

**Piloting Inclusive Education in Ghana: Parental Perceptions, Expectations
and Involvement**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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ABSTRACT

Ghana has embarked on piloting inclusive education in 35 schools since 2003. Since then, no study has been done on parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in inclusive education. Parents' perceptions, expectations and involvement can affect inclusion and the education of children. It was therefore imperative to investigate exactly parents' perceptions, expectations and involvement in inclusive education in Ghana. The study was a descriptive survey and was guided by three research questions. The sample comprised 560 parents and 35 headteachers, sampled from the 35 pilot inclusive schools.

The instruments for data collection were questionnaires and an interview schedule. The questionnaire had four sections which elicited information on demographic data, parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in inclusive education. All participants completed the questionnaire and 20 parents were randomly sampled and interviewed. The interview schedule elicited information on demographic data, parental expectations and involvement in the education of their child. Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, one-way ANOVAs, chi-squares and correlation were used to analyse the questionnaire data. The interview data were analysed thematically.

The findings showed parents were knowledgeable about inclusive education and perceived it to be beneficial. The majority of the parents reported that inclusive education was meeting their expectations for their children. Yet 53.8% of them felt children with SEN should not be educated in inclusive schools.

Parents were found to be involved in inclusive education. They, however, desired to be more involved in volunteering, decision-making, individualised educational plan development and the discipline of their children. The study established a relationship between parents' current involvement, the knowledge parents have of inclusive education and the benefits parents perceived of inclusive education. Among the recommendations was a need for a policy on parental involvement to guide practice. Results of the study will help inform the Ministry of Education Science and Sports in planning, as they will know how parents perceived inclusive education and how they were involved or expect to be involved.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FCUBE:	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GCE 'A'	General Certificate of Education Advance
GCE 'O'	General Certificate of Education Ordinary
GES:	Ghana Education Service
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IE	Inclusive Education
INSET	In-service Training
IEP	Individualised Educational Plans
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MOESS	Ministry of Education Science and Sports
MSLC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PE	Parental Expectation/s
PI	Parental Involvement
PP	Parental Perception/s
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RME	Religious and Moral Education
SD	Standard Deviation
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMC	School Management Committee
SpED	Special Education Division
SENPF	Special Educational Needs Policy Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WAEC	West African Examination Council

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Currently, inclusion is the new drive in the provision of education for children with special educational needs (SEN). It is a world-movement affecting the way children with SEN are educated in developed and developing countries (Mittler, 2002; Sebba and Ainscow, 1996). It has been described as a social movement against exclusion from and in the educational system (Slee and Allan, 2005). The Salamanca Statement, which was signed by 92 countries and of which Ghana is a signatory, calls on governments to adopt the principle of inclusive education (IE), “enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO, 1994:3).

Ghana has not been left out of this inclusive drive. Gyimah and Vanderpuye (2011) report that in order to realise the vision of inclusion, the country, under the direction of the Special Education Division (SpED) of the Ministry of Education Science and Sports (MOESS), has since 2003 embarked on piloting inclusive education (IE) programmes. The reason for this approach was that, since there is no model anywhere to emulate, care needs to be exercised. The first phase of the project started with 35 primary schools selected from three regions. Currently, there are 45 primary schools officially being used as a pilot project for IE in Ghana. However, almost every regular school in the country has children with SEN receiving education in them. Moreover, the Persons with Disability Act (Republic of Ghana, 2006), Act 715, mandates that no school in the country should reject any child, the only exception being where assessment results show that regular education placement is inappropriate. That is when assessment results reveal that the child's SEN is severe and would require special school placement. Thus, it is legally binding in every school to enrol children with SEN and to provide quality education for them. Schools must ensure that children with SEN are accepted in class and that their needs are met to ensure their educational success.

For inclusion to work successfully there is the need for parents, teachers, school administrators, professionals and all other stakeholders to work together (UNESCO, 2005). Parents especially must give their full support and involvement as they are the custodians of their children and nothing can be done without their consent

(Leyser and Kirk, 2004). Also, they must have a positive perception and attitude towards inclusion otherwise the programme is likely to fail. Elkins, van Kraayenoord and Jobling (2003, p.122) state that:

A successful system of inclusion requires that the community believe in the competence of the education system to meet the needs of all students. Parents especially have to have confidence in the capacity of the schools to understand and effectively educate their children with special needs.

1.1.1 Importance of parental involvement and expectations in inclusive education

A significant factor that contributes to the development of effective inclusion programmes is the involvement of parents of children with and without SEN in the inclusion process (Renzalia et al., 2003; Salend, 1998). Programmes are more effective and long lasting for students when parents are part of the action team (Lewis and Doorlag, 2005; Epstein et al., 1997; Lewis and Doorlag 1995). Parents can be instrumental in the success of inclusionary placements for their children. They can collaborate with school personnel and community members to create and support IE programmes. Parents' perspectives of inclusive placement are relevant because their views, expectations for their children and their perception of drawbacks are likely to influence the inclusion process and their commitment to inclusive placements.

According to Lewis and Doorlag (2005, 1995), the parents' awareness of the specific programme designed for the child and the resultant coordination between home and school can make an important difference for many students, meaning that parents are more likely to fully support educational programmes they are aware of and their help has been solicited. They may, therefore, do their best to help their children succeed in such educational programmes. In addition, the attitude of a parent towards inclusion is crucial as this is likely to be conveyed to their child and thereby influence the attitude that they have towards inclusion (Dhingra, Manhas and Sethi 2007; Lewis and Doorlag, 2005; 1995).

Vlachou (1997), viewing the issue on a larger scale, said that the culture in which children are nurtured shapes their perception, attitudes and understanding of differences. Since parents transmit culture to their children it is needless to say that their perceptions, attitudes and expectations will impact on their children.

Previous studies have shown that parental involvement (PI) is essential for any educational success (Epstein and Sheldon, 2002; Fan, 2001; Simon, 2001). The No

Child Left Behind Act in the United States, for example, makes provisions for PI (United States Department of Education, 2002). This Act mandates schools to increase their current PI activities in an effort to improve both student achievement and school performance (United States Department of Education, 2002). In Ghana, even though there is no specific legislature that mandates parents to be involved in their children's education, parents are expected to enrol their children in school and ensure that their children attend. Parents can be prosecuted if they do not.

Parental expectations (PE) may affect their beliefs, knowledge, actions and behaviour (Russell 2003). Adeniji-Neill (2012) reports that the expectations parents have for their children motivates them to encourage their children to be successful. This means that PE for their children in inclusive schools are vital as it can affect their beliefs, perception and knowledge about IE. Additionally, it can affect their involvement and how they encourage or support their children to be successful in inclusive educational placements.

Parental perceptions, expectations and involvement can affect the successful inclusion and education of children. It is therefore imperative to investigate exactly the perceptions and expectations of parents about IE in Ghana and how they are involved.

1.1.2 What informed the study?

My interest in the study was aroused as a result of working with parents and teachers for a number of years. My work involved offering counselling to parents on how to cater for their children with SEN and what to do to enhance the children's educational experience. It also involved training teachers on how to provide educational intervention for children with SEN.

Additionally, I trained teachers on ways to effectively communicate with parents about their children's education. In the course of my duties, I realised that a number of teachers worried about parents' apparent lack of interest and involvement in their children's education. It appeared to me that most parents either did not understand the concept of IE or merely displayed a negative social attitude and hence did not want their children without SEN to be in the same class as children with SEN. There was even an occasion when a parent withdrew her child from school because she heard that there was a child with SEN enrolled in that class. Be that as it may, there were some parents who probably understood the concept or had a positive attitude towards individuals with SEN and wanted to be actively involved. For these parents, the schools' failure to get them involved was frustrating. There were others who

wished to be involved but did not know how to go about it. For these reasons, I questioned how parents in Ghana perceive IE, the expectations they had for their children attending inclusive schools and how they are involved in IE.

1.2 Statement of the problem

As mentioned in section 1.1, Ghana has embraced the IE concept, and has included it in its Education Strategic Plan (MOESS, 2010; 2003). Additionally, the enactment of Persons with Disability Act (Republic of Ghana, 2006), Act 715, made provision for the education of the child with SEN. For instance Article 20 (1) states that:

A person responsible for admission into a school or other institution of learning shall not refuse to give admission to a person with disability on account of the disability unless the person with disability has been assessed by the Ministry responsible for Education in collaboration with the Ministries responsible for Health and Social Welfare to be a person who clearly requires to be in a special school for children or persons with disability.

This stipulation emphasises the country's commitment to developing IE.

As outlined above, parents play a very important role in the success of any educational programme involving their children. Consequently, Hildebrand (1986, p.502) notes that "children cannot be educated apart from their families and have a high quality programme".

Similarly, Sugden and Chambers (2005) state that there is an inseparable relationship between the education of the child and the environment, therefore any intervention process must consider this relationship. Beveridge (2005) citing Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model explicitly points out that the home is part of the child's microsystem and that it is the basic learning context for most children. Parents are part of this microsystem; in addition, the relationships they establish with the school are part of the mesosystem. Parents can therefore not be left out in the IE of their children and however they are involved in IE will impact on their children's educational progress.

While the Government of Ghana has adopted a cautious approach to the development and implementation of IE and is piloting it in certain regions and districts, it is unclear the extent of parents' involvement. Are they involved at all in their children's education? If the answer is "yes", what role are they playing? If the answer is "no", why are they not? What perceptions do parents hold about IE and what expectations do they have of their children in IE placements? Hence it is crucial to determine parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE in Ghana in order to have a successful IE system in the country.

1.3 Aims of the study

The aims and purposes of this study are to:

- i. Examine Ghanaian parents' perceptions of IE and demographic variations within their perceptions.
- ii. Examine Ghanaian parents' expectations for their children, the contribution of IE to the fulfilment of these expectations and demographic variations within their expectations.
- iii. Examine current forms of PI, possible facilitators and inhibitors to PI and demographic variations within PI.

1.4 Research questions

The review of the literature helped to refine the initial aims into three research questions. These have been organised into three sections: parental perceptions; parental expectations; and parental involvement. Sub-questions have been developed for each research question to help in answering them more effectively.

Parental perceptions

1. What are parental perspectives on IE in Ghana?
 - a. What level of knowledge do parents have of IE?
 - b. What do parents perceive the benefits of IE to be?
 - c. What concerns do parents have about IE?
 - d. What are parents' preferences for placement for children with SEN?
 - e. How do parental perceptions vary?

Parental expectations

2. What are the parents' expectations for their children attending inclusive schools?
 - a. What are the expectations of parents?
 - b. To what extent are these expectations met?
 - c. How do parental expectations vary?

Parental involvement

3. What is the extent and nature of parental involvement in inclusive schools in Ghana?
 - a. How are parents currently involved in IE?
 - b. How do the inclusive schools involve parents?
 - c. What additional ways would parents want to be involved?
 - d. What factors facilitate and inhibit parental involvement?

e. How does parental involvement vary?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is significant for four reasons:

- I. Studies on parental perceptions (PP), PE and PI in their children's education from African perspectives are limited in the existing literature. None of the studies reviewed solicited information from Africans, specifically Ghanaians, about the expectations parents have for their children and whether IE will help fulfil their expectations. This study will help add to the limited literature on African perspectives about the issues of PP, PE and PI in IE.
- II. None of the existing studies which were reviewed collected data on how parents think the school could involve them in IE. This study gave parents the unique opportunity to do so.
- III. In the literature most of the studies conducted focused on mothers. Even when in the literature they mentioned parents, fathers were grossly under-represented. This study used an equal representation of fathers and mothers.
- IV. Last but not least, it is expected that the study will yield information that will be useful to the SpED of the MOESS for planning as they will know how parents perceive IE, the expectations they have of their children and how they expect to be involved.

1.6 Definition of terms

The following terms are used within this thesis and the definitions adopted are outlined below:

Children with SEN: has been used to refer to children with SEN and disabilities.

Educational level: refers to the educational qualifications of the parents.

Expectations: envisaged outcomes or predictions about the future.

Inclusive School: is a school where Ghana Education Service (GES) conduct regular in-service training to educate staff on how to meet the needs of diverse learners, parents have been educated about IE and their role in it and adaptations are made in diverse ways to accommodate the need of all learners.

Involvement: the specific ways parents are engaged in the educational life of their children.

Parents: this refers to anyone with whom the child is staying and who is taking care of the child; this therefore includes biological parents, relatives or carers. This

reflects the approach to child rearing in Ghana where extended families are more significant than in most western countries.

Parental Perceptions: how parents understand, view or feel about IE. For this study, it is conceptualised as parents' knowledge, benefit and concerns about IE and parents' preferences for placement of children with SEN.

Regular School: these are schools in Ghana that are neither part of the pilot inclusive schools or special schools.

Special School: is a school designated for specific categories of children with SEN.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The first chapter dealt with the background of the study, what informed the study, the aims of the study and the research questions. Additionally, it highlighted the significance of the study and gave some definitions of terms. These helped to put the study into perspective. This chapter reviews literature relevant to the study and is structured into three main sections which are in line with the aims of the study presented in section 1.3.

2.2 Inclusive education and parental perception of inclusive education

This section is concerned with the concept of inclusive education (IE) and parental perceptions (PP) about IE. The PP component focuses on parents' perceived benefits, concerns, preferences for placement, and Ghanaian parents' perceptions of IE. In my view, this helps give insight to how parents perceive IE.

The demographic variables which influence PP and discussed in this chapter are age, educational level, gender and having or not having a child with SEN. This is because these variables are addressed in the literature and the results appear to be inconclusive.

2.2.1 The concept of inclusive education

IE appears to be a complex and problematic concept (Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell, 2010). Pearson (2005) noted that the term inclusion does not have a universally accepted definition. This may be because it can be defined in various ways (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006; Thomas and Vaughan, 2004; Clough and Corbett, 2000). Most definitions conceptualise it as a process of educating children with SEN in general education classrooms (Blecker and Boakes, 2010; Idol, 2006). It differs from integration, where children with SEN are physically placed in general education classrooms without any provisions made, or mainstreaming where they spend a portion of their school day in the general education programme and a portion in a separate special education programme (Idol, 1997). In integration or mainstreaming the child fits him/herself into the general education system and

copes with the curriculum (Kunc, 1992), implying that it is the child who adapts, not the school.

IE, involves the “restructuring of schools in order to respond to the needs of all students” (Ainscow, 1995, p.1). McLeskey and Waldron (2000) therefore view successful inclusion to be based on change in every aspect of schooling. Confirming this and stressing the need for presence, participation and achievement for all students, Flem, Moen and Gudmundsdotter (2004, p.95) conceptualise inclusive schools as “fitting schools to meet the needs of all pupils”. Internationally, IE is broadly viewed as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity (UNESCO, 2001). Skrtic, Sailor and Gee (1996) conclude that IE involve schools meeting the needs of every student.

To achieve success in IE, schools will have to pay “attention to all aspects of schooling – curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, supports, and so on” (Mitchell, 2005, p.4) and removing all hindrances to learning. The Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (2002) views IE as a continuous process of breaking down barriers to learning and participation for all children. Consequently, Booth and Ainscow (1998) say that schools, communities, governments and local authorities will have to make all possible attempts to remove barriers to participation and learning for all.

IE can therefore be said to be an educational endeavour that actively seeks to remove all exclusionary pressures from the educational system by making it conducive and flexible to accommodate all learners. IE has certain distinct features that have been put forward by Mitchell (2005) and Ainscow (2005b). The next section presents these features.

2.2.1.1 Features of inclusive education

Mitchell (2005, p.4) identified two features of IE:

- Entitlement to full membership in regular, age-appropriate classes in neighbourhood schools.
- Access to appropriate aids, support services and individualised programmes, with appropriately differentiated curriculum and assessment practices.

The four features identified by Ainscow (2005b, p.15) are:

- “Inclusion is a process”: inclusion is on-going and is aimed at finding ways to respond to diversity and learning how to live and learn from differences.

Differences therefore become the medium through which we learn to cooperate and accept each other.

- “Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers”: it is concerned with removing any barrier or impediment to learning. It also involves constantly evaluating current policies and practices to identify any shortfall that will result in children’s inability to maximise their potential. It is about equal opportunities for all and also ensuring that nothing will serve as a barrier to learning.
- “Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students”: the concern is where the children receive their education and the quality of experience they get there. Effort must be made to ensure that children with SEN get worthwhile experiences and are seen as full members of the class in their inclusive placements.
- “Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or under-achievement”: This call for continuous monitoring of children who might be at risk to ensure that their achievement and participation in school is sustained. This will require the needs of the child to be recognised and the necessary support services and curriculum adaptations be made available to the child (Mitchell, 2005).

Supporting this, Deiner (2005, p.24) said that:

Successful inclusion involves placing children in an educational setting that provides the support that meets the children’s emotional, social, and educational needs.

Consistent with the features of IE presented by Mitchell (2005) and Ainscow (2005b), UNESCO (2005, p.13) states that IE is aimed at:

- Welcoming diversity;
- Benefiting all learners, not only the excluded;
- Including children in school who may feel excluded; and
- Providing equal access to education or making provision for certain categories of children without excluding them.

Given the variations in conceptualisations of IE, one of the purposes of the present study is to investigate parents’ understanding of what IE is and what it entails.

2.2.2 Models of inclusive education

Several models of IE have been proposed. In this section the models of Giangreco (1997), Lewis and Norwich (1999) and Ainscow (2005) are discussed as they are relevant to this study.

2.2.2.1 Giangreco's (1997) model

Giangreco's (1997) model of IE can be viewed as an interrelated model in this sense he argued that any successful implementation of IE will require a close relationship and collaboration between the key stakeholders. These include parents, educators and other professionals. To him, there are certain key factors that need to be considered in the interaction between the stakeholders. These are:

- Collaborative teamwork;
- A shared framework;
- Family involvement;
- General educator ownership;
- Clear role relationship among professionals;
- Effective use of support staff;
- Meaningful Individual Education Plans (IEPs); and
- Procedures for evaluating effectiveness.

In this model, emphasis is placed on the interaction between educators, parents and other professionals. Relevant to the current study is the importance of the role of the parents in the educational success of their children. Others have commented that without PI educational success may be impossible (Epstein and Sheldon, 2002; Fan, 2001; Simon, 2001).

Vital for the success of the IE programme in Ghana is the need to recognise the important role of parents and family involvement in the education of children, collaborative team work and a shared framework between key stakeholders. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) acknowledge the important role the family plays and point out that, because of the increasing diversity in schools, there is a need for schools to expand their understanding of family structures and actions. Also, schools need to determine how best to respond to the needs of students based upon how they learn, the cultures they come from, their language and their general background. This is especially important in Ghana where children come from different ethnic backgrounds, cultures and a complex family structure that differs from those in countries where much of the research has been undertaken.

