

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**ATTITUDE OF PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF  
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN SEKONDI- TAKORADI  
METROPOLITAN**



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CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN SEKONDI- TAKORADI  
METROPOLITAN**



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## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, **Joyce Esi Galley**, hereby declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledge, the entire thesis is my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or in whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

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

Name of Supervisor: **Salome Praise Otami (PhD)**

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

To the Almighty God and to my family who has been an inspiration to my life.



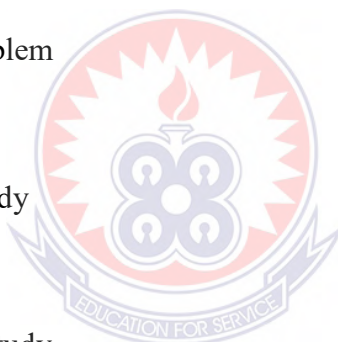
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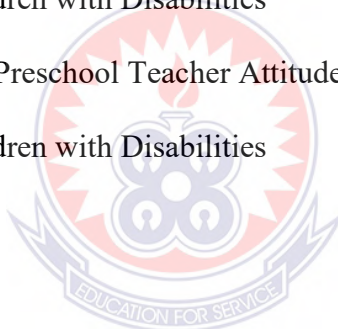


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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitude of preschool teachers towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. The objectives of the study sought to: determine preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of children with disabilities; examine the factors that influence preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of disabled children and identify the ways that could improve preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. The sample size for the study was sixty-five (65). The study used purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. Each questionnaire responses from the preschool were analysed descriptively using frequency tables and simple percentage count. The study found that most preschool teachers agreed that their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities include educational background have prepared them to effectively teach children with disabilities and feel comfortable teaching children with disabilities and all efforts should be made to educate children with disabilities in the regular education classrooms. Again, the study found that majority of the preschool teachers agreed that factors that influence their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities include the type and severity of disability, experience in dealing with children with disability, and knowledge in special education. Finally, the preschool teachers agreed that the education of children with disabilities include strengthen Metro Directorate's Special Education Coordinators should provide adaptive school environment and regular in-service training and workshop for preschool teachers. Thus, the study recommends that preschool teachers should be sensitised to work closely with the parents since they know more about the challenges encountered by their children. Also, the study recommends that government, together with NGOs and other stakeholders of education must ensure adequate provision of quality learning support systems to support positive attitudinal change towards inclusive education.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

Education is a fundamental human right. It is an essential tool facilitating the improvement of the quality of life and social and human development (Abubakar, 2018). Equally important is the right of children with disabilities to be protected from discrimination and stigmatization as stated in Article 2 of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Children which establishes that a child shall not be discriminated against irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, disability, birth, or status. This affirmation is further emphasized by the Children's Act (2001) which enshrines a child's right to live with his/her family and rights to education and integration in law. Similarly, the Children's Act 560 of Ghana states that every child has the right to education no matter the situations the child finds himself or herself, either living with disability or not. It is in this light that the country (Ghana) has come up with an Inclusive Education Policy to make all educational arrangement to ensure that all children have equal opportunities irrespective of gender or disability (Aboagye, 2018).

Inclusion is based on the concept of social justice; wherein all students are entitled to equal access to all educational opportunities, irrespective of disability or any form of disadvantage (Vaz et al., 2015). Inclusion is a process through which the diverse educational needs of all students will be addressed through full involvement and encouragement in learning philosophies and communities as well as reduction of segregation within and from all forms of learning (Hamma, 2019). Inclusion therefore, encompasses modifications and changes in the strategies, methods, content, and structure with a shared vision which cover all individuals within a given age

range. Through inclusion, the differences that exist between the regular system of education and special education would be eliminated by providing a proper system of education relevant and suitable to all learners in their local schools irrespective of their cultural or disability levels (Hamma, 2019).

In Ghana, inclusion of special educational needs project started in September 2003 and have advocated for the inclusion of children with disabilities within regular classrooms. The implementation started in ten districts within three regions. These were Greater Accra, Central, and Eastern. It involved thirty-five schools in the target region and districts (Aboagye, 2018). Numerous studies (e.g. Aboagye, 2018; Ali-Yaaku et al., 2022; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Colber, 2010; Saloviita & Conseganti, 2019; Saloviita, 2018) revealed that among the elements of successful inclusion are the attitudes of preschool teachers towards children with disabilities and inclusion program. Attitudes are defined as an individual's disposition to react to a certain degree in favour or disadvantage to an object, behaviour, person, institution, or event, or to any other discriminatory aspect of his or her individual world (Koliqi & Zabeli, 2021).

Attitudes determine the way in which the preschool teachers behave in front of their children. They predispose them to behave in a predictable way in front of their students, as they predetermine their ideas and feelings (Gallego-Ortega & Rodriguez-Fuentes, 2021). Attitudes are conceptualised as relatively stable constructs comprising cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Vaz et al., 2015). The cognitive component reflects people's beliefs towards inclusive education; it comprises thoughts, ideas, perceptions, opinions, and the mental conceptualisation of this referent (e.g., the right for children with disabilities to attend regular schools). The

affective component focuses on the feelings and alludes to the positive and negative emotions concerning a specific group, in this case, people with disabilities (e.g., concerns about including a disabled child within a regular classroom). Finally, the behavioural component revolves around the tendency to act in a particular way when faced with a disability. It also reveals the disposition to behave in a certain manner (e.g., sharing an event with a child with disabilities) (Gallego-Ortega & Rodriguez-Fuentes, 2021).

Preschool teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are often based on practical concerns about how inclusive education can be implemented, rather than be grounded in any particular ideology (Vaz et al., 2015). Common practical concerns raised by preschool teachers include: accommodating the individualised time demands of students with disability without disadvantaging other students in the classroom; being apprehensive of the quality and quantity of work output of children with disabilities; lacking adequate support services; and limited training and competence in supporting inclusive educational practice (Vaz et al., 2015). The severity of the disability that preschool teachers are required to accommodate within their classroom is inversely associated with their attitude towards inclusion. That is, the more severe the child's disability; the less positive their attitude is towards inclusion (Forlin, 2011).

Numerous studies (e.g. Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; De Boer et al., 2011) conducted to measure preschool teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities and have resulted in mixed findings. Some studies (e.g. Abbott, 2006; Avramidis et al, 2000a, 2000b; Kurniawati et al., 2012), concluded that preschool teachers hold positive attitudes towards inclusive education while others reported more resistant attitudes of teachers (e.g. Ring & Travers, 2005). Sari et al. (2009) used

a sample of preschool teachers and concluded that attitudes of preschool teachers were undecided and that the attitudes of the teachers toward inclusion were affected by their self-efficacy perceptions in terms of teaching dimension.

According to Sucuoğlu et al., (2014), preschool teachers' attitudes are influenced by several factors such as student variables (type and level of disability), teacher variables (direct contact, previous experience with children with disabilities and number of years teaching), and mostly, teacher knowledge about inclusion. Burke and Sutherland (2004) explained that the attitudes and expectancies of the instructors are related to their experiences and knowledge regarding how to teach in inclusive classrooms and limited knowledge with children with disabilities can cause negative attitudes. Preschool teachers who have more education and experience feel more confident about working in inclusive classrooms because of their background knowledge (Huang & Diamond, 2009).

In addition, increase in preschool teachers' knowledge about inclusive practices leads to more positive attitudes (Crane-Mitchell & Hedge, 2007). The factors conditioning the preschool teachers' attitudes are diverse, so it is imperative to explore them in order to know their current ideas in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. Moreover, more training, workshops, seminars activities in special education are accepted more optimistic about improving positive attitudes toward inclusive practices. Therefore, to increase the quality of inclusive practices, it is very important to promote and improve teachers' positive attitudes towards the children with disabilities by providing them effective training programs that include sufficient knowledge, skills, and experiences (Sucuoğlu et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the study was conducted at the basic schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan with the purpose of investigating preschool teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities. Sekondi-Takoradi is located at the western coastline of Ghana about 242 km of Accra and approximately 280 km from La Cote d'Ivoire border in the west. Conducting this study was partly motivated by the fact that teachers' accountability has become more widespread and assessed, teachers' resistance, misconceptions, and attitudes not favourable to the idea of educating children with disabilities within the general education classroom/inclusion has become more prevalent (Hines 2011). Thus, this study was interested to investigate the preschool teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities because they are key service providers in handling such children.

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities has been widely reflected in the lens of unfavourable attitudes as explored by different scholars (Mushoriwa, 2001; Tesfaye, 2005; Sylod, 2016; Chhabra et al., 2010;) who indicated that teachers' negative attitude toward inclusive education has been attributed to lack of skill, fear of handling successfully students with special education needs. As a result, there has been a global systemic campaign to remove barriers, provide reasonable accommodative learning environment, and support services to ensure that children with disabilities perform better in schools (Mugisha, 2018). Hence, understanding preschool teachers' attitudes of inclusion is essential, because these attitudes affect the quality of instruction and interaction within the inclusion setting, as well as teachers' perceptions toward disabled children in their classrooms



## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Early childhood education has evolved to accommodate the increasing number of children with disabilities. Additionally, the definition of inclusion has been modified to account for the unique needs of children with disabilities. Yet, inclusion still has its barriers, which teachers' attitudes are a significant barrier to inclusion (Barton & Smith, 2015). Also, the degree to which children with disabilities can benefit from inclusion is heavily dependent on teachers' attitudes toward them (Weisel & TurKaspa, 2002). Many teachers, however, have found it difficult to adopt inclusive educational practices (O'Brien, 2000). To be effective, all stakeholders, particularly teachers, must have a strong desire to educate children with disabilities in a general education setting and believe that these children are capable of high educational achievement (Burstein et al., 2004). If the teacher's will is present, the assumption is that the teachers' attitude toward the performance of children with disabilities is consistent with their will, and as a result, children will perform at a high level.

