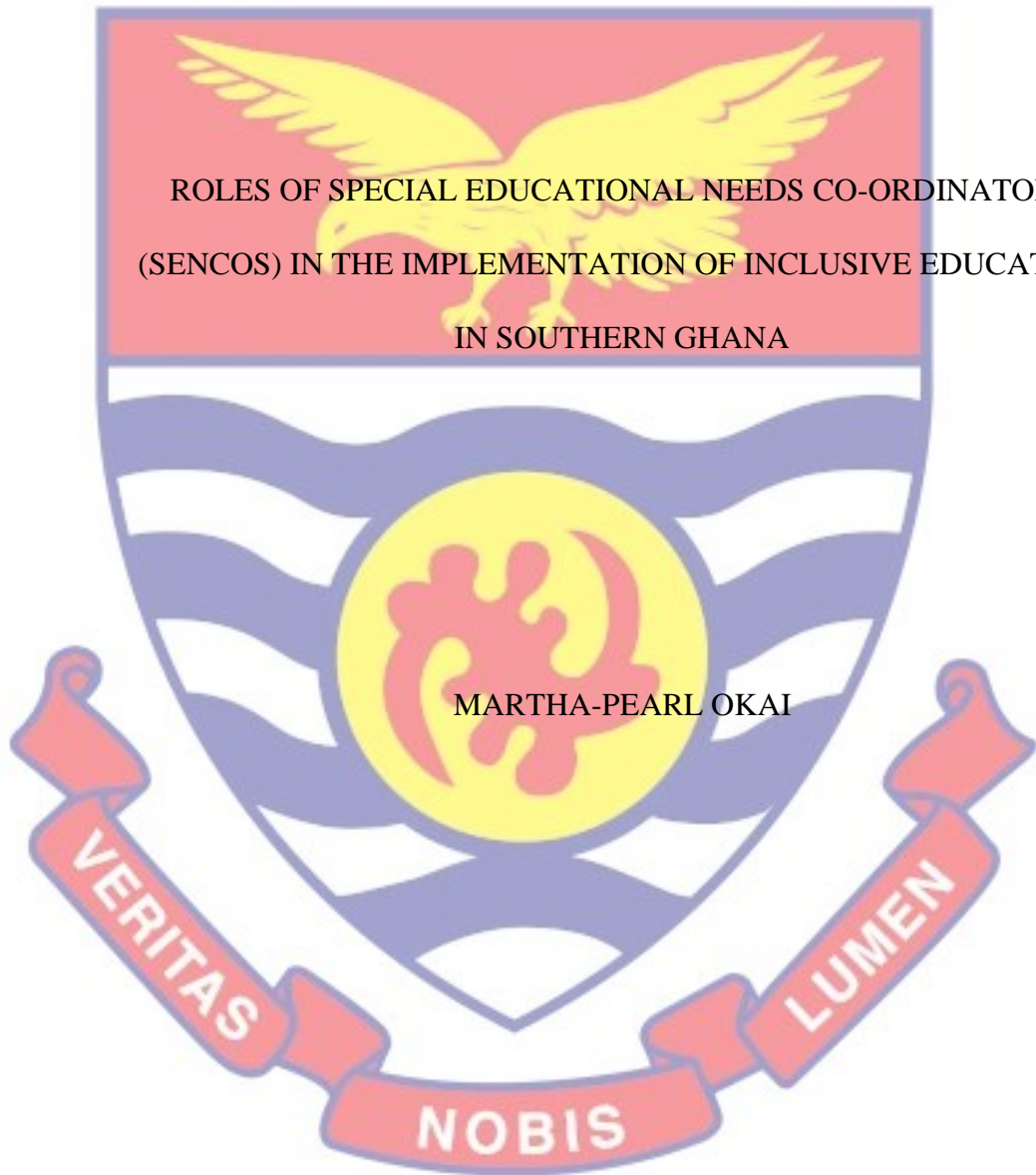


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ROLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CO-ORDINATORS
(SENCOS) IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

IN SOUTHERN GHANA

BY

MARTHA-PEARL OKAI

Thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Psychology of the
Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University
of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Special Education

NOBIS

SEPTEMBER 2021

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date:

Name:.....

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature..... Date:

Name:.....

Co-Supervisor's Signature..... Date:

Name:.....

ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the roles of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in the implementation of inclusive education in southern Ghana. The study used mixed method approach, specifically the convergent design. Seventy-three SENCOs responded to the questionnaire for the quantitative phase while 15 SENCOs participated in the qualitative phase. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect the qualitative data. The census approach was used for the quantitative study, whereas the purposive sampling technique, specifically the criterion sampling was used in sampling the participants for the qualitative phase. The study answered five research questions and tested five hypotheses. Frequencies, Percentages, Means, Standard Deviations, factorial ANOVA, factorial MANOVA as well as Multiple Regression Test were used in analysing the quantitative data. Thematic analysis was used in analysing the qualitative data to gain additional understanding of the phenomenon. The results of the study showed that SENCOs had high level of knowledge about their roles and are confident in playing their roles. The SENCOs also highlighted the roles they play, how they played their roles, and the challenges they have in the implementation of IE. Again, the study revealed that passion drives the confidence of SENCOs in playing their roles in IE. It was evident from the study that working experience is an important predictor to the successful performance of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in Ghana. Among the recommendations was the need for the Ministry of Education to redefine the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE Ghana.

KEYWORDS

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Concerns

Confidence

Inclusive education

Knowledge

Regular School

Role effectiveness

Role expectations

Role performance

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs)

Special educators



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DEDICATION

To my daughter El-Bernarda Naa Deedei Selassie Mimi Okrah and my mother

Margaret Aba Odro.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEY WORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xviii
LIST OF FIGURES	xx
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xxi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Purpose of the study	12
Research Questions	13
Research Hypotheses	14
Significance of the Study	16
Delimitations	18
Limitations	19
Definition of Terms	20

Organisation of the Study	20
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview	22
----------	----

Theoretical Framework	22
-----------------------	----

Applicability of the System Theory to this Study	23
--	----

Conceptual Review	25
-------------------	----

Concept of Inclusive Education	25
--------------------------------	----

Models of Inclusive Education	29
-------------------------------	----

Giangreco's (1997) Framework	29
------------------------------	----

Teamwork	29
----------	----

Shared Framework	30
------------------	----

Recognising the Role of Family	31
--------------------------------	----

Roles and Responsibilities of Educators	31
---	----

Clear Definition of Roles	32
---------------------------	----

Effective Use of Support Staff	33
--------------------------------	----

Support Services	33
------------------	----

Use of Individualised Educational Plan (IEP)	33
--	----

Use of Assessment Procedures	34
------------------------------	----

Applying Giangreco's Model of Inclusive Education to the Study	35
--	----

Ainscow's (2005) Framework	37
----------------------------	----

Ainscow and Miles's (2009) Framework	40
--------------------------------------	----

Historical Perspectives of Inclusive Education in Ghana	43
Types of Inclusive Programmes in Ghana	46
Basic Components of Inclusive Education	47
Indicators to a Successful Implementation of Inclusive Education	48
Visionary Leadership	48
Collaboration	48
Refocused Use of Assessment	49
Support for Staff and Students	49
Funding	50
Effective Parental Involvement	50
Curricula Adaptations	51
Challenges to the Implementation of Inclusive Education	51
Funding	52
Poor Parental Involvement	52
Negative Attitude of Teachers	53
Rigid Curriculum	54
Teacher Competence and Professional Development	55
The Issue of Resources	57
Environmental Accessibility	58
Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)	60
The History of SENCOs from the International Perspective	61

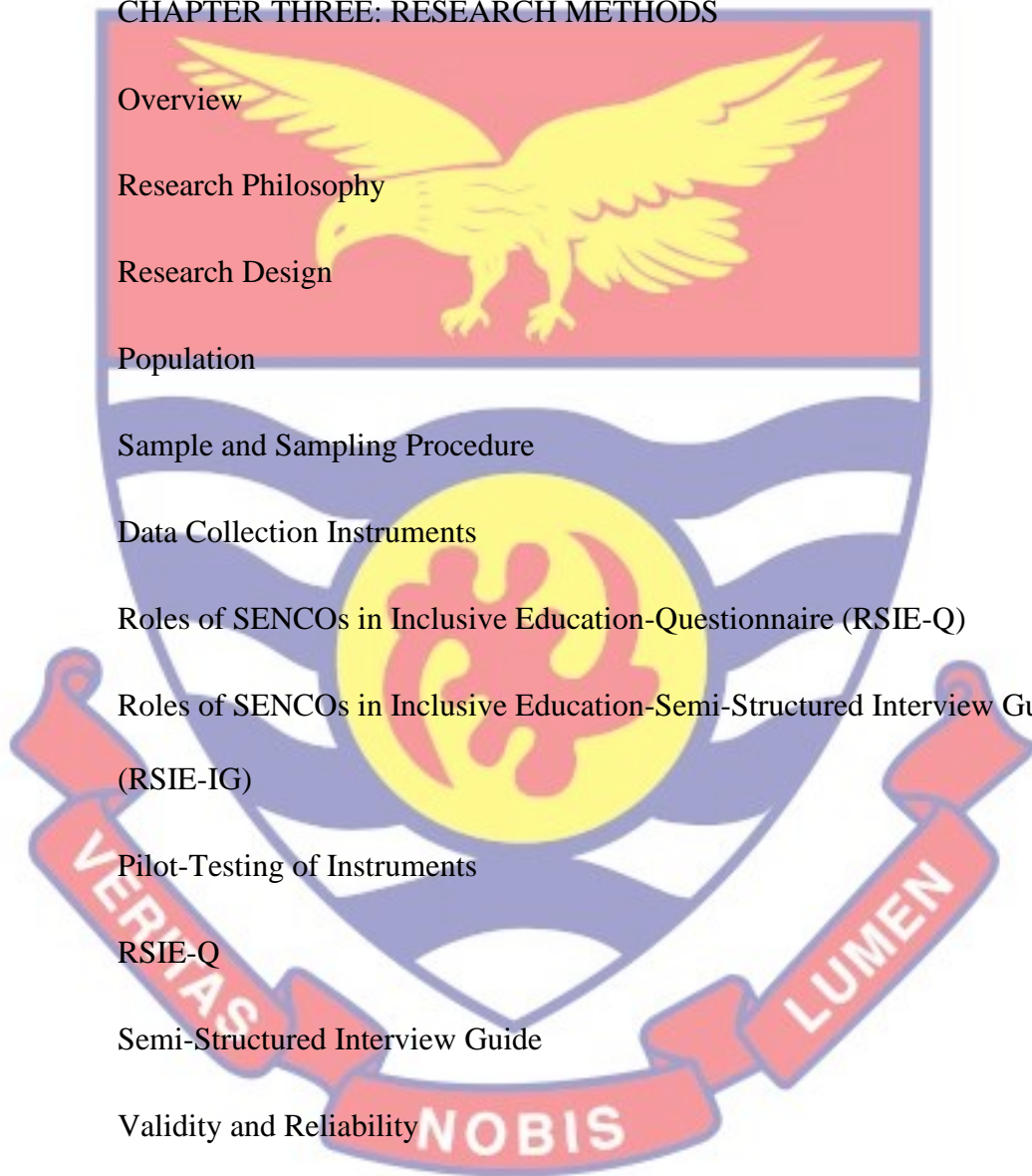


Historical Perspectives of SENCOS in Ghana	61
Guiding Principles of a SENCO	63
Roles of the SENCO and Inclusive Education (IE)	63
Modus Operandi of SENCOS	64
Barriers to the Roles of SENCOS	68
Limited Knowledge about their Roles	69
Negative Attitude of SENCOS and other Staff towards Inclusive Education	70
Limited Influences of SENCOS	71
Empirical Review	71
Level of Knowledge of SENCOS in Playing their Roles in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	72
Duties and Responsibilities of SENCOS in the Implementation of IE	73
Confidence of SENCOS in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	87
Concerns of SENCOS in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	88
Demographic Variations in the Level of Knowledge of SENCOS in Playing their Roles in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	90
Demographic Variations in Roles of SENCOS in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	91
Demographic Variations in SENCOS' Level of Confidence in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	93

Demographic Variations in the Concerns of SENCOs in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	94
Conceptual Framework	96
Summary of Literature Review and the Implications for the Study	97

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

Overview	104
Research Philosophy	104
Research Design	107
Population	110
Sample and Sampling Procedure	111
Data Collection Instruments	112
Roles of SENCOs in Inclusive Education-Questionnaire (RSIE-Q)	112
Roles of SENCOs in Inclusive Education-Semi-Structured Interview Guide (RSIE-IG)	115
Pilot-Testing of Instruments	118
RSIE-Q	118
Semi-Structured Interview Guide	119
Validity and Reliability	119
Validity and Reliability for RSIE-Q	120
Trustworthiness for Qualitative Data	127
Credibility	127

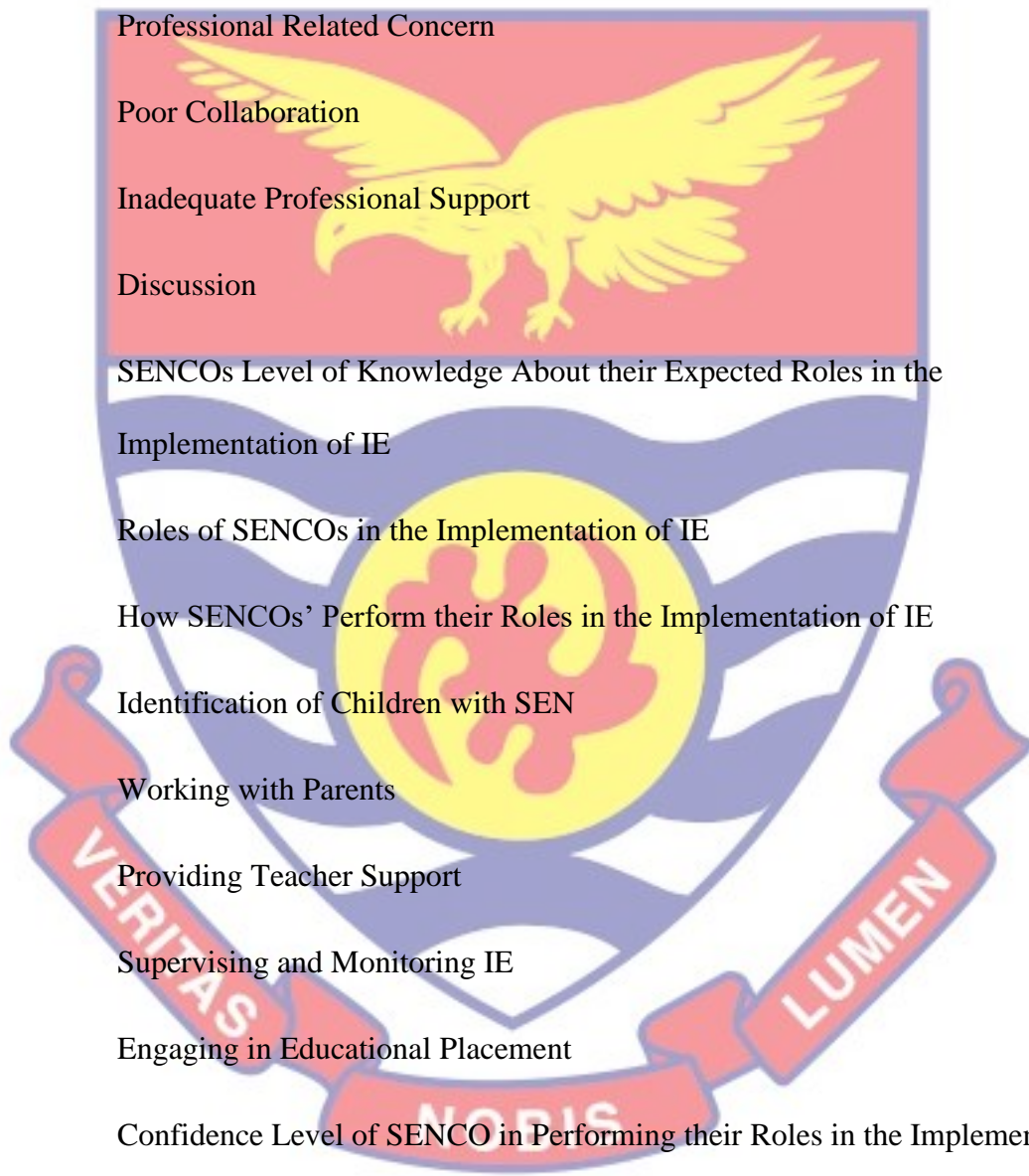


Transferability	128
Dependability	128
Confirmability	129
Data Collection Procedures	129
Ethical Consideration	133
Data Processing and Analysis	134
Quantitative Data Processing and Analysis	135
Qualitative Data Processing and Analysis	140
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Introduction	143
Background Information of Respondents	143
Research Question One	145
Research Question Two	150
Research Question Four	153
Research Question Five	156
Normality Test	159
Research Hypothesis One	160
Research Hypothesis Two	164
Research Hypothesis Three	173
Research Hypothesis Four	182
Research Hypothesis Five	192

Qualitative Results	196
Research Question One: What level of knowledge do SENCOs have in terms of the roles they play in the implementation of IE?	196
Level of Knowledge in Playing their Roles	196
Knowledge About their Expected Roles in the Implementation of IE	197
Research Question Two: What roles do SENCOs play in the implementation of IE?	198
Duties and Responsibilities of the SENCO	199
Prioritised SENCO Roles	203
Research Question Three: How do SENCOs' perform their roles in the implementation of IE?	205
Identification of Children with SEN	205
Creating Public Awareness	207
Working with Parents	209
Providing Teacher Support	211
Supervising and Monitoring IE	212
Educational Placement	213
Research Question Four: How confident are SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE?	214
Research Question Five: What are the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE?	215

Classroom Related Concerns	216
Negative Attitude of Teachers	216
Poor Competence of Teachers in Handling the Inclusive Classroom	217
Large Class Size	218
School Related Concerns	220
Poor Infrastructure	220
Inadequate Funding	221
Inadequate Resource Teachers	222
Academic Achievement-Related Concerns	223
Self-Related Concerns	224
Management Related Concerns	226
Funding	226
Lack of Recognition	229
Unclarified Roles	231
Training of SENCOs on their Duties and Responsibilities	232
Lack of Motivation	235
Inadequate Assessment Tools	238
Inadequate Assessment Centres	239
Lack of Assistive Technologies	240
Inadequate Office Space and Equipment	240
Negative Attitude and Poor Perception of Educational Leaders	241

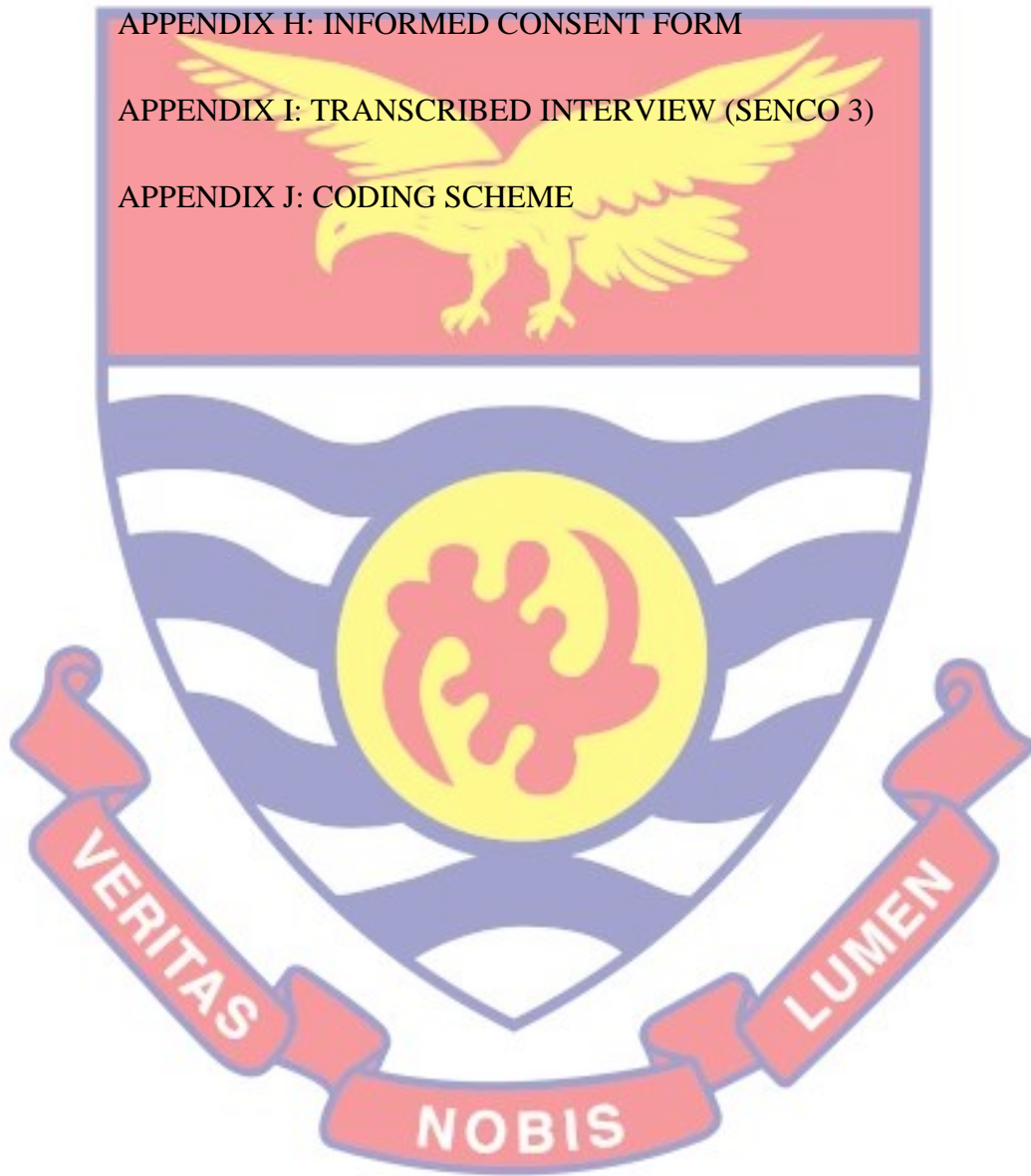
Parental Related Concerns	244
Negative Attitude of Parents	245
Low Income Status of Parents	246
Poor Sensitisation of Parents About Special/Inclusive Education	248
Professional Related Concern	249
Poor Collaboration	249
Inadequate Professional Support	251
Discussion	252
SENCOs Level of Knowledge About their Expected Roles in the Implementation of IE	252
Roles of SENCOs in the Implementation of IE	256
How SENCOs' Perform their Roles in the Implementation of IE	266
Identification of Children with SEN	266
Working with Parents	270
Providing Teacher Support	271
Supervising and Monitoring IE	273
Engaging in Educational Placement	273
Confidence Level of SENCO in Performing their Roles in the Implementation of IE	274
Concerns of SENCOS in the Implementation of IE	278



CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction	316
Summary to the Study	316
Key Findings	317
Emerged Model	319
Major Contributions to Knowledge	320
Contributions to Literature on IE	321
Contributions to Methodology Used in Studies on SENCOS	322
Policy on Roles of SENCOS	322
Contributions to Studies on Roles of SENCOS	322
Conclusions	323
Recommendations	323
Recommendation for Practice	323
Recommendations for Policy	326
Suggestions for Further Research	327
REFERENCES	330
APPENDICES	370
APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER	371
APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER	372
APPENDIX C: LETTER FOR PILOT-TESTING OF INSTRUMENT	373

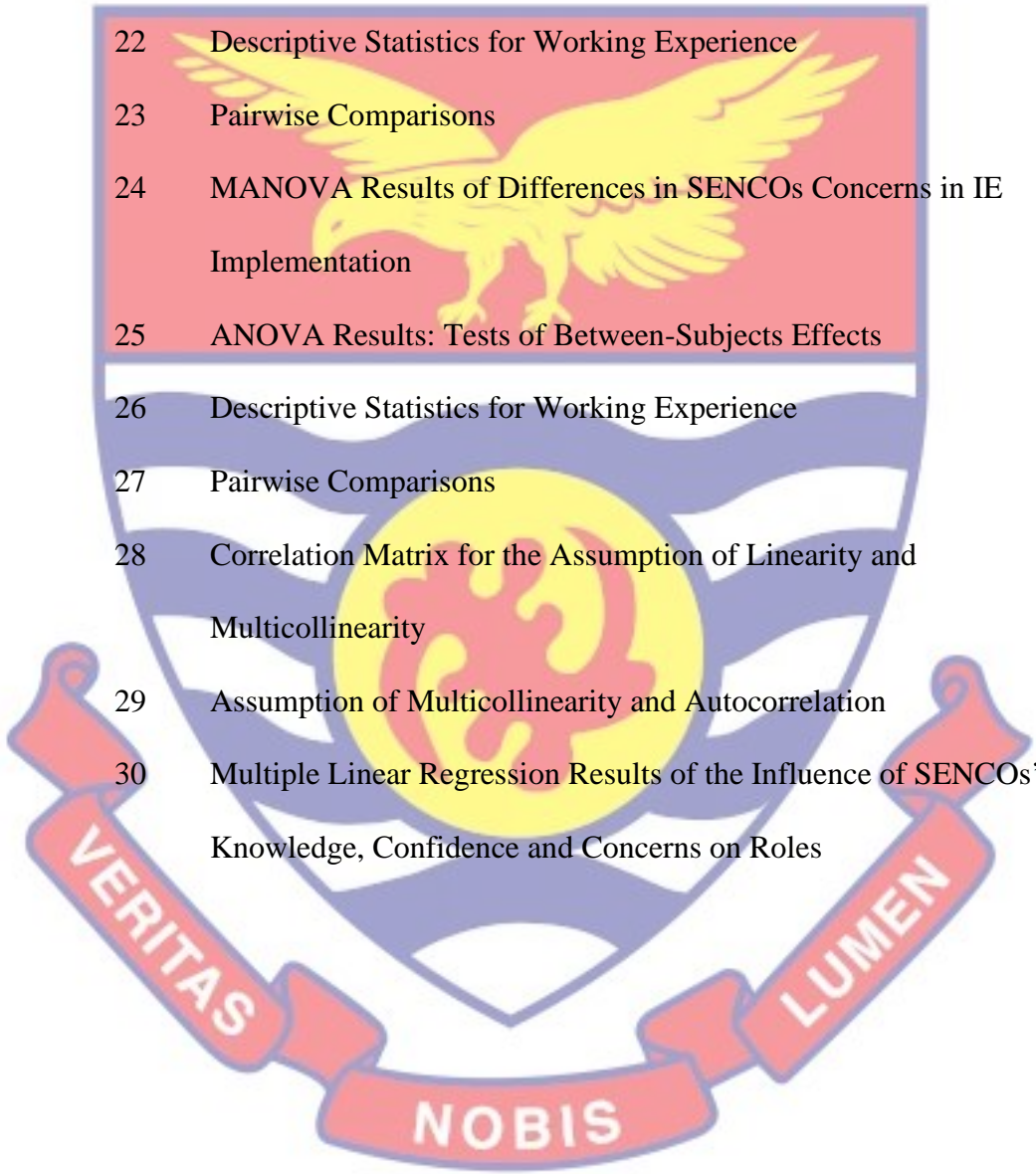
APPENDIX D: INTRODUCTORY LETTER (VOLTA REGION)	374
APPENDIX E: INTRODUCTORY LETTER (WESTERN REGION)	375
APPENDIX F: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	376
APPENDIX G: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	383
APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT FORM	386
APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW (SENCO 3)	387
APPENDIX J: CODING SCHEME	398



LIST OF TABLES

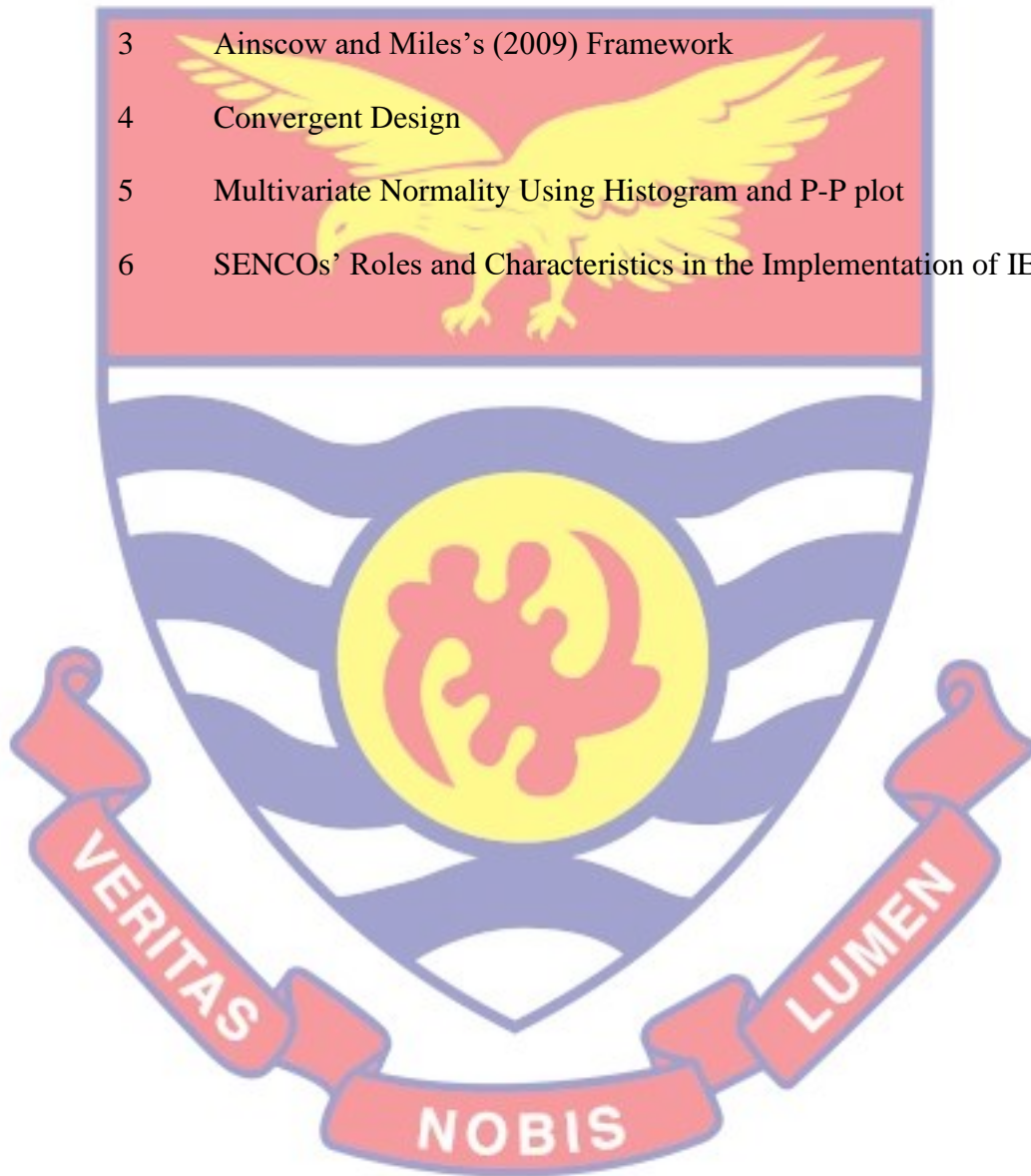
Table	Page
1 Phases of the Development of IE in Ghana	46
2 Population Distribution of SENCOS	110
3 Item Loading and Average Variance Extracted	123
4 Item Loading and Average Variance Extracted	124
5 Item Loading and Average Variance Extracted	125
6 Reliability Coefficients for Pilot Test	126
7 Summary of Data Analyses	141
8 Background Information of Respondents (n =73)	144
9 SENCOS' Level of Knowledge of their Roles in the Implementation of IE	146
10 SENCOS Roles in the Implementation of IE	151
11 SENCOS' Level of Confidence in the Performance of their Roles in the Implementation of IE	154
12 SENCOS Concerns about IE Implementation	157
13 Normality Results of Main Variables	159
14 Factorial ANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOS' Level of Knowledge of the Roles Based on Demographic Characteristics	161
15 LSD Multiple Comparisons of Differences in Level of Knowledge Based on Working Experience	163
16 MANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOS Roles in IE Implementation	165
17 ANOVA Results: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	168

18	Descriptive Statistics for Working Experience	171
19	Pairwise Comparisons	172
20	MANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOS Confidence in IE Implementation	174
21	ANOVA Results: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	177
22	Descriptive Statistics for Working Experience	179
23	Pairwise Comparisons	180
24	MANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOS Concerns in IE Implementation	183
25	ANOVA Results: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	185
26	Descriptive Statistics for Working Experience	188
27	Pairwise Comparisons	189
28	Correlation Matrix for the Assumption of Linearity and Multicollinearity	193
29	Assumption of Multicollinearity and Autocorrelation	194
30	Multiple Linear Regression Results of the Influence of SENCOS' Knowledge, Confidence and Concerns on Roles	195



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	SENCOs Roles and Characteristics in the Implementation of IE Education	96
2	Ainscow's (2005) Framework	38
3	Ainscow and Miles's (2009) Framework	41
4	Convergent Design	109
5	Multivariate Normality Using Histogram and P-P plot	193
6	SENCOs' Roles and Characteristics in the Implementation of IE	320



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AARC	Academic Achievement-Related Concerns
ANOVA	One-Way-Analysis of Variance
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CEEA	Collaboration with Educators and External Agencies

CLRC	Classroom-Related Concerns
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CPC_SEN/AC	Collaboration with Parents of Children with SEN and Assessment for Accommodation
CPCW_SEN	Collaboration with Parents of Children without SEN

	CSE Conducive School Environment
CSE	Conducive School Environment
CSIE	Centre for Studies of Inclusive Education
EFA	Education for All
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
GES	Ghana Education Service
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Individualised Educational Plan
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
LEA	Liaising with External Agencies
MACT	Managerial Administrative and Collaborative Task

MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
MARC	Management-Related Concerns
MIEI	Management of IE Implementation

MoE	Ministry of Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
RSIE-IG	Roles of SENCOs in Inclusive Education-Interview Guide
RSIE-Q	Roles of SENCOs in Inclusive Education-Questionnaire
SCRC	School-Related Concerns
SD	Standard Deviation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCOs	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
SERC	Self-Related Concerns
SFI	Screening for Identification
SFI	Screening for Identification
SISOSs	School Improvement Support Officers
SpED	Special Education Division
SPSS	Statistical Product for Service Solution
TS	Teacher Support
TTAS	Teacher and Administrative Support
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNCRPD United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and hypothesis, the significance of the study, the delimitation, limitation and organisation of the rest of the thesis. Accordingly, it discusses the need for the study, reveals some gaps in the literature on the roles of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) in the implementation of Inclusive Education (IE), the importance of the study in the implementation of IE, scope of the study, some weakness of the study and how the rest of the study is organised.

Background to the Study

Countless studies and intellectual communication in various facets of life reveal the integral roles that education plays in the development of every society, which therefore makes it paramount for every society to prioritise the education of every individual. In this regard, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013) describe education as the pathway to employment opportunities and economic stability of individuals in a society; and that the social skills and social status of individuals can better be improved through education. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 [SDGs] (2017) has also highlighted the need for every individual to be educated.

Further, in line with the specifics of the SDG 4, there is a special emphasis on inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. Similarly, there is a recognition of education (World Declaration of Human Right, 1948) as a fundamental human

right, which mandates every individual regardless of their status to receive equal education. It has been argued (Gray, 2013) that the right to equal education is obtainable only when all persons, including those with and without disabilities have access to basic quality education. Against this backdrop, the Education for All [EFA] has been instituted to ensure that all children, youth and adults have the needed educational opportunities that will suit their basic learning needs (Jomtien World Conference, 1990). It is therefore expected that every individual would have access to education, with a considerable concern for each individual to be accommodated in the educational environment with no discrimination.

As a direct consequence of the Education for All, stakeholders in education, in the last few years, have focused their attention on inclusive education system. For instance, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2017), conceptualises IE as a system that accepts all students no matter their abilities or disabilities. In IE, factors like the curriculum, teaching methodology, the environment and other important aspects in the educational environment should meet the needs of all learners (UNICEF, 2017). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] (2009, p.8), IE is “a process of meeting the unique needs of all learners, by ensuring increased participation in learning, recognising cultures and communities and eliminating any form of exclusion from and within the educational setting”. Quite clearly, from the explication on IE, as shown in the foregoing discussion, the point can be made that, IE goes beyond recognising the individual’s disabilities; and thus, endeavour to create a conducive environment and ensure

quality educational support that will develop the potentials of all individuals, including learners with special educational needs (SEN).

Not only have stakeholders shed light on the concept of inclusive education, there have also been coordinated and consented efforts, aimed at promoting inclusive education. For example, in 1994, the Salamanca World Conference highlighted the need for an Inclusive Educational setting, which gained prominence in several countries around the globe (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006). Apart from the Salamanca World Conference, the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) justified the need for an inclusive education system. However, the Salamanca Statement and the Framework for Action continues to be the focal point in the call for IE (Marchesi, 2019).

Apart from the concerns that have been raised by some stakeholders in promoting inclusive education, several international organisations provide support to Education for All. Among these organisations are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (1982), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), World Declaration on Education for All (1990), Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1993), Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994), Flagship Initiatives (2000), the Millennium Development Goals (2000), the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Notably, Ghana is a signatory to some of these international treaties like the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Tudzi, Bugri, & Danso, 2017). In Ghana, policies like the Children's Act of 1998, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the Disability Act (2006), the Education Act (2008), the National Youth Policy of 2010 and the Education Strategic Plan (2010-2020) support the education of all learners irrespective of their abilities or disabilities (Ministry of Education, [MoE] 2015).

Ghana's commitment to some international policies on the need to ensure inclusive education and the national call for inclusive education, occasioned the piloting of inclusive education in Ghana in the 2003/2004 academic year (Anthony, 2011; Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017; Gregorius, 2016; Opoku, Abenyenga, Mprah, Mckenzie & Badu, 2017; Opoku, Badu, Amponteng & Agyei-Okyere, 2015). In line with the necessity of IE, which seeks to give all children equal educational experiences no matter their disabilities, age differences, cultural or language background (MoE, 2015), a policy on inclusive education was implemented in 2015 (MoE, 2015).

According to the MoE (2015), about 2% of the population of children who are enrolled in schools have some form of disability; and that about 16,500 pupils who have mild disabilities are enrolled in regular schools throughout the country. However, there appears to be no accurate statistics on the prevalence of children with disabilities in basic schools. Hence, it has been argued that the population of children with disabilities that are enrolled in the basic schools may

be more than the number of children with disabilities that are not in schools because there may be some children with unidentified learning difficulties (Akinkube, 2013). Further, about 70% of teachers in Ghana reveal that they have at least a pupil with SEN in their respective classrooms (Senadza, Ayerakwa, & Mills, 2019). From the foregoing, it can be inferred that there is a child with SEN in every classroom even though current statistics on prevalence rate may not indicate the exact number (Akinkube, 2013).

In consideration of the growing rate of children with SEN, including those who have not even been diagnosed in most schools in the country, it becomes crucial to ensure effective implementation of IE in order that the needs of all children are catered for. To do so, there is the need to pay particular attention to the responsibilities of stakeholders like head teachers, teachers, SENCOs and parents (Bublitz, 2016; Hatch, 2013; Murphy, 2018) to effectively implement IE. According to Lindqvist (2012), most studies conducted internationally have not focused on SENCOs' roles and work in the implementation of inclusive education. This seems to suggest that, much attention have been on teachers, head teachers and parents to the neglect of SENCOs. Lindqvist (2012) indicated that, there is apparent lack of comprehensive literature that reveals their duties and responsibilities in the education of children with SEN in the inclusive setting. SENCOs' roles in the implementation of the IE cannot be overemphasised (Epistol & Carroll, 2019). What is more intriguing about this group is that, they appear to have varied roles (see for example, Szeto, Cheng & Sin, 2020); but as Giangreco (1997) has pointed out, these roles are vague and have no clear cut boundaries given that

there is the transition from special schools to an IE school system. Studies have as well shown that the role of SENCOs depends on the specific context in which it is practiced (Cowne, Frankl, & Gerschel 2015; Pearson, Rapti, & Mitchell 2014; Taylor, 2014). Further, Giangreco (1997) maintained that the traditional role of SENCOs, which is teaching their own class has now shifted to supporting general education teachers in the classroom; this has subsequently led to undefined roles for SENCOs. In the same vein, Winwood (2012) pointed out that, the roles of SENCOs is unclear in inclusive practice, meanwhile, they are considered as the hub of support for children with SEN in IE (Mackenzie, 2012). Mackenzie (2012), also indicated that, with the current practices in educational policies, issues on SENCOs should be a significant area of research and further noted that, it is useful to investigate the roles of SENCOs because of the diversity in the roles they perform. Deducing from Giangreco's (1997) assertion, it is likely that the roles of SENCOs have changed with the introduction of IE in Ghana. Apart from that, it appears there is limited knowledge on the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in Ghana, this therefore requires investigation.

From the foregoing discussions, it can be noted that the effective and successful implementation of IE is contingent on the responsibilities of educators like the SENCO as clearly explicated. This draws attention to two important questions: first, in terms of the education of children with disabilities in IE, are SENCOs roles clearly defined? Are they well acquainted with their roles? If they are well-acquainted with their roles, how are they executing their roles as far as the implementation of IE is concerned? It is in the light of these

unreciprocated questions that I derive the motivation to investigate the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of inclusive education in Ghanaian basic schools.

Statement of the Problem

My professional experience as a special educationist was instrumental in sensitising me to observe issues relating to IE. That is, I observed that despite the SDG 4 recognising the need for inclusive and equitable quality education for all, most children with SEN are either denied the opportunity to be educated with their peers without disabilities in the same educational environment, or that the needs of children with SEN are not considered should they even get the opportunity to be enrolled in an inclusive school. In one of my interactions and encounters with both head teachers and teachers, I discovered that most schools preferred children with SEN to be in special schools to the regular school even if their educational needs do not necessarily require them to be in special schools.

To buttress my professional experience, available literature also revealed that, most children with SEN are denied access to regular education (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011; Mantey, 2014; UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2017; UNICEF, 2013). A study in 19 countries including Ghana, revealed that, most children with SEN are denied the opportunity to be in school (UNESCO, 2020), in spite of the global call for equal educational opportunities as enshrined in the SDGs. Several researchers highlight the importance of educating children with and without disabilities in the same educational environment (Dreyer, 2017; Mag, Sinfield, & Burns, 2017; Schuelka, 2018; Singh, 2016). Specifically, a

number of these studies point to better educational outcomes and vocational opportunities for children with SEN (Myers, Pinnock, & Suresh, 2016; Singh, 2016).

With the implementation of IE in Ghana, all schools from pre-tertiary through the tertiary level are noted to be inclusive, which calls for educators to appreciate and allow children with disabilities to be educated with their peers without disabilities. The denial and exclusion of children with SEN in the regular education classroom as reported in the literature and based on my professional experience clearly shows that there is a challenge in the implementation of inclusive education in most schools in Ghana, especially at the basic level. This problem, so far as I can determine, may be as a result of some factors: educators' ignorance of their roles in the implementation of inclusive education, concerns of educators about the implementation of IE, their lack of knowledge about their roles in the implementation of IE, their lack of confidence in implementing IE, some crucial demographic variations of educators, collaboration, and teaching-efficacy, among others.

Consequently, the purpose of SDG 4, which recognises that there should be inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all, is defeated if this problem is not investigated and addressed, the consequences could be dire. To be precise, it will curtail the right of those with disabilities (Gray, 2013) in getting access to equitable quality education. Ultimately, it will derail the aptitude of children with SEN since their denial or disregard in the regular school could affect their total development (Aron & Loprest, 2012) and lead to school dropout (UNESCO, 2005).

The consequences of this problem calls for an investigation of the roles of stakeholders especially SENCOs in the implementation of IE in ensuring that children with SEN are included in the regular school setting (Bublitz, 2016; Hatch, 2013; Murphy, 2018). Some of the studies conducted outside Ghana have focused on *educational leaders* (Andai & Mwatela, 2017; Lindqvist & Nilholm, 2014; Murphy, 2018), *teachers* (Crispel & Kasperski, 2019; Gachocho, 2017; Sharma, Simi, & Forlin, 2015; Saloviita, 2020; Vaillant, 2011), *SENCOs* (Curran, 2020; Mackenzie, 2012; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Smith & Broomhead, 2019) and *Parents* (Adams, Harris, & Jones, 2018; Afolabi, Mukhopadhyay, & Nenty, 2013; Paseka & Schwab, 2020). However, studies in the international literature on SENCOs is limited and lacks comprehensiveness (Esposito & Carroll, 2019; Lindqvist, 2013).

Similarly, in Ghana, several studies have been conducted on *educational leaders* (Kor & Opare, 2017; Kumedzro, 2019; Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Sarpong & Kusi, 2019; Subbey, 2020), *teachers* (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011; Boakyekomeah, 2015; Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017; Dwomo, 2015; Nketsia, Saloviita, & Gyimah, 2016; Vanderpuye, Obosu, & Nimushiko, 2018) and *parents* (Amponteng, Opoku, Agyei-Okyere, Afriyie, & Tawiah, 2019; Vanderpuye, 2013). It appears there is apparent lack of literature on the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE.

Meanwhile, the shift towards inclusive agenda demands a new response to the education of children with SEN, therefore, the roles of SENCOs are ostensibly pivotal in IE and need to be given the necessary attention in the

implementation of IE (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Mackenzie, 2012).

Globally, SENCOs' roles are important in the education of children with SEN (Gareskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Curran, Moloney, Heavey, & Boddison, 2020). SENCOs are required to support teachers in educating children with

SEN (Curran et. al., 2020). Currently, most countries across the globe recognise the roles of SENCOs in IE and have attached them to schools to ensure the effective implementation of IE in schools (Kearney, Mentis, & Holley-Boen, 2017).

Similarly, with the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana, the MoE requires all schools to have qualified SENCOs (MoE, 2015), in this regard, the SENCO's role becomes critical in the implementation of IE. In spite of this provision, not all schools have SENCOs, rather, the ratio is one SENCO per a district (Ghana Education Service, 2020). The SENCOs are expected to handle issues concerning children with SEN in inclusive schools and also support regular education teachers (MoE, 2015).

Meanwhile, teachers reveal that, one of the major challenges affecting their effectiveness in the implementation of IE is inadequate support of SENCOs (Kuyini, Desai, & Sharma, 2020). If teachers do not receive the support they need from SENCOs, it may affect the implementation of IE and have a negative impact on the education of children with SEN since some teachers may neglect children with SEN in the classroom due to their inadequate expertise in handling children with SEN, therefore, if this problem is not investigated and addressed, it may lead to rejection and denial of children with

SEN access to the regular school; children with SEN may be excluded in classroom activities; they may drop out of school; it may affect their school achievement among others.

Few studies have been conducted outside Ghana (Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford 2017; Rosen-Webb, 2011), however, numerous researchers point out that, the roles of SENCOs vary, are unclear and depend on the specific context (Cowne, Frankl, & Gerschel 2015; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Smith & Broomhead, 2019). Additionally, there is limited research on SENCOs internationally and these researches lack comprehensiveness (Esposito & Carroll, 2019; Lindqvist, 2012). For instance, Winwood (2012) suggested that a study should be conducted to ascertain the level of confidence of SENCOs in playing their roles. Pearson (2010) argued that SENCOs level of knowledge is an important predictor to the success of IE. However, most of the current studies conducted so far have not considered these factors (Curran, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Mackenzie, 2012; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Smith & Broomhead, 2019).

Based on the explications made, there is the need to conduct a study to ascertain the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE from the Ghanaian perspectives because of the variations in SENCOs' roles (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Smith & Broomhead, 2019). Also, considering the critical role of SENCOs, the provisions made in the Standards and Guidelines in the implementation of IE in Ghana, and the little research into the SENCO role in Ghana, it calls for an investigation into the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. In addition, most studies conducted in the international

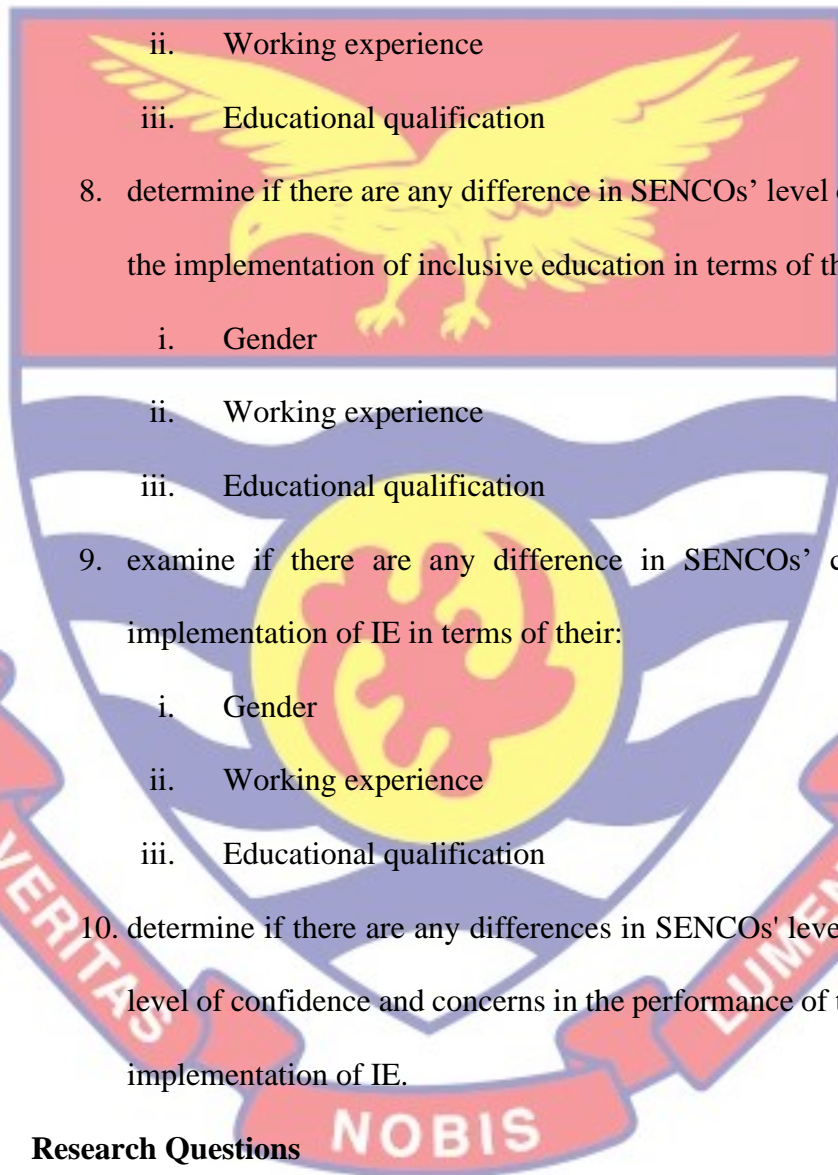
literature lack comprehensiveness (Esposito & Carroll, 2019), there is the need for an in-depth information on SENCOS' roles, in terms of how they play their roles, their level of knowledge in playing their roles, including their confidence and challenges in fulfilling this role. This research therefore seeks to fill these gaps in the literature. The study also seeks to find out some possible demographic variations that can influence SENCOS' roles in the implementation of inclusive education (Bhatnagar, 2014; Kuyini, Desai, & Sharma, 2020). It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to investigate the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in Ghanaian basic schools in Southern Ghana.

Purpose of the study

This study sought to examine SENCOS level of knowledge, confidence and concerns regarding their roles in the implementation of inclusive education. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine SENCOS' level of knowledge in executing their roles in the implementation of IE.
2. examine the roles that SENCOS play in the implementation of IE.
3. describe how SENCOS play their roles in the implementation of IE.
4. determine the level of confidence of SENCOS in playing their roles in the implementation of IE.
5. identify the concerns SENCOS have in the implementation of IE.
6. examine if there are any differences in SENCOS' level of knowledge in the implementation of IE in terms of their:
 - i. Gender

- ii. Working experience
 - iii. Educational qualification
7. determine if there are any differences in SENCOS' roles in the implementation of IE in terms of their:
- i. Gender



- ii. Working experience
 - iii. Educational qualification
8. determine if there are any difference in SENCOS' level of confidence in the implementation of inclusive education in terms of their:
- i. Gender
 - ii. Working experience
 - iii. Educational qualification
9. examine if there are any difference in SENCOS' concerns in the implementation of IE in terms of their:
- i. Gender
 - ii. Working experience
 - iii. Educational qualification
10. determine if there are any differences in SENCOS' level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE.

Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions were addressed:

- 1. What level of knowledge do SENCOS have in terms of the roles they play in the implementation of IE?

2. What roles do SENCOs play in the implementation of IE?
3. How do SENCOs' perform their roles in the implementation of IE?
4. How confident are SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE?
5. What are the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE?

Research Hypotheses

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

1. H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to:

- i. Gender
- ii. Working experience
- iii. Educational qualification

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to:

- i. Gender
- i. Working experience
- ii. Educational qualification

2. H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to:

- i. Gender
- ii. Working experience
- iii. Educational qualification

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference in the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to:

- i. Gender
- ii. Working experience
- iii. Educational qualification

3. H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence of SENCOs in playing their roles in IE with regards to:

- i. Gender
- ii. Working experience
- iii. Educational qualification

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence of SENCOs in playing their roles in IE with regards to:

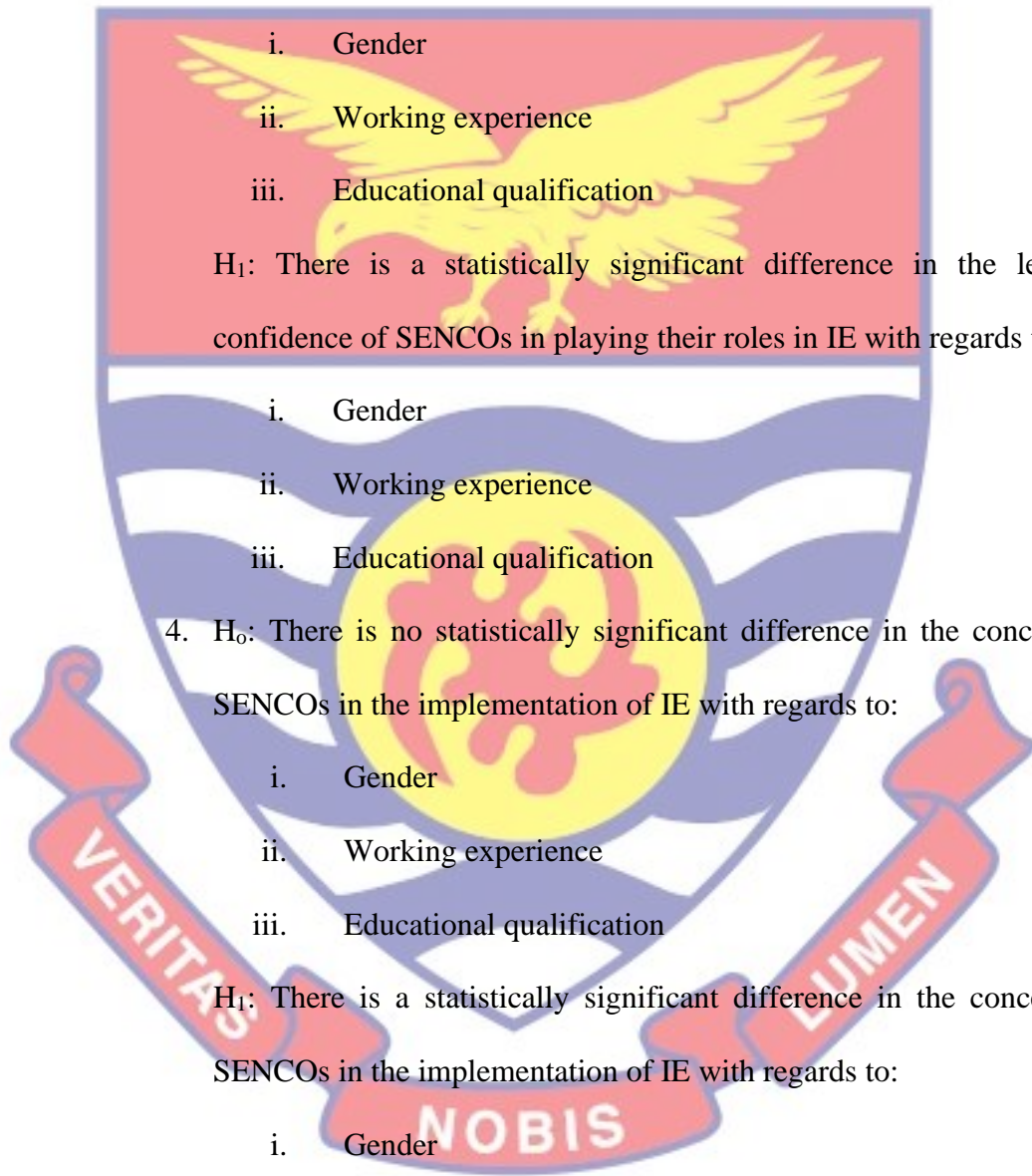
- i. Gender
- ii. Working experience
- iii. Educational qualification

4. H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to:

- i. Gender
- ii. Working experience
- iii. Educational qualification

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference in the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to:

- i. Gender
- ii. Working experience
- iii. Educational qualification



5. H₀: There is no statistically significant influence on SENCOS' roles in the implementation of IE with regards to their:

- i. Level of knowledge
- ii. Level of confidence
- iii. Level of concerns

H₁: There is no statistically significant influence on SENCOS' roles in the implementation of IE with regards to their:

- i. Level of knowledge
- ii. Level of confidence
- iii. Level of concerns

Significance of the Study

Based on the findings, workshops, seminars, and lectures will be organised to sensitise SENCOS on their roles which can enhance their knowledge about their roles in supporting the school in handling children with SEN. Besides, the current study is critical in terms of its theoretical, practical and pedagogical value.

First, this study has theoretical implications in that, it will shed a considerable light on the interplay or the coordination between theory and practice. That is, the findings from the study will provide information that can be helpful in policy review on inclusive education in order to bring to the fore the roles that SENCOS play in the implementation of inclusive education. Information will be disseminated to the Ministry of Education, which will draw the attention of government and educational leaders in Ghana to devise effective

ways of reviewing the policy on IE since the policy is set to be reviewed every five years.

The present study will again make a contribution in terms of a concrete practical value. Investigation of this kind would seem most beneficial to educators, particularly SENCOS. When the level of knowledge, confidence and concerns of SENCOS in relation to their roles in the implementation of inclusive education are targeted (through workshop, seminar, lectures, etc.), not only would they be sensitised on what they are supposed to do in the implementation of inclusive education, but more importantly, they would be required to play their roles very well in order to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education. Thus, this study stands to enhance the awareness of stakeholders, predominantly policy makers, such as Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service and the Special Education Division to allow them to take pragmatic measures in ensuring that children with SEN are provided with the needed opportunity to be educated in the same environment with their peers without SEN.

Moreover, the present study would be of immense benefit pedagogically in the context of Ghana. Since the present study endeavours to popularise the roles and concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of inclusive education, it will foreground and enhance the pedagogical skills in the implementation of inclusive education. That is, SENCOS will be well-informed about their roles in the implementation of inclusive education, and thereby be required to handle issues concerning children with SEN. More important, if their roles are revealed, and their concerns are addressed by policy makers, they can provide

better support to regular teachers so as to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education in Ghanaian basic schools. Eventually, children with special educational needs may receive more attention, will be accepted, and given the needed assistance in the IE classroom.

Last but far from least, future researchers also stand to gain immensely from the findings presented here. This becomes crucial because previous studies on the issues relating to inclusive education have mainly focused on some other factors, rather than on the roles of SENCOs. Thus, the present study will help to fill the existing gap in literature by revealing the roles and concerns of SENCOs, which will add to knowledge on inclusive education in Ghana and also serve as a reference material for future researchers who may want to conduct a similar study.

Delimitations

It would have been crucial to conduct a study of this nature across the length and breadth of the entire country. However, given that some parts (Central, Eastern and Greater Accra regions) of the country serve as a starting point for the implementation of inclusive education, it becomes vital to restrict the context of this study to the Southern part of Ghana which comprises five regions namely Western, Volta, Central, Greater Accra and Eastern Regions. Focusing on these areas, which serve as a basis in the implementation of inclusive education will help evaluate and identify how IE has, over the years, fared in Ghana. Also, based on the available data from the Ghana Education Service (2020), amongst the ten traditional regions in Ghana, only Volta, Central, Greater Accra and Eastern regions have SENCOs in all the districts.

Therefore, focusing on these selected areas will give me the opportunity to provide a detailed and comprehensive investigation of the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of inclusive education since these regions have quite a number of SENCOS.

Moreover, considering the fact that literature on the issues relating to inclusive education is replete with some other factors of inclusivity rather than on the roles of SENCOS, it becomes needful to give all the attention to the roles, level of knowledge about their roles, their confidence in playing their roles and concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE. Paying attention to this area will offer a different standpoint in addressing the issues regarding the implementation of inclusive education, principally Ghana.

Finally, the present study was delimited to SENCOS because they are part of the primary stakeholders in the implementation of IE and therefore, they have the needed information needed for the study. Not only will SENCOS have information that answer the research questions, they are responsible for handling issues on children with SEN; support teachers in the implementation of IE and therefore, they become very instrumental in ensuring the success or failure of inclusive education in Ghana.

Limitations

The study was conducted in only the Southern part of Ghana and only involved SENCOS at the district level. This can affect the generalisability of the findings to SENCOS at the regional level and in other context.

The SENCOs' level of knowledge, confidence and concerns cannot be considered as the only variables that affect the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE.

Definition of Terms

Some terms have been explained based on the context of the study for general

understanding. They are:

Concerns: Factors considered as challenges in the implementation of IE.

Confidence: The belief in one's ability to implement IE.

General concerns: composite concerns

Level of Knowledge: Awareness of the expected duties and responsibilities in IE.

Roles: Duties and responsibilities of SENCOs in the implementation of IE.

SENCOs: They are responsible for coordinating the affairs of students with special educational needs in the IE setting.

Specific concerns: sub or clustered concerns

Specific roles: sub or the grouped roles

Overall roles: composite roles of the SENCOs

Organisation of the Study

The present study is organised into five chapters, including the current section (Chapter One), which offers a general introduction (and background) of the study in order to define the boundaries of the whole study. Chapter Two focuses on relevant theoretical and conceptual framework together with empirical review in order to address the issues relating to inclusive education, Chapter Three focuses on methods and procedures adopted in the collection and

analysis of data. Chapter Four focuses on the presentation of the results and its discussion both for the quantitative and qualitative strands. Finally, Chapter Five recapitulate key issues addressed in the earlier chapters and draw useful conclusions from the findings of the study, present recommendations for policy and practice as well as suggest areas for further research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter presents the review of the literature to appreciate the current status of the roles of SENCOS in implementing IE. The chapter focuses on the theoretical framework, conceptual review, empirical review, and conceptual framework.

Theoretical Framework

System Theory

There are several theories and approaches in explaining a concept, however, the system theory was used to guide the aim of the study. The concept of system theory was propounded by Burtalanffy in 1937. He used the system theory to describe the behaviour and the kind of interrelationship that exists between different organisations (Irby, Brown, Alecio, & Jackson, 2013). System theories are based on the belief that individuals do not operate in isolation but grow and develop by interacting with their physical and social environment (Teater, 2015). According to Germain (2015), systems theory “is a way of noticing how things are interrelated, how they interact and affect one another, and how their individual behaviours change over time because of that interaction” (p, 25). Mbunda (2017) argues that, a system theory views human behaviour based on the shared interaction that exist between persons within the same social setting. In my view, the system theory can be described as the functions that individuals play, their interaction between others in an organisation aimed at achieving a common goal. Mbunda (2017) asserts that,

the use of the system theory in education is based on the premise that the educational institution is a system with different parts that are interrelated and interdependent on other systems. Similarly, the school as an organisation operates with several stakeholders like head teachers, teachers, parents, and the community towards a common goal. By implication, the system theory is appropriate in describing the roles of SENCOs in inclusive education.

In summary, the system theory involves studying the simple and complex structure and behaviour of a system (Germain, 2015). For instance, the educational system is a complex system with diverse elements like the classroom setting, teaching methodologies, curriculum, assessment practices among others and with agents like the teachers and students. Inclusive education can be described as a complex system with agents (stakeholders) like head teachers, teachers, SENCOs and parents striving to achieve a common goal. A major challenge envisaged with the system theory is the interdependence of individual function. The interdependence and interconnections are likely to affect the success of the system if an individual's role is not played effectively. Thus, a failure in an individual's role may affect the entire system. That notwithstanding, the system theory is relevant to this study as it prioritises the unique role of each member and their collaborative functions as the key to achieving a common purpose.

Applicability of the System Theory to this Study

The system theory is appropriate in describing the study since it intends to study the behaviour (roles) of SENCOs in the implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive education can be described as a system that operates with

several stakeholders whose roles are important for effective implementation (Adams, 2016). The inclusive setting is made up of several stakeholders. The Ministry of Education (2015) recognises head teachers, teachers, SENCOs as primary stakeholders. However, based on the purpose of the study, emphasis is on SENCOs functions in the inclusive system. SENCOs play a vital role in coordinating issues concerning children with SEN in the inclusive setting (Cole, 2005; Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist & Wetso, 2011). This means that, their roles may influence other stakeholders in the IE system which can affect the effectiveness of entire IE system.

Similarly, the effectiveness of inclusive education is based on the collective efforts of all stakeholders (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). In this regard, the role of each stakeholder is critical in ensuring the effectiveness of IE. The system theory explains the need to recognise the functions of individuals in an organisation. The theory aids in describing the school as a social system, the functions that members in a school setting play in improving the school system (Mbunda, 2017). Based on this, inclusive education is the system whereas the school is the organisation, the roles and the responsibilities each of the educators will determine the effectiveness of the system. Hence, the study focuses on SENCOs' roles in the implementation of IE to ascertain their functions and contributions in making the school effective as well as the part they play in ensuring the success of the entire IE system.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Inclusive Education

The concept of inclusive education has been defined severally by different authors (Messiou, 2017). Some authors argue that, there is no clear cut definition of inclusive education (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004; Danso, 2009; Dayan, 2017; Gyimah, 2009; Abery, Tichá & Kincade, 2017). Others also argue that, the concept of inclusive education can be better described than defined (Danso, 2009; Gyimah, 2009). Besides, some authors point out that, the definition of inclusive education is based on specific educational and cultural context (Abery, Tichá & Kincade 2017). Hence, inclusive education has been defined and described based on relevance and applicability to the context of the study.

According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (1994), the Inclusive Education concept involves making necessary modifications and adaptations in the curriculum, methodologies, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers the appropriate age range of all children and a belief that, it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. In the UNESCO's (1994) definition, the focus is on the regular school system to modify teaching methods and the curricula content to the advantage of all children in the regular education classroom (Mitiku, Alemu & Mengsitu, 2014; Ngulube, 2016).

UNESCO (2009, p.1) defines Inclusive education as “a process intended to respond to students’ diversity by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion within and from education”. This definition views inclusive education

beyond the individual's disability and aims to provide quality teaching that will encourage active participation of persons with SEN in the regular school setting. It also focuses on the need to remove any form of discrimination in the school setting. In both definitions of UNESCO (1994) and UNESCO (2009), inclusive education should provide the educational support that will meet the learning abilities of all individuals based on appropriate curriculum content, modified teaching methodologies and strategies. This means that, inclusive education should provide the educational means that will ensure full participation of all children.

According to the Centre for Studies of Inclusive Education [CSIE] (2003), inclusion means enabling pupils to participate in the life and work of mainstream institutions to the best of their abilities, whatever their needs. Further, they explained that, IE involves children with and without disabilities learning together in ordinary pre-school provisions, schools, colleges and universities, with appropriate network of support. The CSIE's definition highlights the need for collaborative and collective school system in order to meet the needs of all individuals in the school environment. In other words, in tailoring the school environment to meet the needs of all individuals in terms of content, structures and strategies require the collective responsibilities of all stakeholders (UNESCO, 2005).

Poon-McBrayer and Ping-man (2013) define inclusive education as an educational process that accepts children with disabilities in the regular school settings where they can learn without any form of discrimination. Similarly, Adams (2016), views inclusive education as ensuring the acceptance of all

children in spite of their disability and providing quality education. In both definitions, inclusive education should create an enabling environment where all children will be accepted without any discrimination or marginalisation.

According to UNESCO (2020, p. 8), inclusive education refers to “securing and guaranteeing the right of all children to access, presence, participation and success in their local regular school”. Also, UNESCO (2020) indicated that, for inclusive education to be successful, schools in the local community should thrive to build their capacity to remove any form of barriers to access, presence, participation, and achievement to provide quality learning experiences for all children. Deducing from this definition, inclusive education practices should be fundamental at the local school level in order to serve its purpose. It can therefore be said that, the role of SENCOS, cannot be overlooked in practising inclusive education at the local school level because they are part of the primary stakeholders in implementing inclusive education at the local school level. Based on these definitions, there are some key elements that run through the definitions which can be considered as critical. They are:

- a. *Quality education*: providing the appropriate educational experiences for all learners.
- b. *Removal of barriers*: creating a conducive environmental structures that will accommodate all children.
- c. *Non-discrimination*: accepting all children irrespective of their disabilities.

- d. *Capacity building*: enhancing the knowledge and skills of educators and equipping the community and families with the needed support to enable them play their roles effectively.

In my view, IE can be described as providing appropriate learning experience, creating conducive environmental structures, accepting all children

irrespective of their disabilities, enhancing the knowledge and skills of educators and equipping the community and families with the needed support to enable them play their roles effectively to maximise the potentials of all learners. That notwithstanding, Ainscow (2005) identified four elements in the definition of inclusive education. They have been conceptualised as follows:

- a. *Inclusion as a process*: It involves a continues process of responding to diversity in the educational system. It is about recognising individual differences and appreciating the unique needs of the individual in the learning process.
- b. *Inclusion is concerned with identification and removal of barriers*: It involves collecting and evaluation of information from multiple sources to inform policy and practice.
- c. *Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all learners*: The “*presence*” refers to where children are educated and how they can frequent that environment and “*participation*” connotes meaningful learning experiences.
- d. *Inclusion focuses on learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or becoming underachievers in the learning environment*: providing the appropriate educational support to ensure full participation

and achievement of learners who are at risk in the educational environment.

Models of Inclusive Education

Giangreco's (1997) Framework

Giangreco's (1997) inclusive education model has nine interrelated themes which encompass educators, parents and other professionals responsible for practising IE. According to him, the following factors are relevant to the success of IE practices. They are:

1. Teamwork
2. A shared framework
3. Recognizing the role of family
4. Role responsibility of educators
5. Clear definition of roles
6. Effective use of support staff
7. Support services
8. Use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and
9. Use of assessment procedures

Teamwork

According to Giangreco (1997), team work is an essential component in providing quality IE. He explained that, there are different professionals who provide educational support to children with SEN. Some schools have teachers, special educators, physiotherapists among others working to ensure the success

of the child with SEN in the IE setting. Mostly, some of these professional's work in a group, but working in a group does not necessarily make them a team. Giangreco asserted that, these professionals holding meetings together, communicating with each other, holding conferences together among others may appear to be a team effort, but may not share common goals. He postulated that, professionals who do not share a common goal may come together, reach a consensus and yet head in different directions in providing educational support to the child. He maintained that, if professionals do not share a common goal, it may lead to divergent educational goals, fragmented and disjointed educational programmes that can lead to poor education amongst children with SEN, families frustrated and teachers feeling unsupported. Therefore, for quality IE, there should be meaningful relationship among team members where the team strives to attain a common goal.