Also important is the role of professionals in developing and implementing IE. Children have unique needs; hence the need to collaborate with professionals from different fields to help children achieve their potential. Loreman et al. (2010, p.102) point out that to get the full benefits from collaboration professionals will have to:

- Take time to understand the roles and respect the expertise of other professionals.
- Critically examine issues rather than agreeing quickly on solutions.
- Take collective responsibility for outcomes of any decision-making.
- Structure discussions to enhance effectiveness.

Gyimah (2006, p.51) observes that Giangreco (1997) did not clarify what he meant by “general educator ownership” and that, on the surface, it may imply educators have certain administrative powers or authority that could be used arbitrarily. Again, the model did not provide information about the role of government in the practice of IE. Gyimah (2006) points out that national goals must be set to promote the growth and development of IE. Without this, in my view, IE is likely to fail.

2.2.2.2 Lewis and Norwich's (1999) model

Lewis and Norwich (1999) acknowledge that each individual has needs that must be identified and provided for. The three types of needs they identified are:

- Needs that are common to all (common).
- Needs that are common to some, but not others (specific).
- Needs that are unique to an individual (unique).

As the needs of individuals move from common to unique they become more complex, demanding and difficult to cater for. It is the educator's primary responsibility to ensure that the needs that are common to all are met. Basically, educators should be able to cater for these. With the second and third level of needs, the curriculum should be adapted to cater for the needs of these children. It has been noted that parents of children with and without SEN have expressed concern about general education teachers' capabilities of catering for the needs that are specific and unique to some children (Yssel et al., 2007; Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Grove and Fisher, 1999; Shipley, 1995; Waggoner and Wilgosh, 1990). These concerns are genuine and should be addressed.

2.2.2.3 Ainscow's (2005a) model

Ainscow (2005a) points out that inclusion is a big challenge facing school systems worldwide. He is of the view that to make educational systems more inclusive, there is a need to identify what he terms as the levers for change. This has been explained by Senge (1989, p.4) “as actions that can be taken in order to change the behaviour of an organisation and those individuals within it...”. Ainscow proposes that change agents must be able to identify what the high levers of change are and

address them. He puts the school at the centre of his framework (see Figure 2-1) and says that all changes must focus on “increasing the capacity of local neighbourhood mainstream schools to support the participation and learning of an increasingly diverse range of learners” (p.112).

In his framework he draws attention to a number of contextual factors that affect the way the school carries out its work. He makes us aware that there are principles that guide policy priorities within the educational system. Also, there are views and actions of others within the local context. This includes members of the wider community that the school serves and the staff of the departments that have responsibility for the administration of the school. Finally, there are criteria that are used to evaluate the performance of schools.

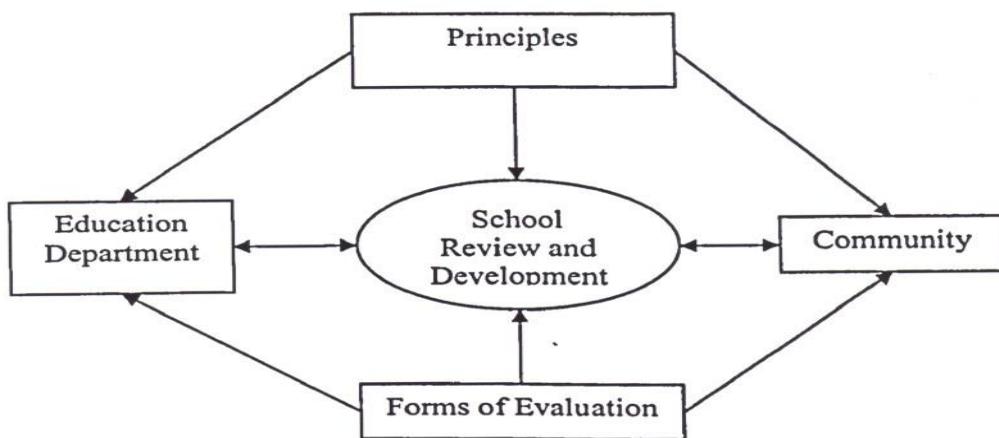


Figure 2-1: Ainscow's (2005a) levers for change p.111

The framework did not explicitly state how the elements in the model interrelate and interconnect. Gyimah (2006, p.53), critically analysing the framework argues that it:

Does not give sufficient information on how School Review and Development affects Principles. Again, there is lack of information on how the other variables or factors interrelate. Apart from placing a huge responsibility on Schools, the framework does not clearly show how the Principles are derived since the Education Department and the Community apparently have no influence on the principles... Besides, there is no information about what contributions governments can make in supporting inclusion.

As mentioned in relation to Giangreco's (1997) model, if the role of the government is not spelt out and its support elicited, it will be very difficult for any programme in Ghana to succeed. If schools can be effective in their roles, they must be guided by certain principles that will not only encourage PI, but more importantly support their children's education. Parents' voices must be heard. In this sense, a form of

partnership or collaboration is needed as enjoined by the SEN Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills, DfES, 2001).

In this study, therefore, there was a need to investigate if the schools have clear-cut policies or guidelines on PI. These guidelines if present will outline actions to be taken to change the behaviour of schools and “those individuals within it” (Senge, 1989, p.4). Also, it will detail what the school and its members will do to ensure continual PI and successful inclusive programmes.

The models reviewed show that there are variations in the way the theorists approach the IE agenda. Collectively, they make us aware that IE is not easy to achieve yet, with the insight they offer, IE can be developed and implemented with a high degree of success.

2.2.3 Inclusive education in Ghana

Ghana has endorsed all international treaties on the rights of people with SEN and has made constitutional provisions for their education (GES, 2005). Education for all children has been an age-long priority in Ghana and this can be traced to the 1961 Education Act which mandates Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE). IE in Ghana has been greatly influenced by The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). Prior to this, education of children with SEN was mainly concentrated on special school placement. More recently, the Persons with Disability Act (Republic of Ghana, 2006), Act 715, further legitimises IE placement. Denying placement based on SEN has become punishable by law. Furthermore, policy documents such as the Education Strategic Plan (MOESS, 2010, 2003) and the Special Educational Needs Policy Framework (SENPF) (GES, 2005) advocate for IE.

Ghana has adopted IE in a bid to fulfil the Education for All (EFA) agenda (Gyimah and Mohamed, *Forthcoming*; Anthony, 2009). Gyimah and Mohamed (*Forthcoming*) noted that the rationale for IE in Ghana is a re-echo of the recommendations of the Salamanca statement. Basically, it is to restructure schools, making them more accessible to all children. Additionally, according to Gyimah and Mohamed, (*Forthcoming*) it is to:

- Promote equal access to education.
- Encourage partnership between professionals.
- Equip teachers with competence to help optimise learning.
- Remove barriers to learning.
- Ensure adaptable and flexible curriculum.

- Provide comprehensive and multi-disciplinary assessment to meet diverse needs of learners.
- Promote parental involvement.

In Ghana the SpED of the MOESS has the responsibility of implementing IE. The goal of the MOESS is 100% enrolment of children with non-severe SEN into mainstream schools by 2015 (MOESS, 2008; 2003). Gyimah and Mohamed (*Forthcoming*) report that in the bid to implement IE cautiously and successfully, SpED has collaborated with organisations such as United States Agency for International Development/Education Quality for All Programme and adopted the following strategies:

- National forum on IE to sensitise and orient stakeholders to the philosophy and practice of IE.
- Piloting inclusive schools.
- Production of screening and training manuals.
- Collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and organisations of persons with disabilities.
- Establishment of working relationship with the West African Examination Council (WAEC).
- In-service training (INSET) for teachers on IE.
- Development of SEN policy to guide practice.

The implementation of the first phase of piloting IE was carried out in three regions of the country (see Table 4-1 in chapter 4), and it was to ensure it worked before embarking on it on a large scale. Gyimah and Mohamed (*forthcoming*) citing Moltó, (2003), suggest that the piloting was done in order not to force the policy on teachers.

2.2.3.1 Challenges to inclusive education in Ghana

Despite the advancement of the programme and policy initiatives, just like the implementation of IE in developed countries, challenges are inevitable and Ghana is no exception. Several researchers have identified possible or current challenges facing IE in Ghana (Adera and Asimeng-Boahene, 2011; Vanderpuye, Gyimah and Deku, 2009; Vanderpuye and Deku, 2007; Vanderpuye, Deku and Kwarteng, 2006; Gyimah and Mohamed, *forthcoming*). One major challenge is societal attitude towards people with SEN. This is fuelled by Ghanaian cultural views about disabilities. Adera and Asimeng-Boahene (2011) report that people with disabilities sometimes face ridicule through folklore and songs due to deep rooted beliefs that

they are curses from God or the result of witchcraft. Agbenyega (2003) and Oliver-Commey (2001), referring to the derogatory labels used in the society to refer to people with SEN, report that the use of these labels filter into the school system, resulting in ostracism and stigmatisation either by teachers or peers.

Also, it has been identified that teachers lack the skill to effectively educate children with SEN (Agbenyega, 2007; Obeng, 2007; Gyimah and Mohamed, *forthcoming*). Additionally, there was lack of:

- Commitment on the part of government;
- Educational resources;
- Appropriate assistive technology;
- Funding; and
- Support.

Other challenges identified were:

- Large class sizes
- Inappropriate infrastructure and
- The existence of dual mode (special and inclusive schools).

Gyimah and Mohamed (*forthcoming*) point out that, even though there is Act 715 of Act 2006, which states the rights of people with disabilities, it does not specify how persons with disabilities and SEN should be included. In effect, these authors highlight the lack of policies to guide the development and implementation of IE in the country and point out that, if this was to exist, it would (for example) categorise ways parents could be involved. In some countries it is a legal requirement for a policy on PI. For example, the United States of America (USA) has a requirement that district schools and schools receiving federal funding must have a written PI policy to guide practice (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002).

The schools used for piloting IE in Ghana were previously regular schools that enrolled both children with and without SEN. Teachers in these schools were not given INSET on IE and the roles required of them and no workshops or seminars were held for parent on IE. Additionally, no effort was made to meet the educational needs of children with SEN. Upon the decision to use the selected schools as pilot inclusive schools, the MOESS started running INSET programmes for teachers and workshops for parents about IE. Also, there was the assessment of the children in these schools to determine the extent and nature of their SEN (GES, SpED, 2005). There was the conscious effort to meet the needs of children with SEN in these

schools, for example, the establishment of a working relationship with WAEC for extended examination times for children with SEN among other arrangement (Gyimah and Mohamed, *Forthcoming*). It is these INSET programmes and workshops for teachers and parents and effort to meet the needs of children with SEN that brought the difference between the regular schools and pilot inclusive schools in Ghana.

In Ghana professionals in education use the term SEN to refer to children who have significant learning difficulties and therefore need special educational provisions by way of adaptations to the curriculum or the physical environment in order for them to achieve their potential. This is therefore no different from how SEN is used by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001). Professionals also assigned labels to specific categories of children with SEN (Gyimah, 2006). The term disability on the other hand is used by professionals in Ghana to refer to people who have physical or mental impairment which affects the person's ability to perform normal routine activities. Parents in Ghana are not familiar with the term 'SEN' rather they use the term disability/disabled children or people to refer to people with sensory impairments, intellectual disabilities as well as those with learning difficulties.

2.2.4 Parental perception of inclusive education

After discussing the concept, and models of IE, and IE in Ghana, the review in this section addresses PP of IE as shown in Figure 2-2 below. The demographic variations in PP of IE are discussed in section 2.2.5.

IE and parental perception of IE

1. The concept of IE
2. Models of IE
3. IE in Ghana
4. Parental perception of IE
5. Demographic variations in PP of IE

Figure 2-2: Outline of literature reviewed for inclusive education and parental perception

2.2.4.1 Parents' perceived benefits of inclusive education

IE has been perceived by parents as having social benefits for children with and without SEN (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Peck et al., 2004; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy and

Widaman, 1998). Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) report that children with and without SEN benefit from the social interaction with each other. Several studies have found that parents acknowledge that the presence of children with SEN improves the social climate of the classroom and enables typically developing children to accept human diversity (Peck et al., 2004; Tafa and Manolitsis, 2003; Giancreco et al., 1993; Peck, Carlton and Helmstetter, 1992). Ryndak et al. (1995) reported that children with SEN developed friendships and experienced feelings of belongingness and acceptance when placed in inclusive classrooms. Earlier studies done by Green and Stoneman (1989) and Peck et al. (1992) with parents of children without SEN confirm that inclusion facilitates friendship between children with and without SEN.

Parents have reported that IE prepares children for the real world and that it provides them with environments that stimulate learning (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Tafa and Manolitsis, 2003; Guralnick, 1994). Parents of children with SEN said that their children showed improvement in their academic, speech, language and communication skills (Ryndak et al., 1995). Snell (2009) reports that children with SEN can and do benefit academically from instruction within inclusive settings. Cole, Waldron and Majd (2004) found that students without SEN who received their education in inclusive classrooms made better progress in mathematics and reading as compared to their counterparts in non-inclusive settings. The explanation given by Cole et al. (2004) was that the support given in the inclusive classrooms, which were aimed at children with SEN, was beneficial for all children and therefore IE should be supported.

Palmer et al. (2001) found that parents with children with SEN have different reasons for supporting IE. The reasons are based upon the perceived benefits of IE, some of which are:

- It would lead to the improvement of academic and social skills due to increased stimulation and higher expectations.
- It will benefit general education students.
- It would lead to improved family connection with home school placement because of the concept of neighbourhood schools.
- It will satisfy parents' moral or philosophical beliefs, for example, segregation is morally wrong.

2.2.4.2 Parental concerns about inclusive education

Some parents of children with SEN have expressed concern about the possible negative social and emotional impact IE could have on their child (Leyser and Kirk,

2004). Parents of children with SEN appear to differ in their concern regarding their children's academic, social, and emotional progress. It has been suggested that PP of IE is determined by the outcomes they value most for their child (Palmer et al., 1998). Some parents appear to value the socialisation aspect of IE while others are concerned about the quality of education their children will receive. Palmer et al. (1998) are of the view that parents who place a higher value on socialisation will desire more inclusive placements for their children, while parents who value quality may opt for segregated placement options.

Other concerns expressed by parents of children with SEN over the years are possible social isolation, negative peer attitudes such as bullying, teasing and isolation; decreased self-confidence; poor quality of teaching; inadequate teacher training; lack of support by the teachers and the parents of typically developing children and inadequate knowledge of staff about IE (O'Connor, 2007; Yessel et al., 2007; Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 2001; Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin, 2001; Grove and Fisher, 1999; Shipley, 1995; Waggoner and Wilgosh, 1990; Bailey and Winton, 1987; McDonnell, 1987). Kenny et al. (2005), in support of this, report that parents fear that teachers may lack knowledge in differentiating the curriculum and adopting flexible teaching strategies. Closely related to this, O'Connor (2007) found that parents expressed concern that some teachers lacked the expertise in identifying the educational needs of children and subsequently in providing the necessary intervention for children who needed assistance. They were concerned that this lack of expertise could hinder early intervention, delay academic progress and generate frustration for the child, teacher, parent and other pupils in the class. Additionally, parents felt that the inclusion of some children could hinder or slow the progress of other pupils (O' Connor, 2007; Palmer et al., 2001). Palmer et al. (2001) mentioned that some of the parents in their study believed that their children with SEN would cause distraction in the inclusive classroom.

Parental concern may be based on the severity of the child's condition. Palmer et al. (2001), after analysing the comments of 140 parents with children with severe SEN, found that a negative parental attitude towards IE was because parents thought that the severity of their child's condition meant that inclusive classrooms would not be accommodating enough and that teachers would be overburdened with children with SEN in their class. Other issues that concerned the parents were class size, teaching conditions, the demands of teaching to a diverse range of students, their child not receiving special attention, or fearing that their child would be mistreated,

harmed or ridiculed in the classroom. Kalyva, Georgiadi, and Tsakiris (2007, p.297) report that concerns usually expressed by parents of children without SEN are:

- “good students get bored because of the relaxed teaching atmosphere,
- most students without SEN attend a programme of lowered expectations,
- students with SEN are disappointed when they discover that other students study less and get the same or even better grades, and
- teachers devote ‘too much time’ to discipline and manage students who have behavioural problems or work at a slower tempo”.

Further concerns were expressed about IE by parents of children without SEN. Laurel, Duhaney and Salend (2000) reported that they were concerned about the effectiveness of instruction in inclusive classrooms. Parents were also of the view that some children did not receive enough help from teachers in inclusive classrooms. Additionally, their children would emulate the negative behaviours of the children with SEN and that some of the teachers in such classrooms did not have the requisite training or qualification to train or teach children with SEN. Parents in the study by Peck et al., (1992), however, reported that their children did not pick up any inappropriate behaviour, rather they learned appropriate behaviours.

From the above, it is evident that the concerns expressed by parents in the developed countries are many. In Ghana, there is a need to investigate if parents have any concerns and, if they do, there is a need to find out exactly what they are so that they can be addressed.

2.2.4.3 Parental views about placement of children with SEN

Parental views about placement vary widely. Some parents actively campaign for inclusive provision whereas others prefer segregated environments for children with SEN (Runswick-Cole, 2008; Kenny et al., 2005). According to Evans and Lunt (2002), parents with children with SEN want what is best for their child and most of the time it is placement in special schools they view to be the best option. These parents may be sceptical about their children’s placement in inclusive environments because they feel that their children may no longer receive individualised instruction or support services (Green and Shinn, 1994). Aside this, Runswick-Cole (2008) reports that these parents believe that segregated environments are the only ones that can cater for their children’s unique educational needs.

Most of the literature found on the views of parents without children with SEN regarding placement are based on studies done in integrated environments. Even though the available literature focuses on integration, not IE, it helps us have a

general idea of whether parents want their children to be educated in the same class with children with SEN or not.

Parents of children without SEN showed positive perspectives towards their children being educated with children with SEN. The studies, however, did not offer them the opportunity to indicate their preferred placement option. Green and Stoneman (1989) found that parents were generally positive towards educating their children in integrated environments. Peck et al. (1992) also said that parents preferred having their children in integrated classrooms. Lowenbraun, Madge and Afflect (1990) reported that parents were satisfied with their children's academic and social progress in their integrated environments. The majority of parents (65%) said they would opt for integrated environments in the future. One third said they requested this placement for their child because of teacher expertise, individualised instruction and the small class sizes, which are all characteristics of such classrooms. Giangreco et al. (1993) report that parents felt inclusive placements had a positive effect on their children's emotional and social growth and that they did not prevent their children from having a good education.