Van-Reusen et al (2001) discovered that over half of the teachers surveyed obtained negative scores about educating children with disabilities in their classrooms. Specifically, the teachers with most negative attitudes were the ones who had the least amount of training and experience with working with children with disabilities. The teachers with more negative attitudes expressed their concern with the impact children with disabilities would have on their classroom environment, their ability to instruct, and the overall quality of learning. Additionally, in some school settings, especially the learning environment, the attitudes of teachers towards children with disabilities has been highly negative and degrading, where the disabled are thought to be incapable of contributing anything meaningful to the society (Yara, 2009). Teachers establish high and uniform standards of learning to be met by all learners regardless of

their physical abilities. Unfortunately, children with disabilities most often fail to meet such standards thus and this reinforces teachers' negative attitudes towards those learners. This negatively affects their school performance by diminishing their confidence, self-esteem, and sense of belonging (Mugisha, 2018).

Moreover, there were challenges in creating an inclusive education system that will lead to professionalism, including professional education and qualified educators, adding the difficulties of different natures for physical and social accommodation of children with disabilities (Sharma, 2015). Although, regular teachers were fully aware of the inclusion program and could maintain positive attitudes towards it, rather insufficient materials, equipment, and resources would not make inclusion a reality (Ocloo & Subbeya, 2008). Education of children with disabilities is mostly curtailed because of negative teachers' attitude about disability, lack of resources to support the education of most children with disability and lack of commitment of successive governments to implement policies that support the education of children with disabilities (Anthony, 2010).

The problem was attitude of the teachers about inclusive classroom do not match the reality of classroom practice. Thus, have affected children with disabilities academic success (Yildiz, 2015). Many teachers feel that they are not prepared to meet the needs of children with disabilities because they were not trained to handle their unique needs, while teaching children without disabilities at the same time (Peterson et al., 2016). As such, instead of teaching them with care, children with disabilities are at-risk of being perceived as a burden on the classroom. Personal observations show that teachers in general education classrooms struggle to adapt the general curriculum to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities.

As a result, teachers frequently see assessment practices that alienate children with disabilities. Because of these practices in the preschool, some of the children with disabilities appear uneasy and, as a result, do not attend class on a regular basis, eventually dropping out. According to Yekple and Avoke (2016), many children with disabilities (CWDs) in Ghana are either formally excluded from the standard educational framework or receive less favorable treatment than other children. According to Yekple and Avoke (2016), the Development of Education National Report of Ghana on the 2000 population evaluation shows that with a population of 670,000-804,000 school-age CWDs, only 0.6% receive any type of instruction.

Although, numerous studies (e.g. Gable, 2009; Gasser et al., 2013; Winter & O'Raw, 2010) on the subject matter have been conducted in both developed and developing countries. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, little is known in the study area thus, the study intends to bridge this gap by conducting this study at the public preschools in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan and investigating preschool teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities. This investigation could help address the educational and social equity issues for children with disabilities in the study area.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitude of preschool teachers towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

The study sought to achieve the following objectives.

1. Investigate preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.
2. Examine the factors that influence preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of disabled children in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.
3. Identify the ways that could improve preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

The following questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan?
2. What factors influence preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan?
3. What ways could improve preschool teachers' attitude towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan?

#### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study could supplement existing research and fill a knowledge gap in the area of preschool teachers' attitudes toward including children with disabilities. Furthermore, the findings of the study could help the government and policymakers improve existing educational policies on inclusion for children with disabilities. Furthermore, the findings of this study could be used to improve the development of an inclusive education curriculum for the inclusion of disabled children in Ghana.

Again, the study's findings may help preschool teachers change their teaching strategies and attitudes toward including children with disabilities in regular classes. Furthermore, the study's findings encourage collaborative teamwork among preschool teachers in service provision. Furthermore, the study findings would highlight the need for preschool teachers to develop positive attitudes toward educating children with disabilities, thereby assisting in the elimination of stigma associated with disabled children. Furthermore, as a secondary data source, the study could be used as a reference point for other researchers conducting related studies.

### **1.7. Delimitations of the Study**

According to Nthia (2012), study delimitation entails a deliberate and intentional action to make the research manageable. The study was only conducted in public preschools; private preschools were not included. The study focused on preschool teachers' attitudes toward including disabled children. Because government schools are thought to have more disabled children, there was a lot of focus on them and their teachers. If preschool inclusion is not prioritized, other levels of education will fail, and if children with disabilities at the preschool level are denied access to quality education, they will likely be dependent rather than potential active participants in schools and the general societal setting. Although inclusive involves participation from a variety of parties, including school heads, regular and special needs teachers, regular and special needs children, and parents of regular and special needs children, among others, this study focused solely on preschool teachers.

### **1.8. Limitations of the Study**

The study only included public preschools and excluded private preschools. As a result, the study's findings cannot be applied to private preschools. It is hoped that the study will provide useful information to private preschools facing similar challenges. Fear of victimization by the authorities was a major impediment to participation and disclosure of information by the school administration during the data collection exercise. Many felt that this was a sensitive subject because it involved evaluating the role of the state in providing this education and determining its effectiveness. To allay this fear, the confidentiality clause was reemphasized, with the assurance that the information provided was only for the study, and that the information's anonymity was protected. The respondents' identities were also not sought by the research instrument.

Another challenge encountered during the data collection process in the study was the lack of literature on the status of inclusive education and the provision of quality education; as a result, the review was drawn from available documentation on the study subject from within and outside Ghana. Another daunting limitation of the study was the logistics of recruiting all preschool teachers to participate. To avoid a disaster, the researcher enlisted the help of school head teachers and asked preschool teachers to participate as much as possible.

## 1.9. Operational Definitions

**Inclusion:** all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools.

**Disabilities:** people who have long term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal ground

**Attitude:** A learned tendency or readiness to evaluate things or react to some ideas, persons, or situations in certain ways, consciously or unconsciously.

**Special educational needs:** it is an individually, planned, systematically implemented and carefully evaluated instruction to help exceptional learners to achieve greatest possible self- sufficiency and success in the present and future environments.

**Pre-school teachers:** is a person who is employed to care for children from infant to four years of age in a daytime setting.

## 1.10. Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five sections or parts. The first section contains the introduction, which includes the study's background, the research problem statement, the study objectives and questions, the thesis's relevance or significance, the study's limitations and limitations, and the study's organization. The second chapter is a review of the literature, covering both theoretical and empirical (existing) literature, and producing meaningful results that confirm or support the findings of other scholars in the existing literature. The third chapter describes the methodology, which includes detailed strategies and justifications for data collection and analysis. This chapter also presented the study philosophy, approach, design, population, and sample, sampling technique, research instruments, and data analysis method. Chapter four applies data analysis methods to the collected data and presents the study's

findings based on the objectives. Chapter five contains a summary of the findings, a conclusion, and recommendations for practice and future research. The references to all individuals and institutions were duly cited and followed immediately after this chapter. In addition, the research questionnaire was included in the appendix.





## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Overview

This chapter consist of theoretical framework and reviews literature on the following themes,

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Inclusion
- Preschool Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Education of Children with Disabilities
- Factors That Influence Preschool Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Education of Children with Disabilities
- Ways to Improve Preschool Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Education of Children with Disabilities.
- Summary of Literature Review



#### 2.1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) were used as the theoretical bases for this study to examine preschool teacher’s attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in general classrooms

##### 2.1.1. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was initially introduced by Fishbein (1967). It was in an attempt to appreciate the relation between attitude and behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The TRA seeks to elucidate the association between attitudes, beliefs, intentions, and behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to Ajzen and

Fishbein (1980), the TRA theory stipulates that the exact determinant of behaviour is behavioural intention. The TRA further states that individuals' direct determinants of behavioural intentions are their attitudes towards performing the behaviour and the subjective norms related to the behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) cited in Gyabeng (2020), a person's attitude is determined by his/her beliefs about the results or attributes of carrying out a particular behaviour: that is, behavioural beliefs, prejudiced by evaluations of those outcomes or attributes. Hence, preschool teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities will determine whether they will perform or not.

To understand an individual's voluntary behaviour by assessing the underlying basic motivation to perform an action is the principal purpose of the TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). It states that the prejudiced norm of an individual is determined by whether vital referents: that is, persons who are important to the individuals approve or disapprove of the performance of those referents (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Montano et al., 2002). TRA states that whether or not people actually perform a behaviour is the main predictor of a person's intention to perform the behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Furthermore, what also contributes to whether or not an individual will actually perform the behaviour is the normative component (that is, social norms surrounding the act). Intention to perform a specific behaviour precedes the actual behaviour, according to the theory (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This intention is referred to as behavioural intention, comes because of a belief that performing the behaviour will lead to a specific outcome. Behavioural intention is important to TRA. This is because these intentions are determined by attitudes to behaviours and subjective norms (Gyabeng, 2020).

### **2.1.2. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) provides a useful framework for addressing the relationship between attitude and behaviour. This work therefore uses this theory to explain in order to predict a specific behaviour, attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention in relation to that behaviour need to be taken into consideration (Ajzen, 1991). That is, “subjective norm is an individual’s perception of how significant others will approve of their behaviour. Perceived behavioural control is the perception of how easy or behavioural intention is willingness to carry out the given behaviour. The theory of Plan behaviour forecast that behaviour is more likely to be put up if each component of the subjective norm, perceived behaviours and behaviour intention are favourable. That is to say, behaviour intention is predicted by attitudes, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991).

Here, attitudes are considered as containing both cognitive (beliefs), and affective (feelings) dimensions. The theory of Plan behaviour largely predict preschool teachers’ use of cooperative children learning, children learning behaviour and children behaviour towards friends with disabilities. Subjective norm to be the strongest predictor of effective preschool teacher behaviour with children with disabilities. This suggests the importance of school ethos as a predictor of teacher behaviour. It has been argued that perceived behavioural control can be conceptualized as teacher efficacy and serve as a means to measure perceived behavioural control (Gyabeng, 2020).