Shared Framework

Giangreco (1997) explained a shared framework as an “ever-evolving set of beliefs, values or assumptions about education, children, families and professionals to which all team members agree and upon which they base their actions” (p.195). He opined that, having a shared framework helps to identify the common denominators that exist among team members who usually may have different options. He stated that, a group without an ongoing basis of shared framework may limit the effectiveness of their work and are unlikely to become a true team.

Recognising the Role of Family

According to Giangreco (1997), the role of family is critical in implementing IE. He mentioned that, the IE system may face challenges if parents of children with SEN are marginalised or not involved in the education of their children. He further said that, in most cases professionals assume the expert posture in interacting with parents rather than considering parents as part of the team. Meanwhile, parents should be considered as part of the school system since they are the primary consumers of educational and support services. Additionally, he suggested that, families should be involved in the education of the children and also, professionals should recognise them as part of the team. He, however, gave the following reasons for the need to recognise the role of family in IE. Families:

- a. know certain aspects of their child better than anyone else.
- b. have the greatest vested interest in seeing their child learn.
- c. have the ability to influence positively the quality of educational services provided in their community.
- d. are likely to live with the outcomes of decisions made by educational teams on daily basis.

Roles and Responsibilities of Educators

This theme is concerned with educators performing their duties and responsibilities diligently in the IE system. Giangreco pointed out that, educators should consider themselves as primarily responsible for the teaching and learning of children with SEN in IE. For instance, he mentioned that, the

general education teacher is likely to be the only qualified teacher in the classroom throughout the child's school day, therefore it is the responsibility of the teacher to accept all children including children with SEN and focus teaching and learning on meeting the diverse needs in the classroom without any form of discrimination or marginalisation. From the foregoing, it can be said that, the roles of SENCOs in supporting teachers in the implementation of IE is critical, because teachers are the sole implementers of IE, therefore, SENCOs need to understand their duties and responsibilities well to perform them diligently in supporting teachers in the implementation of IE. It can also be said that, to achieve the goals of IE, the roles and responsibilities of educators should be monitored and evaluated at proper time intervals to find out if these roles are being played effectively.

Clear Definition of Roles

Giagreco highlighted the need for clear definition of roles in IE. He maintained that, for IE to be successful, educators, parents and other professionals should have a clear role definition. Each member should know what role is expected of him or her and also play the roles effectively in implementing IE. He further explained that, with the IE agenda, the roles of special educators have become unclear and their roles will therefore need to be clarified. Therefore, a clear definition of roles will reveal the individual roles of all stakeholders and help to strengthen IE practices. This also means that, the duties and responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation of IE should be clearly spelt out in policy documents or handbooks to provide a framework that will guide them in performing their duties.

Effective Use of Support Staff

Giangreco (1997) mentioned that, support staff are essential in the general education classroom even though, there may be some challenges associated with having support staff in the classroom which mostly affect children with SEN. He mentioned some challenges support staff may have on children such as; interference with roles and responsibilities of general education teachers; overly depending adults; loss of personal control; and interfering with peer interaction. Others are limiting their access to competent instructions; interference of instruction of other children; separation of classmates and loss of gender identity by children with SEN. He therefore suggested that for effective use of support staff, the school should train support staff; plan IE activities with qualified professionals; engage in continuous supervision in the classroom; engage in continuous research to find better ways of improving the learning needs of children with SEN among others.

Support Services

Giangreco suggested that, schools must provide support services to children with SEN to support their educational needs and also to provide them with quality education. He opined that, support services are most critical and integral for placement decisions and educational programmes. He maintained that, children with SEN receive support services that they can access and participate in school activities.

Use of Individualised Educational Plan (IEP)

According to Giangreco, the use of IEP is paramount in IE. IEPs are the blue print in providing appropriate educational programmes and interventions

for children with SEN. He postulated that, often times, IEP's for children with SEN do not meet their intended purposes. He indicated some problems in developing IEP for children with SEN such as; separate goals for each discipline, confusion between learning outcomes and support and unnecessary use of professional jargons. He maintained that, for IEPs to be effective, schools must involve parents, must identify appropriate learning targets which should be properly documented and should give access to children with SEN to access and participate in their educational programme.

Use of Assessment Procedures

According to Giangreco (1997), in as much as assessing the school prioritises the evaluation of teachers' performances, evaluation of children's performance should also be a priority. The school should have appropriate means in assessing children to suit the needs of all children in the classroom.

Deductions from Giangreco's (1997) model

According to Gyimah (2006), Giangreco's (1997) model recognises the important roles of educators and parents in implementing IE and the need for interaction between educators and parents and other professions in playing their roles in implementing IE. Gyimah (2006), supports the need for clear role identification in implementing IE. Lending support to Gyimah (2006) assertion of Giangreco's IE model, it can be said that, the roles of educators and parents are quintessential in implementing IE. This means that, the roles of educators and parents should be made clear. I agree with Gyimah's (2006) assertion that, national goals must be set to promote the growth and development of IE to make it successful. To add, policies and documents guiding inclusive practices in

countries should be the guiding framework in implementing IE. It also means that, these policies should clearly spell out roles and responsibilities. Similarly, relevant ministries should ensure that, these expected roles are played effectively in all levels of education. I am also of the view that, Giangreco's (1997) model should have merged some of the themes since some of the themes have similar focus and also go hand in hand. For instance, team work and shared framework could have been a composite theme, also support staff and services could have been one common theme. In addition, it seems some of the themes lacked comprehensiveness and need more clarification, for instance, the themes concerning assessment and clear role definition could have been more comprehensive. In spite of these shortfalls, the model provides a guide to the implementation of IE.

Applying Giangreco's Model of Inclusive Education to the Study

Giangreco's (1997) model of IE is applicable to the study because emphasis is placed on the roles of educators and parents and the interaction between educators, parents and other professionals. The critical aspect of the model to the aim of the current study is the need to determine the duties and responsibilities of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. Loreman, Deppeler, and Harvey (2010), acknowledge the importance of stakeholders in the implementation of IE. They indicated that, for stakeholders to be effective it calls for: understanding of their roles; their collective responsibilities and critical examination of their concerns in IE before providing solution. In summary, all these models provide a pathway for building inclusive education and help us to gain a better understanding of the inclusive education concept,

even though, these models have unique ways of conceptualising inclusive education, putting them together gives a holistic view of inclusive education.

Lewis and Norwich's (1999) framework

Lewis and Norwich's model of inclusive education explained inclusive education based on the needs of children. In their model, they revealed how early childhood inclusive education should be approached based on some identified needs of children such as cognitive, physical, social, emotional and communication. They further classified their needs into three namely:

1. Needs that are common to all (for example, motivation);
2. Needs that are common to some, but not others (for example, visual impairment, physical disabilities and hearing impairment); and
3. Needs that are unique to an individual (for example, complex needs).

The first type of need identified in this model can be conceptualized as general needs. According to Gyimah (2006), the first type of needs is the responsibility of all teachers. Buttressing Gyimah's assertion, it appears these needs can be catered for in the general education classroom where the teacher is key in ensuring that the educational needs of the child are met. Similarly, considering the second needs, I am in support with Gyimah (2006) who argued that, these needs require a specialized attention and experts in the fields of inclusive education to ensure these needs are met. Teachers in their own capacity may not be adequately successful in managing the needs of children but require the help of other experts such as SENCOs to fulfil their role (Winwood, 2013). Gyimah (2006), clearly points out that, with the first needs it is likely for teachers to be effective, however, in the second and third needs,

there is clearly doubt of teacher effectiveness without the support of other key players such as the SENCOs in facilitating inclusion because of the complex nature of the subsequent needs.

The third type signifies children with and profound disabilities. Their needs may be complex to handle in the regular education classroom. They may require specialized classroom, experts in the field of special education and specialized equipment in handling them. Considering their nature of disability, they may not have access to inclusive education, this could be one of the reasons why some countries practice partial and severe inclusion to inclusive education (Jensen, 2015). Jensen (2015), further mentioned that, for the best interest of the child and to meet the individual needs of the child, there should be various settings such as partial inclusion, inclusion and self-contained to meet the needs of children in the least restrictive environment. In as much as some school of thought argue for (Garcia & Tyler, 2010) full inclusion, others disagree (Maggin, Wehby, Moore Partin, Robertson, & Oliver, 2011) to full inclusion for all students. In my view and based on Lewis and Norwich's model, inclusive education should be based on the unique needs of individual children while considering the availability of human and physical resources in meeting their needs based on the principle of least restrictive environment.

Ainscow's (2005) Framework

As part of improving the practice of inclusion, Ainscow (2000) proposed six strategies that could be used to develop and push inclusion practice forward and identified them as:

- i. Starting with existing practices and knowledge

- ii. Seeing differences as opportunities for learning
- iii. Scrutinising barriers to participation
- iv. Making use of available resources to support learning
- v. Developing a language of practice
- vi. Creating conditions that encourage risk-taking.

However, a few years later, Ainscow refined his ideas in a paper on 'Developing an Inclusive Education System: What are the levers for change?' Ainscow (2005) (see figure 2) placed School Review and Development at the centre in pushing practice forward. He saw the school to be central if inclusion could be developed and sustained in helping to develop an increasingly diverse range of learners.

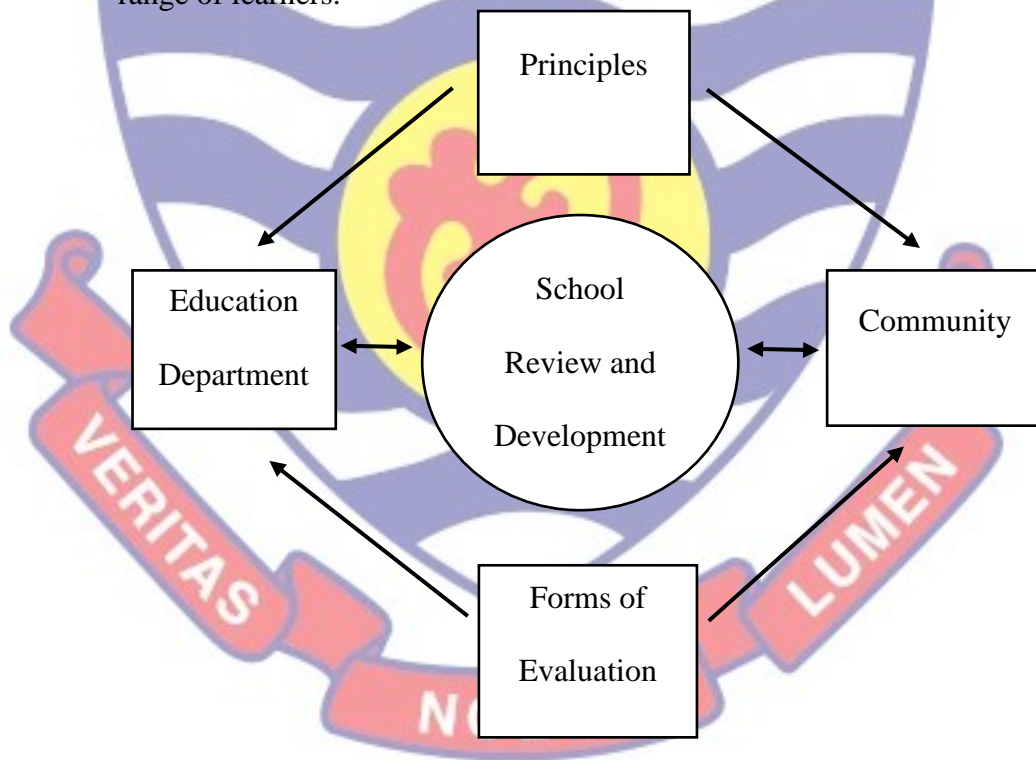


Figure 2: Ainscow's (2005) framework

In his second framework, Ainscow (2005) draws attention to the principles that guide policy priorities within education system; the views and

actions of others within the local context, including members of the wider community that the school serves and the staff of the departments that have responsibility for the administration of the school; and the criteria that are used to evaluate the performance of schools.

Ainscow (2005) revealed that, his inclusive education model is intended to focus on factors that depend on inclusive education development within an educational system. Specifically, his model intends to draw attention to actions that can be taken in the educational system to move the inclusive system forward. Ainscow's (2005) model of inclusive education makes the school central in analysing inclusive education. Ainscow's (2005) argument is for inclusive education to be viewed from the local communities, where the school is central. He mentioned that, schools should be given the necessary support and have structures that will help the participation and learning of children with diverse needs.

To this end, it can be perceived that, Ainscow's (2005) focus was on strengthening the school's capacity, including essential features in the school that can ensure equal participation and reducing exclusion from the school environment. Ainscow further postulates that, the framework draws attention to varied influences in the educational context that affects the way the school carries out their work. Ainscow (2005) further explained that, these influences may help the school and encourage it to move towards an inclusive direction or act as barriers to the school's progress. Ainscow (2005) identifies these influencers as the: principles that guide policy priorities within an educational system; views and actions of others within the local context; including members

of the wider community that the schools serve; staff of the departments that have responsibility for the administration of the school system; criteria that are used to evaluate the performance of schools.

Considering Ainscow's (2005) provisions towards building an inclusive environment, the framework provides a good foundation in promoting inclusive practices (Gyimah, 2006). Ainscow's (2005) model emphasises the importance of a common sense of purpose" and "a common use of language" (McMaster, 2012; Gyimah, 2006). From the forgoing, the success or failure of inclusive education begins from the school level which is dependent on the structures or influences at the school level. However, as Gyimah (2006), pointed out, with the school being the main focus in the development of inclusive practices, the framework should have depicted a clearer picture of the principles since the overall influence of the school comes from the government but not only the community.

On the other hand, it can be said that with the implementation of IE in Ghana, the government seem to have taken a different stance in support of inclusive education at all levels through the policy on inclusive education. As Gyimah (2006) clearly points out that, the framework is feasible where there is governmental support.

Ainscow and Miles's (2009) Framework

An inclusive education framework incorporates the features of the education system that are relevant for a successful inclusive education practice (Ainscow & Miles, 2009; Ainscow, 2005). To Ainscow and Miles (2009), the framework is important in highlighting the areas of development in inclusive

education practices. Ainscow and Miles's (2009) indicate four overlapping themes in the inclusive framework, each theme has four indicators. They are as follows:

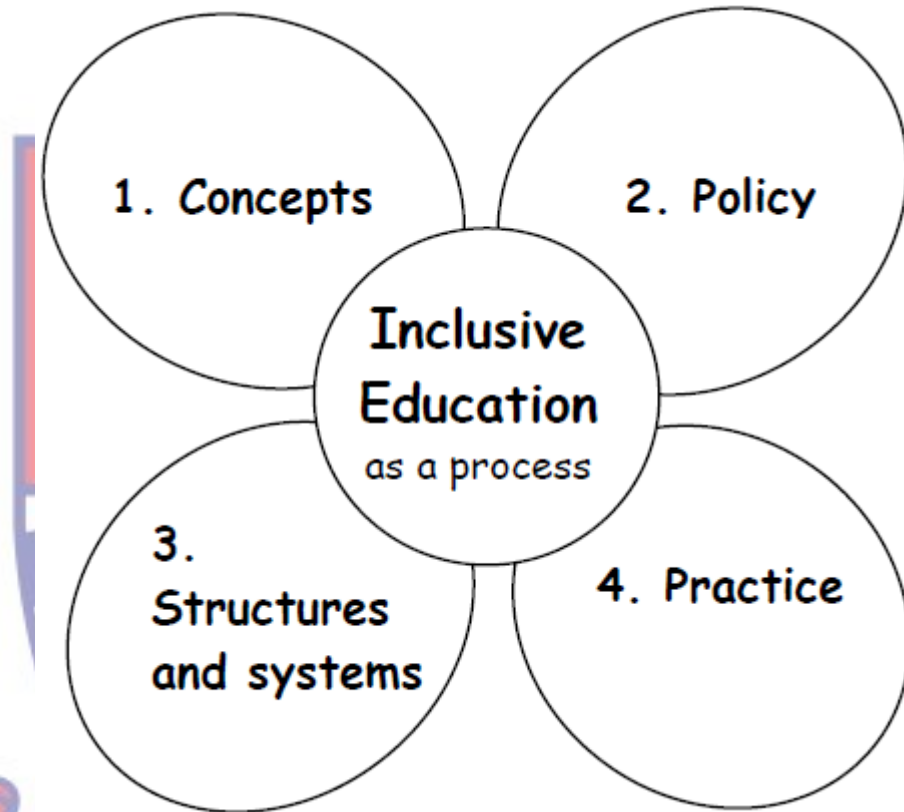


Figure 3: Ainscow and Miles's (2009) framework

Theme 1: Concepts

In an education system that is becoming inclusive:

- 1.1 Inclusion is seen as an overall principle that guides all educational policies and practices.
- 1.2 The curriculum and its associated assessment systems are designed to take account of all learners.
- 1.3 All agencies that work with children, including the health and social services, understand and support the policy aspirations for promoting inclusive education.

1.4 Systems are in place to monitor the presence, participation and achievement of all learners.

Theme 2: Policy

In an education system that is becoming inclusive:

2.1 The promotion of inclusive education is strongly featured in important policy documents.

2.2 Senior staff provide clear leadership on inclusive education.

2.3 Leaders at all levels articulate consistent policy aspirations for the development of inclusive practices in schools.

2.4 Leaders at all levels challenge non-inclusive practices in schools

Theme 3: Structures and systems

In an education system that is becoming inclusive:

3.1 There is high quality support for vulnerable groups of learners.

3.2 All services and institutions involved with children work together in coordinating inclusive policies and practices.

3.3 Resources, both human and financial, are distributed in ways that benefit vulnerable groups of learners.

3.4 There is a clear role for specialist provision, such as special schools and units, in promoting inclusive education.

Theme 4: Practice

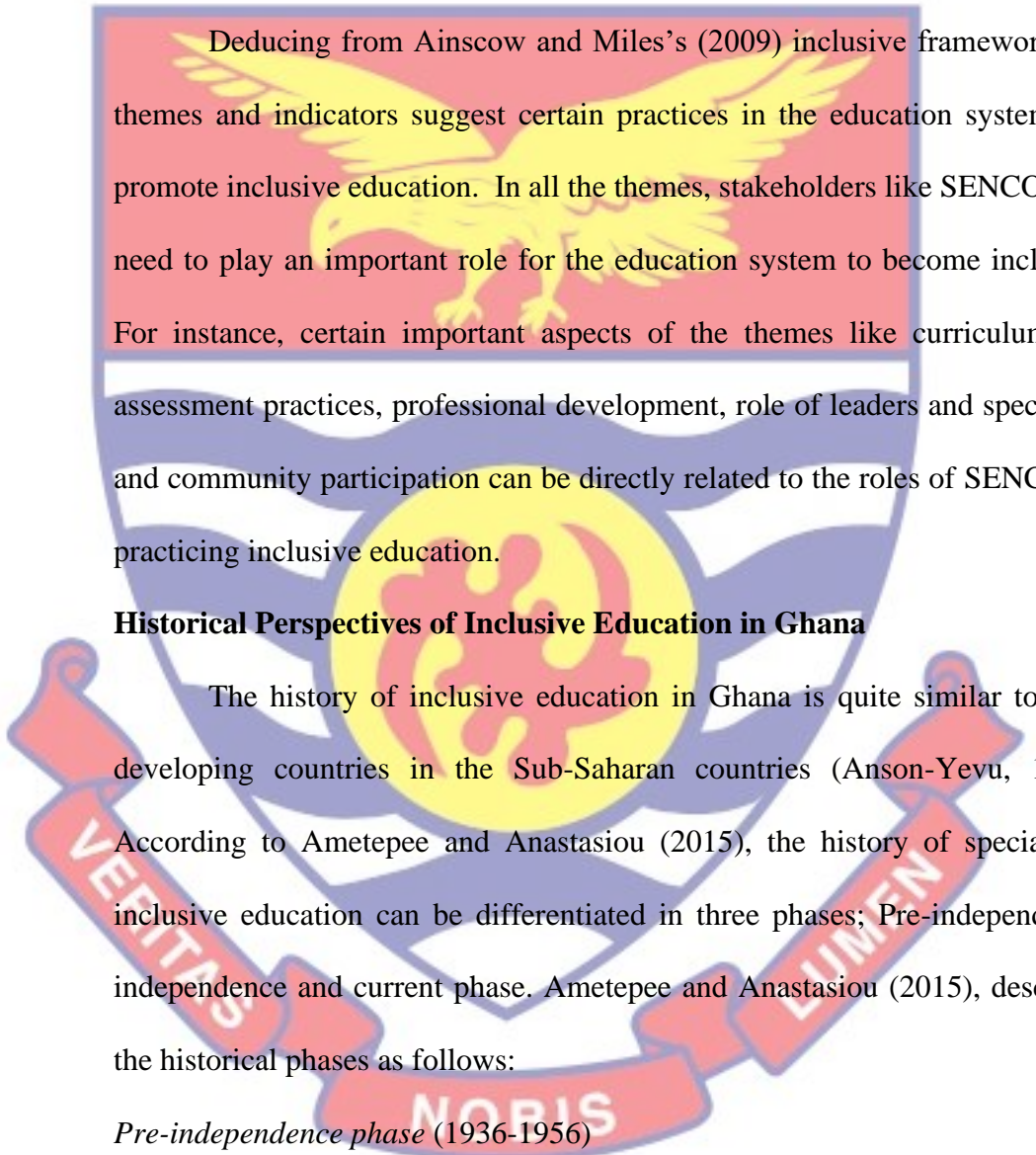
In an education system that is becoming inclusive:

4.1 Schools have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners from their local communities.

4.2 Schools provide support for learners who are vulnerable to marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement.

4.3 Trainee teachers are prepared for dealing with learner diversity.

4.4 Teachers have opportunities to take part in continuing professional development regarding inclusive practices.



Deducing from Ainscow and Miles's (2009) inclusive framework, the themes and indicators suggest certain practices in the education system that promote inclusive education. In all the themes, stakeholders like SENCOs will need to play an important role for the education system to become inclusive. For instance, certain important aspects of the themes like curriculum and assessment practices, professional development, role of leaders and specialists and community participation can be directly related to the roles of SENCOs in practicing inclusive education.

Historical Perspectives of Inclusive Education in Ghana

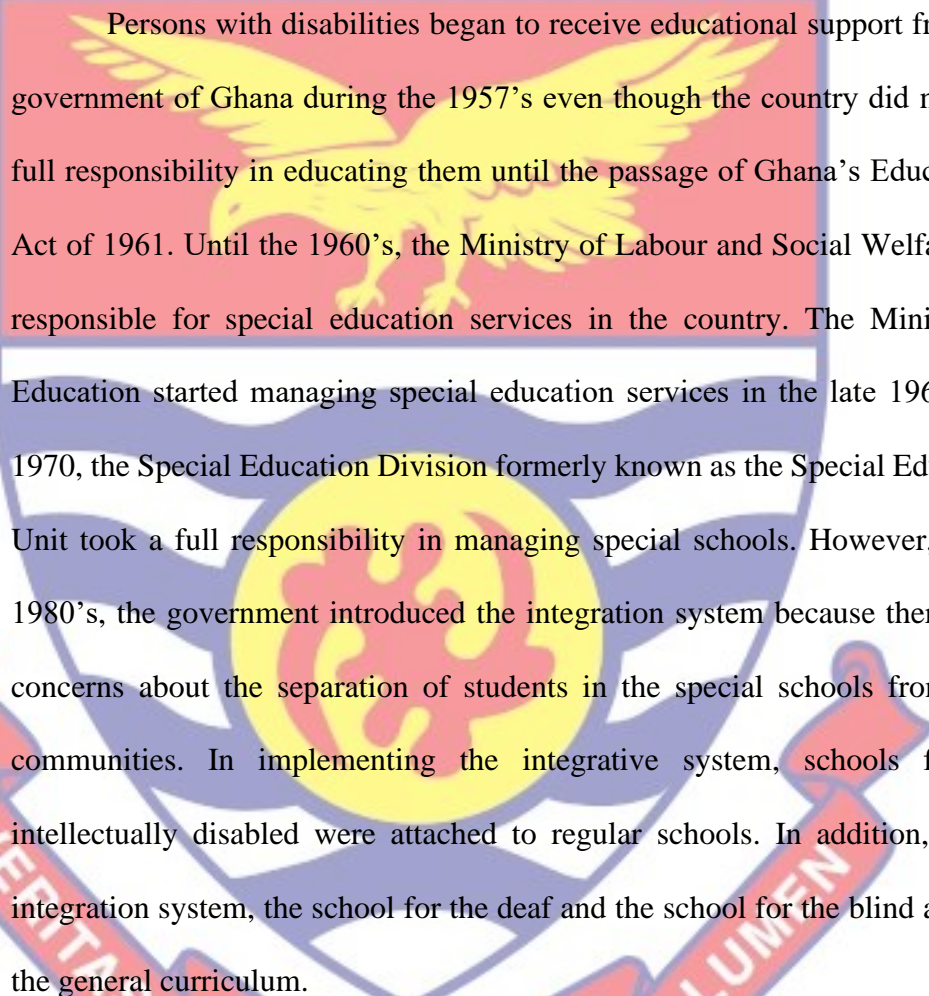
The history of inclusive education in Ghana is quite similar to most developing countries in the Sub-Saharan countries (Anson-Yevu, 1988). According to Ametepee and Anastasiou (2015), the history of special and inclusive education can be differentiated in three phases; Pre-independence, independence and current phase. Ametepee and Anastasiou (2015), described the historical phases as follows:

Pre-independence phase (1936-1956)

Persons with disabilities who had mild to moderate disabilities trained in trades like their counterparts without disabilities. This phase witnessed the beginning of missionary support in educating persons with disabilities.

However, the category of disabilities that were given attention were the blind and the deaf. Schools that were established for persons with disabilities during that era focused on literary skills and weaving of baskets.

Independence phase (establishment of public special education system 1957-1993)



Persons with disabilities began to receive educational support from the government of Ghana during the 1957's even though the country did not take full responsibility in educating them until the passage of Ghana's Educational Act of 1961. Until the 1960's, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was responsible for special education services in the country. The Ministry of Education started managing special education services in the late 1960's. In 1970, the Special Education Division formerly known as the Special Education Unit took a full responsibility in managing special schools. However, in the 1980's, the government introduced the integration system because there were concerns about the separation of students in the special schools from their communities. In implementing the integrative system, schools for the intellectually disabled were attached to regular schools. In addition, to the integration system, the school for the deaf and the school for the blind adapted the general curriculum.

Current phase (emphasis on inclusion mid 1990's-present)

Ametepee and Anastasiou (2015) pointed out that, the current phase is the inclusive education era. Before the Salamanca Statement and framework for Action in 1994, there were no specific policies in guiding the education of persons with SEN in Ghana (UNESCO, 1994). The era of inclusive education

introducing the signatory and ratification of several international treaties like the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action and UNCPRD. Lending support to Ametepee and Anastasiou (2015), the emphasis on inclusion is strengthened by the launching of the inclusive education policy in 2016 (Isaac & Dogbe, 2020).

In summary, based on Ametepee and Anastasiou (2015) classification and of the history of special and inclusive education in Ghana, the historical perspective of special and inclusive education can be conceptualised as:

- a. Pre-independence (1936-1956) (**segregation phase**); this phase was marked by segregation of persons with disabilities and SEN in the school system. Individuals with SEN were totally separated from the regular school environment.
- b. Independence phase (1957-1993) (**integration phase**); this phase welcomed individuals with SEN in the regular school environment but the system could not fully cater for the educational needs of the individuals with SEN since they were only placed in the school environment without other educational support that will ensure their full participation.
- c. Current (mid 1990's-present) (**inclusion phase**); in this current phase, the education of individuals with SEN and disabilities is backed with legislative support and policy. Persons with and without disabilities are expected to be educated in the same classroom environment without any form of discrimination or marginalisation (UNESCO, 2005). In summary, Ofori (2018), highlights the development of IE in Ghana as:

Table 1: *Phases of the Development of IE in Ghana*

DATE	PHASES
1936	Establishment of special education schools.
1946	Schools for the blind and deaf are built - “Akropong-Akwapim School”.
1957	Ghana gained independence. The educational needs of the disabled children became a concern of the government.
1961	Establishment of the Education Act of 1961.
1970-1990	Creation of Special Education Unit, taking responsibility for disabled children and integration of the schools.
1992	The 1992 Constitution of Ghana is established.
1994	The Salamanca Statement is issued emphasizing inclusive education.
1996	The government implemented a Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education program (FCUBE) in support of education in Ghana.
2000	Education for All (EFA) (Dakar).
2003	Education Strategic Plan (ESP) from 2003 to 2015 is established to support special education and the goals reported in the Education for All. This supports inclusive education as well.
2010 to date	Inclusive education policy is introduced and steps taken towards its implementation

Source: Ofori (2018)

Types of Inclusive Programmes in Ghana

Deku and Vanderpuye (2017), mention the following types of inclusive education programmes in Ghana:

- a. Units for children with intellectual disability within regular education complexes.
- b. Integrated educational programme for children with low vision.

Hostel Support, Units for the blind in schools for the deaf.

- c. Inclusive schools with special resource teacher support.
- d. Inclusive schools without resource teacher support.

Basic Components of Inclusive Education

The components of IE as suggested by Giangreco and associates (Giangreco, Baumgart, & Doyle, 1995; Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis, & Edelman, 1994; Giangreco & Doyle, 2000; Giangreco & Suter, 2015) is one of the most in-depth conceptualizations of inclusive education that can be applied across multi-cultural context (Abery, Ticha, & Kincade, 2017). These components are:

1. **Heterogeneous grouping:** this is where the school setting takes into consideration educating students with and without disabilities with appropriate proportions in the classroom based on the local population.
2. **A sense of belonging to a group.** Students with disabilities are not treated as passive members in the classroom but are considered as active participants in the classroom activities. Students feel welcome and part of the classroom community.
3. **Shared activities with Individualised outcomes.** Students go through similar educational experiences. For instance, activities like classroom lessons, field work, laboratories, and group learning are same for all learners. However, the learning objectives are tailored to meet individual needs.

4. **Use of environments frequented by individuals without disabilities.**

The learning experiences take place in the regular education classroom and community work sites.

5. **A balanced educational experience.** Inclusive education promotes an

Individualised balance between academic/functional and social/personal aspects of schooling. For example, the development of the student's adaptive skills and social skills are equally important as their academic skills.

It can be said that, for the components of inclusive education to be realised in the school environment, it calls for the collective responsibility of all stakeholders in playing their roles effectively.

Indicators to a Successful Implementation of Inclusive Education

Okyere and Adams (2003) maintained that, generally there are seven factors that can be considered in implementing inclusive education.

Visionary Leadership

For inclusive education to succeed in Africa, and in the Ghanaian context, it behoves directors of special education divisions and regular school head teachers to have a dynamic vision of the whole process. It also calls for educational leaders to ensure that the inclusive education classroom is adjusted to meet the needs of all learners especially children with SEN.

Collaboration

The success of inclusive education is strongly characterised by a collective responsibility of all stakeholders. It draws on the collaborative effort of professionals in different fields like education, medicine, psychology and the

community. For example, in the educational field, the collaborative roles of professionals like teachers, head teachers, special educators among others cannot be underestimated. The expertise of all these professionals is needed to meet the educational needs of all the students in the classroom. In other words, the success of practicing inclusive education greatly depends on the collaboration between stakeholders (Murphy, 2018). Therefore, there must be continuous professional support for all educators especially teachers and administrative support for both special education teachers, regular classroom teachers, and the pupils with disabilities.

Refocused Use of Assessment

Traditionally, the use of formal assessment tools had been the sole means in determining the eligibility of students for SEN. However, some studies carried out on the global front criticised the use of formal assessment due to its inadequacies and biases. In view of this, the focus on formal assessment tools have been shifted to the use of alternative assessment tools such as authentic assessment, portfolio assessment and performance-based assessment.

Support for Staff and Students

Professional development and in-service training for regular education teachers is paramount to the success of inclusive education. Regular classroom teachers usually express concerns about inclusive education, and one of the major concerns is that, they feel they are inadequately trained to implement inclusive education (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017; Vanderpuye, Gyimah, & Deku, 2009). Teachers must therefore be trained to gain the requisite skills and knowledge in order to play their role effectively to implement inclusive

education (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017). Teachers should be supported with teaching assistants especially those with large classes. Students with special needs should be given the needed support in the form of extra learning materials and aids to facilitate their learning in the regular classroom.

Funding

Funding is very important in the implementation of inclusive education. Most developing countries have challenges meeting the financial needs in the implementation of inclusive education. Some countries are also reluctant to invest in the education of children with special needs. African countries must recognize that, the success of inclusive education calls for adequate financial support, even though, some countries have economic crisis, it is still imperative to prioritise the education of both children with and without disabilities.

Effective Parental Involvement

Generally, most countries in Africa do not prioritise parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities. Parents who have children with disabilities usually go through emotional distress (Mitchell, 2014). Besides, some parents are faced with negative attitudes and stigmatisation in their respective communities (Avoke & Avoke, 2004; Gadagbui, 2010; Opoku-Boadi, 2015) which can lead to poor parental involvement. Meanwhile, for the schools to be successful in educating children with disabilities, there should be co-operation between the schools and the parents (Bariroh, 2018). Hence, parents are encouraged to play their roles effectively through active participation in their children's education to make inclusive education successful (Vanderpuye, 2013).

Curricula Adaptations

Curriculum adaptations is imperative to the success of inclusive education. Adapting the curriculum is one of the major roles teachers play in the inclusive classroom (Adewumi, Rembe, Shumba, & Adeola Akinyemi, 2017; Mishra, Hota & Khamari, 2019). Adewumi, Rembe, Shumba, and Adeola Akinyemi (2017), argue that, curriculum adaptation is important in including children with SEN in the regular classroom. Regular teachers should be equipped with the skills and strategies to be able to adapt the curriculum effectively in inclusive education (Crispel & Kasperski, 2019; Shani & Hebel, 2016).

The indicators for a successful inclusive education suggests the need for educators like SENCOs to play their roles effectively. SENCOs are experts who are directly involved in the implementation of IE. They are expected to liaise with parents, support the schools to manage children with IE, collaborate with head teachers, teachers and parents, participate in assessment of children with SEN, help teachers to adapt the curriculum among others.

Challenges to the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Ankutse (n.d.) noted that, inclusive education seeks to clear the education system of its challenges like negative teacher attitudes, rigid methods/rigid curriculum, inaccessible environments, many drop-outs/many repeaters, teachers and schools not supported, poor parental involvement, inadequate teaching and learning materials and poor quality training. On the contrary, it appears that, these challenges in the education system still exist after

the implementation of inclusive education. Some of the key challenges in implementing inclusive education are:

Funding

UNESCO (2009) mentioned that, funding is a major challenge in the implementation of inclusive education. Implementation of inclusive education involves specialised teaching and learning equipment, teaching professional development, professionals from different disciplines who will undertake assessment among others. Countries with poor economic background may have challenges in implementing inclusive education successfully due to inadequate funding (Akinyi, Nyangia and Orodho, 2015).

Poor Parental Involvement

Poor parental involvement is one of the challenges in implementing inclusive education, even though several studies point out the importance of parental involvement in inclusive education (Amponteng et al., 2019; Bariroh, 2018; Sharma, Forlin, Marella, & Jitoko 2016). According to Monika (2017), the roles of parents in inclusive education include; collaborating with teachers and school authorities; being actively involved in their child's learning; attending meetings, training programmes and conferences; actively engaging in the development of the child's Individualised Education Plan (IEP); maintaining continuous communication with teachers or specialist; frequent contact with class teachers and resource teachers to be updated on their child's progress in the classroom. Despite these key roles of parents, most parents are not involved in the education of their children due to financial challenges, stigmatizations, illiteracy among others (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

Vanderpuye (2013) highlighted some challenges to parental involvement in inclusive education in Ghana, including; financial constraint, lack of communication, unwelcoming attitude of school staff; lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN; inability to help with homework; busy work schedule and opposing views of parents and school authorities which hinder the success of inclusive education.

Negative Attitude of Teachers

According to Green (2017), the teachers' attitude plays a dominant role in teaching and learning. She argues that, the teacher's attitude in the inclusive classroom can affect implementation and delivery of instruction. In the same vein, Saloviita (2019) argues that, the teachers' attitude is an important resource in determining the success of inclusive education. Ewing, Monsen, and Kielblock (2018) state that, teachers' attitudes vary greatly, while some teachers show positive attitudes, others show negative attitude in the implementation of inclusive education. Gal, Schreur, and Engel-Yeger (2010) report that, the teachers' negative attitude in inclusive education can decrease academic performance and increase exclusion of children with SEN in the inclusive classroom. Similarly, the teachers' negative attitude can deter the implementation of inclusive education because she/he may not be in support of the policies and practices that encourage the successful implementation of inclusive education (Chitiyo, Kumedzro, Hughes, & Ahmed, 2019). According to Gal, Schreur, and Engel-Yeger (2010), the teachers' negative attitude is one of the difficult barriers to deal with in the educational setting.

Rigid Curriculum

According to Mogbo (2002), curriculum encompasses the content, structure, and processes of teaching and learning, which the school provides in accordance with its educational objectives and values. This includes the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students acquire as well as the factors that inform the ethos and general environment of the school. Mogbo (2002), saw curriculum as all planned experiences, opportunities, and activities provided by a school to assist the learners attain the designed learning outcomes and desired change in behaviour. Curriculum involves all the structured and unstructured school activities and processes leading to students' learning. Kawser, Ahmed, and Ahmed (2016) found that inflexible curriculum is a big problem for the child with SEN. A rigid syllabus is a great barrier to inclusive education. Glat and Blanco (2009) as cited in Olivia (2016) stated that the existence of curricular accommodations can contribute to the academic success of students with disabilities, global developmental delay, and high abilities or giftedness, by enabling learning and participation. However, there are no pre-set rules as to the type and amount of accommodations required: there are no manuals (Oliva, 2016). According to Hausiku (2017), Namibian school's curriculum does not accommodate all learners with special needs fully which makes it difficult for teachers to know what tools and methodologies to use to support and accommodate all learners' needs. In the view of Jung and Pandey (2018), rigid and inappropriate curriculum as well as teaching methods create a major barrier for inclusive practices of diverse group of learners. Also the examination process is not flexible for the learners with SEN. As Reiser (2012) argued that

where national curricula and assessment policies are too rigid, competitive and do not allow for flexibility and collaborative working practicing inclusive education can be hindered. Ngulube (2016) stated that many curricular expect all pupils to learn the same things, at the same time and by the same means and methods while pupils are different and have different abilities and needs (UNESCO, 2005). Farrell (2010) argues that it is perfectly feasible and preferable to develop a curriculum that is for all pupils including, those with disabilities and disorders. Thus, the curriculum should be adapted as a broadly based one for all pupils. If the curriculum should be unified and adapted to meet the learning needs of the varied abilities and special needs students in inclusive classrooms or special schools, then the obvious question is how well do SENCOs support teachers in adapting the curriculum to meet the learning needs of all students in the inclusive classrooms? If SENCOs are not playing their roles effectively to support teachers in IE, it is likely to defeat the purpose of inclusive education where all learners are to participate fully in the school activities to mere physical placement of learners with special needs in regular schools.

Teacher Competence and Professional Development

Teacher competence and professional development is important to the successful implementation of inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020; Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2016; Majoko, 2019; Zulfija, Indira & Elmira, 2013). Dias (2015), considers the teachers' role as central to the implementation of inclusive education. If the teachers lack knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive education it hinders the success of inclusive education (Flecha & Soler, 2013;

De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). The roles of teachers have changed in practicing inclusive education other than what was expected in the traditional classroom. Teachers are expected to show some level of competency in order to be effective in the inclusive classroom (Chireshe, 2013). The teacher's professional development is related to her/his competence (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2016). The teacher's competency includes; the use of appropriate teaching strategies; requires skills in classroom management; collaboration; assessment and evaluation; adapting the curriculum and behavior management (Das, Kuyini, & Desai, 2013; Rabi & Zulkefli, 2018). Teachers need to be competent to be able to adapt teaching and learning to suit the diverse needs of all children in the classroom (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011; Alhassan, 2014; Sharma, Simi, & Forlin, 2015). The competence of the teacher in the inclusive classroom determines the role s/he plays in the classroom (Rabi & Zulkefli, 2018). This means that, if the teacher is competent in the classroom, it will affect the effectiveness of the role s/he plays in the inclusive education classroom. According to Owobi, Jurmang, and Onuadiebere (2014), some of the inhibitors to teacher competencies are: wrong placement, inadequate staff support and class size. That notwithstanding, the teacher's competence is critical to her or his role and the successful implementation of inclusive education (Abba & Rahid, 2020). According to Carrington, Deppeler, and Moss (2010) student achievement in inclusive classrooms can be compromised unless teacher training programmes change course to embrace a new wave of pedagogical practice that value all learners. Professional development refers to improving the teacher's skills, attitudes and performance in playing his/her roles

(Luning, 2015). Agbenyega and Deku (2011) reveal that, teachers' professional development includes instructional and curricular techniques appropriate for the development of cognitive, social, cultural and physical needs of diverse learners in the inclusive environments. Luning (2015) pointed out that teacher professional development is one of the major hindrance to inclusive education. Therefore, when teachers do not receive adequate training, it is likely to affect their competence in playing their roles successfully in inclusive education. Nonetheless, no matter how equipped teachers are or prepared for IE, they still need the support of SENCOs to be more effective in handling children, especially children with SEN (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; MoE, 2015).

The Issue of Resources

Teaching and learning resources are important in the inclusive classroom. These resources can be in the form of material or equipment to make teaching and learning easy and to make normalization in the classroom or school possible. Farrell (2010) discusses various resources that are required for certain kinds of impairments and SEN: For some children with speech disorders, computer aided communication may be necessary as an alternative or augmentation to speech. For disorder of written expression for example, computer software is used for essay structure and other aspects of writing. The aim is to provide scaffolding for the pupil so that he can produce suitable work. At the same time, the intention is that the computer-provided support will gradually be internalized by the learner, who will gradually acquire the knowledge and skills to produce written work unaided. Visual impairment may

require low vision devices and lighting, Braille or Moon materials, and computer technology. Furniture, aids to movement and other devices are all part of the resources that may be used. For example, children with orthopaedic impairment need to be correctly positioned, and furniture takes account of pupil's stature and the need for good posture and support. These suggest that

resources are very important in the implementation of inclusive education. However, some of these resources are very expensive and providing them will require huge government budget. Meanwhile, without their provisions, policy becomes a lip-service and will remain only in principle but not in practise. Special needs learning materials include speech and language development, social and emotional skills, motor skills, sensory awareness, tactile awareness, visual discrimination, core skills and professional resources (Kawser, Ahmed, & Ahmed, 2016). They however argued that in the mainstream schools, these resources are not available to facilitate the learning of children with SEN which hinders the success of inclusive education. Zungu (2014) stated that many schools lack resources and facilities to support all learners, especially learners with special needs which hampers the progress of learners. Lack of materials and equipment in Ghana have equally been found as challenges to inclusive education (Nketsia, 2016; Ofori, 2018).

Environmental Accessibility

Accessibility is the degree to which an environment, service or product allows access by as many people as possible (Tudzi, Buguri, & Danso, 2017). Accessibility requires taking measures to ensure access for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others. Also, the Sustainable Development

Goal (SDG 4) identifies the need to ensure inclusive and equitable education. However, it seems that, persons with disabilities face a lot of challenges in accessing the school environment which has become a major challenge to their education. For instance, in Ghana, the inclusive education policy requires school buildings to be accessible for all children to attend school (Tugdzi, Buguri, and Danso, 2017, Commission of Human Right and Administrative Justice [CHRAJ], 2013). Ackah-Jnr and Danso (2019) reveal that, the physical environment of most inclusive schools in Ghana is inaccessible for children with disabilities. Thus, if the environment is not friendly for persons with disabilities to access education then the implementation of inclusive education may not be realised.

In spite of the foregoing arguments, the following are some challenges to the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana;

1. Negative attitude and prejudice mind (Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011; Nketsia, 2016).
2. Limited pedagogical competence (Adusei, Sarfo, Manukre, & Cudjoe, 2016; Nketsia, 2016).
3. Shortage of qualified teachers (Chitiyo, Kumedzro, & Ahmed, 2019).
4. Lack of educational resources (Gyimah, Sugden, & Pearson, 2009).
5. Teacher's inadequate skills in identification and assessment (Gyimah & Amoako, 2016).
6. Lack of qualified SENCO (Senadza, Ayerakwa, & Mills, 2019).

The challenges stated are likely to affect the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, as part of the aims of the study, some of the concerns of SENCOs in implementing IE will be investigated.

Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The title SENCO, can be traced to England's Code of Practice on the identification and Assessment of SEN, (DFE, 1994), SENCO is the person who is responsible for ensuring that the needs of school children with SEN are met. According to Bines (1992), the SENCO is an advocate for children with SEN who plays diverse roles as a teacher, consultant, enabler and manager.

To add, Cole (2005) views SENCOs as a group of educators who are directly involved in the educational experiences of children with SEN. Also, Rosen-Webb (2011) describes SENCOs as trained and experienced professionals with the expertise and skills to direct, manage, and co-ordinate activities in inclusive environment. She further described them as leaders who are responsible for ensuring positive climate in the school environment.

The conceptualisation of SENCOs in Ghana is quite similar to international perspectives. SENCOs are seen as individuals responsible for ensuring that, the educational system, structures and methodologies meet the unique needs of all learners in the classroom (Tsikudo, n.d.). Similarly, SENCOs are expected to manage issues concerning SEN in the IE setting (Donbeinaa, 2017). Based on the definitions above, it can be said that, the SENCO is the person who ensures that, the needs of children with SEN are met, teachers are given the required support in managing children with SEN and overall, manages issues concerning SEN in the school.

The History of SENCOs from the International Perspective

Globally, SENCOs are generally recognised in the education of children with SEN (Kearney, Mentis, & Holley-Boen, 2017). The title ‘SENCO’ can be traced from the British Educational system (Collins, 2011). The SENCO’s role was formalised in England in 1994 (Morewood, 2012) and it is stipulated in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of SEN (DfEE, 1994). According to Epistol and Carroll (2019), SENCOs’ duties and responsibilities are mandatory as enshrined in the 1994 code of practice (DfE, 1994) to support IE. The 1994 code obligated all schools to have specialist teachers to handle issues concerning children with SEN (Mackenzie, 2012). Apart from England who were the first to coin the title SENCO and also formalise their roles, other countries such as Australia, Sweden, New Zealand, Hong Kong among others have formalised the roles of SENCOs through policies and legislations (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Kearney et al., 2017; Szeto, Cheng & Sin, 2018). Some countries such as Cyprus, Greek, Ireland, Hong Kong among others have SENCOs, but are yet to regularise their roles (e.g., Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Fitzgerald Radford, 2017; Szeto, Cheng & Sin, 2018; Liasidou & Svensson, 2013).

Historical Perspectives of SENCOs in Ghana.

In Ghana, it appears that, there is little information on how the roles of SENCOs started. However, it is believed that, the SENCOs’ role can be traced from 1972, through Mrs. Eudisia Obeng who played a voluntary role similar to the present roles of SENCOs (Donbeinaa, 2017). She started visiting children

with SEN in their homes in the Eastern Region to give them counselling and peripatetic services (Donbeinaa, 2017; Gadagbui, 1998).

According to Donbeinaa (2017), in 1975, Ghana Education Service recognised the importance of providing home support for children with SEN so they officially appointed five officers with the called “peripatetic teachers” to

aid in the identification of children with SEN, liaise with district education offices and families to provide the necessary support for children with SEN who were to be enrolled in schools. He explained further that, to meet the educational needs of children with SEN, between 1992 and 1993, there was a rapid increase in the appointment of peripatetic teachers with the number increasing from 39 to 53 respectively. Currently, peripatetic teachers are now called SENCOs and can be found in almost every district in Ghana (Donbeinaa, 2017). This is in fulfilment of the standards and guidelines for IE which stipulate that “All schools should have qualified special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)”, (MoE, 2015, p. 16). SENCOs are categorised under special educators who constitute the key operators in the management of children with SEN (Tsikudu, n.d). However, their expected roles are not explicit in the policy unlike head teachers’ and teachers’ that are clarified in the policy. In my view, inclusion of the roles of SENCOs in the policy would have clarified what they are expected to do in the implementation of IE (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gareskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Giangreco, 1997; Mackenzie, 2012) and considering how significant they are in the implementation of IE (Gareskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Smith & Broomhead, 2019)

Guiding Principles of a SENCO

SENCOs are expected to play key roles in the implementation of IE. According to Rosen-Webb (2011), SENCOs should be guided by some philosophies in performing their roles. Based on the findings of her study, these values are paramount to the SENCO. Rosen-Webb (2011) outlines nine (9) of

these principles in a hierarchical manner: A SENCO should/must:

1. be interested in how learner learn
2. have in integrity
3. must be optimistic
4. be able to manage a team
5. have empathy and sympathy to advance students' progress
6. be able to manage stress
7. have an updated knowledge on SEN
8. advocate for social justice for children with SEN
9. be honest

Roles of the SENCO and Inclusive Education (IE)

In the implementation of IE, teachers are recognised as key implementers (Subbey, 2020), in the same vein, SENCOs are vital in the implementation of IE (Winwood, 2013) because they support teachers to handle children with SEN in the classroom (Rosen-Webb, 2011). According to Winwood (2012), the role of the SENCO is as important as that of the teacher in meeting the needs of children with SEN in the classroom. Besides, an effective inclusion practice depends on the quality of teaching and learning afforded to children with SEN (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020). Additionally, the

move towards IE demands special focus on matters involving children with SEN. In this regard, the roles of SENCOs become critical in the implementation of IE (Tissot, 2013; Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist, & Wetso, 2011).

Literature suggest a shift in SENCOs role from discrete roles as special educators in handling children with SEN in special schools (Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist, & Wetso, 2011) to coaches who direct and support regular schools in the implementation of IE (Bennet, 2016). With the current policy on IE in Ghana, SENCOs are significant in the implementation as they are required to be in every school (MoE, 2015). Some researchers indicate that many teachers have difficulties in handling children with SEN in IE (e.g., Winwood, 2013; Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004). Therefore, SENCOs are expected to provide teachers the support they need in managing children with SEN in their classroom (Cole, 2005; Winwood, 2013). This means that, the SENCOs' roles in IE are paramount. Cole (2005) calls for the recognition of the role of SENCOs to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are catered for in the classroom. Lending support to Cole (2005) the role of SENCO is imperative in the education of children with SEN in IE.

Modus Operandi of SENCOs

The duties and responsibilities of SENCOs can be traced from England in the first Code of Practice (DfE, 1994). The Code of Practice was developed to ensure that all schools had experts in special education who will co-ordinate the activities of children with SEN (Tissot, 2013). According to Tissot (2013), the first document in 1994 spelt out seven duties and responsibilities, they are as follows:

1. The day to day operation of the school's SEN policy
2. Liaising with and advising fellow teachers
3. Coordinating provision for children with SEN
4. Maintaining the school's SEN register and overseeing the records on all pupils with SEN

5. Liaising with parents of children with SEN
6. Contributing to the in-service training of staff
7. Liaising with external agencies including the educational psychology service and other support agencies, medical and social services and voluntary bodies

Winwood (2013) points out that, the 1994 code was revised in 2001 (DfES, 2001) to include the following key areas:

1. Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy
2. Coordinating provision for children with SEN
3. Liaising with and advising fellow teachers
4. Managing learning support assistants
5. Overseeing the records of all children with SEN
6. Liaising with parents of children with SEN
7. Contributing to the in-service training of staff
8. Liaising with external agencies including the LEA's support and educational psychology services, health and social services, and voluntary bodies

These roles as enshrined in the Code of Practice in England may not be directly linked to the SENCOs' roles in other countries (Gareskog & Lindqvist,

2020). Even, within England, some scholars argue that the duties and responsibilities as enshrined in the Code of Practice have changed over time and call for an investigation of their current role (Tissot, 2013; Winwood, 2013) since their roles are pivotal in the implementation of IE (Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist & Wetso, 2011; Mackenzie, 2012).

In Ghana, considering the IE policy and the Standards and Guidelines for the implementation of IE, the roles of SENCOs are not clearly spelt out in these documents, even though their roles seem to be formalised based on the provisions in the Standard and Guidelines. However, Donbeinaa (2017), pointed out that, once the teacher is appointed as a SENCO, s/he is given a document that specifies the roles that they are expected to play which serves as their legal instrument in operating as SENCOs. He mentioned some of the duties and responsibilities as enshrined in the role specification document, such as;

1. Seeing to the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
2. Liaising with teachers involved in SEN
3. Maintaining SEN register for pupils in special schools
4. Liaising with external agencies

It can be said that, there may be additional roles or some of these roles may not be applicable in the implementation of IE. For instance, seeing to the day to day SEN policy, now there is also an inclusive education policy which is implemented in all schools in Ghana (MoE, 2015). SENCOs may not only be interested in the implementation of the SEN policy only but the IE policy since they are expected to be in every school but not only, special schools (Oppong, 2003). Therefore, deducing from Donbeinaa's (2017) explication of the duties

and responsibilities of SENCOs, these roles were in existence before the implementation of IE in Ghana. The implementation of IE in Ghana began in 2015 (MoE, 2015). It is likely that, with the implementation of IE, SENCOs may have entirely new roles, additional roles or lesser roles.

Apart from that, considering argument from several researchers (e.g., Cole, 2005; Lindqvist, 2012; Mackenzie, 2012) the existence of role specification document may not be sufficient to assume the roles of SENCOs since their roles change over time. For instance, the label 'SENCO' and the role started from England (Collinson, 2011) and is mandatory in their Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of SEN, (DfE, 1994). Their expected roles have been clearly spelt out and the Code of Practice was revised in 2001(Winwood, 2013), with their roles indicated as well. Yet, most researches on SENCOs in England (Rosen-Webb, 2011; Tissot, 2013) posit that, attention should be paid to the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. It can be said that, since their roles are specified in a policy, it provides clarity on their roles. On the contrary, Rosen-Webb (2011), stated that, the roles of SENCOs are not clear in policy context and in the literature.

Lending support to Mackenzie's (2012) assertion, there should be research on the roles of SENCOs, to reveal the roles of SENCOs to guide the implementation of IE because of their critical roles in supporting the school in handling matters regarding SEN (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020). It is expedient to point out here that, in as much as policies can influence practice, practices are also likely to influence policy (Cuban, 2015). Therefore, researches in this

area may lead to the clarification of their roles and can lead to a successful implementation of IE.

In this regard, a study of this sort is critical to clarify their roles in the implementation of IE in Ghana. Among others, their current duties and responsibilities in the implementation will be revealed as well as other critical issues like their confidence in playing their roles, level of knowledge, how they perform their roles and the challenges they encounter in the implementation of IE.

Barriers to the Roles of SENCOS

Several studies point out the importance of the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE (Cole, 2005; Kearney, Mentis, Holley-Boen, 2017; Mackenzie, 2012; Tissot, 2013). However, there are some factors that affect the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE which some scholars identify as impediments to their roles in the implementation of IE. According to Kearney, Mentis, and Holley-Boen (2017), they include:

SENCOS Working as Remedial Teachers

Lindqvist (2013) found that teachers and educational professionals preferred SENCOS to work as remedial teachers and expected them to teach children with SEN individually. This could be a hindrance to the effectiveness of the role of SENCOS considering how onerous the SENCO's role can be (Winwood, 2013). As indicated earlier, SENCOS are expected to engage in several activities, more specifically, to support parents and teachers to handle the difficulties faced in the implementation of inclusive education (Kearns, 2005). Some educators hold the view that SENCOS should be responsible for

teaching children with SEN because teachers have limited skills in teaching children with SEN (Lindqvist, 2013). If this is done, it will conflict what Lindqvist (2013) describes as “who should do what to whom” because the SENCO role was not planned to include full time teaching responsibility of children with SEN (Mackenzie, 2012).

Besides, several researchers have pointed out that, the work expectations of SENCOs put a heavy burden on their roles (Cowne, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Layton, 2005; Smith & Broomhead, 2019). When SENCOs involve themselves in direct teaching, teachers overly depend on them which overburdens the SENCOs (Sanagi, 2009). According to Sanagi (2009), the workload of SENCOs does not make them effective in remedial teaching and this affects the academic progress of children with SEN in the inclusive environment. He pointed out that, teachers should recognise the primary roles of SENCOs instead of expecting them to provide remedial teaching and overly depending on them to handle children with SEN. He further argued that, teachers should develop their skills and expertise to teach children with SEN directly. From the foregoing, when SENCOs engage in remedial teaching, it comes with a lot of disadvantages (Sanagi, 2009) and can prevent them from being effective in their primary roles which may lead to poor implementation of IE.

Limited Knowledge about their Roles

SENCOs lack of knowledge about their roles can affect the implementation of IE (Kearney et. al., 2017; Winwood, 2013). This means that, SENCOs level of knowledge about their roles is a critical aspect in the

performance of their duties and responsibilities. Agaliotis and Kalyva (2011), argued for SENCOs to update their knowledge on issues concerning children with SEN and also pointed out the need for SENCOs to be abreast with their duties and responsibilities as professionals to meet inclusive demands. SENCOs should prioritize their roles, have expertise in what to do to make IE effective (Kearns, 2005). In summary, if SENCOs have inadequate knowledge about their roles, it is likely to affect the implementation of IE.

Negative Attitude of SENCOs and other Staff towards Inclusive Education

Positive attitude from educators and other stakeholders is critical in the implementation of IE (Nandako, 2019; Paseka & Schwab, 2020; Saloviita, 2020). Similarly, several researchers indicate that, the success of IE education is largely dependent on teacher attitude (Greene, 2017; Kuya, 2018; Sharma, Chunawala, Chari, 2017). When teachers have negative attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education, it affects the effectiveness of IE (Saloviita, 2020). As shown by Kearns (2005) SENCOs play the roles of arbiters in the implementation of IE. They are responsible for supporting both parents and teachers in the implementation of inclusive education. SENCOs spend a lot of time responding to teachers on how to handle children with SEN (Winwood, 2013) yet, some teachers have negative views about children with SEN (Cole, 2005; Winwood, 2013) which affects the efforts made by SENCO's in sustaining inclusive education since teachers are key implementers (Subbey, 2020) in the implementation of IE.

In the same vein, the SENCO's negative attitude can influence the effective implementation of IE (Kearney et. al., 2017), since they are expected

to manage the implementation of IE (Mackenzie, 2012). In a study conducted by Winwood (2013), he asked participants why they wanted to become SENCOs. Some responded they had interest in the role, others responded they took the role because nobody wanted the role. According to Winwood (2013), being a SENCO with no enthusiasm can negatively influence the person's attitude and role in the implementation of IE. He mentioned that, SENCOs who do not have passion for the role or are coerced to accepting the SENCO role are likely to have a negative attitude which can affect the implementation of IE.

Limited Influences of SENCOs

According to Kearney, Mentis, and Holley-Boen (2017) inactive roles of SENCOs within the schools' leadership can affect the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. Available literature suggests that, the roles of SENCOs should have some elements of managerial and leadership roles (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Tissot, 2013). Similarly, the SEN Code of practice suggests SENCOs to have some leadership roles within the school context (Layton, 2005; Tissot, 2013; Winwood, 2013). To add, Cole (2005) argues that, SENCOs should be part of the school's management team. Failure to include SENCOs in the school's management team or leadership team affects effectiveness of the roles of SENCOs in IE (Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Tissot, 2013).

Empirical Review

In searching for information in relation to what some researchers have done with regards to the roles of SENCOs, Google scholar, Sci-hub, Z-library, web of science, University of Cape Coast Library, University of Development

Studies' Library and University of Education Library were used. However, it yielded limited information on their level of knowledge, their confidence and concerns regarding their roles in the implementation of inclusive education from both international and the national perspective. Besides, relevant journals focusing on SENCOs which in turn identified further sources yielded limited information.

Level of Knowledge of SENCOs in Playing their Roles in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Kearns (2005) reported that, SENCOs need to be “experts” in the implementation of IE. She found that, SENCOs knowledge and skills in playing their roles is important to the implementation of IE. Also, Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) conducted a study with 27 SENCOs in Ireland in the United Kingdom to investigate the roles of SENCOs using the mixed method exploratory design. The findings showed that only 10 of the participants felt they were knowledgeable about their roles. Their study showed that, SENCOs did not have adequate knowledge about their roles. Additionally, Winwood (2013) argued in his study that, SENCOs should be knowledgeable about their roles to be effective in the implementation of IE. It can be deduced that, SENCOs level of knowledge in playing their roles is important in the implementation of IE.

Moreover, unlike other countries in the United Kingdom like England with role specifications of SENCOs in the *Codes of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DfE, 1994). In Ghana, their roles are not specified in the policy nor the standard and guidelines

in the implementation of IE. Therefore, it is important to investigate their level of knowledge about their expected roles in the implementation of IE. Also, with the limited information on their roles, it is important to find out if they are knowledgeable about their roles and ascertain their level of knowledge in playing their roles.

Duties and Responsibilities of SENCOs in the Implementation of IE

Globally, few studies have been conducted to investigate the duties and responsibilities of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. Most of the findings of these studies from the international perspective have been discussed below.

To begin with, Cole (2005) conducted a study in England and Wales in the United Kingdom. The study investigated the roles of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Fifty-nine SENCOs responded to the questionnaire whereas 12 SENCOs participated in the interview. The findings revealed that one of the roles that SENCOs prioritised was liaising with parents. The study revealed that majority of the SENCOs were engaged in administrative and paper work involving Individualised Educational Plan (IEPs) and reviews for teaching assistants, liaising with external agencies and overseeing the statutory demands of their occupation. Also, the study revealed that, SENCOs were responsible for the implementation of IE. The study concluded that, the role of the SENCO needs to be central in the implementation of IE and called for revisiting, redefinition and re-conceptualisation of SENCOs role. In my view, considering the nature and depth of Cole's (2005) study, the roles of SENCOs as reported

could have been enumerated for clarity, however, indicating some challenges in their roles gave a broader perspective about the roles of SENCOs.

Secondly, Layton (2005) did a similar study in England in West Midland in the United Kingdom. Her study explored the roles of SENCOs', specifically, their perception in promoting the inclusion of children with diverse needs. In contrast to Cole's (2005) study, she used the quantitative method with a small scale of Twenty-Seven (27) respondents. The sole instrument was a questionnaire. Even though her study did not clearly indicate the specific roles that are prioritised by SENCOs, as indicated in Cole (2005), her study gave a clear role definition of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. Based on her findings, majority of the respondents indicated that, their primary responsibility is developing an IEP, assessing pupils, managing children with behavioural problems, ensuring discipline in the school, supporting teachers in the classroom, liaising with parents, providing data and maintaining records, supporting teachers, teaching and running the day-to-day activities of the school. In line with Cole (2005), Layton (2005) concluded that, SENCOs should be the "heart" of IE. She recommended that, SENCOs should be valued and empowered in their pivotal role so that they can make a change in the inclusive environment to benefit all children.

Similarly, Kearns (2005) revealed the roles of SENCOs. Her study was conducted in the United Kingdom with 18 SENCOs using the qualitative method and the semi-structured interview as the main instrument. Unlike, Cole (2005) and Layton (2005), her study pointed out the roles of SENCOs with labels such as *Arbitrators; Rescuers; Auditors* and *Collaborators*. She described

the *Arbitrators'* role as supporting teachers and parents to deal with the difficulties faced in the implementation of IE as well as helping teachers and parents to have positive feeling towards inclusive practices; for SENCOs as *rescuers* she mentioned that, they are responsible for planning educational activities for children with SEN. In terms of the *Auditors'* role her findings revealed that, SENCOs are engaged in administrative and managerial task, thus, monitoring pupils' progress; managing the IEP, keeping records and maintaining focus on legal procedures. SENCOs as *Collaborators* are involved in teaming up with the teachers and assisting them in curriculum adaptation, ensuring that the school adhered to IE practices. It can be said that, Kearns's (2005) study brought a different perception to the roles of SENCOs because her study gave unique labels and conceptualisation of the roles of SENCOs in four broad terms like arbitrators, rescuers, auditors and collaborators and defined the roles that are associated with the labels. In my view, the labels associated to the roles of SENCOs in her study provide a clearer picture and a generalised view of SENCOs roles.

Additionally, Agalotis and Kalyva (2011) conducted a study in Thessalonki in Greece. Their study explored the perceptions of Greek general and special primary teachers regarding the role and the professional characteristics of special needs coordinators (SENCOs). Unlike Cole (2005), Layton (2005) and Kearns (2005) who used SENCOs as the participants/respondents in their study, they used general and special education teachers as their respondents. Thus, the study did not explore the roles of SENCOs through the lens of SENCOs rather through general and special

education teachers. The study employed the quantitative approach and the main instrument was a questionnaire. A total of 466 primary education teachers; 228 special education teachers and 238 general education teachers were used for the study.

The study revealed the following key roles of SENCOs; *educational provisions to children with SEN* which includes: updating parents and teachers on issues concerning the children with SEN, keeping records, monitoring the progress of children with SEN, preparing activities that educators will need in teaching children with SEN, deciding educational placement and writing IEP. Another major role is *scientific and professional identity*; updating their knowledge about SEN; participating in scientific conferences; *collaborating with other experts to improve their knowledge and practical skills*, the ability to make informed decisions on specific cases of students with SEN, the ability to act as an agent between parties with opposing views, and the ability to closely work with teachers and families and counsel them. Their study further revealed a fourth dimension of SENCOs' roles as *initiating for programme enrichment, knowledge dissemination, and teacher evaluation*, it was revealed that, SENCOs should inform parents and staff of the latest developments in the field of SEN, ensure the socialisation of students with SEN, organise activities for the promotion of social inclusion of students with SEN, and be open to suggestions for new approaches to existing problems. The fifth role as perceived by the teachers was *contributing to in-service training of staff and fund raising*, with regard to in-service- training, it was revealed that, SENCOs should engage in regular training of staff, model appropriate teaching methods and provide

teaching and learning materials. In order to raise funds, SENCOs are expected to liaise with government and other agencies for financial aid for the school.

From their findings, SENCOs roles are grouped into five mainly: (a) *educational provisions to children with SEN; (b) scientific and professional identity; (c) collaborating with other experts to improve their knowledge and practical skills; (d) initiating for programme enrichment, knowledge dissemination, and teacher evaluation; and (e) contributing to in-service training of staff and fund raising.* In line with Kearns (2005) conceptualisation of SENCOs role, their study also grouped the roles in five main themes even though, it did not label the roles. They also provided an in-depth description of their roles. However, in my opinion, it could have been a mixed method study rather than a quantitative method so that SENCOs who are the key actors could be interviewed. This would have added more information and ensured data triangulation.

Further, Rosen-Webb (2011) used the qualitative method involving nine SENCOs in exploring the roles of SENCOs in England. She found that, SENCOs are key players in teaching and learning development at school; strategic planning; ensuring access to the curriculum for children with SEN; monitoring inclusion; engaging in team work. Additionally, she reported that, SENCOs have the responsibility to be knowledgeable in different areas and aspects about SEN; providing in-service training for teachers; responsible for the educational behavioural and physical needs of the students and maximising academic progress for children with SEN. In spite of the smaller sample size used in Rosen-Webb's study as compared to Layton (2005) who used twenty-

seven, her findings are similar to Layton (2005). Additionally, it confirms the findings of Kearns (2005) who also came out with similar findings. My perception concerning the similar gains could be based on the fact that all these studies were conducted in a similar context, thus they were conducted in the United Kingdom. Because the findings reported by Agaliotis and Kalyva (2010)

in Greece showed that some unique duties and responsibilities which appear to be peculiar to SENCOs in Greece. For instance, counselling parents; acting as agent between opposing views; ensuring the socialisation of children with SEN; organising activities to promote social inclusion of children with SEN among others.

Lindqvist (2012) conducted a study in Sweden to investigate the changes that have occurred with the introduction of SENCOs in the school system. Specifically, the study sought to investigate how SENCOs work and should work in the inclusive school. The study used a questionnaire with different sample size from multiple sources like chief education officers, educational leaders, pre-school teachers, class teachers, subject teachers and SENCOs. It involved 123 subject teachers, 147 class teachers, 99 preschool teachers, 35 SENCOs, 22 special teachers and 56 assistants. The study revealed that the main aim of the SENCO role is to support schools towards inclusive practices. SENCOs role include supervising the pedagogical content for children in need for support (supervisory role), ensuring the welfare of pupils in the inclusive school especially children who need support and documenting information. In my view, the different categories of respondents in the study gave a broader perspective to the study. However, in contrast to studies conducted in the United

Kingdom which indicated that, SENCOs were also engaged in teaching (e.g., Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Rosen-Webb, 2011) her study found out that SENCOs were unwilling to teach in the classroom but rather supervise teachers in the school. In my view, a follow-up interview could have been done to explore in details why SENCOs preferred the supervisory role to teaching children with SEN.

More so, contrary to the findings above, Mackenzie (2012) explored the lived experiences of SENCOs with thirty-two (32) participants and detailed a different dimension of SENCOs role. He found that, despite the duties and responsibilities expected from SENCOs, their roles varied in terms of time allocation, grade level, position and if they have additional responsibilities or not. He reported that, these variations affected the roles of SENCOs in working with children with SEN.

Further, Winwood (2013) study sought to explore the roles of SENCOs in England. His study was a qualitative study with in-depth interview of six participants. He found similar findings as Layton (2005), Kearns (2005), and Rosen-Webb (2011). His findings on SENCOs roles include day to day operation of SEN policy, teaching children with SEN, liaising with teachers and parents, working with external agencies, performing administrative duties among others.

To add, Pearson, Mitchell and Raptil (2014) investigated the roles of SENCOs within a policy context in England. They used both quantitative and qualitative methods with 227 participants. The findings from the study indicated that SENCOs duties and responsibilities included identification and assessment,

collaborating with professionals, ensuring the school engaged in inclusive practices, ensuring pedagogies meet the needs of all children, organising in-service for teachers and support staff, collaborating with parents. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data provided an in-depth description of their roles. However, the study did not clearly show how the data converged and diverged based on their findings. A similar assertion was made by Cole (2005) in her study. She concluded that, there is uncertainty in SENCOs role and recommended clarity of their roles and support from policy makers to help SENCOs become effective.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) investigated the roles of SENCOs in Ireland using the mixed method exploratory design with twenty-seven SENCOs who were purposively selected to participate in the study. The study revealed that the SENCOs role was complex and not formally recognised. SENCO played roles such as; record keeping, writing of reports, timetabling of additional supports, identifying children with SEN, making the necessary arrangement for accommodation in examination, liaising with external agencies, and teaching full time. The findings are similar to studies conducted in the United Kingdom (Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Winwood, 2013), however, their study added a different perspective to SENCOs' role. They pointed out that, as part of the roles of SENCOs, they are responsible for making arrangements for the accommodation of children with SEN during examinations. This role has not been reported in any of the previous studies reviewed (Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Lindqvist, 2012; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Winwood, 2013).

In the same vein, Fitzgerald and Radford (2020) explored the factors influencing leadership for inclusive and special education in secondary school and revealed some roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. They pointed out that, the study was a follow-up of their study which was conducted in 2017. It was a qualitative study. The sample was drawn from the earlier study; however, six head teachers were included in the interview. They indicated that, SENCOs with a minimum of five years working experience were involved in the study to provide in-depth information on their roles.

Buttressing Mackenzie's (2012) findings, they mentioned that, there are variations in the role of SENCOs. In contrast to their earlier study in 2017, they categorised SENCOs roles into three; *administrative task* (report writing, time tabling) *collaborative practices*: (working with parents, external agencies, head teachers and teachers) and *teaching* (co-teaching, teaching children in separate classrooms) which appears to be similar to Agalotis and Kalyva (2011). Also, their earlier findings in 2017 did not clearly indicate the working relationship between SENCOs and parents. In line with earlier researches, (Pearson, Mitchell & Raptil, 2014; Cole, 2005) they concluded that, the role of SENCOs should be clarified and reconceptualised.