From the literature gathered from studies conducted in developed countries, it seems that the views of parents on inclusion of children with SEN in inclusive classrooms are varied. Since none of the studies reviewed had information of parental choice of placement for children with SEN in Ghana, there is the need to investigate where Ghanaian parents think children with SEN should be educated.

2.2.4.4 Ghanaian parents' perception of inclusive education

Searching for literature using the Web of science, British Education index, University of Leeds catalogue, Google scholar, University of Cape Coast and Winneba library yielded limited literature in this area. As stated earlier, in Ghana, societal attitudes towards people with SEN are influenced by our cultural beliefs and views about disability. Predominantly, the existence of disability is attributed to unexplainable spiritual factors such as punishment from the gods or as a result of their anger or curse (Abosi, 2007; Obeng, 2004; Okyere, 2003; Avoke, 2002; Ocloo et al., 2002; Oliver-Commey, 2001). These have shameful connotations. Adera and Asimeng-Boahene (2011, p.29) reported that some communities in Ghana see SEN:

As a stain to the social status of a family, often leading to these children being isolated and hidden away or placed in segregated institutions where they are excluded from inclusion in mainstream society.

Against this background, it might be assumed that PP of IE may not be favourable.

Although there were limited studies on PP or views about IE in Ghana, research carried out by Vanderpuye (2003) on challenges to mainstreaming in Ghana, as part of her MPhil thesis, revealed that parents were of the view that children with mild to moderate SEN and those with severe to profound SEN should attend separate special schools. These items had means of 2.6 and 3.8 on a maximum scale of 4 (with 1 being the least score and 4 the maximum score) and standard deviations (SDs) of .76 and .57 respectively. This shows that the parents were not in favour of children with SEN and those without SEN being educated together. The study concluded that the attitude of parents towards mainstreaming of children with SEN was negative and that the negative attitude was more pronounced for children with severe to profound SEN. Supporting this, Okyere (2003) reports that in most African societies, parents would not like their children to be educated with children with SEN.

From the above discussion it can be seen that literature on PP on IE abounds in more developed countries, with the only shortfall being in the knowledge parents have about IE. In the case of Ghana this is not so. Literature on PP about IE is limited and in my view, a good starting point for research would be to investigate the knowledge parents who have children in inclusive schools have about IE, what they perceive to be its benefits and the concerns they have about it. The importance of parental perspectives about IE cannot be overstated. Soodak (2004) emphasised that the drive to embrace IE must include parental perspectives as they are one of the key stakeholders and the success of IE depends to a large extent on them.

2.2.5 Demographic variations in parental perception of inclusive education

In this section, the demographic variables that influence PP are discussed.

2.2.5.1 Parental age and gender influence on perception of inclusive education

Besevegis et al. (1997), cited in Kalyva et al. (2007, p.297), identified age and gender to be factors that influence the attitudes of Greek parents of children without SEN towards IE. It was found that younger parents and women have a more positive attitude towards IE than older parents and men. Balboni and Pedrabissi's (2000) study supported the finding that women hold a more positive attitude than men. Contrary to this, Kalyva et al. (2007) found that fathers had a more positive attitude overall towards IE than mothers, and that the age of parents was not related to their attitudes. The latter was supported by Balboni and Pedrabissi (2000) who found that younger parents do not hold a different attitude from older ones. Studies by Tafa and Manolitis (2003) and Green and Stoneman (1989) do not corroborate

the findings of Besevegis et al., (1997) and Kalyva et al. (2007) as they did not identify any differences in the attitudes of fathers and mothers. Due to this uncertainty about whether age and gender affect PP about IE, there is a need to find out whether, in Ghana, there is variation in PP of IE according to age and gender.

2.2.5.2 Parental educational levels and their influence on perception of inclusive education

There is evidence in the literature that there is a relationship between parental educational level and perception about IE. Parents who have higher educational levels have more positive beliefs than parents with lower educational levels. Studies done by Palmer et al. (1998), Stoiber, Gettinger and Goetz (1998) and Guralnick (1994) confirm that parents with higher educational levels hold more positive beliefs about IE. However, Tofa and Manolitsis (2003) report that, generally, Greek parents' education does not affect their attitudes towards IE. However, mothers with the highest educational level held more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities than mothers with lower educational levels. Kalyva et al. (2007) however, report that educational level bore no relation to attitudes of parents of children without SEN. This means that the research findings on the effect of parental educational level on perception or attitude towards IE are contradictory. There is a need to investigate whether PP about IE in Ghana varies with educational level.

2.2.5.3 Perception of parents with and without children with SEN about Inclusive education

Parental perceptions of IE are mixed; some parents without children with SEN express concerns regarding the possible negative effects it can have on their child (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 1998). Stoiber et al. (1998) report that parents with children with SEN hold more positive beliefs about IE than most parents without children with SEN. Elzein (2009) found that Lebanese parents with children with SEN accepted IE and showed a positive attitude towards it.

Peck et al. (2004) surveyed 389 parents about their views on the impact of IE on their children without SEN. Seventy eight percent of the parents said it had no significant impact on their child's academic progress. However, 15% of the parents reported positive impacts, and 7% reported negative effects on their child's academic performance. The study revealed that 64% of the parents had a positive

attitude towards inclusion and as a result 73% claimed they would enrol their children in inclusive schools again if given another opportunity in the future.

Parents of children without SEN find IE beneficial as their children develop the ability to learn about and accept human diversity (Peck et al., 2004; Tafa and Manolitsis, 2003; Giancreco et al., 1993). A few parents without children with SEN were not in favour of including children with severe conditions; also some of the parents expressed concern that their children would learn bad behaviours in inclusive classrooms (Peck et al., 2004).

Support for IE from parents with children with severe disabilities is mixed. Parents of children with severe SEN have positive attitudes toward IE and attest to the social and educational benefits it brings (Gallagher et al., 2000; Palmer et al., 1998). Other studies have found less support for IE from parents with children with severe SEN (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 2001). It is therefore difficult to generalise parental support for IE when it comes to children with SEN. Parents hold different views and these could be related to the level of needs required by their children although other factors may be involved.

Even though a lot of research has been done on PP of IE, these studies were conducted in more developed countries. Having started the IE programme in 2003, Ghana is relatively young in inclusion and no study has yet focused on the perception of parents, their expectation of their children attending inclusive schools and their involvement in IE in Ghana. Secondly, it appears that none of the studies conducted have focused on ascertaining the knowledge parents have about IE. This has been addressed by this study.

2.3 Parental expectations

This section of the literature review focuses on PE of their children being educated in inclusive schools. The areas the review focuses on are shown in Figure 2-3.

Parental Expectations (PE)

1. PE of education
2. PE of IE
3. Demographic variations in PE in

Figure 2-3: Outline of literature reviewed for parental expectations

2.3.1 Parental expectations of education

Expectations are subjective predictions about the future which originate from and affect people's beliefs, knowledge and experience (Olsen, Roese and Zanna, 1996). According to Adeniji-Neill (2012, p.3):

Parental expectations are various beliefs, assumptions, and aspirations that relate to, but are not limited to, the relationship of students to faculty, curriculum, discipline, culture, acculturation, and family composition as they contribute to children's school achievement.

Reviewing the work of various writers Adeniji-Neill concludes that expectations normally motivated parents to encourage their children to be successful in school.

Russell (2003) suggests that parents develop expectations about their children's education through their own experiences or through information provided by the school, media and other parents. Furthermore, "expectations help a person to make behavioural choices because people behave differently during interaction according to their expectations of the other person" (p.147). This means that PE of their children in school originates from personal experiences or information and may result in their motivation of their children towards higher achievement. Ultimately, PE may impact on their involvement in their children's education.

Some studies have explored PE of the school and teachers. They have revealed that parents expect their children to progress academically and be happy in school, be given homework and have fair discipline. Also, they expect quality teaching and to be given information (Foot et al., 2000; Tartar and Horenczyk, 2000; Crozier, 1999; West et al., 1998).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2006) reported that American parents expect schools to provide conducive learning environments and children will perfect the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Citing the Danish Ministry of Education's survey (2000 and 2003), OECD (2006) reported that parents valued social values and personal skills more than academic ones. The five most important skills identified by Danish parents were:

- Reading;
- Writing;
- Social skills;
- Confidence in one's own potential; and
- Ability to make decisions.

Additionally, Danish parents would want “greater focus on academic performance and individualised teaching” (p.41), so as to meet the needs of diverse learners.

In Japan, parents wanted an “education that cultivates humanity and does not over emphasise achievement scores” (OECD, 2006 p.41). Also, the parents said they wanted to send their children to schools which:

- Train children to acquire basic skills through a rich natural living experience;
- Have a partnership between home, school and community;
- Have lots of people caring for children;
- Cater for different interests and abilities of children;
- Provide opportunities for children to meet different types of teachers and peer group;
- Have a clear educational philosophy;
- Provide a well-balanced education;
- Have high educational standards and quality learning environments; and
- Educate the talented to global standards. (OECD, 2006. pp.41-42)

In England parents expect that their children will attain good academic results and will remain in school beyond the age of 16 years (OECD, 2006; Batterham, 2003). Batterham (2003) further reported that three quarters of the 3,137 parents interviewed expected their child to progress higher than secondary school education.

In the Slovak Republic, parents expect schools to develop thinking and problem-solving skills. The parents endorsed the development of key competencies (which were not defined but I assume to be basic skills), communication skills, the use of information and communication technology and the development of interpersonal and personal skills (OECD, 2006).

OECD (2006), reporting on PE of education in Hungary, said that parents mainly expected their children’s education to help them develop student competencies and skills that would ultimately equip them to move on to the next academic level. Additionally, it was to teach children to learn, develop problem solving skills and become honest individuals with high moral standards (OECD, 2006).

Rambiyana and Kok (2002), conducting research in South Africa, postulate that the ultimate aim of both formal and informal education is to prepare children for adult living. Citing Rice (1991), Rambiyana and Kok (2002, p.10) define adulthood as “the ability of the individual to optimally integrate culture into his/her life, to possess attitudes and behaviour according to society’s expectations”. Every society tries to

preserve itself through the transmission of its culture to its young ones and schooling is one of the means by which this is done. Since the ultimate aim of education is to prepare children for adult living, it presupposes that parents may expect inclusive schools to do likewise and in the process transmit the culture of the land to their children.

Rambiyana and Kok (2002) said that parents send their children to school to be employable in the future. Similarly, Wolman et al. (2001) found that parents wished their children to be financially independent in the future. Generally, parents expected the schools to equip their children with skills and knowledge that would make them employable in the future. To be able to do this effectively, the children would have to attain a degree of academic success.

It is the aim of society to have upright citizens. Rambiyana and Kok (2002) suggest that schools are a means through which society can achieve this aim. According to them, schools can do so because children spend a vast amount of time in schools and “educators are better placed to detect and correct defective citizenship traits” (p.11). Since producing good citizens is something society upholds will parents in this study hold this as a priority expectation for their children?

From the above review it can be concluded that although there are differences between countries on PE of education, there are broadly defined key expectations that can be identified and categorised in three groups, namely:

- Academic - for example: learning to read, write, manipulate figures, and progress academically;
- Social - for example: interpersonal skills, including the development of friendships, and communication skills; and
- Cultural - for example: acculturation and acquisition of good citizenship skills.

2.3.1.1 Ghanaian parental expectations of education

Ghanaian parents acknowledge the importance or value of education in contemporary society (Donkor, 2010). Brooke (2009, p.43) reported that 41% of the Ghanaian parents who participated in his study saw primary education “as the starting point for a protracted educational career or for 'progress', or as a means to securing employment”. This “protracted educational career” in Ghana comprises compulsory eleven years of universal basic education, (two years kindergarten, six years primary and three years Junior High School), three years of Senior High School and then tertiary education. At the tertiary level, one can attend the

university for a degree or a polytechnic for a diploma or Higher National Diploma or attend a College of Education for a diploma (formerly known as Teachers Training College, and used to award Certificate A 4 Year Post Middle, and Certificate A 3 Year Post Secondary qualifications which are equivalent to a diploma). Tertiary level programmes span between three and four years. Thus, it takes a minimum of 17 years to complete the whole cycle of education in Ghana.

Brooke (2009) also said that 29% of parents in the study perceived primary education as an opportunity to learn to read and write. In addition, 28% of the parents said that it was a combination of the two views mentioned. Furthermore, Brooke suggests that the desire of parents to see their children acquire education and thereby acquire a job might increase their desire for their children to achieve certification.

Although the study participants were just 127 parents from six rural schools in Ghana (and we do not know how they were selected, making it liable to bias), it gives insight to PE of education in Ghana. From this study, it can be concluded that some PE of education would be to equip children with the ability to read, write, get certification and be employable. No study was identified that addressed the issue of PE of IE directly.

Based on the assertion that PE are universal (Adeniji-Neill, 2012), it can be assumed that some of the expectations of Ghanaian parents of education would be to:

- Help their children develop problem solving skills;
- Be able to read and write;
- Develop interpersonal skills;
- Acquire good citizenship skills;
- Learn and practise the culture of the society;
- Develop communication skills; and
- Develop skills in ICT.

As noted, these expectations are only assumptions. Since there is limited literature in this area on Ghana, it is an area worth researching as, expectations according to Russell (2003), underpin our behavioural choices.

2.3.2 Parental expectations of inclusive education

A number of studies have been conducted on PE of teachers and the school. Most of these studies focused on parents who had children in regular (Foot et al., 2000; Crozier, 1999) and special schools (Russell, 2003; Wolman et al., 2001; Tartar and

Horenczyk, 2000; Bennet, Lee and Lueke, 1998; Au and Pumfrey, 1993) and none on parents with children with SEN in inclusive settings.

Researching into the influences on parent perceptions of inclusive practices for their children with mental retardation, Palmer et al., (1998) said that some parents with children with SEN value socialisation and would therefore expect their children to make friends and socialise within the inclusive classroom. As noted by Palmer et al. (1998) PP of IE is determined by the outcomes they value most for their child. Rationally, the outcomes which parents value will determine the expectations that they have for their children in inclusive classrooms. Expectations originate from and affect one's beliefs, knowledge, experience, actions and behaviour (Russell, 2003; Olsen et al., 1996). This means that the expectations parents have for their children may originate from their knowledge about IE and SEN and this may affect their involvement in IE.

The studies reviewed did not specify the parents' cultural expectations for their children in inclusive schools. Additionally, they focused only on parents who had children with SEN. No study has been identified that focused on the expectations of both groups of parents for their children in inclusive settings and whether inclusive schools are helping their children achieve their set expectations.

In the present study, parents were given opportunity to give three major expectations they had for their children and also comment on whether the inclusive school was helping their children achieve these expectations. Russell (2003) noted the importance of discussing with parents their expectations of their child as it helps them "generate more complex expectations that take account of different perspectives and dimensions which are more likely to aid their adjustment to and understanding of any new situation" (p.147).

2.3.2.1 Ghanaian parental expectations of inclusive education

Again, my search for literature in this area using the mediums mentioned in section 2.2.4.4 above yielded limited results. Adeniji-Neill (2012, p.3) citing Foner, (2009), Waters and Sykes, (2009) Zhou, (2009) and Li, (2004) suggested that "interpersonal expectations play an essential role in everyone's life and that PE are universal". Against this background it can be assumed that the common PE of general education may not be so different from IE. The assumption is that parents will expect their children to be able to:

- Acquire the basic skills of literacy and numeracy;
- Acquire certification; and

- Progress academically.

Additionally, they would expect the same things I assumed that other parents will expect for their children in general education listed in the last paragraph of the section above. This may hold for parents without children with SEN in inclusive schools but what about the parents with children with SEN? Russell (2003) suggested that parents with children with disabilities may have peculiar needs and expectations which evolved based on cultural values. If so, it is likely that the assumption that PE are universal may not hold and also it is likely that the expectations of parents with children with SEN will differ markedly from parents without children with SEN. Since expectations impact on behaviour, it will mean that PE may impact on their involvement in IE and also their perception of IE in Ghana. There was therefore a need to investigate the expectations of parents in inclusive schools.

2.3.3 Demographic variations in parental expectations of inclusive education

The search for literature using the mediums mentioned in section 2.2.4.4 did not yield much information. The only information I attained is presented in section 2.3.2 where Palmer et al., (1998) mentioned that parents with children with SEN who value socialisation would expect their children to socialise and make friends. The limited literature is an indication that it is an under-researched area in IE.

Literature in general education however, indicates that there are gender and educational level variations in PE. Halle (1997) sampling low-income minority families discovered that the higher the education of mothers, the higher their academic expectations were for their children in maths and reading. Also, there is evidence that highly educated parents expect their children to be able to attain higher levels of education and also have higher expectations for their children's academic achievement (Alexander, Entwistle, and Bedinger, 1994; Grodnick and Slowiaczek, 1994). Due to the limited or lack of literature on demographic variations in PE of their children in inclusive schools, hence the need for the current study to investigate the situation in Ghana.

2.4 Parental involvement

This section of the literature review focuses on the concept of PI. The main components of this section that will be discussed are shown in Figure 2-4.

Parental involvement (PI)

1. PI in education
2. PI in IE
3. Rationale and benefits of PI
4. Models of PI
5. Demographic variations in PI

Figure 2-4: Outline of literature reviewed for parental involvement

2.4.1 Parental involvement in education

As mentioned in section 1.1.1 parents play a vital role in the education of their children and have in-depth information to render to people working with their children.

PI is a situation where parents give their support to their children's education. Hence parents are viewed as "people who provide help and/or augment the educational programme" (Morrison 1978, p.21). Morrison explains that parents in such situations will be viewed as custodians, teacher aides or helpers in delivering services in the classroom. Morrison (1978) points out that this perspective offers a narrow view of PI. To him, PI transcends this view point since it is a reciprocal relationship where the help taking place is a two-way affair. It involves how the school and parents help each other to achieve the overall goal of education.

He therefore defines PI as "a process of actualising the potential of parents: of helping parents discover their strengths, potentialities, and talents: and of using them for the benefit of themselves and the families" (p.22). Therefore, PI can be conceptualised as parents supporting their children's education and working together with the school to optimise the educational experiences of their children.

PI is closely related to two commonly used terms, 'partnership' and 'participation'. Partnership implies a sharing relationship between parents, professionals and the school (Wolfendale, 1989). This relationship presupposes that there is equality between the parents and the school so that "power and control is evenly distributed" (Lareau 1989, p.35). To work effectively the various roles and responsibilities of each partner would have to be spelt out.

The words "participation" and "involvement" mean the same thing, which is, taking part in something or full engagement in and commitment to an activity. For this reason, Jeunes (2005, p.245) defines PI as "...parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children".