Measuring subjective norm although difficult can be done through assessing preschool teachers’ attitudes whereas other measured by preschool teacher

expectations (Kuyini & Desai, 2007). Subjective norm is an individual's perceptions of how significant others will rate their behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). According to Batsiou et al. (2008), experience and training influenced preschool teachers' beliefs and intentions in relation to teaching children with disabilities. It is noted that, preschool teachers who had positive feelings toward children with behavioural difficulties, and accompanied by higher levels of perceived behavioural control, were more likely to report the intention to behave inclusively (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013).

### **2.1.3. How the Theories (TRA & TPB) Fits Into the Study**

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and theory of reasoned action (TRA) were adopted in the present study to build the framework for examining the attitudes of preschool teachers in general education toward children with disabilities in their classrooms. This study proposes that the teacher's cultural belief system/background, years of professional experience, prior contact with people with disabilities, and teacher's level of training will significantly predict preschool teacher's attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in general classrooms. TPB and TRA in the field of education were extended by specifically examining the factors that predict preschool teacher's attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in general classrooms.

Ahsan et al (2013) used TPB and TRA to predict teachers' performance in inclusive classrooms. The focus of this study was similar with Ahsan's et al. in the sense that the current study aimed to extend knowledge about TPB and teachers' intention and how this relationship was influenced by factors such teacher's cultural belief system/background, years of professional experience, prior contact with children with disabilities, and preschool teacher's level of training. TRA was used to understand

preschool teachers' attitude in correlation to the persons' intentions to perform a behaviour.

## **2.2. Concept of Inclusion**

Inclusion is a philosophy of service delivery which is directly prepared for children with and without disabilities. In other words, educating individuals with and without special needs in a general education classroom is what is meant by inclusion or inclusive education (Hamma, 2019). Cooper and Sayeski (2005) maintained a belief that children with disabilities remained part and parcel of a community. Therefore, nothing can exclude them from participating in all aspects of that community. York et al. (1992) described inclusion as a value to live in communities where individuals are considered as equal members and by supporting each other to work together in order to exploit individuals' potential. Lerner (2000) indicated that the philosophical thoughts of inclusion are regularization of persons with disabilities into integrated classes and the removal of all forms of labels for the children with disabilities. Lerner (2000), proposed that, the term inclusion may have different interpretations among which is enclosure of all students from all classes of disabilities with all levels of severity into a general education classroom (full inclusion), and placement of certain individuals with disabilities into regular classroom from time to time (partial inclusion).

It is without doubt that the differences held towards philosophies of inclusion were tremendously disputed by prominent scholars in the field of inclusive education in many journals, books, and position papers. However, it is evident that up to this moment there is that debate between those supporting full inclusion (; McLeskey & Pugach, 1995; Villa et al., 1996) and those supporting partial inclusion (Kauffman et

al., 1988; Zigmond & Baker, 1995; Vergason & Anderegg, 1989; Roberts & Mather, 1995).

Full inclusion model encompasses the breaking down of all instructional systems of special as well as general education, joining them into one instructional system in line with the educational needs of all learners in a classroom (Stainback & Stainback, 1988) and converting educational settings into inclusive communities where everyone is celebrated as a full member (Villa et al., 1996). Supporters of full inclusion have it in mind that there are social and emotional benefits for children with disabilities when mingled into a regular classroom. Among the social benefits are the opportunities to make friends and free interaction without a feeling of inferiority in mind. By learning in the regular classroom, learners with disabilities will get more time to make and maintain relationships with their normal or non-disabled peers (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). In inclusive classrooms, students with disabilities are less stigmatized and more recognized by their counterparts, and they display more self-confidence than those in special education classes or schools (Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987). Gartner and Lipsky (1987) emphasized that unification of general and special educations will require certain fundamental changes and a paradigm shift on the way educators perceive differences among individuals with disabilities.

Partial inclusion advocates were of the opinion that, to accomplish a successful inclusion, it would take a tedious curricular and structural change and educators ought to be tolerant of the process (Stainback & Jordan, 2002). Different researchers (Kaufman, 1993; Vaughn & Schumm, 1995; Zigmond, 2003; Kauffman & Mock, 2002) in the field of inclusive education have expressed concerns on whether or not

full inclusion will be suitable for all students. These researchers have emphasized on the impact of sustaining a variety of services for individuals with disabilities outside the regular classroom base on the following reasons.

(a) The advocates of partial inclusion believe that there is insufficient research and preparation on how to handle learners with different categories of disabilities and their severity level in regular education setting by regular teachers (Kaufman et al., 1988; Vergason & Anderegg, 1989).

(b) They maintain that most of the students with disabilities particularly those with very severe or profound conditions may require individualized educational program (IEP) and explicit instruction, which is believed by these scholars to be complex and challenging to provide in a regular school setting.

(c) Children with disabilities may occasionally require different services which cannot be achieved by general education teachers (such as physical therapy, speech therapy) and it is not fair to deny such services because of full inclusion system. Kauffman (1995), emphasized that if learners with special needs are to remain in an inclusive classroom fully, then regular teachers must meet their educational needs irrespective of their disability which is certainly difficult to be provided. Above all, the accessibility of a range of services (partial inclusion) was authorized since 1975, it replicates the desires of many instructors, paternities, and lawmakers and a noncompliance with it will amount to the violation of the students' civil rights (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995).

Advocates of partial inclusion went further to argue that, even though some researchers endorsed the positive trends of inclusion agendas (Banerji & Dailey,

1995; Baker et al, 1995; Bear & Proctor, 1990), other researchers reported an unsatisfactory and substandard academic and social accomplishment through inclusion programs (Zigmond & Baker, 1990; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). In their studies, Roberts & Mather (1995), established that if provided with proper support, some of the individuals with learning disabilities will be able to benefit in the general education setting, but other students who have a severe or profound learning difficulties may require more rigorous services, which cannot be provided in general education classrooms. It is without a doubt that inclusion can be advantageous for some children with disabilities, but it is pertinent to know that not all children with disabilities can fully profit from inclusion.

### **2.3. Preschool Teachers' Attitudes towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

Preschool teachers are seen as key persons to implement inclusive education. Positive attitudes are therefore argued as playing a considerable role in implementing this educational change successfully. Dimitrova-Radojichikj et al. (2016) examined what attitudes Macedonian preschool teachers hold towards early inclusive education; which variables are related to their attitudes. The results of the study showed, in general, that the preschool teachers' attitudes were more negative than positive towards the inclusion of students with disability (meaning of students with intellectual impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, autism spectrum disorder, physical impairments, and ADHD). No significance was found in relation to the grade level of education of preschool teachers, occupational experience, and previous teaching experience with students with disability.



Ali-Yaaku et al. (2022) investigated the attitude of teachers towards children with disabilities in early childhood centres in the Sissala West District. The study revealed that teachers in the Early Childhood Centres in Sissala West District exhibited positive attitudes toward children with disabilities. It also emerged that teachers in the Early Childhood Centres in Sissala West District can handle children with disabilities though they do not have much knowledge of these groups of learners.

There has been an argument in the literature with regard to the explanation of differences in attitudes. Teachers who have positive attitudes towards inclusion consider that children with disabilities belong to general education classrooms (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). Conversely, teachers with negative attitudes believe that inclusion is a burden on teachers and they should receive special service delivery in special education settings to avoid the negative impact on their typically developing peers in the regular classroom (Zambelli & Bonni, 2004).

A number of studies found that general education teachers are not supportive of inclusion. Hammond and Ingalls (2003), for example, concluded that most of the teachers did not support inclusion, albeit their schools had inclusive programs. Burke and Sutherland (2004) found similar results where in-service teachers' attitudes toward inclusion were negative. Sunardi et al. (2020) discovered that pre-school teachers' positive attitude and high acceptance response for children with special needs at their schools. However, teachers reported difficulties in handling children with special needs due to their lack of adequate knowledge and skills in managing learning in an inclusive education setting. Teachers needed special training to improve their professional competence to handle children with special needs and assist their learning process in an inclusive classroom.

Other studies found that general education teachers are less supportive of inclusion (Armstrong et al., 2005; De-Boer et al., 2010; De Boer et al, 2011). Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) investigated Turkish general education teachers working in public elementary schools regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms and their readiness to include students with severe learning disabilities. The results indicated that the teachers had negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular education classrooms. Alternatively, a number of researchers argued that teachers had positive attitudes toward inclusion (O'Shea et al, 2000). Sucuoğlu, et al. (2014) found that preschool teacher attitudes towards inclusion were neither positive nor negative and there is no significant relationship between the level of knowledge and attitudes of the teachers. All findings were discussed in terms of preschool teacher training programs and several suggestions were made to train teachers who are able to work with young children with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Bailey et al. (2015) observed that, although teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusion, they also had negative attitudes about the implementation of inclusive programmes in their schools. De Boer et al. (2011) reported that several variables were related to teachers' attitudes, including training, experience with inclusive education, and the pupils' types of learning difficulties. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were also influenced by the amount of extra work and accommodations they had to make for these students (Agbenyega & Deku 2011).

The effectiveness of early childhood inclusion depends primarily on the action of teachers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). The quality of a general preschool environment for children with and without disabilities affects their positive

developmental and learning outcomes. Preschool teachers support quality inclusion in early childhood (Clough & Nutbrown, 2004; Hollingsworth et al., 2009). It is suggested that understanding preschool attitudes toward children with disabilities could contribute to maintain a good relationship between teachers and students, which is crucial effective inclusive practices. The success of inclusion is thus reliant on preschool teachers' attitudes (Emam & Mohamed, 2011).

## **2.4. Factors That Influence Preschool Teachers' Attitudes towards Educating Children with Disabilities**

The results of studies (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Frankel, 2004; Gal et al., 2010; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Vakil et al., 2003) about the attitudes of general early childhood teachers toward inclusion indicated that certain factors that had an effect on teachers' attitudes. For example, teacher-related factors included training and knowledge and child-related factors included types and severities of disabilities that influenced preschool teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. These factors are discussed in more detail below.