Gareskog and Lindqvist (2020) investigated the roles of SENCOs in the preschool with 523 SENCOs in Sweden. The findings of the study revealed that SENCOs worked as consultants, counsellors and engaged in professional dialogue with teachers. They also engaged in administrative task, developing of IEP, evaluating inclusive practices and collaborating with teachers, parents and other professionals. The study revealed that, SENCOs in the pre-school do not

work in close contact with children with SEN rather they focused on guiding staff and supporting parents. SENCOs worked as counsellors and on supporting teachers to manage children with SEN. The study concluded that, the occupational roles of SENCOs in the preschool is unclear. Their study confirmed the findings of Lindqvist (2012), who reported that, SENCOs were not involved in teaching children with SEN in Sweden.

These findings confirm the assertion that the roles of SENCOs are context based (Cowne, Frankl, & Gerschel 2015; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Pearson, Rapti, & Mitchell 2015; Taylor 2014) because studies conducted in the United Kingdom indicated that SENCOs are also involved in teaching children with SEN but findings from Sweden show otherwise. Similarly, most of the studies reported that, the roles of SENCOs need to be reconceptualised, clarified and revisited. Therefore, it becomes critical to investigate the duties and responsibilities of SENCOs from the Ghanaian perspective and to ascertain if their roles have been clarified, and, if they are aware of their expected duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE.

In summary, all the findings of the studies above showed that, SENCOs are responsible for ensuring the implementation of IE. They are also responsible for ensuring a conducive environment in the school. More so, they are responsible for collaborating with schools to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Additionally, SENCOs are responsible for supporting teachers in handling children with SEN. They support teachers by ensuring that, they adapt the curriculum to suit children with SEN as well as ensuring appropriate assessment practices. Also, they collaborate with teachers to handle

issues concerning children with SEN. Apart from these duties and responsibilities which seemed to be the central role of SENCOs, the following roles duties and responsibilities were also revealed in the above findings. They are:

1. Liaising with parents (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Pearson, Mitchell & Raptil, 2014; Winwood, 2013).
2. Engaging in administrative task (updating files, providing data and keeping records, writing of reports etc.) (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Rosen-Webb 2011; Winwood, 2013).
3. Collaborating with external agencies (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Winwood, 2013).
4. Teaching children with SEN (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Rosen-Webb 2011; Winwood, 2013; Curran & Boddision, 2021).
5. Developing Individualised Education Plan (Cole, 2005; Layton, 2005; Kearns, 2005; Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Rosen-Webb 2011; Lindqvist, 2013; Winwood, 2013; Pearson, Mitchell & Raptil, 2014; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020).

6. Identifying children with SEN (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Pearson, Mitchell & Raptil, 2014).
7. Monitoring inclusive practices (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Kearns, 2005; Lindqvist, 2012; Rosen-Webb 2011; Winwood, 2013).
8. Evaluating inclusive practices (Kearns, 2005; Lindqvist, 2012; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020).
9. Organising in-service training (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Pearson, Mitchell & Raptil, 2014; Rosen-Webb 2011).

Apart from these findings which seem common to the findings indicated above, some of the findings of the duties and responsibilities of SENCOs were unique to specific studies. For instance, Cole revealed that, SENCOs prioritised liaising with parents. Also, Layton found out that, SENCOs are responsible for maintaining discipline in schools. Additionally, Agaliotis and Kalyva, (2011) reported that, SENCOs engaged in educational placement. Fitzgerald and Radford (2017), revealed that, SENCOs were responsible for making accommodations in examinations. From this, it can be argued that, the roles of SENCOs vary and depend on the specific context in which their roles are played (Lindqvist, 2012; Mackenzie, 2012) because of the peculiar roles found in some of the studies mentioned. It is therefore, important to investigate the roles of SENCOs from the Ghanaian perspective to ascertain the dynamics of their roles in the implementation of IE.

Apart from these international studies, in Ghana, it appears not many studies have been done on the roles of SENCOs. Google scholar, sci-hub, Z-library, web of science, University of Cape Coast Library, University of

Development Studies' Library and University of Education Library gave limited information on the roles of SENCOS in Ghana and related information about SENCOS in Ghana. Hence, only one study was found in relation to SENCOS in Ghana.

Donbeinaa (2017) conducted a study in the Upper East Region in the previous ten regions of Ghana. The study sought to investigate SENCOS' roles in advocacy, identification and assessment for placement. The study employed the qualitative method. Ten SENCOS were purposively selected for the study. They comprised two females and eight males representing a regional co-ordinator and district co-ordinators. Two of the participants held diploma certificates whereas the rest had Bachelor of Education degrees. An unstructured interview guide was used in collecting the data for the study. The study revealed that SENCOS' roles in advocacy, identification and assessment for placement are: *identifying children, with SEN, organising sensitisation programmes to create awareness on disabilities issues, visiting schools, ensuring children with SEN are placed in both regular and special school and guiding teachers on how to handle children with SEN.*

Donbeinaa's (2017) study showed some duties and responsibilities of SENCOS in advocacy, identification and assessment for placement, however, it appears that, the roles as revealed in the study are not related to the implementation of IE. Besides, the qualitative approach may limit the generalisability of the results (Bryman & Bell, 2019).

In addition, the nature of the study did not make room for analysing the influence of their demographic data on their roles even though the study pointed

out the demographics of the participants. Analysing the influence of their demographic data could have provided a broader perspective of the study and revealed how it influenced their roles. Even though the study was conducted in Ghana, findings from the International perspectives on their roles indicated unique findings from the same geographical location (Cole, 2005; Layton, 2005; Mackenzie, 2012; Pearson Mitchell & Raptil, 2014; Rosen- Webb, 2011) whose studies were all conducted in England. The deductions made here is that, another study in relation to SENCOS in Ghana may bring to the fore unique findings, which makes it important for a study of that nature to be conducted. From the foregoing, investigating SENCOS roles to ascertain their contribution to the effectiveness of IE is a welcome call.

How SENCOS Perform their Roles in Inclusive Education

Dobeinaa's (2017) revealed that SENCOS perform the following duties in *identifying children with SEN*:

1. Making referrals from school heads
2. Visiting schools, making observations and writing reports
3. Handling complaints from parents
4. Keeping medical reports from health centres and reports from Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) field staff.

It appears that from both the international and national perspective, how SENCOS perform their roles is under researched despite its relevance to the implementation of IE. There is the need to have in-depth information about how SENCOS perform their roles in the implementation of IE.

Confidence of SENCOs in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Kearney, Mentis, and Holley-Boen (2017), conducted a study in New Zealand with 65 SENCOs using both the quantitative and qualitative data. The study investigated the daily working activities of SENCOs, their confidence and preparedness in the implementation of IE. The findings of the study revealed that, participants were confident in playing their roles since 11% felt very confident, 56% indicating they are confident, 25% were neither confident nor unconfident and 8% felt unconfident. The study concluded that, majority of the SENCOs were confident in playing their roles representing 67% of the participants.

Even though the study was quite clear about the confidence level of SENCOs. The findings did not specifically indicate which of the roles SENCOs were either confident or not confident in playing. In my view, much needs to be explored on the confidence level of SENCOs in playing their roles, for instance, finding out the roles they feel confident and not confident in playing will provide comprehensive information about their confidence in playing their roles in IE.

Also, Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) conducted a study on the roles of SENCOs reported that, 24 out of the 27 SENCOs who participated in their study revealed that they were confident in playing their roles, whereas three of them indicated they were undecided. Curran (2020) did a study in England with 202 SENCOs. The study explored SENCOs' perspectives in the early years and investigated issues in relation to early identification. Sixteen of the respondents participated in the qualitative aspect of the study. The study revealed that, about

80% of SENCOs felt confident in their ability to identify children with SEN. These findings are important to the roles of SENCOs since identification of children with SEN is a key role of the SENCO (Curran, 2020). However, the study was not directly aimed at investigating the confidence SENCOs have in playing their roles in the implementation of IE. In summary, it can be said that, the studies conducted on the confidence of SENCOs are not comprehensive and do not provide in-depth information about their confidence level. Besides, the studies focused on some aspect of their roles like identification and assessment (Curran, 2020) but not their roles in the implementation of IE.

Concerns of SENCOs in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Firstly, Curran, Moloney, Heavey, and Boddison (2018) conducted a study in England to understand the nature of the SENCO's role across varying context in order to capture the breadth and depth of the SENCO role. Qualitative and Quantitative design were utilised with 15 respondents and 1903 respondents respectively. The majority of the respondents representing 74% of SENCOs stated that they do not have enough time to ensure that children with SEN have the needed support. In addition, 70% of SENCOs did not feel that they had enough time allocated to the role. The findings further revealed that, 78% of SENCOs felt that other roles and/or tasks consistently pulled them away from being able to carry out the SENCO role effectively. The findings also pointed to lack of funding as one of the major challenges facing SENCOs in performing their roles.

Smith and Broomhead (2019) conducted a similar study in England with 15 participants. The study explored the perception and experiences of SENCO

in providing educational support for children with SEN. They indicated that, SENCOs were overburdened with responsibilities since parents and teachers consider them as experts, a lot of issues concerning children with SEN are left on them. The study also revealed that, inadequate time was a major concern for SENCOs in playing their roles. SENCOs felt they did not have enough time to accomplish their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, SENCOs who played other roles felt their other roles conflicted with the SENCO role.

Curran and Boddisons' (2021) study aimed at exploring the nature of the SENCO's role. Their study was conducted in England at the primary and secondary school level. Based on their findings, SENCOs' challenges included; insufficient time; misunderstandings about their roles; lack of funding; overburdened additional responsibilities; frustrations in the role due to unclear progression of their role and feeling of isolation.

Similarly, in Ghana, Donbeinaa (2017) reported some challenges facing SENCOs in the implementation of IE. They include; lack of transport, lack of funding, lack of assessment tools, negative attitude towards the SENCO role, additional responsibilities, inadequate support from management, lack of commitment on the part of educational leaders. Apart from this, some researchers indicated the following as challenges facing SENCOs in playing their roles in IE:

1. Workload and stress (Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Rosen-Webb, 2011)
2. Lack of funding (Cole, 2005)
3. Lack of recognition (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020)

4. Insufficient time (Kearns, 2005; Rosen-Webb, 2011)
5. Inadequate training (Rosen-Webb, 2011)
6. Lack of clarity about their roles (Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Pearson, Mitchell and Rapti1, 2014; Rosen-Webb, 2011)

7. Inadequate knowledge about their roles (Kearns, 2005)

Demographic Variations in the Level of Knowledge of SENCOS in Playing their Roles in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

General research on employees consider variables such as gender, ethnicity, age, educational qualification and working experiences in an organisation (Kotur & Anbazhagan, 2014; Thakur, 2015). According to Maslach and Leiter (2008), there seem to be limited empirical evidence on demographic variables like gender, age, working experience and the type of occupation on employee engagement which makes interpretation of these variables challenging. Similarly, based on my literature search it appears that, there are few studies on demographic variables such as gender, working experiences and educational qualifications in relation to the roles of educators in the implementation of IE.

The search for literature on the level of knowledge of SENCOS based on their gender, working experience and educational level, using mediums previously mentioned did not yield much information. However, Kuya (2018) revealed that, educational qualification and working experience influence teachers' knowledge and skills in the implementation of IE.

Due to the limited or lack of literature on the level of knowledge of SENCOs in the implementation of IE, it is expedient for this study to be conducted to find out if there is any influence of gender, working experience and educational qualification on the level of knowledge of SENCOs in performing their roles in the implementation of IE.

Demographic Variations in Roles of SENCOs in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Once again, the search for literature using the mediums indicated earlier provided little results. It appears that, there is apparent lack of literature on SENCOs roles based on their demographic variations in terms of gender, working experience, and educational qualification. For example, in relation to gender, Mackenzie (2012) mentioned that, there is no statistical data on the gender breakdown and comprehensive information of SENCOs who work with children with SEN. Buttressing his assertion, it can be seen in some studies conducted over the years from 2005 till 2020 (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Kearns, 2005; Oldham & Radford, 2011; Pearson, Mitchell, & Rapti1, 2014; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Tissot, 2014) that these studies did not consider the impact of gender on the roles of SENCOs.

Mackenzie (2012), further revealed that, usually studies reveal the percentages of gender in the study but do not directly compare their performance in terms of their roles. Lending support to Mackenzie's assertion, these studies (Agaliotis Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Pearson, Mitchell & Rapti1,

2014; Winwood, 2013) provided a breakdown of gender in their studies but did not provide in additional information on their roles in the implementation of IE.

Meanwhile, Mackenzie (2012) postulated that, in England women outnumbered men in the SENCO position, which is dissimilar in Ghana, where men outnumber women in the SENCO role (Ghana Education Service, [GES] 2020). Also, Mackenzie (2012) stated that, women's mothering experience provides some additional advantages in playing their roles in handling children with SEN which can be related to national standards. He further mentioned that, participants felt that because women are used to dealing with children, they are able to handle issues concerning children with SEN easily.

Also, in terms of working experience and educational qualifications, it appears that, variations in the roles of SENCOs have not been explored. Even though some studies (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017) stated these demographic variations in relation to the participants involved in their studies, not much was revealed in relation to their roles in the implementation of IE. Additionally, not much was found on working experience and educational qualification in relation to performance of roles in education.

However, studies on teachers revealed that, working experience and educational qualification influenced teacher's roles in the implementation of IE (Kuya, 2018; Mngo & Mngo, 2018). Generally, literature on role performance indicates that, persons with higher educational qualification perform their roles better and performance of people increase with the years of experience (Kotur & Anbazhagan, 2014). Due to the apparent lack of literature on demographic

variations in role performance of SENCOs and educators in general, hence the need for this current study.

Demographic Variations in SENCOs' Level of Confidence in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

In the same vein, the search for information using the mediums indicated earlier did not give enough information on the level of confidence with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification in the implementation of IE. It appears that, there is apparent lack of literature on the confidence of SENCOs based on their demographic variations such as gender, working experience and educational qualification in the implementation of IE.

However, in a study conducted by Loreman, Sharma and Forlin (2013) on teachers' self-efficacy in the implementation of IE, it was reported that generally teachers' educational level and gender had no influence on their self-efficacy. On the other hand, there were some difference in their self-efficacy in some specific roles. For instance, the study revealed that, teachers with higher educational qualification have higher self-efficacy than teachers with lower educational qualification in providing inclusive instructions. The study also found out that, gender had little impact on self-efficacy. Similarly, Kuyuni, Desai and Sharma (2018) found out that, there is no influence of gender and years of experience on teacher's self-efficacy. Contrary, to Loreman, Sharma and Forlin (2013) and Kuyuni, Desai and Sharma (2018) who found out that years of experience had no significant influence on self-efficacy, Mahony (2016) found out that, working experience influenced self-efficacy. Her

findings revealed that, the number of working experiences increases self-efficacy.

Based on the differing results of researches on the influence of gender, working experience and educational qualification on self-efficacy, it is important to investigate if there is any influence of these demographic variations on their confidence to ascertain the congruence or differences in relation to SENCOS. Besides, there seem to be lack of information on the level of confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE, hence, the need for the current study.

Demographic Variations in the Concerns of SENCOS in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

The search for literature using the mediums mentioned earlier did not show any specific information on SENCOS concerns based on some demographic variations. However, a study conducted by Yadav, Das, Sharma and Tiwari (2015) on teachers' concern in the implementation of IE showed that, female teachers had a greater mean score of 35.36 whereas male teachers had a mean score of 33.39, this means that, female teachers were more concerned than male teachers, even though, the result is not significant. Their study further indicated there is no significant difference in teachers' concerns based on their educational qualification. In addition, even though, their study indicated that, teachers' concern reduces based on the length of teaching experience, thus, as their experiences increase, their concerns also declined, the findings revealed that, there difference is not significant. This therefore means that, there is no statistically significant difference in concerns based on

educational qualifications. Similarly, Yan, and Deng (2018) reported that, teachers with longer years of experience were less concerned than teachers with lower years of experience. Considering the apparent lack of literature on the concerns of SENCOS based on their demographic variations, it is important to investigate if there are differences in their concerns based on their gender, working experience and educational qualification in the implementation.

Influence of Level of Knowledge, Level of Confidence, and Concerns on SENCOS' Roles

In the same vein, there is limited information on the influence of level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on SENCOS roles in the literature. The search for information using the mediums mentioned earlier did not provide any information on SENCOS.

However, a study conducted by Ashan, Sharma and Deppeler (2012) on Pre-service teachers' perceived teaching efficacy, attitudes and concerns about IE found some significant relationship. Their study revealed that, pre-service teachers with very low self-confidence had fewer concerns which supports similar findings by Savolainen, Engelbrecht and Malinen (2011). Hence, it can be assumed that there may be an influence of level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on the roles of SENCOS. It is against this background that the study is conducted to ascertain the influence of these variables on the roles of SENCOS.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was based on the theoretical framework and the key variables in the study.

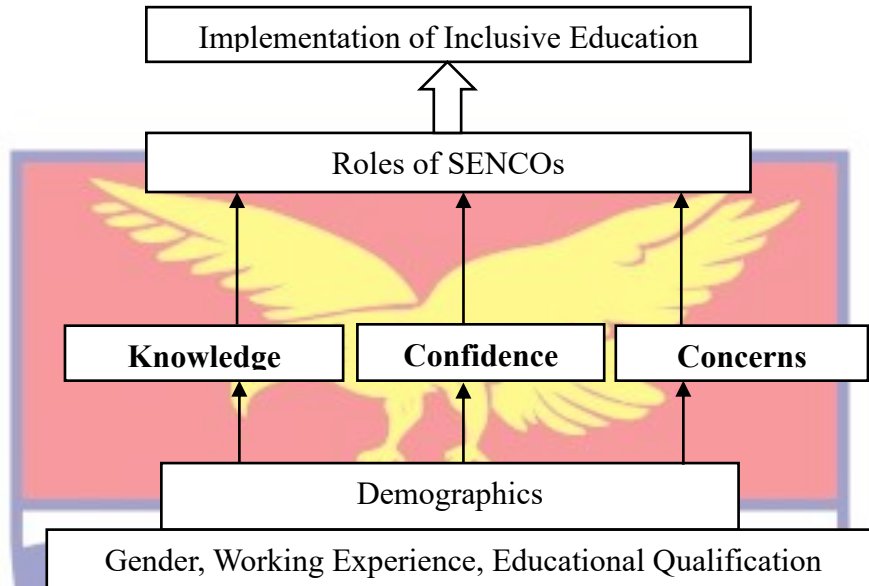


Figure 1: SENCOs roles and characteristics in the implementation of IE Education Source: Author's construct (2020)

The conceptual framework depicts the concept of the system theory and how the variables relate in the study. IE is conceptualised as a system and SENCOs are seen as key actors in the system whose functions (roles) affect the effectiveness of the system. In this study, their roles are viewed in relation to their *level of knowledge* in playing their roles, their *confidence* in playing their roles, and the *concerns* they have in the implementation of IE. It is anticipated that factors such as their level of knowledge, confidence, and concerns affect the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE. It is also predicted that the roles that SENCOs' play can be influenced by their gender, working experience, and educational qualification.

Summary of Literature Review and the Implications for the Study

Literature was reviewed under the following themes: theoretical framework; conceptual framework; conceptual review and empirical review. A summary under each of the themes is discussed below:

To begin with, the theory that underpins this study is the system theory.

The system theory studies the behaviour of a system (Germain, 2015). Additionally, it suggests that, units of the system must work for the effectiveness of the entire system (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, & Dutton, 2012). In other words, the system theory describes the behaviour of people within an organisation. It can be said that, IE is a system with agents such as educational leaders, teachers, SENCOs and parents. In Ghana, the MoE (2015) recognises head teachers, teachers and SENCOs as primary stakeholders. Thus focusing on the educational environment, the key actors in the implementation of IE includes the aforementioned educators. These educators are expected to play their roles effectively for the implementation of IE.

However, based on the current literature both internationally and locally, it appears that, much attention has been focused on head teachers (e.g., Andai & Mwatela, 2017; Kumedzro, 2019; Murphy, 2018; Sarpong & Kusi, 2019) and teachers (e.g., Agbenyega & Deku, 2011; Boakye-Akomeah, 2015; Crispel & Kasperski, 2019; Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017; Gachocho, 2017; Nketsia, Saloviita, & Gyimah, 2016; Sharma, Simi, & Forlin, 2015; Timo, 2020; Vanderpuye, Obosu, & Nimushiko, 2018). There is limited information on SENCOs (Esposito & Carroll, 2019) who are also key actors in the

implementation of IE and play a major role in the IE system. With the shift towards the implementation of IE globally, SENCOs become significant in the implementation of IE (Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020). Hence, based on the ideology of the system theory, every actor in the system is important. As pointed out earlier, the limited information on SENCOs (Esposito & Carroll, 2020; Lindqvist, 2013) creates some setbacks for the entire IE system and demands attention in the literature.

Also, in reviewing concepts in the implementation of IE, issues such as the concept of IE; international and national legal frameworks of IE; model of IE; history of IE in Ghana; Types of IE programmes in Ghana; models of IE; components of IE; indicators of successful IE; challenges of IE in Ghana; Analysis of IE policy; Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in IE; Historical perspective of SENCOs from both the international and national perspective; roles of SENCOs and IE; Modus operandi of SENCOs from the international and national perspectives; and barriers to the roles of SENCOs. From the concepts reviewed, it can be said that, inclusive education is the process of providing appropriate learning experience, creating conducive environmental structures, accepting all children irrespective of their disabilities, enhancing the knowledge and skills of educators and equipping the community and families with the needed support to enable them play their roles effectively to maximise the potentials of all learners. Further, it can be deduced that, in the implementation of IE, the success or failure largely depends on how effective stakeholders play their roles, specifically, the effectiveness of educators' roles. For instance, Giangreco (1997) pointed out clearly in his model of IE that, role

responsibilities and clear definition of roles form critical components of the success of IE. Therefore, attention must be paid to the role effectiveness of educators in the implementation of IE, hence the focus on SENCOS.

Also, it from the explications presented, it can be seen that, some studies have been conducted on SENCOS from the global perspective, however, most of these studies as discussed earlier (Cole, 2005; Layton, 2005; Kearns, 2005; Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Rosen-Webb 2011; Winwood, 2013; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020) focused more on the duties and responsibilities of SENCOS in the implementation of IE. It can be said that these studies adopted a piecemeal approach in their study. Winwood (2013) argued that, studies on SENCOS should be comprehensive, he further suggested that, a study should be conducted to ascertain the level of confidence of SENCOS in IE. Similarly, Pearson (2010) opined that, SENCOS level of knowledge about their roles in IE is an important predictor to the success of IE. Considering an account on SENCOS roles in the aforementioned studies, it can be said that, none of these studies have provided a comprehensive study on SENCOS. For instance, some studies between 2011-2020 as discussed earlier (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Lindqvist, 2012; Rosen-Webb 2011; Winwood, 2013) seem not to be comprehensive. This supports the argument made by Epistol and Carroll (2019) that, studies on SENCOS lacks comprehensiveness. The empirical literature discussed above, also suggest that, the roles of SENCOS may vary depending on the context in which their roles are played. For instance,

some studies conducted in England, (Rosen-Webb, 2011) Greece, (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2010) Sweden, (Lindqvist, 2012) and Ireland (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017) show some variations in the SENCO role. This buttresses the assertion made by some scholars (Cowne, Franky, Gershel, 2015; Pearson, Rapti & Mitchell, 2014; Smith & Broomhead, 2019; Taylor, 2014) that the roles of SENCOs vary, depending on the context in which they play their roles. Therefore, a study in Ghana on the roles of SENCOs is important.

Apart from that, most studies conducted so far on SENCOs failed to do a critical analysis of some demographic variations such as age, gender, working experience, educational qualification among others of the participants in the study. I must admit that, some studies mentioned some demographic variations in their study (Agaliotis Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Pearson, Mitchell and Rapti, 2014; Winwood, 2013) but their study did not provide additional information or analysis of the demographics. Mackenzie (2012) asserted that, there is no statistical data on the gender breakdown and comprehensive information of SENCOs who work with children with SEN.

Consequently, some studies on teachers in the implementation of IE (Kuyini, Desai, & Sharma, 2020; Mahony, 2016; Yadav, Das, Sharma, & Tiwari, 2015; Yan & Deng, 2018) analysed some demographic variations on teachers in the implementation of IE and provided some similar and contradictory findings. It can be argued that SENCOs demographic variations are critical in ascertaining their roles.

Thus, with the little attention paid to the demographic variations of SENCOs in playing their roles, it is important to include some demographic

variations in investigating their roles in this study to provide a comprehensive analysis of their level of knowledge, level of confidence, and concerns in playing their roles. In this regard, the conceptual framework, as presented above, establishes these influences.

Again, from the empirical literature, studies on SENCOS in Ghana is inadequate, hence, only one study was found. The study was conducted by Donbeinaa (2017). The study used the qualitative approach to investigate the contributions of SENCOS in the education of children with SEN in the Upper East region. Even though the study highlighted some duties and responsibilities of SENCOS as well as the challenges that SENCOS face in handling children with SEN, the focus was not geared towards the implementation of IE. The study focused on only one region, with 10 sample size. An unstructured interview guide was used in the data collection. In my view, the study lacks comprehensiveness since some important aspects such as detailed description of their contributions were not discussed. Additionally, there were some inconsistencies in the methodology. For instance, I mentioned a population size of 14 including the regional co-ordinator and later mentioned 10 as the population size. Also, I indicated two different sample size, he mentioned 10 and later mentioned 9. Data was analysed with few verbatim responses to buttress the findings. However, the findings can only be generalised to the Upper East Region because of the sample size and the qualitative approach. For example, Mackenzie (2012) used a sample size of 32 in a qualitative study and indicated that, due to the small sample size, it will not appropriate to generalise the results to other setting. Similarly, Winwood (2013) stated in his study that,

a sample size of six is small, making it impossible to generalise his findings to other settings. Hence a larger sample size in a study of this sort is important to enhance generalisability to the Southern part of Ghana. Also, the current study will be more comprehensive since it intends to investigate the roles of SENCOS in relation to their level of knowledge, confidence and concerns in the implementation of IE.

Apart from the limited literature on SENCOS in Ghana, most studies on the roles of SENCOS adopted the qualitative approach (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Kearns, 2005; Mackenzie, 2012; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Smith & Broomhead, 2019; Winwood, 2013) which limits the generalisability of the findings. More so, few of the studies employed the quantitative method (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Gäreskog & Lindqvist; Lindqvist, 2012). Lindqvist (2012) noted in their study that, an additional qualitative study would have provided a more in-depth understanding of their study. To add, even though some of the studies used both quantitative and qualitative methods (Curran, 2020; Curran, Moloney, Heavey, & Boddison, 2018; Kearney, Mentis, & Holley-Boen, 2017; Pearson, Mitchell & Rapti, 2014), these studies did not employ the mixed method approach. Thus, the researchers did not indicate any 'mixing' of their quantitative and qualitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) adopted the mixed method approach with the exploratory design, thus emphasized the qualitative strand of the data. The current study seeks to give both the quantitative and qualitative data equal priority.

Based on the literature reviewed, it can be said that, globally, not much researches have been conducted on the duties and responsibilities of SENCOs. Additionally, most studies conducted from 2005 to 2021, for example: Cole (2005); Layton (2005); Kearns (2005); Agaliotis and Kalyva, (2011); Rosen-Webb (2011); Fitzgerald and Radford (2017); Curran, Moloney, Heavey, and Boddison, (2018); Smith and Broomhead (2019); Fitzgerald and Radford (2020); Gäreskog and Lindqvist (2020); Curran and Boddison, (2021) show that, there are some uncertainties and challenges with the SENCO role which needs to be investigated. Thus, most of the conclusions made in these studies call for more investigations into the SENCO role. On the other hand, based on the literature presented above, no study has been conducted on the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in Ghana. Further, most of the studies conducted outside Ghana on SENCOs roles so far excluded variables such as the level of knowledge, level of confidence, and concerns in the implementation of IE. Besides, most of the studies did not clearly describe their roles in a comprehensive manner. To add, the demographic analysis of participants in relation to their roles were not discussed in most of the studies. Lastly, most studies conducted employed the qualitative, quantitative, and multiple methods. Only few studies adopted the mixed method approach. Hence, the current study seeks to provide a comprehensive study on SENCOs' roles focusing on some demographic variations using the mixed method approach.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Overview

This chapter describes the methods and procedures employed to examine the roles of SENCOS in implementing IE. To effectively examine the roles, the study employed the pragmatic philosophy through the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to scientific enquiry. Therefore, the chapter describes mixed methods approaches employed for the study. The chapter describes the research design, population, respondents and participants, data collection instruments, pilot testing, validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and data processing and analysis as used with the selected paradigm.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the foundation or the world view that regulates the execution of research. Research philosophy also referred to as the research paradigm, is the assumptions which guide how scientific enquiries should be carried out (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Saunders, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The three fundamental research paradigms are positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. The three paradigms classify their assumptions under ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology, addresses the issue of the nature of existence or the assumptions we make in order to believe that something is real (Crotty, 2011; Kivunja & Kuyuni, 2017; Scotland, 2012). Epistemology focuses on the nature of knowledge and stresses the connection between the knower and the known (Crotty, 2011). The methodology covers the

approaches employed in research to collect data for purposes of inferences and interpretations.

Positivism was established by Auguste Comte, a French social scholar (Pring, 2000). The positivist ontological view is that reality exists and driven by irreversible natural laws (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). By this, social reality exists outside the mind. Therefore, there is no relationship between objects and the knower (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Creswell, 2008). Consequently, the positivist as a matter of centrality, does not expect an interaction between the knower and the subjects being studied. Epistemologically, knowledge is obtained through observation and experimentation (Breen & Darlaston-Jones, 2008, Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The positivists' methodological view is to explain causal relationships and thus replicability and generalisability become handy (Creswell, 2009). In this paradigm, data collection methods employed are meant to gather quantitative data for statistical analysis.

Interpretivism was founded by a German sociologist, Max Weber (Crotty, 2011). As a combatant paradigm to that of positivism, the interpretivists hold a realist ontology. According to Pring (2000) and Leitch, Hill and Harrison (2010), the philosophy is rooted in relativism where reality is constructed on an individual basis resulting in multiple realities. This means that the way reality appears to one individual differs from another (Scotland, 2012). The interpretivists believe that the world is constructed through interactions of people and that the social and natural worlds are not different. Therefore, researchers are not different from that which is being studied as opposed by the positivists. Subsequently, the interpretivist epistemological view is rooted in

subjectivity in that personalised meanings and interpretations have great relevance (Pring, 2000). Methodologically, the interpretivist employs methods that inductively provide understanding to phenomena hence, akin to qualitative studies.

Pragmatism is credited to the American scholar John Dewey; a psychologist, philosopher and educational reformer (Goldkuhl, 2004). Pragmatism has been acknowledged as the substitute for combatant positivism and interpretivism. According to Creswell (2003) and Goldkuhl (2004), it gives less influence on philosophical assumptions. Researchers are therefore not strictly influenced when conducting research. Denscombe (2008) warns that pragmatism does not haphazardly welcome the conduct of research but with much considerations and thoughtfulness. The pragmatist ontological view is that the external world is both dependent and independent of the mind. Epistemologically, according to Creswell (2003), the truth is what works at a particular time, and shaped by human actions. Researchers, therefore, have the right to select the best methods, techniques and strategies necessary to deal with a research problem than to choose between interpretivism and positivism (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2017) indicated that it places key importance on research questions and endorses methodological pluralism. Pragmatist employs the mixed methods approach which combines the quantitative methods and qualitative methods in a single study.

The current study examined the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE by employing pragmatism. This is because it allowed for a complex understanding of their roles; this cannot be offered by either positivism or

interpretivism (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Also, it increased the confidence in the study's finding since most of the extant literature focused on positivism and interpretivism in examining the roles of SENCOs in IE; this is one major reason for employing pragmatism since it addresses weaknesses in each of the mono methods (Albert, Trochelman, Meyer & Nutter, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A total understanding was obtained about the roles SENCOs played in making IE effective (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2006). The challenges encountered from adopting this philosophy for the study were that enough resources and time went into the execution of the study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) noted these challenges as usual with the pragmatist paradigm and mixed methods approach.

Research Design

The study employed the convergent design to examine SENCOs roles in the implementation of IE. This design allows the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data separately, relate them to determine similarities and differences in data, and interpret results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This design over time has changed names according to the authors. It assumed names such as triangulation design, simultaneous triangulation, parallel study, convergence model and concurrent triangulation. However, its purpose is "to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" (Morse, 1991, p. 122). The convergent design integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to seek convergence, corroboration, and correspondence from both methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

In employing this design, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) indicated that the researcher has to pay attention to four variants: parallel-databases variant, data transformation variant, questionnaire variant, and fully integrated variant. The parallel-database variant (QUAN + QUAL) is where quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed independently, and results are then compared during the interpretation. The data-transformation variant (QUAN + qual) places higher weight on the quantitative strand in the study and both the quantitative and the qualitative data are merged. By this variant, the qualitative data is quantified for the composite quantitative data to direct the findings. The questionnaire variant (QUAN + qual) is used when the researcher includes open- and closed-ended questions on a questionnaire and uses the open-ended questions to validate or confirm the results of the closed-ended results. The last variant, the fully integrated variant, ensures the interaction of the quantitative and the qualitative data at the implementation stage rather than the interpretation stage.

By the selected convergent design (QUAN + QUAL), independent quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from the SENCOS about their roles in IE. The data obtained from each method were compared and contrasted, after which they were interpreted to project the findings. By implication, equivalent weighting was placed on each of the data types. The interpretation was shown in the discussion section of the thesis report. Figure 4 presents the design framework.

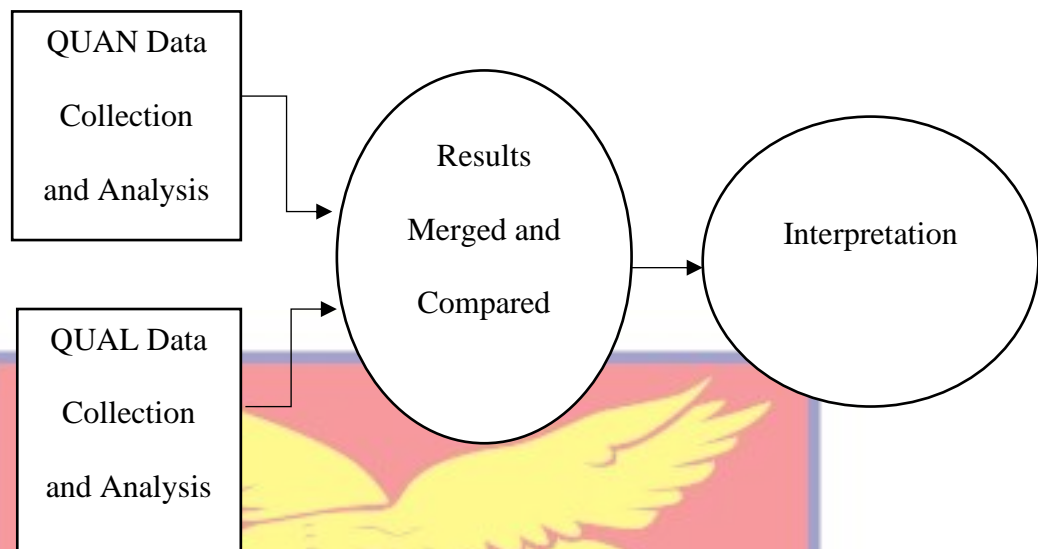


Figure 4: Convergent Design. Source: Creswell and Plano Clark (2018)

The use of the convergent design provided several benefits and few limitations to the study. It provided efficiency to the study during the data collection as both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered at the same time; this was recognised earlier by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018). It also allowed the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data and their analysis separately. This delineated the research process. Again, it facilitated the comparison of the respondents' data gathered from the questionnaire to the perspectives of the same respondents gathered through a semi-structured interview guide.

The major limitation is the gathering of data from different samples in each strand due to different purposes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The current study could not gather data from the same number of participants in the qualitative strand to correspond to the number of respondents in the quantitative strand. This was because the quantitative strand sought coverage whilst the qualitative strand sought in-depth knowledge into the roles of the SENCOs in

IE. Hence, the sample of the qualitative strand was obtained during data saturation – where each successive participant added no new information to the data already obtained.

Population

The population for the study was all 77 SENCOS for the Greater Accra, Central and Eastern Regions. The Regions were selected because they were the regions that began the piloting of IE in Ghana. Table 2 presents the population distribution.

Table 2: *Population Distribution of SENCOS*

Regions	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Greater Accra Region	12	17	29	37.66
Central Region	16	6	22	28.57
Eastern Region	18	8	26	33.77
Total	46	31	77	100

Source: Ghana Education Service (2020)

Table 2 shows that Greater Accra Region has the highest number of SENCOS followed by Eastern Region and Central Region. The table further shows that, the population comprised 46 males and 31 females. It must be noted that, the number of SENCOS per region was not equivalent to the number of educational districts in the Eastern Region since the region had 33 educational districts but 26 SENCOS, unlike Greater Accra and Central Region who had SENCOS in all the educational districts.

These SENCOS had varied working experiences and might have exhibited different degrees of confidence in executing their roles. Some of them might better appreciate the roles expected from them to make IE effective. The

differences in the biological (gender) and experiential (educational qualification and working experience) characteristics of the population were taken into consideration in the examination of their roles in implementing IE.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

All the 77 SENCOS (respondents) were involved in the quantitative phase of the study. This was done through the census survey. The census survey was used because all the SENCOS were accessible in the three aforementioned Regions. By this, one can assume a high level of accuracy in the study since no element of chance was left (Kothari, 2004). Kothari and Garg (2014), noted that the census survey method provides a study with better results than any sample survey. The relatively limited number of the SENCOS in the three Regions further influenced the use of the census survey as supported by Golata (2016).

For the qualitative phase, participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique, specifically, criterion sampling. The basic criteria for selecting participants was those with working experiences of five years and above. This was because, in a similar study, Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) used participants with that number of working experiences due to their rich insight into the roles played in the implementation of IE. A total of 26 participants thus eight females and 18 males were purposively selected from the three Regions based on their number of working experience ranging from five years and above. Additionally, the Regional co-ordinators who had the data on the number of working experience of the SENCOS and were also in constant interaction with them indicated that, they had rich insight into their roles and had the competence to provide the information needed for the study. Hence, a total of

eight, eleven and seven names were provided by the Greater Accra, Central and Eastern regional co-ordinators, respectively to participate in the study. However, one person declined Greater Accra and another person in the Eastern Region, whereas five people declined in the Central region. Therefore, a total of 19 SENCOS agreed to participate in the interview.

Data Collection Instruments

Two data collection instruments were used to gather data for the study to determine the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE. These were Roles of SENCOS in Inclusive Education-Questionnaire (RSIE-Q) and Roles of SENCOS in Inclusive Education-Interview Guide (RSIE-IG). These instruments are described next.

Roles of SENCOS in Inclusive Education-Questionnaire (RSIE-Q)

The RSIE-Q was developed based on the literature review to gather quantitative data on the roles SENCOS played in the implementation of IE (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2010; Cole, 2005; Donbeinaa, 2017; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Rosen-Webb, 2011). The literature helped to formulate themes that are relevant to the roles of SENCOS to develop the questionnaire. De Vaus (2014) pointed out that, similar studies can serve as a guide in developing a questionnaire for a current study. The instrument was structured into five parts. Part A focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. These were made up of gender, educational qualification, rank in Ghana Education Service and working experience. The gender and educational qualification variables were structured and the rest of the variables were open-ended for respondents to provide their responses. In the case of the

structured items, respondents were requested to tick where applicable the item response that best described their nature.

Part B solicited data on the knowledge of the SENCOs in IE. It had 34 items structured on a dichotomous scale of 'Yes' and 'No'. This scale was selected because knowledge is a maximal performance issue. It is a factual issue, and respondents either knew or did not know an issue under investigation. This means that by the measurement of knowledge, SENCOs either knew the roles or did not know the roles in the implementation of IE. The scale allowed the SENCOs to communicate their knowledge of their roles in IE by either ticking 'Yes', where they knew or ticking 'No', where they did not know the roles.

Part C solicited data on the roles of SENCOs in IE. This part of the RSIE-Q was structured on a four-point Likert-type scale. The response scales were *Never* (1), *Sometimes* (2), *Often* (3) and *Always* (4). In all, 35 items measured the roles of the SENCOs. Out of these items, 34 were Likert-type scale items and one item was an open-ended item which provided the SENCOs with the opportunity to state other roles that were not captured on the Likert-type scale. The open-ended question made the section exhaustive, leaving no unaccounted roles in the measurement of the roles SENCOs played in the implementation of IE.

Part D measured the level of confidence of the SENCOs as they performed their roles in the implementation of IE. This part measured their level of confidence on a four-point Likert-type scale with item response scale as *Very*

Low (1), *Low* (2), *High* (3) and *Very High* (4). It had 26 items that were derived from literature to measure their level of confidence in the implementation of IE.

Finally, Part E focused on the concerns SENCOs had in implementing IE. Most of the items on the scale were adapted from Yadav, Das, Sharma, and Tiwari's (2015). *Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale-Revised (CIES-R)*.

However, because the scale was originally developed for teachers, additional items were added to the scale based on the literature (Smith, 2019; Curan et al., 2018) to make it more suitable for the unit of analysis in the study. Therefore, instead of 23 items in the original scale under five sections; Classroom-related concerns (nine items), School-related concerns (four items), Self-related concerns (four items), Academic achievement related concerns (three items) and Management-related concerns (3 items), which was structured on a four-point Likert-type scale. Thus, *Not At All Concerned* (0), *A Little Concerned* (1), *Moderately Concerned* (2) and *Extremely Concerned*, ten more items were added to the scale on a four point Likert-type scale. That is *Not At All Concerned* (0), *A Little Concerned* (1), *Moderately Concerned* (2) and *Extremely Concerned* (3). There were 33 items in all which measured SENCOs concerns about the implementation of IE. The concerns were grouped under specific areas of concerns. These were classroom-related (nine items), school-related (five items), self-related (ten items), academic achievement related (three items) and management-related (six items). Specifically, six more items were added to the self-related concern, under the management related concerns five new items were replaced in that section in addition to only one item from the original scale making it six items instead of three and under the school related section one

item was added making it five items instead of four. It was important to add more items and make replacements of some of the items apart from adapting the scale because the roles of SENCOs are different from regular education teachers (Curran et al., 2018) and therefore some of their concerns differ from the regular education teachers (Smith, 2019). The internal consistency of the CIES-R original scale was .88.

The use of the RSIE-Q provided the opportunity for the SENCOs to respond to the same questions, hence it ensured standardisation of responses gathered which increased the study's objectivity. It also helped to gather data on time to address the research problem. However, it had few limitations as far as the study was concerned. Its standardised nature did not provide the opportunity for the SENCOs to seek clarification to its items in the moments of misunderstandings. This limitation was minimised through the pilot-test which ensured that the items or questions were easy to comprehend by the respondents for the validation of the instrument. The self-report nature of the instrument made it possible for the SENCOs to provide superficial responses in an attempt to complete and return the instrument. To reduce the impact of this limitation, the respondents were not forced to take part in the study. They were briefed about the purpose of the study and they were told to respond to their best of knowledge.

Roles of SENCOs in Inclusive Education-Semi-Structured Interview Guide (RSIE-IG)

The semi-structured interview guide was used to gather qualitative data for the qualitative strand of the mixed methods phase of the study. The

instrument was structured into five sections. Section A focused on the background information of the SENCOs. It considered their educational qualification, grades in Ghana Education Service and number of working experience.

Section B considered the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE.

It had eight open-ended items. Out of these eight, seven of them were main questions which had follow-up questions. The lead-off question solicited responses on the nature of employment of the SENCOs. Other questions probed into their job description, training offered to them, unrelated roles assigned to them, number of SEN in the district, specific actions carried out by them for the implementation of IE in schools, supervision carried out by regional coordinators and collaboration existing between the SENCOs and regional coordinators.

Section C covered issues on the SENCOs' level of knowledge on their roles. It had three items. The first item was on the expected roles they are to play to make IE effective. This was followed by quantification of their knowledge on a scale that ranged from low, medium and high.

Section D focused on SENCOs performance of their roles and it had seven items in all. Items covered issues on how SENCOs identified children with SEN, if screening was done and how it was done if screening is done before enrolment of pupils in kindergarten. They were also made to describe the strategies they used in creating public awareness on disability issues, what they did to support heads in the implementation of IE, what they did to support

teachers who had children with SEN in the classroom and what they did to support parents of children with SEN.

Section E covered their confidence in implementing their roles in IE. They were required to justify whether or not they felt confident to perform their roles. The instrument placed the responsibility on them to detail the roles they felt confident in and those they did not feel confident to perform.

The implementation of the IE could not be devoid of some challenges as indicated by extant researchers (Nketsia, 2016; Ofori, 2018; Singh, 2016). Hence, the final section, Section E, covered the challenges SENCOs experienced in the implementation of their roles. In all, the section had six items that covered issues such as challenges faced, strategies to overcome the challenges, awareness of authorities about the challenges and actions taken by them to address the challenges, and measures the SENCOs should put in place to facilitate their performance.

The semi-structured interview guide allowed me to gather high-quality data. Patton (2012) noted that this is one of the essential attributes of using this type of instrument. This is also due to the speed involved in gathering data (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). It helped to gather sufficient qualitative data since I had only one opportunity to gather data from the participants. Its open-ended nature allowed the thought of the participants to be stimulated during the interview process. However, it was labour intensive and consumed a considerable amount of time in gathering and analysing volumes of data.

Pilot-Testing of Instruments

Pilot-testing is an essential function undertaken before a study (Halberg, 2008). This is because it helps to identify difficulties and the adjustment that has to be made to the instruments so that credible data can be gathered for a study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001; Kim, 2011). Besides, since I may not be present during the answering of the questions, it is important for participants to understand the questions well by piloting the instrument to examine its effectiveness for the data collection (Payne & Payne, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2019). The pilot-test for the quantitative and qualitative instruments are described as follows:

RSIE-Q

The selection of a sample size for a pilot-test has been a controversial one as various scholars have argued about the appropriate samples for the test. Whilst some scholars argued for a minimum of 10 (Fink, 2003; Hill, 1998), other scholars argued for a minimum of 30 (Browne, 1995). Kieser and Wassmer (1996) indicated that samples for a pilot-test can be selected from the range of 30-40 inclusive. Also, Cooper and Saunder (2016) emphasised that it can be between 25 and 100. Therefore, a sample size of 33 SENCOS was selected from Western and Volta Regions, for the pilot-test. In all, 15 and 18 SENCOS were selected from Western and Volta Regions respectively. All the SENCOS were therefore selected and reached through the Regional coordinators for both regions. However, only 31 SENCOS participated in the study. Some of them answered the RSIE-Q manually whilst others answered the online survey version.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

In qualitative studies, the issue of pilot-testing has not been rigorously enforced as seen in quantitative studies. Kim (2011) noted that pilot-testing in interpretative phenomenological studies is mainly to reflect on the personal skills and abilities of the researchers. In this current pilot-test, six SENCOS were purposively selected from the Western and Volta Regions. The SENCOS were contacted through their regional co-ordinators. Before the pilot-testing, the SENCOS were contacted via phone to seek for their consent to participate in the study and to introduce the study to them. A follow-up call was made to book the date for the interview and the venue for the interview. Two participants in the Western Region were interviewed face to face, whereas the remaining were interviewed via phone based on their request. For the face to face interview, their written consent was sought and a verbal consent was sought from the phone interview. During the interview, the interviewees were informed about the purpose of the pilot-testing and they were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The pilot-testing determined the user-friendliness of the instrument since the participants were able to respond to the questions. It also indicated that participants would need prompts and clarifications to enable them to respond to some of the questions. The pilot-testing of the instrument gave an estimate of the duration of the interview. Finally, the pilot-test helped to improve my interviewing skills for the main study.

Validity and Reliability

In research, researchers need to establish two important quality criteria to justify the credibility of data gathered and findings projected to inform

recommendations for policy and practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). These quality criteria are validity and reliability. In qualitative research, these two quality criteria are simply referred to as trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The validity and reliability of the RSIE-Q are described next, this is followed by the trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

Validity and Reliability for RSIE-Q

The study established the content and the face validity of the instrument and construct validity of the variables. For the content validity, I ensured that the items developed were comprehensive to address all the aspects of the constructs measured and the research objectives formulated for the study. The instrument was then given to postgraduates Ph.D. students and some lecturers in the field of Special Education, at the University of Cape Coast to examine its content validity. Some of the corrections identified from them were issues of the spacing, double-barrel items, wrong choice of words, typographical errors and simplification of some items. Few items were also deleted because they were not considered good to measure the constructs. Corrections from them were effected to refine the instrument. After, the instrument was given to my supervisors for their expert judgement. Few of such similar errors detected by the earlier reviewers were also spotted by the supervisors. For instance, my supervisors asked for the repositioning of the items. Final corrections were effected and the instrument was considered by the supervisors to be valid. The supervisors also indicated that the appearance of the instrument showed that logically it could measure what it intended to measure.

Next, the SENCO regional coordinators in Central, Western and Volta Regions were given the instrument for their final validation. All the regional coordinators indicated that the instrument was valid. However, the Volta regional coordinator was of the view that it was relatively long. However, the researcher indicated that after the pilot-test it might reduce to make it easier for the actual respondents to respond to it when finally presented to them. Hence, no corrections were effected on the instrument. The instrument was therefore ready for the pilot- test to gather preliminary data to assess its construct validity and reliability.

Data gathered on the constructs was subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The EFA was used to reduce the number of items on the questionnaire and also to determine factor structures whereas the CFA was used to confirm if the factors retained are appropriate for the constructs they measure (Şimşek & Noyan, 2013).

The EFA was carried out on the items which measured SENCOs' roles, confidence and concerns about the implementation of IE. The promax rotation method was employed with cut off loading value of .5. The test was valid and significant for all the variables: roles, KMO = .545, Bartlett test result, χ^2 (df = 276) = 573.989, $p < .001$; confidence, KMO = .626, Bartlett test result, χ^2 (df = 153) = 366.781, $p < .001$; and concerns, KMO = .507, Bartlett test result, χ^2 (df = 253) = 537.924, $p < .001$.

For the roles, nine items were deleted after the EFA out of the 34 items. The remaining 25 items revealed a seven-factor structure. These factors were named as Teacher support, teaching and administrative task; Manage IE

implementation; Screening for identification; Collaborating with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation; Ensuring a conducive school environment; Collaborating with educators and external agencies; and Collaborate with parents of children without SEN. For the confidence, eight items were deleted out of 26 items. The remaining 18 items showed a three-

underlying factor structure. These factor structures were named as Managerial, Administrative and Collaborative task; Teacher support; and Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification. Finally, the EFA deleted 12 items under the concerns and left 21 items. These 21 items revealed a five-factor structure. These are Classroom-related; Self-related; Academic Achievement; School-related and Management Related.

Right after the EFA, the factors that were extracted were subjected to a CFA. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should not be less than .5. This means that construct validity has been attained. The results that were obtained for the roles variable is presented in Table 3.

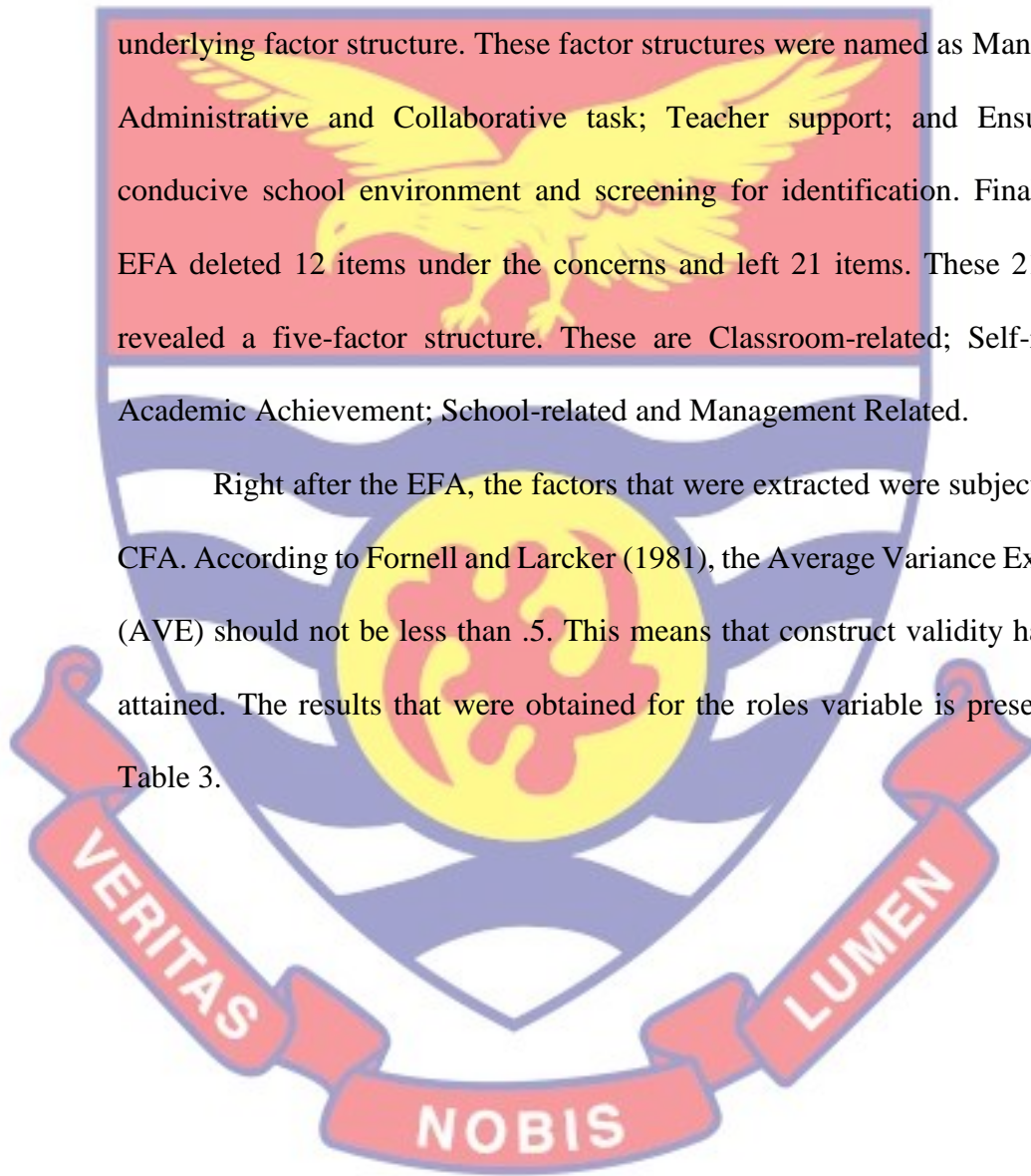


Table 3: *Item Loading and Average Variance Extracted*

Roles	Items	Loading	KMO	df	χ^2	Sig	AVE
Teacher support, teaching and administrative task	R2	.778	.833	21	109.494	<.001	.65
	R5	.863					
	R6	.836					
	R10	.792					
	R22	.777					
	R28	.851					
	R29	.742					
Manage IE implementation	R8	.768	.881	21	127.860	<.001	.71
	R11	.849					
	R15	.831					
	R17	.893					
	R23	.812					
	R24	.856					
	R33	.886					
Screen for identification	R1	.768	.638	6	37.444	<.001	.64
	R9	.850					
	R12	.745					
Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation	R19	.834	.500	1	14.610	<.001	.84
	R21	.914					
	R27	.914					
Ensure a conducive school environment	R14	.801	.692	3	22.159	<.001	.71
	R25	.848					
	R34	.870					
Collaborate with educators and external agencies	R20	.908	1F	1F	1F	1F	.82
Collaborate with parents of children without SEN	R13	.853	1F	1F	1F	1F	.73

It can be seen that the CFA was significant for all the sub-construct of the roles variable. The KMOs also showed that sampling adequacy was attained. By the visual inspection of the factor loadings, it can be seen that the least factor

loading is .745 on the A sub-construct and the highest item loading is .914 on the D sub-construct. This shows that each item explained more than 50% of the variance in the construct that it represents. The least AVE is .65 for the A sub-construct with the maximum AVE of .84 on the D sub-construct. This means that construct validity has been attained. Also, Table 4 presents the construct

validity for the confidence variable.

Table 4: *Item Loading and Average Variance Extracted*

Confidence	Items	Loading	KMO	df	χ^2	Sig	AVE
Managerial, administrative and collaborative task	C1	.711	.842	21	111.297	<.001	.65
	C6	.734					
	C8	.912					
	C9	.811					
	C10	.764					
	C23	.838					
	C26	.852					
Teacher support	C2	.791	.743	15	75.148	<.001	.60
	C3	.648					
	C4	.693					
	C16	.751					
	C22	.807					
	C24	.921					
	C13	.767					
Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification	C15	.789	.710	6	41.022	<.001	.66
	C18	.836					
	C21	.857					

The CFA results for confidence did not differ from the roles. The only observation here is that one item was deleted from the 18 items that passed the

EFA test. All the rest of the items loaded very well on their respective constructs. The least item loading is .648 and the maximum item loading is .92. Again, all the sub-constructs of the confidence variable explained more than 50% variance in the variable. This means that construct validity has been attained. Finally, Table 5 presents the construct validity for the concerns

variable.

Table 5: *Item Loading and Average Variance Extracted*

Concerns	Items	Loading	KMO	df	χ^2	Sig	AVE
Self-related	SeRC8	.853	.782	15	159.472	<.001	.77
	SeRC15	.849					
	SeRC16	.800					
	SeRC20	.889					
	SeRC22	.925					
	SeRC23	.939					
	Academic Achievement	AARC24					
AARC25		.931					
AARC26		.887					
AARC27		.888					
SRC10		.798					
School-Related	SRC11	.868	.740	6	54.584	<.001	.73
	SRC12	.865					
	SRC13	.881					
	CRC1	.815					
Classroom-Related	CRC2	.761	.770	6	33.434	<.001	.65
	CRC7	.849					
	CRC9	.793					
	MRC29	.918					
Management-Related	MRC31	.837	.691	3	33.153	<.001	.77
	MRC32	.871					

The CFA results for concerns confirmed all the five factor structures. As observed, sampling adequacy was achieved by the inspection of the KMO estimates and the test was significant ($p < .001$) for all the sub-constructs. All

the items loaded very well; the least and highest item loading were .733 and .939 for academic achievement and self-related concerns respectively. All the AVEs show that construct validity has been attained.

Next, the reliability of the instrument was calculated using the Cronbach alpha and the McDonald Omega (Hayes & Coutts, 2020; Peters, 2014; Zhang & Yuan, 2015). Hayes and Coutts (2020) recommend the use of the McDonald Omega for a multidimensional scale. The reliability results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: *Reliability Coefficients for Pilot Test*

Variable	Subscales	Pilot	
		Alpha	Omega
Knowledge		.892	-
Roles	Teacher support, teaching and administrative task	.907	.913
	Manage IE implementation	.928	.932
	Screen for identification	.806	.820
	Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation	.789	-
	Ensure a conducive school environment	.788	.804
	Collaborate with educators and external agencies	1F	1F
	Collaborate with parents of children without SEN	1F	1F
Confidence	Managerial, administrative and collaborative task	.906	.911
	Teacher support	.860	.872
	Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification	.820	.854
Concerns	Self-related	.938	.938
	Academic Achievement	.884	.894
	School-Related	.865	.868
	Classroom-Related	.815	.821
	Management-Related	.846	.850
Composite Reliability		.891	

Note: 1F = one item factor

Both the Cronbach's alpha and the McDonald omega yielded reliability estimates above .7 for all the sub-constructs. The composite reliability was .891.

According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2011) and Huck (2011), a reliability estimate of .7 and above means that the instrument is good and credible to gather data. This can be inferred for the current instrument (RSIE-Q).

Trustworthiness for Qualitative Data

Quality in research is a concept that cannot be disregarded.

Trustworthiness is concerned with the extent to which the results of a qualitative study presented are useful and not characterised by errors due to bias in decision making. The positivists employ the term validity and argue for the need for researchers to establish convergent validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, criterion-related, internal and external validity (Maxwell, 1992). Guba and Lincoln (1989) argued for qualitative researchers to rather focus on authenticity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) advanced four criteria that qualitative researchers must meet to communicate the validity of the data, also known as trustworthiness. These are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

The concept of credibility replaces the concept of internal validity in quantitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative researchers need to guarantee that the results are valid and conceivable and should address the perspectives given by the study's participants. To ensure credibility in the current study, I employed four techniques: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and member checking. The prolonged engagement employed focused on my familiarisation with the research participants. This was done by establishing rapport with them. I

established informal conversations with them so that they could get used to me before the data collection. This was meant for them to see me as part of them during the interview section so that my presence would not influence their answers. Through the technique of persistent observation, I visited some of them at their offices to understand some of the roles they played. This was to enable me to appreciate the context in which they work. This aided me to probe them more during the data collection in an event I perceived doubt in their responses. To confirm their responses, I used a semi-structured interview guide which allowed some similar questions to be asked of them and responses crosschecked for truthfulness. Finally, the member checking technique had them to confirm the results generated by me to ensure that it was representative of their perspectives.

Transferability

The concept of transferability replaces the concept of generalisability in quantitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability refers to the extent to which the findings depicted in a study are applicable or suitable to theory, practice and future studies. This is to ensure that the context of the study is well described so that others who find themselves in a similar context can apply the findings to address problems in their context. Therefore, in the current study, I presented a rich and thick description of the study's participants, their selection and the study's context.

Dependability

In quantitative research, dependability is referred to as reliability. This to the qualitative researchers refers to "whether the findings of an inquiry would

be consistently repeated if the inquiry was replicated with the same (or similar) subjects in the same (or similar) context” (Guba, 1981, p. 80). Evidence of dependability can be provided in qualitative research when researchers provide detail coverage of the methodology employed to show the extent to which appropriate practices have been adhered to. An audit trail was provided right from how data was collected, analysed and themes generated to support findings.

Confirmability

The concept of confirmability stands on the same as objectivity in quantitative research. According to Guba (1981), it is “the degree to which the finding of an inquiry is a function solely of the participants and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, etc. of the inquirer” (p. 80). Confirmability was ensured in the current study by first allowing colleague researchers to examine the appropriateness of the transcript generated. This was to ensure that the themes generated were based on the exact perspectives of the participants. Themes generated were also subjected to review by colleague researchers and the study’s supervisors. The report was given back to the participants to again confirm whether their views have been correctly captured and reported. Similarly, an audit trail was provided for other researchers to verify the appropriateness of the procedures followed in establishing findings.

Data Collection Procedures

The collection of the data started by following the protocols laid down by the University of Cape Coast. First, ethical clearance was applied for

University of Cape Coast (UCC), Institutional Review Board (IRB). This enabled me to obtain an introductory letter to seek permission from relevant state authorities to gather the data from the three Regions. The letter was presented to the Regional Directors of Education to first seek permission. Upon acceptance by the Regional Directors of Education, I proceeded to the offices of the Regional SENCO co-ordinators. They were also informed about the study and their permission sought to allow the SENCOS to be contacted for the study. The Regional SENCO co-ordinators provided the total number and the telephone numbers of the District SENCOS in the three Regions. They also perused the RSIE-Q and validated it as already indicated under the validity of the instrument.

Right after, the SENCOS were personally contacted. Permission letters provided to me were shown to them to obtain their attention. Some were contacted only on the phone because external work took them of their post and others due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of the study was explained to them. They were assured that the study was being conducted to clearly understand their roles as experts in the field of special education. It was not meant to victimise anyone. They were then given a consent letter to sign for their acceptance to be part of the study and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point they felt uncomfortable. All these happened both in-person and online as some of them were only contacted through phones and emails.

Those contacted in person were given the RSIE-Q and were given two weeks to complete and submit them. Also, the equivalent online version of the

RSIE-Q was given to those who were not on the post and could not be contacted in person to complete it within two weeks. The online address was sent to them on their WhatsApp pages to enable them to access the online version of the RSIE-Q. I was added to the WhatsApp platforms created to enable me give weekly prompts to the respondents in the group and also reach them individually to follow-up if they had been able to answer the questionnaire or if they were facing challenges in accessing the questionnaire online. They were also asked to place a call directly to me should they require assistance in filling the instrument. Some respondents were able to fill online and others filled hard copies. A period of four weeks was used in collecting the data and out of the 77 SENCOS only four SENCOS did not respond to the questionnaire. A fourth follow-up was done to reach some of the SENCOS who could not participate but they gave reasons for their unavailability. Thus in total 73, SENCOS responded. Hence, about 95% of the population participated in the study.

The face-to-face or one-on-one interview was conducted with 15 participants instead of the 19 participants because after the fifteenth person saturation had occurred. The interview took place during the same period of the quantitative data collection. Four participants were interviewed face-to-face whereas eleven participants were interviewed via phone. In all five, six and four participants were in the Greater Accra, Central and Eastern Regions, respectively. Those who were reached via phone was based on their request, they explained that, because of the special office arrangement by the government for observing the COVID protocols, their office days were too busy and therefore they would be much relaxed at home for the interview. Some also

indicated they shared office space, therefore their offices would not be convenient and preferred to have a phone conversation. For those who were interviewed face-to-face the venue was in their offices. During the day of the data collection, the participants were again reminded of the purpose of the study. Their consent was obtained during the scheduling stage of which they gave

verbal consent. They were told their responses were being recorded on a recording device to allow playback and to appropriately report their responses. They were also informed that they could ignore a question they felt uncomfortable to answer. For the face-to-face, the recorder was fixed at the centre of the interviewer (researcher) and the interviewee (SENCOs). For the phone interview, the phone was used in recording the conversation. Also, they were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the data provided.

The meeting started with an introductory greeting and welcome address, and the ground rules stated. They were told that the interview session would take approximately 45 minutes to end. The first question was posed to the participant to answer. Where necessary, follow-up questions were asked to clarify answers. The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 1 hour 5 minutes. The duration was dependent on the responses of the participants. After interviewing each participant, I thanked them for accepting to participate in the interview and their cooperation in the interview. For the face-to-face interviews, the audio played back after the interview, but for the phone interview, the audio was sent to them right after the interview for them to clarify, provide additional information or to validate the information they had provided. The duration for the qualitative data collection also lasted for four weeks.

Ethical Considerations

The laid down guidelines for conducting research in the University of Cape Coast were strictly adhered to. First, the proposal was presented to the Department of Education and Psychology for their approval of the study. Upon approval, ethical clearance was solicited from the University of Cape Coast, Institutional Review Board. It took one month one week for the Board to issue me the clearance letter to start data collection. The letter was then presented to my Department for an introductory letter. The introductory letter obtained was used to seek permission from the Regional Directors of Education and the regional SENCO co-ordinators. Permission granted by these directors allowed me to meet the SENCOS.

The SENCOS were briefed about the purpose of the study and their written consent solicited to participate in the study. However, verbal consent was given during the qualitative phase of the study. They were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. “Anonymity and confidentiality are important ethical issues because their violation can bring embarrassment, stigma, hardship, discrimination, incrimination, or loss of prestige to the individual group” (Ogah, 2013, p. 224). No respondent or participant was coerced to take part in the study. Those who were involved were informed they could opt-out anytime they felt uncomfortable. They also had the opportunity to refuse to provide an answer to a particular question. They were informed that, the data would be stored for a period of five years with utmost security. They were further informed that if data were to be released to third parties, their consent would first be solicited. In the interview section, I solicited their consent to

record their voices. The recorded audio was kept from third parties. Pseudonyms were used to represent the participants in the research report to hide all identities.

Finally, ethical considerations were taken into consideration during data processing and analysis. This was crucial to ensure that results were not tampered with and the fact as reported. The data from the RSIE-Q were edited and cleaned without altering responses. The right statistical software was used to process the data and all errors were checked after the data entry. The appropriate statistical tools were used to analyse the data. The assumptions governing the use of the selected statistics were tested and reported accordingly in the research report. It must be noted that the descriptive and inferential statistics selected were done within my knowledge framework. Hence, I was solely responsible for any errors committed. During the transcription of the qualitative data, I committed enough efforts in recording the exact words of the participants. The participants were made to confirm if the right reports were generated. The language used in the report took into consideration the research audience. The final thesis report was also subjected to a plagiarism check as instituted by the University of Cape Coast.

Data Processing and Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for the study, hence a mixed analysis was employed. The study employed concurrent mixed analysis; this is where both data strands are analysed separately in no chronological manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The purpose of the mixed analysis was for corroboration and validation purposes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the

analysis, equal priority was given to each data strand. The data processing and analysis has been reported under each research approach.

Quantitative Data Processing and Analysis

The questionnaires gathered from the field were first examined for completeness in responses. All the respondents provided complete responses with no clear pattern on each of the questionnaire to suggest that the respondents did not read the items on the questionnaire. The questionnaires were also checked for multiple responses on a particular item of which none was found. Subsequently, the responses were entered into Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 26. Right after the data entry, errors were examined through the computations of frequency and percentages on all variables in the software. This was to ensure that the results obtained had not been affected by errors, and statistical values were not overestimated or underestimated. The SPSS software had all the functionalities which assisted in analysing the data to address the research problem. Also, it was easy to export data from the SPSS software into other statistical packages for specific analysis that those software had the advantage over the SPSS. It should be noted that a five-year data storage policy was adopted for the study (European Commission, Ethics and Data Protection, 2018). The hard copies of the questionnaire were kept in a locked cabinet with appropriate filing, and also the SPSS software which contained the soft data was to be kept in my google drive for the aforementioned number of years.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the data gathered on the research questions and hypotheses. For the descriptive

statistics, the following tools were employed – frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation; and for the inferential statistics the following were used – factorial ANOVA, factorial MANOVA and multiple linear regression. All the hypotheses were examined at a .05 level of significance.

The questionnaire gathered preliminary data on the respondents' demographic characteristics. These characteristics were gender, working experience, grades and educational qualification. All the variables were measured by categorisation except for the work experience. However, to provide a summary report on the work experience it was also categorised following the scientific approach of categorising a variable into equal class interval and width. The categorical nature of the variables implied that no numerical attributes could be imputed, hence frequency and percentage were deemed the appropriate statistical tools for their analysis.

The first research question gathered data on SENCOs level of knowledge in terms of the roles they played in the implementation of IE. Since knowledge is factual, based on maximal performance, factual items were presented for the participants in a dichotomous scale of 'Yes' or 'No' to tick. Since the data gathered were categorical. However, the research question focused on reporting the general level of knowledge of SENCOs in the roles played in the implementation of IE. This meant that the scale had to be converted from its categorical nature to a continuous scale so that a statistical model could be used to represent the entire SENCOs. Hence, the responses were scored into correct and wrong answers. After, the actual level of knowledge for a particular respondent was computed by dividing into the total correct score of

the individual by the total number of items ($n = 34$) and expressed as a percentage. This made the use of the mean appropriate model since it works on variables measured or presented in the interval and ratio scale. The scores of the SENCOS on their level of knowledge was in the interval form, hence the appropriate use of the mean. The standard deviation assisted in tracking variations in their knowledge to communicate the homogeneity in their level of knowledge.

The second research question gathered data on the roles SENCOS played in the implementation of IE. The import of the question was to report their general roles played as a cohort and not as individuals. This meant that a statistical model was required which could represent the entire cohort. The continuous nature of the data gathered on the question therefore made the mean and standard deviation the most appropriate statistical tools. The mean serves as a good statistical model when data is gathered on a continuous scale of measurement without any outliers (Field, 2018). To track the level of homogeneity in the respondents' responses, the standard deviation became the readily available statistical tool. The closer the standard deviation estimate to zero, the higher the level of homogeneity in the responses. High homogeneity means that the responses equally indicated that they played the same roles in the implementation of IE.

The fourth research question focused on the level of confidence SENCOS' exhibit in the implementation of IE. Similar to Research Question Two, the mean and standard deviation were used to determine their level of confidence. This is because data on their level of confidence was gathered at the

interval level. The mean serves as the best measure of central tendency for interval level data. The standard deviation assisted in determining if all the SENCOS possessed the same level of confidence in implementing their roles.