The three concepts (involvement, partnership and participation) are, however, intertwined; they cannot be fully independent of each other. To partner with parents

will incorporate their involvement and their participation. In this study, the term PI is the preferred term and it will focus on how parents are taking part in IE (the roles they are playing, how the schools are incorporating them in the IE drive and how the parents, think the schools should incorporate them in this drive).

2.4.1.1 Parental involvement in education in Ghana

As part of Ghana's decentralisation policy to alleviate poverty (World Bank, 2003), there has been increased community participation in education. Parents are part of the community (Loreman, 2007) and, as mentioned in the previous sections, their involvement in the education of their children is important, along with its associated benefits. Even though there is no policy document on PI nationally, or at the school level, all parents are expected to be part of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and it enhances their participation in their children's education. Also, PTA meetings serve as forums where school – community issues and relations are discussed and strengthened.

Few studies have been done on PI in education. Donkor (2010) reported that parents identified their poor supervision of homework as the main reason of poor performance and that they spend more time on their jobs than with their children at home. He further reported that all the parents said they attended PTA meetings, during which they exchanged ideas with the school personnel and that PTA meetings were "their main source of interaction with the school" (p.33).

Nyarko (2011) found that mothers' school involvement, and not fathers, positively correlated with educational achievement of students, and that the fathers' involvement was not significant in the academic achievement of students. Nyarko (2012) obtained similar results when he explored the relationship between teachers' rating of parents' school involvement and academic achievement of high school students. Nyarko (2011) reported positive correlation between mothers' and fathers' home involvement and the academic achievement of adolescent students.

Pryor and Ampiah (2003, 2004) reported that most of the parents in Akurase a town in Ghana were indifferent or uninterested in the education of their children as to them it was unproductive in their future career as farmers. So, they did not bother to engage in the learning activities of their children. This is contrary to the findings of Donkor (2010), where parents acknowledged the value of education generally.

It must be noted that in Nyarko's studies, his research participants did not include parents but rather teachers and their students. The findings, although extremely useful, lacked the parents' opinion. Donkor's study had only 30 parents and a few

unspecified numbers of community leaders. This affects representativeness and generalisation. Additionally, both studies failed to identify exactly how parents were involved in the education of their children, or what they considered to be facilitators or inhibitors to their involvement.

2.4.2 Parental Involvement in inclusive education

Mittler (2008) emphasised that actively engaging all stakeholders to work together is a positive move in successful IE programmes. Parents are key stakeholders and cannot be left out. The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), acknowledging their importance, said that “they have unique strengths, knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of the child’s needs” (p.17). The SEN Code of Practice is of the view that parents should be involved in the education of their children by working in partnership with the schools and professionals. This partnership relationship should be characterised by mutual respect and recognition where roles are clearly defined.

Even though in England the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) emphasises partnership with parents to help achieve inclusion, the means by which this partnership can be realised is through working hand in hand with parents (involving parents). This therefore means that partnership cannot take place without involving parents. PI is therefore the mechanism through which partnership with parents can be actualised. PI in IE is therefore essential (Loreman, 2007; Palmer et al., 2001; Seligman 2000; Salend, 1998; Hornby, 1995; Reichart et al., 1989).

The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) mentions that parents are to be assisted to “recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as parents and play an active and valued role in their children’s education” (p.16). This is an active call for parents to be involved in their children’s education.

According to Loreman (2007) parents take part in decision-making, teaching and advocating for their children. These roles do not differ significantly from the roles played by parents in general education. However, Russell (2003) mentioned that parents with children with SEN might have different needs and expectations. If this is so, even though the roles mentioned may be similar, there are some activities peculiar to parents of children with SEN. A typical example is their involvement in the development of Individualised Educational Plans (IEPs). In this study, when parents mentioned they had a child with SEN during the interviews, they were asked about their involvement in IEP development (see Appendix D).

Hornby and Witte ((2010) using principals as their sample, found that most schools in New Zealand had no written policy on PI. The study showed that the parents acted as resources in various capacities (see section 2.4.4.3). They also collaborated and shared information about the children with teachers. Furthermore, the channels of communication used between them were telephone, parents coming to the schools, notes, meetings by appointment, email, newsletters and home school diaries. There was minimum use of home visits by staff. Parent education was being carried out and parents were encouraged to come to the schools through the use of various school activities and programmes like open days and nights, exhibitions, day trips, sporting activities and school camps.

Research on the participation of parents of children with SEN has focused on the rationale for participation (Turnbull and Turnbull, 1997; Bailey et al., 1992), strategies for increasing meaningful involvement (Winton and DiVenere, 1995; Winton, 1986) and the development of positive involvement in inclusive settings (Bennett, Lee and Lueke, 1998; Bennett, DeLuac and Bruns, 1997). The studies reviewed did not focus on how parents were currently involved in IE. These studies focused mainly on parents with children with SEN, excluding parents without children with SEN. There is therefore a need to investigate the role played by both groups of parents in IE.

2.4.2.1 Parental involvement in inclusive education in Ghana

My search for literature, using the search engines and libraries mention in sections 2.2.4.4, yielded very little information. However, as part of a study conducted on learning difficulties in basic schools in Ghana by the Special Attention Project (2011, p.22-23), parents identified the following as their responsibilities in helping their children with learning difficulties:

- Insisting that the child goes to school;
- Personal monitoring and teaching;
- Taking time to go through everything that was taught in school when the child comes home;
- Visiting the school often to go through the child's books;
- Solving more work with the child;
- Constantly advising the child to stay focused; and
- Always helping by solving more work examples with the child.

The PTA also suggested the following for the schools to engage parents in:

- Talking to parents of such children;

- Advising parents to provide basic needs of children;
- Giving advice to parents to seek medical help;
- Urging parents to seek help; and
- Holding meeting with parents and advising them on what to do.

The deduction from the above is that parents have some ideas on ways to be involved in their children's education.

Unlike the USA and Britain where there is the “No Child is left behind Act” and SEN code of practice respectively, that help guide policy on PI, and from which schools have developed their policies on PI. There is no such policy in Ghana. As such there is no law to back PI in IE. Also, being an under-researched area in Ghana, there is a need to find out how parents are involved in IE and the facilitators and inhibitors to their involvement.

2.4.2.2 Inhibitors to parental involvement in inclusive education

The literature records a number of things that can serve as inhibitors to PI. There is a need to review what the literature says and find out from parents in Ghana what barriers they encounter in their attempt to be involved in IE.

It has been observed that many teachers lack the skills, knowledge, strategies and attitudes that they need to effectively interact with parents (Hornby, 2000; Morris and Taylor, 1998). Their deficiency has been attributed to lack of training to be able to work with parents (de Acosta, 1996; Epstein and Dauber, 1991). This inability of teachers to adequately interact with parents and offer them advice and guidance has been identified as a major barrier to PI.

Closely related to this is the issue of teacher time. Hornby (2000) points out that to facilitate PI the teachers must have time for parents; if they do not then it is likely that this will affect PI in their children's education.

Additionally, the parents themselves may lack the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to work with teachers and assist their children with their academic tasks. For example, due to a language barrier, they may not be able to assist their children with their homework (Morris and Taylor, 1998). Also, Epstein (1990) identified parental lack of knowledge as a barrier to their involvement, in that very few parents know what the school expect from them or how they should contribute towards their children's education.

Another identified barrier to PI is parental employment. A study conducted by Williams, Williams and Ullman (2002) found that parents cited work commitment,

demands of other children, child difficulties and lack of time as barriers to their involvement in their child's education.

Hornby (2000) points out that in developed countries like England and USA, where there are policies or legislative instruments on PI which guide practice, it is much easier to get parents involved in their children's education. This means that lack of policies or legislative instruments on PI is likely to pose a barrier to IE.

Furthermore, for schools to effectively involve parents, they must have clear policies and well established procedures of working with parents. Lack of such policies and procedures will inhibit PI. There is a need to find out from the schools that will be used for the study if they have such policies and procedures in place, and if they do not there is a need to find out if this has any effect on PI in the country or not.

Lack of effective communication has been identified as a possible barrier to PI (Lawson, M. 2003; Thompson, 1996; Armstrong, 1995; Mannan and Blackwell, 1992; Epstein, 1986). There is a need to ensure that communication is effectively and efficiently carried on between the home and the school and vice versa. The school must inform parents about everything that is going on and also give the parents information about the progress, as well as the weaknesses, their children are facing. The parents, on the other hand, must feel free to contact the school at any time for information about their children or about any aspect of the school. Roffey (2002, p.33) reports that:

Parents want to know what is going on for their child in school. They prefer informal contact that is positive, regular, private, planned, non-intrusive and early enough to make a difference.

This two-way information will help to improve PI in education and also help to improve the relationship between the parents and the school. Baker and Manfredi-Petitt (2004) emphasised that communication is the basis for any strong relationship. It should not therefore be taken for granted.

Despite the identified barriers, there are rationales and benefits of PI. Some of these are presented in the next section.

2.4.3 Rationale and benefits of parental involvement

Research over the past four decades has linked higher academic success to PI (Van Voorhis, 2003; Van Voorhis, 2001; Simon, 2000; Epstein, Simon and Salinas, 1997; Henderson and Berla, 1994; Steinberg et al., 1992; Epstein, 1991; Fehrman, Keith and Reimers, 1987; Stevenson and Baker, 1987; Marjoribanks, 1979). These researchers have established that the more parents are involved in their children's

education, the better the performance of their children. Also, meaningful engagement of parents in their children's early learning leads to school readiness and later academic success (Henrich and Gadaire, 2008; Weiss, Caspe and Lopez, 2006).

Hornby (2000, p.1) suggests that "increased parental involvement is important because of the benefits that parental involvement brings". Studies have shown that when schools try to increase PI through the use of specific workshops for parents, particular communication practices, coordinated volunteers, and interactive homework there is considerable improvement in student's grades, homework completion, daily attendance, and behaviour (Epstein and Sheldon, 2002; Sheldon and Epstein, 2002; Simon, 2001; Van Voorhis, 2001; Epstein et al., 1997; Epstein, 1991). This indicates that PI does not just happen; schools must make considerable effort towards putting strategies in place to get parents involved in IE. But as to whether the parents will actually get involved will depend on how they see and understand IE and the role they are expected to play in their children's education.

Additionally, benefits or potential benefits of PI reported in the literature include positive parental attitudes towards teachers and schools, improved teacher morale, improved school climate, increased parental satisfaction with schools, increased self-confidence of the parents, improved communication between parents and children, increased likelihood of completing high school, improved study habits of children, a sense of accomplishment by parents and high parental expectations of their children (Ballantine 1999; Karther and Lowden, 1997; Sussell, Carr and Hartman, 1996). Muscott, et al. (2008) reported that by serving on the board of the school, for example, parents or family members can contribute to decision-making in educational programmes, advocate for their communities, and become actively engaged in their children's educational experiences. In my view, since parents play a critical role in their children's education, they must be actively involved in it. Also, they must advocate for appropriate education for their children.

2.4.4 Models of parental involvement

A model is defined as "A model is a framework for understanding information" (Carson, 2009). In my view, models reflect the theoretical framework of theorists and provide guidelines and principles to be followed. The models of PI therefore present the theoretical framework of how PI can be effectively implemented.

The models of PI described in the subsequent sections, were chosen due to their relevance to the Ghanaian context. In this section, Dale (1996), Epstein (1995), and

Hornby's (2000) models are discussed. The models are compared and justification made for why Epstein and Hornby's model were used as theoretical bases for the study with Dale's model giving further insight on how negotiations can be arrived at.

2.4.4.1 Dale's model

Dale (1996) views negotiation as the medium through which professionals and parents reach an agreement about service provision for the education of the child. Her model is based on the premise that parents and professionals have a lot to contribute to the educational arena. However, their views may vary. These differences Dale attributes to the different social roles and functions that they play in society. Despite these different perspectives the professional has to provide services to the parents and the child. To do this effectively there must be some compromise between the professional and the parents. This will require "a two-way dialogue and negotiation whereby each partner brings in their perspective to assist in the decision-making" (Dale, 1996, p.15).

Negotiation leads to two possible outcomes: "consensus", implying that understanding has taken place, or "dissent", meaning that no understanding has been reached and therefore no action will be taken. In the case of the latter, there is a need to use disagreement resolution strategies and embark upon further negotiations. If repeated negotiations fail and the disagreement cannot be resolved, then the relationship enters the conflict phase. Under this phase, the relationship may be temporarily or permanently unable to work as a partnership and may have to be severed. This will be to the detriment of the child for whom the partnership relationship was established in the first place. On the other hand, if it leads to consensus a decision is arrived at and further action and the partnership, may proceed.

To Dale (1996), reaching a "consensus" or a "dissent" is determined by the role of the professionals and parents, the power positions, and the social, economic and organisational context in which they exist. This calls for an analysis of the personalities of the partners involved in the partnership relationship including their roles, power positions, family systems, ethnic group membership, social and political policies and organisational structure (Dale, 1996). Individual role, ideas and participation is determined by the socio cultural setting in which the person finds himself. Dale therefore advocates analysis of individual roles, power positions, family systems, ethnic group membership, social and political policies and organisational structure.

Dale's negotiation model provides great insight as to how negotiation can be used to develop a partnership relationship and to arrive at decisions on service delivery. However, it does not go into categorical detail as to how parents can be actively involved in their children's education whereas the models of PI of Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000) do.

In Ghana parents are not considered as partners, consequently, teachers are not trained to interact with parents as such. Also, there is no policy or legislation on PI. There was a need to investigate if parents were involved in decision-making about their children's IE.

2.4.4.2 Epstein's model

The model proposed by Epstein (1995) incorporates school-based involvement, home-based involvement and home-school communication. It is the redefined version of her initial five types of PI developed in 1991. It has been acclaimed as well-defined and comprehensive (Kohl, Lengua and McMahon, 2002; Georgiou, 1997). The table below shows her six types of PI.

Table: 2-1: Epstein's six types of PI

Type 1 Parenting	Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.
Type 2 Communicating	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programmes and children's progress.
Type 3 Volunteering	Recruit and organise parental help and support.
Type 4 Learning at Home	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning
Type 5 Decision- Making	Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
Type 6 Collaborating with Community	Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning and development

Adapted from Epstein (1995, p.704).

Type 1 (Parenting), involves parents providing a supportive home environment through the provision of basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, health, safety and school needs, including provision of a place in the home for the child to

do his or her homework (Ingram, Wolfe and Lieberman, 2007). Fundamentally, parents are encouraged to provide a home environment that facilitates the educational advancement of their children.

Epstein (1995) said the school can facilitate parenting through parent education and other courses to train parents. There can be family support programmes to assist families and also home visits at transitional points to help families and schools understand themselves.

Under Type 2 (communicating), Epstein (1995) emphasises a two-way communication between the parents and the school. This communication should focus on the progress of the child. Additionally, the school should have what Bastiani (1987) calls an “open door policy”, such that parents can walk in at all times to express their concern or to volunteer information. To facilitate communication Epstein (1995) suggests that there should be conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as and when needed. Also, there should be weekly or monthly folders of students’ work sent home for reviews and comments by parents. Ingram et al. (2007) reported that the parents in their study rarely engaged in this.

Furthermore, schools should provide regular schedules of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communication to parents. The various modes suggested emphasise the point made by Hornby (2000) that parents have various communication preferences. Using these various modes will satisfy the parents’ differing communication preferences.

Agreeing with Hornby (2000), Epstein (1995) emphasised the need for clear information to be given to parents concerning school policies, programmes, reforms and transitions. The goal of communicating is to keep parents informed about what is happening at the school, keep them involved in school programs, and keep them updated on the academic progress of their children (Epstein, 2008). Apart from receiving information, parents must be allowed to air their views to the school authorities and teachers.

Type 3 (Volunteering), is aimed at helping teachers, administrators, students and parents contribute to the functioning of the school (Epstein and Salinas, 1993). As volunteers, parents can facilitate teaching and learning in the school. Hornby (2000) said that parents can be fundraisers or voluntary teaching assistants. However, studies have reported that few parents volunteered their services to the school (Dhingra et al., 2007; Ingram et al., 2007)

Type 4 (Learning at home), deals with learning opportunities at home. Parents are expected to help their children at home with their school work and other curriculum related activities for the academic advancement of their children.

Under Type 5 (Decision-making), parents are expected to be actively involved in the decision-making process in the school. This decision-making is not only about their child but other children as well. To get parents involved, Epstein (1995) suggests that there should be a vibrant PTA or any other parent organisation, advisory council or committee or independent advocacy groups that parents can join to make their voices heard and to work for school reform. Epstein (1995) is by this advocating for parents to be part of the decision-making body and governance team at their children's schools so that they can actively influence policies and decisions.

Under Type 6 (Collaborating with the Community), this has to do with identifying community based resources and services and utilising them in order to help optimise learning. The typology of Epstein (1995) gives clear indicators of how parents can be involved in their children's education. It even provides examples of school practices to enhance PI. However, she fails to mention the possible negative consequences that can arise from PI. This situation can arise when a group of parents want to take total control over the school and dictate all school procedures in the name of PI. To Casanova (1996), such parents become opponents of the school and try to undermine the school and teacher decisions. Policies must be put in place so that such parents do not take absolute control over all decisions, rather, when it comes to school wide decisions, majority opinion must prevail.

Furthermore, her model just outlines the types of PI and how the schools can involve parents. It fails to explore how the parents themselves want to be involved in their children's education. The present study addresses this.

Additionally, Epstein's (1995) model failed to acknowledge that, even though parents can contribute significantly, they equally have needs that must be met to help them become fully involved in their children's education. The model proposed by Hornby's (2000) model outlines these needs.

2.4.4.3 Hornby's model

The theoretical model of PI proposed by Hornby (2000) was developed after he combined and adapted various models developed by Wolfendale (1992), Bastiani (1989), Kroth (1985) and Lombana (1983). His model is made up of two pyramids representing the hierarchy of parental needs and the other a hierarchy of parental strengths or possible contributions. The model acknowledges that parents may

need some guidance in the effort to involve them. Despite this, parents also have much information, skill and knowledge that can be utilised to help in the education of their children. This is especially true for children with SEN. Beveridge (2005, p.62) therefore said:

When their children are disabled, parents frequently acquire the sorts of specialist knowledge and understanding of the nature and implications of their impairment that are invaluable to schools in informing their teaching approach. Many parents will not only wish to contribute their own knowledge to schools, but may at the same time seek reassurance or guidance from schools concerning strategies at home.

