, demonstrating efforts to create an inclusive and supportive environment that allows pupils with multiple disabilities to overcome emotional and environmental challenges.

4.4.2 Managing Misunderstandings among Cohorts

The participants' efforts to address misunderstandings among children with multiple disabilities resulted in the following responses:

TR-1 proposed:

"As a teacher, I use holistic and inclusive approaches to mediate, resolve, and reduce misunderstandings between children with multiple disabilities within the framework of the social model, aiming for normalization in the management processes."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 noted:

"The communication I use daily in my class is essential for transmitting information to the children. Effective communication processes are crucial for class management and addressing behavioral triggers."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 pointed out:

"Communicating with children with multiple disabilities helps me manage them effectively. Well-channels communication can restore calm during misunderstandings. Miscommunication, however, tends to worsen the situation, especially if the affected child cannot accept the teacher's judgment. Fair play has been a major tool in resolving disagreements among these children."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 declared:

"Managing misunderstandings among children with multiple disabilities in class can be very taxing. Poor communication can exacerbate the situation, so I always carefully choose appropriate communication skills to maintain order in class."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The responses indicate that communication is a crucial strategy for managing misunderstandings among children with multiple disabilities. This proactive approach aligns with the principles of inclusiveness and support advocated by the social model of disability. Nunes (2003) as cited in Rosa de Oliveira et al. (2021) emphasizes that communication through language is vital for human development. Assumpção and Valle (2008) also support this view, noting that language helps organize thoughts and facilitates the transmission of ideas and emotions. By integrating effective communication strategies, educators contribute to creating environments that address not only physical accessibility but also emotional well-being and unique needs.

4.4.3 How Teachers Motivate Persons with Multiple Disabilities

Regarding how teachers motivate people with multiple disabilities, the participants shared the following views:

TR-1 said:

"All that these children need is love. I hug them, say kind words, and praise them. Some children in my class enjoy using the swing, so those who show positive behavior get to use it for recreation. This motivates them to exhibit good behavior and conduct themselves well."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-2 suggested:

"My students respond well to external motivation like praise, 'well done' stickers, and similar rewards. I often use these extrinsic motivational strategies to keep them engaged in class activities."

Although it is challenging for them to consolidate learning units as expected, these strategies help."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-3 indicated:

"Even though ordinary schoolteachers give gifts, I also use gifts, stickers, and praise to motivate my students. I occasionally project YouTube videos on a screen to inspire intrinsic motivation and spark their interest in learning activities."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

TR-4 maintained:

"I motivate my learners with multiple disabilities using stickers, tokens, and praise. These approaches work well, and the active participation of the children often makes the lessons more interesting."

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The findings reveal that teachers employ a variety of motivational strategies, drawing from both behavioral and social models. These strategies include positive reinforcement, individualized approaches, tangible rewards, and verbal affirmations, all contributing to a motivating and inclusive learning environment. The emphasis on recognizing individual preferences and using nuanced motivational tools aligns with the principles of accommodating unique needs and fostering inclusivity in education. According to the American Psychological Association (2024), providing choices in how students learn, such as watching videos versus reading books, can enhance intrinsic motivation. Participant TR-3's use of video content as an extrinsic motivational tool aligns with this approach. Overall, the study underscores the importance of

comprehensive and individualized motivational strategies in supporting learners with multiple disabilities.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The objective of the study was to find support services that are available for people with multiple disabilities to function independently. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach, and a descriptive search design was adopted for the study. A purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The interview was the main research instrument used by the researcher to collect data from the field. A target population of 7 participants was interviewed.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Results were summarized based on the stated objectives of the study as follows.

5.1.1 What supportive services are available for people with multiple disabilities to function independently?

The first objective sought to find out what support services are available for persons with multiple disabilities to function independently at Multikids Inclusive Academy in the Greater Region of Ghana. The support services found were community-based support services, educational support, and independent living.