The last research question concentrated on the concerns SENCOS had in the implementation of IE. Several items which measured concerns in such a programme implementation were selected from the literature to measure their concerns for IE implementation. Hence, the items were first subjected to EFA to determine the specific areas of their concerns. After, the specific concerns generated were confirmed through CFA. This allowed the use of the mean to represent each specific concerns obtained through the EFA and CFA. The standard deviation was then used to check if they all had the same concerns.

Five research hypotheses were formulated in the study. Hypotheses one was hypotheses of difference with one dependent variable. Specifically, Hypothesis One examined the differences in the SENCOS level of knowledge based on gender, working experience and educational qualification. In this hypothesis, the dependent variable was level of knowledge in the implementation of IE. This was analysed against three independent variables (gender, working experience and educational qualification). Pallant (2016) and Field (2018) indicated that in such a test the best statistical tool is factorial ANOVA. This tool provides the analyst with the opportunity to determine differences in the main effect, which is either gender, working experiences or educational qualification, and the interaction effect, which is gender and working experiences, gender and educational qualification, working experience and educational qualification among others. These interactions occur at two and

three levels where the independent variables are three. The use of the factorial ANOVA, therefore, provided the study with a comprehensive analysis of the differences that existed in their level of knowledge in the implementation of IE than to narrowly focus on the issues under consideration in isolation through the use of one-way ANOVA.

Hypotheses Two, Three and Four were hypotheses of difference. However, the hypotheses had more than one dependent variable. The hypotheses concentrated on differences in SENCOs' roles, level of confidence and concerns in the implementation of IE based on gender, working experiences and educational qualification. The role, level of confidence and concern variables had several dimensions giving rise to its multivariate nature. The roles were categorised under: Screening for identification (SFI), Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation (CPC_SEN/AC), Ensure a conducive school environment (CSE), Management of IE implementation (MIEI), Collaborate with educators and external agencies (CEEAA), Teaching, teacher and administrative Support (TTAS) and Collaborate with parents of children without SEN (CPCW_SEN). Also, the level of confidence was categorised under: Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification (CSE/SFI), Managerial, administrative and collaborative task (MACT) and Teacher support (TS). The concerns were categorised under classroom-related, school-related, self-related, academic achievement related and management-related concerns. Hence, a statistical tool was needed that could first examine differences in the linear combination of the specific concerns as well as differences in each concern based on the

aforementioned demographics. Hence, the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was considered useful as suggested by Pallant (2016) and Field (2018). The design for the tests was factorial MANOVA. In such tests, multiple comparisons must be examined using the Bonferroni alpha – dividing the original alpha level by the number of dependent variables (.05/7, .05/3, .05/5).

This was to ensure that the alpha level (.05) was not inflated since a single test has been conducted at multiple levels (Field, 2018). The last hypothesis was a hypothesis of relationship which focused on the influence of SENCOS' level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on their roles in implementing IE. The hypothesis had one dependent variable (roles) and three independent variables (knowledge, confidence and concerns). This made the use of multiple linear regression the best statistical tool for the test. Multiple linear regression is a multivariate technique used when determining the correlation between a criterion variable (roles) and a combination of two or more predictor variables (knowledge, confidence and concerns) (Field, 2018).

Qualitative Data Processing and Analysis

The qualitative data was gathered through the use of a digital recording device. Hence, the soft data was transcribed to generate the transcripts for the analysis. The transcription was done by myself. The transcript was then given to two senior researchers to confirm using the soft data the appropriateness of the generated transcript. After, I read through the transcript over and over again to understand the issues in the transcript. It must be noted that, the following steps as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) were used in storing the data, thus high-quality recording devices for recording information were used during

the interviews, backup copies of audio recording were stored on google drive and data collection medium was developed to easily locate and identify information for the study.

Subsequently, the data were analysed thematically following the guidelines provided by Braun, Clarke, Hayfield and Terry (2019). The guidelines have six phases that must be followed. These are familiarisation, generating codes, constructing themes, revising themes, defining themes and producing the report. This analysis follows the inductive approach where themes emerge from the data rather than from some a priori themes. The guidelines used provided the study with credible results and enhanced its trustworthiness. This is because a rigorous and methodical approach was followed (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). It provided the study with rich and detailed results (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun, Clarke, & Hayfield, 2019). Table 7 provides a summary of the data analysis.

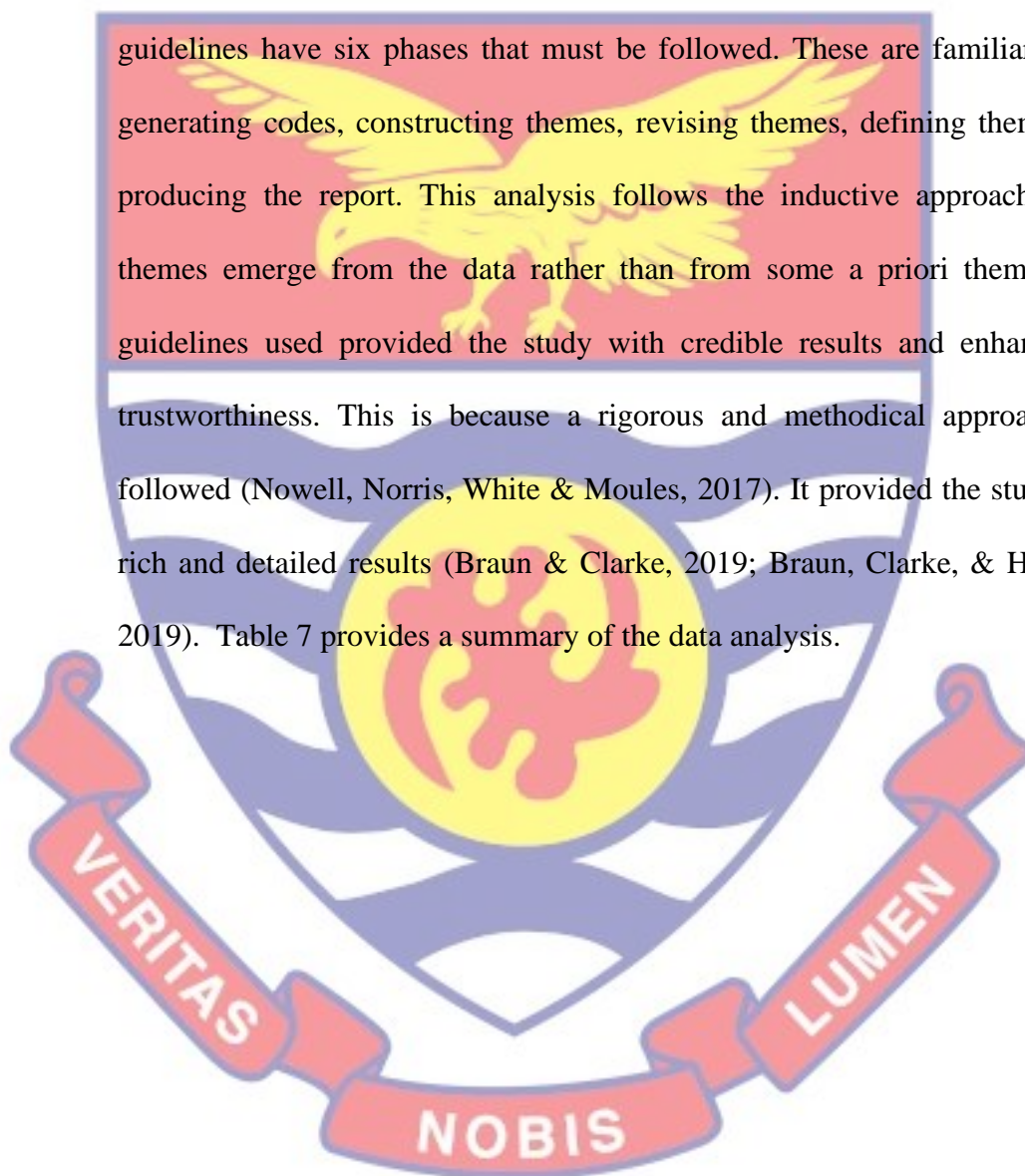


Table 7: Summary of Data Analyses

Research Questions/Hypotheses	Instruments	Analytical Tools
What level of knowledge do SENCOS have in terms of the roles they play in the implementation of IE?	RSIE-Q Semi-structured Interview guide	Mean, Standard Deviation and Thematic Analysis
What roles do SENCOS play in the implementation of IE?	RSIE-Q Semi-structured Interview guide	Mean, Standard Deviation and Thematic Analysis
How do SENCOS' perform their roles in the implementation of IE?	Semi-structured Interview guide	Thematic Analysis
How confident are SENCOS in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE?	RSIE-Q Semi-structured Interview guide	Mean, Standard Deviation and Thematic Analysis
What are the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE?	RSIE-Q Semi-structured Interview guide	Mean, Standard Deviation and Thematic Analysis
H ₀ : There is no statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge of SENCOS in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.	Data from RSIE-Q	Factorial ANOVA
H ₀ : There is no statistically significant difference in the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.	Data from RSIE-Q	Factorial MANOVA
H ₀ : There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence of SENCOS in playing their roles in IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.	Data from RSIE-Q	Factorial MANOVA
H ₀ : There is no statistically significant difference in the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.	Data from RSIE-Q	Factorial MANOVA
H ₀ : There is no statistically significant influence of SENCOS' level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on their roles in the implementation of IE.	Data from RSIE-Q	Multiple Linear Regression

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study examined Special Education Needs Co-ordinators' (SENCOs) level of knowledge, confidence regarding their roles in the implementation of inclusive education. Also, the study examined the concerns SENCOs have in the implementation of IE. This chapter presents the results and discussion of the results. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were presented first, followed by the results of the research questions, and the hypotheses. The quantitative and qualitative data were presented separately; however, the findings from both data sets were used for the discussion phase of the study.

Background Information of Respondents

The background data of the respondents who participated in the study was sought. These include their gender, educational qualification, working experience and Ranks in GES. This data was gathered to help provide an overview of the category of SENCOS who are participating in the study. The data gathered was analysed using frequency and percentages. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: *Background Information of Respondents (n =73)*

Variable	Category	Freq.	%
Gender	Male	46	63.00
	Female	27	37.00
Educational qualification	Bachelor's degree	40	54.80
	Master's degree	33	45.20
Working experience	1-5yrs	22	30.10
	6-10yrs	31	42.50
	11-15yrs	12	16.40
	16-20yrs	8	11.00
Rank in GES	Principal Superintend.	18	24.70
	Ass. director I	35	47.90
	Ass. director II	17	23.30
	Deputy director	3	4.10

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 8 shows that 46 (63%) of the respondents are males, while the remaining are females. This result shows that the male SENCOS who participated in the study were more than the female SENCOS. Further in Table 8, out of 73 respondents, 40(55%) of them have bachelor's degree while 33(45%) of them have a master's degree. Regarding the working experience, 31(43%) of them have been working as SENCOS for 6-10years while 8(11%) of them have been working for 16-20years. This result implies that most of the respondents have experience in the implementation of IE. They could provide valuable information in relation to their knowledge on roles to be performed, confidence level in executing their roles and the concerns they have about the implementation of IE. Out of 73 respondents, 35(48%) of them are working as Assistant Director I, while 3(4%) of them are serving as Deputy Directors. These ranks among the SENCOS is very important because they would help us to really understand their knowledge level on the expected roles to be executed, their confidence level and the concerns they have about IE implementation. The

working experiences and ranks of the respondents indicate that they are matured and are more likely to have the needed experiences in the implementation of IE.

Research Question One: What level of knowledge do SENCOS have in terms of the roles they play in the implementation of IE?

The objective of this research question was to identify the level of knowledge of SENCOS regarding the roles they play in implementing IE in schools. The factual data was gathered on a dichotomous scale and was analysed using frequency and percentage. This allowed the researcher to determine the specific roles that a number of the SENCOS demonstrated knowledge or no knowledge. To determine their level of knowledge, the dichotomous scale was converted to a continuous scale. This was done by scoring their responses into correct and wrong responses. The correct responses were expressed as a percentage of the total scale items. High knowledge saw a scale mean score of 67-100, moderate knowledge 34-66 and low knowledge 33 and below. Table 9 presents the results concerning the SENCOS' level of knowledge about their roles in the implementation of IE.

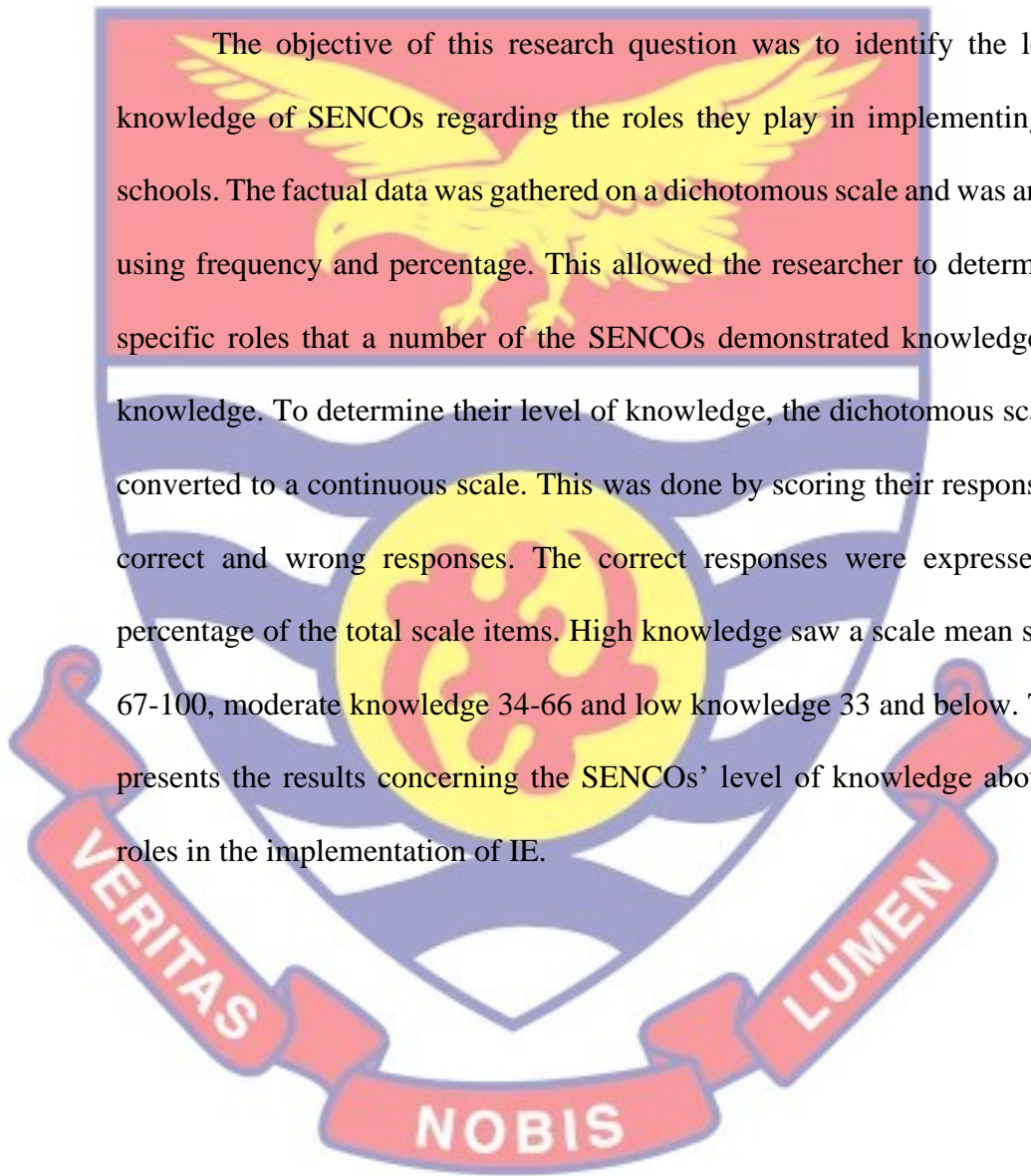


Table 9: *SENCOS' Level of Knowledge of their Roles in the Implementation of*

IE

Statement	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
SENCOS should ensure the implementation of inclusive education in schools.	69 (94.5)	4 (5.5)
update the files of children with SEN.	71 (97.3)	2 (2.7)
monitor the progress of children with SEN.	73 (100)	0 (0)
evaluate the progress of children with SEN.	69 (94.5)	4(5.5)
assist in the educational placement of children with SEN.	70 (95.9)	3 (4.1)
prepare the activities teachers need in teaching children with SEN.	57 (78.1)	16 (21.9)
teach children with SEN.	43 (58.9)	30 (41.1)
Engage in identification of children with SEN.	73 (100)	0 (0)
write Individual Education Plan (IEP).	65 (89)	8 (11)
inform parents about the progress of children with SEN.	71 (97.3)	2 (2.7)
engage in regular visits to schools.	70 (95.9)	3 (4.1)
collaborate with parents of children with disabilities.	72 (98.6)	1 (1.4)
collaborate with parents of children without disabilities.	49 (67.1)	24 (32.9)
discuss with teachers the condition of each child with SEN in order to make the right decisions.	73 (100)	0 (0)
train teachers to work with children with SEN.	72 (98.6)	1 (1.4)
participate in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting on issues concerning children with SEN.	71 (97.3)	2 (2.7)
make sure the school acquires appropriate teaching and learning resources (e.g., assistive resources).	60 (82.2)	13 (17.8)
ensure the School-Based Assessment includes the IEP.	61 (83.6)	12 (16.4)
ensure the school provides additional time for children with SEN to complete assignments and examinations.	71 (97.3)	2 (2.7)
make a conscious effort to identify the categories of children with disabilities in schools.	73 (100)	0 (0)
hold regular meetings with the school to ensure the school adheres to Inclusive practices.	69 (94.5)	4 (5.5)
hold Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings on school performance targets.	49 (67.1)	24 (32.9)
collaborate with the school to organise public education and sensitisation for parents and the community on SEN.	63 (86.3)	10 (13.7)
ensure teachers provide alternative assessment for children with SEN.	70 (95.9)	3 (4.1)
provide important information about children with SEN's performance to the District inclusive education team.	65 (89)	8 (11)
ensure teachers' complete school registers indicating the diverse learning needs in the classroom.	52 (71.2)	21 (28.8)
ensure a conducive school environment.	59 (80.8)	14 (19.2)
assist teachers in adapting the curriculum.	60 (82.2)	13 (17.8)
contribute to the in-service training of teachers.	71 (97.3)	2 (2.7)
asses children with SEN.	73 (100)	0 (0)
supervise IE practices in schools.	62 (84.9)	11 (15.1)
evaluate IE practices in schools.	59 (80.8)	14 (19.2)
ensure all schools in the district are practicing IE.	63 (86.3)	10 (13.7)
keep records on children with SEN.	71 (97.3)	2 (2.7)

Note: Continuous scale Mean = 89.52, SD = 16.87 Mean Score Interpretation: 33 and below (Low); 34-66 (Moderate); 67-100 (High)

Source: Field data (2021)

The SENCOs generally displayed a high level of knowledge (Mean = 89.52, SD = 16.87) on their roles in the implementation of IE. The deviation estimate (16.87) highlights that some of the SENCOs did not know some of the roles they were to play to make the IE programme effective. Table 9 provides a good breakdown of these observations. The high display of knowledge was significant in certain aspects of their roles where all the SENCOs demonstrated homogeneous knowledge. These areas are:

1. Monitor the progress of children with SEN.
2. Engage in identification of children with SEN.
3. Discuss with teachers the condition of each child with SEN in order to make the right decisions.
4. Make a conscious effort to identify the categories of children with disabilities in schools.
5. Assess children with SEN.

In all these aforementioned areas, the SENCOs scored 100% on the knowledge scale. Such a high knowledge means that such roles in IE would be performed very well if no internal or external impediments (any challenges that can affect their performance) are created for them in their execution of the roles. Few of the SENCOs (number ranging from 1-10) displayed no knowledge about the following roles:

1. Ensure the implementation of inclusive education in schools (n = 4).
2. Update the files of children with SEN (N = 2).
3. Evaluate the progress of children with SEN (n = 4).
4. Assist in the educational placement of children with SEN (n = 3).

5. Write Individual Education Plan (IEP) (n = 8).
6. inform parents about the progress of children with SEN (n = 2)
7. Engage in regular visits to schools (n = 3).
8. Collaborate with parents of children with disabilities (n = 1).
9. Train teachers to work with children with SEN (n = 1).
10. Participate in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting on issues concerning children with SEN (n = 2).
11. Ensure the school provides additional time for children with SEN to complete assignments and examinations (n = 2).
12. Hold regular meetings with the school to ensure the school adheres to Inclusive practices (n = 4).
13. Collaborate with the school to organise public education and sensitisation for parents and the community on SEN (n = 10).
14. Ensure teachers provide alternative assessment for children with SEN (n = 3).
15. Provide important information about children with SEN's performance to the District inclusive education team (n = 8).
16. Contribute to the in-service training of teachers (n = 2).
17. Ensure all schools in the district are practicing IE (n = 10).
18. Keep records on children with SEN (n = 2).

In these immediate aforementioned roles, quite a marginal number of the SENCOs did not prove their knowledge in the execution of the IE programme. This is not as alarming as compared with the observations made in other roles

where more than 11 (15.1% to 41.1%) of the SENCOs showed inadequate knowledge in their IE roles. The roles listed next buttress this observation.

1. Prepare the activities teachers need in teaching children with SEN (n = 16).
2. Teach children with SEN (n = 30).
3. Collaborate with parents of children without disabilities (n = 24).
4. Make sure the school acquires appropriate teaching and learning resources (e.g., assistive resources) (n = 13).
5. Ensure the School-Based Assessment includes the IEP (n = 12).
6. Hold Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings on school performance targets (n = 24).
7. Ensure teachers' complete school registers indicating the diverse learning needs in the classroom (n = 21).
8. Ensure a conducive school environment (n = 14).
9. Assist teachers in adapting the curriculum (n = 13).
10. Supervise IE practices in schools (n = 11).
11. Evaluate IE practices in schools (n = 14).

The study concludes that, generally, the level of knowledge of the SENCOs in the implementation of IE was high. It was identified in categories where a number of the SENCOs displayed inadequate knowledge for stakeholders' attention.

Research Question Two: What roles do SENCOs play in the implementation of IE?

This research question aimed to explore the roles that SENCOs play in the implementation of IE. The data gathered was analysed using means and standard deviation. For easy interpretation of the results, a mean criterion was

established as follows: A mean of 1.00 – 1.49 indicates that SENCOs never play those roles, 1.50 -2.49 indicates that SENCOs sometimes play those roles and 2.50 – 4.00 indicates that SENCOs often/always play those roles in the implementation of IE. Table 10 presents the analysis of the responses of the respondents on the roles SENCOs play in the implementation of IE.

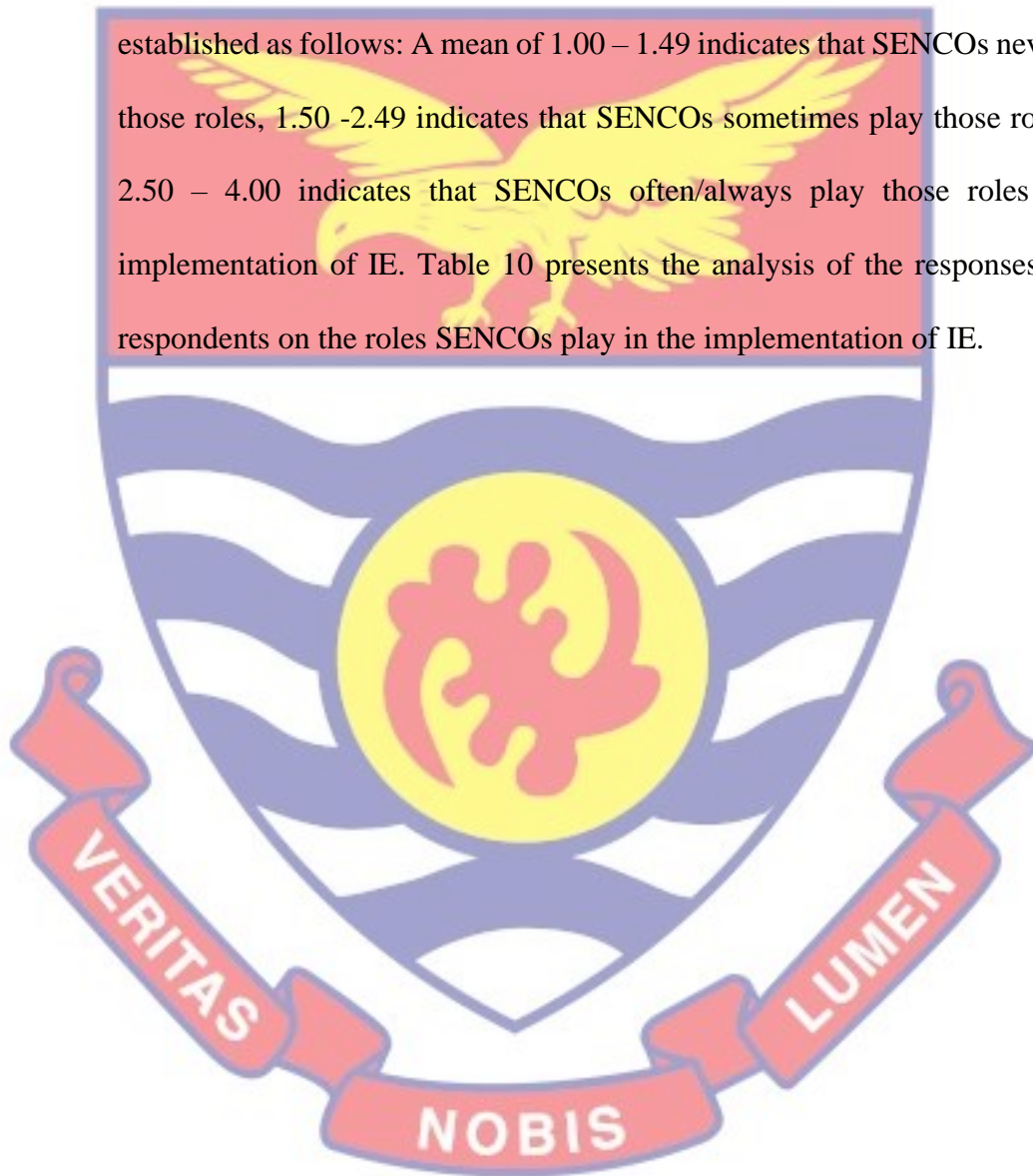


Table 10: *SENCOs Roles in the Implementation of IE*

Statement	Mean	SD
Screening for identification (SFI)	3.55	.69
1 I make a conscious effort to identify the categories of children with SEN.	3.55	.69
Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation (CPC_SEN/AC)	3.51	.66
1 I ensure the implementation of inclusive education in schools.	3.69	.60
2 I collaborate with parents of children with disabilities.	3.56	.67
3 I ensure the school provides additional time for children with SEN to complete assignments and examinations.	3.48	.77
4 I inform parents about the progress of children with SEN.	3.33	.83
Ensure a conducive school environment (CSE)	3.17	.73
1 I ensure a conducive school environment.	3.37	.81
2 I hold regular meetings with the school to ensure the school adheres to inclusive practices.	2.97	.87
Management of IE implementation (MIEI)	3.14	.61
1 I engage in regular visits to schools.	3.71	.54
2 I monitor IE practices in schools.	3.49	.77
3 I evaluate the performance of children with SEN.	3.21	.82
4 I train teachers to work with children with SEN.	3.19	.79
5 I ensure teachers provide alternative assessment for children with SEN.	3.03	.88
6 I collaborate with the school to organise public education and sensitisation for the community on SEN.	2.84	.88
7 I make sure the school acquires appropriate teaching and learning resources (e.g., assistive resources).	2.51	.90
Collaborate with educators and external agencies (CEEA)	2.90	.61
1 I discuss with teachers the condition of each child with SEN in order to make the right decisions.	3.49	.73
2 I provide important information on children with SEN's performance to the District Inclusive Education team.	3.04	1.03
3 I work with external agencies like Non-Governmental Agencies.	2.18	.75
Teaching, teacher and administrative Support (TTAS)	2.54	.52
1 I update the files of children with SEN	3.12	.67
2 I inform regional coordinators about the progress of children with SEN.	3.07	.79
3 I assist teachers in adapting the curriculum.	2.52	.85
4 I organise in-service training of teachers.	2.47	.71
5 I teach children with SEN.	2.36	.79
6 I prepare the activities teachers need in teaching children with SEN.	2.33	.82
7 I hold Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings on school performance targets.	1.92	.81
Collaborate with parents of children without SEN (CPCW_SEN)	2.48	.88
1 I collaborate with parents of children without SEN.	2.48	.88
Mean of Means/SD	3.00	.79

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 10 shows the means and standard deviations of the actual roles that SENCOs play in the implementation of IE. The results in Table 10 show

that the roles SENCOs play in the implementation of can be clustered into seven broad areas. They are:

1. Screening for identification (SFI)
2. Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation (CPC_SEN/AC)
3. Ensure a conducive school environment (CSE)
4. Management of IE implementation (MIEI)
5. Collaborate with educators and external agencies (CEEA)
6. Teaching, teacher and administrative Support (TTAS)
7. Collaborate with parents of children without SEN (CPCW_SEN)

The results in Table 10 further show that within the cluster of roles, 'Screening for identification' had the highest group mean (GM =3.55; SD =.69) followed by 'Collaborate with parents of children with SEN assessment accommodation' (GM =3.51; SD = .72), 'Ensure a conducive school environment' (GM =3.17; SD .84), 'Management of IE implementation' (GM =3.14; SD .80), 'Collaborate with educators and external agencies' (GM =2.90; SD .84) and 'Teacher, teaching and administrative support' (GM =2.54; SD .78). Compared to the established mean criterion of 2.50 – 4.00 indicating often/always playing a role in the implementation of IE, the SENCOs often/always performed the six clusters of roles above. On the other hand, 'Collaborate with parents of children without SEN' recorded the lowest group mean (GM =2.48; SD .88) indicating that SENCOs sometimes played this role.

The Mean of Means of the roles for the whole table (MM = 3.00; SD = 0.79) shows that, SENCOs often/always played several roles in the

implementation of IE. The value of the standard deviation indicates that the respondent's responses are clustered around mean score. Thus, SENCOs have homogeneous responses concerning their roles in the implementation of IE. Among the roles they play are; screening for identification for children with SEN, working with parents, providing support for teachers, engaging in administrative tasks such as keeping records on children with SEN. They also ensure a conducive school environment and make examination accommodations for children with SEN. Overall, SENCOs manage the implementation of IE in schools.

Research Question Four: How confident are SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE?

This research question aimed to assess the confidence level of SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE. The data gathered was analysed using means and standard deviation. For easy interpretation of the results, a mean criterion was established as follows: A mean of 1.00 – 2.49 indicates a low confidence while a mean of 2.50 – 3.49 and 3.50 - 4.00 indicates a moderate and high confidence level of SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE respectively. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: *SENCOs' Level of Confidence in the Performance of their Roles in the Implementation of IE*

Statement	Mean	SD
<i>Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification (CSE/SFI)</i>	3.42	.42
1 I am confident in identifying the categories of children with disabilities in schools.	3.66	.63
2 I am confident in training teachers to work with children with SEN.	3.58	.62
3 I can confidently supervise teachers on alternative assessment for children with SEN.	3.25	.64
4 I ensure a conducive school environment.	3.21	.60
<i>Managerial, administrative and collaborative task (MACT)</i>	3.40	.53
1 I feel confident when providing information to parents about the progress of their children with SEN.	3.52	.60
2 I feel confident evaluating the performance of children with SEN.	3.43	.67
3 I confidently collaborate with parents of children with disabilities.	3.43	.71
4 I can confidently assess children with SEN.	3.41	.60
5 I can confidently provide information to educators on the progress of children with SEN.	3.40	.64
6 I feel confident in ensuring the implementation of IE in designated schools.	3.33	.63
7 I confidently monitor IE practices	3.30	.64
<i>Teacher support (TS)</i>	3.29	.43
1 I feel confident when monitoring the progress of children with SEN.	3.60	.57
2 I confidently supervise IE practices.	3.43	.73
3 I am confident in taking decisions concerning the educational placement of children with SEN.	3.34	.58
4 I feel confident in assisting teachers in adapting the curriculum.	3.18	.59
5 I can confidently hold regular meetings with the school to ensure the school adheres to IE practices.	3.16	.65
6 I confidently prepare the activities teachers need in teaching children with SEN.	3.03	.65
Mean of Means/Std. Dev.	3.37	.63

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 11 shows the results of SENCOs' level of confidence in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE. The results in Table 11 show that the confidence level of SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE in school can be grouped into three main themes. They are:

1. Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification (CSE/SFI)
2. Managerial, administrative and collaborative task (MACT)
3. Teacher support (TS)

From Table 11, the results further show that within the cluster of SENCOs' level of confidence, 'Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification' had the highest group mean ($M=3.42$ 'SD=.42). This was followed by 'Managerial, administrative and collaborative tasks' ($M=3.40$; $SD=.53$) and 'Teacher support' ($M=3.29$; $SD=.43$). Comparing these results with the established mean criterion of 3.50 - 4.00, it is apparent that the SENCOs who participated in the study had a moderate level of confidence in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE. This moderate level of confidence among the SENCOs is seen within the sub-items. For example, they are confident in identifying the categories of children with disabilities in schools ($M=3.66$; $SD=.63$), providing information to parents about the progress of their children with SEN ($M=3.52$; $SD=.60$) and monitoring the progress of children with SEN ($M=3.60$; $SD=.57$).

From these results, it is concluded that on average, SENCOs have a moderate level of confidence in the performance of the roles in the

implementation of IE in schools. This was evident by the mean of means score (MM = 3.37; SD = 0.63). The relatively small value of the standard deviation revealed that SENCOs responses are clustered around the mean score. Thus, the SENCOs have a similar response in terms of their confidence in the performance of the roles in the implementation of IE in schools. The result means that the SENCOs are moderately efficacious in their ability to execute/handle the tasks and obligations assigned to them as SENCOs. With this level of efficacy, they could enhance the overall management of IE in schools, provide support for children with SEN, help teachers adapt effective instructional strategies that will meet the needs of all learners in the classroom and also provide in-service training for teachers. Hence, the level of confidence of the SENCOs can lead to effective performance of their roles in the implementation of IE.

Research Question Five: What are the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE?

This research question aimed to assess the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. The data gathered was analysed using means and standard deviation. For easy interpretation of the results, a mean criterion was established as follows: A mean of 0.00 – 0.49 indicates SENCOs are Unconcerned, 0.50 – 1.49 indicates SENCOs are little/low concerned, 1.50 – 2.49 indicates SENCO are moderately concerned and 2.50 – 3.49 indicates SENCO are highly/extremely concerned about the implementation of IE. The results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: *SENCOs Concerns about IE Implementation*

Statement	Mean	SD
<i>School-Related Concerns (SCRC)</i>	2.47	.89
1 The schools have inadequate special educators to support teaching.	2.51	.90
2 The schools do not have enough funding for implementing IE successfully.	2.49	.93
3 There is inadequate para-professional staff available to support children with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, OT).	2.45	.93
4 The schools have difficulty in accommodating children with various SEN because of inappropriate infrastructure (for, e.g., architectural barriers).	2.44	.97
<i>Classroom-Related Concerns (CLRC)</i>	1.77	.94
1 It is difficult to give equal opportunities to all children in an inclusive school	1.86	.98
2 Children with SEN are not accepted by children without SEN in the school.	1.86	1.07
3 It is difficult to maintain discipline in schools.	1.70	.97
4 I am not proficient in supervising the use of special devices and equipment used by children with special education needs.	1.66	1.06
<i>Academic Achievement-Related Concerns (AARC)</i>	1.68	.86
1 I am overburdened with workload as a SENCO.	1.86	1.19
2 The overall academic standard of the school is suffering.	1.77	1.03
3 The academic achievement of children without SEN is affected.	1.73	1.11
4 Children with SEN create disciplinary problems.	1.36	.89
<i>Management-Related Concerns (MARC)</i>	1.56	.90
1 There is insufficient training about the roles and responsibilities of the SENCO.	1.88	.97
2 My duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE have not been clarified.	1.43	1.08
3 The SENCOs' role overlapped with other roles.	1.38	1.10
<i>Self-Related Concerns (SERC)</i>	1.00	.97
1 I am not able to communicate effectively with the parents.	1.21	1.19
2 I am not able to work with parents in the implementation of IE.	1.18	1.06
3 I am not competent enough to supervise teachers to use a multi-sensory approach for children with varied educational needs.	.99	1.12
4 I have difficulty promoting the use of appropriate teaching strategies and class environment that enhance the learning of children with SEN.	.93	1.16
5 I am not able to communicate effectively with the teachers.	.90	1.12
6 I am not able to communicate effectively with the teachers.	.90	1.12
7 I do not have knowledge and skills required to supervise teachers in teaching children with special education needs.	.85	1.10
Mean of Mean/SD	1.64	1.05

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 12 shows the results of SENCOs regarding their concerns about IE implementation in schools. The concerns of SENCOs ranged from:

1. School-Related Concerns (SCRC)
2. Classroom-Related Concerns (CLRC)
3. Academic Achievement-Related Concerns (AARC)
4. Management-Related Concerns (MARC)
5. Self-Related Concerns (SERC)

From the results, it is evident that generally, SENCOs had moderate level of concerns about IE implementation in schools. The highest intensity of concerns expressed among SENCOs about IE implementation was at “school-related concerns” ($M=2.47$; $SD=.89$) and the least intensity of concerns voiced by the SENCOs was self-related concerns ($M=1.00$; $SD=.97$). This level of concern among the SENCOs was characterised within the individual items. For example, The SENCOS have concerns about IE implementation because the schools have inadequate special educators to support teaching ($M=2.51$; $SD=.90$) and it is difficult to give equal opportunities to all children in an inclusive school ($M=1.86$; $SD=.98$). They are also worried about overburden workload ($M=1.86$; $SD=1.19$) and concerned about insufficient training on the roles and responsibilities of the SENCO ($M=1.88$; $SD=.97$). They are also worried about how to communicate effectively with the parents ($M=1.21$; $SD=1.19$). From these results, it is concluded that the SENCOs reported a moderate level of concerns about the implementation of IE. They reported a number of concerns including inadequate funds, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate special educators, and paraprofessionals, overburdened workload, insufficient training, difficulty in communicating with parents and unclarified roles and responsibilities

Normality Test

Preceding the hypotheses testing, the normality assumption, which is the fundamental of all parametric assumptions was tested. This was tested using mean, median, skewness, and kurtosis. Details of the results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: *Normality Results of Main Variables*

Variables	Mean	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis
Knowledge of SENCOS	89.52	97.06	-1.91	3.12
Roles of SENCOS	3.00	3.04	-.10	-.68
Confidence of SENCOS	3.37	3.29	.28	-1.45
Concerns of SENCOS	1.64	1.64	-.51	-.54

Source: Field data (2021)

The results of the mean and median for the roles, confidence and concerns of SENCOS about the implementation of IE were approximately equal. A difference is seen between the mean and the median for SENCOS' level of knowledge. The overall results imply that the distribution of the aforementioned variables was normal. Further examination of the skewness and kurtosis values showed that the coefficients of the level of knowledge of SENCOS (Skew = -1.91; Kurt = 3.12), roles of SENCOS (Skew = -.10; Kurt = -.68), the level of confidence of SENCOS (Skew = .28; Kurt = -1.45) and concerns of SENCOS (Skew = -.51; Kurt = -.54) were within the range of -2 and + 2 (Bryne, 2010; George & Mallery, 2010), hence they were considered normally distributed. Therefore, it is appropriate that parametric tools are used to test the hypothesis of differences that were formulated for the study.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

The objective of the Research Hypothesis One was to determine whether significant differences exist in the level of knowledge of SENCOs in the implementation of IE based on gender, working experience and educational qualification. The dependent variable is SENCOs' knowledge of the roles and the independent variables are SENCOs gender, educational qualification and working experience. The data gathered was analysed using Factorial ANOVA. The primary purpose of the Factorial ANOVA is to understand if there is an interaction between the independent variables (gender, working experience and educational qualification) on the level of knowledge of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. The details of the results are presented in Tables 13 and 14. Table 14 presents the results of Factorial ANOVA of the difference in the level of knowledge of SENCOs on their roles in the implementation of IE in schools based on their demographic characteristics.

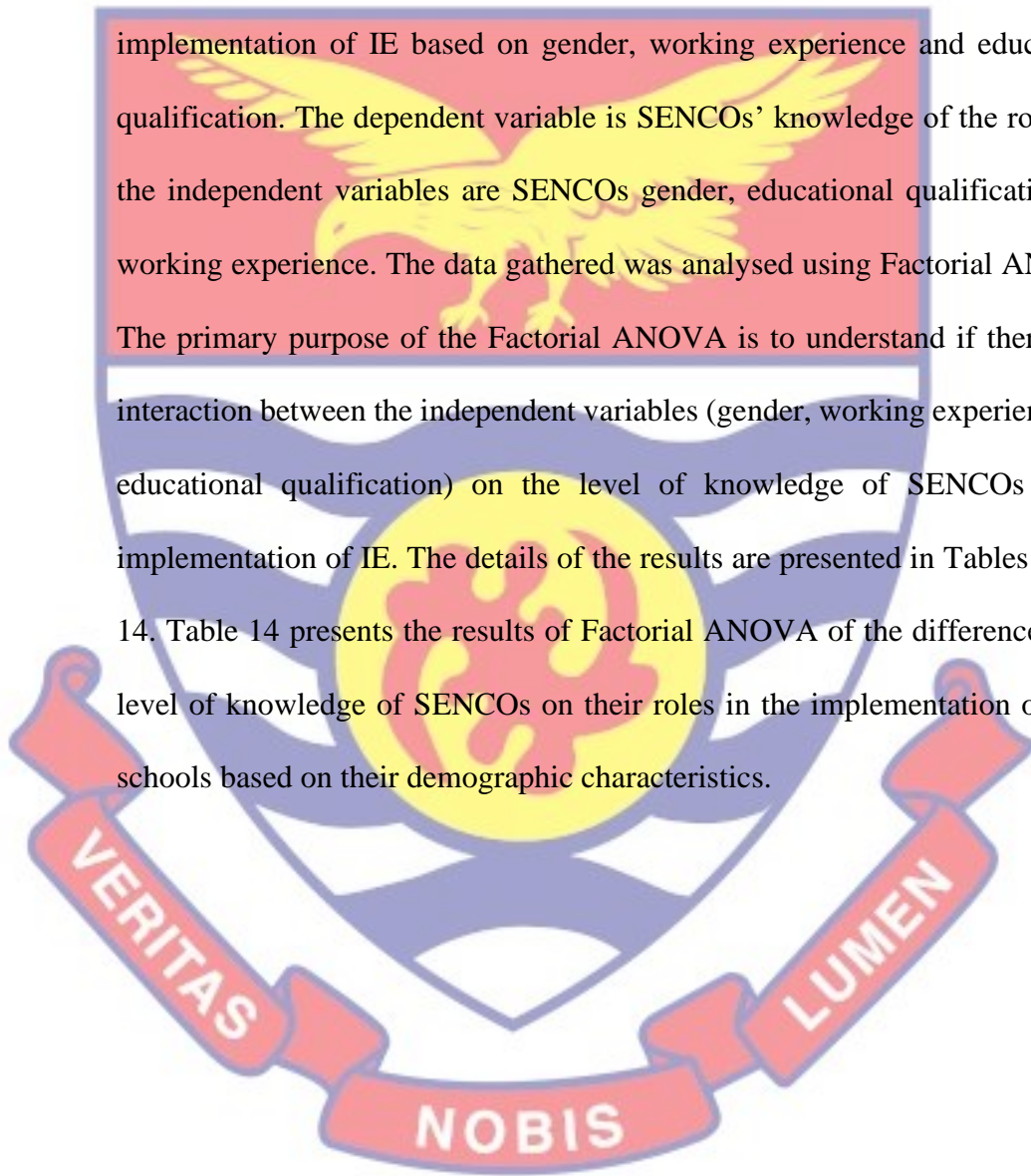


Table 14: *Factorial ANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOs' Level of Knowledge of the Roles Based on Demographic Characteristics*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Corrected Model	8825.888	15	588.393	2.873	.002	.430
Intercept	363155.062	1	363155.062	1772.913	.000	.969
Gender	376.674	1	376.674	1.839	.180	.031
WorkExp	4968.309	3	1656.103	8.085	.000	.299
EduQua	100.159	1	100.159	.489	.487	.009
Gender * WorkExp	126.920	3	42.307	.207	.891	.011
Gender EduQua	2.497	1	2.497	.012	.912	.000
WorkExp * EduQua	318.473	3	106.158	.518	.671	.027
Gender * WorkExp * EduQua	411.326	3	137.109	.669	.574	.034
Error	11675.606	57	204.835			
Total	605570.934	73				
Corrected Total	20501.493	72				

R Squared = .430 (Adjusted R Squared = .281)

Source: Field data (2021)

The Levene's test of equality of error variances suggests that the variance of the dependent variable (SENCOs knowledge) across the groups is not equal, $F(15, 57) = 4.489, p < 0.001$. Hence, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated. This implies that any post hoc test selected must be based on a statistical test that makes adjustments in the degrees of freedom to estimate the actual differences between groups displaying significant differences.

The corrected model for the test indicates that there are significant differences in SENCOs' level of knowledge based on their demographic characteristics, $F(15, 57) = 2.873, p = 0.002; \eta_p^2 = .430$. The demographic characteristics together explained 43% of the variation in their level of knowledge of their roles in the implementation of IE. This variation explained

is large by recourse to effect size estimate by Cohen (1988). Therefore, the null hypothesis that state that *there is no statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification* was rejected.

In examining the demographic characteristics which influenced their level of knowledge of their roles in the implementation of IE, the main effects and the interaction effects were taken into consideration. For the main effect, their gender, $F(1, 57) = 1.839, p = .180, \eta_p^2 = .031$, and educational qualification, $F(1, 57) = .489, p = .487, \eta_p^2 = .009$, did not create any significant differences. It was only their working experience, $F(3, 57) = 8.085, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .299$, that created differences in their level of knowledge of their roles in the implementation of the IE. The significance of their working experience is seen in the large amount of variation ($\eta_p^2 = 29.9\%$) it accounts for their level of knowledge. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of their working experience and not their gender and level of educational qualification.

In terms of the interaction effect, non-significant results were observed for both the two-way interaction effects (gender and working experience; gender and educational qualification; and working experience and educational qualification) and the three-way interaction effect (gender, working experience and educational qualification). This means that SENCOs demographic characteristics do not combine to create any difference in their level of knowledge of their roles in the implementation of IE.

It is emphasised that their working experience is the only significant factor that appear to influence their level of knowledge of their roles in IE. To

identify the number of years which significantly influenced their knowledge, the Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparisons were conducted. This test adjusts the confidence interval due to the failure in the assumption of the homogeneity test. Table 15 presents the results.

Table 15: *LSD Multiple Comparisons of Differences in Level of Knowledge*

Based on Working Experience

(I) Working experience	(J) Working experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1-5yrs	6-10yrs	-20.882*	4.603	.000	-30.099	-11.666
	11-15yrs	-22.328*	6.034	.000	-34.412	-10.245
	16-20yrs	-16.912*	6.511	.012	-29.949	-3.874
6-10yrs	1-5yrs	20.882*	4.603	.000	11.666	30.099
	11-15yrs	-1.446	5.706	.801	-12.873	9.981
	16-20yrs	3.971	6.208	.525	-8.460	16.402
11-15yrs	1-5yrs	22.328*	6.034	.000	10.245	34.412
	6-10yrs	1.446	5.706	.801	-9.981	12.873
	16-20yrs	5.417	7.333	.463	-9.267	20.100
16-20yrs	1-5yrs	16.912*	6.511	.012	3.874	29.949
	6-10yrs	-3.971	6.208	.525	-16.402	8.460
	11-15yrs	-5.417	7.333	.463	-20.100	9.267

Source: Field data (2021)

The LSD test identified significant differences between SENCO found within the group of 1-5 years ($M = 76.10$) and those found in the age groups of 6-10 years ($M = 96.99$), 11-15 years (98.43) and 16-20 years (93.01). Those in the age group of 1-5 years showed a lower level of knowledge of the roles in the implementation of IE as compared with those in the age groups of 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16-20 years. No significant differences were found among the SENCOS within the age groups of 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16-20 years. It is concluded that the minimum years of experience of 1-5 years is

not enough to exhibit a very high knowledge about the roles in the implementation of the IE programme. This means that SENCOS 6 years and above working experience is enough for them to demonstrate a very high level of knowledge of the roles in the implementation of the IE.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no statistically significant difference in the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

The objective of this research hypothesis two was to determine whether significant difference exists in the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE based on gender, working experience and educational qualification. The data gathered was analysed using Factorial MANOVA. The primary purpose of the Factorial MANOVA is to understand if there is an interaction between the independent variables (gender, working experience and educational qualification) on the dependent variables: teaching, teacher and administrative support (TTAS), management of IE implementation (MIEI), screening for identification (SFI), collaboration with parents of children with SEN and assessment for accommodation (CPC_SEN/AC), conducive school environment (CSE), collaboration with educators and external agencies (CEEA) and collaboration with parents of children without SEN (CPCW_SEN). The details of the results are presented in Table 16, 17, 18 and 19.

Table 16: *MANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOS Roles in IE Implementation*

Effect		Value	F	Hyp df	Error df	Sig.	η_p^2
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.981	378.046 _b	7.000	51.000	.000	.981
	Wilks' Lambda	.019	378.046 _{b*}	7.000	51.000	.000	.981
	Hotelling's T	51.889	378.046 _b	7.000	51.000	.000	.981
	Roy's LR	51.889	378.046 _b	7.000	51.000	.000	.981
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.209	1.921 ^b	7.000	51.000	.085	.209
	Wilks' Lambda	.791	1.921 ^b	7.000	51.000	.085	.209
	Hotelling's T	.264	1.921 ^b	7.000	51.000	.085	.209
	Roy's LR	.264	1.921 ^b	7.000	51.000	.085	.209
EduQual	Pillai's Trace	.061	.472 ^b	7.000	51.000	.851	.061
	Wilks' Lambda	.939	.472 ^b	7.000	51.000	.851	.061
	Hotelling's T	.065	.472 ^b	7.000	51.000	.851	.061
	Roy's LR	.065	.472 ^b	7.000	51.000	.851	.061
Work Exp.	Pillai's Trace	.985	3.701	21.000	159.000	.000	.328
	Wilks' Lambda	.295	3.702 [*]	21.000	146.995	.000	.334
	Hotelling's T	1.541	3.644	21.000	149.000	.000	.339
	Roy's LR	.712	5.393 ^c	7.000	53.000	.000	.416
Gender*Edu Qual	Pillai's Trace	.117	.968 ^b	7.000	51.000	.464	.117
	Wilks' Lambda	.883	.968 ^b	7.000	51.000	.464	.117
	Hotelling's T	.133	.968 ^b	7.000	51.000	.464	.117
	Roy's LR	.133	.968 ^b	7.000	51.000	.464	.117
Gender*WE xp	Pillai's Trace	.879	3.139	21.000	159.000	.000	.293
	Wilks' Lambda	.317	3.448 [*]	21.000	146.995	.000	.318
	Hotelling's T	1.587	3.754	21.000	149.000	.000	.346
	Roy's LR	1.177	8.910 ^c	7.000	53.000	.000	.541
EduQual*W Exp	Pillai's Trace	.186	.500	21.000	159.000	.967	.062
	Wilks' Lambda	.824	.489	21.000	146.995	.971	.063
	Hotelling's T	.202	.479	21.000	149.000	.974	.063
	Roy's LR	.118	.893 ^c	7.000	53.000	.518	.106
Gender*Edu Qual*WExp	Pillai's Trace	.252	.694	21.000	159.000	.835	.084
	Wilks' Lambda	.766	.680	21.000	146.995	.848	.085
	Hotelling's T	.282	.666	21.000	149.000	.860	.086
	Roy's LR	.142	1.071 ^c	7.000	53.000	.395	.124

EduQual = Educational qualification

WExp = Working experience

Source: Field data (2021)

*significant @ 0.05

As shown in Table 16, the Box's M test ($M = 75.108$) indicated that the homogeneity of covariance matrices across groups is assumed equal, $F(28,$

1308.838) = 1.657, $p = .017$). This means that there are no significant differences between the covariance matrices. Therefore, the assumption of the equality of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices has been met and Wilk's Lambda (Λ) is an appropriate test to use. Thus, Wilks' Lambda (Λ) was therefore reported in testing for statistical significance. From Table 8, it is

clearly evident that there was no statistically significant overall interaction effects (at the three levels) between gender, educational qualification and working experience (Gender*EduQual*WExp) on the combined dependent variables (roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools), Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.766$, $F(21, 146.995) = 0.680$, $p = 0.848$, with a multivariate partial effect size (η_p^2) = 0.085 (9%). Also, at the two level of interactions, statistical significance interaction effect between gender and working experience (Gender*WExp) on the linear combination of roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.317$, $F(21, 146.995) = 3.448$, $p = 0.000$]. However, there was no statistically significant interaction effect between gender and educational qualification (Gender*EduQual) [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.883$, $F(7, 51) = 0.968$, $p = 0.464$] and educational qualification and working experience (EduQual*WExp) [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.824$, $F(21, 146.995) = 0.489$, $p = 0.971$] on the linear combination of roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools.

Concerning the main effects (i.e. effect of each independent variable on the dependent variables), the result of the MANOVA revealed that there was statistically significant effect of working experience (WExp) [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.295$, $F(21, 146.995) = 3.702$, $p = 0.000$] on the linear combination of the roles of

SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools. However, there was no statistically significant difference in the linear combination of the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools based on gender [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.791$, $F(7, 51) = 1.921$, $p = 0.085$] and educational qualification [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.939$, $F(7, 51) = 0.472$, $p = 0.851$]. These results mean that there are no significant differences between male and female SENCOs and among the educational qualification groups of SENCOs on a linear combination of the dependent variables (Roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools).

Aside the multivariate effects (MANOVA results) of the independent variables (gender, educational qualification and working experience) on the linear combination of the dependent variables (Roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools), the univariate results (ANOVA) (i.e. the effect of the independent variables on each dependent variables) are presented in Table 17.

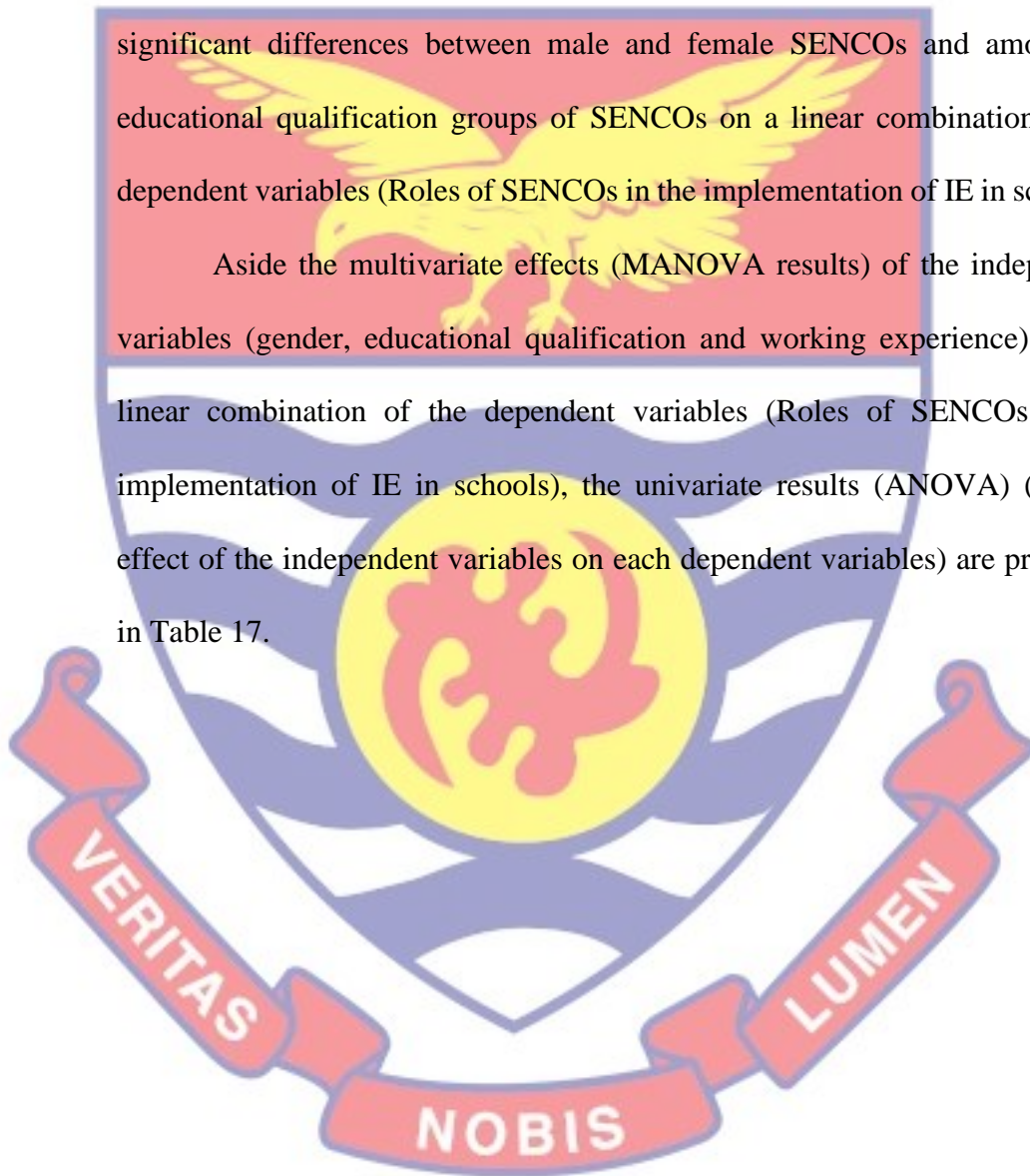


Table 17: ANOVA Results: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Corrected Model	TTAS	6.193 ^a	15	.413	1.739	.069	.314
	MIEI	8.905 ^b	15	.594	1.916	.041	.335
	SFI	15.716 ^c	15	1.048	3.252*	.001	.461
	CPC_SEN/AC	9.004 ^d	15	.600	1.539	.122	.288
	CSE	10.391 ^e	15	.693	1.399	.179	.269
	CEEA	10.159 ^f	15	.677	2.293	.013	.376
	CPCW_SEN	21.995 ^g	15	1.466	2.442	.008	.391
Intercept	TTAS	263.383	1	263.383	1109.450	.000	.951
	MIEI	396.504	1	396.504	1279.379	.000	.957
	SFI	485.917	1	485.917	1508.089	.000	.964
	CPC_SEN/AC	500.435	1	500.435	1283.007	.000	.957
	CSE	403.174	1	403.174	814.390	.000	.935
	CEEA	363.479	1	363.479	1230.537	.000	.956
	CPCW_SEN	205.495	1	205.495	342.248	.000	.857
Gender	TTAS	.446	1	.446	1.880	.176	.032
	MIEI	1.652	1	1.652	5.329	.025	.085
	SFI	.333	1	.333	1.033	.314	.018
	CPC_SEN/AC	1.457	1	1.457	3.734	.058	.061
	CSE	1.026	1	1.026	2.073	.155	.035
	CEEA	.644	1	.644	2.181	.145	.037
	CPCW_SEN	.430	1	.430	.715	.401	.012
EduQual	TTAS	.001	1	.001	.003	.957	.000
	MIEI	.001	1	.001	.005	.947	.000
	SFI	.686	1	.686	2.129	.150	.036
	CPC_SEN/AC	.001	1	.001	.002	.967	.000
	CSE	.065	1	.065	.131	.719	.002
	CEEA	.016	1	.016	.053	.819	.001
	CPCW_SEN	.017	1	.017	.029	.865	.001
Work Exp.	TTAS	2.742	3	.914	3.850	.014	.168
	MIEI	4.386	3	1.462	4.717*	.005	.199
	SFI	7.232	3	2.411	7.481*	.000	.283
	CPC_SEN/AC	5.610	3	1.870	4.794*	.005	.201
	CSE	6.549	3	2.183	4.409*	.007	.188
	CEEA	5.983	3	1.994	6.751*	.001	.262
	CPCW_SEN	6.265	3	2.088	3.478	.022	.155
Gender* EduQual	TTAS	.239	1	.239	1.007	.320	.017
	MIEI	.115	1	.115	.370	.546	.006
	SFI	.636	1	.636	1.973	.166	.033
	CPC_SEN/AC	.000	1	.000	.001	.976	.000
	CSE	.035	1	.035	.070	.792	.001
	CEEA	.580	1	.580	1.962	.167	.033
	TTAS	.254	3	.085	.357	.784	.018
Gender* WExp	MIEI	1.226	3	.409	1.319	.277	.065
	SFI	5.030	3	1.677	5.204*	.003	.215
	CPC_SEN/AC	1.716	3	.572	1.467	.233	.072
	CSE	1.238	3	.413	.834	.481	.042
	CEEA	1.372	3	.457	1.548	.212	.075
	CPCW_SEN	7.121	3	2.374	3.953	.012	.172
	TTAS	.065	3	.022	.091	.965	.005
*WExp	MIEI	.024	3	.008	.026	.994	.001

Table 17 continued

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
	SFI	.676	3	.225	.699	.556	.035
	CPC_SEN/AC	.196	3	.065	.168	.918	.009
	CSE	.092	3	.031	.062	.980	.003
	CEEA	.044	3	.015	.049	.985	.003
	CPCW_SEN	.790	3	.263	.439	.726	.023
	TTAS	.157	3	.052	.221	.881	.012
	MIEI	.634	3	.211	.682	.567	.035
Gender*E	SFI	.207	3	.069	.214	.887	.011
duQual*	CPC_SEN/AC	1.133	3	.378	.969	.414	.049
WExp	CSE	.846	3	.282	.570	.637	.029
	CEEA	.862	3	.287	.973	.412	.049
	CPCW_SEN	.029	3	.010	.016	.997	.001
	TTAS	13.532	57	.237			
	MIEI	17.665	57	.310			
	SFI	18.366	57	.322			
Error	CPC_SEN/AC	22.233	57	.390			
	CSE	28.219	57	.495			
	CEEA	16.837	57	.295			
	CPCW_SEN	34.224	57	.600			
Total	TTAS	490.735	73				
	MIEI	745.837	73				
	SFI	953.000	73				
	CPC_SEN/AC	932.500	73				
	CSE	772.750	73				
	CEEA	642.667	73				
	CPCW_SEN	505.000	73				
	TTAS	19.724	72				
Corrected Total	MIEI	26.570	72				
	SFI	34.082	72				
	CPC_SEN/AC	31.236	72				
	CSE	38.610	72				
	CEEA	26.995	72				
	CPCW_SEN	56.219	72				

TTAS

= Teacher, teaching and administrative support

MIEI

= Management of IE implementation

SFI

= Screening for identification

CPC_SEN

/AC = Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation

CSE

= Conducive school environment

CEEA

= Collaborate with educators and external agencies

CPCW_S
EN

= Collaborate with parents of children without SEN.

Source: Field data (2021)

*Bonferroni adjustment $p < 0.007$

Table 17 presents the results of the ANOVA test when dependent variables (TTAS, MIEI, SFI, CPC_SEN/AC, CSE, CEEA and CPCW_SEN)

(i.e. the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in school) were considered separately. The p-values (sig. values) for the ANOVAs on the MANOVA output do not take into account that multiple ANOVAs that have been conducted. Accordingly, to protect against Type I error, I used a traditional Bonferroni procedure and test each ANOVA at the 0.007 level (0.05 divided by the number of ANOVAs conducted, which is equal to the number of dependent variables) ($0.05/7 = 0.007$).

As shown in Table 17, the tests of between-subjects' effects (ANOVA) revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in SENCOs roles (TTAS, MIEI, SFI, CPC_SEN/AC, CSE, CEEA and CPCW_SEN) in the implementation of IE in schools based on gender and educational qualification (main effects) as well as two and three level of interactions. However, based on working experience (WExp), the ANOVA results revealed that there was statistically significant difference in SENCOs roles in the implementation of IE in school such as MIEI (management of IE implementation) [$F(3, 57) = 4.717$, $p = 0.005$], SFI (Screening for identification) [$F(3, 57) = 7.481$, $p = 0.000$], CPC_SEN/AC (Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation) [$F(3, 57) = 4.794$, $p = 0.005$], and CEEA (Collaborate with educators and external agencies) [$F(3, 57) = 6.751$, $p = 0.001$]. The results of the descriptive statistics and the pairwise comparisons are shown in Tables 18 and 19, respectively.

Table 18: *Descriptive Statistics for Working Experience*

Dependent Variable	Working experience	Mean	Std. Error	99.3% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MIEI	1-5yrs	3.398	.138	3.013	3.783
	6-10yrs	3.115	.115	2.794	3.435
	11-15yrs	3.086	.190	2.554	3.618
	16-20yrs	2.446	.213	1.852	3.041
SFI	1-5yrs	3.639	.140	3.246	4.032
	6-10yrs	3.729	.117	3.402	4.056
	11-15yrs	2.717	.194	2.174	3.259
	16-20yrs	3.250	.217	2.643	3.857
CPC_SEN/AC	1-5yrs	3.817	.154	3.385	4.249
	6-10yrs	3.480	.128	3.121	3.839
	11-15yrs	3.496	.213	2.899	4.093
	16-20yrs	2.740	.238	2.072	3.407
CEEA	1-5yrs	3.341	.134	2.965	3.717
	6-10yrs	2.734	.112	2.421	3.046
	11-15yrs	3.083	.186	2.564	3.603
	16-20yrs	2.375	.208	1.794	2.956

Source: Field data (2021)



Table 19: *Pairwise Comparisons*

Dependent Variable	(I) Working experience	(J) Working experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	99.3% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MIEI	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	.284	.179	.711	-.328	.896
		11-15yrs	.313	.235	1.000	-.490	1.115
		16-20yrs	.952*	.253	.002	.086	1.818
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	-.284	.179	.711	-.896	.328
		11-15yrs	.029	.222	1.000	-.730	.788
		16-20yrs	.668	.241	.046	-.157	1.494
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-.313	.235	1.000	-1.115	.490
		6-10yrs	-.029	.222	1.000	-.788	.730
		16-20yrs	.639	.285	.173	-.336	1.615
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.952*	.253	.002	-1.818	-.086
		6-10yrs	-.668	.241	.046	-1.494	.157
		11-15yrs	-.639	.285	.173	-1.615	.336
SFI	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	-.090	.183	1.000	-.714	.534
		11-15yrs	.922*	.239	.002	.104	1.741
		16-20yrs	.389	.258	.826	-.494	1.272
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	.090	.183	1.000	-.534	.714
		11-15yrs	1.012*	.226	.000	.238	1.786
		16-20yrs	.479	.246	.340	-.363	1.321
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-.922*	.239	.002	-1.741	-.104
		6-10yrs	-1.012*	.226	.000	-1.786	-.238
		16-20yrs	-.533	.291	.431	-1.528	.461
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.389	.258	.826	-1.272	.494
		6-10yrs	-.479	.246	.340	-1.321	.363
		11-15yrs	.533	.291	.431	-.461	1.528
CPC_SEN /AC	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	.337	.201	.595	-.350	1.023
		11-15yrs	.321	.263	1.000	-.580	1.221
		16-20yrs	1.077*	.284	.002	.106	2.048
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	-.337	.201	.595	-1.023	.350
		11-15yrs	-.016	.249	1.000	-.867	.836
		16-20yrs	.740	.271	.050	-.186	1.667
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-.321	.263	1.000	-1.221	.580
		6-10yrs	.016	.249	1.000	-.836	.867
		16-20yrs	.756	.320	.129	-.338	1.850
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-1.077*	.284	.002	-2.048	-.106
		6-10yrs	-.740	.271	.050	-1.667	.186
		11-15yrs	-.756	.320	.129	-1.850	.338
CEEA	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	.607*	.175	.006	.009	1.205
		11-15yrs	.257	.229	1.000	-.526	1.041
		16-20yrs	.966*	.247	.002	.120	1.811
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	-.607*	.175	.006	-1.205	-.009
		11-15yrs	-.350	.217	.673	-1.091	.391
		16-20yrs	.359	.236	.802	-.447	1.165
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-.257	.229	1.000	-1.041	.526
		6-10yrs	.350	.217	.673	-.391	1.091
		16-20yrs	.708	.278	.082	-.244	1.660
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.966*	.247	.002	-1.811	-.120
		6-10yrs	-.359	.236	.802	-1.165	.447
		11-15yrs	-.708	.278	.082	-1.660	.244

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.007 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Source: Field data (2021)

As shown in Tables 18 and 19, an inspection of the mean scores using Bonferroni adjustment indicated that the SENCOs who had worked for 1-5years reported slightly higher levels of performing their roles in terms of management of IE implementation (MIEI), collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation (CPC_SEN/AC) and collaborate with educators and external agencies (CEEA) than the SENCOs who had worked for 16-20years and 6-10years. Also, concerning SFI (Screening for identification), the results of the post hoc comparison using Bonferroni adjustment indicated that the SENCOs who had worked for 11-15years differ in the performance of their roles in terms of screening for identification (SFI) from those who had worked for 1-5years and 6-10years (see Table 18 and 19).

Research Hypothesis Three: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence of SENCOs in playing their roles in IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

The objective of this research hypothesis three was to determine whether significant differences exist in the level of confidence of SENCOs in playing their roles in the implementation of IE based on gender, working experience and educational qualification. The data gathered was analysed using Factorial MANOVA. The primary purpose of the Factorial MANOVA is to understand if there is an interaction between the independent variables (gender, working experience and educational qualification) on the dependent variables: Managerial, administrative, collaborative task (MACT), Teacher support (TS)

and Conducive school environment and screening for identification (CSE/SFI).

The details of the results are presented in Table 20, 21, 22 and 23.

Table 20: *MANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOS Confidence in IE Implementation*

Effect		Value	F	Hypo. df	Error df	Sig.	η_p^2
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.991	1929.299 ^b	3.000	55.000	.000	.991
	Wilks' Lambda	.009	1929.299 ^{b*}	3.000	55.000	.000	.991
	Hotelling's T	105.234	1929.299 ^b	3.000	55.000	.000	.991
	Roy's LR	105.234	1929.299 ^b	3.000	55.000	.000	.991
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.155	3.354 ^b	3.000	55.000	.025	.155
	Wilks' Lambda	.845	3.354 ^{b*}	3.000	55.000	.025	.155
	Hotelling's T	.183	3.354 ^b	3.000	55.000	.025	.155
	Roy's LR	.183	3.354 ^b	3.000	55.000	.025	.155
EduQual	Pillai's Trace	.072	1.418 ^b	3.000	55.000	.247	.072
	Wilks' Lambda	.928	1.418 ^b	3.000	55.000	.247	.072
	Hotelling's T	.077	1.418 ^b	3.000	55.000	.247	.072
	Roy's LR	.077	1.418 ^b	3.000	55.000	.247	.072
Work Exp.	Pillai's Trace	.392	2.854	9.000	171.000	.004	.131
	Wilks' Lambda	.628	3.136 [*]	9.000	134.006	.002	.144
	Hotelling's T	.561	3.343	9.000	161.000	.001	.157
	Roy's LR	.497	9.451 ^c	3.000	57.000	.000	.332
Gender*EduQual	Pillai's Trace	.153	3.304 ^b	3.000	55.000	.027	.153
	Wilks' Lambda	.847	3.304 ^{b*}	3.000	55.000	.027	.153
	Hotelling's T	.180	3.304 ^b	3.000	55.000	.027	.153
	Roy's LR	.180	3.304 ^b	3.000	55.000	.027	.153
Gender*WExp	Pillai's Trace	.357	2.566	9.000	171.000	.009	.119
	Wilks' Lambda	.659	2.785 [*]	9.000	134.006	.005	.130
	Hotelling's T	.494	2.946	9.000	161.000	.003	.141
	Roy's LR	.441	8.381 ^c	3.000	57.000	.000	.306
EduQual*WExp	Pillai's Trace	.150	1.002	9.000	171.000	.440	.050
	Wilks' Lambda	.855	.990	9.000	134.006	.451	.051
	Hotelling's T	.164	.975	9.000	161.000	.463	.052
	Roy's LR	.116	2.200 ^c	3.000	57.000	.098	.104
Gender*EduQual*WExp	Pillai's Trace	.144	.961	9.000	171.000	.475	.048
	Wilks' Lambda	.858	.971	9.000	134.006	.467	.050
	Hotelling's T	.164	.977	9.000	161.000	.461	.052
	Roy's LR	.149	2.835 ^c	3.000	57.000	.046	.130

Source: Field data (2021)

*significant @ 0.05

As presented in Table 20, the homogeneity of covariance matrices using Box's M ($M = 73.529$) revealed that covariance matrices of the dependent variables are assumed equal across groups, $F(30, 1606.917) = 1.876, p = 0.003$. This means that there are no significant differences between the covariance matrices. Therefore, the assumption of the equality of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices has been met and Wilk's Lambda (Λ) is an appropriate test to use. Thus, Wilks' Lambda (Λ) was therefore reported in testing for statistical significance.