Warnock (1985) agrees with the wealth of knowledge held by parents and attests that this information, when supplied to teachers, will enable them to work more effectively. The Department for Education (1994) therefore said that children will not chalk up much progress if parents are not seen as partners who have valuable knowledge and information to pass on. Figure 2-5 shows the pictorial image of the model of PI proposed by Hornby (2000). In this model, parental contributions comprise information, collaboration, resources and policy.

Parental contributions

Parental contribution to policy

Some parents contribute their expertise to the school through their membership of parent or professional organisations (Hornby, 2000). Parents can serve in various capacities in these organisations or groups, for example, they can be school governors or members of the PTA group. Some parents are able to provide in-service training by speaking at conferences or workshops and, by writing about their experience, through these they can impact on policy.

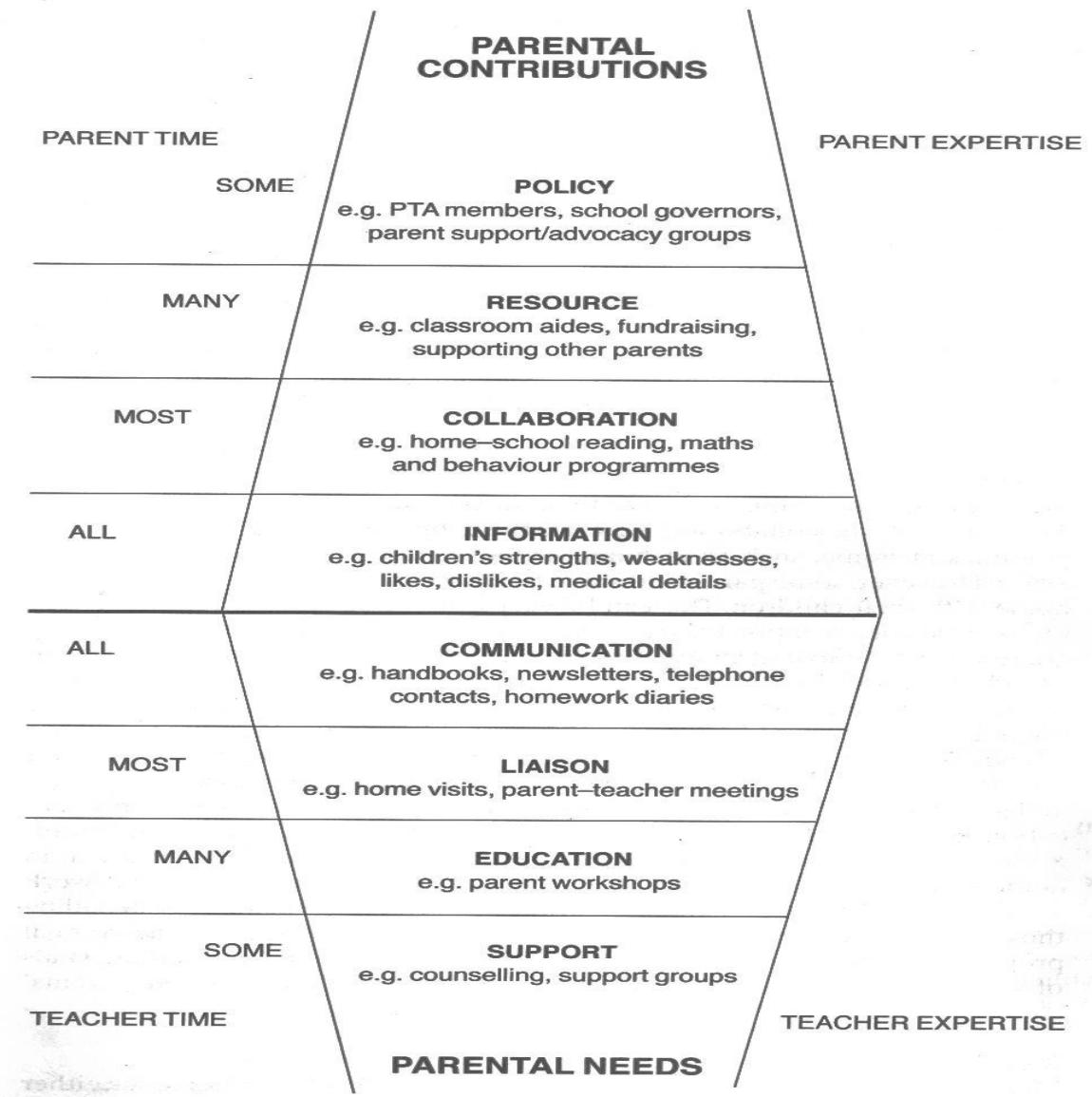


Figure 2-5: Model of PI proposed by Hornby (2000) p.23

Parents as resources

Hornby observed that many parents act as voluntary teacher aides or resources to teach specialised skills like art and craft, or to be fundraisers. This idea is not exclusive to Hornby as other writers have mentioned this (Roffey, 2002; Dale, 1996). In the topography proposed by Epstein's (1995) it falls under volunteering. In acting as a resource, parents are able to obtain knowledge which helps them to better understand their children (Hornby, 2000). Additionally, they acquire confidence and as a result go on to further their own education (Ballantine, 1999).

Hornby and Witte (2010) came up with some specific ways parents can act as resources. They are:

- Listening to pupils read;

- Helping in the classroom;
- Preparing teaching materials;
- Helping on class trips;
- Helping on school camps;
- Helping with sports coaching;
- Assisting with road crossing patrols before and after school;
- Helping in the school library;
- Helping in the school canteen; and
- Acting as guest speakers.

Collaboration between parents and professionals

Hornby (2000) points out that most parents are willing to go beyond information-giving to collaborating with professionals. This collaboration can take the form of reinforcing classroom programmes at home (Topping, 1995). Hornby was quick to point out however, that some parents are not able to do this, as their time and energy may be fully committed to coping with their child at home leaving them very little time. Additionally, they may not have the technical knowhow to reinforce what teachers do in class, especially in the case of Africa where illiteracy is high.

Researchers have reported that PI is linked with their education (Brandon, 2007; Davis-Kean, 2005; Pena, 2000; Grodnick and Slowiaczek, 1994; Stevenson and Baker, 1987). The normal trend is that the better educated the parent, the more involved they will be in their child's education (Epstein, 1995). Documented in the literature is the view that less educated parents cannot or do not want to be involved in their children's education (Lareau, 1987; Baker and Stevenson, 1986). If parents cannot be involved due to inadequate, or lack of, education which will equip them with the necessary skills, then such parents cannot be accused of not wanting to collaborate or be involved in their children's education. Some studies have disputed the assertion that less educated parents cannot or do not want to be involved in their children's education by illustrating variation in the nature and quality of the involvement of less educated parents (Scott-Jones, 1987; Clark, 1983). Researchers have documented that, with teachers' help, parents of any background can become effectively involved in their children's education (Dauber and Epstein, 1989; Epstein, 1986).

Importantly, teachers require "skills of collaborating with parents in a flexible partnership in which parents are respected" (Hornby, 2000, p.24). Without this, parents may get the feeling that the teachers do not respect their decisions. They may decline from any future desire to increase their involvement in their child's

education which will not augur well for the educational progress of their child. It is the legal and ethical responsibility of the school or the educator to seek PI as this will foster collaboration between the home and school (Brandon and Brown, 2009).

Information contributed by parents

Hornby (2000) is of the view that all parents can contribute important information about their children because they have known them all their lives and also have interacted with professionals who have worked with these children. Due to this, parents have a wealth of information they can give to teachers to enhance their children's education (Beveridge, 2005; Dale, 1996; Warnock, 1985).

It has been reported that professionals need parents to be able to successfully do their job (DES Warnock Report, 1978; DHSS Court Report, 1976; DES Plowden Report, 1967). Without parents, professionals will be handicapped as they may not be able to get relevant information (especially for children with SEN) to know where to begin working with the child.

Needs of parents

In the model proposed by Hornby (2000), the needs of parents can be categorised into four areas, communication, liaison, education and support.

Communication needs of parents

To Hornby, parents need an effective communication channel with their children's teacher. But this communication must not be restricted to the teacher; it must involve the whole school. Communication must include information about the organisation and requirements of the school and how that affects the children, the difficulties faced by the children and how the school intends to solve them, and the parental rights and responsibilities. It is very important that parents are informed about the progress, strengths and weaknesses of their child. This will help foster good relationships with parents. Shah (2001) suggests that when the school has a good relationship with parents, communicating good news about their children starts to balance the bad news in a more realistic mix.

Hornby further mentions that the parents need to feel that the school is always open to them and that they can contact the school at all times to inquire about their child. This is what Bastiani (1987) referred to as open door policy. Roffey (2002) said that parents want to know what is going on with their child in school at all times. Schools should therefore be open to parents and keep them informed. Shan (2001) draws attention to the fact that creating a more open channel of communication will

enhance parent-school contact and also help parents to develop trust in the school. Hornby (2000) makes us aware that parents have various communication preferences, for example, face to face, phone or written communication. Educators must develop effective written and oral communication skills so that they can provide parents with a wide range of communication options.

Roffey (2002, p.33) is of the view that parents “prefer informal contact that is positive, regular, private, planned, non-intrusive, two-way and early enough to make a difference”. The most important thing is that the school communicates with the parents about everything happening in the school and also about their children. Additionally, the school should have a welcoming environment for parents such that the parents feel free to contact and communicate with the school about their children at all times. This communication should take whatever form that suits the parent.

Liaison between parents and the school

To be able to effectively provide information on children for parents, teachers must maintain regular contact with parents through home visits, home-school notebooks, weekly report cards, telephone calls and by meeting with parents at the school or through any other means that the teacher deems fit (Hornby, 2000). The goal is to liaise with parents so that the channel of communication between the home and the school remain open. Hornby recommends that teachers should develop the skill of conducting meetings with parents and also of using various liaison strategies so that parents who dislike coming to formal meetings will have other forms of meeting available to them. In other words, it is important that the school uses various strategies to keep the link between the home and the school vibrant.

Educational need of parents

Many parents are interested in parent training programmes which are set out to either promote their child’s progress or manage their behaviour (Hornby 2000). Hornby made it clear that parental education or training can be done individually or in a group or through workshops. But as parents may have differing needs, group training may not fully address the specific need of a particular parent unless the group is constituted based upon common needs. He is of the opinion that the most successful parent education programmes are the ones that involve a group of parents and employ a workshop format. This is so because they lend themselves to educational input while at the same time the parents are given the opportunity to share their concerns. This view was also echoed by Pugh and De'Ath (1984) who

concluded that the most successful type of parent educational programmes involve guidance on promoting child development and opportunity for parents to express any concerns they might have.

This type gives opportunity for the parents to learn and at the same time express their concerns which can be addressed by the experts. Parental education is very important as without it parents may not provide the type of support that will facilitate and eventually optimise children's academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Support needs of parents

The model acknowledges that some parents may need supportive counselling to help them cope. This is indeed so as, for example, having a child with SEN can be challenging even for the most experienced parent and therefore parents may at times require counselling to help them cope. Some parents may request for it, while others may not. Whether the parent requests it or not is not the important issue at stake here. The concern here is that some parents do need counselling and therefore must be provided with it. Hornby (2000) notes that counselling support can be provided on an individual or group basis. In using group counselling the counsellor must ensure that members of the group have similar counselling needs. The relationship between teachers and parents is very important. Hornby (2000, p.27) emphasises that:

If parents have good channels of communication and regular liaison with teachers coupled with the opportunity to receive guidance about their children whenever they need it, then only a few of them will need counselling at any particular time.

On the surface this may seem true. Yet, due to the complexity of human nature, some people with perfect teacher and school communication may still need counselling to help them cope and be involved in the education of their children with SEN. Hornby, however, advises that teachers should have basic counselling skills, in order to be good listeners and to help parents solve their everyday problems.

The model of PI proposed by Hornby (2000) gives a clear idea of the input parents can contribute to their children's education and at the same time makes us aware that parents have some vital needs that should be satisfied in order to facilitate their involvement in their children's education. However, just like Epstein, he fails to outline how the parents themselves want to be involved in their children's education.

2.4.4.4 Comparison of the models and justification for using the selected models

The models proposed by Hornby (2000) and Epstein (1995) deal extensively with how parents can be actively involved in their children's education. The two models have areas where they converge. For example, they agree on the need for a two-way communication between the home and the school.

Both writers agree that parents can volunteer their services or skills to the school. Epstein (1995) refers to parents acting in this capacity as "volunteers" while Hornby (2000) refers to the parents as "resources". Basically, they are referring to how parents can make their services and expertise available to the school and how this can be harnessed to improve the education of their children. Roffey (2002) therefore said parents can be a resource for learning and also a support to the school. Positive parental contribution in whatever form is an invaluable asset that the school must not take for granted but must do everything in their power to uphold.

The roles that parents perform as volunteers or resources can take many forms. Morgan (1993) identifies eight such roles:

- Recipients of information;
- Governors;
- Helpers;
- Fundraisers;
- Experts;
- Co-educators;
- Clients; and
- Consultants.

This is not an exhaustive list as there are more ways in which parents can be resources in their children's education. For example, they can act as advocates to fight the cause of injustices in the educational system. Also, parents can support other parents through membership of parental organisations whereby they can air their views and experiences. Also, Hornby and Witte (2010) suggested several ways parents can act as resources (see section 2.4.4.3). Most of the specific ways they mention can be grouped under the third, fourth and sixth ways that parents can be involved in their children's education as stated by Morgan (1993).

After reviewing literature extensively, Halgunseth et al., (2009) identified PI practices to include:

- Discussing the school day with child;
- Direct and regular contact with teachers;

- Volunteering in the classroom;
- Planning or attending school activities or events;
- Actively promoting learning in the home;
- Chaperoning field trips;
- Developing fundraising activities; and
- Working in parent-teacher organisations.

These specific ways, mentioned by the researchers, whereby parents can be involved in their children's education, emphasise the point made earlier that the modes of involvement are many. Literature suggests that specific suggestions by teachers, parent leaders and support personnel about what parents can do to be involved, helps parents to know what exactly they can do and also helps to develop their positive sense of efficacy and boosts their morale to be involved (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005; Gonzalez and Chrispeels, 2004; Patrikakou and Weissberg, 2000).

Another area in which they converge is the issue of parents contributing to decision-making (Epstein, 1995) or parents contributing to policy (Hornby, 2000). Once again, they are talking about the same thing using different terminologies.

Parents must be allowed to contribute to the decision-making or the policy implementation of the school. Whatever decisions or policies are made affects children. This gives parents a right to be part of the decision-making process. Pugh and De'Ath (1989) point out that parental views are vital and that parents have a critical role to play in the planning and management of services for their children. Their voice must therefore be heard and adhered to.

It has been suggested in the literature that all schools must have a written policy for PI (Henderson and Mapp, 2007; Quiocho and Daoud, 2006; Hornby, 2000) Hornby and Witte (2010) suggest that these policies should outline the ways parents can be involved in their children's education as well as how the schools and teachers intend to help the parents to become involved in their children's education. In the policy document it would be relevant to have suggestions as to specific ways the parents can contribute to the decisions and policies of the school.

Hornby and Witte (2010) suggest further that these policies should be developed in collaboration with the parents so that the activities stated will be relevant to the needs of the parents in their various communities. This suggestion is relevant to Ghana since the nation is made up of people from various socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds and they all have diverse needs. It will be necessary to

find out exactly what the needs of the parents are before outlining activities for them to be involved.

Decision-making involves a two-way dialogue whereby the parents and the professional or school authorities respect each other and attempt to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement (Dale, 1996; Cunningham and Davis, 1985). Hornby (2000) and Epstein (1995), however, did not deliberate on how the process of decision-making or contribution to policy should be achieved. They just mention that the parents should be involved in the decision-making process and contribute to the policy of the school, as it is their right by virtue of the fact that they are the legal custodians of their children. The mention of this specifically gives us one definite way by which parents can be involved in their children's education.

Another area where convergence can be implied is the concept of learning at home by Epstein (1995) and collaboration by Hornby (2000). Learning at home, according to Epstein (1995), is the involvement of parents in the academic learning of their children in terms of helping them to do their homework, helping them to set goals and involving themselves in other curriculum-related activities. Collaboration, to Hornby (2000), involves how parents can help their children with their homework and reading, maths, behaviour programmes and also how parents can have an input in the assessment of their child's need. Additionally, how parents with children with SEN are involved in the development of their child's IEP and even how the parents are involved in the review of their children's progress, and last but not least, how the parents are encouraged to reinforce school programmes at home.

Learning at home, as presented by Epstein (1995), is a myopic way of viewing collaboration. Learning at home is a minute aspect of the collaboration that parents can do. Collaboration in the real sense would involve the parents and the school working hand in hand to perpetuate the specific objectives set for the individual child and to make sure that the parents and the school are constantly in touch with each other. From this it can be said that Hornby (2000) expanded Epstein's idea of learning at home, thereby giving us a more comprehensive view of what collaboration involves.

Differences exist in their models. The first type of PI as proposed by Epstein (1995) which deals with the basic responsibilities of parents to care for their children and create environments that are nurturing and supporting for learning, was not mentioned by Hornby (2000). Additionally, the sixth type of PI proposed by Epstein (1995) was not catered for by Hornby (2000). This has to do with harnessing community resources to maximise learning and the functioning of the school. This is

to get the whole community and its organisations involved in education, thereby developing a holistic approach to dealing with educational issues.

Hornby (2000), on the other hand, identified that parents can give information about their child to professionals or the school, to help them provide the children with the exact service that they will need. Epstein (1995) did not mention information giving but it is implied in her second type of PI. Two-way communications will involve giving information as well as receiving information. Therefore, even though not stated, it is implied in her category.

The main difference between what is proposed by Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000) on the issue of communication is that Hornby identifies it as a need for parents while Epstein sees it as a way parents can be involved. Communication is both a basic need of parents and a way parents can be involved in IE.

The most striking difference between the models proposed by Hornby (2000) and Epstein (1995) is that the Hornby model consists of two pyramids, demonstrating parental contributions and parental needs. He acknowledges that, as much as parents have something to offer in terms of their involvement, they have some basic needs that must be addressed to help facilitate their involvement. Without addressing these needs PI may be affected. This is something that Epstein (1995) failed to acknowledge initially. However, Epstein (1995) presented some challenges and redefinition of her six types of involvement. For example, a challenge she presented under her Type 1 of PI is “provide information to all families who want it or who need it ...” (p.705). This shows that she knows that parents have some needs that have to be met. Despite this, it can be said that Hornby (2000) right from the start categorically identified parental needs that have to be met to help facilitate their involvement. By doing this he makes up for the lapse in the model proposed by Epstein (1995). The two models taken together will therefore complement each other and it is for this reason they are used as the theoretical basis for this research.