### **2.4.1. Training and knowledge.**

Attitudes of teachers toward inclusion may be influenced by the training they have received on working with children with disabilities and information about children with disabilities that they have obtained (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). According to Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005), teachers with positive attitudes toward inclusion had obtained specific knowledge of strategies for working with children with disabilities from in-service training. Also, teachers with positive attitudes toward inclusion indicated that they had previous experiences working with children with disabilities. By enhancing their knowledge about working with children with

disabilities, teachers might be able to adapt classroom activities and play materials to meet the needs individual children with differing abilities. Vakil et al., (2003) also indicated that understanding the need of children with speech, language, and/or communication disabilities better allowed teachers to meet their needs. Also, Mitchell and Hegde (2007) reported that teachers' knowledge, comfort levels, and attitudes related to inclusion were significantly correlated with each other. Teachers with more knowledge about inclusion may be more comfortable with including children with disabilities into the general classrooms.

Bradshaw (2009) reported 63 % of teachers indicated that they had experiences teaching children with disabilities, even though they had received little training related to special educational issues. While a majority of teachers viewed inclusion as an opportunity to work with children with disabilities, some teachers did not want to learn more about the children with disabilities. Because of a lack of the training, teachers might have limited information about how to implement inclusive practices effectively for children with disabilities. Due to limited information, the teachers might have little awareness of the significance of learning about children with disabilities for working with them in inclusive classrooms. When teachers have more training opportunities associated with special education issues, they may have more knowledge about working with children with disabilities, and they will work with children with disabilities more effectively in inclusive classrooms.

#### **2.4.2. Types and severities of disabilities**

The types and severity of children's disabilities may pose challenges to teachers who work with them. For example, Gal et al. (2010) reported the relationships between 53 preschool teachers' attitudes and children with different types of disabilities such as

learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disabilities (ADHD), emotional regulation disabilities, and sensory/motor disabilities. The teachers felt that learning disabilities, ADHD, were more challenging than sensory/motor disabilities, probably because they believed that children with learning disabilities, ADHD, and emotional regulation disabilities needed accommodations than children with sensory/motor disabilities.

Huang and Diamond (2009) also reported information about the feelings of 155 preschool teachers about including children with disabilities in general preschool programs. Specifically, they investigated the relationships between children's types of disability and teachers' comfort level, classroom adaptations, or need for support. They asked teachers how comfortable they would be if children with different kinds of disabilities were included in their classrooms. The results indicated that teachers had positive feelings about including a child with a physical disability such as cerebral palsy than a child with difficulties in learning, language and/or behaviour such as ADHD, Down syndrome, or severe intellectual disabilities. Also, teachers showed the least level of comfort about including a child with severe intellectual disabilities. While teachers felt the need for more classroom adaptations and support when including a child with ADHD than a child with cerebral palsy or Down syndrome did, teachers indicated that they needed more adaptations and support when including a child with severe intellectual disabilities to children with ADHD, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy. While some teachers had positive feelings about including children with motor or physical disabilities (Gal et al., 2010; Huang & Diamond, 2009), some teachers had a negative perception about including children with physical disabilities into the general classroom (Bradshaw, 2009). Also, early

childhood teachers might have more difficulty in working with children with more significant disabilities (Mitchell & Hegde, 2007).

### **2.4.3. Demographic characteristics of teachers**

Researchers have reported that several demographic characteristics of teachers are related to teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. These include: (a) years of teaching experience, (b) experience teaching children with disabilities, (c) completion of a course(s) related to special education, (d) in-service training, and (e) possession of advanced professional degrees (Bradshaw, 2009; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cross et al., 2004; Gal et al., 2010; Huang & Dimond, 2009; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005). For example, Gal and her colleagues (2010) reported preschool teachers who had more years of teaching experience had more negative beliefs about children with disabilities than preschool teachers with few years of teaching experience. Also, preschool teachers with more years of teaching experience indicated that children with disabilities were rarely friendly compared to typically developing peers. In addition, preschool teachers with more years of teaching experience believed that children with disabilities did not show success in the classroom compared to typically developing children, and they easily gave up.

Experience teaching children with disabilities also affected teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Specifically, several researchers have reported that teachers with positive experiences working with children with disabilities had positive attitudes toward inclusion (Cross et al., 2004; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005). For example, general early childhood teachers who worked with children with significant disabilities stated that they wanted to work with children with mild and moderate disabilities because of

their successful experiences working with children with significant disabilities (Cross et al., 2004).

Although teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward inclusion, several studies revealed inconsistent results associated with the factors of age and gender. For example, Avramidis et al. (2000) found that age and gender, along with years of teaching experience, was not significantly related to attitudes towards inclusion. In addition, supporting studies like Boyle (2014) examined the impact of teacher-related variables on attitudes toward inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002) using a large sample of preschool pre-service teachers. Findings appeared to support the study by Avramidis et al. (2000), concluding age and gender did not influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. In contrast, Vaz et al. (2015) concluded that male teachers held less favourable attitudes toward inclusion, and teachers aged 55 years or older had less favourable attitudes toward inclusion than those aged 35-55. In contrast, Saloviita (2020) found that female teachers held more positive attitudes towards inclusion than male teachers did. Also, age was a predictor of attitudes, indicating that younger teachers have slightly more positive attitudes towards inclusion (Saloviita, 2020).

#### **2.4.4. Educational Environment**

Educational environment-related factors, such as physical and human support services, are associated with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion Avramidis and Norwich (2002). Physical support services include resources, teaching materials, information technology (IT) equipment, or restructuring the physical environment (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). In contrast, human support services include leadership and administrative personnel, service providers (i.e., speech therapists, resource

specialists), and general education teachers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Subban and Sharma (2005) identified that preparation to teach children with disabilities was a factor that influenced teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Also, support from administrative staff was a factor that contributed to teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Subban & Sharma, 2005).

In another study similar to Subban and Sharma (2005), Vaz et al. (2015) found that training in teaching students with disabilities was associated with primary teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. In addition, teachers with special education training held positive attitudes to those without training (Boer et al., 2011). Also, lacking skills to teach students with disabilities was associated with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Vaz et al., 2015). The overall results indicated a need to enhance pedagogical content knowledge related to students with disabilities to positively influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, especially understanding specific disabilities (Vaz et al., 2015). In their study, Subban and Sharma (2005) highlighted that professional training was a "bonus," though they were not specific to areas of need for teachers.

Accordingly, Lue (2000) explained that class size influence teachers' attitude in such way that in case when there are many students in over-crowded classroom, teachers often say that it is not suitable to provide activities and group works for such classes. Krueger and Whitmore (2006) concluded that students who attend teachers' small classes in the early grades tend to have higher test scores while they are enrolled in those grades than their counterparts who attend larger classes.

Last but not least, other educational environmental-related variables that influenced teachers' attitudes toward inclusion include field experience and knowledge of special



education policy and procedures. Literature supports that a special education course combined with field experience working with students who have disabilities shapes attitudes toward inclusion (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Swain et al., 2012; Yu & Park, 2020). Teachers have reported that they lack confidence in skills and knowledge in working with students who have disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Yu, 2019). Also, teachers reported concerns around the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, teachers' participation in IEPs, and instructional implementation (Alfaro et al., 2015). A strong correlation was found between teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities and their knowledge of policies and procedures and instructional strategies (Alfaro et al., 2015).

### **2.5. Ways That Could Improve Preschool Teachers' Attitude Towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

Teachers' attitudes have been indicated as one of determinants for quality inclusion (Cheuk & Hatch, 2007; Cross et al., 2004; Frankel et al., 2010; Gal et al., 2010; Leatherman, 2007; Seçer, 2010). Specifically, positive attitudes of teachers played a significant role in implementing preschool inclusion effectively to improve developmental and educational benefits for children with and without disabilities (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; Cross et al., 2004; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Seçer, 2010). Results from these studies suggested that professional development such as in-service training and availability of resources such as special therapists and classroom materials could improve teachers' attitudes about early childhood inclusion.

Mitchell and Hegde (2007) mentioned that sufficient knowledge and skills played a significant role in helping early childhood educators to work effectively with children

with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. In their study, in-service teachers indicated that they had a lack of knowledge about disabilities, and they needed to have more courses or workshops related to special education for more preparation for working with children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. In addition, some teachers with positive feelings about inclusion believed that more training or workshops are necessary to provide effective inclusive education to children with different needs (Leatherman, 2007). Seçer (2010) pointed out the importance of professional development to support preschool teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion as well. Some researchers suggested that providing in-service training helped general classroom teachers to be more effective in inclusive classrooms (Leatherman, 2007).

Cheuk and Hatch (2007) reported that early childhood teachers believed that training related to special education supports effective inclusion for children with disabilities. Bruns and Mogharreban (2007) also suggested that continuing professional development opportunities, follow-up activities, and specialized training had to be provided to teachers who work with children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Specialized training focused on challenging behaviour issues that some children had as well as adaptations of classroom and instructional materials. Placement alone in typical preschool settings without coordinated support to teachers cannot guarantee effective learning opportunities for preschool children with disabilities (Vakil et al., 2009). Differentiations and making accommodations to learning environments for children with disabilities helped children to achieve their learning potential and development (Leatherman, 2007). Moreover, additional teaching staff, sufficient resources, and additional teacher training were recommended to support inclusive classrooms (Mitchell & Hegde, 2007). It is clear that professional development has a strong, positive role in supporting successful early childhood inclusion. General early

childhood teachers and their special education colleagues who participated in professional development programs supported children with disabilities to learn effectively in inclusive classrooms (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009).