As shown in Table 20, the main effects of gender (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.845, F(3, 55) = 3.354, p = 0.025$) and working experience (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.628, F(9, 134) = 3.136, p = 0.002$) on the linear combination of the dependent variables (Level of confidence of SENCOS) was statistically significant. The variance in the dependent variables explained by gender (multivariate partial effect size (η_p^2) = 0.155 (16%) and working experience ($\eta_p^2 = 0.144$) (14%) was large. These results mean the level of Confidence of SENCOS in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE in schools varies based on gender and working experience. However, there was no statistically significant main effect of educational qualification on the linear combination of the dependent variables (Level of confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE). This result suggests that the educational qualification of SENCOS is not a significant determinant of their level of confidence in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE in schools.

In Table 20, it was observed that there was no statistically significant three level interaction effects among gender, educational qualification and

working experience (Gender*EduQual*WExp) on the combined dependent variables (Level of Confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE), Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.858$, $F(9, 134) = 0.971$, $p = 0.467$. Also, at the two level of interactions, it was realised that there was no significant interaction effect between educational qualification and working experience (EduQual*WExp) of SENCOS on the combined dependent variables (Level of Confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE). These results mean that the level of confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools does not vary by respondents who obtained either bachelor's or master's degree and had worked for 1-20years. However, statistical significance interaction effects were observed between gender and educational qualification (Gender*EduQual) [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.847$, $F(3, 55) = 3.304$, $p = 0.027$] and as well as gender and working experience (Gender*WExp) [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.659$, $F(9, 134) = 2.785$, $p = 0.005$] on the linear combination of dependent variables (Level of Confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE). The effect size of Gender*EduQual ($\eta_p^2 = 15\%$) and Gender*WExp ($\eta_p^2 = 13\%$) large. These results mean that the level of confidence among SENCOS in the implementation of IE in school significantly differs from male and female SENCOS who obtained bachelor's or master's degree and also had worked for less or more years in the teaching profession.

Aside the multivariate effects (MANOVA results) of the independent variables (gender, educational qualification and working experience) on the linear combination of the dependent variables (Level of Confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE), the univariate results (ANOVA) (i.e. the effect of

the independent variables on each dependent variables) are presented in Table 21.

Table 21: ANOVA Results: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Corrected Model	MACT	7.439 ^a	15	.496	2.231*	.015	.370
	TS	4.069 ^b	15	.271	1.689	.079	.308
	CSE/SFI	5.757 ^c	15	.384	3.251*	.001	.461
Intercept	MACT	558.694	1	558.694	2513.619	.000	.978
	TS	510.020	1	510.020	3175.568	.000	.982
	CSE/SFI	551.659	1	551.659	4673.746	.000	.988
Gender	MACT	.261	1	.261	1.174	.283	.020
	TS	.167	1	.167	1.040	.312	.018
	CSE/SFI	.152	1	.152	1.289	.261	.022
EduQual	MACT	.007	1	.007	.030	.863	.001
	TS	.304	1	.304	1.891	.175	.032
	CSE/SFI	.018	1	.018	.155	.695	.003
Work Exp	MACT	4.590	3	1.530	6.883*	.000	.266
	TS	1.680	3	.560	3.486	.021	.155
	CSE/SFI	2.919	3	.973	8.242*	.000	.303
Gender*EduQual	MACT	.055	1	.055	.249	.620	.004
	TS	.373	1	.373	2.322	.133	.039
	CSE/SFI	.000	1	.000	.004	.950	.000
Gender*Work Exp	MACT	.290	3	.097	.435	.729	.022
	TS	1.405	3	.468	2.916	.042	.133
	CSE/SFI	1.201	3	.400	3.391	.024	.151
EduQual*Work Exp	MACT	.450	3	.150	.674	.571	.034
	TS	.348	3	.116	.721	.543	.037
	CSE/SFI	.632	3	.211	1.786	.160	.086
Gender*EduQual*Work Exp	MACT	.057	3	.019	.086	.967	.005
	TS	.268	3	.089	.557	.646	.028
	CSE/SFI	.240	3	.080	.678	.569	.034
Table 21 continued							
Error	MACT	12.669	57	.222			
	TS	9.155	57	.161			
	CSE/SFI	6.728	57	.118			
Total	MACT	864.571	73				
	TS	803.361	73				
	CSE/SFI	866.938	73				

Table 21 continued

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Corrected Total	MACT	20.108	72				
	TS	13.224	72				
	CSE/SFI	12.485	72				

MACT = Managerial, administrative and collaborative task
 TS = Teacher support
 CSE/SFI = Conducive school environment/Screening for identification

Source: Field data (2021)

*Bonferroni adjustment $p < 0.017$

Table 21 presents the results of the ANOVA test when dependent variables: managerial, administrative and collaborative task (MACT), Teacher support (TS), and conducive school environment/screening for identification (CSE/SFI) (i.e. Level of Confidence of SENCOS in the implementation of IE) were considered separately. The p-values (sig. values) for the ANOVAs on the MANOVA output do not take into account that multiple ANOVAs that have been conducted. Accordingly, to protect against Type I error, I used a traditional Bonferroni procedure and test each ANOVA at the 0.017 level (0.05 divided by the number of ANOVAs conducted, which is equal to the number of dependent variables) ($0.05/3 = 0.017$).

As shown in Table 21, the results of the ANOVA test revealed that there was no statistically significant effect of gender, educational qualification, two levels of interaction effects and three levels of interaction effect on the level of confidence among SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools (MACT, TS and CSE/SFI). Thus, there was no significant difference in the dependent variables (MACT, TS and CSE/SFI) based on gender, educational qualification and any of the levels of interaction effects (e.g., Gender*EduQual*WExp).

However, based on working experience (WExp) and the dependent variables, it was noted that there was statistically significant difference in MACT [$F(3, 57) = 6.883, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = 0.266$ (27%)] and CSE/SFI [$F(3, 57) = 8.242, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = 0.303$ (30%)] based on working experience. This result suggests that the level of confidence among SENCOS in terms of MACT and CSE/SFI significantly varies by the working experience. Thus, the working experience is a significant factor that determines the level of confidence among SENCOS in the performance of the roles in the implementation of IE in schools. The magnitude of the effect size (partial eta square) by working experience in the level of confidence (MACT and CSE/SFI) among SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools was very large. The results of the mean difference using a post hoc test of pairwise comparison was presented in Tables 22 and 23.

Table 22: *Descriptive Statistics for Working Experience*

Dependent Variable	Working experience	Mean	Std. Error	98.3% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MACT	1-5yrs	3.338	.117	3.051	3.624
	6-10yrs	3.207	.097	2.968	3.445
	11-15yrs	3.950	.161	3.554	4.346
	16-20yrs	3.804	.180	3.361	4.246
CSE/SFI	1-5yrs	3.465	.085	3.256	3.674
	6-10yrs	3.255	.071	3.081	3.429
	11-15yrs	3.925	.117	3.636	4.214
	16-20yrs	3.562	.131	3.240	3.885

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 23: *Pairwise Comparisons*

Dependent Variable	(I) Working experience	(J) Working experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	98.3% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MACT	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	.131	.152	1.000	-.342	.604
		11-15yrs	-.612	.199	.019	-1.233	.008
		16-20yrs	-.466	.214	.204	-1.135	.203
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	-.131	.152	1.000	-.604	.342
		11-15yrs	-.743*	.188	.001	-1.330	-.157
		16-20yrs	-.597	.204	.030	-1.235	.041
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	.612	.199	.019	-.008	1.233
		6-10yrs	.743*	.188	.001	.157	1.330
		16-20yrs	.146	.242	1.000	-.607	.900
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	.466	.214	.204	-.203	1.135
		6-10yrs	.597	.204	.030	-.041	1.235
		11-15yrs	-.146	.242	1.000	-.900	.607
CSE/SF I	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	.210	.110	.373	-.135	.555
		11-15yrs	-.460*	.145	.015	-.912	-.008
		16-20yrs	-.097	.156	1.000	-.585	.390
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	-.210	.110	.373	-.555	.135
		11-15yrs	-.670*	.137	.000	-1.097	-.243
		16-20yrs	-.307	.149	.262	-.772	.158
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	.460*	.145	.015	.008	.912
		6-10yrs	.670*	.137	.000	.243	1.097
		16-20yrs	.363	.176	.264	-.187	.912
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	.097	.156	1.000	-.390	.585
		6-10yrs	.307	.149	.262	-.158	.772
		11-15yrs	-.363	.176	.264	-.912	.187

*. The mean difference is significant at the .017 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Source: Field data (2021)

From Tables 22 and 23, an examination of the mean score using Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the SENCOs who had worked for 6-10years ($M= 3.21$; $SE = 0.10$) significantly differ in their confidence level in terms of managerial, administrative and collaborative task (MACT) from the SENCOs who had worked for 11-15years of working experience ($M= 3.95$; $SE = 0.16$, $p = 0.001$). Thus, the SENCOs within 11-15working experience had a high level of confidence (MACT) in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE in schools than the SENCOs who had worked for 6-10years. Thus, the SENCOs within 11-15working experience have a high level of confidence to perform managerial, administrative roles, and effectively collaborate with appropriate stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of IE in schools.

Also, looking at the SENCOs confidence level in the performance of ensuring conducive school environment (CSE) and screening children with SEN for identification (SFI), the SENCOs who had worked for 11-15years ($M = 3.925$; $SE = 0.12$) reported a high level of confidence than the SENCOs who had worked for 1-5years ($M = 3.47$; $SE = 0.09$, $p = 0.015$) and 6-10years ($M = 3.26$; $SE = 0.07$, $p = 0.000$). This result means that there was statistically significant difference in the confidence level of SENCOs in the performance of their roles in terms of ensuring conducive environment and screening for identification (CSE/SFI) based on working experience. Thus, the SENCOs who had worked for 11-15years believed that they had a high level of confidence to perform their role of ensuring a conducive environment and screening for

identification (CSE/SFI) more than those who had worked for 11-15years and 6-10years respectively.

Research Hypothesis Four: There is no statistically significant difference in the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

The objective of this research hypothesis four was to determine whether significant difference exist in the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE based on gender, working experience and educational qualification. The data gathered was analysed using Factorial MANOVA. The primary purpose of the Factorial MANOVA is to understand if there is an interaction between the independent variables (gender, working experience and educational qualification) on the dependent variables: classroom-related concerns (CLRC), school-related concerns (SCRC), self-related concerns (SERC), management-related concerns (MARC) and academic achievement-related concerns (AARC). The details of the results are presented in Table 24, 25, 26, and 27.



Table 24: *MANOVA Results of Differences in SENCOs Concerns in IE Implementation*

Effect		Value	F	Hypo df	Error df	Sig.	η_p^2
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.883	79.715 ^b	5.000	53.000	.000	.883
	Wilks' Lambda	.117	79.715 ^{b*}	5.000	53.000	.000	.883
	Hotelling's T	7.520	79.715 ^b	5.000	53.000	.000	.883
	Roy's LR	7.520	79.715 ^b	5.000	53.000	.000	.883
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.067	.758 ^b	5.000	53.000	.584	.067
	Wilks' Lambda	.933	.758 ^b	5.000	53.000	.584	.067
	Hotelling's T	.072	.758 ^b	5.000	53.000	.584	.067
	Roy's LR	.072	.758 ^b	5.000	53.000	.584	.067
EduQual	Pillai's Trace	.205	2.727 ^b	5.000	53.000	.029	.205
	Wilks' Lambda	.795	2.727 ^{b*}	5.000	53.000	.029	.205
	Hotelling's T	.257	2.727 ^b	5.000	53.000	.029	.205
	Roy's LR	.257	2.727 ^b	5.000	53.000	.029	.205
Work Exp	Pillai's Trace	.501	2.204	15.000	165.000	.008	.167
	Wilks' Lambda	.551	2.355 [*]	15.000	146.711	.005	.180
	Hotelling's T	.723	2.489	15.000	155.000	.003	.194
	Roy's LR	.578	6.356 ^c	5.000	55.000	.000	.366
Gender*EduQual	Pillai's Trace	.169	2.161 ^b	5.000	53.000	.072	.169
	Wilks' Lambda	.831	2.161 ^b	5.000	53.000	.072	.169
	Hotelling's T	.204	2.161 ^b	5.000	53.000	.072	.169
	Roy's LR	.204	2.161 ^b	5.000	53.000	.072	.169
Gender*Work Exp	Pillai's Trace	.560	2.526	15.000	165.000	.002	.187
	Wilks' Lambda	.532	2.510 [*]	15.000	146.711	.002	.190
	Hotelling's T	.715	2.464	15.000	155.000	.003	.193
	Roy's LR	.390	4.294 ^c	5.000	55.000	.002	.281
EduQual*Work Exp	Pillai's Trace	.156	.602	15.000	165.000	.871	.052
	Wilks' Lambda	.850	.591	15.000	146.711	.878	.053
	Hotelling's T	.169	.582	15.000	155.000	.885	.053
	Roy's LR	.115	1.261 ^c	5.000	55.000	.294	.103
Gender*EduQual*Work Exp	Pillai's Trace	.180	.701	15.000	165.000	.781	.060
	Wilks' Lambda	.829	.686	15.000	146.711	.796	.060
	Hotelling's T	.195	.671	15.000	155.000	.810	.061
	Roy's LR	.114	1.253 ^c	5.000	55.000	.297	.102

Source: Field data (2021)

*significant @ 0.05

As presented in Table 24, the homogeneity of covariance matrices using Box's M ($M = 83.925$) revealed that covariance matrices of the dependent variables are assumed equal across groups, $F(40, 2,142.556) = 2.501$ $p = 0.014$). This means that there are no significant differences between the covariance

matrices. Therefore, the assumption of the equality of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices has been met and Wilk's Lambda (Λ) is an appropriate test to use. Thus, Wilks' Lambda (Λ) was therefore reported in testing for statistical significance.

As shown in Table 24, the MANOVA results revealed that there were no significant main effects of gender on the linear combination of the dependent variables (Concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools). Also, there was no statistically significant two-levels interaction effects between gender and educational qualification (Gender*EduQual), educational qualification and working experience (EduQual*WExp) and three level interaction effects among gender, educational qualification and working experience (Gender*EduQual*WExp) on the combined dependent variables (Concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools).

However, statistically significant main effects of educational qualification (EduQual), [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.795$, $F(5, 53) = 2.727$, $p = 0.029$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.205$] and working experience (WExp) [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.551$, $F(15, 146.711) = 2.355$, $p = 0.005$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.180$] on the combined dependent variables was observed. The result of the main effects indicated that educational qualification (EduQual) and working experience (WExp) explained about 21% and 18% respectively in the linear combination of the dependent variables. In furtherance, the two-level interaction effects between gender and working experience (Gender*WExp) significantly predicted the difference in the linear combination of the dependent variables (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.532$, $F(15, 146.711) = 2.510$, $p = 0.002$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.190$). The magnitude of the effect size was large. Thus,

the Gender*WExp accounted for 19% of the variance in the combined dependent variables. This result means that both EduQual, WExp and Gender*WExp are significant factors that influence the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools.

Aside from the multivariate effects (MANOVA results) of the independent variables (gender, educational qualification and working experience) on the linear combination of the dependent variables (Concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE), the univariate results (ANOVA) (i.e. the effect of the independent variables on each dependent variables) are presented in Table 25.

Table 25: ANOVA Results: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Corrected Model	CLRC	28.307 ^a	15	1.887	3.048	.001	.445
	SCRC	27.474 ^b	15	1.832	3.588	.000	.486
	SERC	21.643 ^c	15	1.443	1.781	.061	.319
	AARC	24.475 ^d	15	1.632	3.184	.001	.456
	MARC	25.782 ^e	15	1.719	2.962	.002	.438
Intercept	CLRC	86.633	1	86.633	139.941	.000	.711
	SCRC	203.476	1	203.476	398.612	.000	.875
	SERC	24.374	1	24.374	30.082	.000	.345
	AARC	77.818	1	77.818	151.854	.000	.727
Gender	MARC	65.116	1	65.116	112.201	.000	.663
	CLRC	.135	1	.135	.218	.643	.004
	SCRC	1.088	1	1.088	2.131	.150	.036
	SERC	.357	1	.357	.441	.509	.008
EduQual	AARC	.272	1	.272	.530	.469	.009
	MARC	.655	1	.655	1.129	.292	.019
	CLRC	1.525	1	1.525	2.463	.122	.041
	SCRC	.017	1	.017	.033	.856	.001
Work Exp	SERC	.055	1	.055	.068	.795	.001
	AARC	.324	1	.324	.633	.430	.011
	MARC	.007	1	.007	.011	.915	.000
	CLRC	16.933	3	5.644	9.117*	.000	.324
Work Exp	SCRC	11.975	3	3.992	7.819*	.000	.292
	SERC	10.411	3	3.470	4.283*	.009	.184
	AARC	11.870	3	3.957	7.721*	.000	.289
	MARC	12.903	3	4.301	7.411*	.000	.281

Table 25 continued

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Gender* EduQual	CLRC	.462	1	.462	.747	.391	.013
	SCRC	.885	1	.885	1.734	.193	.030
	SERC	.149	1	.149	.184	.669	.003
	AARC	1.344	1	1.344	2.623	.111	.044
	MARC	.016	1	.016	.027	.870	.000
Gender* WExp	CLRC	6.836	3	2.279	3.681	.017	.162
	SCRC	5.200	3	1.733	3.396	.024	.152
	SERC	6.724	3	2.241	2.766	.050	.127
	AARC	4.825	3	1.608	3.139	.032	.142
	MARC	4.413	3	1.471	2.535	.066	.118
EduQual *WExp	CLRC	1.241	3	.414	.668	.575	.034
	SCRC	2.152	3	.717	1.405	.251	.069
	SERC	1.249	3	.416	.514	.675	.026
	AARC	.890	3	.297	.579	.631	.030
	MARC	.933	3	.311	.536	.660	.027
Gender* EduQual *WExp	CLRC	.461	3	.154	.248	.862	.013
	SCRC	.789	3	.263	.515	.674	.026
	SERC	1.592	3	.531	.655	.583	.033
	AARC	.173	3	.058	.113	.952	.006
	MARC	.385	3	.128	.221	.881	.011
Error	CLRC	35.287	57	.619			
	SCRC	29.096	57	.510			
	SERC	46.184	57	.810			
	AARC	29.210	57	.512			
	MARC	33.080	57	.580			
Total	CLRC	292.438	73				
	SCRC	502.875	73				
	SERC	142.167	73				
	AARC	259.250	73				
	MARC	236.889	73				
Corrected Total	CLRC	63.594	72				
	SCRC	56.570	72				
	SERC	67.827	72				
	AARC	53.685	72				
	MARC	58.861	72				

CLRC = classroom-related concerns
 SCRC = school-related concerns
 SERC = Self-related concerns
 AARC = Academic achievement-related concerns
 MARC = Management-related concerns

Source: Field data (2021)

*Bonferroni adjustment $p < 0.01$

Table 25 presents the results of the ANOVA test when dependent variables (Concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE): classroom-related concerns (CLRC), school-related concerns (SCRC), self-related concerns (SERC), academic achievement-related concerns (AARC) and management-related concerns (MARC) were considered separately. The p-values (sig. values) for the ANOVAs on the MANOVA output do not take into account that multiple ANOVAs that have been conducted. Accordingly, to protect against Type I error, I used a traditional Bonferroni procedure and test each ANOVA at the 0.017 level (0.05 divided by the number of ANOVAs conducted, which is equal to the number of dependent variables) ($0.05/5 = 0.01$).

As shown in Table 25, the results of the ANOVA test revealed that there was no statistically significant effect of gender, educational qualification, two levels of interaction effects and three levels of interaction effect on each of the dependent variables (Concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools. Thus, there was no significant difference in the dependent variables (CLRC, SCRC, SERC, AARC and MARC) based on gender, educational qualification, two and three levels of interaction effect. However, based on working experience (WExp) and the dependent variables, it was found that there was statistically significant difference in the concerns of SENCOS in terms of classroom-related concerns (CLRC) [$F(3, 57) = 9.117, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = 0.324$ (34%)], school-related concerns (SCRC) [$F(3, 57) = 7.819, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = 0.292$ (29%)], self-related concerns (SERC) [$F(3, 57) = 4.283, p = 0.009, \eta_p^2 = 0.184$ (18%)], academic achievement-related concerns (AARC) [$F(3, 57) = 7.721, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = 0.289$ (29%)], and management-related concerns

(MARC) [$F(3, 57) = 7.411, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = 0.281$ (28%)]. The magnitude of the effect size (η_p^2) of working experience (WExp) on each of the dependent variables (CLRC, SCRC, SERC, AARC and MARC) (i.e. concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools) was large. This result may suggest that the concerns of SENCOS vary by the working experience. Thus, working experience is a significant factor that determines the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE in schools. The results of the mean difference using a post hoc test of pairwise comparison was presented in Table 26 and 27.

Table 26: *Descriptive Statistics for Working Experience*

Dependent Variable	Working experience	Mean	Std. Error	98.3% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
CLRC*	1-5yrs	1.888	.195	1.410	2.366
	6-10yrs	2.075	.162	1.678	2.473
	11-15yrs	.604	.269	-.057	1.265
	16-20yrs	1.063	.300	.324	1.801
SCRC	1-5yrs	2.521	.177	2.087	2.955
	6-10yrs	2.645	.147	2.284	3.007
	11-15yrs	1.317	.244	.717	1.917
	16-20yrs	2.146	.273	1.475	2.817
SERC	1-5yrs	.881	.223	.334	1.428
	6-10yrs	1.364	.185	.909	1.819
	11-15yrs	.158	.307	-.598	.914
AARC	16-20yrs	.583	.344	-.262	1.429
	1-5yrs	1.819	.177	1.384	2.254
	6-10yrs	1.815	.147	1.453	2.177
MARC	11-15yrs	.608	.245	.007	1.210
	16-20yrs	1.094	.273	.422	1.766
	1-5yrs	1.664	.188	1.201	2.127
MARC	6-10yrs	1.762	.157	1.377	2.147
	11-15yrs	.456	.260	-.184	1.095
	16-20yrs	1.000	.291	.285	1.715

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 27: *Pairwise Comparisons*

Dependent Variable	(I) Working experience	(J) Working experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	98.7% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
CLRC	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	-.187	.253	1.000	-1.000	.626
		11-15yrs	1.284*	.332	.002	.218	2.350
		16-20yrs	.826	.358	.148	-.324	1.975
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	.187	.253	1.000	-.626	1.000
		11-15yrs	1.471*	.314	.000	.464	2.479
		16-20yrs	1.013	.341	.026	-.083	2.109
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-1.284*	.332	.002	-2.350	-.218
		6-10yrs	-1.471*	.314	.000	-2.479	-.464
		16-20yrs	-.458	.403	1.000	-1.753	.837
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.826	.358	.148	-1.975	.324
		6-10yrs	-1.013	.341	.026	-2.109	.083
		11-15yrs	.458	.403	1.000	-.837	1.753
SCRC	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	-.125	.230	1.000	-.863	.613
		11-15yrs	1.204*	.301	.001	.236	2.172
		16-20yrs	.375	.325	1.000	-.669	1.419
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	.125	.230	1.000	-.613	.863
		11-15yrs	1.329*	.285	.000	.414	2.244
		16-20yrs	.500	.310	.675	-.496	1.495
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-1.204*	.301	.001	-2.172	-.236
		6-10yrs	-1.329*	.285	.000	-2.244	-.414
		16-20yrs	-.829	.366	.164	-2.005	.347
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.375	.325	1.000	-1.419	.669
		6-10yrs	-.500	.310	.675	-1.495	.496
		11-15yrs	.829	.366	.164	-.347	2.005
SERC	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	-.483	.289	.605	-1.413	.447
		11-15yrs	.723	.380	.372	-.496	1.942
		16-20yrs	.298	.409	1.000	-1.018	1.613
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	.483	.289	.605	-.447	1.413
		11-15yrs	1.205*	.359	.008	.053	2.358
		16-20yrs	.780	.390	.302	-.474	2.035
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-.723	.380	.372	-1.942	.496
		6-10yrs	-1.205*	.359	.008	-2.358	-.053
		16-20yrs	-.425	.461	1.000	-1.906	1.056
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.298	.409	1.000	-1.613	1.018
		6-10yrs	-.780	.390	.302	-2.035	.474
		11-15yrs	.425	.461	1.000	-1.056	1.906

Table 27 continued

Dependent Variable	(I) Working experience	(J) Working experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	98.7% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ARC	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	.003	.230	1.000	-.736	.743
		11-15yrs	1.210*	.302	.001	.241	2.180
		16-20yrs	.725	.326	.180	-.321	1.771
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	-.003	.230	1.000	-.743	.736
		11-15yrs	1.207*	.285	.001	.290	2.124
		16-20yrs	.722	.311	.142	-.276	1.719
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-1.210*	.302	.001	-2.180	-.241
		6-10yrs	-1.207*	.285	.001	-2.124	-.290
		16-20yrs	-.485	.367	1.000	-1.664	.693
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.725	.326	.180	-1.771	.321
		6-10yrs	-.722	.311	.142	-1.719	.276
		11-15yrs	.485	.367	1.000	-.693	1.664
MARC	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	-.098	.245	1.000	-.885	.689
		11-15yrs	1.208*	.321	.002	.177	2.240
		16-20yrs	.664	.347	.363	-.449	1.777
	6-10yrs	1-5yrs	.098	.245	1.000	-.689	.885
		11-15yrs	1.306*	.304	.000	.331	2.282
		16-20yrs	.762	.330	.149	-.300	1.823
	11-15yrs	1-5yrs	-1.208*	.321	.002	-2.240	-.177
		6-10yrs	-1.306*	.304	.000	-2.282	-.331
		16-20yrs	-.544	.390	1.000	-1.798	.709
	16-20yrs	1-5yrs	-.664	.347	.363	-1.777	.449
		6-10yrs	-.762	.330	.149	-1.823	.300
			11-15yrs	.544	.390	1.000	-.709

*. The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Source: Field data (2021)

In Tables 26 and 27, there was a significant difference in the concerns (CLRC < SCRC, SERC, AARC and MARC) of SENCOS based on the working experience (WExp). The SENCOS who had worked for 1-5 years ($M = 1.89$; $SE = 0.20$) and 6-10 years ($M = 2.08$; $SE = 0.16$) had a high level of classroom-related concerns (CLRC) than SENCOS who had worked for 11-16 years ($M =$

0.60; SE = 0.27). Likewise, an examination of the of the mean score for school-related concerns (SCRC), academic achievement-related concerns (AARC) and management related concerns (MARC), the results of the pairwise comparison revealed that the SENCOs who had worked for 1-5years and 6-10years had a high level of these concerns (SCRC, AARC and MARC) than SENCOs who had worked for 11-16years. Thus, in the implementation of IE in schools, the SENCOs who had worked for 1-5years and 6-10years expressed more classroom-related concerns (CLRC), school-related concerns (SCRC), academic achievement-related concerns (AARC) and management related concerns (MARC) in comparison with the SENCOs who have 11-15working experience. The low classroom-related concerns (CLRC), school-related concerns (SCRC), academic achievement-related concerns (AARC) and management related concerns (MARC) voiced by the SENCOs within 11-15working experience could be attributed to the experiences they have encountered and derived in the performance of the roles in the implementation of IE. Despite these concerns (CLRC, SCRC, AARC and MARC), they may have learned how to cope with the situation or improvise during the performance of the roles as SENCOs.

Concerning self-related concerns (SERC) in Tables 26 and 27, the post hoc test revealed that the SENCOs who had worked for 6-10years ($M = 1.36$; $SE = 0.19$) expressed high self-related concerns than the SENCOs with 11-15working experience ($M = 0.16$; $SD = 0.31$). This result means that the SENCOs with 6-10working experience are more worried about their interest and welfare during the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE.

Thus, they are more concerned about the changes they would need to make in their daily routines in the performance of the roles in the implementation of IE in schools. Typically, they are more concerned about their knowledge, skills and abilities (proficiency level) to complete the tasks required for the implementation of IE and what others would think of their competencies (proficiency level). This type of concern reflected their egocentrism.

Research Hypothesis Five: There is no statistically significant influence of SENCOs' level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on their roles in the implementation of IE.

The objective of research hypothesis five was to determine the significant influence of SENCOs' level of knowledge, confidence and concerns on the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE in schools. The data gathered was analysed using multiple linear regression. Prior to the analysis, the assumptions of multivariate normality, linearity, multicollinearity and autocorrelation were examined. The results are presented in Table 28-30 and Figure 5.

The multivariate normality of the dependent variable roles of SENCOs was checked using descriptive statistics (mean, median, skewness and kurtosis) as presented in Table 13. The value of mean, median, skewness and kurtosis revealed that the data was approximately normally distributed (see Table 13). This was further confirmed by histogram and Normal Probability Plot (P-P) of the Regression Standardised Residual (see Figure 5).

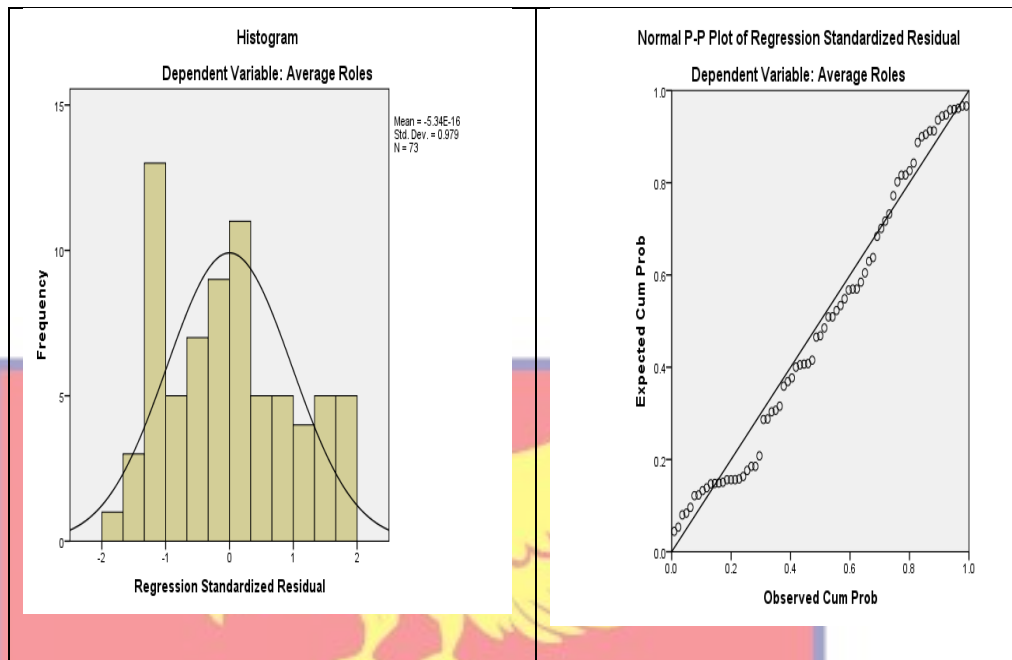


Figure 5: Multivariate normality using histogram and P-P plot

As shown in Figure 5, both the histogram and Normal P-P Plot indicated that the data (Roles of SENCOS) is approximately normally distributed. An examination of Normal PP plot indicates that the points lie in a reasonably straight diagonal line from bottom left to top right. This suggests no major deviations from normality. The assumption of linearity and multicollinearity was assessed using correlations matrix, Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (see Table 28).

Table 28: Correlation Matrix for the Assumption of Linearity and Multicollinearity

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Roles of SENCOS	1			
2. Knowledge of SENCOS	-0.282*	1		
3. Confidence of SENCOS	-0.543*	0.154*	1	
4. Concerns of SENCOS	0.464*	-0.265*	-0.563*	1

Source: Field data (2021)

*significant @ 0.05

As shown in Table 28, the relationship between the independent variables (level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns of SENCOS) and the dependent variable (Roles of SENCOS) was moderate (from -0.282 to -0.543). These values mean that the independent variables (level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns of SENCOS) correlate substantially with the dependent variable (Roles of SENCOS). Accordingly, there was a linearity between the independent variables and dependent variables. Also, the correlation among the independent variables was not too high. The correlation ranges from 0.154 to -0.563, which is less than 0.70 (Pallant, 2010). Therefore, all the independent variables are retained in the regression model indicating that there is no multicollinearity.

Table 29: Assumption of Multicollinearity and Autocorrelation

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	DW test
Knowledge	.908	1.101	
Confidence	.249	4.010	1.914
Concerns	.238	4.210	

Source: Field Data (2021)

In addition, the value of Tolerance and VIF are within the range (see Table 29). The Tolerance values are greater than 0.10 and VIF are less than 10 (Pallant, 2010). These values also confirmed that there is no multicollinearity. In Table 21, the value of Durbin Watson (DW) test is within the range of 0 to 4.00. Field (2009) suggests that values less than 1.00 and greater 3.00 are a definite cause of concern. However, the value of 1.914 is approximately 2 which is an indication of no autocorrelation or serial correlation. Thus, the residuals are uncorrelated.

Table 30: *Multiple Linear Regression Results of the Influence of SENCOs' Knowledge, Confidence and Concerns on Roles*

Variable	B	SE	Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	7.163	1.304		5.491	.000
Knowledge	-.692	.321	-.221	-2.154*	.035
Confidence	-.805	.253	-.623	-3.182*	.002
Concerns	-.089	.134	-.133	-.660	.511
DW test			=	1.914	
R			=	0.583	
R Square (R ²)			=	0.339	
adjR Square (R ²)			=	0.311	
F-test (3, 69)			=	11.816	
p-value			=	0.000	

Source: Field data (2021) *Significant @ 0.05

In Table 30, multiple linear regression was performed to determine the influence of SENCOs' level of knowledge, level of confidence, and concerns on their roles in the implementation of IE in schools. The results showed that all the independent variables statistically significantly predicted the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE in schools, $F(3, 69) = 11.816$, $p = 0.000$, $R^2 = 0.339$. The multiple correlation between the independent variables (knowledge, confidence and concerns) and dependent variables (roles of SENCOs) was positively moderate ($R = 0.583$). The independent variables explained ($R^2 = 0.339$) about 34% of the variance in the dependent variable. Thus, the combined effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable was moderately large.

From Table 30, only two independent variables (knowledge and confidence) added statistically significantly to the prediction (p -value less than 0.05). For example, the highest predictor of the roles of SENCOs was the level

of confidence among SENCOS ($B = -0.805$; $SE = 0.253$; $t = -3.182$, $p = 0.002$). This represents the partial effect of the level of confidence among SENCOS on their roles in the implementation of IE in schools. However, the effect is negative. This means that if SENCOS lose confidence in the ability to perform the roles or have low confidence/efficacy beliefs in the ability to execute the tasks given them, their performance of the roles in the implementation would decrease by 0.805.

From these results, it was concluded that there was statistically significant influence of SENCOS' level of knowledge, confidence and concerns on the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE in schools. The highest predictor was the level of confidence and the least predictor was concerns.

Qualitative Results

Research Question One: What level of knowledge do SENCOS have in terms of the roles they play in the implementation of IE?

This research question was intended to find out from the SENCOS if they were knowledgeable about their expected roles in the implementation of IE. Responses from the participants indicated that they had high knowledge about their expected roles in the implementation of IE. Their responses are reported under the following themes:

Level of Knowledge in Playing their Roles

The SENCOS who participated in the study revealed that they had high knowledge about their roles in the implementation of IE. For instance, **SENCO 3** stated that:

I will place myself high because I play my roles well and I know what to do and I have the inclusive documents and there is nothing in the document beyond my control except issues beyond me that I will need to refer for onward action so confidently looking at what I'm doing, I can place myself high.

In addition, accounts from the SENCOs showed that their working experience increased their expertise and knowledge in performing their roles. For instance, SENCOs who were resource teachers before they were appointed believed their experiences as resource teachers coupled with their background in special education have equipped them with in-depth knowledge on how to handle children with SEN, hence they are able to apply this knowledge in the implementation of IE. For example, **SENCO 2** said that:

For the SENCO role am playing I have very high knowledge if you will allow me to use very high. I know what I should do in this work. As I said earlier, I was a resource teacher for long before they gave me the SENCO role and I have done special education too.

Knowledge About their Expected Roles in the Implementation of IE

In showing mastery in their expected duties and responsibilities, the SENCOs enumerated their expected roles in the implementation of IE. The responses of, **SENCO 2** and **9** sum up the responses of the SENCOs on the issue:

One, to liaise with the head teachers and then conduct regular screening for all new learners. Another one is that, we refer them to the assessment centre and when the report is brought, we discuss with the parents and we help for placement of the child

accordingly. Another one is we liaise with the parents and the regular teachers and the head teacher so that children who have special needs can be supported, then another one also says that we should do regular visits to the schools to give in class support services to the children, then another also says that we should do regular sensitisation for regular teachers, resource teachers, head teachers and the peers of children with special needs in the classroom so that they will be able to accept those children and give them the needed attention and help them to also benefit from the learning situations in the classroom.

SENCO 9 said that:

collect data on children with special needs, counsel parents of children with special needs in the pre-school, maintain or follow up records of people with special needs, creating awareness on special need issues through public education, supporting classroom teachers to effectively manage children with special needs, advise the district director on disability issues in the schools...these are some of the roles they expect us to do.

Research Question Two: What roles do SENCOs play in the implementation of IE?

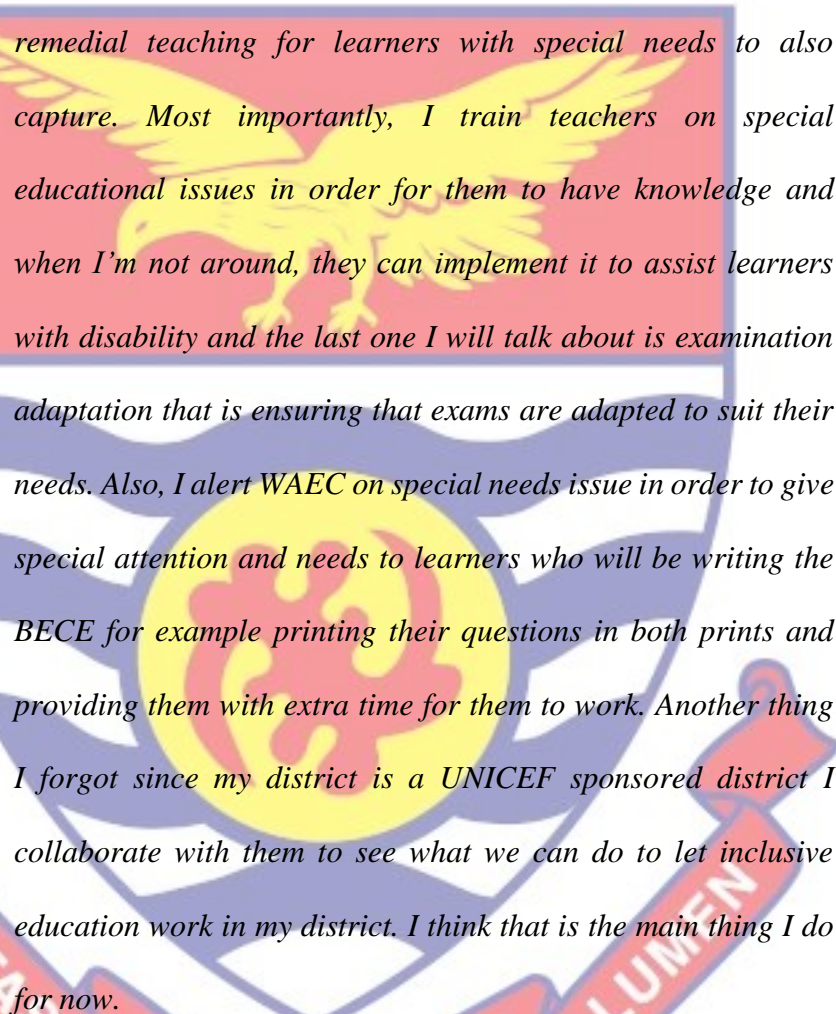
This research question sought to find out from the SENCOs the actual roles they play in IE since some roles in practice may differ from what is expected of them. The responses given by the participants showed that the SENCOs played diverse roles in the implementation of IE. Further, it was

noticed that some of the roles were prioritised over others. Some of the roles are considered as day-to-day activities and therefore are critical in the implementation of IE. The verbatim responses below clearly outline the roles the SENCOs play.

Duties and Responsibilities of the SENCO

The SENCOs indicated that they *engage in identification of children with SEN; make referrals; provide in class support; visit homes of children with SEN; supervise IE; work with parents; facilitate educational placement; develop Individualised Educational Plans (IEP); ensure examinations are adapted for children with SEN; engage in remedial teaching; train teachers; engage in early identification and intervention; ensure a conducive school environment; collaborate with internal agencies such as Department of Social Welfare, Ghana Health Service and external agencies such as United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund[UNICEF], United States Agency for International Development [USAID], ensure the acquisition and maintenance of assistive technologies; write report on children with SEN and activities undertaking in the district; update the files of children with SEN and engage in teamwork.* This is an excerpt from **SENCO 3**:

I do screening of children in order to identify children with special needs and then referral of learners with special needs either to the assessment centre or to the hospital or medical assistant and I monitor activities in the schools and provide in-class support services that is being in the classroom to support learners with disability or special needs during lessons and then



visit homes to encourage parents who have children with special needs, then also managing and assisting learners who are using assistive devices and how to take care of them and then when they are in need of such assistive devices I refer them to get one and I also do remedial teaching after the main teaching, we do remedial teaching for learners with special needs to also capture. Most importantly, I train teachers on special educational issues in order for them to have knowledge and when I'm not around, they can implement it to assist learners with disability and the last one I will talk about is examination adaptation that is ensuring that exams are adapted to suit their needs. Also, I alert WAEC on special needs issue in order to give special attention and needs to learners who will be writing the BECE for example printing their questions in both prints and providing them with extra time for them to work. Another thing I forgot since my district is a UNICEF sponsored district I collaborate with them to see what we can do to let inclusive education work in my district. I think that is the main thing I do for now.

SENCO 14 added that:

The unfortunate aspect is that I am the only officer in the district and you can imagine we have about 93 primary schools and am supposed to visit all these schools so it is very difficult to visit all these schools within the academic year but still we are doing our

best. Am doing in class support for children with writing difficulties and other behaviour difficulties and at the same time I attend PTA meeting and educate parents on the importance of sending their children with special Educational Needs to school and I have the opportunity to go to FM stations to educate the public on inclusive education programme in the district and let them know that IE is not just a policy but human right so to find out how people are embracing the policy. As at now I have the opportunity of meeting the social welfare people and every year we able to send people to the National Assessment Centre at Achimota for assessment and for placement. And am able to acquire wheelchair for children who are not able to attend school because of their physical challenges. And also one student was assessed, he was hearing impaired and was able to get hearing aid for that guy. He has even completed now. One boy he was also visually impaired he needed lens to enable him to read he had low vision so I sent him to Koforidua hospital and I got the result and I send him to the regional assessment at Akwapem Akropong and he was provided with the reading glasses. During Head teacher's meetings and other meetings too we go to educate them apart from the training that we have been given them. Also every programme especially planned Ghana programmes they normally give you the opportunity to talk to the people on inclusive education programme.

SENCO 1 also added to the duties and responsibilities mentioned by other SENCOS. He said:

I co-ordinate special education activities in the district and I do screening for children with special needs in the schools. I ensure children with SEN are enrolled in school. I prepare individualised education programme for individuals with special needs. I provide in class support to teachers and provide remedial teaching for children with disabilities in the classroom. I write reports on learner with special needs to the regional coordinator. I also do counselling for parents and train teachers as well. I do educational placement. I forgot and also monitoring schools and making referrals. Madam we also tell them some of the things they can do teaching children with disabilities like the method and all that.

Explications from **SENCO 8** revealed that SENCOS engage in the following activities:

You will have to ensure all children regardless of their situation are enrolled in school and also have access to education. Apart from that you need to create awareness that every child should be in school especially children with special needs. You know in some communities, some people think if a child has special needs, the child does not deserve to be educated sometimes they are sacked with brooms and other things and the public needs to be aware that every child regardless of the limitation should get

access to education and apart from that in the school we have to ensure that since children with special needs will be in this school, the environment should be conducive to accommodate them, the environment should be welcoming and they should have easy access to the environment, they should have access of information, access of environment, they should be comfortable in school. We also ensure teachers adapt the lessons to suit all children. We ensure that children who have challenges are identified early enough so that they are given the intervention needed so that their condition will not be profound so that they will also learn without any problem. We also update files of the children with SEN; we also work together with some professionals like psychologist, physiotherapist and others to make sure that the child with special need gets the needed support.

Prioritised SENCO Roles

Participants revealed that some specific roles are not to be taken for granted because they are critical to the SENCOS' role and the implementation of IE. They listed roles such as *visiting schools regularly; training of teachers; ensuring children with SEN are enrolled in schools; identifying children with SEN; making referrals; creating public awareness; collaborating with parents and facilitating educational placement.*

SENCO 1 succinctly pointed out that:

... The most important thing in the roles we play is training the teachers and working with the parents so they can help the disabled children. I will also say that, ensuring that all children regardless of their situation are in the right school

SENCO 3 added that:

Yes, I've identified some major ones that is very key that is screening that's identification, then like I said training of the teachers because the teachers are always with them. I only go there to monitor and see if they are doing the right thing so if the teachers do not know what should be done for the child then who will even give me information? I think where the child can get the needed assistance that's the referral. Some of them will be beyond me, you have to be referred to the National Assessment centre especially for the school placement because what I know about inclusive education is that, is not all the conditions that can suit our public schools, the mild and moderate can be managed in our public school whiles the severe and profound because of lack of special educators can be taken to special school let me cite an example, a child who is totally blind and in our public basic school, there is no single teacher who can teach a braille , it's better that child is taken to the school of the blind which is a special school and that child when in the public school will not benefit so when we see such condition, we will

refer the National Assessment Centre then after assessment they can do the right school placementcollaboration with parents and sensitisation of parents with children with SPED needs especially during PTA meetings is also very important, I must say that am achieving more work with parents than working in the school with the children alone....so I think those are the major ones. They are very key.

Research Question Three: How do SENCOS' perform their roles in the implementation of IE?

This research question was intended to find out some of the strategies SENCOS use in playing their roles. The key issues mentioned included *identification of children with SEN; creating public awareness; working with parents, providing teacher support, supervising IE and engaging in educational placement.*

Identification of Children with SEN

The SENCOS gave an account of how they identify children with SEN. Identification of children with SEN is the first step in assessment. This stage is important in the assessment process and provides the pathway for diagnosis if the need be. Besides, assessment is the heart of special education services and for one to qualify for special education services, this should be the first step. The SENCOS narrated that they identify behaviour problems and learning challenges through the use of observation, interviews and reviewing the work samples of children. They also use assessment tools such as the Snellen charts and the Oscope for identifying visual and hearing problems respectively.

Reports from the SENCOS show that they often screen for visual and hearing problems than the other areas of need. The following are some excerpts of the verbatim responses from the SENCOS:

Please, for the screening we mostly do eye and ear screening and we use the E chart for smaller pupils and for the older ones we should have used the LogMAR but we don't have the LogMAR. So for the ear screening we use the otoscope to check the outer ear to see if there are wax or fungi or any other thing in the ear. If we see anything we advise. If it is just wax we ask them to apply a little oil so that the wax will come out and they can clean it. We advise that they shouldn't put anything into the ear. If we see it may be a serious problem, we refer them to professionals

(SENCO 1)

SENCO 3 described how the identification was done. He said:

I do organise screening on school basis then I invite the special education resource teacher to assist. When I get to the school we look at the physical appearance that can sometimes speak to you, we do ear screening. I have an otoscope that we had a training on it at school and we know how to use it then we screen for hearing test then we do eye screening using the Snellen chart that can let you suspect it and I can say most of the time when we suspect it means you have to go for check-up, most of the time, it's proven and then I have talked about the physical

appearance, the academic performance of the child also speaks to us.

This is what **SENCO 2** said:

We've been going on visit, we do visit in the schools, while in the school sometimes through observation we can identify some of the children. And we team up with the health personnel and we screen the eye and the ear so by that we are also able to identify, but through the visits, sometimes when you get to some of the schools or classroom, the behaviour of some of the children will let you know that this child is different from the others and you can identify such child and refer him....sometimes complains from the children like they cannot see well will let you know they have some problem, if you get to class and you realise that, you ask questions and a child may not be able to answer, the child may be looking at your lips to listen to you then you know the child is having problems with hearing and some too in the classroom they will be moving here and there then you know there is a problem

Creating Public Awareness

The platforms SENCOS use in creating awareness are Community information centres, Radio, churches, mosques and Parent Teacher Association Meeting (PTA). The following are some excerpts of the verbatim responses on how SENCOS create public awareness on special education and disability issues. For example, **SENCO 6** said that:

When the school is organising PTA meeting they call me and I talk about why they have to bring their children with disabilities to school, then they have information centres so I go there to talk and during community durbars I go there and do something like that.

SENCO 4 indicated that:

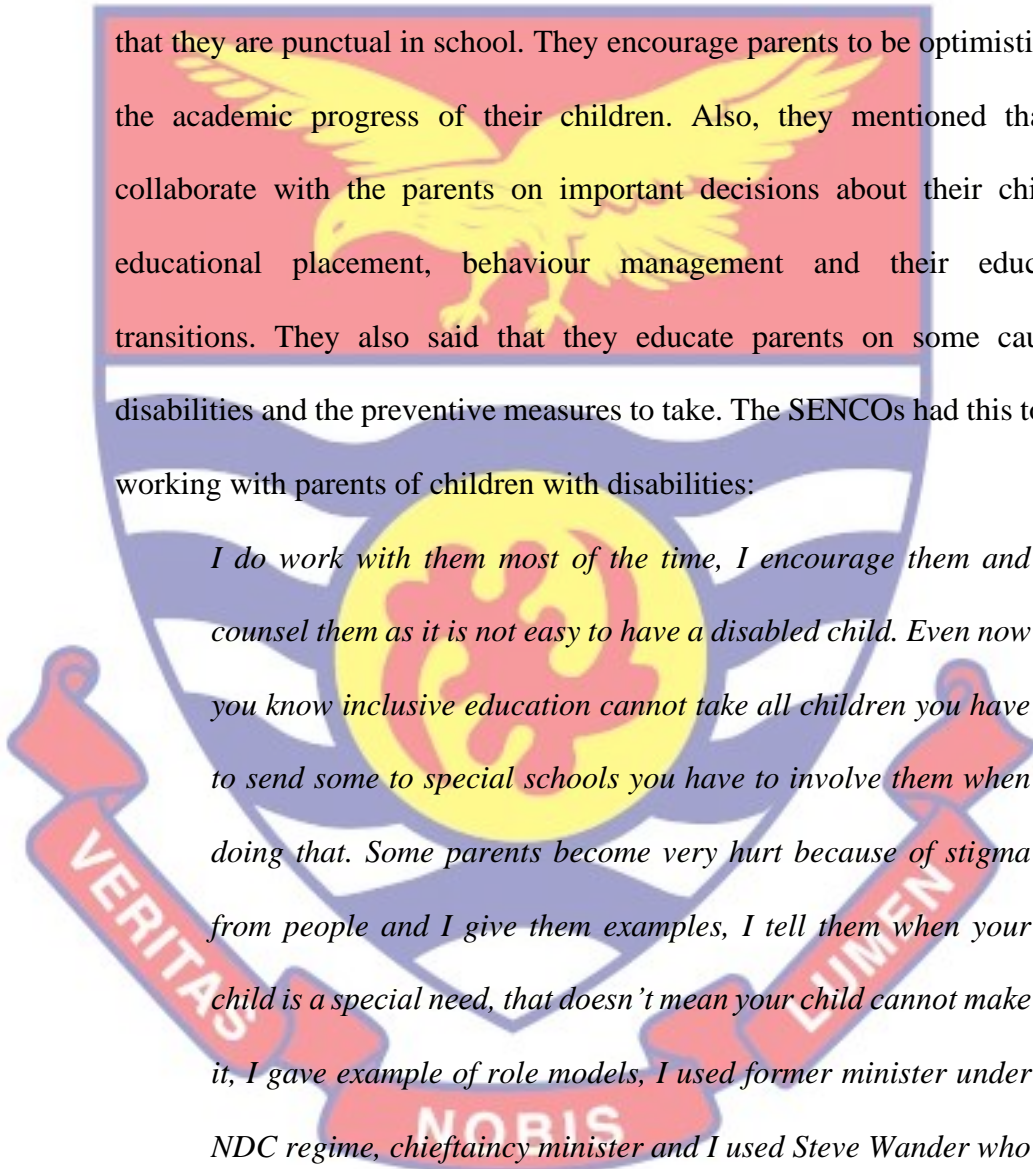
....We do through the churches and information centres but recently we started the back-to-school campaign I used that opportunity, because I went to 50 communities and I was putting that one too across and so sometimes they invite us for PTA, then I put it across, sometimes I visit some churches, I put it across and all that, that is how I'm creating the awareness.

SENCO 5 had this to say:

Recently for example, when President asked school children to go back there was a programme called back to school campaign so we went on radio, we have four stations around so we went there and educated the public and I talked about the need for children with disability to go to school. Sometimes, Open days and PTA I take the opportunity to educate them to encourage their disabled children to go to school, I talk about what cause disabilities too and sometimes some things on inclusive education too, so that is what I've been doing.

Working with Parents

The participants reported that working with parents is a two-way affair. They depend on the parents for information and the parents also depend on them for support for their children. The SENCOs counsel and encourage parents who have children with SEN to take their children's education seriously by ensuring that they are punctual in school. They encourage parents to be optimistic about the academic progress of their children. Also, they mentioned that they collaborate with the parents on important decisions about their children's educational placement, behaviour management and their educational transitions. They also said that they educate parents on some causes of disabilities and the preventive measures to take. The SENCOs had this to say in working with parents of children with disabilities:



I do work with them most of the time, I encourage them and counsel them as it is not easy to have a disabled child. Even now you know inclusive education cannot take all children you have to send some to special schools you have to involve them when doing that. Some parents become very hurt because of stigma from people and I give them examples, I tell them when your child is a special need, that doesn't mean your child cannot make it, I gave example of role models, I used former minister under NDC regime, chieftaincy minister and I used Steve Wander who was born blind and is the highest record holder of grammys award. L.M Kaylor the famous American philanthropist who is also blind, you know I give instances, sometimes I even bring in

politicians like the highest serving American president Franklin Roosevelt. The guy was cripple and he was in a wheelchair but he is the longest serving American president and so with the parents I talked to them a lot (SENCO 4)

SENCO 8 shared a similar view with respect to how they work with parents of children with SEN

I visit parents of children with special needs to give them encouragement and to also advise them, give them counselling before they will continue to support the education of their wards. Some of the parents too you can't go without stretching your hands in terms of resources. When they even try and finish JHS you have to follow-up and see if they are learning a trade or they will leave them like that and for the girls they usually become pregnant so we try our best to help the parents.

SENCO 11 succinctly added:

I talk to them, counsel them and encourage them to take care of their children with disability. When I need information about their children I fall on them. Sometimes, most of the parents are worried about the behaviour of their children and we give them advice on how to help their children even at home.

This is what **SENCO 7** said:

At times, we will talk about some of the causes such as old age and early child birth and the effect it can have on the child. Also, some drugs they take during pregnancy, so we counsel them on

what to do, when you are pregnant what you have to do. They shouldn't take hard drugs and alcohol and the rest and you have to give birth early and other things that can prevent disabilities.

Providing Teacher Support

Excerpts from the verbatim responses from the SENCOs show that they provide support to regular class teachers by giving them frequent in-service training, coaching them on the right methodologies and using co teaching approach. On this issue **SENCO 8** said:

The only support we give is frequent in-service training apart from the frequent INSET, we also visit from time to time and guide the regular teachers in the classroom on how to give special attention to the children who have special needs and while am not there, my resource teachers go round and do same so the resource teachers they go and sit in the classroom and support the teachers how to provide teaching and learning or services to this children, then when they are not there the regular teachers copy what the resource teachers have been doing during their absence.

SENCO 1 also said that:

First, we tell them if they see anything or they identify any child with a problem they should inform the head teacher to inform the circuit supervisor then they will inform us. We also go to the classroom to do in class support. Like the teacher will be teaching and we go round the class and help those children who

will need help. So, we go there to support the teachers and we sometimes sit by the children in the class ourselves and teach them. For me, I have few resource teachers who help me also I advise the teachers in the right method to use. We also tell them to break the lesson into bit for children to be able to learn.

SENCO 7 added that:

Normally, we do IN SET training for teachers on how to teach children with disabilities and how they can even identify them in the classroom. We also visit the school and talk to them to find out the challenges they have and we give them assistance on the methods. Recently when we came from COVID I went to a school and the teacher was having problems teaching the child to write so I designed some task and told the teacher what to do. Sometimes too when I go the school I can help the teacher by teaching the child myself and the teacher to will handle the other children in the class. As for my place I help the teachers and they like me.

Supervising and Monitoring IE

Participants' responses indicated their supervisory role included moving from school to school to check if they are implementing IE in the school with the IE monitoring kit. They look out for the state of the physical environment if it is inclusive friendly, they check for the availability of teaching and learning resources especially assistive technologies. They talk to the teachers to find out if they are adapting the curriculum and identify children who may need special

education services during the supervision. The following are some excerpts of the verbatim response from the SENCOs:

In my district am in charge of over 65 schools and I have to go to the schools to see if they are doing what will benefit children with disabilities but not only the normal children. When I go there the first person I talk to is the head teacher then I go ahead to the classroom. The teachers will tell me the children with problems and I quickly plan some assessment. Before the COVID break I helped one child to have a hearing aid. So when we go check all these things like the environment how conducive it is for the children especially helping the disabled to get wheel chairs and hearing aid (SENCO 15)

SENCO 13 also stated that:

We have the inclusive monitoring kit so I use that one and I also talk to the teachers to see if they are adapting the curriculum. Curriculum adaptation is very important only that most of the time the teachers complain about how to do it but when I visit the schools I try to help them out. I also talk to the head teacher to write for materials for the school too. We do a lot during the monitoring.

Educational Placement

It emerged from the study that SENCOs refer children suspected of having disabilities for further assessment before making any educational

placement. They also engage parents before any placement decision is made.

The following are some verbatim responses from the SENCOs on the issue:

I have done a lot of educational placement in my district. Now with the inclusive education a lot of parents want their children to be in the mainstream school but we talk to them and when we want to place them. So the educational placement the parents come first because they usually do not understand why their child should go to a special school. We explain the assessment result to them and if they agree we move on. (SENCO 1)

SENCO 7 added:

I first of talk to the head teacher and the class teacher for the child to go for assessment. So the school will invite the parents for further discussion then if they agree we send the child for assessment and we do the educational placement based on the child's condition.

Research Question Four: How confident are SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE?

This research question sought to find out if SENCOs are confident in playing their roles in the implementation of IE and what makes them confident in playing their roles. The SENCOs indicated that their confidence is driven by their expertise, commitment, love and the passion they have for the job. For example: **SENCO 1** expressed her confidence with enthusiasm:

I have high confidence and I have been trained to do it so I do it with all my heart. I will say it is passion too that is why am

confident, because am passionate about what I do and I know what am doing too. You do it like you are doing it unto God.

This is what **SENCO 2** said:

I wanted to help children with disabilities that is why I did special education. If you love what you do you are confident in doing it so my confidence is high.

SENCO 13 added that:

Madam, if not the problem like I will say very very high but there are a lot of problems. But I will say high because I like the job that is why I did special education and me when I do my work am committed. Everybody knows even my regional co-ordinator is aware. The love for the work and the commitment is keeping me like...

SENCO 3 summed it up by saying:

When you are performing an activity and you know exactly what to do and the results are coming, the confidence level go high...

Research Question Five: What are the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE?

This research question was intended to elicit the concerns of SENCOS in the implementation of IE. The concerns of SENCOS were clustered under six main themes: *classroom related concerns; school related concerns; self-related concerns; management related concerns; parental related concerns and professional related concerns.*

Classroom Related Concerns

The classroom related concerns are conditions in the classroom that affect the implementation of IE. The SENCO's role involves providing support to regular class teachers. Hence, they work directly with regular class teachers and are privy to some classroom challenges that can affect the implementation of IE. The concerns were: *negative attitude of regular teachers, poor competence of teachers and large class size.*

Negative Attitude of Teachers

The SENCOs reported that some regular teachers hold negative perceptions towards children with SEN and feel reluctant to accept them in the classroom. If children with SEN are not accepted in the classroom it may lead to stigmatisation and rejection in the classroom. They also added that some teachers are irresponsive to the SENCO and hold a negative perception about their office. It emerged that because the School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) are responsible for monitoring if they also go for monitoring some teachers are adamant because they feel overburdened. For instance, **SENCO 13** had this to say:

One of the problem is the teachers, most of them are uncooperative if they have to do anything for children with disabilities they think it is too much work. For me like this in my district I have to talk and talk

SENCO 10 added that:

Some of the teachers too because there are circuit supervisors coming around, and then you also go there some of them look at

you from head to toe. They are like; wei nso obye den wa ha (“what is this guy doing here”) but we are more interested in the disabled child and inclusive education but unfortunately the teachers do not see our importance and some do not receive us well.

SENCO 8 added this:

Sometimes for the teachers to accept that the disabled child can learn and become somebody big in the future so that this child can benefit from classroom situation, they always doubt their capabilities and let the child feel neglected in the classroom.

There is this child who was drooling and the teacher did not want to accept the child because she was pregnant and she thought her child will inherit it. The headmaster was part and wanted me to take the child to a special school but the child’s condition does not need any special school you see...

Poor Competence of Teachers in Handling the Inclusive Classroom

The implementation of IE includes the teachers’ ability to adapt the curriculum, manage behaviour and ensure a conducive classroom setting. Teachers are considered as key implementers in the implementation of IE. They are expected to teach both learners with and without SEN in the same classroom, hence, if they are not able to use the requisite knowledge and skills expected of them to handle the inclusive setting it may affect the academic progress of both learners with and without SEN.

How the teachers are handling the class is another problem or let me say some teachers. Madam Pearl, the teachers do not know how to handle the children especially those who are hyperactive or have behaviour problems and the autistics. If you go to their classroom they are only complaining and they are not using any strategy to help. That is why we need a lot of special educators to help them (SENCO 4)

SENCO 14 said that:

The strategies the teachers will use to teach the pupils is where the big problem is. For example, I went to one school, I don't want to mention the name, a lot of the pupils cannot read and write and the teachers are not doing anything about it. When you ask them they say they have tried you ask them what they use in trying too they can't tell you anything. I am the only co-ordinator in this district so I can't be in one school for long it the teachers who have to help these children but unfortunately they are not pulling their weight.

Large Class Size

The SENCOs also explained that the large class size is another challenge affecting the successful implementation of IE. Since most of the teachers complain they are not able to handle the number of children in the classroom.

This is what **SENCO 5** said:

Another thing is that in the municipality itself, there is one school that when you go, the children are 90/95 in one class. Some even

105 so just imagine and then you want the teachers to pay attention to 3 special need children so they will tell you, just have a look for yourself, will it work? It won't work, they will just teach and go their way. So they will not have individual attention for and with this COVID too, the classes have been split into two and they now running from morning to afternoon and it's same teachers who are teaching so just imagine. It's a big wahala {problem}.

SENCO 8 had this to say:

Teacher to pupil ratio is one major problem in my district, in one of the schools where director I don't know if you heard, director presented desks to the school during his birthday, the director general we call it Ashonmang Presby , it came in the news , when you go there the students in a class number about 120 and out of the 120 I have 7 children with special needs so when the teacher goes to the classroom, he cannot provide any service at all and the policy also says that don't withdraw the child from the regular classroom and provide the services separately, no, let him benefit from the general this thing but how will it work? Ghana inclusive is a big problem...

SENCO 4 added:

Some teachers too find it very difficult in handling large class. I went to a school just today and the class enrolment is 65 with one autistic child and as soon as I got there the madam was like

“sir mabr33 oo akwadaa wei dei, mabr3, mabr33 {sir I'm tired, as for this child, I'm tired, I'm tired}, I wish they would take him away from my school so that I will be free Look at the large class and only one teacher handling it and we are talking of inclusive education

School Related Concerns

The school related concerns are conditions that affect the implementation of IE at the school level. These were identified as *poor infrastructure, inadequate funding and inadequate resource teachers*. The SENCOs described some of the school buildings as not being “disability friendly”. They further revealed that there was inadequate funding to support the schools in the implementation of IE. In addition to the school related problems is the lack of resource teachers to support the regular school teacher in handling learners with SEN. The following excerpts of the verbatim responses explain the concerns SENCOs had in relation to the schools.

Poor Infrastructure

The SENCOs stated that some school buildings are still not accessible for learners who are physically challenged which makes accessibility to the classroom difficult. They explained that the poor infrastructure creates a barrier in the IE setting. For example, this is what **SENCO 3** said:

The second is infrastructure, though you said inclusive education but the district will build classroom, there are learners with wheelchairs and there is no single ramp that can easily move these children to the classroom. They will get there and

other children will come out to carry them to climb to the classrooms and its making thing difficult, accessibility that is it!

SENCO 4 succinctly said:

We talk of inclusive education and even the new classroom, they are building are still not disability friendly...

SENCO 8 also said

The school buildings that they have done some and left some is it inclusive? It is like some places is inclusive other place it is exclusive. My place like this all the school buildings are still not good for the physically disabled and the impulsive ones. Imagine this school in my district the K.G. 2 madam is always complaining that a particular boy is always running from the class and she has to chase him to bring him back to the classroom because of the way the classroom is...

Inadequate Funding

The SENCOS reported that inadequate funding is the major problem facing the schools. Most schools do not have enough funds to acquire appropriate teaching and learning resources and assistive technologies. They also do not have funds to train their teachers and take learners who are suspected of having SEN for further assessment. The following are verbatim statements from the SENCOS. For instance, **SENCO 11** said:

Madam how can inclusive work well in the school when there are no funds to buy teaching materials and help children who need assessment. Many of the parents of the children with

disabilities are poor and they depend on the school to help these children so if the school too has no money then it is a problem.

SENCO 14 added:

The districts have no money how much more the schools... they don't push money to the school...

Inadequate Resource Teachers

Resource teachers are expected to be in schools to support the regular education teachers. However, the SENCOS mentioned that the majority of the schools do not have resource teachers to help teachers to handle children with SEN in the IE setting. The following are some excerpts of the verbatim responses of the SENCOS on the issue.

One major thing is that the resource teachers to support the teachers are not there, if they are there it will make the work very very effective (SENCO 2)

SENCO 4 added:

We need a resource teacher in every school so that they will help it well, madam how can one person in charge of a district get to A,B,C,D,E,F(school) simultaneously to make sure the policy is well implemented, it is tough!. My recommendation is that every school should have a resource teacher that will make it very easy.

SENCO 9 gave a critical view of the situation and added a very good recommendation. She said:

We do not have resources teachers to push IE in the schools so the teachers are complaining that they are suffering. The special educator has been trained to help the child with disabilities well than the teacher so if the teacher is working alone then IE will have problems. Recently recruitment came, two times, they didn't consider special education, the subject areas that they took into consideration, special education was left out meanwhile we don't have resource teachers in the schools. We need to post special educators to the schools.

Academic Achievement-Related Concerns

The academic achievement concern is related to the **overburdened work load**. The academic achievement related concern has to do with the challenges that affect the academic progress of children with SEN. The SENCOs indicated that they were overburdened with their workload because of inadequate special educators. The SENCOs reported that, because there are few resource teachers, they are not able to support learners with SEN as expected of them. They felt that their role is overburdened with too much work. The following statements reflect the frustrations of some SENCOs:

Sometimes we feel like moving away from special education because of how they are treating us. We are not getting the support and the workload is too much. How can a whole district only two resources teachers and the schools are scattered everywhere? Madam how do we help the children well?
(SENCO 13).

I am alone so I'm just a drop of water in the ocean. Look at the number of schools in the district and I have to go to all these school with no resource teacher to help me. When you go to one school you can't spend good time there and the children will suffer. In fact, it is just frustrating! (SENCO 5)

One person having a whole district, let's say district of over ten twelve circuit, each circuit is about 20-25 schools and one SENCO officer handling a whole district, that is tough, we cannot help the children well so we need resource teachers to come in and help. (SENCO 4)

From the excerpts, the frustration and helplessness of the SENCOS is evident. The workload is huge and this is as a result of lack of adequate SENCOS so the few available have to oversee a whole district with numerous schools. To make matters worse, some of the schools do not even have resource teachers.

Self-Related Concerns

The self-related concern is related to feelings of isolation and stigmatisation. The self-related concerns are the challenges that affect their field of expertise and are more specific to their job role or profession. These affect the effectiveness of their role performance. The SENCOS also feel that colleagues in other fields are more valued than they are. To the SENCOS, it appeared that they were on their own and alone with little attention paid to them. They mentioned that things that are needed to make them play their roles effectively are usually ignored by management, rather other colleagues in different fields and positions like circuit supervisors, guidance and counselling

co-ordinators seem to have the needed support. The SENCOs expressed their disappointment about how they are treated. Excerpts of their verbatim comments are presented below.