The model proposed by Dale (1996), on the other hand, focuses on the use of negotiation as a means of arriving at decisions on service provision and partnership. Her model does not go into the specifics of what parents need to do in order to be involved. Additionally, her model focuses more on partnership than involvement, while the models proposed by Hornby (2000) and Epstein (1995) focused more on PI, and collectively they have identified how parents can be involved, what parental needs are and what schools can do to facilitate PI.

A number of factors were considered (including socio-cultural) before deciding upon the models to guide the study. Among them was whether the model gave specific indicators of what goes into PI, whether it recognised what parents can do, as well as what they will need, to be effectively involved. Additionally, I had to reflect upon whether the views of the model about PI reflected the current views about PI in Ghana. After careful deliberation, the models proposed by Hornby (2000) and Epstein (1995) have been chosen since they complement each other. The shortfalls in Epstein's model have been catered for in Hornby's model. They have been judged to be the best models to serve as the theoretical basis for a study of this nature undertaken in Ghana. The model proposed by Dale (1996), on the other hand, will help the researcher know how negotiation can be used as a means of decision-making.

2.4.5 Demographic variations in parental involvement

Dhingra et al. (2007) reported that there are gender variations in the participation of parents in school activities. However, they reported that more mothers engaged in school visits and discussed academic issues with teachers than fathers. Williams et al. (2002) reported that more mothers than father are likely to feel involved in their children's education if they do not choose to work full time. The findings on gender variations are therefore mixed making it necessary to investigate the situation in Ghana.

Ho Sui-chu and Willms (1996) reported that parents who have children with learning and behavioural problems were less involved in their children's education and had less discussion about school activities with their children but were more likely to have contact with school staff.

Research has found that parents with low literacy are less likely to help their children with reading and writing (Parsons and Bynner, 2007; Williams et al., 2003) and feel less confident in doing so (Williams et al., 2003). This implies that these parents might not be very involved in helping their children with their homework. This shows that parents' education level may affect their involvement in their child's learning and education generally.

Since the international literature shows that parental demographic variables, such as educational level, gender and having a child with SEN, can impact on PI, the literature on Ghana in these areas is limited and especially so for IE. There is a need to investigate this area further to find out what pertains in Ghana.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature review suggests that PP, PE and PI may be interrelated. Russell (2003) suggests that expectations determine behavioural choices. According to Olsen et al. (1996) expectations can affect our beliefs, knowledge and experiences. While Vrey (1990) views perception as a process of sensing and finding meaning, these occur concurrently. This means that parents' expectations may determine their involvement in IE. What they perceive and find meaning in would also influence their expectation and subsequent involvement. Also, there are some facilitators and inhibitors to PI. Finally demographic variables of the parents (age, educational level, gender and having a child with SEN or not) can impact on their perception, expectation and involvement in IE. Based on the literature review, Figure 2-6 was developed based on the hypothesis that PP, PI and PE may be influenced by demographic variables in Ghana. Figure 2-6 gives an overview of the major areas of the literature review and the possible relationships that may exist between demographics variables and PP, PI and PE. Figure 2-6 will be further developed based on the research questions and will guide the development of the instruments for data collection (see Figure 4-1). Findings of the study will be used to bring changes to Figure 4-1. The new Figure will then be used for the discussion chapter (see Figure 7-1). The next chapter discusses the various methodologies used to research into PP, PE and PI in IE.

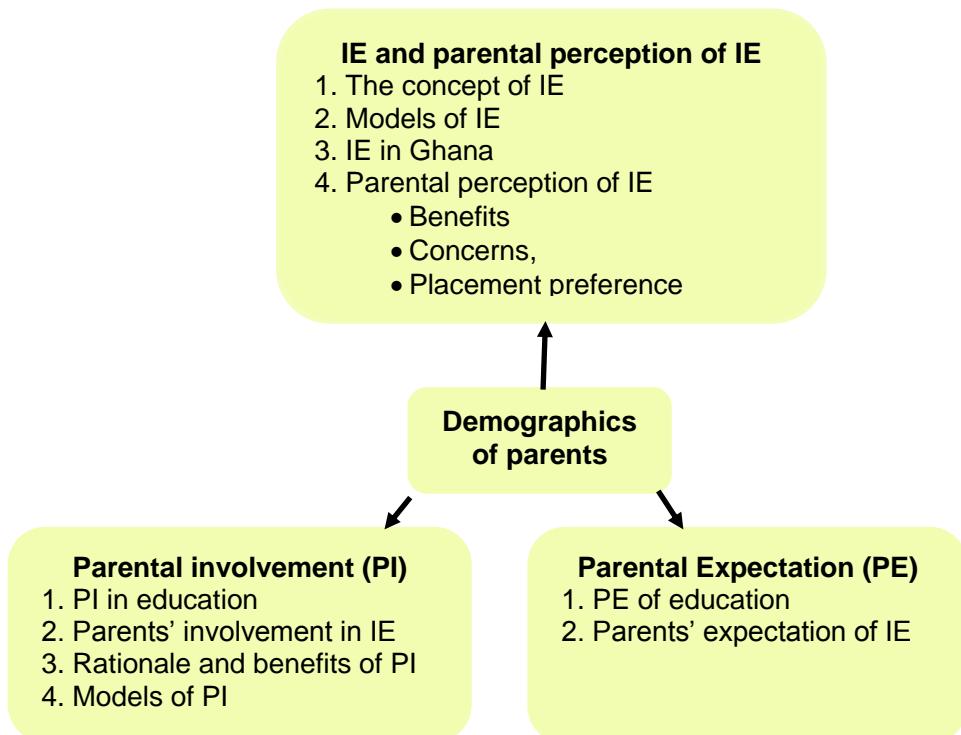


Figure 2-6: Conceptual framework and outline of the literature review

CHAPTER THREE

3 REVIEW OF METHODS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH INTO PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature on inclusive education, parental perceptions, parental expectations and parental involvement in inclusive education and education. The focus of this chapter is to review the methodologies used to research parental perception, expectations and involvement in the inclusive education of their children.

3.2 Methodological approaches

There are three main approaches that can be used in researching into parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE. These are the qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches.

3.2.1 Qualitative methods

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.3):

...qualitative research involves a qualitative interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Several researchers agree with this view (Creswell, 2012; Marshall and Rossman, 2010; Mason, 2000). Creswell (2012) after analysing the characteristics of qualitative research presented by several researchers concluded that the common ones are qualitative researchers:

- Gather data in the participants' natural settings. This involves the researcher talking directly to the participants and seeing them behave or act in their context and having face to face interaction with the participants overtime. This in my view leads to the researcher understanding the participants. The participant would also develop trust in the researcher, resulting in the participant genuinely opening up and divulging information that he/she otherwise would not reveal. The end result will be the compilation of data

that can be accurately interpreted due to the in-depth understanding the researcher has gained of the participant.

- Collect data themselves using observations, interviews and documentary analysis. The instruments they use are self-designed and involve open-ended questions.
- Present a holistic account of their findings. Meaning that, they present findings devoid of bias and consider all possible perspectives or features of their data.
- Use multiple methods of data which they review categorically or thematically.
- Use complex reasoning which involves inductive and deductive reasoning as they develop themes based on their data.
- Focus on learning or understanding the meaning the participants have about the issue being investigated and develop themes based on this. To do this effectively, the researchers adopt methods that “are particularly well suited for understanding values, personal perspectives, experiences and contextual circumstances” (Hull, Taylor and Kass, 2001, p.146).
- View the research process as emergent and therefore they are ready to alter or change their initial plan of research when it is not working as expected. They are ready to adopt the best method that will yield high quality data even if it involves accepting issues raised by the participants that the researcher may not have included in the research design.
- Are reflexive so include in their research their background and how this influenced their interest in the topic.

Inherent in these characteristics are the strengths of qualitative research. Qualitative research importantly allows researchers to generate data that is rich in detail and to understand their research participants in an in-depth way that quantitative research lacks (Denscombe 2010; Marshall and Rossman, 2010; Mason, 2002). Also, qualitative descriptions can play an important role in suggesting possible relationships, causes, effects and dynamic processes (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This is probably because the researcher is able to interact with the research participant and even interview them for further clarifications or justification of their behaviours. This approach therefore allows the researcher to be able to identify contextual and setting factors as they relate to the phenomenon of interest (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

However, undertaking qualitative research requires researchers to spend longer time collecting and analysing large volumes of data and that for most researchers it

is a lonely time of struggling and deliberation over the data (Creswell, 2012; Denscombe, 2010). Denscombe (2010) further mentions that it often deals with small sample sizes which affect representativeness and generalisation. He therefore suggested transferability of the results to other instances.

Additionally, it yields large volumes of data that can overwhelm the researcher (Creswell, 2012; Denscombe, 2010). Denscombe (2010) reports that since the initial data collected is unstructured it is more difficult and time consuming to analyse. Despite these disadvantages, qualitative research is an effective approach that can yield useful data and findings.

3.2.2 Quantitative methods

Quantitative research involves theory or hypothesis testing, deduction, confirmation, explanation, prediction, standardised data collection, statistical analysis and it is generally large scale (O' Leary, 2009; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Creswell (2009, p.5) describes quantitative research simply as:

A means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables in turn, can be measured typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures.

Because of the nature of quantitative research described above Denscombe, (2010) and Creswell, (2009) observe that quantitative researchers are preoccupied with issues of design, measurement, and sampling. The possible reason for this is the fact that they use the deductive approach, which emphasizes detailed planning prior to data collection and analysis.

Quantitative research, unlike its qualitative counterpart, results in findings that can be generalised to the population from which the sample was selected (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This is because it uses probability or random sampling which allows tests of statistical significance from which inferences can be made (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) points out that probability sampling is often time-consuming and costly therefore some researchers use sampling procedures that are less rigorous and this affects the sampling quality. Researchers should use sampling procedures that best suit their research and produce high results as any compromises will affect the findings.

Also, quantitative research tends to be more objective as the researchers adopt this approach in order to understand the facts their data present to them (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Their objectivity may be a result of the little or no contact they have with their research participants. The advantage here is that the researcher

would be more objective as he/she would have no emotional involvement with the participants, unlike the qualitative approach which tends to be more subjective and liable to bias.

Even though the quantitative method is objective, the absence of an interactive relationship between the researcher and the participants can result in the researcher not being able to understand the view of the participants. This can affect the interpretation of the data collected.

The methods employed in the quantitative approach, such as correlational and experimental methods, help to yield information about the relationship between variables that are being investigated. Hence, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) said it is useful for generating data which can be used for quantitative predictions. This helps to predict or control future outcomes.

From the above discussions, it is evident that the two major approaches (qualitative and quantitative) have their individual strengths and weaknesses. It is for this reason that some researchers propose that the two methods should be combined, to compensate for their mutual and overlapping weaknesses (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson and Turner, 2003). In my view, this may be the basic genesis of the mixed method approach.

3.2.3 Mixed methods

Mixed methods research has been identified as the new wave in research and identified to be the third major approach to research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). According to Greene (2006), mixed methods research is an approach to investigating the social world that involves more than one methodological tradition and, as a result, more than one way of knowing, along with more than one kind of technique for gathering, analysing, and representing human phenomena, for the purpose of better understanding. Several researchers conceptualise mixed methods research as an approach to inquiry that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches and assumptions in a study (Creswell, 2009; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, mixed methods research, as the name implies, involves using multiple methods in a particular study such that the weakness of each approach will be neutralised by the use of the strengths of the alternative approach. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) said that, it is more than just collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data; rather it involves the use of both approaches such that the overall strength of

the study is greater than when either of the methods are used alone and will be evident in the analysis of data.

3.3 Review of research methodologies

This section reviews a number of studies which focused on parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE. The selection of the studies included in this section was based on the fact that they investigated the variables of interest to the current study, used a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach and the researchers explicitly described the methods they used. The purpose of conducting this review was to find out how other researchers conducted similar studies using the various approaches to research and to be informed about the strategies that made their studies successful. It was also to identify any shortfalls in their methodologies in order to avoid them when designing the methodology for my study.

3.3.1 Research studies based on the qualitative approach

Seery et al. (2000), in a general education preschool programme in a large Midwestern University in the USA, conducted a study to find out the hopes and concerns of parents and professionals about inclusion. The three research questions that guided the study were about the hopes and concerns of parents and teachers about inclusion, whether the hopes and concerns between the two groups were different and whether they change overtime.

Fifty-two respondents made up of 22 teachers and support staff, 20 parents of typically developing children and 10 parents with children with SEN participated in the study. Forty-nine of the respondents were females, while three were males. The investigation was conducted in two phases, using open-ended interviews. The first and second phase lasted six and three weeks respectively. This format was chosen so that the graduate students who were told to conduct the interviews would be able to contact all the parents. The interviewers were given a framework and were to maintain a conversational tone during the interviews. Apart from the open-ended questions, neutral probes were used to elicit further information.

Content analysis was used to uncover the descriptive qualities of their responses from the two phases. The inter-rater reliability was 94% and a Kappa of 92% was achieved.

Even though the study yielded information about the hopes and concerns of parents and teachers about inclusion, it had some limitations. Due to the limited sample

used, and the fact that the sample was selected from only one preschool in a university setting, the results cannot be generalised. The implication of this for my study is that I need to broaden the scope of my study by including a larger representative sample size from all the regions where IE is being piloted in Ghana.

Runswick-Cole (2008) conducted a study on parents' attitudes to inclusion using the qualitative approach. The parents were contacted through three voluntary organisations involved in supporting children with SEN. Thirty parents expressed interest but 24 agreed to participate. This was made up of 17 mothers and seven fathers. Additionally, seven professionals took part in the study.

Due to geographical constraints seven parents were interviewed in their homes and 17 by phone. The researcher conducted these narrative interviews.

The duration of the interviews was not stated. Also, the study included the opinions of seven fathers. This is an under-representation of fathers. From the study, I learnt that I should be prepared to interview my research participants anywhere convenient for them, have equal representation of gender and state in my methodology the duration of the interviews.

The inter-rater reliability of Seery et al.'s (2000) study shows that the training given to the interviewers was adequate. The reliability results gave credibility to the study and enhanced its objectivity.

Russell (2003), using semi-structured interviews and a sample of 19 parents who had disabled children, investigated the parents' expectations as their children started school and also explored ways the parents could become involved in the research process. Russell (2003) had made prior arrangements with the families resulting in her interviewing the mother only in 16 out of the 19 families. In six of these families the mother was the only carer and for one of the families she had to interview the grandmother. One family requested an evening appointment so both parents could attend, as the mother was not fluent in English. Russell used direct questions to elicit details when required information was not forthcoming.

The arrangements Russell had with the families offered parents the opportunity to decide who would be interviewed. Using direct questions to elicit the required information helped to keep the research focused. When preparing my interview schedule I will use direct questions to help elicit the required information.

From the above studies, it is clear that the qualitative approach can be used to conduct research in the stated area which is able to yield useful data. However, all the studies reviewed used small sample sizes and this limits the ability to generalize

the findings. Reviewing the literature on Ghana, I did not come across any study that used the qualitative approach.

3.3.2 Research studies based on the quantitative approach

Leyser and Kirk (2004) examined parental views and factors influencing their perspectives about inclusion. The study was conducted in a Midwestern state in the USA. Four hundred and thirty seven parents with children with mild to severe disabilities responded to a “Parent Opinion About Inclusion or Mainstreaming” questionnaire. The respondents were 343 mothers, 34 fathers, 60 couples and other family members.

A five point Likert scale questionnaire made up of three parts was used to collect data. The first part elicited information on the background of the respondents. The second included an “Attitude towards inclusion/mainstreaming scale” and was composed of 18 items selected and adapted for parent respondents from the revised “Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale” (ORM) by Antonak and Larrivee (1995) and an earlier version of the scale by Larrivee and Cook (1979). Of the 18 items, eight items were in favour of inclusion and ten expressed negative attitudes about inclusion. The scores of the negative items were reverse coded during the analysis so that the low rating could be interpreted as favourable to inclusion.

The third part of the instrument include items requiring parents to rate their feelings about placement of children with SEN, satisfaction with services, and teachers available time. Space was provided for parents comments. Frequencies, means, ANOVAs and t-tests were used to analyse the data. Even though the study yielded information about parental views and factors influencing their perspectives about inclusion, fathers were under-represented. The sampling procedure used was not described thereby affecting ability to replicate the study.

Kalyva et al. (2007) explored the attitudes of Greek parents of primary school children without SEN towards inclusion using a quantitative approach. The sample comprised 338 parents selected from three randomly selected primary schools in Thessaloniki. This was made up of 182 fathers and 156 mothers aged between 27-58 years. The parents were asked to respond to “My Thinking About Inclusion Scale” (MTAI) developed by Stoiber et al. (1998). This consisted of 12 Likert scale items.

There were six reverse questions. A pilot study was conducted with 40 parents to ensure that the data from these parents were well understood. Kalyva et al. (2007)

reported that the parents were asked to complete another questionnaire devised by Besevegis et al. (1997).

In all, 400 questionnaires were distributed to the parents via the children and parents were asked to return them to the teachers. The return rate was 84.5%. Chi-square, MANCOVA, means and SDs were used for the analysis.

Whereas the study was based on self-report and there was no information on the actual behaviour of the parents, observation of the actual reaction of the parents would have yielded more information. It must be noted that self-report is used by most surveys and the researchers take it on trust that the respondents will report on what they actually feel or think; they accept whatever their research participants tell them. Additionally, qualitative interviews could have been used to shed more light on the information given through self-reports.

Chavkin and Williams (1993) conducted a study to investigate the attitudes and practices of minority parents regarding their involvement in their children's education. The investigation was done in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The study included 3,103 parents and 4,073 educators. A Parent Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ) was used to collect the data. This is a self-reported Likert scale instrument consisting of 101 closed response items.

The instruments were distributed at open house meetings sponsored by PTAs across the six regions. Translators were provided for parents who could not speak English. This gave such parents the opportunity to be part of the study. But what the researcher failed to tell us is whether all the people who spoke English could actually read, understand and complete the questionnaire or whether it had to be interpreted to them.

Frequencies, rank orders, means and SDs were used to present the data. The breakdown procedure was used to help interpret the comparisons among the ethnic groups. Accordingly, the eta-squared statistic with a significance level of $p \leq .001$ was used to estimate the amount of variance that could be accounted for by the difference in ethnicity.

The study was able to yield some interesting and useful findings. However, the researchers did not explicitly describe the type of sampling method they used. Also, in investigating reasons for less PI, the researchers could have introduced a qualitative element into the research such that the respondents would compose

their own reasons as to why they involved themselves less in their children's education. This will have introduced depth and meaning to the study.