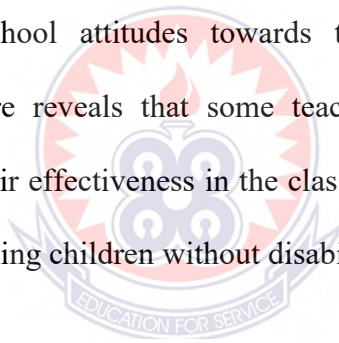
In Badley's (2008) submission, the emphasis is on well-prepared teachers who are capable of helping children with disabilities both inside and outside of the classroom, by adapting their methods to suit the different circumstances that would enable children's success in learning. Cook's (2001) was of the conviction that classroom adaptation by the teacher is a vital practice and refers to how teachers adjust the physical layout of their classroom as a way of minimizing obstructions that might hinder students' engagement with their learning. Chhabra et al. (2010) cited how teachers achieve classroom adaptations which include students' seating arrangements at furniture like desks and tables, as well as wall displays and student work centres that have no personalized approach.

Sadler (2005) examined the beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge of teachers on inclusion and reported that many mainstreamed preschool teachers had acquired the knowledge about children with speech and language disorders through hands-on experiences and books but implied that they do not know how to employ this knowledge in the inclusive classroom. On the other hand, simply providing information to teachers is not sufficient for them to work with children with diverse abilities. Hundert (2007) drew attention to the type of the teacher training program about inclusive practices and emphasized that the method used to teach new skills and knowledge should be considered and easy-to use intervention strategies that can be incorporated into daily instruction and routines that do not require much effort should be provided in teacher training programs.

In conclusion, the primary objective of inclusion is to find solutions for both children with disabilities and those without disabilities in education. Therefore, Barton and Smith (2015) recommend identifying and using current resources as leverage, using evidence-based practices that improve student outcomes, and using an implementation science framework that focuses on leadership and organizational procedures to support preschool inclusion to maximize their impact.

## **2.6. Summary of Literature Review**

This chapter discussed the theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) used as a theoretical framework for the study. It looked at the concept of inclusion, preschool attitudes, factors that influence their attitudes and ways to improve preschool attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities. The literature reveals that some teachers have reported viewing the students as the reason their effectiveness in the classroom has decreased compared to when they were just teaching children without disabilities (Costello & Boyle, 2013).



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0. Overview

This chapter describes the method and procedure used to collect data for the study. It consists of the research philosophy, research approach, research design, study area, population of the study, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instrument, validity and reliability of data collection instrument, pre-testing of data collection instrument, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1. Research Philosophy

This study was underpinned by positivist philosophy. A research philosophy is a belief about the way in which data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analysed and used. Researchers embrace philosophical analysis in research due to the following reasons. (1). The researcher plan to **conduct** overall strategy and in overall areas, (2). While analysing the research methods it does not lead to indulge in unnecessary works and (3). The actual capability of the researcher is decided by the methods of research (Saunders et al., 2012).

Positivism philosophy originated in the works of Francis Bacon, Auguste Comte and the early twentieth-century group of philosophers and scientists known as the Vienna Circle. According to them, observation and reason are the best means of understanding human behaviour; true knowledge is based on experience of senses and can be obtained by observation and experiment. At the ontological level, positivists assume that reality is objectively given and is measurable using properties which are independent of the researcher and instruments; in other words, knowledge is objective

and quantifiable. Positivistic thinkers adopt scientific methods and systematize the knowledge generation process with the help of quantification to enhance precision in the description of parameters and the relationship among them. Positivism is concerned with uncovering truth and presenting it by empirical means (Henning et al., 2004; Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

At the epistemological level, positivism sees social science as an organized method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity (Neuman, 2003). The nature of social reality for positivists is that: empirical facts exist apart from personal ideas or thoughts; they are governed by laws of cause and effect; patterns of social reality are stable and knowledge of them is additive (Neuman, 2003; Marczyk et al., 2005).

According to Antwi and Hamza (2015), the positivist position maintains that scientific knowledge consists of facts while its ontology considers reality as independent of social construction. If research study consists of a stable and unchanging reality, then the researcher can adopt an „objectivist“ perspective: a realist ontology based on a belief in an objective, real world and detached epistemological stance based on a belief that people’s perceptions and statements are either true or false, right or wrong, a belief based on a view of knowledge as hard, real and acquirable; they can employ methodology that relies on control and manipulation of reality (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

Researchers who work from positivist perspective explains in quantitative terms how variables interact, shape events, and cause outcomes. They often develop and test these explanations in experimental studies. Multivariate analysis and techniques for

statistical prediction are among the classic contributions of this type of research. This framework maintains that reliable knowledge is based on direct observation or manipulation of natural phenomena through empirical, often experimental, means (Neuman, 2003).

Positivism was chosen as the study philosophy because it helped the researcher to be emotionally neutral and make a strong distinction between reasons and feelings on the data collected from the preschool teachers in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. Again, this philosophy helped the researcher to be objective in collecting the data from the respondents on preschool attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

### **3.2. Research Approach**

The study adopted quantitative research approach. The study adopted quantitative research approach due to the fact that it enabled the researcher to use questionnaire to collect numerical data to answer the research questions. As Babbie (2010) indicated that, quantitative approach emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques.

Also, the quantitative approach led the researcher to explain preschool teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan by collecting numerical data that were analysed using mathematical based method. According to Williams (2011), a quantitative research approach deals with quantifying and analysis variables in order to get results. Quantitative research

focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or explains a particular phenomenon (Babbie, 2010).

### **3.3. Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The study adopted cross-sectional survey design for the fact that, it enabled the researcher to give a clear snapshot of preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities, factors that influence preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities and ways of improving preschool teachers' attitude towards the education of children with disabilities in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. As Hall (2008) indicated that cross-sectional studies provide a clear „snapshot“ of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it at a specific point in time. Cross-sectional designs focus on studying and drawing inferences from existing differences between people, subjects, or phenomena. Amoah and Eshun (2015) described cross-sectional survey as how one collects information from a sample drawn from a population at one point in time which can vary from 1 week to 6 months. Kombo and Tromp (2006) corroborate these views and stressed that cross-sectional survey involves collecting data with a view to answer questions on the prevailing state of the topic of the research via recording, analysing and reporting on relationships of variables and mostly uses questionnaire.

### **3.4. Study Area**

The study was conducted at the public preschools in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan was chosen as the study location because children with disabilities in the metropolitan complained regarding their inability to access the regular schools physical environment, use of non-inclusive teaching methods by the



regular teachers and non-inclusive assessment strategies. This therefore make children with disabilities prefer going to the special schools than the inclusive basic schools.

Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly is one of the twenty-two (22) districts in the Western Region. The metro area population of Sekondi-Takoradi in 2021 was 991,000. The Metropolis is bounded to the north by Mpohor-Wassa East District, to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, west by Ahanta West District and to the east by the Shama District. It has a total land area of 192km<sup>2</sup>, with Sekondi as the administrative headquarters. The metropolis is located on the west coast with the Trans West African Highway passing through. It is about 280km west of Accra and 130km east of La Cote D'voire. It is thus strategically located considering its closeness to the sea, the airports, and accessibility to major cities by rail and road (GSS, 2014).

There are 78 Assembly members made up of 49 elected, 23 government appointees, 5 Members of Parliament as ex-officio members with the Metropolitan Chief Executive as a member. The administrative set-up comprises 16 decentralized departments out of which eleven (11) under the first schedule are in operation. The Assembly has 4 sub Metropolitan councils which are, Sekondi Sub Metro Council, Takoradi Sub Metro Council, Effia – Kwesimintsim Sub Metro Council and Essikado – Ketan Sub Metro Council. Educational and health facilities in the Metropolis are fairly and spatially located. Public and private educational facilities in the Metropolis include the following; four tertiary, twelve senior high school, nine hundred and ninety basic schools, five vocational /technical and two special school (Mensah, 2015).

### **3.5 Population of the Study**

Creswell (2012) defines population as a group of individuals with some common defining characteristic that a researcher can identify and study. The study population comprised all basic schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Area and District Education Directorate. The Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis has 105 preschools, 118 primary schools, and 79 Junior High Schools across the nine educational circuits. There are 1,012 basic school teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis (Mcclain-Afful et al., 2016).

The targeted population is the entire group of individuals or items under study from which a sample may be drawn (Lavrakas, 2008). In other words, the target population defines units for which the conclusions of the research are meant to generalize. Thus, the target population for this study included all preschool teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. At the time of conducting the study, records obtained from the Sekondi-Takoradi Education Directorate showed that there were 78 public preschool teachers and 60 private preschool teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The target population is who the researcher wants to study, and the accessible population is whom the researcher can actually study. Accessible population is the portion of the population to which the researcher has reasonable access; may be a subset of the target population (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the accessible population for this study included public preschool teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

### **3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Sample size is the number of people or items picked from a target population (Gyabeng, 2020). Generally, it is better to have a large sample size to obtain conclusions that can be generalized. The larger the sample, the more representative of

the population it becomes and so the more reliable and valid the results. However, the selection of a sample size depends on the period, resources and population of the study. In line with this, the accessible population for the study was seventy-eight (78) public preschool teachers. Based on this population size, the minimum sample size was calculated using Miller and Brewer (2003) formula below:

Where „N“ is the sample frame, „n“ is the same size and „α“ is the margin of error or level of significant which in this case is 0.05%. By formula,  $N = 78$  and  $\alpha = 0.05$

$$\text{Therefore, } n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{78}{1 + 78(0.05)^2} = \frac{78}{1 + 78(0.0025)} = \frac{78}{1 + 0.195} = \frac{78}{1.195} = 65.2719$$

Accordingly, using an accessible size of 78 respondents, the suitable sample size for this study should not be less than approximately 65 as indicated by the sample size calculated above. As Miller and Brewer (2003) indicated that, this is not the actual sample size but a way to determine a suitable sample size for a study in order to have more reliable and valid results.

Sampling involves selecting some persons to deal with instead of the whole group of persons in the population (Babbie, 2010). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the fifty (50) public preschools within the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan for the study. These public basic schools were selected based on the report from the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Education Directorate. Hence, helped the researcher to identify them in their respective locations to include them for the study. As Creswell (2012) stated that in purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand phenomenon. To Ranjit (2005), the

primary consideration in purposive sampling is the judgment of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study.