I am also fighting to be a circuit supervisor, you will be there when they go and come back they are more recognised, even as

I speak now the director general recognised the Circuit supervisors, they've brought them motor bikes but SENCO's are not recognised at all so as I am sitting down and answering your questions should there be any other way, I will quickly jump because day in day out we are working but it is like you are not part... (SENCO 8)

Recently they gave motor bikes to circuit supervisors but ask me what about SENCO's? I've been a SENCO's for more than ten years but ask me, what at all have I been given. When I was newly appointed, I even asked for notebooks to collect data and this thing wasn't given so I had to buy some exercise books to collect my own data from the seven circuit so these are some of the problems (SENCO 6)

They should also recognise us like other people. Sometimes there are courses they will ask the girl child educator and counsellors to attend and we will be side-lined as if our work is not important. Sometimes in the office some colleagues want to use the names for the children for you.... They can call you "special" and they mean the negative special like you are mentally

retarded and we are human beings it affects you and the work as well... (SENCO 1)

The above excerpts show that apart from lack of recognition, motivation, not being given the needed resources to work, the SENCOs are being labelled by their colleagues in other fields or departments in the service. SENCO 1 said *'it affects {them} and the work as well.*

Management Related Concerns

SENCOs felt that administration from the local to the national level was not being adequately supportive of IE. Their concerns were identified as *inadequate funding, lack of recognition, unclarified roles, insufficient training, lack of motivation, inadequate assessment tools, inadequate assessment centres, inadequate office space and equipment and negative attitude and poor perception of educational leaders.*

Funding

Funding can be said to be the foundation in the implementation of IE. Without adequate funding the IE system can fall. SENCOs expressed their worry about the inadequate funds to support IE in two major areas: funding to train teachers and funding for transportation. One of the major roles played by SENCOs is monitoring of IE in schools, therefore, if SENCOs are not given the needed resources to ease their movement to schools to monitor IE it will affect the implementation of IE. Similarly, if adequate funds are not released for teachers to receive in-service training they may not be adequately equipped to handle the inclusive classroom. The following are some statement from the

SENCOs which suggest that they lack adequate funds for running in service programmes:

Funding is a problem, there is no funding anywhere to support this I.E, not at all. Because we want some work to be done to report on you put in your own resources so that you can get a report and write when they request for your report, that's it. Because of this funding problem the last time we had training was about three years now and new teachers are coming into the system and they don't have ideas, if you write to organise such training, they will say there is no money and you can't invite teachers to train and you can't give them common water to drink.... (SENCO 3)

There are inadequate funds to be released by GES to help us do our work so when it comes to training of regular school teachers to address inclusive education, there is no fund (SENCO 11)

.... They want to do inclusive well in Ghana here and they are not pushing money on the ground. We are on the ground doing the work but see the problems we are facing. The money ends at the top and they organise big seminars at the top and they say capacity building but the teachers are not getting enough training (SENCO 14)

Additionally, the SENCOs indicated that inadequate funding affected their movement to schools in the district. It also creates financial burden on them since they have to find their own means of transporting themselves to do

monitoring in the schools. The following are some examples of the statements the SENCOs made about this:

The number one challenge is transportation. You know as a coordinator, you need to be moving round always, and you have no means of transportation so sometimes you are limited as to moving to the various schools and given them the needed help and also to the remote places, that's where most of the challenges are, in the towns where you have the means and is closer it is simple but in the remote areas where you can't access the place, they are not providing any money to go there it becomes difficult for you to supervise what is happening there. I can tell you, in at least every school, you can get a child with a special need and if we can't reach every school because of transportation then what are we doing. (SENCO 2)

...If you take circuit supervisor for instance and he has some number of schools to visit but SENCO you are a district coordinator and you have all the schools to visit but you don't have means of transport so how do you go? My district is a typical village, if you take a taxi to the school sometimes its 20 to 25 cedis and how do you use your meagre salary to do that? So specifically, sometimes even a year you have not even attended 10 schools so that is also a major challenge: means of transport.... (SENCO 6)

My big problem is that there is no fund to travel around. There is a particular community within a municipality, from the municipal capital to that place in and out will cost you 50 cedis, in and out alone ooo will cost you 50 cedis, even that one it means that you have gone to circuit centre not the interior school so just imagine going to the interior schools, in and out it will cost you more than 50 cedis you see. There are some villages you go you have to let the okada wait for about 2-3 hours and you have to pay for it so it's a big challenge, a very big challenge. One thing that has helped is that two years ago USAID introduced a programme so I was using that monitoring to do this work too but now they have stopped so am actually feeling it... (SENCO 5)

Lack of Recognition

Based on the reports from the SENCOS, it seems that management does not recognise their value in relation to their role in the implementation of IE.

We need recognition from the directors. Is it that they don't even understand special education themselves, you will try your best and they will not even see the effort of the special educators because they don't even understand your roles, they think the special educator is just like a circuit supervisor who will just go in and inspect lesson notes, ask for teachers presence and reports, they don't know our work goes far far beyond, it is more technical and so ours has nothing to do with how many teachers

were present, bring your lesson notes, and all that. They should know that as a Circuit Supervisor will go to a school and spend 20-40minutes, we can also go to a school and spend the whole term, imagine screening, madam just imagine screening, screening, eye screening alone can take you a whole month for a school and you are not done, so how do you juxtapose the work of the circuit supervisor to that of the special educator (SENCO 4)

...Another thing is that it is like the SENCO work is not recognised in this inclusive education. I know of a district who have converted their special education resource teachers to classroom teachers when you get to that district there is no single resource teacher in the cluster of schools to assist, I feel is not right and the directors don't see the importance of special educators, when they see them as special resource teachers, they feel it's a waste and because they lack teachers, they have to use them in the classroom (SENCO 3)

In Ghana we don't challenge anything, the guidelines for inclusive education says we should have SENCOs but we the SENCOs are not recognised, we write reports, ask me, how many of them have the directors called for the investigation in the reports. Even the social welfare, I do give them my report, ask me, how many times they have invited me so inclusive education is only in principle in Ghana but in practical it is lost, nobody,

the government, from the central government, everywhere we are not recognised meanwhile we are always saying about disabilities and those things who are the experts in this inclusive we are doing (SENCO 6)

Unclarified Roles

Most of the SENCOs pointed out that their roles were not clearly spelt out in their appointment letter. Additionally, there are no documents spelling out their duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE. Hence, they had to struggle to be abreast with their expected duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE. They had to make deductions from the IE policy; seek support from a colleague with experience; read literature on inclusive education and apply the knowledge gained in special education. For instance, **SENCO 5** said that:

I have to contact friends on phone, what are you doing? You are also a SENCO, what do you do? What is expected from you, we communicate on phones through my mates from the University and then you get to know I've to do this I've to do that. Even when I got to the office there wasn't any file to look at previous work done by others so you just have to be asking friends and then we did rehabilitation as a course in the university so through that I got to know one or two things expected from a SENCO so that is what I was, I was referring from my notes time to time to know what to do....

SENCO 13 said also that:

They gave me an appointment letter but the roles were not spelt out because I was in a special school long before I was pushed here ... I have a friend who was a SENCO so I liaised with him and when I took office too I went through the file of the previous SENCO to have information on the roles. The inclusive education policy also helped because I was able to deduce some of the roles and the activities I have to perform in inclusive education....

Training of SENCOs on their Duties and Responsibilities

The SENCOs in this study had opposing views regarding regular training about their expected roles in the implementation of IE. Whereas some indicated that they received a lot of free regular training to gain additional knowledge and skills in the implementation of IE, others revealed that the training programmes were too expensive to attend. The deductions made from those who reported to have regular training is that their district was under the sponsorship of some international agencies or their training was sponsored by international agencies. In addition, some indicated they have had few training programmes but the focus was not directed towards their roles or the implementation of IE. While others said they have not received any training. It emerged from most of the narrations from the SENCOs that the training they have received on their duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE is inadequate. Those who had received training had this to say:

Yes, I remember the regional special education coordinator do organise some training for we the coordinators in the region and I happen to attend an inclusive education organised by the British council which was held in their premises, I remember that one, there was visual impairment training and there was an autism management which was also organised by the coordination through the assistance of American Autism Society who came down to have a training with us and also ID management strategies and some couple of training, I will say about 6 kind of different training within the 8 years but we still need more (SENCO 3)

SENCO 8 reported that:

A lot, apart from GES headquarters some time ago I liaise with vision international, Germany they provided training for us continuously for about 2 years or so. There were 13 schedule trainings, Nsawam, from Nsawam then we started from Cape Coast, Koforidua, Takoradi, Ho, Kumasi, a whole lot, and Accra, they were training us on how to do the screening, how to identify, how to interpret the screening readings and how to handle children with special needs in the classroom, how to even assist the heads and others. After that, in 2016 UNICEF also adopted my district for support and there was a lot of trainings that UNICEF in collaboration with GES headquarters provided for my district of which I was the focal person for the district so

almost every workshop I attended. So for 2017, 2018, I go to Kumasi and come back on Saturday morning then Sunday morning I'm going back for another training continuously, so it was this COVID that put off all the trainings.

SENCO 14 succinctly said that:

UNICEF has been organising workshop for us in Kumasi and so at least I have gotten some training especially on inclusive education even though I see a lot more trainings can be organised.

In the case of some SENCOs, the training programmes were available in their districts but were too expensive for them to attend. For example, **SENCO 6** spoke in plain words expressing his frustration about the amount involved in attending a training programme:

Yes, but you have to pay it yourself and you are enrolled on and because of that sometimes if the money is not there you can't attend, the office isn't paying, you have to pay it personally and the one that was brought recently, we were to pay three hundred and something cedis and we couldn't attend so you have to pay before you are enrolled on any training.

For those who had no training or received few training programmes in their districts, these are some excerpts from them.

... They don't do plenty training on inclusive education. Only few people in the UNICEF sponsored district have more training

because always UNICEF is calling them. But those of us who are not in UNICEF district, it is like you have to suffer for yourself.

We don't get in-service training! (SENCO 4)

SENCO 12 added:

Madam they do not organise any training for us only calling for data every time. I made my mind to use my own small pay to attend one but the COVID has put everything on hold now. As for training programmes, it is another issue on its own

Similarly, **SENCO 10** described his displeasure about the apparent lack of training programmes organised for SENCOs:

For my last 6 years as a SENCO, there have been few in-service trainings like about four of them and some are not even related to special education or inclusive education. Madam as for refresher courses we need some paa so if you can also tell some of the lectures in your area to help

Lack of Motivation

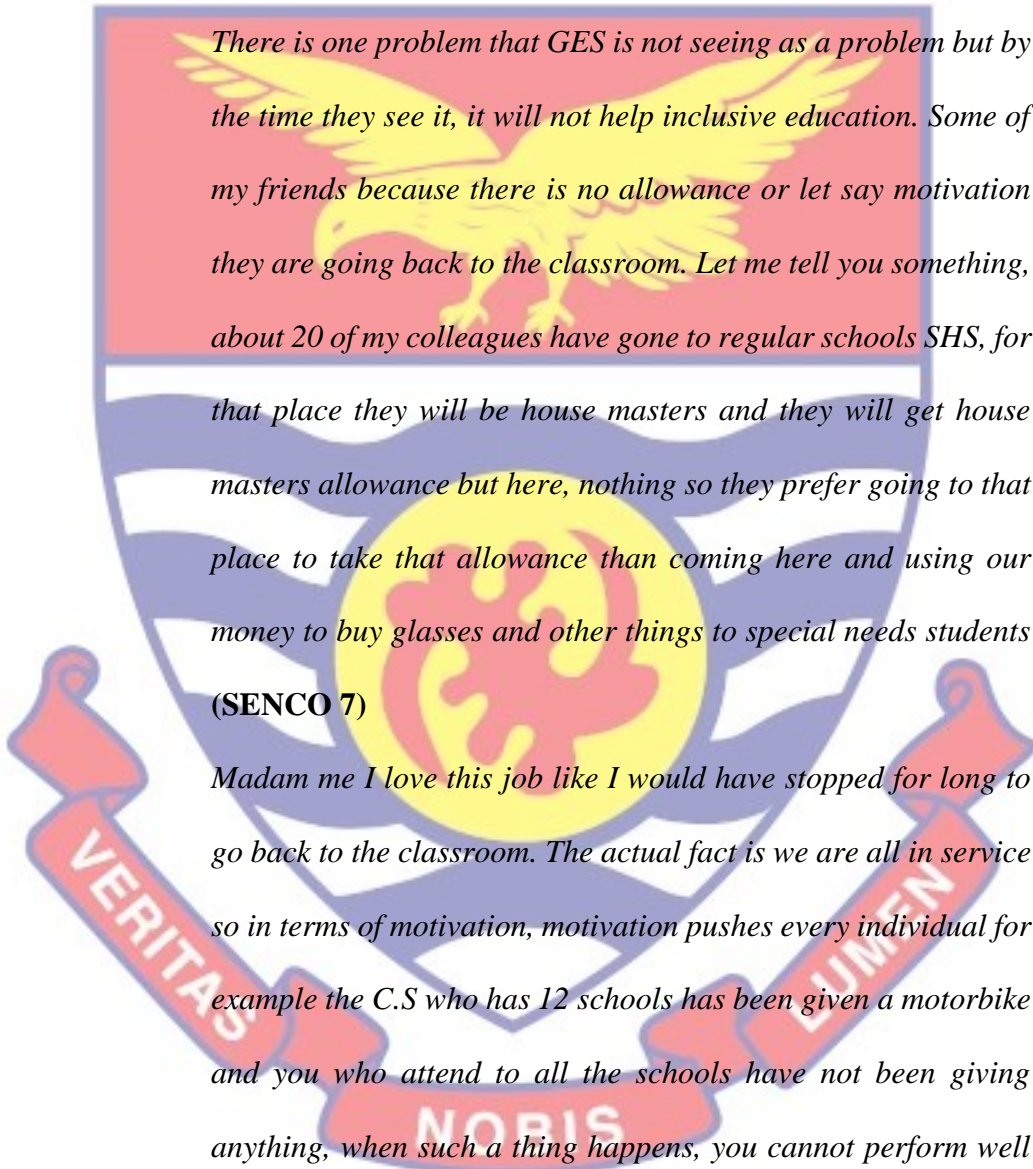
The SENCOs felt motivation in terms of incentives and allowances will boost their role performance but management seem passive in providing them with some allowance to encourage them. The SENCOs stated that the management's inadequate motivation affects their role performance. It has also contributed to some special educators moving to different areas in the Ghana Education Service (GES) rather than their original special education field where they would have supported children with SEN and managed the implementation

of IE. The following are some excerpts of the verbatim statements from the SENCOS:

... Whenever money comes to the office, they will tell you it's for circuit supervisors and they give it to them meanwhile the circuit supervisor is handling let's say, in my district some of them are only overseeing just 7 schools, we have 72 schools but the coordinator you have to visit all the schools in the district and so if you give a circuit supervisor who is overseeing 6 schools a motorbike and whenever money comes from government you say it's for circuit supervisors, what are you telling me? Indirectly you are telling me you don't value the work that I am doing and so you see, if you don't have these kids at heart, there is no way you will give your best because the government doesn't cherish what you are doing, the government doesn't cherish it so you will be looking elsewhere when you get the opportunity then you move away and that is why majority of my colleagues are not working because even at the office, the small that will come, office we know money is not coming but even the small that will come you are not part of it because you are a special education coordinator we are giving it to circuit supervisors. (SENCO 9)

We are not given any thing for this SENCO. Nothing at all whether from the districts or whatever. But we do monitoring, we move round a lot. Every week we have to move from school to school with our own money and if you don't have that passion

to do the work you will sit in the office our work is also not in the office. Me like this I don't have a car so I take passenger car to move round and it is from my own pocket you see. Meanwhile no allowance the risk "koora po" to go round the schools ... GES do not see it. Hmm (SENCO 1)



There is one problem that GES is not seeing as a problem but by the time they see it, it will not help inclusive education. Some of my friends because there is no allowance or let say motivation they are going back to the classroom. Let me tell you something, about 20 of my colleagues have gone to regular schools SHS, for that place they will be house masters and they will get house masters allowance but here, nothing so they prefer going to that place to take that allowance than coming here and using our money to buy glasses and other things to special needs students (SENCO 7)

Madam me I love this job like I would have stopped for long to go back to the classroom. The actual fact is we are all in service so in terms of motivation, motivation pushes every individual for example the C.S who has 12 schools has been given a motorbike and you who attend to all the schools have not been giving anything, when such a thing happens, you cannot perform well and the training that you were given as a degree holder, you cannot perform once the community does not recognise the activity you are doing. That is the major challenge (SENCO 12)

Inadequate Assessment Tools

The SENCOs pointed out that identification of children with SEN is paramount into their roles in the implementation of IE. However, reports from them show that they are faced with a lot of challenges in playing this role effectively because they do not have adequate assessment tools. They were of the view that this challenge creates a setback in the implementation of IE and the IE policy requirements. They revealed that the IE policy requires children to be screened, yet the tools for screening the children are unavailable. For example, **SENCO 3** said:

Mainly my challenge is the lack of screening equipment, I mentioned some equipment we used during screening, I had to afford it by myself, you know the otoscope we use for the ear screening is over 1000 Ghana cedis and I have to acquire it myself, it uses dry cell and anytime I go for screening I have to buy the dry cells and the Snellen chart I think if GES is able to provide... but they don't. We have to look for it ourselves to use in identifying the children.

SENCO 5 added that:

We need assessment materials like I said earlier, there is not even one Snellen chart in the office so I talk with a nurse at the polyclinic so that we can go out to do some basic screening for the children. There is no Snellen chart, there is no otoscope, nothing.

Inadequate Assessment Centres

In addition to the inadequate assessment tools the SENCOs also mentioned that they had inadequate centres. They explained that the assessment centres are too far for the schools and the parents to access them. This challenge can prevent children who are suspected of having disabilities from having further assessment and also receive proper educational support. For instance, this is what **SENCO 1** said:

Also equipment or tools for the screening is hard to come by. They will say that we have some at the assessment centres but the centres are far away from us. So if you are doing screening you have to write and the process that you have to go through before you get it done before you finish you are frustrated. I will say we need to get assessment centres in every circuit to help or equipment in every district.

SENCO 2 added that:

Sometimes you refer a child to go and see a clinical psychologist or even for the audiologist and the parents will not send the child, they will not, they will say it is far and there is no money but if there is a place in the district, I mean an assessment centre, where you can even send the child, you the SENCO could even get the parent to come to the school and send the child there even though it is not easy to deal with the parents. I think that would have been good but we don't have that and so you will sometimes

identify these children but how they get the support for the intervention, it's a problem so we need assessment centre.

SENCO 11 also said:

...the resources too not in terms of money but even resource room or assessment centres are not close to us you have to travel before you can take a child to do assessment then the materials to do assessment are not even there

Lack of Assistive Technologies

Lack of assistive technologies is another concern the SENCOs reported was hindering the implementation of IE. The verbatim statement from SENCO 6 sums up the SENCOs view about the lack of assistive technologies.

Some children need wheel chairs other need clutches, others need hearing aids, mental retarded children need playing materials, all these materials are not there to help them. These are assistive devices and we don't have them so even if you go and identify a child you don't have any help to give so if you are updating the person's particulars without any material resource to help them...

Inadequate Office Space and Equipment

The nature of the SENCO role requires confidentiality and privacy in dealing with parents and the children with SEN. The role also demands collection of data and proper filing and keeping of data. The SENCOs were worried that they did not have the office space to engage parents and the children with SEN. They were also unhappy about the means they used in storing data

and updating the files of children with SEN. Below are the comments they made to support the fact that there was inadequate office space and equipment.

We must be provided with an office. Most SENCO's in the various districts do not have an office so no confidence or confidential talk. I must have an office for talking to parents and even keep files and other important things there just for issues on IE, the most important is office... (SENCO 10)

Then administratively we should have been given some laptops to collate our data but this one is not there so we are still using pen and paper data collection to do and you know how tedious it is so we are not interested doing it (SENCO 6)

We need a resource room because, we are lucky our district director has provided us with some few equipment so we need a resource room to keep them and all that and at times when parents come it's an issue, when they come and there are people around, we don't feel comfortable, we need a resource room so that in that we will feel comfortable in that room (SENCO 7)

Negative Attitude and Poor Perception of Educational Leaders

It was evident from the responses from the SENCO that some educational heads showed negative attitudes towards and held poor perception about the implementation of IE and the field of special education. They added that some heads discouraged the SENCO role and even tried to give them different roles. The following are statements that show that some educational heads have negative attitude:

Recently I had an interaction with someone at the head office about some issues in my district and the person said: “What you can do it and leave the rest, you just do it because we at the headquarters we don’t even understand certain things”, so they know, we have a platform, coordinators are complaining day in day out and on that platform, the director is on it, those at the headquarters they are on it, regional coordinators are on it, some of them even say “they regret doing special education at the university so if a coordinator should consistently write this on a national platform, then imagine if that person can help push IE agenda (SENCO 9)

I know of a district who has converted their special education resource teachers to classroom teachers when you get to that district there is no single resource teacher in the cluster of schools to assist, I feel is not right and the directors don’t see the importance of special educators, when they see them as special resource teachers, they feel it’s a waste and because they lack teachers, they have to use them in the classroom (SENCO 3)

... The district directors, majority of them are not ready to accept inclusive education and champion the course in their district so they see the SENCOs as wasting the governments resources been paid and they are just there saying ‘you people what do you do?’ those are some of the questions they ask, you as a SENCO what do you do? What is your work? They refuse to accept and then

know the capabilities of special needs and then the inclusive education so that they will be able to implement it to in their district, so that's a challenge (SENCO 8)

These are verbatim statements from the SENCOs indicating that some of the educational heads have poor understanding about their roles and the concept of inclusive education and the implementation. For example, this is what **SENCO**

3 said:

The challenge is the awareness, our district directors though they heard the news in air but what goes into it, most of them are not aware. The I.E policy launching, I attended when they launched it, I was with my former director and my district since then four directors have been changed and they don't have any idea so our directors need more highlight on I.E.

Secondly, the district directors should be taken through the roles of the SENCO, they must also respect the roles of the SENCO and know they are playing a bigger role than those people they are paying attention to, that's it (SENCO 4)

There should be a lot of education on inclusive education especially for the directors. I remember a head said director said they don't need special educators..... That's why am saying the education has not gone down well. You know I started that there was a director who even said because of inclusive education we don't need special educators so it's all because ignorance about our work. So people should be educated (SENCO 11)

The number one problem is; the district/ municipal directors don't understand special education. If you are lucky and the director did special education fine if not, then hmmm... See a director came and I wanted to organise a workshop for special need teachers in the municipality. He told me where he is coming from, special needs have been collapsed so there is no need for me to organise such an activity, he told me. He told me point blank, where is coming from there is no need for special education, they don't even have special education coordinator so there is no need. He told me it is not necessary and it's a waste of time and that director said he wants to make me the PRO for the office and I said no. I told him no I don't want to and then the current director wanted to take me to the classroom and I told him point blank that i won't go, they have shortage of teachers in the municipality so he wants to take me to the classroom.... (SENCO 5)

Parental Related Concerns

The SENCOs are expected to work collaboratively with parents in the implementation of IE. The SENCOs identified some concerns that affect their role performance and the implementation of IE which are related to the parents. Some of the parental related concerns identified were *negative attitudes of parents, low-income status of parents and poor sensitisation of parents about special/inclusive education.*

Negative Attitude of Parents

The SENCOs explained that some parents show negative attitudes towards their children with SEN in relation to their educational support. Most of the parents are reluctant in showing concern and actively involving themselves in the education of their wards. The SENCOs explained that, most parents are not actively engaged in the education of their wards because of their negative attitude and perception about the academic progress of children with SEN. They indicated that most parents believe it is not worthwhile to spend time, energy and resources on children with SEN. This negative attitude of the parents hinders the performance of their roles because the SENCOs depend on the parents for information and other relevant resources to support their children in the implementation of IE. The following are some excerpts of the verbatim statements from the SENCOs:

when I refer them too they are not ready, most of the parents are not ready to take the children to hospital for further assessment or to assessment centres at Kaneshi or Achimota for further assessment so those things at times, puts me off a little and I don't have any backing to stand on my feet and say hey jack, if you like it or yes you have to do it, I do it to some extent, I do my best, when it gets to where the parents are to come in and help assess and get to the medical aspect of the issue so that I will base on that and support the child, then am stuck, so I may say my general problem is the legal backing and then support from Ministry of Education and GES. (SENCO 8)

... and even the parents, the negative attitude towards their own children I'm worried so these are all challenges we are facing

(SENCO 6)

Parents who have children with special needs do not want to cooperate with us they think nothing good will come out of them.

Especially when we do screening and we identify the children and refer them to the hospital, parents do not take them to the hospital and the district directors do not support me with money to move about **(SENCO 14)**

I did eye screening for glaucoma then I took the children whom I suspected had glaucoma to their parents and the parents told me I should just let the eyes be. **(SENCO 12)**

Low Income Status of Parents

The SENCOS mentioned that, the low-income status of parents puts a lot of financial burden on them since they have to bear a lot of the financial cost of the children with SEN especially for transporting them for further assessment and for acquiring assistive technologies for the children. In addition, the low-income status of some of the parents delays the assessment process or sometimes prevents some children from being assessed at all. The SENCOS see this as a hurdle that prevents children with SEN from getting the appropriate educational support in the implementation of IE. The following are some verbatim statements from the SENCOS:

The first challenge is with parent. As I said, if you identify any child and you need to send the child to an ophthalmologist or

optometrist, or audiologist or go to see a psychologist we cannot take the child there but you try and they will not come. They don't have time for their children especially when they already know the child is having disability it is not their concern at all. Sometimes we go to their houses and you will not meet the

parents or the parent will be there and will say Madam "me ni sika" {I don't have money} sometimes we tell them you come and let's discuss. If we have to go we do pay. Sometimes we use our own money to pay for the services that we get for the children. Sometimes the lorry fare the parent will tell us we don't have money so we have to pay the lorry fare to the centre. If you really want to help the child, you have to do it from your small pay

(SENCO 1)

*... Some of the parents are financial not sound, 80% I will say that financially they are down. They will come to you and say "teacher let him be here like that" then, because if you say by force, she will not send the child, do you see it? I had to use my own money to buy lens about 350 cedis before the child could see well and benefit from the classroom activities, the parents are like, we don't have money. So you see when it happens like that it makes the work very very difficult! **(SENCO 7)***

... Sometimes you identify the child's problem but the money you raise for the assessment will be the problem because the parents

cannot pay and National Insurance does not cover ear assessment (SENCO 12)

Poor Sensitisation of Parents About Special/Inclusive Education

The poor perception held by parents on issues concerning children with SEN, inclusive education and special education in general affect the role performance of the SENCOs. Parents are expected to enrol their children with SEN in school and actively participate in the education of their children with SEN, however, because most parents are not fully educated about their roles and responsibilities for their children with SEN and the implementation of IE, it creates some challenges for the SENCOs and it obstructs the implementation of IE. For example, the SENCOs indicated that it hinders the collaboration between them and the parents. It further delays or prevents some important educational decisions such as ensuring the appropriate educational placement and providing appropriate educational intervention.

Parents are also to be educated, most of the parents are not aware of the fact that their special children can also learn or can improve or something good will come out from them. Once they realise these children have disabilities, they abandon them and concentrate on the good ones. There was a case in the school where there were twins, one was physically challenged and the other one, there was nothing wrong. The one with no problem was sent to school and the one who was physically challenged was just left home (SENCO 2)

So awareness, that is the biggest, people are not aware especially parents, they are not aware of this inclusive education you talking about which sometimes makes collaborating with them difficult (SENCO 3)

I will also say the attitude of some parents too is a worry to us, we have two special schools in the district, we have school for the deaf and we have unit for learning disability so they classify that unit for learning disability as those who are mad so when you go to a school and identify a child with a problem and then you want to even place that child there the parents will come to you and ask you, “you want my child to attend mad people school”. No, no I won’t allow my child there” so it’s a big challenge. So the parents need to understand (SENCO 7)

Professional Related Concern

These were challenges that SENCOS attributed to poor collaboration with other fields of expertise and inadequate professionals to support the assessment needs of children with SEN.

Poor Collaboration

The Standards and Guidelines for practice of IE in Ghana (MoE, 2015) requires teachers to refer learners suspected of having special educational needs for further assessment by the District Inclusive Education Team (DIET) and later by the District Assessment Team (DAT). The SENCOS stated that DIET and the DAT team are not working well. They also expressed their displeasure about the poor collaboration that existed between them and other fields of

expertise. They were particularly unhappy with the poor collaboration between the Ministry of Health, specifically, the Ghana Health Service as well as the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, specifically, the Department of Social Welfare. For instance, **SENCO 2** had this to say:

This DIET and DAT team in the policy it is not even working well. I don't see the collaboration because for instance we are supposed to screen every child within the year, every child of school going age, if you read the policy is in it, but you go to the health they have a programme; school health and their nurses go to the school, alright and they assess the children but there should be that collaboration so that we move together, do you understand what I'm saying, so that education also meets all the children and their needs. So when we work as a team that help but if for instance the health sector does her own, school health assessment and we the teachers go and do ours I think it's not the best and then you need to work as a team

There is no inclusive education team. There is nothing like that.... Yes, Ghana Health Service do collaborate with us but currently they do their own thing without the knowledge of GES. First, they move into the schools, sometimes I will be on normal monitoring then I meet the Ghana Health Service doing screening for the school children and I don't even have any knowledge on it and I find it difficult to join the team to do anything (SENCO 3)

No, there is no collaboration with Social welfare or Ghana Health Service they do their own thing and we also do our own thing (SENCO 5)

Mostly I do my identification through observation and interviews because when Ghana Health Service are doing, they collaborate with school head officer's coordinators, they don't collaborate with SENCO and that's the issue at stake....Recently that was the problem we encountered when school reopened, a letter was brought and it was spelt out that the G.H.S. to join the school head coordinators to do the screening and we asked our coordinators why they are not collaborating with us but it didn't get anywhere, it died a natural death (SENCO 6)

Inadequate Professional Support

Inadequate professional support is one of the concerns that emerged from the interview. The SENCOs indicated that they did not have adequate professionals in the district and the assessment centres to readily assist in the assessment of children with SEN. They indicated that it poses a lot of challenge in ensuring that children with SEN are properly assessed. This is what SENCO 2 said:

The professional support is one of the difficult things a SENCO is facing because it is difficult to get all the needed professionals to help a child. It is not all that easy but it is one of the important things a SENCO should ensure that the child should have so that the child will be able to learn as needed.

SENCO 1 also said:

We need professionals that can handle behaviour problems, attention problems, learning disabilities and others. We have to recognise these disabilities and get professionals to do proper diagnosis. At times, we are only concentrating on the visually impaired and the hearing disabled. But they are few.

Discussion

SENCOs Level of Knowledge About their Expected Roles in the Implementation of IE

The first research question sought to examine SENCOs' level of knowledge in terms of what is required of them in the implementation of IE in Ghana. Some researchers point out that the SENCOs' level of knowledge about their expected duties and responsibilities is an important predictor to successful implementation of IE (Pearson, 2010; Winwood, 2013; Kearney, Mentis, & Holley-Boen, 2017).

From the quantitative results, it was concluded that SENCOs had an adequate or a high level of knowledge on their roles in the implementation of IE. They are aware about their expected duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE. This is evident by their high mean score.

In the same vein, the qualitative results showed that SENCOs had a high level of knowledge about their roles in the implementation of IE. This was evident in their responses, for example, they stated that, they are to *engage in identification of children with SEN, create public awareness on issues on IE and disabilities, work with parents, support teachers, provide information to*

district directors on disability issues, keep data on children with SEN, monitor the progress of children with SEN and facilitate the educational placement of children with SEN. Thus, the qualitative findings corroborate with the quantitative data. Further, the qualitative findings revealed that, their working experience and their background in special education have equipped them with their role expectations in the implementation of IE, thus their awareness about their roles in IE is due to the fact they are in the field of special education and have acquired a lot of experience.

It can therefore be inferred from the qualitative results that, for someone to be appointed as a SENCO, the person must have read special education to enable her/him to have the requisite knowledge and skills to be efficient in what is expected of him or her. As pointed out in Kearns's (2005) study, SENCOs who were specialist in the field of handling children with SEN saw themselves to be more knowledgeable and autonomous than others who were not directly in the field of special needs. Hence, the SENCOs' level of knowledge in playing their roles and knowing what is expected of them can be linked to their knowledge in their field of expertise.

In addition, based on the qualitative findings, SENCOs need to have adequate experience before taking the SENCO role. MacBeath, Galton, Steward, MacBeath and Paige (2006) revealed that one major element of the SENCO role in successful implementation of IE is the working experience of the SENCO. Thus, the SENCOs' level of knowledge in playing their roles is influenced by their working experience as special educators. The outcome of the findings is important in the implementation of IE as argued by Agaliotis and

Kalyva (2011) that, when SENCOs are aware about their expected duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE it will help them meet inclusive demands and ensure the effective implementation of IE. Lewis and Norwich (1999) mentioned that, inclusive education should be based on the needs of the child. In Lewis and Norwich's (1997) framework, the second and third needs (see p. 36), require experts in the field of IE who are well informed about issues in the field of special education and their roles and responsibilities in meeting the needs of children with SEN in the IE setting (Gyimah, 2006). Therefore, the SENCOs' awareness about their roles is critical in the implementation of IE in meeting the needs of children with SEN.

Further, it can be said that, the SENCOs level of knowledge about their roles is crucial in providing adequate support for regular teachers and parents. SENCOs being experts in the education of children with SEN coupled with their high level of knowledge about their expected roles can lead to effective support for teachers, parents and the school in the implementation of IE. This argument support Kearns's (2005) assertion that, SENCOs need to be "experts" in playing their roles in the implementation of IE. Thus, being a professional requires being abreast with the demands of the profession (Kumar, Kuar & Kalra 2013).

On the other hand, the finding is contrary to the finding of Fitzgerald and Radford (2017). Their study was conducted with 27 SENCOs in Ireland, their findings showed that only 10 out of the 27 participants were knowledgeable about their roles, even though 21 out of the 27 participants had post graduate qualification in special education. The findings of their study indicated that having specialist knowledge related to SEN is not adequate to

manage inclusive practice rather being able to collaborate and communicate with colleagues is. This means that their study did not clearly recognise the influence of the field of SEN on the role performance of SENCOs.

This conflicting result may be due to the different context, because their study was conducted in Ireland. Unlike the United Kingdom, where previous pieces of evidence (Kearns, 2005; Pearson, 2010; Mackenzie, 2012; Winwood, 2013) suggest that, competence in the field of SEN influences the role performance of the SENCO. For example, Winwood (2013) reported in his study that, the SENCO's awareness about their duties and responsibilities and being able to execute them in the implementation of IE is directly linked to the development of specialist skills and the level of knowledge about the role. These differences in the findings may be due to the kind of training that exists in the United Kingdom where all SENCOs are required to take specific post-graduate training in the management of IE (Winwood, 2013) but in Ireland such training does not exist (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017). Similarly, in Ghana, based on my personal experience as a student of the University of Cape Coast, the masters programme in Special education includes training the student on inclusive education practices.

The findings of the current study about the level of knowledge of SENCOs on their expected roles in the implementation of IE is novel in the Ghanaian context. As indicated in the literature review, only one study was found on the roles of SENCOs in Ghana, that is Donbeinaa (2017), but his research did not investigate the level of knowledge of the SENCOs in the

implementation of IE. He only considered the roles they played and the challenges they faced.

Roles of SENCOs in the Implementation of IE

The second research question aimed to explore the roles SENCOs play in the implementation of IE. SENCOs were originally responsible for handling children with SEN in special schools (Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist, & Wetso, 2011), however, the implementation of IE has shifted their roles to managers or directors in the implementation of IE (Bennet, 2016). Hence, the need to ascertain their roles in the implementation of IE. The Mean of Means of their actual roles (MM = 3.00; SD = 0.79) shows that, SENCOs often/always played several roles in the implementation of IE. Among the roles they play are; *screening for identification for children with SEN, collaborating with parents of children with SEN, making examination accommodation, ensuring a conducive school environment, collaborating with internal and external agencies, providing support for teachers, engaging in administrative task such (keeping records on children with SEN), and teaching children with SEN.* Overall, SENCOs manage the implementation of IE in schools through *monitoring and evaluating IE in schools, acquiring assistive technologies for the school, collaborating with the school to educate the parents and the community about SEN issues and supporting teachers to handle children with SEN.*

Similarly, the qualitative results confirmed that SENCOs engaged in all the roles mentioned in the quantitative findings. However, the qualitative findings provided more elaboration on some roles like: *identifying children with*

SEN, teaching, collaboration, working with parents and managing the implementation of IE in schools. These qualitative findings are important in expatiating the roles of the SENCOs. For instance, in “identification of children with SEN”, the qualitative findings revealed that, SENCOs also engage in early identification of children with SEN and make referrals to appropriate professionals when they suspect the child is likely to have special education needs. In addition, as part of their role in “teaching” children with SEN, they prepare Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) to teach children with SEN. Additionally, in “collaborating with parents of children with SEN” it was revealed that: they visit them at home to monitor the progress of their children with SEN, counsel them and motivate them on how to deal with the child’s condition. Moreover, when it comes to ensuring the implementation of IE in schools, they discuss with the school the appropriate educational placement for children with SEN. From the qualitative study, the SENCOs’ play the following roles in addition to the roles mentioned in the quantitative study. These are: *making referral, preparing IEP; making home visitations and counselling parents.*

From both results, it can be concluded that SENCOs are “directors” of the implementation of IE at the school level, classroom level and the parent level. This means that, SENCOs are responsible for directing all IE affairs in the school, they are also responsible for supporting the regular class teacher at the class level and supporting the parents of children with SEN at the parent level. These findings support the findings of (Cole, 2005; Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Agalotis & Kalyva, 2011; Rosen-Webb 2011; Lindqvist, 2012;

Lindqvist, 2013; Winwood, 2013; Pearson, Mitchell & Raptil, 2014; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Curran & Boddision, 2021).

However, there are some disparities in these international findings based on the geographical context of the study. In contrast to the present study,

Lindqvist (2012) reported in her study that SENCOs in Sweden were reluctant in teaching but preferred to supervise. In the context of this study, apart from the quantitative findings indicating that SENCOs sometimes engage in teaching of children with SEN, the qualitative findings also confirmed that SENCOs teach and are willing to teach children with SEN in the classroom which is similar to the findings in the United Kingdom (Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Rosen-Webb 2011; Winwood, 2013; Curran & Boddision, 2021) and in Ireland (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020). The reason for Ghanaian SENCOs willingness to teach could be that, in Ghana, all students who are trained in special education are trained as professional teachers, hence, their first professional mandate is “teaching”. Additionally, SENCOs in Ghana are not directly responsible for the day-day activities of the inclusive school as reported in Layton’s (2005) findings because SENCOs in Ghana are attached to the schools in the educational district.

Similar studies in the United Kingdom show that, every school has a SENCO and they are responsible for managing all affairs concerning SEN in the schools (Cole, 2005; Kearns, 2005; Rosen-Webb 2011; Winwood, 2013; Pearson, Mitchell & Raptil, 2014; Curran & Boddision, 2021) which is contrary to the situation in Ghana where there is one SENCO per district (GES, 2021).

Additionally, Agaliotis and Kalyva (2011) conducted a study in Thessaloniki in Greece. Their study explored the general and special primary education teachers' perception regarding the roles of SENCOs. The study adopted the quantitative approach. They found that SENCOs collaborate with professionals from other fields and are also responsible for raising funds for the school. These findings are dissimilar to the current findings which did not indicate that the SENCOs collaborate with other professionals and engage in fund-raising. These disparities may be as a result of the structure of the school management system in Ghana, for instance, the SENCOs are not part of the School Management Committee (SMC) (Abreh, 2017; Osei-owusu & Sam, 2012), because, as part of the responsibilities of the SMC they are expected to raise funds for the school (Sacramento, 2013). In my opinion, in this inclusive era, the SENCOs engaging in fund-raising will be helpful to their role because funding is a major aspect of IE (UNESCO, 2005). If they are made to do this the SENCOs will support the school to raise funds to support issues concerning children with SEN. This will also mean that, the SENCOs will need to be included in the SMC to be able to effectively play this role, because they have the expertise in managing inclusion, hence, they can support the SMC to be effective in the school.

In addition, results from both data sets did not suggest that the SENCOs collaborate with professionals from other fields. This could be due to the inadequate professionals in the assessment process (Gyimah, Deku & Ntim, 2018). Another role that was not evident in this study but was reported in Kern's (2005) study had to do with SENCO maintaining focus on legal

procedures. It can be seen in other countries such as the United Kingdom that the SENCO role is legalised and documented (Collins, 2011; Mackenzie, 2012; Winwood, 2013). For instance, Winwood (2013) stated that, the expectations for the SENCO role is well documented in the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001b) as well as the Department for Children, Schools and Families Communications Unit (DCSF, 2008), this gives the SENCOs in the United Kingdom the legal mandate to perform certain roles.

Results from the qualitative study show that, there are no existing policies for the SENCOs even though IE requires them to be attached to schools. This means there is no legal document that spells out their roles. This can hinder the “role power” of the SENCO to engage in legal issues concerning children with SEN because their role is not legalised. For instance, if some schools refuse to admit a child because of her/his disabilities (Persons With Disabilities Act 2006, Act 715), if the SENCO role is legalised, the SENCO can use due process to get the child to be admitted.

Apart from these contradictions found in the literature, the findings of both the quantitative and the quantitative results show that SENCOs in Ghana prioritise certain roles in the implementation of IE. For instance, in the quantitative findings, the high mean score under the seven clustered roles indicated that the SENCO often played those roles and were important in the implementation of IE. For instance, screening for identification had the highest mean score, followed by collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation, the items under that role with the high mean scores were *ensuring the implementation of inclusive education in schools;*

collaborating with parents of children with disabilities; ensuring the school provides additional time for children with SEN to complete assignments and examinations respectively. Also, ensuring a conducive school environment followed with a high mean score. Additionally, items under the management of IE implementation had high mean scores: *engaging in regular visits to schools; monitoring IE practices in schools; evaluating the performance of children with SEN and training teachers to work with children with SEN* which shows the importance of that role. More so, *updating the files of children* had the highest mean score under teaching, teacher and administrative support. These reported high means could mean that SENCOs attach importance to these roles.

In the qualitative findings, the results confirmed the priority attached to some of the roles mentioned in the quantitative findings and also gave additional roles that are prioritised by the SENCOs. For example, the most prioritised role based on the means recorded in the quantitative study is the *identification of children with SEN*, this was also confirmed in the qualitative findings. However, the qualitative findings revealed some additional roles that are deemed important to the SENCOs such as visiting schools regularly, training of teachers, collaborating with parents of children with SEN and engaging in educational placement.

The roles that are prioritised by SENCOs in this study could be linked to the IE policy expectations in Ghana. The policy outlined some objectives and strategies for the implementation of IE, hence, these objectives and strategies stated in the policy are evident in the roles played by the SENCOs. For example, the policy expectations on screening, engaging in community awareness,

training teachers, involving parents, ensuring the enrolment of children with SEN in schools, making examination accommodations, and monitoring and evaluating IE are evident in the results.

This evidence of role priority can be seen in the study conducted by Fitzgerald and Radford (2017), where the SENCOs indicated that the most important duties of the SENCOs are identifying children with SEN; making assessment accommodations and updating the files of children with SEN. Additionally, this study is consistent with previous studies (Cole, 2005; Pearson, Mitchell & Rapti, 2014) which show that, SENCO prioritised liaising with parents of children with disabilities. In the same vein, the results showed that monitoring of IE in schools and training of teachers are important to the SENCO role; this is similar to the findings of Rosen-Webb (2011).

Agaliotis and Kalyva's (2011) study used general education teachers and SENCOs to identify the roles of SENCOs. Their study revealed through the lens of the general education teachers that ensuring the educational placement of children with SEN and updating the records of children with SEN is critical to the SENCO role which confirms the current findings. Meanwhile, in Agaliotis and Kalyva's (2011) study, the SENCOs who participated in the study did not prioritise the educational placement as important to their role which contradicts the current findings because this study investigated the roles from the perspectives of SENCOs. This difference in the findings could be as a result of the methodology used in both studies, specifically, the unit of analysis. The current findings viewed the roles of the SENCOs from the SENCOs

perspectives whereas their study used both general education teachers and the SENCOs, hence, the disparity can be seen from the different samples used.

From both results, SENCOs do not often work with parents of children without SEN. The quantitative study recorded a low mean with regards to the established mean criteria. Correspondingly in the qualitative study, the SENCOs mentioned that, they work with parents of children with disabilities rather than parents of children without disabilities. This finding maybe due to the fact that parents of children without SEN do not have the needs that parents of children with SEN have (Mitchell, 2014).

To add, even though both results showed that SENCOs are concerned with the educational welfare of children with SEN and also provide remedial teaching for them, the writing of the IEP was not regarded as important to the SENCO role. Meanwhile, based on the Standard and guidelines for the implementation of IE, the IEP is considered as a critical component in the educational provision for children with SEN in the inclusive setting. It is also mandated for the District Inclusive Education Team (DIET) to develop IEP for learners diagnosed with SEN, yet it seems not to be an upheld responsibility of the SENCOs in this study. This is in congruence with the study conducted by Fitzgerald and Radford's (2017) which showed that SENCOs had least priority in developing IEP. Similarly, Agaliotis and Kalyva (2011) pointed out in their findings that, even though the writing of IEP is an important obligation to the SENCO role, the respondents did not rank it high. However, Cole (2005) and Weiner (2003) reported that SENCOs saw the development of the IEP as part of the focus of their role. This contradictory finding may be due to the

geographical context. For instance, both studies by Cole (2005) and Weiner (2003) were conducted in the United Kingdom where the SENCO role originates from (Collins, 2011) and are mandated to develop the IEP. The studies conducted by Fitzgerald and Radford's (2017) and Agaliotis and Kalyva (2011) were done in Ireland and Greece respectively. For instance, Agaliotis and Kalyva (2011) mentioned in their study that many Greek teachers are not familiar with the writing of the IEP which accounted for the least ranking. With regards to this study, it can be assumed that the IEP was not ranked high because of the workload of the SENCOs since they are attached to a number of schools in the district which may make it quite impossible for them to write IEPs for individual learners with SEN. In England, Frankl (2005) implemented a strategy to reduce the workload of SENCOs in developing IEPs by piloting the use of Group Educational Plans (GEP) for learners with SEN. His study reported reduced workload for the SENCOs who invested more time in supporting teachers and playing other roles. Mackenzie (2012) argued that the GEP should be maintained instead of the IEP but cautioned for research to be conducted to ascertain the efficacy of the use of the GEP.

However, quite contrary to the present requirement of schools to develop IEP for children with SEN, in England where the "SENCO role" originated from (Collins, 2011), the use of the IEPs have been removed and replaced with more functional means of planning, reviewing and tracking the progress of pupils with SEN since 2011(Great Britain. Department for Education, 2011.) According to the Green Paper Report (2011), this initiative was to lessen the burden on schools, especially SENCOs, in developing IEPs.

Deducing from this, a more non bureaucratic approach can be used to monitor the progress of the learners with SEN in IE in Ghana since SENCOs do not necessarily consider this role important because the nature of their work may not permit them to successfully develop and implement the IEP.

Apart from the similarities and differences seen in the international studies conducted, based on my literature search, only one study was found in Ghana in relation to this research question. Donbeinaa (2017) conducted a qualitative study on the roles of SENCOs in the Upper East Region with 10 participants. The study identified the roles of SENCOs as: *identifying children with SEN, organising sensitisation programmes to create awareness on disabilities issues, visiting schools, ensuring children with SEN are placed in both regular and special school and guiding teachers on how to handle children with SEN*. These findings support the current study. However, contrary to Donbeinaa (2017), other roles such as collaborating with parents, ensuring conducive school environment, making examination accommodations, updating the files of children with SEN were found in the present study. Also, their most important and least important roles in relation to the implementation of IE were reported in the current study which was not reported in Donbeina's (2017) study.

From the ongoing discussion on the duties and responsibilities of the SENCO, it can be seen from both the quantitative and the qualitative results that, SENCOs play several roles, they also have roles they deem important and also consider less important. It is also evident from the international literature reviewed that some roles are context based and specific to some geographical

locations. Additionally, the methodology employed in investigating the roles also have some likely effects on the outcome of the study. Moreover, additional roles have been added to the existing literature on roles of SENCOS. Besides, the roles identified are in relation to the implementation of IE which seems not reported in the existing literature on SENCOS in Ghana. It can be concluded from the findings that, most of the roles played by the SENCOS are in line with the implementation of IE since these roles are clearly synonymous with the policy goals and aspirations in implementing IE in Ghana.

How SENCOS' Perform their Roles in the Implementation of IE

The third research question was intended to explore some of the strategies SENCOS use in performing their roles. This research question was analysed qualitatively. From the results, the strategies used in the following areas; *identification of children with SEN; creating public awareness; working with parents, providing teacher support, supervising and monitoring IE and engaging in educational placement* were highlighted.

Identification of Children with SEN

The SENCOS use the following assessment strategies in identifying children with SEN: *observation, interviews and reviewing the work samples of children*. They indicated that, during their regular visits to the schools they use the opportunity to interact with the regular teachers who identify the pupils they suspect of having deficits in learning. The SENCOS now observe these children to confirm the suspicions of the regular teacher. Usually in the observation, it is used to ascertain the behaviour of the child in terms of the physical, attention span, social interaction, hyperactivity, impulsivity, aggressiveness and other

challenges associated with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBDs). The results suggested that they seldom use observation for identifying learning challenges.

Also, they use interviews for obtaining information from the parents of children with SEN about the child's background information and conditions before birth, during birth and after birth. They also interview the children with SEN to ascertain challenges in learning and communication. Further, the regular teachers are also interviewed for information concerning the child's academic level in the identification process. To add, the results showed that, the SENCOS use the work samples of the children in identifying writing problems, and mathematical challenges among others.

Based on these findings, informal assessment strategies are mostly used in identifying children with SEN in cognitive, social, behavioural, communication and the physical areas. According to Gyimah, Ntim and Deku (2018), the types of informal assessment include observation, interviews and work sample analysis. The informal assessment tools are used because they are: relatively cost effective and time efficient; flexible and can be designed to meet various educational needs; favourable to all categories of children since it involves non-test techniques and helpful in making decisions (Gyimah, Ntim & Deku 2018).

When it comes to the sensory challenges, the SENCOS use the Snellen chart and the otoscope to screen for visual and hearing impairment, respectively. More so, it can be seen from the results that the areas mostly assessed in the identification of children with SEN are the visual and the hearing aspect. This

means that much attention is placed on the sensory impaired than the other categories of special education needs. Senadza, Ayerakwa and Mills (2019), reported that, the most common type of SEN reported by basic school teachers are intellectual disability (43%) visual impairment (29%), speech and communication disorder (23%) and attention deficit (21%). They further revealed that for most types of SEN, the majority of the teachers indicated that only one pupil showed that trait. This could justify the SENCOS' interest in assessing the sensory impaired more than other areas.

In my view, the focus on the sensory impaired in identifying children with SEN contradicts with the IE policy (MoE, 2015) since the regulations in the policy give priority to all special education needs. Further, it can be said that other categories of SEN may not receive the necessary attention in the classroom because much attention is not paid to their identification. The focus on some specific areas may also depend on how the SENCOS are trained in the University. Based on the background information gathered in the qualitative study, the majority of the SENCOS specialised in hearing and vision. From the interview, they indicated that their undergraduate experience provides them the opportunity to select their areas of interest. Therefore, if more SENCOS are trained in a particular area than other areas, then it is likely that most of these SENCOS will concentrate in their specialised fields during the identification process. The findings are in line with Dobeinaa (2017), who reported that SENCOS make observations, visit schools, write reports and have discussions with parents in identifying children with SEN.

Creating Public Awareness

The results show that the SENCOs create public awareness through the use of Community information centres, Radio programmes, churches, mosques and PTA meetings. They revealed that they use the aforementioned platforms to encourage parents to send their children with SEN to school. They also educate them about the causes of disabilities and some issues in IE.

It can be seen from the qualitative results that, the major issues discussed during community awareness is encouraging parents to send their children with disabilities to school. The focus on this issue may be due to the cultural or ethnic beliefs that are associated with persons with disabilities (Okyerere & Adams, 2003; Avoke & Avoke, 2004; Gadagbui, 2010; Opoku- Boadi, 2015). Some communities hold negative perceptions about children with SEN in their communities and stigmatise them (Avoke & Avoke, 2004; Gadagbui, 2010; Opoku- Boadi, 2015), hence, some parents may be reluctant in sending their children with SEN to school. This assertion is buttressed by Vanderpuye (2013) who reported in her study that parents are unwilling to take their children with SEN to school because people ridiculed them and passed cruel judgement about them. Also, it can be said that the much attention on enrolment maybe due to IE policy (2015) requirement. The policy requires all children with SEN to be enrolled in school.

From the results, it can be concluded that five main mediums are used in creating public awareness. They are: through *community information centres, radio programmes, churches, mosques* and *PTA Meetings*. Siding with (Gyimah, Ntim & Deku, 2018), these are important channels because the home,

community, religion and mass media are conditions in the child's environment that can influence the development of the child and the quality of education provided to the child. According to Vanderpuye (2013), the mass media, thus, the use of radio programmes and television are good platforms for sensitising parents on the need to take their children to school as well as eradicating negative societal attitude towards children with SEN. Also, the issues focused on educating the public are important in the implementation of IE because it will help in safeguarding the rights of children with disabilities in accessing education as required in the IE policy. It will also help in educating the community on the need for attitudinal change to help reduce the stigma associated with children with SEN (Vanderpuye, 2013). These strategies used by SENCOS in creating public awareness are novel and were not found in relation to any of the literature I reviewed during the study.

Working with Parents

From the results, the SENCOS work with parents by maintaining a two-way communication channel between the school and the home. Turnbull, Turnbull and Wehmeyer (2010) mentioned that, communication is an important element in effective partnership. It can therefore be argued that, communication between the SENCOS and the parents can encourage active involvement of parents in IE. In maintaining communication with the parents the SENCOS provide information concerning the progress of the children to the parents and the parents also give information about their children to them. This therefore means that communication is one of the strategies used in working with parents.

The results also suggested that, in working with parents, they counsel them. Counselling is used as a strategy in educating parents on; what can put children at risk of having disabilities, transitional programmes for their children and educational placement issues. In addition, they use counselling to help parents who may have negative emotional reactions such as denial, sadness, anger among others because of their child's condition. It can therefore be deduced from this finding that, in working with the parents of children with SEN the major principles used are communication and counselling. Gäreskog and Lindqvist (2020) indicated in their study that SENCOs who work with parents of children with SEN counsel them.

Providing Teacher Support

From the findings, the strategies employed by the SENCOs include in-service training, coaching, preparing teaching activities and using a co-teaching approach. The SENCOs collaborate with the school to organise in-service training for the teachers on what is expected of them in the implementation of IE. Based on the IE policy (MoE, 2015) regular education teachers need to be given continual professional development through in-service training to help them to implement IE. The SENCOs also visit the school and coach teachers on appropriate pedagogies to use in the classroom. Further, the SENCOs support the teachers through preparation of lesson activities for specific children in the class.

In addition, the results show that several approaches are used in the co-teaching strategy, for instance, some of the responses from the SENCOs showed that the regular teachers are basically responsible for teaching whereas they

move around the classroom to give assistance to specific learners who need assistance. It can also be seen from their responses that, sometimes they teach specific learners who need remediation whereas the regular teacher teaches the whole group. These approaches are known as *supportive* and *alternative* teaching (Friend & Bursuck, 2009). Holliday (2011) asserted that co-teaching is an important strategy in the implementation of IE. He further mentioned that co-teaching is beneficial for both students with and without disabilities in the IE environment. Hence, the use of these co-teaching strategies will support teachers to effectively implement IE in the classroom. Considering the strategies used by the SENCOS in supporting the teachers, it can be argued that, the SENCOS collaborate with the regular education teachers. Eccleston (2010) defines collaboration as a situation where “two or more people create an outcome for a student that no one of them could have created alone” (p. 40). Based on the qualitative findings, the SENCOS need the regular education teachers’ support and the regular education teachers also need the SENCOS support to implement IE. This assertion buttresses Eccleston’s (2010) description of collaboration. Hence, the collaboration between the SENCOS and the teachers can improve IE in Ghana since several studies show that, collaboration between regular education teachers and special education teachers leads to an effective implementation of IE (Khairuddin, Dally, & Foggett, 2016; Al-Natour, Amr, Al-Zboon, & Alkhamra, 2015; Holliday, 2011; Naraian, 2010; Friend & Cook, 2006). Apart from that, the findings suggested that, for the SENCOS to be more helpful to the regular teachers they will need the support of resource teachers.

Supervising and Monitoring IE

The qualitative result shows that the SENCOs perform this role by visiting the schools to observe how the school is implementing IE. The findings suggest that they interact with the teachers to find out instructional strategies used in teaching. They also check if teachers are using appropriate behaviour management techniques. In addition, they also move around the school to check the physical facilities suitability for the learners, especially those with physical challenges. From the findings, they also check for safety in the school. In addition, they check for the availability of appropriate teaching and learning resources, for instance, the availability of assistive technology.

Per the strategies used in performing this role, it can be said that, the SENCOs supervise the school's implementation of IE focusing on the environmental accessibility, safety in the school and provision of quality learning. Deducing from how the SENCOs perform this role it can be said that, it conforms to the principles stated in the Standard and Guidelines for the Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana (MoE, 2015).

Engaging in Educational Placement

From the qualitative result, SENCOs refer children they suspect of having SEN for further assessment. They discuss assessment results with the head teacher and the teacher. Also, they discuss the assessment result with the parents and seek their consent about the educational decision before facilitating the educational placement.

In summary, the findings of the study suggest that, the SENCOs use the following ways in facilitating educational placement: referring for further

assessment, holding discussions with the head teacher, consulting the regular education teacher, communicating with the parents and seeking their consent. It can be concluded from the results that they ensure appropriate communication between the home and the school before facilitating the educational placement.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that, “the how” or the approaches the SENCOs use in performing their roles in IE are directly linked to the specifications of the Standard and Guidelines in practicing IE in Ghana, (2015). Hence, the SENCOs have the skills and the abilities to execute their duties and responsibilities in line with the policy’s expectations.

Confidence Level of SENCO in Performing their Roles in the Implementation of IE

The fourth research question intended to explore the confidence level of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. This research question was important to this study because, Winwood (2012) conducted a study on the roles of SENCOs and suggested that a study should be conducted to ascertain the level of confidence of SENCOs in playing their roles. Therefore, considering the aim of the study, it was important to determine in addition to their duties and responsibilities, their level of confidence in playing their roles. In analysing this research question, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. The quantitative data provided evidence on their level of confidence. It also gave additional information on their levels of confidence based on specific roles. In the qualitative data, the results provided evidence on their confidence level and in addition, gave details about what made them confident in playing their roles.

The quantitative results suggested that the SENCOs have moderate confidence in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE. However, the qualitative results showed that the SENCOs have high confidence in the implementation of their roles. The disparity in the quantitative result and the qualitative result in terms of their confidence level can be attributed to the

data collection instruments and the mode of analysing the quantitative data. The questionnaire used in the data collection listed the several roles that the SENCOs played. The SENCOs selected each of the items based on how confident they felt in playing that particular role. Therefore, they were able to assess their confidence in relation to specific roles rather than their overall role as a SENCO. The results showed they have high confidence in playing some of the roles and moderate confidence in other roles. This could have accounted for the “moderate” level of confidence reported in the quantitative study because the majority of the items had moderate mean score, with only four items having a high mean score as shown in *Table 4*. Based on my analysis, these four items had a high mean score because they are part of their prioritised roles. On the other hand, the qualitative study did not take into account their level of confidence in relation to their specific roles but their overall roles, hence the SENCOs judged their confidence level based on their overall roles in the implementation of IE.

Another difference in the result in relation to this research question is that, the qualitative findings revealed what contributes to their level of confidence but the quantitative study did not reveal that aspect. Based on the qualitative evidence, the SENCOs reported that they have a high level of

confidence because they are passionate about their job. Others indicated that their high level of confidence is driven by their expertise and commitment towards their job. Based on the qualitative results, the majority of the SENCOs attribute their high level of confidence to the passion they have in their role. The disparities in both findings justify the need for using the mixed method approach, in order to use one's weakness to offset the other (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), because with regards to this study, the qualitative data has given an additional dimension to their level of confidence in terms of what drives their confidence. On the other hand, the quantitative study provided a comprehensive report on their levels of confidence.

Apart from the methodological issues regarding the differences in the findings, it can be seen in both results that the SENCOs are confident in playing their roles in the implementation of IE. The findings of this study are in congruence with Kearney, Mentis, and Holley-Boen (2017), who conducted a study in New Zealand with 65 SENCOs. The study investigated the daily working activities of SENCOs, their confidence and preparedness in the implementation of IE. The findings of the study revealed that participants were confident in playing their roles in the implementation of IE. It also confirms the findings of Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) who reported that the SENCOs who participated in their study were confident in playing their roles.

Further, from the quantitative result, the highest mean recorded was in relation to *“ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification”* among the items under this role was *“identifying children with SEN”* which also had the highest mean score under that cluster and the highest

mean score among all the items under the confidence level. This finding is similar to the finding of Curran (2020) who reported that SENCOs had a high level of confidence in their ability to identify children with SEN. This role is very important to the SENCO role (Curran, 2020) because before any child can be referred for any special education services the child will need to be assessed (Gyimah, Ntim & Deku, 2018). The first and most important step in the assessment process is screening (Heward, Alber-Morgan, & Konrad, 2017). Hence, if the SENCOs are confident in screening children for the identification of SEN it will help in the effective implementation of IE since the IE policy (2015) mandates all schools to undertake periodic screening of all learners.

Again, their high level of confidence is important to effectively support teachers in the regular classroom. The SENCOs are the frontiers in providing support to the regular education teachers (Curran, Moloney, Heavey & Boddison, 2018) and the experts (Kearns, 2005) in the implementation of IE, it is therefore expedient for them to be confident in screening for identification of children with SEN, this will help the schools to carry out periodic screening.

Notwithstanding, the qualitative result showed that passion drives the confidence of the SENCO. In a similar study, Mackenzie (2012) said that SENCOs in his study felt that passion is critical to the SENCO job. In addition to Mackenzie's (2012) findings, some pieces of evidence (Dwyfor-Davies, Garner & Lee, 1999; Jones, 2004; Winwood, 2013) show that passion influences SENCOs in the performance of their roles. The qualitative evidence gathered from the study shows that, the SENCOs are passionate about their job and their passion influences their confidence in the performance of their roles.

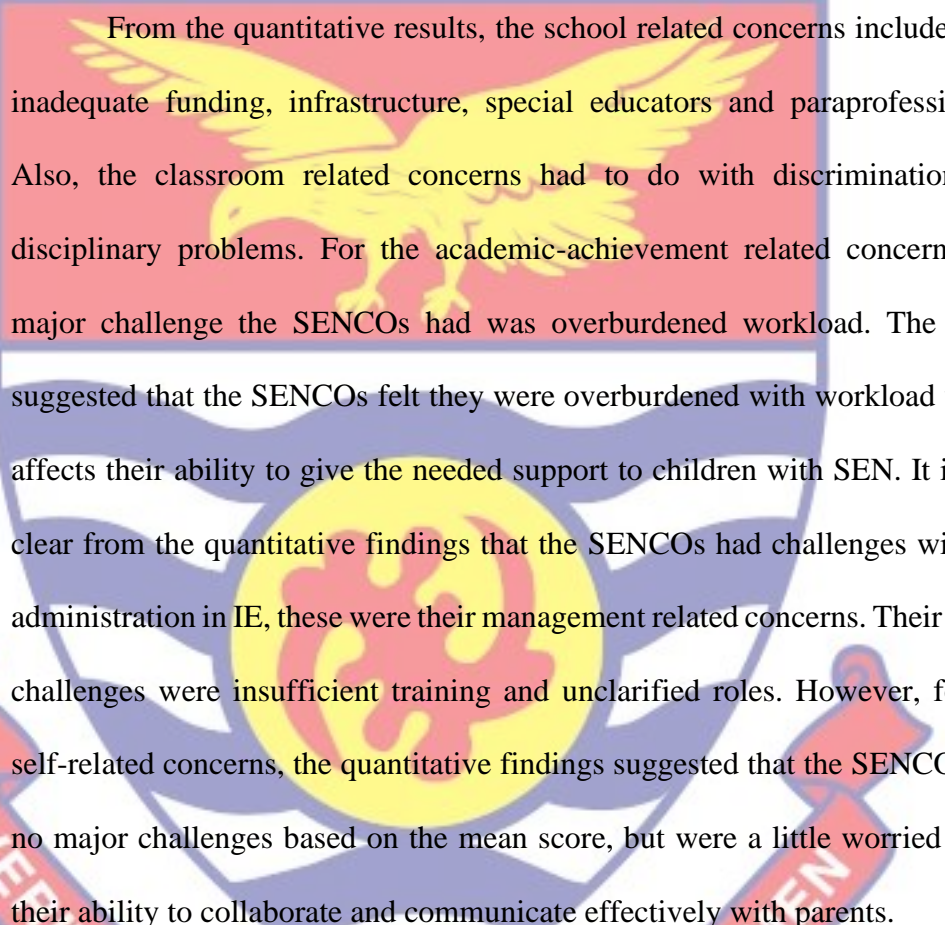
The findings of this study are novel because, even though previous studies reported the confidence levels of the SENCOS, the studies did not report their confidence level based on their specific roles. Moreover, the studies did not point out which of the roles they felt more confident in playing. The study also revealed the role they were most confident in playing. Again, another novelty reported in this study is the influence of passion on their level of confidence which was not reported in these studies (Dwyfor-Davies, Garner & Lee, 1999; Jones, 2004; Winwood, 2013; Fitzgerald & Radford 2017; Kearney, Mentis, & Holley-Boen 2017; Curran, 2020). Based on the qualitative findings, it can be concluded that their confidence is driven by passion.

Concerns of SENCOS in the Implementation of IE

The fifth research question was intended to examine the concerns SENCOS have in the implementation of IE. Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) postulated that, there are no jobs without impediments. Therefore, considering the focus of the study, it was important to explore the concerns SENCOS have in relation to their job and also assess the general concerns they may have in the implementation of IE. This research question was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

From the quantitative findings, the SENCOS' concerns were clustered into: the school (school related concerns), the classroom (classroom related concerns), academic progress (academic-achievement related concerns) expertise or proficiency (self-related concerns) and administration (management related concerns). From the quantitative findings, the SENCOS had moderate level of concerns about the implementation of IE. The major

concerns of the SENCOS in the implementation of IE are inadequate funding, special educators, paraprofessionals and an inaccessible physical environment. They were also concerned about discrimination in the classroom, the overburdened workload, insufficient training, difficulty in communicating with parents and unclarified roles and responsibilities.



From the quantitative results, the school related concerns included: the inadequate funding, infrastructure, special educators and paraprofessionals. Also, the classroom related concerns had to do with discrimination and disciplinary problems. For the academic-achievement related concerns, the major challenge the SENCOS had was overburdened workload. The result suggested that the SENCOS felt they were overburdened with workload which affects their ability to give the needed support to children with SEN. It is also clear from the quantitative findings that the SENCOS had challenges with the administration in IE, these were their management related concerns. Their major challenges were insufficient training and unclarified roles. However, for the self-related concerns, the quantitative findings suggested that the SENCOS had no major challenges based on the mean score, but were a little worried about their ability to collaborate and communicate effectively with parents.

The qualitative findings corroborated with the quantitative study. However, two additional concerns were identified as ‘parental’ and ‘professional’ related in the qualitative study. From the qualitative findings, the classroom related concerns were negative attitudes of teachers, poor competence of teachers and large class size. Comparing issues raised with regards to classroom related concerns in both findings, even though, the

concerns raised are quite different in both findings, the results suggest issues of discrimination and discipline. For example, the negative attitude of teachers can lead to discrimination of children with SEN in the classroom (Gal, Schreur, & Engel-Yeger, 2010). In the same vein, poor competence of teachers can lead to marginalisation and also create disciplinary problems in IE (Abba & Rashid, 2020). The teachers' competency involves; the use of appropriate teaching strategies; classroom management skills; collaboration; assessment and evaluation; adapting the curriculum and behaviour management (Das, Kuyini, & Desai, 2013; Rabi & Zulkefli, 2018). Therefore, if the teachers are not competent, then they may not be able to maintain discipline in their classroom and use appropriate pedagogies that will suit all learners in their classroom. To add, class size affects the competence of teachers and their ability to ensure discipline in the classroom (Owobi, Jurmang, & Onuadiebere, 2014).

Further, the school related concerns that were reported in the quantitative findings were also reported in the qualitative findings. The qualitative results showed that the SENCOs were worried about poor infrastructure, lack of funding and lack of resource teachers. More so, for academic achievement related concerns, the qualitative findings showed that the SENCOs' were overburdened with workload which they felt was affecting the academic progress of the children with SEN. From both studies, it can be concluded that, the SENCOs reported similar concerns with regards to the classroom, school and academic achievement.

However, there are some differences in both studies with regards to their self-related concerns. The qualitative findings revealed that, the SENCOs felt

isolated and stigmatised because of their profession as a SENCO which was not reported in the quantitative study because the questionnaire did not include that item. Also, the quantitative findings showed that the SENCOs were a little concerned about their ability to effectively communicate with parents, they did not report this concern in the qualitative study. This could mean that they did not see it as a major source of worry in playing their roles in IE. This could be a reason for the low mean score related to their self-related concern.

In the same vein, additional information was gathered in the qualitative study with regards to the management related concerns which was not reported in the quantitative study. For instance, apart from insufficient training and unclarified roles, concerns such as inadequate funding for transportation and to train teachers were raised in the qualitative study. In addition, lack of recognition, lack of motivation, inadequate assessment tools, inadequate assessment centres, inadequate office space and equipment and negative attitude and poor perception of educational leaders were reported in the qualitative study. Besides, the qualitative study showed that the SENCOs had concerns with regards to parents (parental related concerns) and professionals (professional related concerns) but these were not clearly indicated in the quantitative study. Apart from these similarities and differences in the findings of both data sets, it can be concluded from the current study that, concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE are school, classroom, academic achievement, self, management, parental and professionals related concerns.

Based on the findings of both data sets, the classroom related concerns are issues in the classroom that bring rejection or unequal learning opportunities

and indiscipline in the classroom. The SENCOs reported that it is difficult to provide equal opportunities for all children in the classroom. They were also concerned that some teachers held a negative attitude towards children with SEN. Also, they were concerned that some teachers were not competent enough to handle the inclusive classroom. The SENCOs also revealed that most of the schools had class sizes that were too large for the inclusive setting. Numerous researchers point out that the negative attitude of teachers can hinder the successful implementation of IE (Chitiyo, Kumedzro, & Ahmed, 2019; Saloviita 2019; Greene 2017). Kuyuni, Desai and Sharma (2018) found that teachers held a negative attitude towards the implementation of IE in Ghana. Deku and Vanderpuye's (2017) conducted a study in Ghana and found out that the majority of the teachers are not competent to teach in inclusive schools. In another study conducted by Nketsia (2016), large class size was found as one of the challenges affecting the implementation of IE. He further postulated that large class size affects the teacher's ability to teach well and to implement appropriate disciplinary measures. Most challenges related to teachers in the implementation of IE in Ghana were reported from the perspectives of pre-service teachers or the teachers (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017; Kuyuni, Desai, & Sharma, 2018; Nketsia, 2016; Gyimah & Amoako, 2016). Hence, this finding from SENCOs perception is novel. Besides, most of the studies conducted internationally with SENCOs focused on their challenges in relation to the SENCO role but not the general implementation of IE.

To add, the school related concerns in the implementation of IE are challenges that affect the implementation of IE at the school level. Both studies

suggested that poor infrastructure, inadequate funding, inadequate resource teachers are the challenges affecting the implementation of IE. The SENCOs indicated that architectural barriers affected the implementation of IE. The qualitative data provided sufficient evidence that some school buildings are not disability friendly, also, some schools have not provided ramps and walkways for the physically challenged. Ackah-Jnr and Danso (2019) revealed in their study that, the physical environment of most inclusive schools in Ghana is inaccessible for children with disabilities. Senadza, Ayerakwa, and Mills, (2019) revealed that one of the challenges facing schools in the implementation of IE is funding. Sarpong and Kusi (2019) found out that funding affects the progress of the school in terms of organising training for teachers, procuring appropriate teaching and learning materials, expediting assessment, providing appropriate infrastructure among others. In another study conducted by Afful-Broni and Ankutse (2009), they reported that the Ghana Education Service (GES) is faced with financial challenges and is not able to support schools to implement IE effectively. Besides, Senadza, Ayerakwa and Mills (2019), reported that inadequate special education teachers to support schools is affecting the successful implementation of IE. It argued that, these challenges at the school level could hinder the implementation of IE. Ainscow's (2005) principle on "scrutinising barriers to participation" draws attention to the effective implementation of IE. Ainscow's (2005) argument draws attention to actions that should be taken at the school level to move IE forward. He recognises the school as central to the implementation of IE and a focal point for the effective implementation of IE. He maintained that, schools should be

given the necessary support that will ensure the inclusion of children with SEN. Ainscow and Miles (2009) clearly stated in their model that, financial support should be provided (see p.42) in IE to support the learning needs of children with SEN. In line with the assertions made by Ainscow (2005) and Ainscow and Miles (2009), if the schools are faced with the aforementioned challenges, it can reduce the capacity of the school in ensuring equal participation of children with SEN and encourage the exclusion of children with SEN there contradicting the principles of SDG4.