Again, the questionnaires they used had too many items (101). When questionnaires are too long there is a tendency for fatigue to set in and the respondents may just be responding without reading critically; this will affect the findings.

An examination of the three studies described in this section shows that they all used Likert scale items in their questionnaire. It is evident that Likert scale items are able to yield useful data for this type of research.

The study conducted by Kalyva et al. (2007) yielded a high (84.5%) questionnaire return rate. This significant return rate may be because the children who disseminated the questionnaires impressed upon their parents to respond to the questionnaire. The implication of this for my study is that I must adopt a questionnaire dissemination strategy that will result in a high return rate, such as, having personal contact with the respondents and following up to ensure the questionnaire is returned, as the return rate can have an impact on my findings. Having personal contact may lead to more time used for data collection and also increase travel expenses.

Another observation made is that all the studies either used or adopted questionnaires from previous studies conducted by other researchers. This is something worth doing as the reliability and validity of these instruments has already been established.

3.3.3 Research studies based on mixed methods approaches

Dhingra et al. (2007) researched into involvement of parents in school-related activities. The sample comprised 1,000 parents, drawn from Jammu City in the K state of India, made up of fathers and mothers who had children between classes one to five.

A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the selection of the students whose parents became the research participants. A self-devised questionnaire was used for the data collection. The researchers used qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the data. Content analysis, t-test and Pearson's chi-square were used to analyse the data.

The researchers failed to tell readers how many fathers and mothers were used for the study. As a result the reader cannot tell if comparatively both sexes were well represented.

Additionally, they did not describe how they generated the qualitative data for the content analysis. Throughout their presentation, they made no specific reference to the findings from the content analysis. Furthermore, there was no evidence of qualitative components in the description of the questionnaire. The lack of presentation of the qualitative finding supports Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) observation that, some researchers claim to use mixed methods yet in the analysis of data they tend to present only the findings from one approach. To illustrate this anomaly, Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) evaluated 57 articles and found that only five articles integrated the quantitative and qualitative data in the analysis, while 44% did not. Based on this evidence, Bryman (2006) and Niglas (2004) arrived at the conclusion that researchers hardly integrate the qualitative and quantitative data when analysing their data.

Possible reasons why researchers fail to report findings from both approaches may be due to publication issues, methodological preferences, lack of exemplary mixed methods studies, nature of the data, difficulty in bridging ontological drives, skill specialism of the research team, structure of the research projects, timelines and writing for different audiences (Bryman, 2007). Additionally, they may be saving the information for another publication. Despite these reasons, I recommend that the data from both methods should be presented to help strengthen the findings.

Foot et al. (2000) used questionnaires and interviews to investigate parents' preference, knowledge and expectation of their child's preschool education. It must be noted that, even though this study is not directly related to IE, it gives insight to how studies conducted on PE using the mixed method approach are conducted.

Foot et al. (2000) conducted their study using two successive stages. First they distributed questionnaires comprising 34 items to 3,315 parents via their children. Prepaid envelopes were included for their return. In all, 911 parents completed the questionnaires and 91% of them were mothers. The response rate was 27.5%. For representativeness, the schools were selected in proportion to the population of children in each educational authority. The second stage was the use of in-depth interviews. Parents were selected from preschools in Glasgow. Seventy-five schools were contacted and 16 were used. Ninety-one parents were interviewed by phone. The questionnaires were analysed using statistical means and descriptive statistics. The discussion was based on the results of both instruments.

Apart from informing the reader the areas the interview data covered, the researchers did not state how many items were in the interview schedule. Additionally, they did not mention the number of males and females interviewed.

The return rate of the questionnaires (27.5%) was very low. If the parents had been requested to return the completed questionnaire via their children rather than mailing it, the return rate may have been higher. This is supported in the study by Leyser and Kirk (2004) and reported in section 3.3.2.

Finally, although the writers reported that the results and discussion were based on both data sets, it is difficult for the reader to identify the results of the interviews from their write-up. Nevertheless, the study yielded useful results that contributed to knowledge.

3.3.4 Justification for the mixed method approach

Bryman (2006) identified 16 reasons why researchers use the mixed method approach. Some of these are: triangulation, instrument development, completeness, credibility and offset. Completeness, credibility and offset are my reasons for using this approach for my study.

Triangulation offers the advantage of corroborating the findings of one method against another (Denscombe, 2010; Bryman, 2006). For example, the researcher uses a questionnaire to gather information, but since it is based on self-report, the researcher has no way of knowing whether the respondent is telling the truth. To confirm what the respondents profess, the researcher can add observation of the respondents in their natural environment, to observe if they really do what they said in the questionnaire. Denscombe (2010) discusses four types of triangulation. They are:

- Data: this involves the use of variety of sources in a study. There are three types of data triangulation: informant, time and space.
- Investigator: this involves the use of different researchers.
- Theory: this involves the use of multiple perspectives and theories to interpret the results of the study.
- Methodological: the use of multiple methods to study a research problem.

Even though my study did not specifically aim for triangulation, data and methodological triangulation were used. For the data triangulation, my study elicited information from parents and headteachers (informant triangulation) and gathered data from the three regions in Ghana piloting IE (space triangulation).

For the methodological triangulation, I used questionnaires (with Likert scale items and one open-ended question making it qualitative in nature) which were analysed quantitatively (see chapter 5). The data from the interviews was analysed

thematically although I quantified the number of interviewees who gave specific responses (see chapter 6). I did not quantify the entire data from the interviews because it was intended to add depth to the information derived from the questionnaire. Using qualitative means of analysing information helped to add the depth and understanding I anticipated.

Denscombe (2010) identified two types of methodological triangulation: within methods and between methods triangulation. The former involves the use of either multiple quantitative or multiple qualitative approaches in one study. The latter involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in one study. Within method triangulation has limited value because the weakness of the method being used will still persist (Denscombe, 2010).

For my study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilised. This eventually facilitated the comparison of the results. Additionally, since I used two sets of respondents (parents and headteachers), the information generated from both groups further facilitated the comparison, as in most instances they were asked to respond to the same sets of items (see Appendix B and C). This approach was used because it helped me elicit useful and meaningful data.

Instrument development is another reason advanced by Bryman (2006) for the use of mixed method research. This is the situation where the results obtained through one method are used to shape subsequent instruments, sampling or analysis strategies of the other method (Kelle, 2006), meaning that, one method shapes and informs the next method. For example, after a review of the literature, a researcher finds very little empirical information to help him/her develop a questionnaire. As a result, the researcher decides to do some initial investigation to help understand the issues before developing a survey.

He/she then decides to interview people for information. Based upon the information generated, he/she develops a questionnaire and does his/her research. Or, for example, in my current study I decide to first administer a questionnaire and then, based on the responses, I decide the type of questions I would include in my interview guide. This means that the information derived from the questionnaire would assist me in the next stage of my research.

According to Bryman (2006) completeness is based on the view that mixed methods research would result in a more rich and detailed or comprehensive study than the use of only one method. This is because it offers the researcher the opportunity to view the issue from different perspectives (Denscombe, 2010). Further advancing

this view, Creswell and Plano Clarks (2010) suggest that this approach may be used to enhance the study or when the researcher realises that one source of data is insufficient.

In the current study, for example, the data that was generated from the interviews was used to enhance meaningfulness in the statistical figures that the analysis of the questionnaires generated. Kelle (2006, p.309) said that “results from the qualitative part of mixed research design can help to understand previously incomprehensible statistical findings”. Furthermore, the data from the qualitative interviews helped me to identify unobservable heterogeneity in the quantitative data and identify factors that impacted on PI in IE in Ghana.

According to Bryman (2006, p.106) “credibility refers to suggestions that employing both approaches enhances the integrity of findings”. Credibility or trustworthiness of the findings is enhanced when the two methods used produce the same results. Even if they produce different results the researcher can investigate the reason for this and report the findings. This further adds to the authenticity of the study. The credibility of the present study was enhanced when some of the findings from the qualitative data confirmed that of the quantitative findings. Based on the quantitative data, for example, parents volunteering their services recorded the lowest means, meaning that not many parents did this (see Table 5-25 and 5-26). The results from the interviews in section 6.4.1.5 confirm this result as 4 out of the 19 parents interviewed said they engaged in this.

Offset is one of my rationales for engaging in mixed methods research. Bryman (2006) points out that mixed methods research is used to utilise the strengths of both methods and that the strengths of each method offsets the weaknesses in the other. In the present study, for example, I was able to statistically establish relationships among some of my variables using the quantitative data which I could not do with the qualitative data (see section 5.4 for examples). The qualitative data on the other hand provided rich, accurate and detailed responses for example, compare the information in Table 5-25 and parental responses on the same issue in section 6.4.1.5.

In the literature search there were two studies that mentioned using the mixed approach and they had nothing to do with IE (see section 3.3.3). Dhingra et al. (2007) did not describe how they used the qualitative aspect in their methodology or report its findings while Foot et al. (2000) failed to clearly report their interviews results. Thus, even though the researchers reported using mixed methods, there is

no evidence, suggesting that, mixed methods research is professed to be used by some researchers but in reality is not (Bryman, 2006; Niglas, 2004).

3.3.5 How the Review Informed the Study

From the above it is clear that there are two traditional approaches to research which can yield useful information but have their inherent weaknesses. It is to compensate for their mutual and overlapping weaknesses among other reasons that it has become necessary to combine both methods in what has become known as the mixed method design. This is not to say that it does not have its weaknesses, for example, the tendency to report on only one methodology and ignore the other. However, for my research the use of the mixed method approach helped to add depth, better understanding, credibility, provide richer and more useful answers to my research questions and offset the weaknesses of the methods.

In reporting, I made conscious effort to report both the qualitative and quantitative findings. Also, the data I collected from the qualitative data were used for explanation, elaboration and in certain cases corroboration.

I adopted data collection strategies that yielded a high questionnaire return rate. For example, I distributed some of the questionnaires personally to the parents and for those I could not reach I used the headteachers to personally give it to them. Parents who could complete it immediately were encouraged to do so. Otherwise, they returned the completed questionnaire on the agreed date to the headteacher who then handed it to me on the agreed date. Initially, I planned that parents who did not understand English would have the questionnaire translated into the local dialect for them, but fortunately all the parents that the systematic sampling procedure yielded were literate in English.

I ensured that in developing the questionnaire, close attention was paid to the literature and also to previous instruments used to research into PP, PE and PI. This helped to improve the reliability and validity of my instrument. I also ensured that the questionnaire did not have too many items and that the language used was at a level the respondents could understand and respond to. Finally, equal numbers of fathers and mothers were sampled for this study, as the literature review revealed that fathers had been grossly underrepresented in previous studies. The next chapter presents the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed methods involved in research into parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE. The study was guided by four research questions which are stated in section 1.4. This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the research design, population, sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, pilot-testing of instruments, data collection procedure and methods of data analysis.

4.2 Research design

A descriptive survey approach was used for this research project. This involves collecting data in order to test a hypothesis or answering questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. It determines and reports the way things are (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2009). According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) and Best and Kahn (2005), the descriptive survey method is useful for assessing a group of people's preferences, attitudes, concerns, interests, practices and perceptions. Descriptive data are usually collected through questionnaires, interviews or observations (Creswell, 2012; Robson, 2011).

In this study, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data. Questionnaires were used to facilitate the collection of data from a large sample (560 parents and 35 head teachers). It was also to enable statistical analysis to be conducted in order to test for the relationship between the variables, for example, I was able to use Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between parents' knowledge, perceived benefits and concerns about IE and their current involvement in IE (see section 5.5.7). On the other hand, interviews were chosen because of their ability to yield in-depth information and give the respondents the opportunity to express their views about issues.

Questionnaires and interviews have inherent advantages and disadvantages (Sarantakos, 2013; Robson, 2011; Sarantakos, 2005). For example, questionnaires offers researchers the opportunity of having a larger sample size. However, it may produce untrustworthy results because people may not be completely truthful in their responses also the data may be influenced by the respondents' characteristics (Robson, 2011; Denscombe, 2010). Examples of these are experience, knowledge

and literacy. Questionnaires require respondents who can articulate their thoughts and sometimes put such thoughts into writing. The questionnaire is, therefore, limited by illiteracy. However, for this study all the respondents were literate.

Gay et al. (2009) are also of the opinion that other challenges facing researchers who use this approach are participants' failure to return completed questionnaires, their willingness to be interviewed and their ability to attend scheduled interviews. They point out that "if the response rate is low then valid, trustworthy conclusions cannot be drawn" (p.9). In other words, this will affect the generalisation of the results. This study has not been affected by these factors as it yielded high response rates (see section 4.9.1) and the interviewees willingly accepted the opportunity to be interviewed and showed up on the expected day and time. In spite of the other disadvantages, the questionnaire did generate useful data for this study. In addition to utilising the descriptive survey design, the research employed both quantitative and qualitative means of data collection and analysis. In other words, it used the mixed method approach. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007, p.123) point out that:

Mixed method research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and collaboration.

4.3 Regions involved in the pilot inclusive project

In Ghana, the first phase of the pilot project for IE operates in three of the ten regions of the country. The breakdown of the number of schools and districts in the three regions used for the piloting of IE is presented in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: Data of regions, districts, number of schools and pupils

Region	District	Location	Schools	Pupils
Greater Accra	Accra Metro	Tudu	4	2,046
	Dangbe East	Ada Foah	3	1,208
	Ga West	Amasaman	3	611
Central	Cape Coast	Cape Coast	4	1,839
	Ewutu/Efutu/ Senya	Winneba	4	2,279
	Agona Swedru	Agona Swedru	3	1,304
Eastern	New Juabeng	Koforidua	4	849
	Birim South	Akim Oda	4	1,495
	Yilo Krobo	Somanya	3	1,660
	Manya Krobo	Odumase	3	1,305
Total			35	14,596

Selection of the study area was determined by the regions in which the first phase of the pilot inclusive programme was being run by the SpED of the MOESS.

4.3.1 Justification for using the pilot inclusive schools

The 35 schools used in the first pilot phase of the implementation of the inclusive education programme in Ghana were used for the present study. These schools were chosen because they have been exposed to IE for quite some time (from 2003 to date). Additionally, the teachers in these schools were exposed to a training programme in relation to IE prior to the inception of the pilot programme. Therefore, these schools provided the information which was being sought.

4.4 Population

The study included all 35 headteachers in the selected schools. Additionally, all parents who had their children enrolled in the 35 pilot inclusive schools in Ghana were part of the study. Determining the number of parents in each family was problematic due to the complex nature of some family structures. For example, single parent families or children with step parents. The number of pupils was used as an indicator of the number of parents.

The total population of pupils in the schools was 14,596. This figure is based on the most recent available statistics (2005/2006) from the SpED. Table 4-2 shows the number of pupils in the respective schools. The total population of pupils, and hence parents, was approximated to be 15,000.

Table 4-2: Distribution of pupils in schools

Regions	District	School	Pupils
Greater Accra	Accra Metro	Nungua AMA 4 Basic	511
		Nungua AMA 7 Basic	483
		Odorkor 6 Basic	572
		Odorkor 7 Primary and JSS	480
		Big Ada Methodist Basic	449
	Dangme East	Big Ada Presby Basic	431
		Gbedeku Basic	328
	Ga West	Malam D/A1A Primary	223
		Malam D/A1B Primary	276
		Malam D/ A 3 JSS	112
Central	Cape Coast	Pedu M/ AA	446
		Pedu M A B	421
		Christ OF Christ Basic	513
		R/C Jubilee Basic	459
	Ewutu/Afutu/Senya	UniPra North Basic	496
		Presby Primary and JSS	605
		D/C Primary and JSS	594
	Agona Swedru	AME Zion Primary and JSS	584
		Swedru Presby Primary B	458
		Swedru Sal Army Primary A	399
		Swedru Presby A	447
Eastern	New Juabeng	Koforidua SDA Primary	281
		Asokore R/C Primary	170
		Koforidua Presby F. Primary	256
		Ada Kyeremanten LA Primary	142
		Oda Freeman Methodist	352
	Brim South	Oda St Anthony Primary	373
		Oda Wesley Methodist Primary	403
		Swedru St Andrew Primary	376
	Yilo Krobo	Somanya RC Primary	516
		Somanya Presby Primary	553
		Somanya L/A Primary	591
	Manya Krobo	Mount Mary's Primary	469
		Akro Primary	474
		Nuaso Presby Primary	362
TOTAL		10	14,596

4.5 Sample and sampling techniques

The sample size was 595. This comprised 560 parents and 35 headteachers. A description of the sampling process is contained in the subsequent sections.

4.5.1 Headteachers

All 35 headteachers were selected. The headteachers were purposefully used for the study because they provided perspective about the nature of PI. These were based upon the MOE directives and included how parents are to be involved in their children's education. Also, they provided information on their perceptions of how parents are actually involved in IE.

4.5.2 Parents

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2004) suggest that with a population of approximately 15,000, the ideal sample size is 375. Cohen et al. (2004) recommend that, due to the non-return of some of the questionnaires, the sample size can be increased to about half of the required number. For this reason, 560 parents were used for the study instead of the proposed 375. Based on the literature, this was a good representation of the sample and also accommodated questionnaires that were not returned. For representation purposes, the sample of parents was selected from all 35 schools.

The convenience sampling technique was considered initially to select parents for the study. Using this method meant that parents who came to the school to consult teachers or to discuss the progress of their child or for any other reason would be invited to be part of the sample. The use of this sampling technique was abandoned as it was likely to affect the ability to generalise results. Using the convenience sampling method also implies that every member of the population will not be given an equal chance of being selected. This was likely to introduce subjectivity into the study. This is because the method itself is biased. Secondly, the researcher may be biased and end up using their personal judgment to decide who will or will not be part of the sample.

The systematic sampling procedure was chosen to enhance the opportunity to generalise the results and lessen the possibility of introducing any form of subjectivity into the study.

This technique involves the selection of “subjects from a population list in a systematic rather than a random fashion” (Cohen et al., 2004, p.100). The first respondent is usually randomly selected from the list and thereafter every nth person is selected (Denscombe, 2010; Robson, 2002). It is recorded that the systematic sampling procedure does not give an equal chance for every member of the population to be selected, (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The random selection of the first respondent, however, lessens this effect (Cohen et al., 2007)

The sample was weighted per region depending on the total population of parents who had children attending the respective schools (see Tables 4-3, 4-4, 4-5 and 4-6). The systematic sampling technique was used on the list of pupils enrolled in the schools. The parents were contacted once the pupils had been identified. The parents became part of the sample for the study.