5.1.2 What roles do teachers play in supporting people with multiple disabilities?

The results reveal that providing support services for people with multiple disabilities at the center teachers play a pivotal role. The emphasis on collaboration with ABA therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, school counselors, and nurses highlights the recognition that individuals with multiple disabilities require

multifaceted assistance. This collaborative approach ensures that the support provided is not only comprehensive but also tailored to the specific needs of each student. Despite differences in the emphasis on specific professionals, the shared commitment to comprehensive support reflects an understanding that addressing the challenges faced by individuals with multiple disabilities. By engaging professionals from various fields, the teachers contributed to creating an inclusive environment where individuals with multiple disabilities engage in academic emotional and social development. Through observations, the teachers highlight the positive impact of support services, providing valuable insights into the benefits experienced by individuals with multiple disabilities. Moreover, teachers help individuals with multiple disabilities with the provision's assistive technologies such as the wheelchair for mobility, laptops since some cannot write they type their assignments on the laptop also help in their fine motor skills, projector for visual learners to grasp concept, hearing aids to hear more clearly, pencil grips to help learner with multiple disabilities to participate in educational activities. Adding up to the role teachers play, educational support is another important part to consider, developing and IEP for each learning depending on their condition since they are unique in their own ways and participate effectively in their academics. Again, independent living which is crucial in the daily life activities to help them function independently with little support. Independent living such as bathing, toileting, eating, personal grooming, communication skills, shopping, money concept, time management, transportation, and the likes.

Community-based support was also considered as a role teachers play when providing support services. According to the teacher educational and fun trips were available for individuals with multiple disabilities. Educational trips such visiting E- Anansi library where learners are exposed to Africa books and some drama such by the fire side, post-

office to learn how to post letters and explaining certain concept involving the posting of letter and other activities that take place there too, going to malls for shopping to experience how to shop and for the fun trip's learners visited the Accra playground, Papaya recreational, Shia hills, Nkrumah Museum, Osu castle. All these exposes them to learn the history and see beautiful places in the county and to socialize and make them feel accepted by society.

5.1.3 What are the challenges faced by teachers in supporting persons with multiple disabilities?

The results revealed that support services for people with multiple disabilities, in Multikids Inclusive Academy faced a lot of challenges. The following are some of the challenges teachers encountered.

- Teachers go through emotional complexities, self-questioning, and doubts. The challenges highlight the need for comprehensive support systems and an inclusive pedagogical approach.
- Teachers face challenges in developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) that are tailored to support individuals with multiple disabilities. Teachers also faced challenges, of stress. Collaboration with other professionals is seen as crucial for delivering comprehensive support services.
- Teachers face emotional challenges and stress, emphasizing the need for tailored support mechanisms.
- Teachers recognize the importance of collaborative and understanding relationships with caregivers, fostering positive interactions in an inclusive and supportive atmosphere.

5.1.4 What are the coping strategies teachers use in supporting persons with multiple disabilities?

The results reveal that,

- Employing a well-rounded approach to motivate learners with multiple disabilities is crucial.
- Strategies such as positive reinforcement, individualized approaches, tangible rewards, and verbal affirmations contribute to creating a motivating and inclusive learning environment.
- Recognizing individual preferences and utilizing nuanced motivational tools aligns with the principles of catering to unique needs and fostering inclusiveness in education.
- Providing choices in how students learn, such as watching videos or reading books, can increase intrinsic motivation.
- The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive and individualized approaches to motivation for learners with multiple disabilities.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings from the study reveal that the support services available for individuals with multiple disabilities were assistive technology, community-based support services, educational support, independent living, and involvement of a multidisciplinary team making them function independently. Teachers play a central role in orchestrating collaborative efforts with professionals from various disciplines to provide comprehensive support tailored to the unique needs of each student. Teachers demonstrated positive roles and commitment in providing support services.

Moreover, the study highlights the need for continued support services for individuals with multiple disabilities.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the significance of adopting a comprehensive and individualized approach to support services, with teachers playing a pivotal role in facilitating access to specialized interventions and fostering an inclusive learning environment. By addressing the diverse needs of individuals with multiple disabilities, educators contribute to promoting their overall well-being and academic success.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, I recommend Special educators, Policymakers, Caregivers.

The challenges in supporting individuals with multiple disabilities are multifaceted. While shared challenges demand collective solutions, and the diverse perspectives presented by teachers highlight the need for tailored approaches. The Social Model of Disability enriches our understanding by emphasizing the societal dimensions of these challenges, encouraging holistic strategies for inclusive and effective support.

- There is the need to encourage ongoing collaboration between teachers and other professionals to ensure comprehensive and holistic support for individuals with multiple disabilities.
- There should be the provision of specialized training programs, assistive technologies, and facilities tailored to the needs of individuals with multiple disabilities. Providing continuous professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in catering to the diverse needs of individuals with multiple disabilities.