Again, the academic achievement related concerns of the SENCOs were related to overburdened workload. From the findings of the qualitative data, the SENCOs were worried that there were inadequate resource teachers to support them in the schools. This challenge can affect the support that children with SEN require to enhance their academic progress (Senadza, Ayerakwa, & Mills 2019). For example, because the schools allocated to the SENCOs are too many for one person as reported in the qualitative study, the SENCOs may not be able to give adequate attention to children with SEN, because they may be overwhelmed with the number of children in a particular school. Consequently, it is likely that the academic progress of children with SEN will be affected. According to Sanagi (2009), the workload of SENCOs does not make them effective in remedial teaching and this affects the academic progress of children with SEN in the inclusive environment. For IE to be successful there should be quality support for children with SEN (Ainscow & Miles, 2009). This therefore calls for the availability of SENCOs who have the expertise to provide quality

educational support for children with SEN to progress well in the academic environment.

Apart from supporting the children, SENCOs support the teachers as well (Curran, Moloney, Heavey & Boddison, 2018) and they play some additional task such as engaging in administrative task (updating files, providing data and keeping records, writing of reports among others (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020), hence they may not have enough time for teaching children with SEN (Sanagi, 2009). Curran, Moloney, Heavey and Boddison (2018) conducted a study on the challenges SENCO face in playing their roles. They reported that the SENCOs felt their roles were not manageable for one person. In addition, their study reported that their workload prevented them from playing their roles effectively. This finding is in line with previous evidences (Smith & Broomhead, 2019; Curran, Moloney, Heavey, & Boddison, 2018) that SENCOs are overburden with workload and hence do not have enough time to ensure that children with SEN have the needed support. It can be deduced that the workload of the SENCOs affect the academic achievement of children with SEN and their overall role effectiveness.

To add, the qualitative findings suggested that, the SENCOs feel isolated and stigmatised in their field of expertise. This is a self-related concern that has a direct effect on their job or role as SENCO. The SENCOs feel lonely among their other colleagues because they feel their role is not given the attention needed as compared to other fields. Based on the findings, this feeling of isolation has led to some of the SENCOs wanting to abandon being SENCOs and take other roles like counsellors, Circuit Supervisors or class teachers

because they feel people in these roles are more accepted. It can be seen from the qualitative results that the SENCOs felt unhappy and frustrated because they feel some of their colleagues from other fields and in other positions are given support in diverse ways to make their work easier as compared to theirs. SENCOs in this study reported that some of their colleagues tag them with some names to suggest that their field of expertise is not significant. Curran and Boddison (2021), reported in their study that the frustration with the SENCO role is obvious. They revealed that, paramount to this frustration is the feeling of isolation. SENCOs who participated in their study felt isolated from their colleagues at the workplace. In the same vein, SENCOs in Winwood's (2013) study said they do not have that sense of belongingness in the school team. Several pieces of evidence have reported similar findings (Crisp & Robertson, 2006; Mackenzie, 2012; Curran, Moloney, Heavey, & Boddison, 2018; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020).

Another concern raised by the SENCOs is related to the administration responsible for the implementation of IE, thus, the management related concern. From both studies the concerns are: inadequate funding, lack of recognition, unclarified roles, insufficient training, lack of motivation, inadequate assessment tools, inadequate assessment centres, inadequate office space and equipment and negative attitude and poor perception of educational leaders.

Funding is one of the major concerns of the SENCOs. The results indicated that, there are inadequate funds for the SENCOs to organise in-service training for teachers. It is argued that, with the implementation of IE, teacher's traditional roles in the classroom have changed because they are expected to

show some level of competency to meet IE demands (Chireshe, 2013). Similarly, considering the Inclusive Policy (2015), teachers are expected to be trained to have additional skills and knowledge to help them implement IE successfully. The teacher's role is central to the implementation of IE (Dias, 2015) and their competence is linked to their professional development (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2016), hence, if they are not receiving continuous professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills to be able to effectively manage the inclusive classroom, then it is likely that, they may not be effective in the inclusive classroom which can lead to the denial of children with SEN in the implementation of IE. For example, if teachers are well equipped with the needed skills they will be able to adapt the curriculum, but where they lack the expertise to adapt the curriculum, it will create a barrier for learners with diverse needs in the IE setting (Jung & Pandey 2018). Ainscow and Miles' (2009) maintained that, teachers should have the opportunity to take part in continuing professional development (see p. 43) to strengthen their skills in the effective implementation of IE.

Ainscow and Miles (2009) postulated that, there should be measures for monitoring the implementation of IE. From the result, funding affects the SENCOs ability to do effective monitoring and supervision of IE. Monitoring and supervising of IE is essential to the SENCOs' role (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Lindqvist, 2012; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Winwood, 2013). However, the SENCOs reported that they have challenges with transportation because they are not adequately supported with funds to help them move from school to school to monitor and supervise IE. They indicated that this challenge puts a

huge financial burden on the SENCO role, since in many cases, they have to use their own money as transportation to do monitoring and supervision. Due to this financial challenge, they are not able to monitor and supervise IE in schools as required of them. Additionally, they reported that, some schools are located in remote areas, hence, it requires a means of transportation such as a government

owned vehicle or motorcycle which can wait for them in the schools to facilitate easy movement and expedite their monitoring so they can monitor a lot of schools in the academic year to oversee the implementation of IE. This finding corresponds with the finding from the study conducted by Donbeinaa (2017) on the roles of SENCOs in the Upper East Region of Ghana. He found that funding and lack of transportation are challenges facing SENCOs in the implementation of IE. This finding suggests that, because of inadequate funds, the SENCOs are unable to organise continuous professional development training for teachers and are also unable to engage in frequent monitoring of schools. The finding also suggests that some schools in remote areas may not receive any monitoring or supervision due to inadequate funds. This means that, it is likely some schools in Ghana are not practicing IE as expected of them because the experts who are responsible for managing the implementation are not there to give them the needed support. Curran, Moloney, Heavey, and Boddison (2018), reported that chronic lack of funding is one of the major issues affecting the roles of SENCOs. They mentioned that the lack of funds to support the work of SENCOs prevent them from working effectively. Their study concluded that, if SENCOs are not properly funded to have all the resources they need to support schools, then, children with SEN will not reach their maximum potential.

Lack of recognition is another concern that was attributed to management. The SENCOs pointed out that their roles are not formally recognised by management. From the result, most directors in the Ghana Education Service [GES] do not recognise the SENCO role and undermine the importance of the role. From the qualitative results, some schools have changed the roles of some SENCOs to regular class teachers. This means that the value of the SENCO role in IE has not been fully recognised in the educational sector. The Inclusive Education Policy (2015) and the Standard and Guidelines for the Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana (2015) call for all schools to have SENCOs. Therefore, if the SENCOs are not recognised and are being converted to regular teachers as reported in the results, then this defeats the purpose of the IE policy expectation and the standards stipulated for practice. In my view, this challenge can cripple the implementation of IE and lead to attrition of SENCOs. Meanwhile it is reported that, there are inadequate SENCOs to support the implementation of IE (Senadza, Ayerakwa, & Mills, 2019). Similarly, the findings of this study show that there are inadequate SENCOs to support IE. Therefore, considering the inadequacy of SENCOs in IE and their being assigned to different roles, it suggests that their importance in IE is not fully recognised. Fitzgerald and Radford (2020), stated in their study that, the SENCOs lack of recognition is as a result of the non-existence of formal internal and external support. They indicated that no formal support exists for the SENCOs unlike other professionals like guidance counsellors who have that support. Their findings commensurate with the current findings. Deducing from the current findings, the SENCOs lack formal recognition, in spite of the IE

policy and the principles guiding the implementation of IE in Ghana. This can weaken the SENCO role and affect the successful implementation of IE.

To add, unclarified roles are another concern of the SENCOs in the implementation of IE. From results of both data sets, the duties and responsibilities of the SENCOs have not been clearly spelt out. From the qualitative results, the appointment letters given to some of the SENCOs did not clearly spell out their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of IE. Others indicated that, since that was not their first appointment, they did not receive appointment letters that indicated their expected roles. Giangreco (1997) advocated that, professionals, educators and parents should have a clear definition about their roles in the implementation of IE. In this vein, Pearson and Mitchell (2013) conducted a study in England on how SENCOs are recruited and inducted, they found that some of the SENCOs inherited the role and others volunteered to take the position. They also reported that, SENCOs use several means such as observing previous SENCOs, getting support from leading SENCOs, depending on journals and books, attending forums among others to help them become abreast with their roles. This is similar to the current findings where some of the SENCOs held other positions before their current positions. Similarly, SENCOs in this study reported several means they use in order to be well-informed about their roles in IE. They mentioned that they depend on their colleagues, the policy and the knowledge and skills gained from the University in playing their roles. Even though, these means of being abreast with their roles can help them play their roles (Pearson & Mitchell, 2013), in some countries such as England, there are policies that spell the roles of

SENCOs (Cole, 2005; Winwood, 2013; Curran, 2020), but, in Ghana there is no legal document that spells the roles of the SENCOs. For instance, Ghana Education Service (GES) has provided a handbook for the head teachers (GES, 2010a) and the School Management Committee [SMC] (GES, 2010b) to guide their activities, but the reports from the SENCOs show they do not have any handbook that has been designed to specifically guide them in performing their duties in IE. This means that, the SENCOs do not have any basic document that can be used as a guide for their roles in IE. When people work in organisations and they are not given clear role expectations, it affects their role performance (Kumar & Kuar, 2013). It is for this reason that, Giangreco (1997) emphasized that role expectation should be made explicit in the implementation of IE in order for stakeholders to be effective for the IE system to function well. Hence, if the SENCOs are not clear about their expected roles in IE, it can affect their role performance in the implementation of IE. Cole (2005) called for a national policy to make the SENCO position in England a statutory requirement. Similarly, Pearson, Mitchell, and Rapti (2014), cautioned that there should be clarity about the roles of the SENCOs for children with SEN and their families to receive a better deal.

More so, the SENCOs pointed out that they are not given sufficient training about their roles in the implementation of IE or on issues in the implementation of IE. Only four out of the SENCOs mentioned that they had received some training because they were sponsored by some international organisations, yet, they felt the training received were inadequate and most of the training was also not directly linked to the implementation of IE. From both

results, this seems to be a major concern for the SENCOs. They felt that management has not channelled much effort in training them on issues in the implementation of IE. From the qualitative results, the SENCOs mentioned that most training on IE implementation were held at the top management level to their disadvantage because they are rather on the field. This is a unique finding to the challenges of SENCOs in Ghana since Donbeinaa's (2017) study did not report this concern in his study. However, in a similar study conducted outside Ghana, Rosen-Webb (2011) reported that inadequate training is a barrier to the SENCO role. Lending support to Rosen-Webb (2011), inadequate training of SENCOs about their roles in the implementation of IE and general issues in the implementation of IE can affect their role effectiveness since they may not be fully abreast with current practices in the implementation of IE. Rosen-Webb (2011), opined that, it is important to train SENCOs' to enhance their ability to develop and support good practice at school. She also noted that, when SENCOs receive training in specialist teaching and management skills it improves their ability to properly monitor the progress of children with SEN.

The qualitative findings showed that the SENCOs are concerned about management not providing any additional incentive for their roles. The result showed that the SENCOs are concerned about the lack of motivation in performing their roles. Numerous studies about the SENCO role show that, the role is onerous (Cole, 2005; Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Lindqvist, 2013; Winwood, 2013; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gareskog & Lindqvist, 2020) hence, if they are not given any allowance to motivate them it may affect their roles in diverse ways. Generally, motivation is considered as

an important element in the working environment (Varma, 2018). According to Varma (2018), motivation is an essential incentive which directs human behaviour. She indicated that motivation can lead to a high level of effectiveness and efficiency, increased commitment towards work, performance oriented environment and employee retention and attraction. Similarly, in the education sector, motivation is central in increasing teaching quality and in eluding Burnout phenomenon (Claudia, 2015; Kotherja, 2013). Therefore, if the SENCOs are not motivated, it can lead to low performance, low morale, low contribution and attrition (Kotherja, 2013; Varma, 2018). This can affect the implementation of IE, especially the academic progress of children with SEN.

Another concern raised in the study is inadequate assessment tools and assessment centres. Assessment is the bedrock in special education because special education services start and end with assessment (Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Witmer, 2012). This means that the contribution of assessment to special education services should not be underrated but given the necessary attention. Even though Ghana does not have a policy on assessment, the importance of assessment can be seen in the IE policy (MoE, 2015) and the Standards and Guidelines for practicing IE in Ghana (MoE, 2015). These documents highlight the importance of assessing children in the IE environment. The IE policy (MoE, 2015) and the Standards and Guidelines for practicing IE (MoE, 2015) stress inclusive schools to ensure periodic screening of children for early identification. Besides, one of the strategies to achieve the policy's objective "1" is to build assessment centres in all regions and districts. From the results, the SENCOs do not have adequate assessment tools to screen children in

inclusive schools. Additionally, they reported that there are few assessment centres which are very far from the schools and most of the assessment centres do not have adequate assessment equipment. Gyimah, Ntim, and Deku (2018) opined that inadequate assessment tools and assessment centres are some of the challenges to assessment in Ghana. They argued that this challenge can hinder the assessment of children with SEN, and may affect educational placement and educational support services for children with SEN. Gyimah, Sugden, and Pearson (2009), believe that in response to the UNESCO 1994 Salamanca Statement on inclusion, countries have been burdened with the issue of placement which is a necessary condition in education of children with SEN. It can therefore be argued that assessment and inclusion are inseparable. Lending support to Gyimah, Ntim, and Deku (2018), if children with SEN are not well assessed, it may defeat the purpose of the IE policy provisions and the implementation of IE. Ametepee and Anastasiou (2015) conducted a study on the challenges of IE in Ghana, they reported that there are only four 'poor' resourced assessment centres in Ghana which is a barrier to the successful implementation of IE.

Another concern raised by the SENCOs is inadequate office space and equipment. The findings of the qualitative study suggested that they lack office equipment such as computers, laptops, printers, office cabinets, files and other office equipment. Also, the result showed that they do not have comfortable office space to engage in parental interaction because most of them shared offices with others who are not directly in their field. This can breach the professional ethics of the SENCO in conducting assessment in terms of ensuring

privacy and confidentiality (Overton, 2012). Additionally, the SENCO role involves some administrative task (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017; Gareskog & Lindqvist, 2020; Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Rosen-Webb, 2011; Winwood, 2013) hence, if they lack the equipment needed to perform these administrative task such as keeping data, writing reports, keeping assessment records among others then they may not be effective in playing their roles in IE. Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) postulated that a person's working environment affects how s/he performs his/her duties and responsibilities. They found that factors in the physical environment that can affect a person's role performance in the working environment are air (pollution, freshness), temperature (heat, cold), sound (noise), light and colour and space. They revealed that, if the individual's office space is too crowded and restricted, it can lead to stress, pressure and other psychological effects. They further revealed that it can decrease the quality of the individual's job performance. According to Sehgal (2012), inadequate office equipment can lead to less efficiency and productivity in workers. It can therefore be argued that this challenge can limit the efficiency of the SENCOS in performing their roles in IE. This finding is new to the concerns of SENCOS in performing their roles. This could be due to the geographical setting since most of the studies conducted are in the advanced countries and there maybe well-resourced in terms of office space and equipment.

The results showed that SENCOS were concerned about the negative attitude and poor perception of educational leaders towards the implementation of IE. The qualitative evidence gathered in the study pointed out that, most

directors in the education sector who are responsible for the implementation of IE are unconcerned about the challenges in IE and have a poor perception about the importance of the implementation of IE. The SENCOs felt that most of the heads are not committed to IE issues, have poor perception about IE and hold a negative attitude towards the SENCO role and the field of special education.

From the result, this negative attitude and poor perception of educational leaders about IE has led to some of the directors converting special educators to regular class teachers. This situation is detrimental to the effective implementation of IE and Ainscow and Miles (2009) have emphatically stated that, leaders at all levels of education should be supportive of IE implementation if we want IE to be effective as a system. Therefore, as recognised earlier by Ainsow and Miles (2009), the negative attitude of educational leaders can hinder the effective implementation of IE. Also, considering the fact that there are few SENCOs (Senadza, Ayerakwa, & Mills, 2019) to support the regular education teachers. According to Kuyuni, Desai, and Sharma (2018) one of the major challenges confronting the implementation of IE in Ghana is that, there inadequate special educators to support the regular education teachers, so if these SENCOs are confined to one classroom, it can reduce the coverage of their professional impact on children with SEN, because they may not be able to support many children with SEN. Meanwhile, if they are attached to schools, they can support the teachers in the school which will benefit a lot of children with SEN considering the increasing rate of children with SEN in regular schools (Mantey, 2014; Senadza, Ayerakwa, & Mills, 2019). In my view, this problem can lead to the neglect of children with SEN in the regular basic schools. Besides, the

field of expertise of the SENCOS does not demand them to be regular class teachers but rather support regular teachers in the IE classroom (Curran, Moloney, Heavey, & Boddison, 2018). According to Okyere and Adams (2003), one of the bedrocks in IE is visionary leadership. Therefore, if the leaders who are in charge are not committed, hold a negative attitude and have a poor perception about the implementation of IE, it can lead to poor implementation of IE. This finding is in line with Donbeinaa (2017) who found out that, negative attitude towards the SENCO role, inadequate support from management and lack of commitment on the part of educational leaders affect the roles of SENCOS in Ghana.

Apart from the concerns mentioned, parental related concern is another challenge affecting the implementation IE. The result of the study showed that most parents hold a negative attitude towards the education of their children with SEN and are unwilling to actively involve themselves in their education. Additionally, the qualitative evidence obtained showed that, most of the parents have low-income status, hence, they are not able to support the education of their children with SEN, especially, when it comes to facilitating assessment and placement. The qualitative results also showed that, some of the parents are inadequately prepared about issues concerning special and IE, they therefore struggle to play an active role in the education of their children with SEN. Besides, the results also showed that, stigma from others in the community affects the parents of children with SEN and hinders them from being supportive towards their children with SEN. The SENCOS indicated that these challenges hinder the collaboration that should exist between the SENCOS and the parents.

Meanwhile, one of the hallmark of the SENCO role is being able to collaborate effectively with parents (Cole, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2020; Gäreskog & Lindqvist, 2020) on issues concerning their children's academic progress, assessment, educational placement among others (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011; Winwood, 2013). To add, several studies point out the relevance of parents in the participation of the implementation of IE (Amponteng et al., 2019; Bariroh, 2018; Sharma, Forlin, Marella, & Jitoko, 2017; Vanderpuye, 2013). Parents are expected to play several roles in the implementation of IE, these include; collaborating with the school; being actively involved in their child's learning; attending meetings, training programmes and conferences; actively engaging in the assessment and development of the child's IEP; maintaining continuous communication with specialist; frequent contact with class teachers and resource teachers to be updated on their child's progress in the classroom (Monika, 2017). The IE policy (MoE, 2015) recognises the critical role of parents in the implementation of IE in Ghana. Based on the policy, parents are expected to supply vital information about their child prior to referral for appropriate intervention; participate in school-related decisions; fulfil home-school obligations or expectations in order to meet the needs of their child; engage in advocacy for the rights of all children. This means that parents need to be actively involved in the education of their children with SEN to help the SENCOs in the assessment process and decisions on educational placement in the implementation of IE. According to Gyimah, Ntim, and Deku (2018), challenges to assessment of children with SEN in Ghana include poor parental involvement. They mentioned problems such as illiteracy, lack of knowledge or

ignorance of their rights, poor attitudes toward disability, stereotyping and misconceptions, poverty among others. Also, according to Hornby and Blackwell (2018), parents are not involved in the education of their children due to financial challenges, stigmatisations, and illiteracy among others. In Ghana, Vanderpuye (2013) conducted a study on parental perception, expectation and involvement in IE. She found that factors such as financial constraint, lack of communication and lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN hinder the success of IE.

The qualitative study highlighted a professional related concern. The results showed that poor collaboration and inadequate professionals affect the SENCOS in playing their roles in IE. Even though SENCOS are expected to collaborate with professionals (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011), the results of this study show that there is poor collaboration between the SENCOS and other fields in the implementation of IE. Also, there is poor teamwork in the implementation of IE. The results indicated that the teams needed to be established in districts to oversee assessment and the implementation of IE is not working as expected. They mentioned that the DIET and the DAT are not working. Meanwhile, these teams are expected to be active in all districts to facilitate assessment and support the implementation of IE in Ghana (MoE, 2015). Giangreco (1997) suggested that, professionals work together in the IE system for its effective implementation. If the DIET and the DIAT team is not function as expected in the implementation of IE, it defeats the concept of the system theory, which projects teamwork and collective responsibility in ensuring the effectiveness of the system. Besides, the IE policy (2015) calls for

collaboration between different fields in the implementation of IE. According to Milteniene (2012), collaboration in IE means working together. She argued that collaboration is important for the implementation of IE. Based on the policy, the Ministry of Education is expected to liaise with the Ministry of Health and other ministries to conduct assessment and take other important decisions in the implementation of IE. Therefore, if there is poor collaboration between these fields it will affect IE implementation. Murphy (2018) concluded in his study that collaboration is key in the successful implementation of IE. The SENCOs indicated in the qualitative results that they need professionals to help them in the assessment of children with SEN. It is common knowledge that professionals play important roles in the assessment process. In order to have in-depth and comprehensive information on the needs of children, there is the need to have highly qualified and skilful professionals. The SENCOs reported that the absence of efficient professionals has become a challenge for schools to have comprehensive assessment on the needs of children with SEN. Lewis, Wheeler and Carter (2018) emphasise the role of professionals in education, psychology and medicine in assessing the varied needs of learners in special education. For instance, Paediatrician, neurologist, psychiatrist or psychologist, nurses, general education and special education teachers, optometrist or ophthalmologist, speech and language therapist, audiologist, physical therapist, social workers, among others are the personnel involved in the assessment of children with SEN (Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Deiner, 2005). The absence or lack of these professionals in District assessment centres and even the National Assessment and Resource Centre (NARC) for children with SEN is a

major challenge to conducting a successful comprehensive assessment in schools and hinders the implementation of IE (Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015).

Difference in the Level of Knowledge of SENCOS

Based on the quantitative findings, there is no difference with regards to gender and educational qualification in the level of knowledge of SENCOS.

However, the results showed that there is a difference between their level of knowledge with regards to their working experience, hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The results of the LSD showed that there are significant differences between SENCOS who have worked for 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16-20 years. However, only SENCOS who had worked between 1-5 years differed significantly from the other year groups. Hence, it can be concluded that, SENCOS with more than five years working experience had higher level of knowledge than SENCOS with five years and below working experience. This difference in their level of knowledge may be due to the longer experiences that the SENCOS with above six years have gained over time. It can be said that those with five years working experience and below are quite new to the role and may not be fully abreast like their colleagues with higher working experience. Kuya (2018) revealed in his study that working experience influences teachers' knowledge and skills in the implementation. This may account for the difference seen in the level of knowledge of the SENCOS. It can therefore be said that, SENCOS with high working experience have a high level of knowledge than those with less working experience. Based on the findings, it can also be said that, when SENCOS are new in their role, they may not exhibit

adequate knowledge in the performance of their roles unlike those who have gained adequate experience. This buttresses the assertion of Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) that SENCOs with more than five working experience have adequate knowledge about their roles. However, Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) only made an assumption, but this study has proven that SENCOs with more than five working experience have adequate knowledge about their roles. This finding is unique to this study as previous studies on SENCOs did not explore this dimension.

Difference in the Roles of SENCOs

Based on the results, for the main effect, working experience had a significant effect on the linear combination of the roles played by SENCOs in the implementation of IE. At the level of interaction, gender and working experience had significant effect on the linear combination of the roles played by SENCOs in the implementation of IE. With regards to educational qualification, for the main effect and at the level of interaction, there was no significant effect on the linear combination of the roles played by SENCOs in the implementation of IE. For the main effect, gender had no significant effect on the linear combination of the roles played by SENCOs in the implementation of IE. The univariate results showed that, there is a significant effect of gender and working experience with regards to some specific roles, thus, screening for identification (SFI). Again, only working experience had a significant effect on the specific roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Based on the results, SENCOs who had worked for 1-5 years reported slightly higher levels of performing their roles in terms of management of IE implementation (MIEI) than those who have worked for 16-20 years. Also, with regards to collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation (CPC_SEN/AC) those with 1-5 years working experience performed better than those who have worked for 11-15 years and 16-20 years. Generally, it would have been expected that SENCOs who have worked for 11-15 years and 16-20 years have longer working experience, so they are likely to perform better than those with 1-5 years working experience but it appears this is not the case. From the results, (see Table 18) it can be said that, SENCOs with 1-5 years working experience are likely to perform better than those in the later years in MIEI and CPC_SEN/AC in the implementation of IE. From the quantitative results (descriptive analysis) and the qualitative data, these roles are key to the successful implementation of IE, hence, those with less than six years of working experience should perform less than those with more than six years working experience since they may not have had the experiences that those with more than six years working experience have (Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017). These differences reported in the results may be due to the fact that, SENCOs within the first five years are new in the role and would want to give off their best hoping that their good work will be recognised in the future. However, those with higher working experience may be performing slightly lower because it is likely that, over the years they have become complacent with their role performance or they have not received adequate motivation from the authorities that will push them to work harder, hence maybe more relaxed (Varma, 2018).

In the same vein, SENCOs with 1-5 years working experience performed better in collaborating with educators and external agencies (CEEA) than SENCOs with 6-10 years and 16- 20 years working experience. From Table 18, it can be seen that, SENCOs with 1-5 years working experience have higher mean scores than 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16-20 years working experience. SENCOs with 1-5 years of working experience may be performing better in this role because they are still in the range of newly recruits and will want to strengthen their network with other educators and external collaborators to enhance the performance of their roles. A study conducted by Farnan (2017) showed that, teachers within the first two years of recruitment are enthused to collaborate and are also very comfortable to collaborate. Lending support to Farnan (2017) SENCOs, within the first five years are more likely to have the zeal to collaborate.

Further, the results showed that, SENCOs who had worked for 1-5 years performed better than SENCOs who have worked for 11-15 years in screening for identification (SFI). Also, SENCOs with 6-10 years working experience performed better than those who have worked for 11-15 years. From Table 18, SENCOs with 6-10 years working experience performed better than 11-15 years and 16-20 years. It can therefore be said that, in the first ten years of working experience, SENCOs are more likely to perform this role better as compared to other years. Screening for identification is the first step in assessment in special education (Porter, 2002), hence, in the first ten years of working experience, SENCOs are more likely to attach relevance to this role because that is the first path to a successful provision of special education services. Generally, it would

have been envisaged that, SENCOs with higher working experience, thus above ten years would perform better in SFI than those with below ten years working experience. The results from both the quantitative (descriptive analysis) and the qualitative data show that, SFI is the most important role of the SENCOs in the implementation of IE, therefore, since they have been on the job for quite a longer period and may have gained the experiences needed to identify children with SEN they are more likely to perform better. Based on the results, it is important for regular in-service training to be organised for SENCOs to help them gain additional knowledge and skills to perform their roles better, especially, during the later years of their working experience since their expertise may have decreased over time due to limited training. This assertion is made based on the results from both the quantitative (descriptive analysis) and the qualitative results study which indicated that, the SENCOs are concerned they do not receive adequate training in performing their roles in IE. Literature on role performance indicates that, performance of people increases with the years of experience (Kotur & Anbazhagan, 2014), however, the results of this study shows another dimension. The result of the current study shows that, when it comes to some specific roles, the range of working experiences that SENCOs have may result in them either performing higher or lower or better or lesser in those specific role roles but not necessarily in all roles. Generally, I am in agreement with Kotur and Anbazhagan (2014) that working experience has an effect on role performance, hence, this may account for the differences that exist in the roles of SENCOs with regards to their working

experience. Again, this finding is unique to this study as previous studies on SENCOs did not explore this dimension.

Difference in the Level of Confidence of SENCOs

The multivariate results showed that, at the level of interaction, gender and educational qualification as well as gender and working experience have significant effect on the level of confidence of SENCO in the performance of their roles in IE. For the main effect, gender as well as working experience have significant effect on the level of confidence of SENCOs in the performance of their roles. Also, the univariate results showed that, at the level of interaction, there is a significant effect of gender and working experience on the level of confidence of SENCOs in playing specific roles such Teacher support (TS) and conducive school environment/screening for identification (CSE/SFI). For the main effect, there is no significant effect of gender and educational qualification on the level of confidence of the specific roles. However, working experience has significant effect on the level of confidence of SENCOs in managerial, administrative and collaborative task (MACT) and conducive school environment/screening for identification (CSE/SFI). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

It can be seen from the results in Table 23 that, SENCOs with 11-15 years working experience are more confident than SENCOs with 1-5 years and 6-10 years working experience in performing MACT and CSE/SFI. It can be deduced that, SENCOs with 11-15 years of working experience perform better because they have gained more experiences and believe in the experiences they have acquired over the years, hence may be confident in their expertise. Mahony

(2016) reported that, working experiences influence self-efficacy. Her findings revealed that, the number of working experiences increases self-efficacy. I agree with Mahony's (2016) assertion that, higher working experience increases self-confidence. From the results, SENCOs with 11-15 years working experience and 16-20 years working experience have higher confidence than 1-5 working years working experience and 6-10 years working experience, this means that, in the first ten years SENCOs are less confident in the performance of their roles as compared to later years (see Table 22). On the other hand, it can be seen that SENCOs who have worked for 11-15 years are more confident than those who have worked for 16-20 years (see Table 22).

Also from Table 22, it can be seen that, those with 1-5 years are more confident than those with 6-10 years. From the results, it is likely that, SENCOs who have worked for 1-5 years have the zeal to make a positive impact, hence, in the beginning of their roles as SENCOs they are confident. However, after five years they may appreciate that, they are faced with certain challenges that prevent them from achieving their goals, which is likely to decrease their level of confidence. From the qualitative findings, (see p. 213) the SENCOs indicated that, the challenges they encounter in the performance of their roles affect their level of confidence in the implementation of IE. However, from 11-15 years of working experience, it is likely that, they may overlook the challenges faced over time and therefore decide to have faith in what they do with the hope of making a positive impact in the performance of their roles. It is also likely that, when they get to the later working years (16-20 years) they may be threatened by new ways of doing things especially when they have not upgraded their

knowledge. For example, Winwood (2013) mentioned that, the need for change and self-development can reduce the level of confidence of SENCOs.

With regards to the effect gender has on the level of confidence, it could be attributed to the biological differences that exist between males and females. For instance, Mackenzie (2012) stated that women's mothering experience provides some additional advantages in playing their roles in handling children with SEN. Again, this finding is unique to this study as previous studies on SENCOs did not explore this dimension.

However, a study conducted by Loreman, Sharma and Forlin (2013) on teachers' self-efficacy in the implementation of IE, showed that generally teachers' educational level and gender has no influence on their self-efficacy. Similarly, Kuyuni, Desai and Sharma (2018) reported that there is no significant influence of gender and years of experience on teacher's self-efficacy.

Based on these studies, it can be seen that there are contradictory reports on demographic variables in relation to level of confidence. For instance, Kuyuni, Desai and Sharma (2018) reported that, working experience does not influence self-efficacy whereas Mahony's (2016) study, reported that working experience influences self-efficacy. Also Loreman, Sharma and Forlin (2013) reported that, educational qualification does not influence self-efficacy, similarly, the results indicated that, educational qualification has no significant effect on level of confidence. On the other hand, the results contradict with Kuyuni, Desai and Sharma's (2018) findings since the current study showed that, working experience has significant effect on the level of confidence. Based on this finding, it can be said that, the level of confidence in the performance of

roles may be influenced by certain circumstances in the field of work since the results showed that, SENCOs level of confidence vary within certain year brackets and is also based on the specific roles being performed. This finding is unique to studies conducted on SENCOs.

Difference in the Concerns of SENCOs

From the multivariate results, at the level of interaction, there is a significant effect of gender and working experience on the linear combination of the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. For the main effect, educational qualification has significant effect on the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. Also, working experience has significant effect on the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. The univariate results showed that, at the level of interaction, there is no significant effect at two and three levels. However, for the main effect, there was significant effect of working experience on the concerns of SENCOs. This means that, there are differences in the working experiences of SENCOs based the on specific concerns; classroom-related concerns (CLRC), school-related concerns (SCRC), self-related concerns (SERC), academic achievement-related concerns (AARC) and management related concerns (MARC). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

From the results, SENCOs with 1-5 and 6-10 years working experience are more concerned than SENCOs with 11-15 years of working experience with regards to CLRC, SCRC AARC and MACT. This means that, the SENCOs in the first ten years of working experiences are concerned about challenges in the implementation of IE at the classroom, school and management level.

Additionally, they are more concerned about the academic achievement of children with SEN. This result may be due to the fact that SENCOs in that range are quite young in the profession and embark on regular monitoring so they have the opportunity to witness challenges at the classroom level and at the school level. Besides, the results on the differences in the roles of SENCOs showed that, SENCOs in the first five years perform better in collaborating with educators and external agencies (CEEA) (see p. 213). It is therefore likely that, the SENCOs within the first five years of working experience have regular interaction with the school and are privy to the challenges in the classroom and the school. More so, the quantitative results (descriptive analysis) and the qualitative results showed that, in terms of AARC, the most concern of SENCOs is overburdened workload. Therefore, if SENCOs in the first ten years are more concerned, then, it is likely that they are worried about their overwhelming workload. It is also likely that, SENCOs with longer working experience have adjusted to the workload with time and are no longer worried, but those with lesser working experience are yet to adjust with the workload. From Table 26, it can be seen that, SENCOs with 1-5 years working experience have the highest mean, followed by 6-10 years working experience. However, SENCOs with 11-15 years of working experience are least concerned about the AARC, it is therefore likely that they may be least concerned about the workload. On the contrary, SENCOs with 16-20 years working experience are more worried than SENCOs with 11-15 years of working experience with regard to AARC. It can be argued that, with time they are concerned that they are not adequately motivated in spite of their workload (Varma, 2018). SENCOs within the first

ten years of working experience are more concerned about MARC. From the quantitative results (descriptive analysis) the SENCOs were concerned most about insufficient training followed by unclarified roles in the implementation of IE. It can therefore be deduced that, SENCOs within the first ten years of working experience are eager to upgrade their knowledge and perform better to

help children with SEN in IE. SENCOs with 11-15 years of working experience may not be bothered because they may have received more training to help them cope with their work. Besides SENCOs within 11-15 years of working experience may have become abreast with the work schedule and are not bothered about how to go about their duties. Also with regards to self-related concerns (SERC) SENCOs with 6-10 years expressed high SERC. The main concern based on the quantitative data (descriptive analysis) had to do with collaborating with parents of children with SEN. Even though, results on the differences in their roles suggest that, SENCOs within 6-10 years are able to perform their roles well as compared to 11-15 years working experience and 16-20 years working experience, they are more concerned in performing this role.

It is likely that, they engage more with parents of children with SEN but are not getting the feedback they want from them, hence, their concern. Besides the qualitative results revealed that, SENCOs are worried about the negative attitude of parents towards their children with SEN, it is therefore likely that, they are not able to collaborate with them effectively.

From Table 26, the observation made is that, SENCOs with 1-5 years working experience and 6-10 years working experience are more concerned than 11-15 working experience and 16-20 working years with regards to all the

concerns, even though, 1-5 years of working experience were more concerned than 6-10 years of working experience with regards to AARC, the difference is not significant. This could be the justification for the low confidence of SENCOs in the first ten years since SENCOs within the first ten years of working experience are more concerned than the later years.

Another observation made from this is that (see Table 26) SENCOs with 16-20 years working experience are more concerned than those with 11-15 years working experience, this could also be the reason for the decrease in the level of confidence within those with 16-20 years of working experience. It can be concluded that, SENCOs with 6-10 years working experience are most concerned about the challenges in the implementation of IE. Again, this is a novel finding in studies conducted on SENCOs in the implementation of IE.

However, Yadav, Das, Sharma and Tiwari 's (2015) study on teachers' concern in the implementation of IE showed that, female teachers had a greater mean score of 35.36 whereas male teachers had a mean score of 33.39, this means that, female teachers were more concerned than male teachers, even though, the result is not significant. Their study further indicated there is no significant difference in teachers' concerns based on their educational qualification. Contrary to the previous study conducted by Yadav, Das, Sharma and Tiwari's (2015), the current study showed that, educational qualification has a significant effect on the concerns of SENCOs. In addition, even though their study indicated that teachers' concern reduces based on the length of teaching experience, thus, as their experiences increase, their concerns also declined, the findings revealed that the difference is not significant. Similarly,

Yan and Deng (2018) reported that teachers with longer years of working experience were less concerned than teachers with lower years of working experience. The studies conducted by Yadav, Das, Sharma and Tiwari's (2015) and Yan and Deng (2018) confirm the findings of this study, however, there is another dimension, thus, the decrease in the concerns may not be static throughout the length of working experience. The concerns can increase again over some period as seen in the current study that 16-20 years working experience are more concerned than 11-15 years working experience. This finding has given additional dimension to demographic analysis of concerns in the field of education.

Influence of SENCOS' Level of Knowledge, Level of Confidence and Concerns

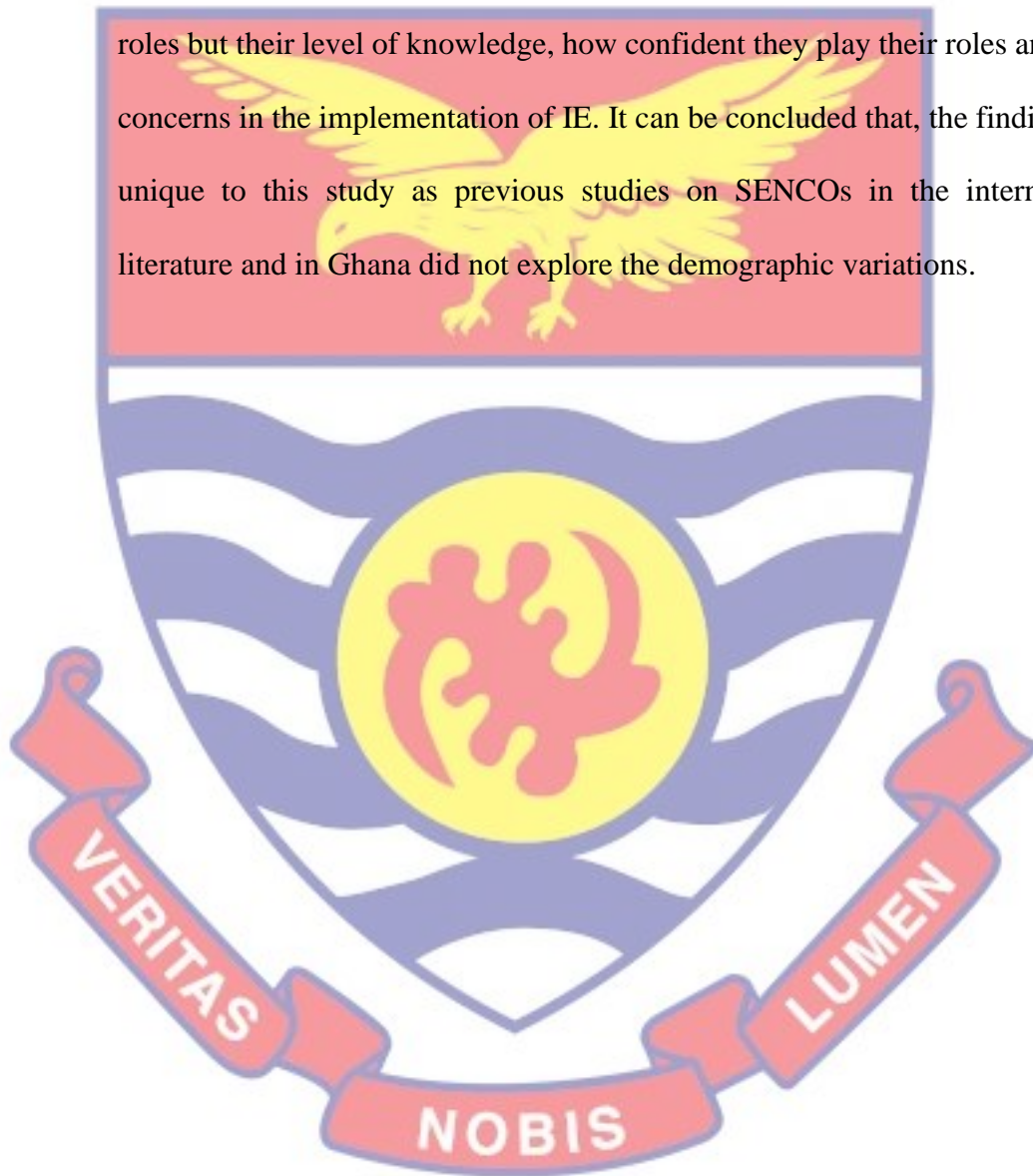
The results showed that, SENCOS' level of knowledge, confidence and concerns influenced their performance of their roles in the implementation of IE in schools. From the results, there is a statistically significant influence of level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on the roles of SENCOS in IE, hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, for the SENCOS to be able to perform their roles in IE, they will need to be knowledgeable as well as confident in playing about her or his roles in IE. This implies that there should be constant training or refresher courses to keep them updated about their roles and to sustain their level of confidence in playing their roles in the implementation of IE. Several studies showed that, if teachers are given constant training in the implementation of IE, it can improve their self-efficacy (e.g., Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012; Das, Kuyini, & Desai, 2013; Loreman,

Sharma, & Forlin, 2013). This also calls for certain qualities such as love, empathy, enthusiasm, commitment, passion among others in handling children with SEN to help drive their level of confidence in IE. According to Hussein and Al-Quaryouti (2014), teachers with high self-efficacy showed commitment, empathy and enthusiasm. Rosen-Webb (2011) reported that empathy and sympathy are important qualities for the SENCO in helping children with SEN to achieve their potential.

Additionally, the findings suggested that, the concerns that SENCOs have can influence their role performance, if the SENCOs are faced with challenges in the implementation of IE, it can have a negative influence on their role performance. However, the results further revealed that, the highest predictor was the level of confidence and the least predictor was their concerns. The concerns being a least predictor in the performance of their roles could mean that, the SENCOs have overlooked the many challenges they have and are more focused in helping children with SEN and ensuring the implementation of IE. The level of confidence being the highest predictor could mean that, if their level of confidence is low, they may not be able to play their roles well in IE. This means that the SENCOs will need to be motivated to boost their confidence to play their roles well. This finding is new to studies conducted on SENCOs in the implementation of IE.

Based on the analysis of the hypotheses, it can be concluded that, gender, educational qualification and working experience has a significant effect on the level of knowledge, the roles, level of confidence and the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE. However, from the results, in terms of the three

demographic variations, working experience has a major effect in their level of knowledge, performance of their roles, level of confidence and concerns. Lending support to the assertion of MacBeath, Galton, Steward, MacBeath, and Paige (2006) the working experiences of the SENCOs influence their role performance, however, the working experience does not only influence their roles but their level of knowledge, how confident they play their roles and their concerns in the implementation of IE. It can be concluded that, the findings are unique to this study as previous studies on SENCOs in the international literature and in Ghana did not explore the demographic variations.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The chapter presents the summary of the study, major contributions to knowledge, conclusions that were drawn from the findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

Summary to the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the Special Educational Needs Coordinators' (SENCOs) level of knowledge, confidence and concerns regarding their roles in the implementation of IE. A mixed method approach was used, specifically, the Convergent design was utilised for the study. Equal priority was given to both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. A total of 73 SENCOs participated in the quantitative phase whereas 15 of them participated in the qualitative phase. The sample was drawn from the three regions in the southern part of Ghana, namely: Greater Accra, Eastern and Central region. The census approach was used for the quantitative phase and the purposive sampling, specifically the criterion sampling was used for the qualitative study in selecting the participants. The main instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The items on level of knowledge, roles and level of confidence were developed by the researcher based on the literature and were used for the data collection after it had gone through a process to ensure its reliability and validity (see chapter 3, p125-126). The items on the concerns were adapted from Yadav, Das, Sharma and Tiwari's (2015). The study was guided by five research questions and five

hypotheses. Statistical procedures used for the data analysis were descriptive statistics; *frequencies* and *percentages*, *means* and *standard deviations* and *factorial ANOVA*, *factorial MANOVA* and *multiple linear regression* for the inferential statistics.

Key Findings

Based on the research questions and the hypotheses formulated for the study, the findings were as follows;

1. SENCOs had a high level of knowledge about their roles in the implementation of IE.
2. SENCOs played several roles in the implementation of IE. These roles are: screening for identification for children with SEN, collaborating with parents of children with SEN, making examination accommodation, ensuring a conducive school environment, collaborating with internal and external agencies, providing support for teachers, engaging in administrative task such (keeping records on children with SEN), teaching children with SEN, monitoring and evaluating IE in schools, acquiring assistive technologies for the school, collaborating with the school to educate the parents and the community about SEN issues and supporting teachers to handle children with SEN. The qualitative study provided additional roles to the quantitative phase. These are; making referral, preparing IEP, facilitating educational placement, making home visitations, and counselling parents.
3. SENCOs considered some roles as important in the implementation of IE. These roles are: screening for identification of children with SEN; ensuring

the implementation of IE in schools; collaborating with parents of children with SEN; making accommodations in examination; ensuring conducive school environment; engaging in regular visits to schools; monitoring IE practices in schools; evaluating the performance of children with SEN and training teachers, updating the files of children with SEN and engaging in educational placement.

4. SENCOs were confident in playing their roles in the implementation of IE. Both the quantitative and qualitative results showed moderate and a high level of confidence respectively.

5. SENCOs had moderate level of concern. The study further established a number of concerns which are grouped into:

- i. *Classroom related* (discrimination, disciplinary problems, negative attitudes of teachers, poor competence of teachers and large class size)
- ii. *School related* (inadequate funds, inadequate special educators, inadequate paraprofessionals and inaccessible physical environment)
- iii. *Academic achievement* (overburdened workload)
- iv. *Self-related* (feeling of isolation and stigmatisation).
- v. *Management related* (inadequate funding, lack of recognition, unclarified roles, insufficient training, lack of motivation, inadequate assessment tools and assessment centres, inadequate office space and equipment and negative attitude and poor perception of educational leaders)

- vi. *Parental related* (negative attitude of parents, poor parental involvement, stigmatisation, poverty and inadequate preparation of parents towards IE)
 - vii. *Professional related* (poor collaboration and inadequate professionals)
6. There was a statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge of

SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

7. There was a statistically significant difference in the roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

8. There was a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

9. There was a statistically significant difference in the concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE with regards to gender, working experience and educational qualification.

10. There was a statistically significant influence of SENCOs' level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on their roles in the implementation of IE.

Emerged Model

The observed model for SENCOs roles and characteristics in the implementation of IE was derived from the tested hypotheses. This is presented in Figure 6.

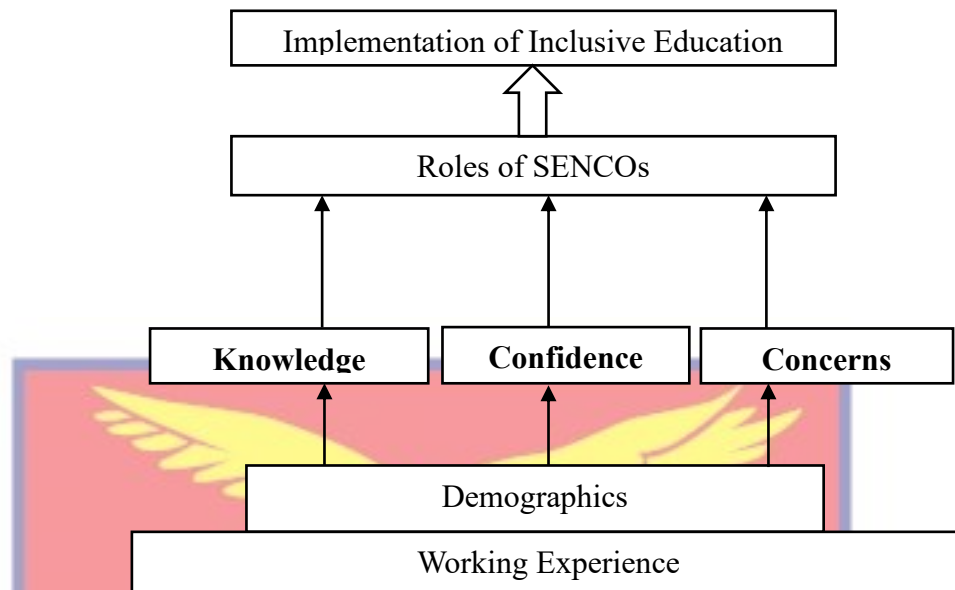


Figure 6: SENCOs' roles and characteristics in the implementation of IE.

Source: Author's construct (2020)

The results showed that there are variations in the gender, working experience and educational qualification of SENCOs' level of knowledge, roles, level of confidence and concerns in the implementation of IE. Even though the main effect was the working experience, at the level of interaction all the demographic variables hypothesised had an effect. It can be concluded from the model that, SENCOs' roles in the implementation of IE are influenced by their gender, working experience and their educational qualification, hence, the conceptual framework was maintained.

Major Contributions to Knowledge

The main contributions of this study with regards to international and national literature on IE and specifically SENCOs have been highlighted in terms of contribution to literature on IE, methodology, policy and SENCO's roles.

Contributions to Literature on IE

The focus of IE is to ensure that children with and without SEN are educated in the same classroom environment. Besides, for IE to be effective, it depends on the roles of SENCOS, teachers and parents. Based on the literature reviewed, much attention had been paid to teachers and parents both internationally and in Ghana. Few studies were conducted outside Ghana on SENCOS. Based on my literature search, only one study was found in Ghana on SENCOS.

Besides, most of the studies from the international perspective and the study conducted in Ghana did not investigate the level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns in the implementation of IE, hence this study has contributed to the limited literature in that area. Besides, most of the studies conducted on the challenges in the implementation of IE, were not considered from the SENCOS' perspective, especially studies conducted in Ghana. Therefore, it can be said that ascertaining the challenges in the implementation of IE from the perspective of the SENCOS is novel.

To add, based on the literature reviewed, the studies conducted on SENCOS did not test any hypothesis. Therefore, the findings in the study in relation to demographic variations is new. Also, to the best of my knowledge, it appears that no study on SENCOS investigated the influence of level of knowledge, level of confidence and concerns on their roles. This study has contributed to the body of knowledge on IE.

Contributions to Methodology Used in Studies on SENCOS

The mixed method approach used in investigating the roles of SENCOS is limited in international literature and the first of its kind in Ghana. For instance, the questionnaire used in the collection of data can be used by other researchers in conducting a study of this kind since such questionnaires on SENCOS are rare in the literature on SENCOS' roles. Also, to the best of my knowledge, the inferential statistics used in analysing the data is also rare to studies conducted on SENCOS.

Policy on Roles of SENCOS

The majority of the SENCOS were of the opinion that the existence of a policy on SENCOS will help them in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE. Based on this, my study has established the need for Ghana to have a policy on SENCOS to guide their practice. This policy can be informed by the findings of the current study. I suggest that this policy be developed in partnership with the SENCOS who are on the field. When developed, this policy can highlight the role expectations of SENCOS in the implementation of IE.

Contributions to Studies on Roles of SENCOS

To the best of my knowledge, so far studies conducted on SENCOS did not explore how they play their roles in the implementation of IE. This study has revealed how SENCOS perform their roles in the implementation of IE. This can guide other SENCOS in performing their roles in the implementation of IE. This will lead to better service provisions for children with SEN in the implementation of IE.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that SENCOs are knowledgeable about their roles in the implementation of IE. Also, from the findings, roles such as screening for identification, monitoring IE practices in schools, engaging in regular visit to schools, training teachers, collaborating with parents of children with SEN among others are critical for the SENCOs in the implementation of IE. Therefore, if those roles are not played well, it can lead to poor role performance which can affect children with SEN and the implementation of IE. Further, it can be concluded that, SENCOs are faced with several challenges in the implementation of IE, however, the passion towards their roles enhance their level of confidence in playing their roles. It can therefore be concluded that, in the IE system, SENCOs are key actors who can support the teachers and the parents in the implementation of IE. If SENCOs are attached to every school as stipulated by the IE policy (MoE, 2015), then it is likely that most children with SEN will be accepted in the IE settings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study and the conclusion, the following recommendations are made for practice and policy.

Recommendation for Practice

The following recommendations are made for practice:

1. The MoE in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service (GES) should post more SENCOs to assist schools in the implementation of IE to reduce the workload of the few SENCOs.

2. The GES and the Special Education Division (SpED) of Ghana should organise more sensitisation programmes for Head teachers and Directors of Education to equip them with additional knowledge to help them gain better understanding about the SENCO role and IE to reduce the poor perception held by most of the educational leaders about inclusive practices.

3. The GES should put measures in place that can restrict Directors of Education from converting SENCOs to regular education teachers to help maintain the SENCOs in their original position to help the implementation of IE.

4. The GES in collaboration with the SpED should use several platforms to highlight the importance of the roles of the SENCO to educational heads, teachers, parents and the community so that they can seek their help in handling children with SEN and strengthen the collaboration that exists between them in IE.

5. The MoE should provide allowances and other incentives for the SENCOs to motivate them in the performance of their roles since most of those who are seeking to leave the role feel they are poorly motivated.

6. The SpED should provide more training programmes to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the SENCOs especially SENCOs who are newly appointed so that they can effectively support parents, teachers and the school in the implementation of IE.

7. The MoE should liaise with universities such as; the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba to train more special education teachers to support the implementation of IE.

8. The MoE should liaise with universities like the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education so that list of students who complete programmes in special education can be sent to the MoE for them to be appointed as SENCOs to increase the number of SENCOs on the field to reduce their workload.

9. The GES should encourage their regional and district offices to develop proposals to Non-governmental Organisation (NGOs) to seek financial help to support the implementation of IE at the district level since the study revealed that one of the major challenges affecting the roles of the SENCO is inadequate funding.

10. The MoE should provide assessment tools to the GES so that they can distribute the assessment tools in all districts to enable the SENCOs to engage in regular assessment of pupils' vision, hearing, reading, behaviour and other challenges. The results of the study showed that screening for identification is vital to the SENCOs in playing their roles. However, the findings revealed that, because there are inadequate assessment tools they are not able to carry that role effectively.

11. The GES should provide adequate funds to the districts for the SENCOs to train teachers, educate the public, and to facilitate monitoring activities.

12. The GES should provide appropriate office spaces and equipment for the SENCOs to engage in proper parental consultation and record keeping. This will ensure confidentiality and privacy in the assessment process and also help in proper storage of information on children for the purpose of tracking their records and progress.

13. The MoE should strengthen collaboration with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Children's protection, University of Cape Coast, University of Education, University of Ghana among others to seek the help of professionals in medicine, education and psychology to help the national assessment centre. This will help children with SEN have a multidisciplinary assessment procedure since the findings reveal that the SENCOS need the help of other professionals to be able to support children with SEN in IE.

14. The GES should consider restructuring the IE school system to ensure that at least one of the administrative heads (headteacher) is a special educator since they have the expertise to handle issues concerning children with SEN. Affording the special educator a seniority status can help the effective implementation of IE since the findings revealed that, most heads have negative attitude and poor perception about children with SEN and the implementation of IE.

Recommendations for Policy

The following recommendations were made for policymaking:

1. The SpED and GES through the MoE should collaborate with the Government of Ghana to include the specified roles of the SENCOS in the IE policy or the Standard and Guidelines for the Practice of IE when revised, this will make their roles more recognised so that they can safeguard the rights of parents and children with SEN through due process. Also, it will give them the mandate to ensure that schools do not reject children with

SEN from the IE setting based on their disabilities. It will also strengthen their roles to ensure the implementation of IE.

2. The MoE in collaboration with GES should design a handbook with a reconceptualisation of the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE, this will help SENCOS who were appointed in the pre IE policy era to be updated on their new roles and expectations in the implementation of IE. The handbook should also be disseminated to Directors of Education at the district level, head teachers, teachers and other governing bodies to keep them informed about the responsibilities of the SENCOS and how it can be facilitated in various IE settings

3. The MoE in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service should endeavour to revise the Standard and Guidelines in Practicing IE on the development of IEP in schools by introducing a more bureaucratic approach to support the education of children with SEN in the IE environment. Since the findings of the study revealed that, the SENCOS are overburden with their workload, hence, they may not be adequately effective in supporting the teachers to implement it. The findings revealed that the class sizes are too large for the teachers and therefore they may not be able to implement the IEP. This step can reduce the tendency of some teachers hiding behind the use of the IEP and refusing to adapt the curriculum in the implementation of IE.

Suggestions for Further Research

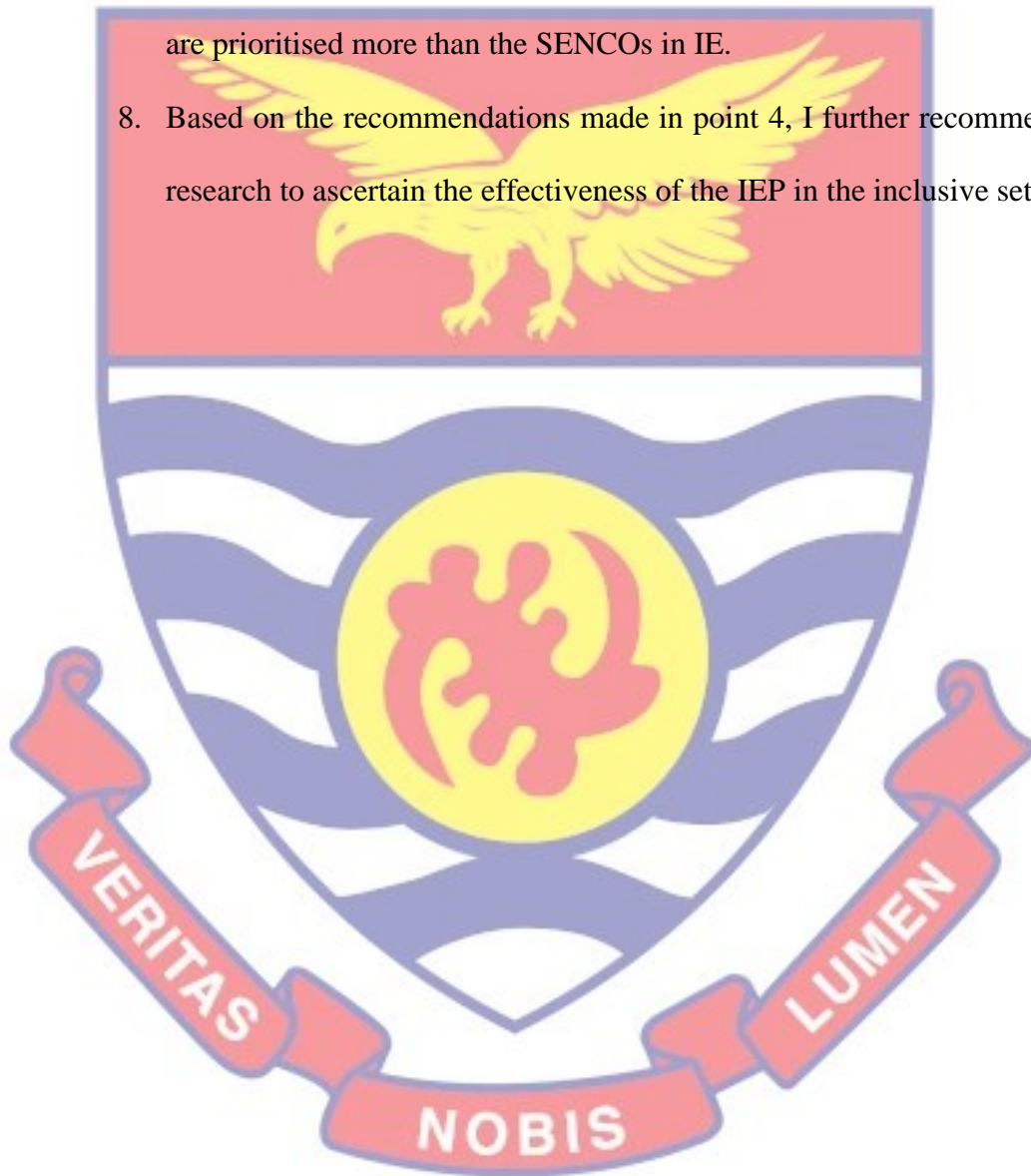
The findings and limitations of the present study revealed several avenues for future researchers to investigate the following:

1. The study was carried out in three regions in the southern part of Ghana, namely: Greater Accra, Eastern and Central region; further research could be carried out in other regions to ascertain what pertains there.
2. In this study, the roles of the SENCOs in IE were viewed through their own perception. However, a study can be conducted with both SENCOs and teachers to ascertain the roles of SENCOs and also compare the perception SENCOs have with the perception teachers have to give a broader view of the SENCO role.
3. The study should be replicated with different demographic variations such as the age and the district of participants to ascertain the influence of the demographic variation on their roles since the findings suggested that there could be variations in the effectiveness of the SENCOs based on their district. Besides, age was not tested in the current study.
4. A study should be conducted in Ghana on the Emotional Reactions, Attrition and Burnout of SENCOs in the implementation of IE since the findings revealed that SENCOs are overburdened with workload, feel isolated in their field and are willing to abandon their roles for other positions.
5. A study should be conducted on the knowledge, attitude, and confidence of SENCOs in collaborating with parents in the implementation of IE because the findings of the study suggest poor communication between parents and SENCOs and poor involvement of parents in IE.
6. A study should be conducted in Ghana on the collaborative roles of SENCOs in the implementation of IE, this will highlight how the SENCOs

collaborate in the implementation of IE and strengthen the need for collaboration in IE.

7. A study should be conducted on the educational leader's perception about the roles of SENCOs and School Improvement Support Officers (SISOSs) in the implementation of IE because the findings suggest that the SISOSs are prioritised more than the SENCOs in IE.

8. Based on the recommendations made in point 4, I further recommend that research to ascertain the effectiveness of the IEP in the inclusive setting.



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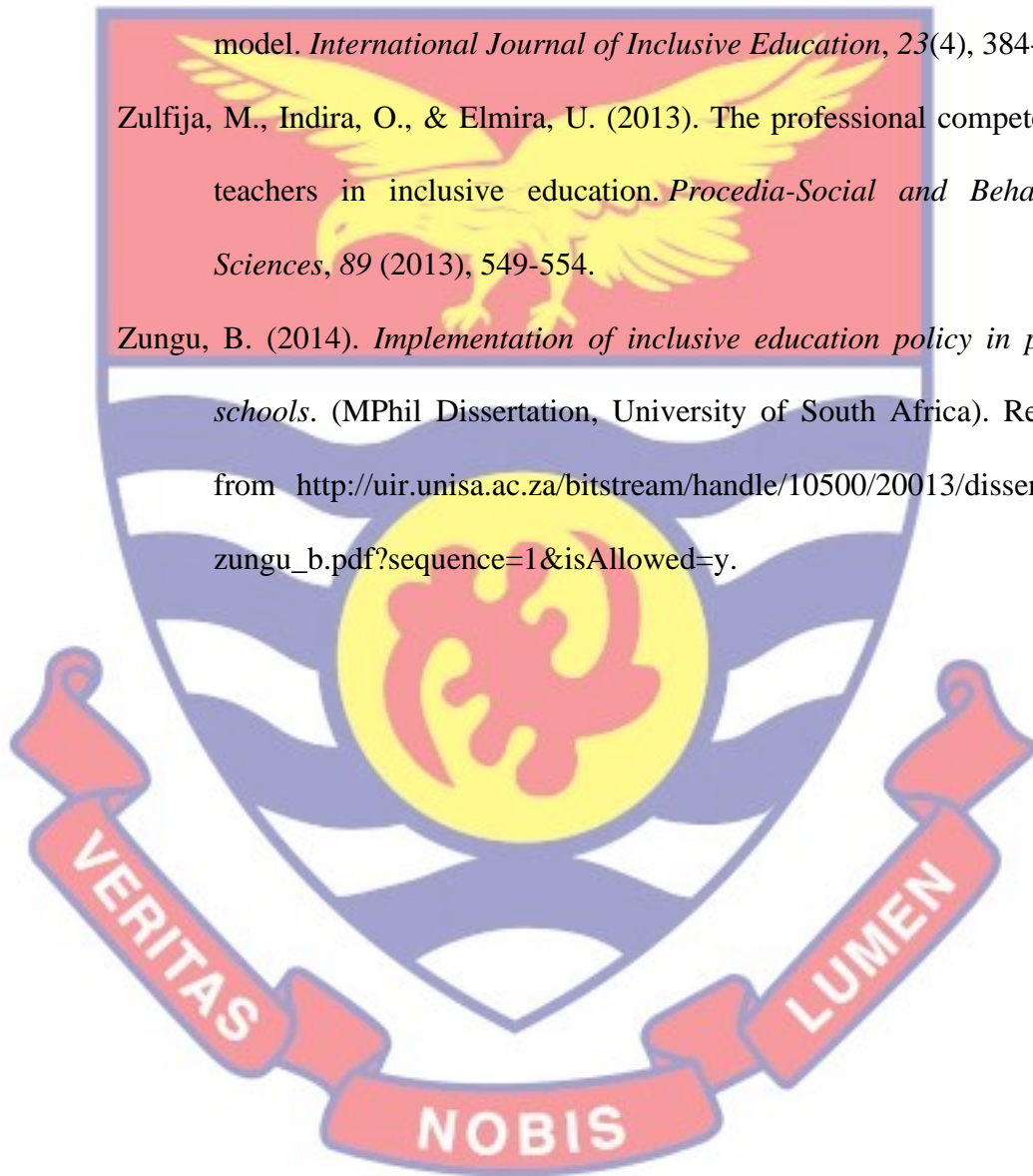
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA



Our Ref: CES-ERB/UCC.edu/VS/20-14
Your Ref:

Date: 19th February, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Gmotosho
jmotosho@ucc.edu.gh
0243784735

Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. K. Edjah
kedjah@ucc.edu.gh
0244742357

Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
lforde@ucc.edu.gh
0244786680

The bearer, Macka-Peol Okai, Reg. No EF/19E/19/000 is an M.Phil / Ph.D. student in the Department of Education and Psychology in the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. ~~He~~ She wishes to undertake a research study on the topic:

Roles of special educational needs co-ordinators in the implementation of inclusive education in Basic Schools in Southern Ghana

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies (CES) has assessed ~~his~~ her proposal and confirm that the proposal satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval to commence ~~his~~ her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would give ~~him~~ her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

Telephone: 0332091697
Email: dep@ucc.edu.gh



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

9th March, 2021

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION MS. MARTHA-PEARL OKAI (EF/DSE/19/0001)

We introduce to you **Ms. Okai**, a student from the University of Cape Coast, Department of Education and Psychology. She is pursuing Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Special Education and she is currently at the thesis stage.


Ms. Okai is researching on the topic: **ROLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CO-ORDINATORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN GHANA.**

She has opted to collect or gather data at your institution/establishment for her Thesis work. We would be most grateful if you could provide her the opportunity and assistance for the study. Any information provided would be treated strictly as confidential.

We sincerely appreciate your co-operation and assistance in this direction.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


Ama A. Ocran
Principal Administrative Assistant
For: **HEAD**

APPENDIX C: LETTER FOR PILOT-TESTING OF INSTRUMENT

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

My name is Martha-Pearl Okai, a student at the University of Cape Coast. I am conducting a research on: ROLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CO-ORDINATORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN GHANA. My supervisors are Prof. Emmanuel Kofi Gyimah and Dr. Irene Vanderpuye.

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the roles of special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) in the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. This study will be conducted in three regions in Ghana, namely: Greater Accra, Central, and Eastern Regions.

The study will yield information that will be useful to the Special Education Division of the Ministry of Education for planning and in reviewing the inclusive education policy since the study will reveal the roles and concerns SENCOs have in the implementation of inclusive education.

I am conscious of your busy schedules but pleading with you to spare about thirty-five minutes of your time to respond to this questionnaire. Kindly note that participation in this study is voluntary. I want to assure you that your name will remain anonymous and will not be identified in any document. Please, look out for a four-page summary of the report that comes out of the findings. This will be made available in your district.

If you decide to participate in the study, please return the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope provided within three weeks. If I do not receive the completed questionnaire within the stipulated time, a letter of reminder will be sent to you. If I still do not hear from you, I will assume that you do not want to participate in the study. If you need further information or clarification, you can contact me on this number **0242947059** or through this email address martha.okai@ucc.edu.gh.

Thank you.


.....
Martha-Pearl Okai
PhD student, University of Cape Coast

APPENDIX D: INTRODUCTORY LETTER (VOLTA REGION)

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

Telephone: 0332091697
Email: dep@ucc.edu.gh



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

1st February, 2021.

The Director
Ghana Education Service
Volta Region

Dear Sir/Madam,

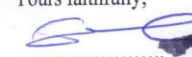
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Please, we write to introduce Ms Martha-Pearl Okai, a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Education and Psychology, Faculty of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast. She is undertaking a research titled: **Roles of Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Basic Schools in Southern Ghana.** She has expressed interest in using the Region for pilot testing. We are kindly asking that you grant her all the assistance she needs. We assure you that, any information given to her will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Counting on your unreserved support.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


.....
Dr. Mark O. Amponsah
Head of Department.

**HEAD
DEPT OF EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
CAPE COAST**

APPENDIX E: INTRODUCTORY LETTER (WESTERN REGION)

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

Telephone: 0332091697
Email: dep@ucc.edu.gh



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

1st February, 2021.

The Director
Ghana Education Service
Western Region

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Please, we write to introduce Ms Martha-Pearl Okai, a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Education and Psychology, Faculty of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast. She is undertaking a research titled: **Roles of Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Basic Schools in Southern Ghana.**

She has expressed interest in using the Region for pilot testing. We are kindly asking that you grant her all the assistance she needs. We assure you that, any information given to her will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Counting on your unreserved support.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

.....
Dr. Mark O. Amponsah
Head of Department

HEAD
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
CAPE COAST

APPENDIX F: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

RESEARCH TOPIC: ROLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CO-ORDINATORS (SENCOS) IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher aims to investigate the roles of SENCOS in the implementation of inclusive education in southern Ghana. I will be very grateful if you would participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw at any time if you want to do so. The study is purely for academic purpose and the information you provide will be treated confidential.

PART A: Demographic Information

Instruction: Please, tick (✓) the appropriate response

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Educational Qualification: Diploma [] Degree [] Masters []
Any other qualification? (Please specify)
3. What is your rank in Ghana Education Service?
4. How many years have you been a SENCO?

PART B: Knowledge of SENCOS in Inclusive Education

Instruction

Please, indicate your response by ticking (✓) YES or NO.

By SEN, I mean children with Special Educational Needs

S/N	Statement	YES	NO
	SENCOS should		
1.	ensure the implementation of inclusive education in schools.		
2.	update the files of children with SEN.		
3.	monitor the progress of children with SEN.		
4.	evaluate the progress of children with SEN.		
5.	assist in the educational placement of children with SEN.		
6.	prepare the activities teachers need in teaching children with SEN.		
7.	teach children with SEN.		
8.	engage in identification of children with SEN.		
9.	write Individual Education Plan (IEP).		