The simple random sampling technique with the help of lottery method was used to facilitate in the selection of the preschool teachers from each school to respond to the questionnaire. Lottery method was used to ensure that every preschool teacher has equal chance of being selected into the sample. In all the fifty (50) public preschools, the researcher wrote numbers from 1 to 50 on pieces of papers together with blank papers. The pieces of paper were folded and put in a box. The box was turned repeatedly to ensure that the pieces of paper were well mixed to guarantee that each preschool teacher had an equal opportunity of being selected. The preschool teacher was required to pick the pieces of paper at random without replacement. Preschool teacher who selected the pieces of paper which have number responses was enrolled as study participants for this study. Sixty-five (65) preschool teachers were sampled for the study. Hence, the total sample size for this study was sixty-five (65). According to Showkat and Parveen (2017) and Saunders et al. (2012), the lottery method is the most primitive and mechanical example of random sampling. Where you have to number each member of population in a consequent manner, writing numbers in separate pieces of paper. This activity is straightforward and helps the researcher to avoid being biased.

### **3.7. Data Collection Instrument**

Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data for this study. Structured questionnaire was used purposively for the preschool teachers in the public preschools due to its ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably short time. A set of structured questionnaire was developed and piloted, before administration.

### 3.7.1. Development of questionnaire

Karen (2005) opines that questionnaires are printed form of questions designed by a researcher, which is given to potential respondents to answer. Hence, the questionnaires were suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth information from the respondents, permit the use of standardized questions, and have a uniform procedure.

Likert Scale was adopted with 3-point Likert scales in this study. The study used Likert scale as it has the capacity to measure the attitude of the respondents (preschool teachers) easily. As Naude (2015) indicated that, Likert scales allow participants to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a statement which often used to measure opinions, beliefs, and attitudes. Revilla, Saris, and Krosnick (2014) also stated that agree to disagree scale can be used to measure a wide range of constructs. The study used 3-point Likert scales because it is quick and facilitates understanding. In this regard, Jacoby and Matell (1971) recommended the usage of simplified scales; specifically they suggested the truncation of the Likert scale into a 3-point scale because this will facilitate understanding. Also, Lehman and Hulbert (1971) concluded that two or three points are probably fine when averaging across people and across many items. Preston and Colman (2000) found that 2, 3, and 4-point scales were rated as the quickest to use. Therefore, the study used the 3-point Likert Scale in all, with the responses rated as follows: 3 - *agree*, 2 – *uncertain*, and 1 – *disagree*.

The structured questionnaire for the preschool had 29 questions that were put into two parts. The first part had five (5) questions used to collect demographic details about the preschool teachers. The second part of the questionnaire was sub-divided into three (3) sections; namely Sections A, B, and C. Section A contained 8 questions

on preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities. Again, Section B contains 8 questions on the factors that influence preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities. Section C also contains 8 questions on ways that could improve preschool teachers' attitude towards the education of children with disabilities (See Appendix A).

### **3.8. Pre-Testing of Data Collection Instrument**

A pre-test was carried out in five public preschools at Accra Metropolitan a town with similar features as the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. The reason for the choice was the fact that they have similar characteristics with that of public preschools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. Again, to avoid the interaction effect (Kusi, 2012) among the preschool teachers in public preschool schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan, it was prudent to pilot-test the instruments in five public preschools at Accra Metropolitan. Ekyaw (2014) opine that it is always good to pre-test a questionnaire before administering to eliminate ambiguities and errors in data collected and to ascertain validity and reliability of the instruments.

Ten participants were involved in the pre-test as indicated in Ekyaw (2014) that 10% of the sample should constitute the pre-test. This was to find out from respondents how long it took them to complete the questionnaires; whether the instructions and items were clearly understood (Karen, 2005). The feedback received was used to improve on the instrument by making the right corrections and adjustments in the final write-up to increase the level of validity.

### **3.9. Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instrument**

Validity and reliability that were used check the suitability of the instruments are discussed in turns below:

#### **3.9.1. Validity of the questionnaire**

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences researchers make based on the data they collect. According to Cohen et al. (2011), there are several methods of ensuring validity and reliability. Out of these approaches, the researcher adopted the face and content validity. The face and content validity helped the researcher to see whether the questionnaire had measured what it appears to measure according to the researchers' personal judgment. Also, helps the researcher to evaluate the extent to which the items were related to the topic (Polit & Beck, 2004).

To validate the questionnaire, consultations and discussions were made with my supervisor and other experts in my field of study. Their recommendations were followed accordingly by the researcher and necessary amendments done before data collection. Besides, the researcher heeded to the advice given by professional researchers who assert that self-constructed measurement instruments should be used for pilot study before use to determine validity, reliability, and feasibility (Polit & Beck, 2004). In order to ascertain content validity, piloting of the instruments was done.

#### **3.9.2. Reliability of the questionnaire**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) opined that reliability refers to the consistency of the scores obtained. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure reliability or internal consistency of the instruments. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), Cronbach's

alpha provides a unique, quantitative estimate of the internal consistency of a scale. Reliability of the questionnaire was determined through internal consistency of items where Crobach's alpha coefficients were computed and the overall coefficients of the instrument yielded a coefficient of 0.51. A coefficient of 0.5 and above is regarded reliable for the distribution of questionnaires as suggested by Bonnet and Wright (2014).

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedures**

A letter of introduction was collected by the researcher from the Department of Early Childhood Education in University of Education, Winneba (UEW) and shown to the Metropolis Director of Education in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan and the various preschools that were selected. After sampling, the selected preschool teachers were given the questionnaires personally by the researcher. The questionnaires were collected after one week. The personal contact helped the researcher to explain some portions of the questionnaire (upon demand) to respondents. Indeed all the questionnaire administered was returned.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Procedure**

After editing and sorting out the questionnaires for completeness, returns, and coding, computer software that uses a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data to give the percentages (%) and frequencies (f). Data presented helped to explain the relationship between the variables of study. Information on the questionnaires was corrected by scrutinizing the data items before coding them. This procedure helped in pinpointing items which were wrongly responded to, mistakes in spelling and empty spaces left by the respondents. The coded information was to enable data entry into the computer to



permit statistical analysis. The analysis of data was significant for the reason that it brought out clearly the features, interpretations to enable description, and the generalization from the study (Creswell, 2012)

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics in research is typically put in place to regulate the relationship between the researchers and respondents and between the researchers and the area; they would like to study (Flick, 2006). As such, informed agreement permits the respondents to indicate to partake or not (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The researcher was guided by ethical considerations which included voluntary participation, no harm to respondents, anonymity, and confidentiality, identifying purpose and sponsor, and analysis and reporting. To conduct the study, the researcher was equipped with knowledge, expertise, and due diligence, and ensured the process observed honesty and integrity. Also, the participants' informed consent was used when sampling the participants. The participants were given the freedom to choose to participate or not to in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were achieved by not asking participants to write their names on the questionnaires. Participants' identity was not tied to the information given nor disclosed to the public. The questionnaires were destroyed when the research work was completed to ensure confidentiality.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0. Overview

This chapter presents data collected from the public preschool teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan within the Western Region of the Republic of Ghana. The data collected was structured into three main sections, the first section focused on the demographical characteristics of the respondents, the second section deals with the data presentation and analysis from the data collection instruments and the third section deals with the discussion of findings in relation to the research questions.

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section considers the background information of the respondents focusing on the sex, age range, and academic qualification, years of teaching and training in special education. The results are presented in Table 4.1 to Table 4.5.

##### Sex of Respondents

Table 4.1 shows the sex of the public preschool teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

**Table 4.1: Sex Distribution of Respondents**

Sex	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	41	63
Male	24	37
Total	65	100

Source: Field Data (2022).

Table 4.1 result indicates that, majority (41; 63%) of the public preschool teachers who responded to the questionnaire were females while minority (24; 37%) of the

preschool teachers who responded to the questionnaire were females.

### Age Group of Respondents

Table 4.2 shows the age range of the public preschool teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

**Table 4.2: Age Group Distribution of Respondents**

Age Group	Frequency	Percent (%)
21 – 30 years	12	18
31 – 40 years	40	62
41 – 50 years	10	15
51 years and above	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data (2022).**

Table 4.2 result reveals that, the highest (40; 62%) age group of the public preschool teachers in this study were within the age of 31 – 40 years, the higher (12, 18%) age group of the public preschool teachers were within the age of 21 – 30 years, the low (10; 15%) age group of the public preschool teachers were within the age of 41 – 50 years and the lowest (3; 5%) age group of the public preschool teachers were within the age of 51 – 60 years. This implies that the age group of the study participants are youthful thus could help educate children with disabilities in the study area.

### Academic Qualification of Respondents

Table 4.3 shows the academic qualification of the public preschool teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

**Table 4.3: Academic Qualifications Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Cert A	0	0
Diploma	13	20
Bachelors <sup>o</sup> Degree	34	52
Masters <sup>o</sup> Degree	18	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data (2022).**

Table 4.3 result reveals that, majority (34; 52%) of the public preschool teachers in this study are bachelors<sup>o</sup> degree holders, 18 (28%) of the public preschool teachers are degree holders, and 13 (20%) of the public preschool teachers are masters holders.

### **Years in Teaching**

Table 4.4 shows public preschool teachers<sup>o</sup> years in teaching in their current preschools in the metropolitan.

**Table 4.4: Years in Teaching Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
1 year	4	6
2 – 5 years	26	40
6 – 9 years	29	45
10 years and above	6	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data (2022).**

Table 4 result reveals that, majority (29; 45%) of the public preschool teachers in this study had taught for 6 – 9 years, 26 (40%) of the public preschool teachers had also taught for 2 – 5 years, 6 (9%) of the public preschool teachers had taught for 10 years and above and finally, 4 (6%) of the public preschool teachers had taught for 1 year.

### Training Received in Special Education

Table 4.5 shows whether public preschool teachers in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan had been trained in educating children with disabilities.

**Table 4.5: Training Distribution of Respondents**

Training in Special Education	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	55	85
No	10	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data (2022).