- Advocate for policies and initiatives that promote access to the needs of people with multiple disabilities, ensuring that they have equal opportunities to access education, healthcare, employment, and community resources. Develop and implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for individuals with multiple disabilities, tailored to their unique strengths, needs, and goals to ensure that support services are personalized and responsive to individual preferences and abilities.



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APPENDICES

Interview Consent Form

Research project title: support services available for people with multiple disabilities to function independently

Research investigator: Doreen Kwofie

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. The interview will take 15 minutes. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the condition of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information and then sign up to this form to certify that you approve the following:

1. The interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be produced
2. You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
3. The transcript of the interview will be analyzed by me as a research investigator
4. Access to the interview transcript will be used for academic purposes
5. Any summary interview consent, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed.

Respondent

I am voluntarily taking part in this interview. I understand that

1. I can stop the interview at any time.
2. The transcribed interview may be used as described
3. I don't expect to receive any benefits or payment for my participant.
4. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits if I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.

Teacher

Signature.....

Date.....



Appendix B

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITY FOR INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TEACHER'S INTERVIEW GUIDE

Bio data on teachers

1. What is your position/rank in this institution?

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2. How many years have you worked under GES and with this institution?

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3. Which class (s) do you handle?

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A. SUPPORT SERVICES

1. What support services are available for people with multiple disabilities in the school environment?

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2. How do you deliver such support services to people with multiple disabilities?

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3. Do they benefit from the support services according to their condition?

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4. What specific training have you received on the support you can give to children with multiple disabilities?

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B. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

5. Do you find it difficult teaching people with multiple disabilities?

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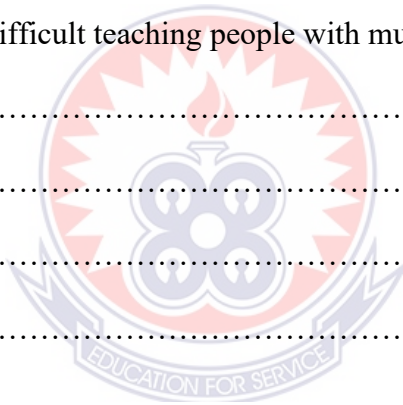
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6. How do you accommodate people with multiple disabilities due to their individual differences?

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7. What is your take on the cost of rendering support services to people with multiple disabilities?

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8. Do their conditions affect your personal wellbeing as a teacher?

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9. How is teacher - caregiver relationship with children with such conditions?

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10. How is teacher- student's relationship?

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11. What do you do when there is a trigger of a behavior in delivering a lesson?

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The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is centered on the page. It features a circular emblem with a red and white sunburst design. Inside the circle, there is a stylized figure of a person with arms raised, set against a white background. Below the circle is a blue banner with the text "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE" in white capital letters.

12. How is their behavior during a social gathering?

a. In the classroom

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b. Outside the classroom

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c. Social even with other students?

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13. What is/are the attitudes of the public (society) towards people with multiple disabilities?

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**SECTION C: COPING STRATEGIES TEACHERS USE IN SUPPORTING
PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITY.**

14. How do you manage people with multiple disabilities?

a. trigger of behavior.

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b. misunderstanding amongst students?

.....

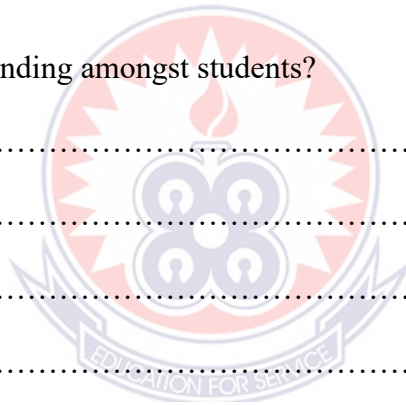
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15. How do you motivate your learners with multiple disabilities?

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Appendix C

	UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA FACULTY OF APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES IN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION P.O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana sped@uew.edu.gh +233 (020) 2041069
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6th September, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MS. DOREEN KWOFIE


I write to introduce to you, **Ms. Doreen Kwofie** an M.Phil student of the Department of Special Education with index number 220009238


He is currently working on her thesis on the topic: **"Support Services for Persons with Multiple Disabilities for Independent Functioning: The Case of Multikids Inclusive Academy in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana."** He will administer questionnaire to collect her data.

I would be grateful if you could give him the needed assistance.

Thank you for the consideration and assistance.

Yours faithfully,


.....
MRS. FLORENCE AKUA MENSAH
(Ag. Head of Department)

 www.uew.edu.gh