10.	inform parents about the progress of children with SEN.		
11.	engage in regular visits to schools.		
12.	collaborate with parents of children with disabilities.		
13.	collaborate with parents of children without disabilities.		
14.	discuss with teachers the condition of each child with SEN in order to make the right decisions.		
15.	train teachers to work with children with SEN.		
16.	participate in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting on issues concerning children with SEN.		
17.	make sure the school acquires appropriate teaching and learning resources (e.g., assistive resources).		
18.	ensure the School-Based Assessment includes the IEP.		
19.	ensure the school provides additional time for children with SEN to complete assignments and examinations.		
20.	make a conscious effort to identify the categories of children with disabilities in schools.		
21.	hold regular meetings with the school to ensure the school adheres to Inclusive practices.		
22.	hold Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings on school performance targets.		
23.	collaborate with the school to organise public education and sensitisation for parents and the community on SEN.		
24.	ensure teachers provide alternative assessment for children with SEN.		
25.	provide important information about children with SEN's performance to the District inclusive education team.		
26.	ensure teachers' complete school registers indicating the diverse learning needs in the classroom.		
27.	ensure a conducive school environment.		
28.	assist teachers in adapting the curriculum.		
29.	contribute to the in-service training of teachers.		
30.	asses children with SEN.		
31.	supervise IE practices in schools.		
32.	evaluate IE practices in schools.		
33.	ensure all schools in the district are practicing IE.		
34.	keep records on children with SEN.		

PART C: Roles of SENCOs in Inclusive Education

Instruction

S/N	Statement	1	2	3	4
Teaching, teacher and administrative support					
1.	I update the files of children with SEN.				
2.	I prepare the activities teachers need in teaching children with SEN.				
3.	I teach children with SEN.				
4.	I inform regional co-ordinators about the progress of children with SEN.				
5.	I organise in-service training of teachers.				
6.	I assist teachers in adapting the curriculum.				
7.	I hold Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings on school performance targets.				
Manage the implementation of IE					
8.	I engage in regular visits to schools.				
9.	I monitor IE practices in schools.				
10.	I train teachers to work with children with SEN.				
11.	I collaborate with the school to organise public education and sensitisation for the community on SEN.				
12.	I ensure teachers provide alternative assessment for children with SEN.				
13.	I evaluate the performance of children with SEN.				
14.	I make sure the school acquires appropriate teaching and learning resources (e.g., assistive resources).				
Screening for identification					
15.	I make a conscious effort to identify the categories of children with SEN.				
Collaborate with parents of children with SEN and assessment accommodation					
16.	I inform parents about the progress of children with SEN.				
17.	I ensure the implementation of inclusive education in schools.				
18.	I collaborate with parents of children with disabilities.				
19.	I ensure the school provides additional time for children with SEN to complete assignments and examinations.				

PART D: Confidence of SENCOs in Role Performance

Instruction manage

This table consists of statements on your confidence level in playing your roles as a SENCO on a four-point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures numbers stand for the following: *1. (Very low) 2. (Low) 3. (High) 4. (Very High)*. For each of the statement, please indicate with a tick (✓) the level of confidence you have in performing these roles.

S/N	Statement	1	2	3	4
Managerial, administrative and collaborative task					
1.	I feel confident in ensuring the implementation of IE in designated schools.				
2.	I can confidently assess children with SEN.				
3.	I confidently monitor IE practices				
4.	I can confidently provide information to educators on the progress of children with SEN.				
5.	I confidently collaborate with parents of children with disabilities.				
6.	I feel confident evaluating the performance of children with SEN.				
7.	I feel confident when providing information to parents about the progress of their children with SEN.				
Teacher support					
8.	I feel confident when monitoring the progress of children with SEN.				
9.	I am confident in taking decision concerning the educational placement of children with SEN.				
10.	I confidently prepare the activities teachers need in teaching children with SEN.				
11.	I can confidently hold regular meetings with the school to ensure the school adheres to IE practices.				
12.	I feel confident in assisting teachers in adapting the curriculum.				
13.	I confidently supervise IE practices.				
Ensuring a conducive school environment and screening for identification					
14.	I am confident in training teachers to work with children with SEN.				
15.	I am confident in identifying the categories of children with disabilities in schools.				

16.	I can confidently supervise teachers on alternative assessment for children with SEN.				
17.	I ensure a conducive school environment.				

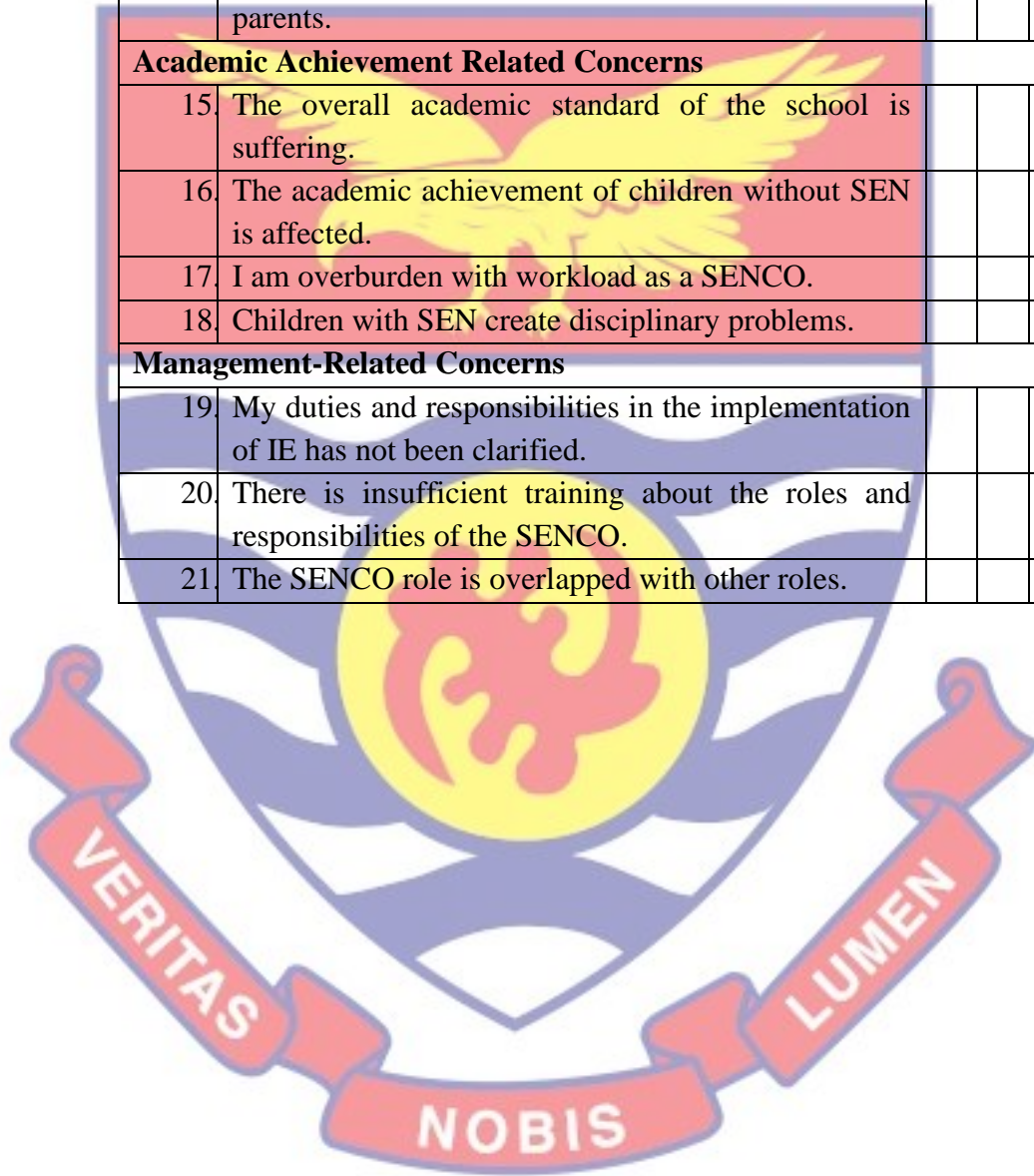
PART E: Concerns of SENCOs in Implementing Inclusive Education

Instruction

Below is a table to be completed. It consists of statement on the concerns you have in implementing IE three-point scale of 1; 2 and 3. The numbers stand for the following: *0. (Not at all concerned) 1. (A little concerned) 2. (moderately concerned) 3. (extremely concerned).* For each of the statement, please indicate with a tick (✓) the number that *best* corresponds to your level of concern in implementing IE.

S/N	Statement	0	1	2	3
Classroom-Related Concerns					
1.	It is difficult to give equal opportunities to all children in an inclusive school.				
2.	It is difficult to maintain discipline in schools.				
3.	I am not proficient in supervising the use of special devices and equipment used by children with special education needs.				
4.	Children with SEN are not accepted by children without SEN in the school.				
School-Related Concerns					
5.	The schools do not have enough funding for implementing IE successfully.				
6.	There is inadequate para-professional staff available to support children with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, OT).				
7.	The schools have difficulty in accommodating children with various SEN because of inappropriate infrastructure (for, e.g., architectural barriers).				
8.	The schools have inadequate special educators to support teaching.				
Self-Related Concerns					
9.	I do not have knowledge and skills required to supervise teachers in teaching children with special education needs.				
10.	I have difficulty promoting the use of appropriate teaching strategies and class environment that enhance the learning of children with SEN.				

11.	I am not competent enough to supervise teachers to use multi-sensory approach for children with varied educational needs.				
12.	I am not able to work with parents in the implementation of IE.				
13.	I am not able to communicate effectively with the teachers.				
14.	I am not able to communicate effectively with the parents.				
Academic Achievement Related Concerns					
15.	The overall academic standard of the school is suffering.				
16.	The academic achievement of children without SEN is affected.				
17.	I am overburden with workload as a SENCO.				
18.	Children with SEN create disciplinary problems.				
Management-Related Concerns					
19.	My duties and responsibilities in the implementation of IE has not been clarified.				
20.	There is insufficient training about the roles and responsibilities of the SENCO.				
21.	The SENCO role is overlapped with other roles.				



APPENDIX G: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

INTERVIEW GUIDE ON ROLES OF SENCOs IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Please what is your educational qualification?
2. Please tell me your rank in Ghana Education Service
3. Please how long have been a SENCO?

Instruction: please I want you to listen carefully to some statements about implementing IE based on what you do and experience in your district. Please there is no right or wrong answers.

SECTION B: ROLES OF SENCOS

1. Please is the SENCO role by appointment or through application?
 - a. If it is through application, please kindly describe the process you went through to be appointed
 - b. If it is through appointment, please kindly describe what led to the appointment
2. Please does the appointment letter provide a description of your roles?
 - a. If yes, please kindly tell me some of the roles
 - b. If no, do you have any document that spells out your role (e.g. like head teachers hand book)
 - i. If yes, please kindly tell me some of the roles stated in the document
 - ii. If no, how did you get to know your roles? (*if the person indicates through training then ignore question 3, and ask some of the main issues in the training programme, if the person does not indicate through training, follow up with question 3*)
3. Please have you received any training after taken this role?
 - a. If yes, how many times
 - b. Please kindly tell me what the training programmes usually focus on?
4. Please are you assigned any other role apart from the SENCO role?
 - a. If yes, kindly tell me what you do apart from the SENCO's role

- b. If no, please have you heard about other colleagues who perform other duties outside the SENCO role?
5. How many children with SEN do you have in your district?
 - a. How many males and females do you have?
 - b. Please kindly tell some of the categories of children with SEN in your District
 6. What specific things do you do to implement IE in schools?
 7. Are your roles directly supervised by the regional co-ordinator?
 8. Is there any collaboration between the regional co-ordinator and yourself?
 - a. If yes, please briefly describe what goes into the collaboration
 - b. If no, do you think collaboration between the district co-ordinator and the regional co-ordinator is necessary?
 - i. Please kindly give reasons for your response

SECTION C: KNOWLEDGE ON ROLES

1. Please what roles are you expected to play to make IE effective?
2. Please which of these would you consider most important?

SECTION D: PERFORMANCE OF THEIR ROLES

1. Describe how you identify children with SEN in you district (Probe for assessment techniques)
2. Do you organise screening in the schools in your district?
 - a. If yes, please how do you go about it?
3. Please do you play any role in screening pupils before enrolment in kindergarten your district?
 - a. If yes, how do you go about it?
 - b. If no, please who is responsible for that role?
4. Please kindly describe the strategies you use in creating public awareness on disability issues?
5. Please describe what you do to support the head teachers in your district to effectively implement IE
6. Please describe what you do to support teachers to handle children with SEN in the classroom.
7. Please describe what you do to support parents of children with SEN in your district.

SECTION D: CONFIDENCE

1. Please are you confident in the roles you play?
 - a. If yes, why do you say that?
 - i. Please what specific roles are you confident in playing
 - b. If no, why do you say that?

- i. Please what specific roles are you not confident in playing

SECTION E: CHALLENGES

1. Please what challenges do you face in performing your duties
2. What have you done to overcome the challenges in playing your roles
3. Please describe the challenges in the implementation of IE in your district
4. Are authorities aware of those challenges
5. What has been done to address the challenges
6. Please what can be done to facilitate the SENCOs role in your district?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME



APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This is an informed consent form for a research project on Roles of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators in the implementation of inclusive education in Basic schools in Southern Ghana.

SN	DESCRIPTION	√
1	My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation.	
2	I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	
3	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation and have been satisfied with the explanation provided to me.	
4	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g., use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.) to me.	
5	I understand notes will be written during the interview and an audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made.	
6	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	
7	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	
8	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	

Researcher's Signature	Name	Date
Participant's Signature	Name	Date

APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW (SENCO 3)

DURATION OF INTERVIEW: **57 minutes**

Interviewer: Good morning Sir, my name is Martha-Pearl and I am conducting a study on roles of Special Educational Need Coordinators (SENCOs) in the Implementation of Inclusive Education. I want to know your roles and duties and responsibilities as far as inclusive education is concerned, find out some of the challenges you may have as far as your roles and the implementation of IE is concerned. I am special educator myself. I have practiced it for a very long time, the only difference is that am not with the Ghana Education Service, so please feel free and let's interact, there are no right or wrong answers. Whatever we discuss is strictly confidential, I will be saving this data for a maximum of five years under strict confidentiality. After the findings I hope to bring a four-page summary to your district. Please welcome to our interaction.

Interviewee: Thank you Madam

Interviewer: Sir please do you agree that there wouldn't be any monetary gain for participating in the study?

Interviewee: I agree

Interviewer: Do you also agree that I record this conversation and also make note out of the conversation?

Interviewee: Very much in agreement

Interviewer: I will need about 45 minutes of your time depending on how we interact

Interviewee: Ok

Interviewer: Please, what's your educational qualification?

Interviewee: First degree

Interviewer: What is your rank in GES?

Interviewee: Assistant Director 2

Interviewer: How long have you been a SENCO?

Interviewee: For the past 8 years

Interviewer: How did you get this role, was it by appointment or you applied?

Interviewee: It was an appointment

Interviewer: So how were you appointed?

Interviewee: After my first degree from UEW, I was posted to a district I don't want to mention the name as a special education resource teacher in the classroom for a cluster of schools where I assist learners of disability to catch up with the "norm". After 6 months, the district was created and after the district was created, with my

hard work my special education coordinator recommended me to get to the other district as the sped coordinator over there, so there I was given my appointment letter and I have to move to the new district created and I became the sped coordinator there. It all started in 2013 and I've been on that position from 2013 till now, that's how it happened.

Interviewer: When you were appointed, were you given any hard document that spelt your roles in the implementation of Inclusive Education, thus IE?

Interviewee: After our appointment, I was given a letter of appointment and the roles were clearly specified and then I was following those roles.

Interviewer: What roles are you expected to play based on your appointment letter?

Interviewee: They are a lot and that is what am currently doing

Interviewer: Sir please kindly describe the roles based on what you do

Interviewee: I do screening of children in order to identify children with special needs and then referral of learners with special needs either to the assessment centre or to the hospital or medical assistant and I monitor activities in the schools and provide in-class support services that is being in the classroom to support learners with disability or special needs during lessons and then visit homes to encourage parents who have children with special needs, then also managing and assisting learners who are using assistive devices and how to take care of them and then when they are in need of such assistive devices I refer them to get one and I also do remedial teaching after the main teaching, we do remedial teaching for learners with special needs to also capture. Most importantly I train teachers on special educational issues in order for them to have knowledge and when I'm not around, they can implement it to assist learners with disability and the last one I will talk about is examination adaptation that is ensuring that exams are adapted to suit their needs. Also, I alert WAEC on special needs issue in order to give special attention and needs to learners who will be writing the BECE for example printing their questions in both prints and providing them with extra time for them to work. Another thing I forgot since my district is a UNICEF sponsored district I collaborate with them to see what we can do to let inclusive education work in my district. I think that is the main thing I do for now.

Interviewer: After taking this role as a SENCO have you been receiving training programmes to enhance your knowledge and skills?

Interviewee: Yes, I remember the regional special education coordinator do organize some training for we the coordinators in the region and I happen to attend an inclusive education organized by the British council which was held in their premises, I remember that one, there was visual impairment training and there was an autism management which was also organized by the coordination through the assistance of American Autism Society who came down to have a training with us and also ID management strategies and some couple of training, I will say about 6 kind of different training within the 8 years but we still need more

Interviewer: So basically, the training programs, what has always been the focus? Are there main focus or agenda in most of training, is it tailored in a particular direction especially directed towards the implementation of inclusive education?

Interviewee: Most of the time, the training was focused on the special school, but the British one was broad and it cuts across. For specific one on implementation of inclusive education I can't remember.

Interviewer: Do you think you will need more training than what you are receiving now?

Interviewee: I think so, we need more than we had and I think it should go with certificates to prove. With the previous training, only 2 came with certificates and the rest were workshops without any certificate to proof. And I think it should focus more on the implementation of IE.

Interviewer: Apart from you being called a SENCO, are you playing any other role, are you entrusted with other roles because some of your colleagues have some additional roles like girl child educators.

Interviewee: There is no specific additional role but then if there is a coordinator to play in the office and the coordinator is not around, director just gives directives and we take up but it is not specific but we play other roles indirectly

Interviewer: But have you heard that some of your colleagues have additional responsibilities aside the SENCO role?

Interviewee: Not really the only thing I know is most of our colleagues after some time, they are given different roles and then the SENCO is taken off so they divert and it worries me a lot.

Interviewer: If they divert and get other roles don't you think it may have the implementation of IE, looking at the limited number, do you think it's ok, the number of SENCOs now is ok to manage?

Interviewee: No, it affects us because some of our colleagues, the districts that are closer to us, we sometimes collaborate and work together and

we seek ideas from them and before we realise, they've been moved from SENCO to circuit supervisor and that one is abandoned and it makes the work difficult. I know of a district who has converted their special education resource teachers to classroom teachers when you get to that district there is no single resource teacher in the cluster of schools to assist, I feel is not right and the directors don't see the importance of special educators, when they see them as special resource teachers, they feel it's a waste and because they lack teachers, they have to use them in the classroom. As I speak my district is very broad, I have 6 circuits widely spread and I have special education teacher and that one I had to fight the regional coordinator before I can could get him. I alone moving from school to school is worrying

Interviewer: So how many children with SEN I mean special education needs do you have in your district?

Interviewee: The number is increasing daily, it's over 200

Interviewer: Are you the only one managing the whole district?

Interviewee: Yes, and they all need special attention, its worrying

Interviewer: So how many males and females do you have currently in your district

Interviewee: I have about 122 females, and I have about 78 males

Interviewer: So basically, what categories of SEN do you have in your district?

Interviewee: I have visual impairment which is the highest number and most of the children are with only one eye, then we come to hearing impairment that one is minimal, then the intellectual disability and I also have the physical disabilities which is manageable. I don't want to talk about the challenges now

Interviewer: Apart from what you said earlier are there other roles you want to add?

Interviewee: What I've identified in practicing is collaboration with parents and sensitization to parents with sped needs especially during PTA meetings so working with the parents, I'm getting more results than working in isolation with the children only in school so that was my focus, going to the homes, meeting the parents and working with the parents, I'm achieving more than working in the school with children alone.

Interviewer: Are you trying to say that collaboration is very important in the SENCO role?

Interviewee: Yeah

Interviewer: So I wanted to find out from you based on the roles you perform, are you directly supervised by the regional coordinator, do you go to him or her or he or she comes to you, is there any direct supervision or coordination or collaboration with the Regional coordinator

Interviewee: Yeah, there is direct supervision and coordination by them, there is also supervision at my district level where my Head of Department do supervise me well but sometimes the regional coordinator too comes to direct or supervise and collaborate with me. I remember when I organize in service training for teachers on SPED, he is around and supported me to do the workshop when there is screening, he comes around and support me, I always invite him and most of the time he honours my invitation and that is the collaboration

Interviewer: You talked about the Head of Department; Do you have a District Inclusive Education Team?

Interviewee: There is nothing like that, I am even hearing it for the first time

Interviewer: As a SENCO, what are some of the roles you are expected to play to make Inclusive Education effective?

Interviewee: I think training teachers and screening will be the things that I will say should be first because you need to identify the children first and you need to provide in class support service and monitor the SPED activities for example you cannot be in the school all the time therefore when the teachers are trained, they are to implement sped techniques, you go and monitor their activities and see whether they are playing or implementing the roles on what they were taught and also planning IEP for the child and then setting a goal in a period and after that you need to measure if you've achieved those goals to improve the child's standard. So those are the roles I think I am to play

Interviewer: With the duties you have spelt, is there any one that you deem as the most important or a key role for the SENCO role?

Interviewee: Yes, I've identified some major ones that is very key that is screening that's identification, then like I said training of the teachers because the teachers are always with them. I only go there to monitor and see if they are doing the right thing so if the teachers do not know what should be done for the child then who will even give me information? I think where the child can get the needed assistance that's the referral. Some of them will be beyond me, you have to be referred to the National Assessment centre especially for the school placement because what I know about inclusive education is that, is not all the conditions that can

suit our public schools, the mild and moderate can be managed in our public school while the severe and profound because of lack of special educators can be taken to special school let me cite an example, a child who is totally blind and in our public basic school, there is no single teacher who can teach a braille , it's better that child is taken to the school of the blind which is a special school and that child when in the public school will not benefit so when we see such condition, we will refer the National Assessment Centre then after assessment they can do the right school placementcollaboration with parents and sensitization of parents with children with SPED needs especially during PTA meetings is also very important, I must say that am achieving more work with parents than working in the school with the children alone..... so I think those are the major ones. They are very key.

Interviewer: So based on your roles, if you are asked how effective and well do you know your roles, on a scale of low, medium, high, where will you place yourself in terms of your level of knowledge.

Interviewee: So far, I will not boast but I will place myself high

Interviewer: Why?

Interviewee: Because I play my roles well and I know what to do and I have the inclusive documents and there is nothing in the document beyond my control except issues beyond me that I will need to refer for onward action so confidently looking at what I'm doing, I can place myself high

Interviewer: You talked about the need to identify children with SEN which is very critical so in terms of identification of children with SEN, how do you go about it as a SENCO in your district?

Interviewee: I do organise screening on school basis then I invite the special education resource teacher to assist. When I get to the school we look at the physical appearance that can sometimes speak to you, we do ear screening. I have an otoscope that we had a training on it at school and we know how to use it then we screen for hearing test then we do eye screening using the Snellen chart that can let you suspect it and I can say most of the time when we suspect it means you have to go for check-up, most of the time, it's proven and then I have talked about the physical appearance, the academic performance of the child also speaks to us

Interviewer: As you have already indicated that you do screening in the district who is in charge of screening the children who enter KG1 because the IE policy requires children to be screened at that level

Interviewee: We normally undergo this on my first day at school, but during my first day at school because I'm alone I will not be able to capture all, I have over 50 schools in my district, but after my first day at school, because I will not be able to capture all then we begin to go from school to school but it takes time, sometimes before we could conclude the year is over looking at how the district and schools are scattered, that's the problem. We are not able to capture all the schools before another batch comes in.

Interviewer: But do you include any other ministry apart from the Ministry of Education?

Interviewee: Yes, Ghana Health Service do collaborate with us but currently they do their own thing without the knowledge of GES. First, they move into the schools, sometimes I will be on normal monitoring then I meet the Ghana Health Service doing screening for the school children and I don't even have any knowledge on it and I find it difficult to join the team to do anything

Interviewer: Shouldn't there be a collaboration between the educators and those in health?

Interviewee: I think for GES, they are able to collaborate but when Ghana Health Service plan their activities and it is not known to us, there is no way they can go with us, I remember at the meeting with GHS they brought a question that they were in a school to screen them and the teachers were not allowing them so I asked have you written to the GES director that you will be in that school to carry out the screening? At least you could have written to them, director could have a sped coordinator to accompany you to the school and even write to the head teacher that a team is coming for this and you would not be rejected. You didn't write to GES and now you are bringing a complaint and I think they learnt a there and I know the next one they will collaborate with us.

Interviewer: You talked about sensitization; how do you go about it? How do you create public awareness in your district? Please kindly describe how you create awareness in your district on IE and disabilities.

Interviewee: I use four means, first, PTA, even with that you can't get all the parents I go to churches in the district on Sundays and we talk to them and I also go to mosque for education and also the community communication centre. With the help of the assemblyman, they give me one hour and people call in and I answer. So these are the four means I've been using

Interviewer: Based on our conversation, you handle quite a number of schools, this means you work with head teachers, teachers and parents. How do you support them in handling children with SEN?

Interviewee: What to do is to train them for them to understand their condition both the head teacher and the teacher and then sometimes you are there physically to encourage them to do more. Those are the two things we do for them.

Interviewer: The parents of children with SEN, are they supportive? Are they free to describe their children's condition to you, do they understand your role as a SENCO?

Interviewee: Anytime I call them they are lovely, they welcome me, they understand my explanations and they are ready to work with me. It is fifty-fifty. Some immediately you explain, they take actions and before you realise, the problems are getting solved, some too are reluctant, they really neglect the children and sometimes, it is because of poverty, they don't have the means

Interviewer: Would say you are confident in playing all these roles?

Interviewee: Yeah, very very confident

Interviewer: Why do you say you are very confident?

Interviewee: When you are performing an activity and you know exactly what to do and the results are coming, the confidence level go higher because if I considered the number of children that have gone through my hand and they are up and I'm seeing improvement and they are climbing the academic ladder, I feel so happy and proud and very confident especially those who received special attention from WAEC and they had good grades and had good schools and they are in now performing, I feel so proud and even cases that were early identified and actions that were taken and now the problems are solved, I feel so great. I remember a child identified with low vision very early as class two, she is now in JHS 1 we identified early, actions were taken she started using glasses, she got to JHS 1 and without the glasses she is ok and i saw that early intervention has solved the problem and when i see such a child why won't I feel confident?

Interviewer: Thanks for the good elaboration about your roles. Please I want to please find out if you have any challenges in playing your roles.

Interviewee: Mainly my challenge is the lack of screening equipment, I mentioned some equipment we used during screening, I had to afford it by myself, you know the otoscope we use for the ear screening is over 1000 Ghana cedis and I have to acquire it

myself, it uses dry cell and anytime I go for screening I have to buy the dry cells and the Snellen chart I think if GES is able to provide... but they don't. We have to look for it ourselves to use in identifying the children. My second challenge is the movement, my district schools are scattered and they are in the villages, when they tell you those villages exist in greater Accra region, you won't believe it but very far away and we have to move. I managed to buy motorbike for myself for easy movement but always I have to buy fuel for myself, the office doesn't provide any TNT or any fuel for movement. Movement is very difficult. Last one is lack of special education resource teachers, you know some of the schools are cluster, we have about four five school in the same compound or area. If we have at least resource teacher there, at least he will be taking care of those issues there and if we are not able to get within a week, he can work and report but we don't have the resource teachers which is making the work difficult

Interviewer: Sir please apart from these challenges that affect your role as a SENCO, kindly share some of the challenges affecting the implementation of IE in your district.

Interviewee: The challenge is the awareness, our district directors though they heard the news in air but what goes into it, most of them are not aware. The I.E policy launching, I attended when they launched it, I was with my former director and my district since then four directors have been changed and they don't have any idea so our directors need more highlight on I.E. Then when we the subordinates speak about it they will understand us more then they will give us the zeal and chances to operate in ensuring successful implementation. The second is infrastructure, though you said inclusive education but the district will build classroom, there are learners with wheelchairs and there is no single ramp that can easily move these children to the classroom. They will get there and other children will come out to carry them to climb to the classrooms and its making thing difficult, accessibility that is it! Then I will talk about more training of our teachers in this aspect. The last time we had training was about three years now and new teachers are coming into the system and they don't have ideas, if you write to organise such training, they will say there is no money and you can't invite teachers to train and you can't give them common water to drink. So awareness, that is the biggest, people are not aware especially parents, they are not

aware of this inclusive education you talking about which sometimes makes collaborating with them difficult.

Interviewer: You just talked about training and money, is funding a problem in your district or for your district you have enough funds to implement IE.

Interviewee: Funding is a problem in your district, there is no funding anywhere to support this I.E, not at all. Because we want some work to be done to report on you put in your own resources so that you can get a report and write when they request for your report, that's it. If you sit down, you don't know what to report on but for them to see that you are also working you have to put in your own resources to get the work done so that you can report on. That's it

Interviewer: Are the authorities aware of the challenges and if they do, what are they doing to overcome these challenges?

Interviewee: They are very much aware ranging from district to the regional level, but they are the same people who will keep on worrying demanding data every day and every night and they will want you to provide that data no matter how you go about it. But the challenges, they are so much aware. When you report them, you become an enemy

Interviewer: Do you see yourself retiring as a SENCO or if there is an opportunity for you to leave, would you want to leave for another designation or anything?

Interviewee: Oh yes because when I started, my colleagues were complaining and they have been saying it, I was not getting them and when they were leaving, when they changed to the other side leaving the SENCO work there is an improvement and they are testifying and I can see so when it happens like that and the chance comes, I will leave. Because your efforts are not appreciated. You are doing the work but you are not seen but sometimes because of humanity we should continue but if the chance comes, we won't hesitate to change

Interviewer: Is the SENCO work stressful, is it something that is draining you or causing some sort of anxiety pushing you because of the challenges you are having?

Interviewee: No, the SENCO work is a normal work, is not stressful, the fact is that when you have the love and zeal for the SPED work, you won't see any problem with unless you don't have a desire for it. I don't see any problem with it.is a relax work, with SENCO work you don't rush with it, it is process by process, When the results are coming you will feel good. There is no stress provided

resources are available but when you are using your own resources, there will be stress and discouragement. For me the only stress is that the resource teachers are not there and am alone but the zeal and the love I take it. So it is fine.

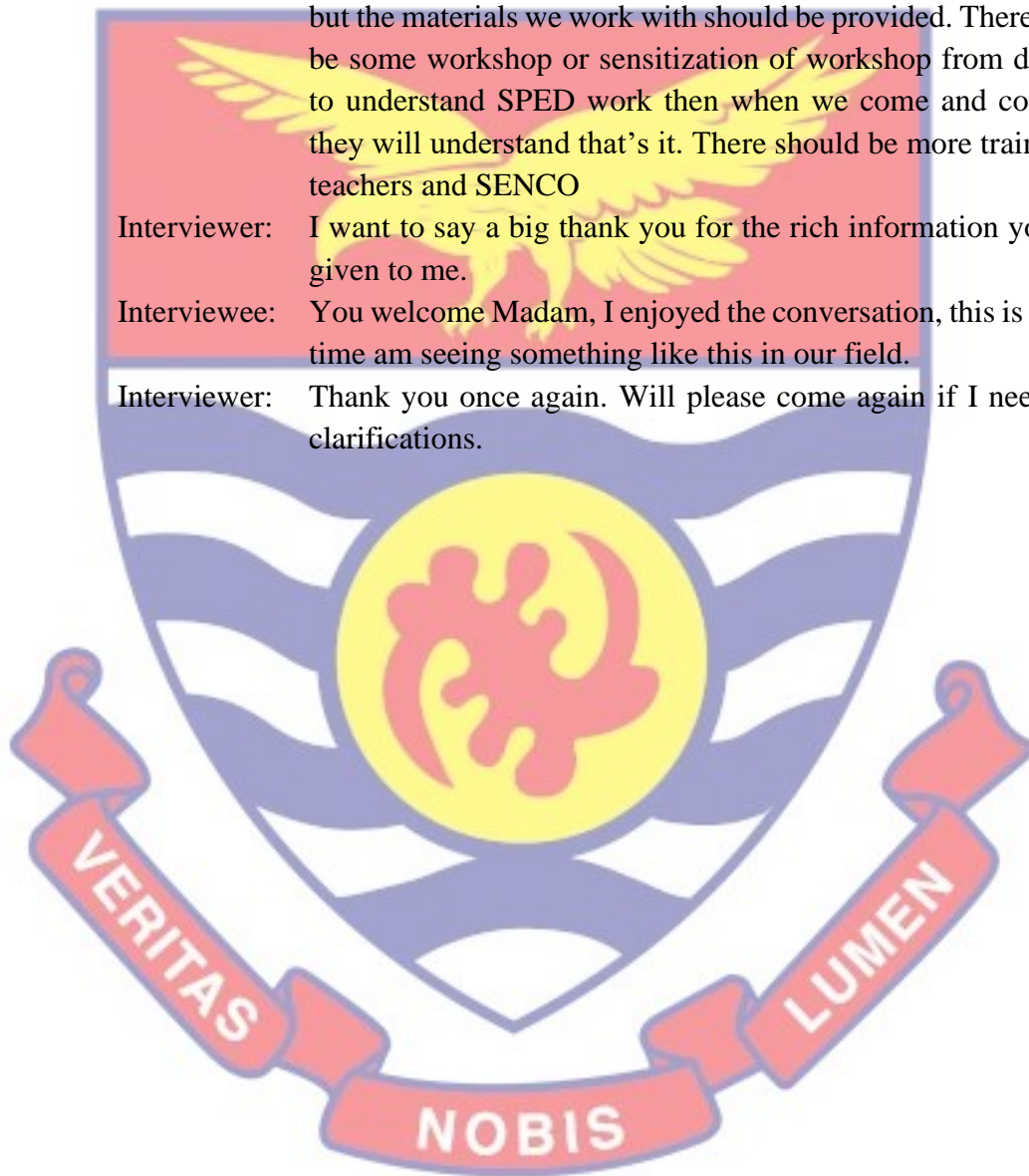
Interviewer: Finally, what can be done to facilitate SENCO roles in your district to make the roles simpler and more flexible and effective in the implementation of Inclusive Education?

Interviewee: I think resources should be provided, it's not only about money but the materials we work with should be provided. There should be some workshop or sensitization of workshop from directors to understand SPED work then when we come and complain, they will understand that's it. There should be more training for teachers and SENCO

Interviewer: I want to say a big thank you for the rich information you have given to me.

Interviewee: You welcome Madam, I enjoyed the conversation, this is the first time am seeing something like this in our field.

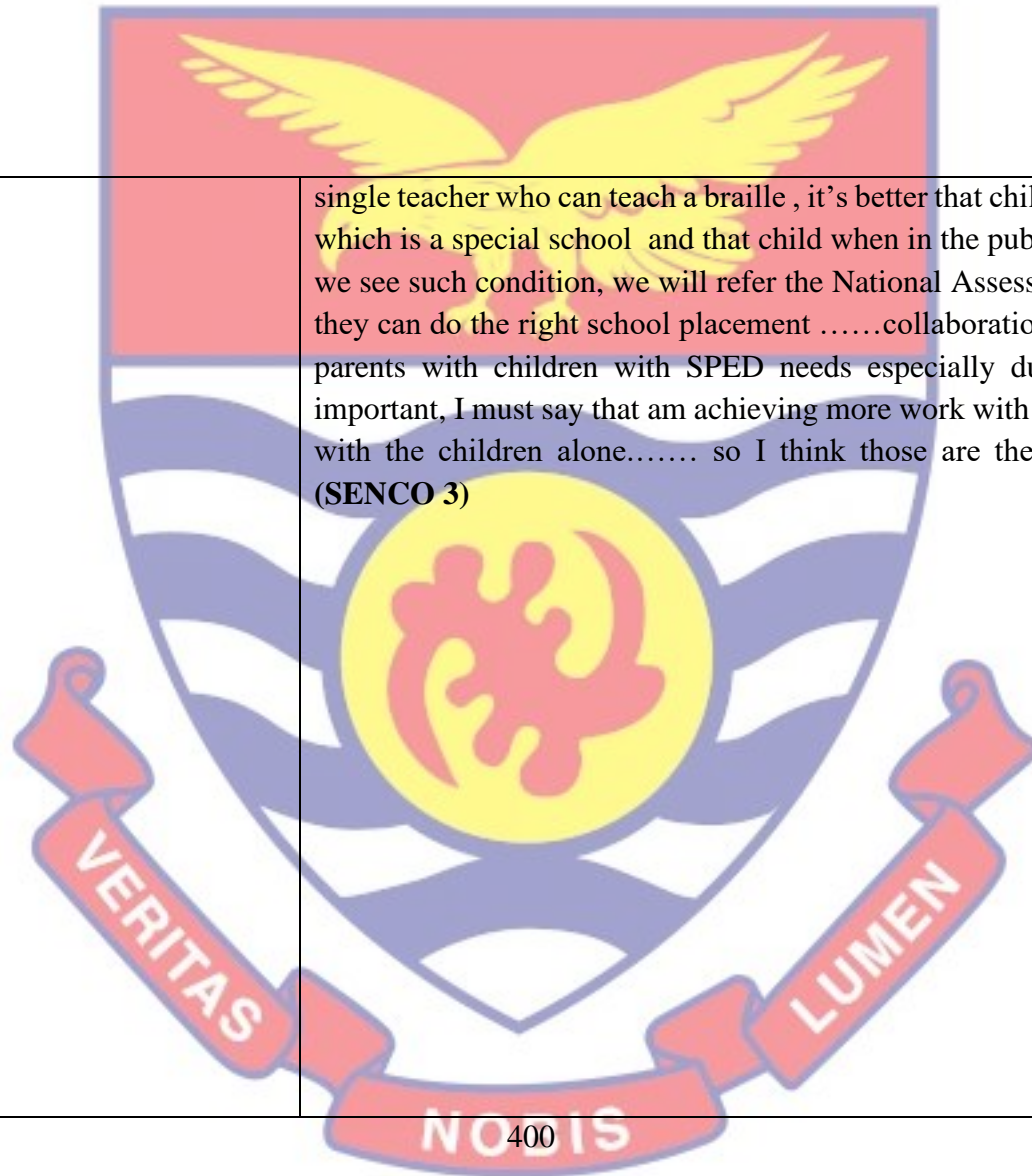
Interviewer: Thank you once again. Will please come again if I need more clarifications.



APPENDIX J: CODING SCHEME

<u>Main themes</u>	<u>Categories of Codes</u>	<u>Example of Patterns of response</u>
<p>1. Level of knowledge of SENCOS in playing their roles in the implementation of IE</p>	<p><i>Level of knowledge in playing their roles</i></p>	<p>For the SENCO role am playing I have very high knowledge if you will allow me to use very high. I know what I should do in this work. As I said earlier, I was a resource teacher for long before they gave me the SENCO role and I have done special education too. (SENCO 2)</p>
	<p><i>Knowledge about the expected roles in the implementation of IE</i></p>	<p>collect data on children with special needs, counsel parents of children with special needs in the pre-school, maintain or follow up records of people with special needs, creating awareness on special need issues through public education, supporting classroom teachers to effectively manage children with special needs, advise the district director on disability issues in the schools.... these are some of the roles they expect us to do. (SENCO 9)</p>

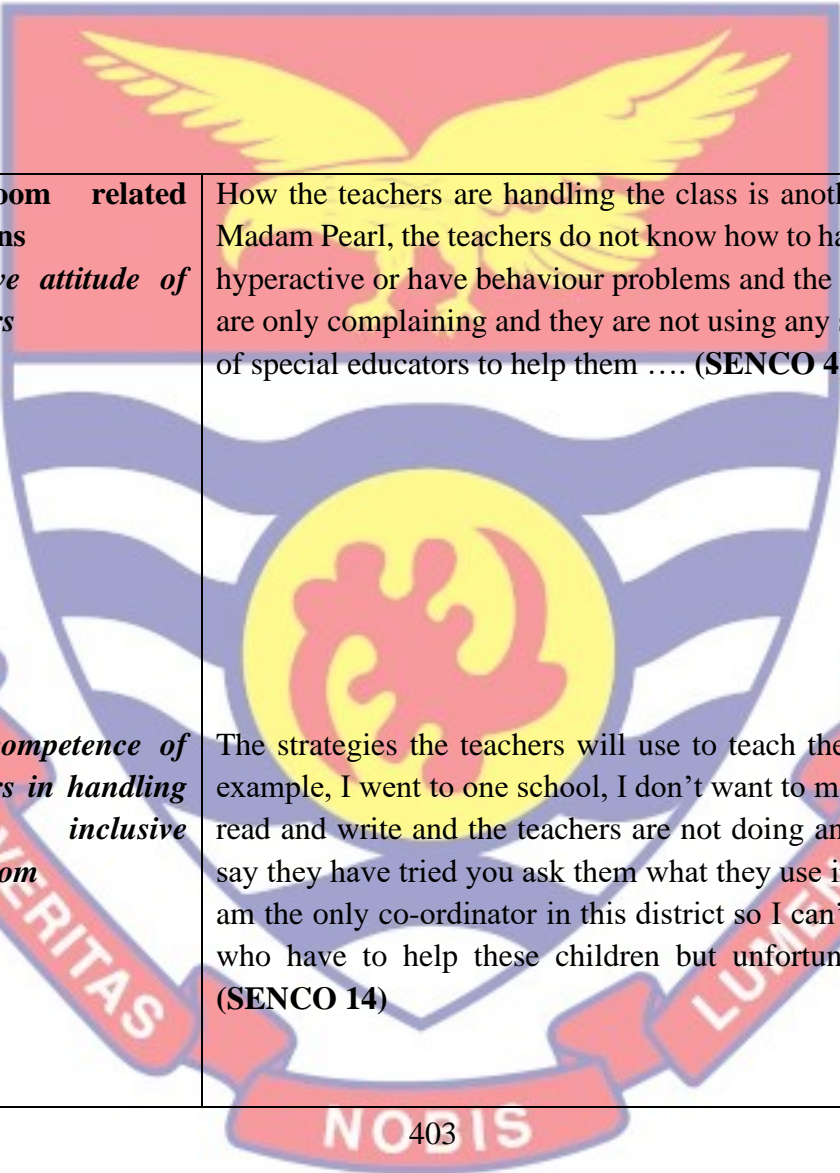
<p>2. Roles of SENCOS in the implementation of IE</p>	<p><i>Duties and responsibilities of the SENCOS</i></p>	<p>I co-ordinate special education activities in the district and I do screening for children with special needs in the schools. I ensure children with SEN are enrolled in school. I prepare Individualised education programme for individuals with special needs. I provide in class support to teachers and provide remedial teaching for children with disabilities in the classroom. I write reports on learner with special needs to the regional coordinator. I also do counselling for parents and train teachers as well. I do educational placement. I forgot and also monitoring schools and making referrals. Madam we also tell them some of the things they can do teaching children with disabilities like the method and all that.</p> <p>(SENCO 1)</p>
	<p><i>Prioritised SENCO roles</i></p>	<p>Yes, I've identified some major ones that is very key that is screening that's identification, then like I said training of the teachers because the teachers are always with them. I only go there to monitor and see if they are doing the right thing so if the teachers do not know what should be done for the child then who will even give me information? I think where the child can get the needed assistance that's the referral. Some of them will be beyond me, you have to be referred to the National Assessment centre especially for the school placement because what I know about inclusive education is that, is not all the conditions that can suit our public schools, the mild and moderate can be managed in our public school whiles the severe and profound because of lack of special educators can be taken to special school let me cite an example, a child who is totally blind and in our public basic school, there is no</p>



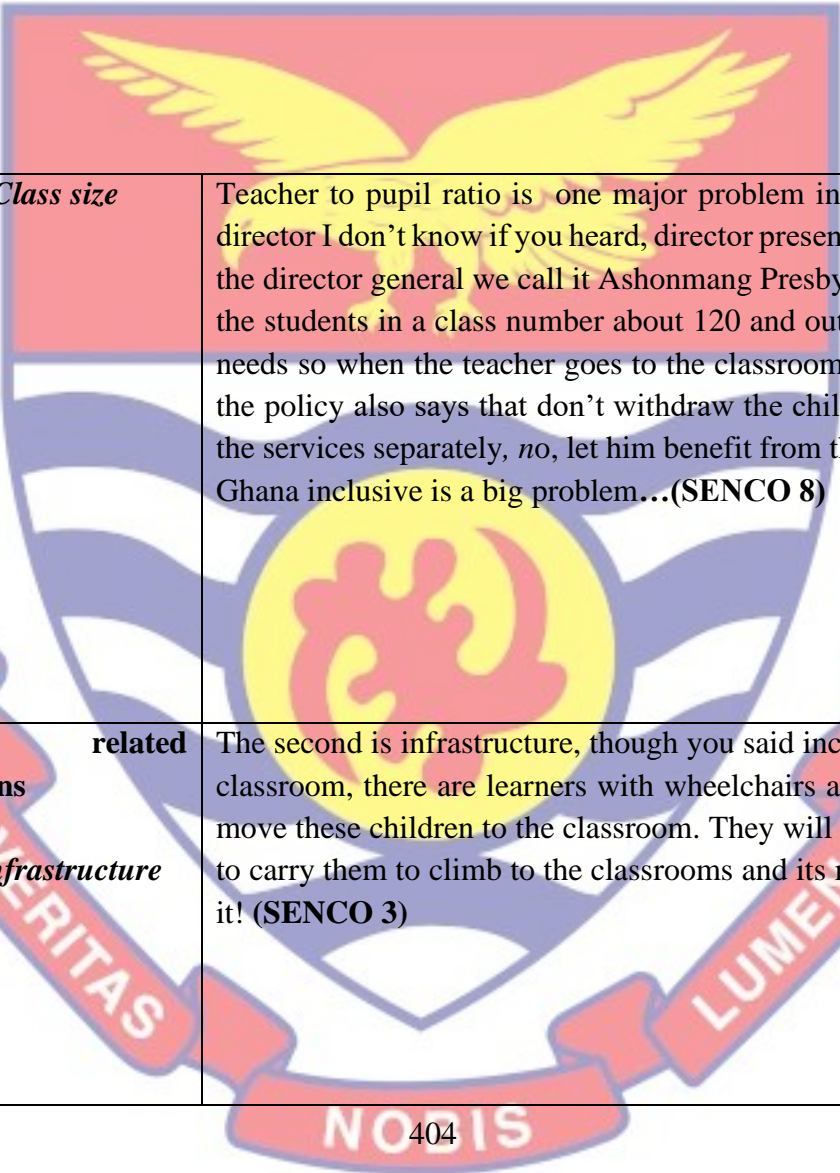
single teacher who can teach a braille , it's better that child is taken to the school of the blind which is a special school and that child when in the public school will not benefit so when we see such condition, we will refer the National Assessment Centre then after assessment they can do the right school placementcollaboration with parents and sensitization of parents with children with SPED needs especially during PTA meetings is also very important, I must say that am achieving more work with parents than working in the school with the children alone..... so I think those are the major ones. They are very key.
(SENCO 3)

<p>How SENCOs' perform their roles in the implementation of IE</p>	<p>Identification of children with SEN</p>	<p>Please for the screening we mostly do eye and ear screening and we use the E chat for smaller pupils and for the older ones we should have used the LogMAR but we don't have the LogMAR. So for the ear screening we use the otoscope to check the outer ear to see if there are wax or fungi or any other thing in the ear. If we see anything we advise. If it is just wax we ask them to apply a little oil so that the wax will come out and they can clean it. We advise that they shouldn't put anything into the ear. If we see it may be a serious problem, we refer them to professionals (SENCO 1)</p>
	<p>Working with Parents</p>	<p>I visit parents of children with special needs to give them encouragement and to also advise them, give them counselling before they will continue to support the <i>education</i> of their wards. Some of the parents too you can't go without stretching your hands in terms of resources. When they even try and finish JHS you have to follow-up and see if they are learning a trade or they will leave them like that and for the girls they usually become pregnant so we try our best to help the parents. (SENCO 8)</p>
	<p>Supervising and monitoring IE</p>	<p>In my district am in charge of over 65 schools and I have to go to the schools to see if they are doing what will benefit children with disabilities but not only the normal children. When I go there the first person I talk to is the head teacher then I go ahead to the classroom. The teachers will tell me the children with problems and I quickly plan some assessment. Before</p>

		the COVID break I helped one child to have a hearing aid. So when we go check all these things like the environment how conducive it is for the children especially helping the disabled to get wheel chairs and hearing aid (SENCO 15)
	<i>Educational placement</i>	I first of talk to the head teacher and the class teacher for the child to go for assessment. So the school will invite the parents for further discussion then if they agree we send the child for assessment and we do the educational placement based on the child's condition. (SENCO 7)
3. Confidence of SENCOs in the performance of their roles in the implementation of IE		Madam, if not the problem like I will say very very high but there are a lot of problems. But I will say high because I like the job that is why I did special education and me when I do my work am committed. Everybody knows even my regional co-ordinator is aware. The love for the work and the commitment is keeping me like (SENCO 13)

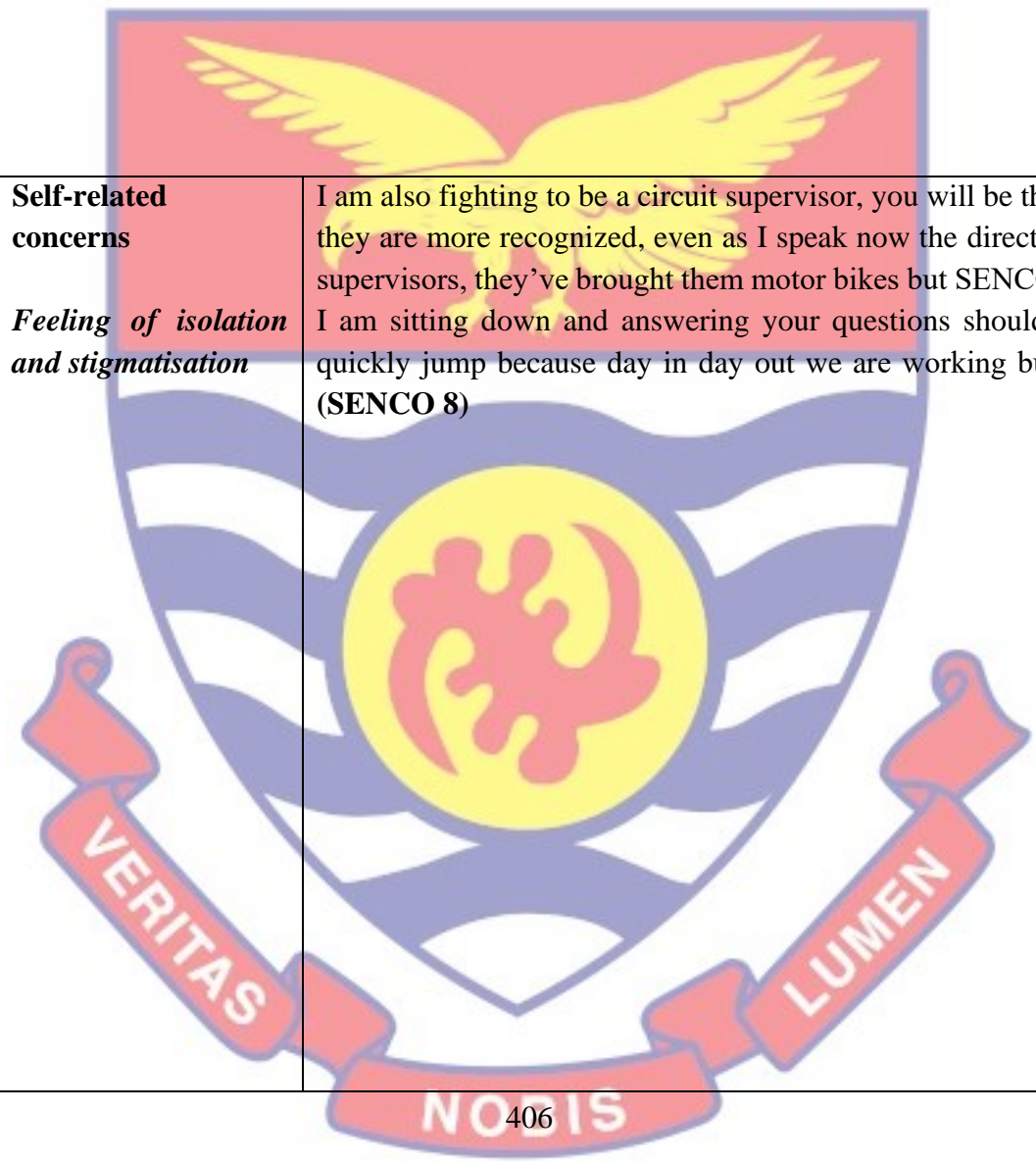


<p>4. Concerns of SENCOs in the implementation of IE</p>	<p>Classroom related concerns <i>Negative attitude of teachers</i></p> <p><i>Poor competence of teachers in handling the inclusive classroom</i></p>	<p>How the teachers are handling the class is another problem or let me say some teachers. Madam Pearl, the teachers do not know how to handle the children especially those who are hyperactive or have behaviour problems and the autistics. If you go to their classroom they are only complaining and they are not using any strategy to help. That is why we need a lot of special educators to help them (SENCO 4)</p> <p>The strategies the teachers will use to teach the pupils is where the big problem is. For example, I went to one school, I don't want to mention the name, a lot of the pupils cannot read and write and the teachers are not doing anything about it. When you ask them they say they have tried you ask them what they use in trying too they can't tell you anything. I am the only co-ordinator in this district so I can't be in one school for long it the teachers who have to help these children but unfortunately they are not pulling their weight. (SENCO 14)</p>
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	<p>Large Class size</p>	<p>Teacher to pupil ratio is one major problem in my district, in one of the schools where director I don't know if you heard, director presented desks to the school during his birthday, the director general we call it Ashonmang Presby , it came in the news , when you go there the students in a class number about 120 and out of the 120 I have 7 children with special needs so when the teacher goes to the classroom, he cannot provide any service at all and the policy also says that don't withdraw the child from the regular classroom and provide the services separately, <i>no</i>, let him benefit from the general this thing but how will it work? Ghana inclusive is a big problem...(SENCO 8)</p>
	<p>School related concerns</p> <p>Poor infrastructure</p>	<p>The second is infrastructure, though you said inclusive education but the district will build classroom, there are learners with wheelchairs and there is no single ramp that can easily move these children to the classroom. They will get there and other children will come out to carry them to climb to the classrooms and its making thing difficult, accessibility that is it! (SENCO 3)</p>

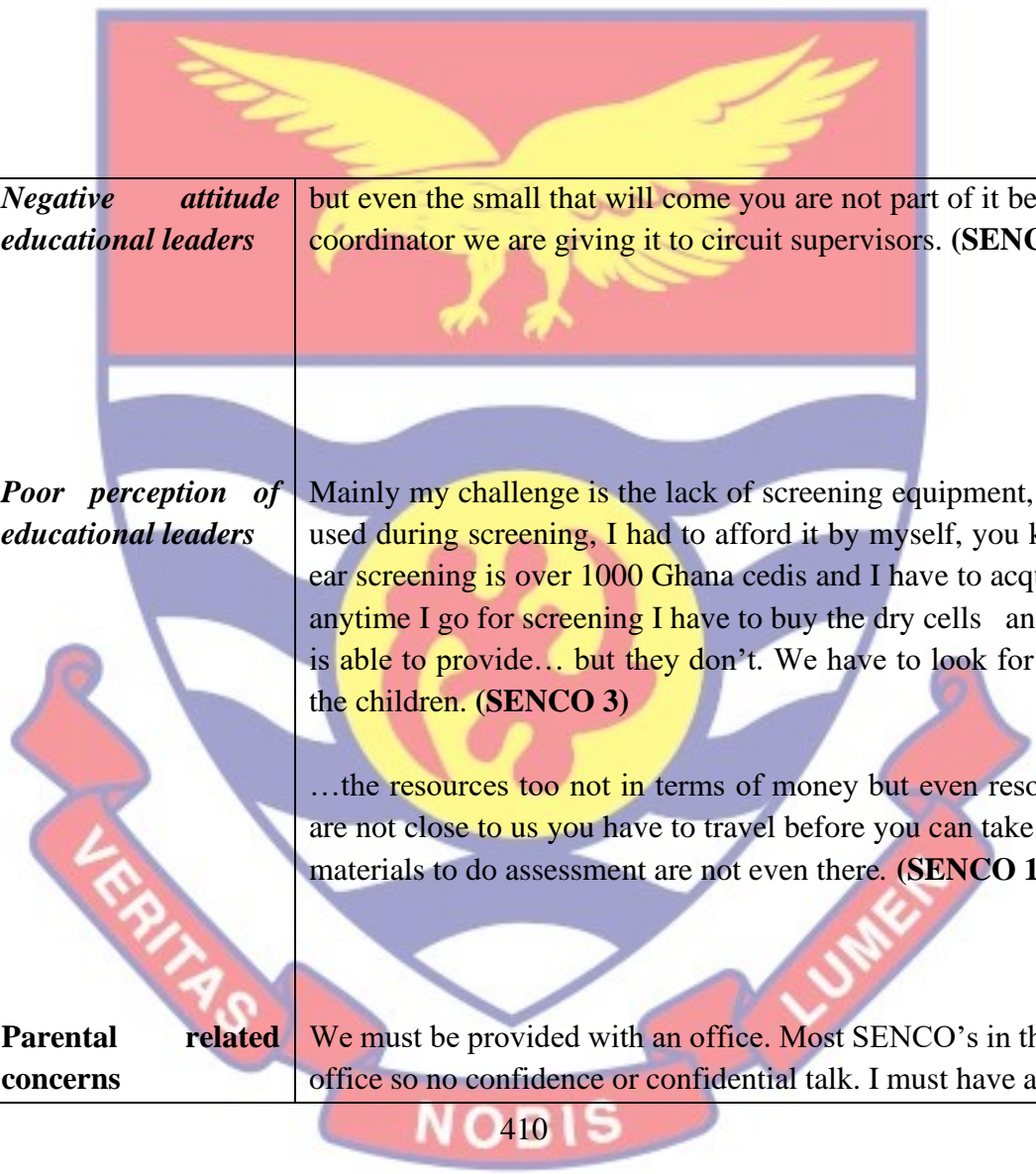
	<p><i>Inadequate funding</i></p>	<p>Madam how can inclusive work well in the school when there are no funds to buy teaching materials and help children who need assessment. Many of the parents of the children with disabilities are poor and they depend on the school to help these children so if the school too has no money then it is a problem. (SENCO 11)</p>
	<p><i>Inadequate resource teachers</i></p>	<p>We need a resource teacher in every school so that they will help it well, madam how can one person in charge of a district get to A,B,C,D,E,F(school) simultaneously to make sure the policy is well implemented, it is tough!. My recommendation is that every school should have a resource teacher that will make it very easy. (SENCO 4)</p>
	<p>Academic achievement-related concerns <i>Overburden workload</i></p>	<p>Sometimes we feel like moving away from special education because of how they are treating us. We are not getting the support and the workload is too much. How can a whole district only two resources teachers and the schools are scattered everywhere? Madam how do we help the children well? (SENCO 13)</p>



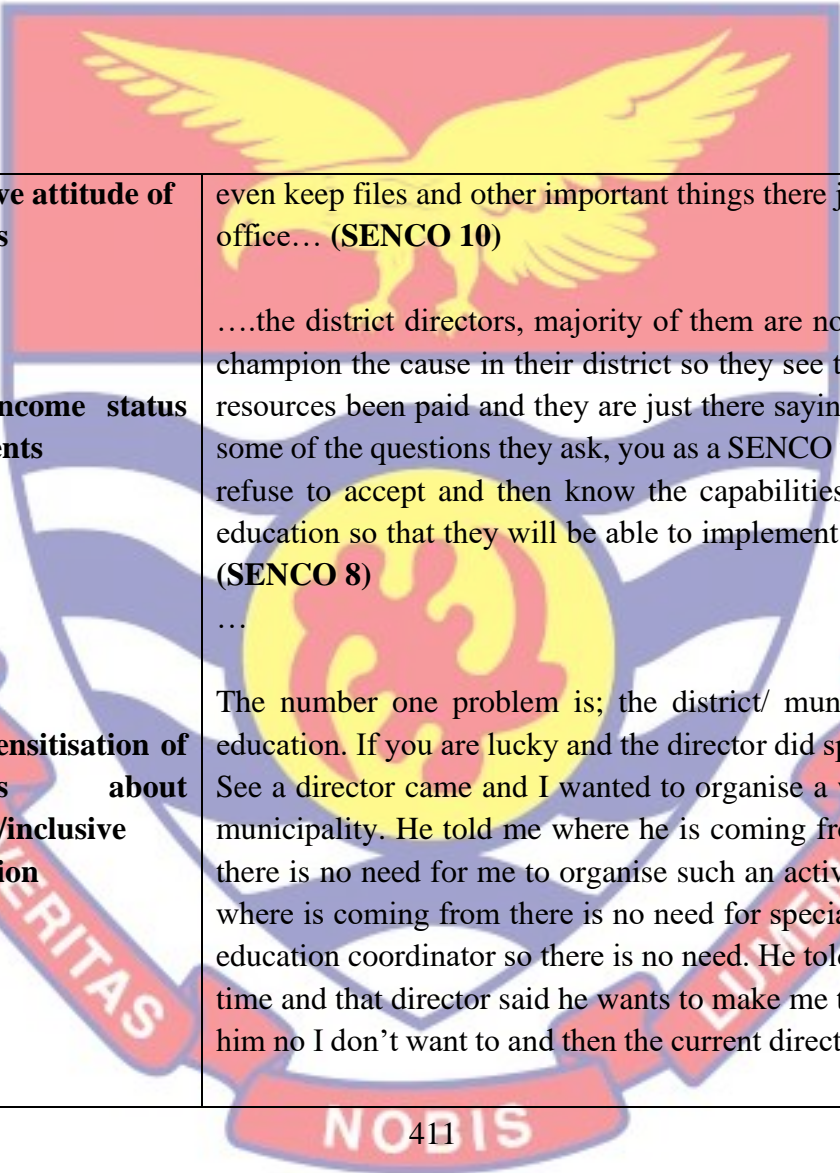
	<p>Self-related concerns</p> <p><i>Feeling of isolation and stigmatisation</i></p>	<p>I am also fighting to be a circuit supervisor, you will be there when they go and come back they are more recognized, even as I speak now the director general recognized the Circuit supervisors, they've brought them motor bikes but SENCO's are not recognized at all so as I am sitting down and answering your questions should there be any other way, I will quickly jump because day in day out we are working but it is like you are not part..... (SENCO 8)</p>
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	<p>Management related concerns</p> <p><i>Funding to train teachers</i></p> <p><i>Funding for transportation</i></p>	<p>Funding is a problem, there is no funding anywhere to support this I.E, not at all. Because we want some work to be done to report on you put in your own resources so that you can get a report and write when they request for your report, that's it. Because of this funding problem the last time we had training was about three years now and new teachers are coming into the system and they don't have ideas, if you write to organise such training, they will say there is no money and you can't invite teachers to train and you can't give them common water to drink.... (SENCO 3)</p> <p>The number one challenge is transportation. You know as a coordinator, you need to be moving round always, and you have no means of transportation so sometimes you are limited as to moving to the various schools and given them the needed help and also to the remote places, that's where most of the challenges are, in the towns where you have the means and is closer it is simple but in the remote areas where you can't access the place, they are not providing any money to go there it becomes difficult for you to supervise what is happening there. I can tell you, in at least every school, you can get a child with a special need and if we can't reach every school because of transportation then what are we doing. (SENCO 2)</p> <p>....</p>
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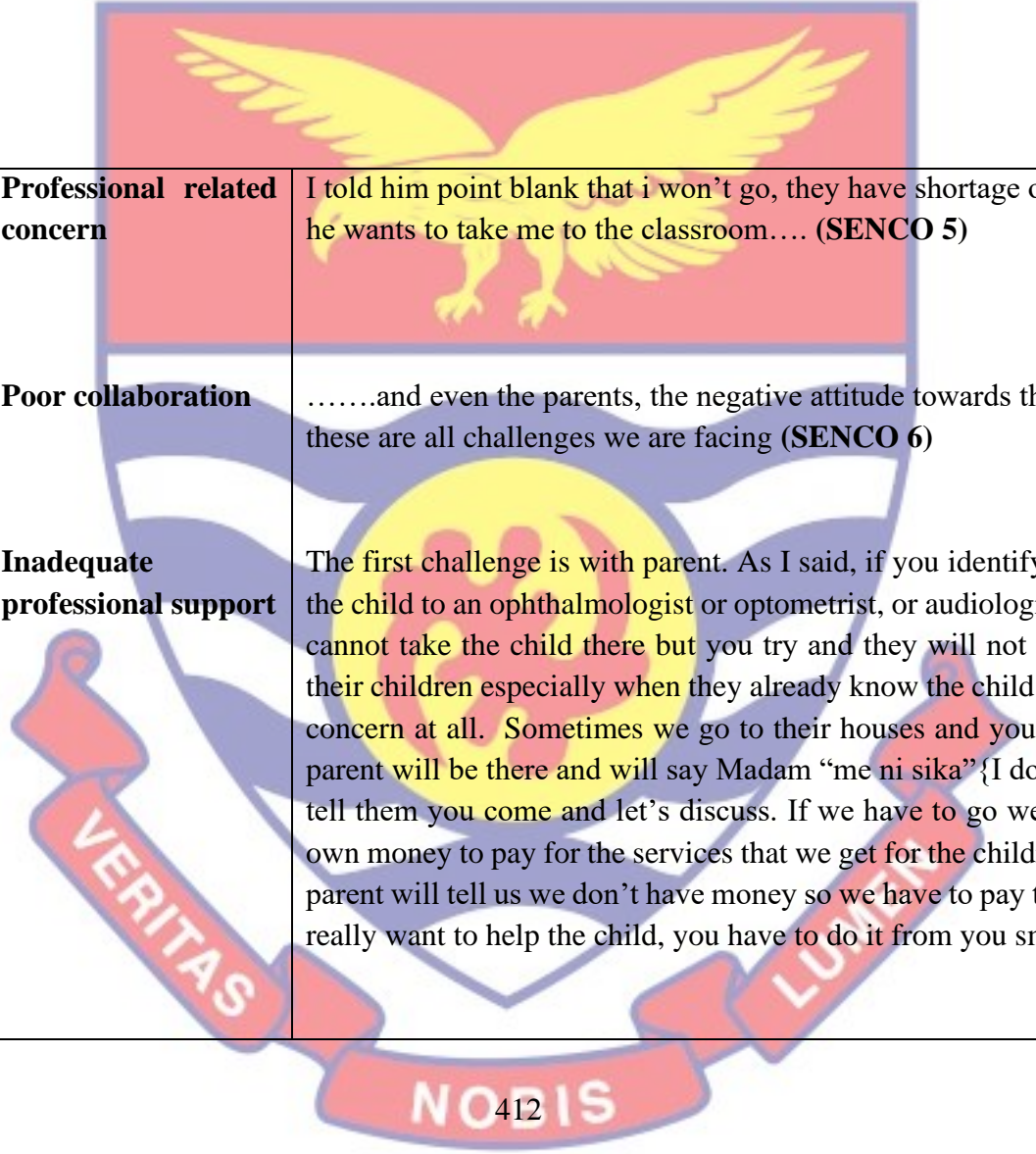
	<p><i>Lack of motivation</i></p> <p><i>Inadequate assessment tools</i></p> <p><i>Inadequate assessment centres</i></p> <p><i>Inadequate office space and equipment</i></p>	<p>.... They don't do plenty training on inclusive education. Only few people in the UNICEF sponsored district have more training because always UNICEF is calling them. But those of us who are not in UNICEF district, it is like you have to suffer for yourself. We don't get in-service training! (SENCO 4)</p> <p>.... whenever money comes to the office, they will tell you it's for circuit supervisors and they give it to them meanwhile the circuit supervisor is handling let's say, in my district some of them are only overseeing just 7 schools, we have 72 schools but the coordinator you have to visit all the schools in the district and so if you give a circuit supervisor who is overseeing 6 schools a motorbike and whenever money comes from government you say it's for circuit supervisors, what are you telling me? Indirectly you are telling me you don't value the work that I am doing and so you see, if you don't have these kids at heart, there is no way you will give your best because the government doesn't cherish what you are doing, the government doesn't cherish it so you will be looking elsewhere when you get the opportunity then you move away and that is why majority of my colleagues are not working because even at the office, the small that will come, office we know money is not coming</p>
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	<p><i>Negative attitude educational leaders</i></p>	<p>but even the small that will come you are not part of it because you are a special education coordinator we are giving it to circuit supervisors. (SENCO 9)</p>
	<p><i>Poor perception of educational leaders</i></p>	<p>Mainly my challenge is the lack of screening equipment, I mentioned some equipment we used during screening, I had to afford it by myself, you know the otoscope we use for the ear screening is over 1000 Ghana cedis and I have to acquire it myself, it uses dry cell and anytime I go for screening I have to buy the dry cells and the Snellen chart I think if GES is able to provide... but they don't. We have to look for it ourselves to use in identifying the children. (SENCO 3)</p> <p>...the resources too not in terms of money but even resource room or assessment centres are not close to us you have to travel before you can take a child to do assessment then the materials to do assessment are not even there. (SENCO 11)</p>
	<p>Parental related concerns</p>	<p>We must be provided with an office. Most SENCO's in the various districts do not have an office so no confidence or confidential talk. I must have an office for talking to parents and</p>



	<p>Negative attitude of parents</p> <p>Low income status of parents</p> <p>Poor sensitisation of parents about special/inclusive education</p>	<p>even keep files and other important things there just for issues on IE, the most important is office... (SENCO 10)</p> <p>...the district directors, majority of them are not ready to accept inclusive education and champion the cause in their district so they see the SENCO's as wasting the governments resources been paid and they are just there saying 'you people what do you do?' those are some of the questions they ask, you as a SENCO what do you do? What is your work? They refuse to accept and then know the capabilities of special needs and then the inclusive education so that they will be able to implement it to in their district, so that's a challenge (SENCO 8)</p> <p>...</p> <p>The number one problem is; the district/ municipal directors don't understand special education. If you are lucky and the director did special education fine if not, then hmmm... See a director came and I wanted to organise a workshop for special need teachers in the municipality. He told me where he is coming from, special needs have been collapsed so there is no need for me to organise such an activity, he told me. He told me point blank, where is coming from there is no need for special education, they don't even have special education coordinator so there is no need. He told me it is not necessary and it's a waste of time and that director said he wants to make me the PRO for the office and I said no. I told him no I don't want to and then the current director wanted to take me to the classroom and</p>
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	Professional related concern	I told him point blank that i won't go, they have shortage of teachers in the municipality so he wants to take me to the classroom.... (SENCO 5)
	Poor collaborationand even the parents, the negative attitude towards their own children I'm worried so these are all challenges we are facing (SENCO 6)
	Inadequate professional support	The first challenge is with parent. As I said, if you identify any child and you need to send the child to an ophthalmologist or optometrist, or audiologist or go to see a psychologist we cannot take the child there but you try and they will not come. They don't have time for their children especially when they already know the child is having disability it is not their concern at all. Sometimes we go to their houses and you will not meet the parents or the parent will be there and will say Madam "me ni sika" {I don't have money} sometimes we tell them you come and let's discuss. If we have to go we do pay. Sometimes we use our own money to pay for the services that we get for the children. Sometimes the lorry fare the parent will tell us we don't have money so we have to pay the lorry fare to the centre. If you really want to help the child, you have to do it from you small pay (SENCO 1)

		<p>So awareness, that is the biggest, people are not aware especially parents, they are not aware of this inclusive education you talking about which sometimes makes collaborating with them difficult (SENCO 3)</p> <p>No, there is no collaboration with Social welfare or Ghana Health Service they do their own thing and we also do our own thing (SENCO 5)</p> <p>We need professionals that can handle behaviour problems, attention problems, learning disabilities and others. We have to recognize these disabilities and get professionals to do proper diagnosis. At times, we are only concentrating on the visually impaired and the hearing disabled. But they are few. (SENCO 1)</p>
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