Table 4.5 result reveals that, majority (55; 85%) of the public preschool teachers in this study had trained in special education whilst minority (10; 15%) of the public preschool teachers also responded that they have not received training in special education. This result signifies that enough preschool teachers in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan had been trained on how to educate children with disabilities.

### 4.2. Data Presentation and Analysis

This aspect of the analysis and discussion focused attention on the research questions of the study. These questions were analysed using data generated by the questionnaire and based on the three scales employed in the instrument.

#### **Research Question 1: What are the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan?**

This research question sought to examine preschool teachers' attitude towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. The result is presented in table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Preschool Teacher Attitudes towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

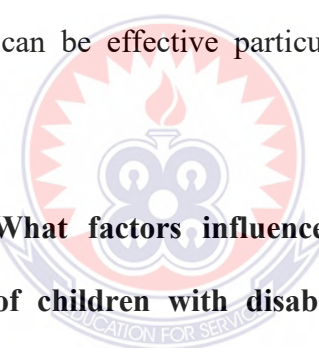
<b>Item</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Uncertain %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
I am prepared to effectively teach children with disabilities	41 63%	4 6%	20 31%	65 100%
I feel comfortable teaching children with disabilities	44 68%	4 6%	17 26%	65 100%
Children who are diagnosed with disabilities need to be in special education classrooms	40 62%	2 3%	23 35%	65 100%
All efforts should be made to educate children with disabilities in the regular education classroom	44 68%	0 0%	21 32%	65 100%
Collaborative teaching of children with disabilities can be effective particularly when they are placed in a regular classroom	39 60%	9 14%	17 26%	65 100%
I feel supported by my head teacher when faced with challenges presented by children with disabilities in my classroom	50 77%	4 6%	11 17%	65 100%
My metro provides me with sufficient professional development training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach children with disabilities	39 60%	6 9%	20 31%	65 100%
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach children with disabilities	50 77%	2 3%	13 20%	65 100%

**Source: Field Data, (2022)**

Results from Table 4.6 indicate that 44 (representing 68%) of the preschool teachers agreed they feel comfortable teaching children with disabilities. Also, 50 (representing 77%) of the preschool teachers agreed that their educational background has prepared them to effectively teach children with disabilities. Again, 41 (representing 63%) of the preschool teachers agreed that they are prepared to effectively teach children with disabilities. Furthermore, 50 (representing 77%) of the

preschool teachers agreed that they feel supported by their head teachers when faced with challenges presented by children with disabilities in their classrooms.

Similarly, 39 (representing 60%) of the preschool teachers agreed that the metro provides them with sufficient professional development training opportunities in order for them to appropriately teach children with disabilities. Moreover, 44 (representing 68%) of the preschool teachers agreed that all efforts have to be made to educate children with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Further, 40 (representing 62%) of the preschool teachers agreed that children who are diagnosed with disabilities need to be in special education classrooms. Also, the results show that 39 (representing 60%) of the preschool teachers agreed that collaborative teaching of children with disabilities can be effective particularly when they are placed in a regular classroom.

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central lamp with a flame, set against a background of a sunburst. The lamp is flanked by two stylized figures. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION' is written in a circle around the top, and 'WISDOM FOR SERVICE' is written around the bottom.

**Research Question 2: What factors influence preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan?** This research question sought to identify the factors that influence preschool teachers' attitude towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. The result is presented in table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Factors That Influence Preschool Teachers' Attitudes towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Uncertain %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Type and severity of disability influence my attitude	54 83%	1 2%	10 15%	65 100%
My knowledge in special education influence my attitude	40 62%	5 8%	20 31%	65 100%
My years of teaching in inclusive school influence my attitude	35 54%	5 8%	25 38%	65 100%
My level of confidence influence my attitude	29 45%	10 15%	26 40%	65 100%
Large class sizes influence my attitude	35 54%	5 8%	25 38%	65 100%
Provision of quality of learning supports influence my attitude	45 69%	5 8%	15 23%	65 100%
My experience in dealing with children with disability influence my attitude	50 77%	5 8%	10 15%	65 100%
Physical and human support service influence my attitude	35 54%	0 0%	30 46%	65 100%

**Source: Field Data, (2022)**

Results from Table 4.7 indicate that majority of the preschool teachers agreed that the type and severity of disability (54 representing 83%), experience in dealing with children with disability (50 representing 77%), provision of quality of learning supports (45 representing 69%), knowledge in special education (40 representing 62%), years of teaching in inclusive school (35 representing 54%), large class sizes (35 representing 54%), physical and human support service (35 representing 54%) and level of confidence (29 representing 45%) influence their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities.



**Research Question 3: What ways could improve preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan?** This research question sought to identify ways that could improve preschool teachers' attitude towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan. The result is presented in table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Ways to Improve Preschool Teacher Attitudes towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Uncertain %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Strengthen pre-service education to promote inclusive education	55 85%	2 3%	8 12%	65 100%
Regular in-service training and workshops for preschool teachers	55 85%	2 3%	8 12%	65 100%
Attitudinal change among preschool teachers towards inclusion of children with disabilities	56 86%	0 0%	9 14%	65 100%
Preschool teachers to be creative and innovative	35 54%	5 8%	25 38%	65 100%
Preschool teachers with requisite learning material	48 74%	2 3%	5 8%	65 100%
Providing adaptive school environment	58 89%	2 3%	5 8%	65 100%
Improving the quality of support systems	54 83%	4 6%	7 11%	65 100%
Strengthening metro directorate's special education coordinators	59 91%	2 3%	4 6%	65 100%

**Source: Field Data, (2022)**

Results from Table 4.8 indicate that 56 (representing 86%) of the preschool teachers agreed that one way to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities is to strengthen pre-service education to promote inclusive education.

With regards to providing adaptive school environment, 58 (representing 89%) of the preschool teachers agreed it is a way to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities.

Again, 55 (representing 85%) of the preschool teachers agreed that another way to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities is regular in-service training and workshops. Furthermore, 56 (representing 86%) of the preschool teachers agreed that attitudinal change among preschool teachers is a way to improve their attitude toward the education of children with disabilities.

Moreover, 48 (representing 74%) of the preschool teachers agreed that preschool teachers with requisite learning materials is a way to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities. Further, 59 (representing 91%) of the preschool teachers agreed that another way to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities is to strengthen metro directorate's special education coordinators. Also, the result show that 44 (representing 68%) of the preschool teachers agreed that improving the quality of support systems is a way to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities. Finally, 35 (representing 54%) of the preschool teachers agreed that preschool teachers to be creative and innovative as a way to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities.

### **4.3. Discussion of Research Findings**

#### **4.3.1. Preschool Teachers' Attitudes towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

Table 4.6 results show that preschool teachers at the preschools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan were not much boarded in teaching children with disabilities. The results also suggest that the preschool teachers were willing to teach children with disabilities. The results can further connote that the preschool teachers were not much disturbed by the presence of children with disabilities in their classrooms. Thus, this study revealed that preschool teachers in in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan have positive attitudes toward children with disabilities. The findings align well with Duckmack (2013) who expressed that general teachers show positive attitudes toward educational inclusion. In the same vein, Hsieh and Hsieh (2012) reported that teachers in their study were positive towards inclusive classrooms and that 59% of them had at least one child with a disability in their classroom. The study contradicts the findings of Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou (2006) who maintain that regular education teachers hold a number of restrictive as well as conflicting beliefs about disability and educational inclusion.

Hobbs and Westling (1998) state that positive attitudes can, and need to be, fostered through training and positive experiences with students with disabilities. Teachers must be highly skilled practitioners When teachers are adequately trained, have access to appropriate resources and support, and have a positive attitude towards including students with disabilities within their classrooms, there are many good practices which become evident (Florian, 2012).

#### **4.3.2. Factors That Influence Preschool Teachers' Attitudes towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

Table 4.7 results show that preschool teachers at the preschools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan admitted that there are possible factors that influence their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities. It was obvious that the type and severity of disability have influence on preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities. The result of this study is supported by the findings of Lifshitz et al., (2004), who maintained that the attitudes of teachers differed about the disability type

The severity of learning difficulty and the extent of knowledge and training teachers have showed similar impressions of influencing teacher attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities in regular schools. Similar observation was established by Nydal (2008) supporting the influence of knowledge and training of teachers to shape the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education. However, Krohn-Nydal (2008) reported a differing view that the severity of learning disability amongst pupils does not matter so much given the needed training and equipping teachers with relevant skills to handle pupils with disabilities.

Consistent with prior research finding (Booth & Dyson, 2004), the level of teachers' professional confidence and experience dealing with disability children do not influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Abosi (2007) recounted that as teachers acquire the relevant skills and have logistics support, their professional confidence level builds up through enhanced performance. Generally, the current study establishes that quality of learning support is the most influential factor that induces teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

### **4.3.3. Ways of Improving Preschool Teachers' Attitudes towards the Education of Children with Disabilities**

Table 4.8 results show that preschool teachers at the preschools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan believes that for their attitudes to be improved they need to strengthen pre-service education to promote inclusive education so as to impart them with adequate knowledge and skills that would make them able to fit the children with disabilities in an environment like other children. On equal pedestal, strengthening the metro directorates' special education coordinators, providing adaptive school environment and the provision of improved quality of learning support systems were suggested by most of the preschool teachers. Perhaps, preschool teachers' suggestion for strengthening metro special education coordinators stems from ineffective operationalization of these coordinators. Kanu (2008) submits that special education coordinators/officers at the education directorate are expected to exercise regular monitoring and giving supporting hands to special children at the inclusive schools.

Again, quality of support systems is established earlier as influencing teacher attitude towards inclusive education. Therefore, Dukmak's (2013) recommendation for improved quality of support systems as corroborated in the current study is considered crucial in educating children with disabilities. Provision of requisite learning materials, organizing regular in-service training/workshops, and strengthening pre-service education were also cited by respondents as consideration for improving teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. Studies (Otieno & Anika, 2018; Wilkins & Nietfeld, 2004) suggest that requisite learning materials enhance teacher effectiveness in the performance of professional responsibilities building up psychomotor, cognitive, and social skills of children with disabilities. Similarly, the suggestion raised here supports prior studies (Avoke, 2005; Agbenyega & Deku,

2011) that regular in-service training for teachers handling children with disabilities should not be underrated. Teacher respondents in this study suggest strengthening of pre-service education to embrace and enrich inclusive education syllabus. Nonetheless, the finding here sees the reverse side of Leyser & Tappendorf (2001) where only about one-third of respondents held that view.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

This chapter gives a summary of the study, summarise the key findings and draw conclusions based on the findings. It also gives recommendations of the study and areas that require further research.

#### 5.1 Summary

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitude of preschool teachers towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis. The objectives of the study sought to:

1. determine preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of children with disabilities;
2. examine the factors that influence preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of disabled children
3. identify the ways that could improve preschool teachers' attitudes toward the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

This study was underpinned by positivist philosophy. Again, the study adopted quantitative research approach in line with descriptive cross-sectional survey design.

The sample size for the study was sixty-five (65). The study used purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. Each questionnaire responses from the preschool were analysed descriptively using frequency tables and simple percentage count. The respondents' background information was analysed using frequency tables and simple percentage count whiles the respondent's responses in relation to the research question was

analysed using frequency tables and simple percentage count. The following ethical considerations were adhered in this research. They include plagiarism, para-plagiarism, informed consent, harm to participants, and invasion of privacy, anonymity, conflict of interest, confidentiality and deception.

## 5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study reveals that:

1. Most of the preschool teachers agreed that their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities include educational background have prepared them to effectively teach children with disabilities, feel supported by their head teachers when faced with challenges presented by children with disabilities, feel comfortable teaching children with disabilities and all efforts should be made to educate children with disabilities in the regular education classrooms.
2. Majority of the preschool teachers agreed that factors that influence their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities include the type and severity of disability, experience in dealing with children with disability, provision of quality of learning supports and knowledge in special education.
3. Majority of the preschool teachers agreed that ways to improve their attitude towards the education of children with disabilities include strengthen metro directorate's special education coordinators, provide adaptive school environment, attitudinal change among preschool teachers towards inclusion of children with disabilities, strengthen pre-service education to promote inclusive education and regular in-service training and workshop for preschool teachers.



### **5.3 Conclusion**

All children with disabilities in the preschools in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis have the right to be placed in regular classrooms. That means children who need special education services are placed in regular classrooms and provided with the necessary services and support in general preschool classes. In spite of all the problems and difficulties faced during the implementation of these practices, preschool teachers in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan agreed that inclusion is still the preferred placement for children with disabilities. Thus, preschool teachers in the study area exhibited positive attitudes toward children with disabilities.

Moreover, the study concludes that preschool teachers' attitudes are positively influenced through the type and severity of disability, knowledge in special education, provision of quality of learning supports and experience in dealing with children with disabilities. Thus, providing adaptive school environment, regular in-service training, and workshops for preschool teachers and strengthening metro directorate's special education coordinators could help improve preschool teachers' attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. With respect to the first research objective, the study recommends that for preschool teachers in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan to operate successfully in inclusive settings, they must develop a comprehensive knowledge of the principles of inclusive education that must be tailored to the specific needs of each children. Also, preschool teachers should be sensitised to work closely

with the parents since they are the one who know more about the challenges encountered by their children.

2. Based on the second research objective, the study recommends that the government of Ghana through the educational directorate in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan to organize regular in-service training for preschool teachers in inclusive schools. This would sharpen their professional skills to better manage children with disabilities. Also, the Metro Educational Directorate should endeavour to resource the special education coordinators to improve on their monitoring and guidance to inclusive education teachers.
3. Concerning the third research objective, the study recommends that the stakeholders of education such as non-governmental organizations should complement the efforts of the Government to ensure adequate provision of quality learning support systems to support positive attitudinal change towards inclusive education. Such provisions will encourage preschool teachers to work harder towards educational development of pupils with disabilities.

### **5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies**

The study can be replicated in other metropolitan to compare the findings. A study can be carried out on preschool teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education policy in Ghana. An investigation of preschool teachers' attitudes towards the ignorance of parents in education of their children with disabilities

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## APPENDIX A

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
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**DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**  
P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana [ece@uew.edu.gh](mailto:ece@uew.edu.gh)  
+233 (020) 2041072

FES/DECE/1.1

13<sup>th</sup> September, 2022

The Director  
Metro Education Office  
M. C. 405  
Takoradi

Dear Sir/Madam

#### INTRODUCTORY LETTER

We write to introduce to you **Ms. Joyce Esi Galley** with index number **220013210** who is an M. Ed student in the above department. She was admitted in 2019/2021 academic year and has successfully completed her course work and is to embark on her thesis on the topic: "*Attitude of preschool teachers towards inclusion of children with disabilities in Sekondi-Takoradi*".

**Ms. Esi Galley** is to collect data for her dissertation, and we would be most grateful if she could be given the needed assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Subbey', written over a dotted line.

**DR. MICHAEL SUBBEY**  
**AG. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**





## APPENDIX B

### LETTER FROM GES

# GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

## KETAN CIRCUIT

*P. O. BOX MC 405, TAKORADI*

5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
P. O BOX 25  
WINNEBA

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH

I write to confirm that Miss Joyce Esi Galley with index number 22013210 who pursuig Masters in Early Childhood Education has been granted permission to conduct her academic research on the topic '*Attitude of preschool teachers towards inclusion of children with disabilities in Sekondi- Takoradi*'.

Protocols, rules, and regulations governing conducting research will be adhered to.

Thank you.

**CIRCUIT SUPERVISOR**

Yours faithfully,  
SIGN.....  
METRO EDUCATION OFFICE (GES)

.....  
CHRISTIAN VAN KENNEDY

(KETAN SISO)

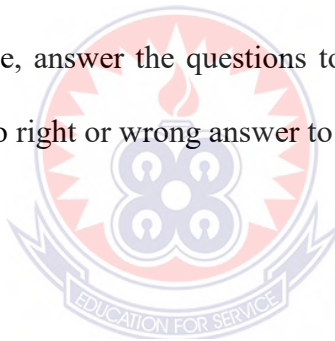
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## APPENDIX C

### Questionnaire for the Study

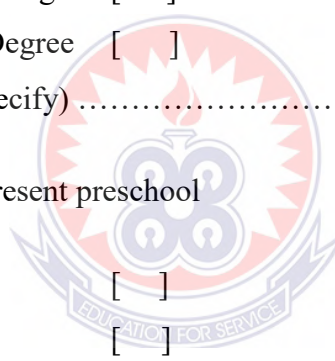
**Dear Respondent,**

I am **Joyce Galley**, a postgraduate student of University of Education Winneba, conducting a research in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of **Master of Education, Early Childhood Education**. You are hereby requested to respond to these questions to help me undertake a study to *“Preschool Teachers’ Attitudes towards the education of Children with disabilities in basic schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis”*. Please, be assured that your identity is not required here and any information you provide will be held confidential as the study is only for academic purposes. Please, answer the questions to the best of your knowledge and understanding. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions.



**SECTION A**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. Gender
  - a. Male [    ]
  - b. Female [    ]
2. Age group (in years)
  - a. 21 – 30        [    ]
  - b. 31 – 40        [    ]
  - c. 41 – 50        [    ]
  - d. 51 and above [    ]
3. Highest educational qualification
  - a. Diploma            [    ]
  - b. Bachelors“ degree [    ]
  - c. Masters“ Degree [    ]
  - d. Others (specify) .....
4. Years worked at present preschool
  - a. 1 year            [    ]
  - b. 2 -5 years        [    ]
  - c. 6 -9years        [    ]
  - d. 10 years and above [    ]
5. Have you received any professionally trained in special education?
  - a. Yes [    ]
  - b. No [    ]



**SECTION B****PRESCHOOL TEACHERS ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Please, indicate with a tick (✓) to show the extent to which you agree with the statements regarding the education of children with disabilities in your school. The responses are anchored: agree (A), uncertain (N), and disagree (D).

<b>Statements</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>D</b>
1. I am prepared to effectively teach children with disabilities			
2. I feel comfortable teaching children with disabilities			
3. Children who are diagnosed with disabilities need to be in special education classrooms			
4. All efforts should be made to educate children with disabilities in the regular education classroom			
5. Collaborative teaching of children with disabilities can be effective particularly when they are placed in a regular classroom			
6. I feel supported by my head teacher when faced with challenges presented by children with disabilities in my classroom			
7. My metro provides me with sufficient professional development training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach children with disabilities			
8. My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach children with disabilities			

## SECTION C

### FACTORS INFLUENCING PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Please, indicate with a tick (√) to show the extent to which you agree with the statements regarding the education of children with disability in your school. The responses are anchored: agree (A), uncertain (N), and disagree (sD).

Statements	A	UN	D
1. Type and severity of disability influence my attitude			
2. My knowledge in special education influence my attitude			
3. My years of teaching in inclusive school influence my attitude			
4. My level of confidence influence my attitude			
5. Large class sizes influence my attitude			
6. Provision of quality of learning supports influence my attitude			
7. My experience in dealing with children with disability influence my attitude			
8. Physical and human support service influence my attitude			

**SECTION D****WAYS OF IMPROVING TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE  
EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Please, indicate with a tick (✓) to show the extent to which you agree with the statements regarding the education of children with disability in your school. The responses are anchored: agree (A), uncertain (N), and disagree (D).

<b>Statements</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>D</b>
1. Strengthen pre-service education to promote inclusive education			
2. Regular in-service training and workshops			
3. Attitudinal change among teachers towards inclusive of disabilities pupils			
4. Teachers to be creative and innovative			
5. Resource teachers with requisite learning material			
6. Providing adaptive school environment			
7. Improving the quality of support systems			
8. Strengthening metro directorate's special education coordinators			