Parents with more than one child in the school were substituted after they had been selected once. Also, I ensured that my sample comprised equal numbers of fathers and mothers. This selection was done randomly until equal numbers of fathers and mothers were selected.

In order to get a representative sample of parents based on the sampling procedure described above, the following steps were taken. The first step was to count the total number of parents who had their children in schools which were part of the first phase of the pilot inclusive programme in each region. This was derived approximately from the total number of pupils in the schools. The approximated number of parents was based on the premise of one parent per child.

Table 4-3: Distribution of parents in the regions

Region	Number of parents	Number of schools
Greater Accra	3,865	10
Central	5,309	11
Eastern	5,422	14
Total	14,596	35

Based on Table 4-3, the proportion of each region was calculated (see summary on Table 4-4) and distributed accordingly (see Table 4-5).

Table 4-4: Sample proportion

Region	Number of parents	Proportion	%
Greater Accra	3,865	27	
Central	5,039	36	
Eastern	5,422	37	
Total	14,596	100	

Table 4-5: Distribution of sample size among the regions

Region	Percentage	Sample per region
Greater Accra	27	151
Central	36	202
Eastern	37	207
Total	100	560

Having derived the distribution of sample per region, the next step was to determine the sample size per school (see Table 4-6).

Table 4-6: Distribution of sample per school in each region

Region	Number of schools	Sample per region	sample per school
Greater Accra	10	150	15
Central	11	198	18
Eastern	14	210	15
Total	35	558	

From the calculation, the total sample of parents was 558. This fell short of two people as the calculation was based on a sample size of 560. Two parents were randomly selected from the Central region to make up for this shortfall. This region is considered to be the cradle of education in Ghana (where the Government focused on establishing model schools during the colonial era and after independence in 1957). It therefore seemed appropriate to select the extra two respondents from this region. It must be noted that the disproportionate sampling technique was used to reflect the uneven population of parents per region (see Table 4-6).

4.5.3 Interview with parents

Out of the 560 parents that were sampled for the study, 20 parents were purposively selected and interviewed to help provide more information and explanation for research questions two and three. Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. In purposively selecting the parents for the interviews, I first grouped them based on regions as shown in Figure 4-1 and then selected parents who fulfilled the criteria set till I had the required number per region.

Six parents each from the three regions were interviewed with an additional two from the Central region (see section 4.5.2 for the reason given for selecting additional sample from the Central region). In selecting the interviewees for each region, I ensured that there were equal numbers of fathers and mothers and at least 2 parents who had children with SEN (see Figure 4-1). The rationale for the distribution of the sample was that I wanted the opinion of parents from all the three regions, as well as that of fathers and mothers and also parents with and without children with SEN.

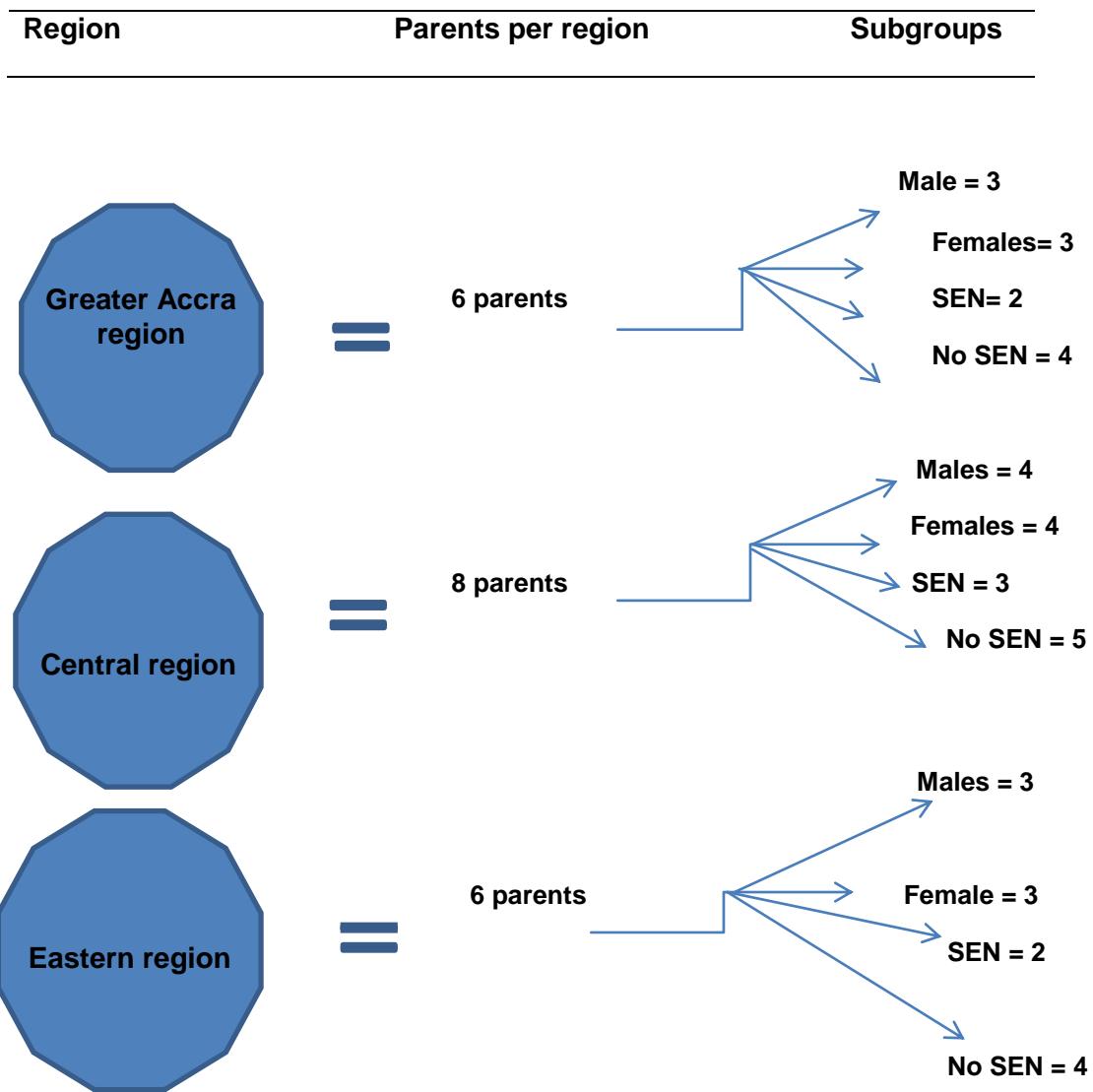


Figure 4-1: Distribution of the parents interviewed

The sample of parents interviewed was relatively small because interviewing a large number would have resulted in data that may have been too large to handle.

4.6 Research instruments

This section describes the research instruments that were used to gather data. These were questionnaires for parents, headteachers and an interview schedule for parents. A questionnaire was chosen because of its “ability to reach respondents who live at widely dispersed addresses” and the “low cost of data collection” associated with it (Oppenheim 1992, p.102).

The interview as a data collection tool was chosen because of its ability to yield in-depth information and offer the research participants the opportunity to say what they think with greater richness and spontaneity (Oppenheim, 1992). The instruments were developed based upon existing literature. In constructing items for the section on PP of IE, a number of items were selected from the “Attitude towards

inclusion/mainstreaming scale" by Leyser and Krik (2004, p.276-277). The major difference between their instrument and the current instrument is that they had 18 five-point Likert scale items, while for this study 36 four-point Likert scale items, divided into two major areas (knowledge and feelings about IE) were used. The feeling about IE component was divided into benefits and concerns for the analysis. Apart from adapting items from the instruments used by Leyser and Krik (2004), additional items were developed based on the literature to bring the total number of items in this section of the questionnaire to 36. The four-point Likert scale was chosen for this study. This was based on personal experience in supervising students conduct their research with teachers and parents in Ghana. When respondents were given the neutral option, the majority of them end up selecting that without critically reading the other items to form an opinion about them.

In developing the items, consideration was given to the terminologies used in the Ghanaian context. In the literature, children with SEN is the current preferred terminology. Using this term in the questionnaire meant parents would not have known which children were being referred to. Children with disabilities is the term that was used as this is familiar to Ghanaian parents.

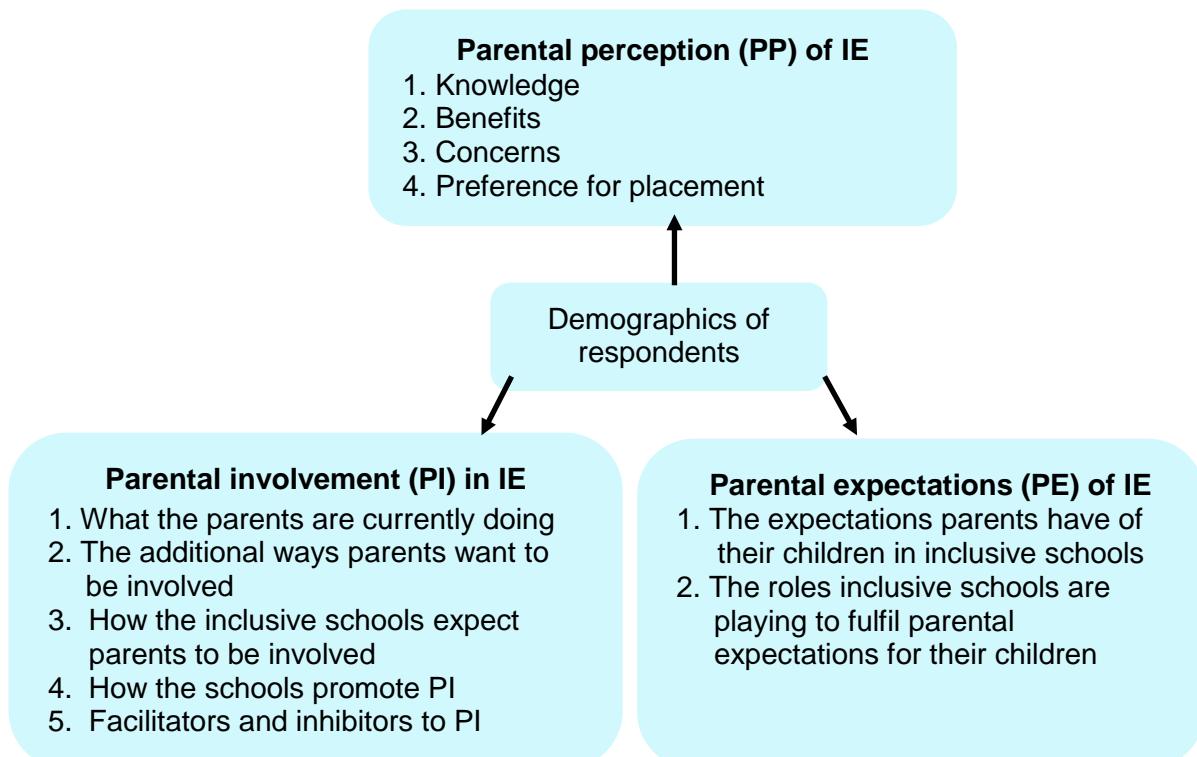


Figure 4-2: The coverage of the instruments for data collection

Figure 4-2 was developed based on the literature, aims of the study and the research questions. It gives a general overview of the areas the instruments for data

collection covered. Sections 4.6.1, 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 give further details of the specific areas covered by each instrument.

4.6.1 Questionnaire for parents

The parents' questionnaire had four sections (A–D) (see Appendix B). Section A elicited background information from the parents, that is, gender, age-range and educational level of the respondent. Also, information was sought on whether the respondent had a child with SEN or not, and the gender of the child was elicited. Parents were asked to indicate where they thought children with SEN should receive their education. They were to give reasons for their response. Section A had seven items and respondents were required to either tick or supply their answer.

Section B sought information on perception about IE. The focus here was on parental knowledge and their perception about the benefits of IE, and also their concerns about IE. Data collected from this section of the questionnaire was used to answer research question one. The four-point Likert scale format with 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree was used for the 36 items in this section of the questionnaire.

Section C elicited information to answer research question two and it was about the expectations parents had for their children in inclusive schools, and whether IE was meeting these expectations. Additionally, it yielded information on things the schools were doing or should be doing to help fulfil these expectations. Parents were expected to tick one of the options provided. Also, for the item that demanded a "yes" or "no" response, further explanation was elicited.

Section D elicited information on PI in IE. It was aimed at answering research question three. The foci of the questions were: what the parents are currently doing to be involved in their children's IE, how the school is currently involving parents in their children's education and what roles Ghanaian parents think inclusive schools should allow them to play in their children's education. An open-ended item was placed in this section to give parents the opportunity to suggest other ways they would want the school to involve them in their children's education. This was in line with Robson (2002) and it gave the parents the opportunity to give a vivid assessment or response based on their innermost beliefs and opinions.

Additionally, this section elicited information on factors that inhibited and facilitated PI in IE. The total number of items in the questionnaire for parents was 83 (see Appendix B).

4.6.2 Questionnaire for headteachers

The headteachers' questionnaire had two sections (see Appendix C). Section A elicited information on the background of the respondents. This included their gender, age-range, teaching experience in years and professional qualification.

Section B elicited information on how parents were currently involved in IE, how the school involved parents in IE, and additional ways headteachers thought the parents would want to be involved. Also, it elicited information on factors the headteachers viewed as facilitators or inhibitors to PI in Ghana. The last item in the questionnaire required respondents to rate PI in IE on a scale of 1–4. With 1 being Poor, 2 Very low, 3 Low and 4 High. Most of the items in the questionnaire were Likert scale and they were the same as that for the parents. The only difference was that the statements were depersonalised while those of the parents were personalised and started with "I". The total number of items for this questionnaire was 45.

4.6.3 Interview schedule for parents

A structured interview schedule was developed for parents. This had three sections, A to C (see Appendix D). Section A elicited background information about the respondents, that is, their gender, age-range and educational qualification(s). Section B elicited information on PE for their children. Section C elicited information on PI in IE and factors that prohibited or facilitated PI in IE.

4.7 Pilot-testing of instruments

This section describes how the pilot-testing of the instruments was done. It describes the pilot-testing of the questionnaires and the interview schedule.

4.7.1 Questionnaires

Five schools were randomly chosen for the instruments to be pilot-tested. Five parents were randomly selected from each school and two headteachers (the head and assistant) from the schools were used to pilot the instruments. In all, 25 parents and ten headteachers were used to pilot-test the instruments in Ghana. The research instruments were sent to Ghana to be piloted by a colleague who completed his doctoral programme at the University of Leeds. Also, the instruments were piloted on five Ghanaian parents who are currently living in Leeds.

Extra sheets of paper were added to the questionnaire for respondents to pass comments on the clarity, weaknesses, inadequacies, ambiguities and problems on

all aspects of the items in the instrument. As a result of such comments, statements felt to be ambiguous or misleading or redundant were either removed or revised for clarity before the actual data collection took place. To further refine the instruments, they were given to a PhD student and a past PhD student in the field of SEN of the University of Leeds for completion and their comments. Based on the pilot-testing, the instruments were refined for the main study. The pilot-testing helped to ensure that the final instruments were minimised of ambiguity. Additionally, it helped to check the time needed to respond and to test the coding system (Cohen et al., 2004; Sommers and Sommers, 2002; Morrison, 1993; Oppenheim, 1992).

4.7.2 Interview guide

The interview guide was pilot-tested in London and Leeds on the 14th and 22nd August 2010. Four Ghanaian parents were interviewed. They all had children who attended inclusive schools in Ghana before migrating to the United Kingdom between 2007 and 2010. For ethical reasons, the interviewees, two males and two females, were informed about the purpose of the pilot-testing and their written consent was elicited for the exercise. They were contacted by phone prior to the interview. Some information about the interview was given and the time and venue for the interview were agreed. Parents were also asked to give their verbal consent. The interviews lasted between 20 to 30 minutes each.

The parents' responses gave an indication that parents were involved in the IE of their children. The piloting showed that parents needed time to think and compose their responses. Hence, I decided to give parents about 30 seconds before prompting a response during the main study. In certain situations, the questions had to be repeated before the parents attempted to answer. Parents were given options of which educational qualifications they possessed. However, there was a pause before parents said that their educational qualification was not listed. The options were removed from the final instrument.

The interviewees fully understood all the questions asked and answered to the best of their knowledge. Piloting the interview helped me to estimate the time it would take to conduct the interviews and the type of questions parents might ask for clarification.

4.8 Validity and reliability of instruments

Validity is defined as “the appropriateness of the interpretations, inferences, and actions that we make based on test scores” (Johnson and Christensen 2004,

p.140). They cautioned that, in ensuring validity, we must ensure that the test measures what it is intended to measure, for the particular group of people and for the particular context, and also that the interpretations that are made based on the test scores are correct. As a result, Hair et al. (2005) opined that validity refers to how well the concept is defined by the measure.

Reliability on the other hand, "refers to the consistency or stability of the test scores" (Gay et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2005; Johnson and Christensen, 2004). This means that the assessment tool would yield the same or almost the same scores any time it is administered to the same individual or group.

There are several ways of determining the reliability of an instrument, for example, there is the split half, test retest, alternative form methods and the internal consistency method. The Crobach's alpha is estimated to be the most widely used method in estimating the internal consistency of an instrument (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008). Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008) reported that it is used for summated scales or Likert scale items. Since the questionnaires were predominantly Likert scale and I wanted to estimate the internal consistency of the instruments, the Crobach's alpha was deemed the best method to estimate the reliability of the instrument. The Crobach's alpha has a correlation coefficient ranging in value from 0 to 1. The closer a reliability coefficient value is to 1, the more reliable the test, while the closer the reliability coefficient value is to 0, the less reliable the test (Gay et al., 2009). The reliability coefficient of the parents' questionnaire was 0.83, while that of the headteachers' was 0.73.

To establish the validity of the instruments, the questionnaire and interview schedule were given to colleagues and three experts in the field (my supervisors and a former PhD student of Leeds University) for their review, since face or content validity can be determined by expert judgment (Gay et al., 2009). The suggestions they made were used to restructure the items. According to Amedah (2001) it is the soundness of the interpretations given to the assessment scores that are validated, not the instrument. If the instrument measures what it intends to measure and the results are used for the intended purpose, then the instrument can be said to be valid. The pilot-test helped to refine the research instruments. The questionnaire was refined based on the comments made during the pilot study.

Additionally, to ensure the reliability of the interviews, Silverman (1993) suggests that there is a need for the interviews to have the same structure, sequence of words and questions for each respondent. The structured interview schedule that was developed and used helped to achieve this (see Appendix D). Also, the

prompts and probes used to elicit further information or clarification was the same for all the interviewees.

Furthermore, in line with Gibbs (2007) concerning the reliability of qualitative research, all the transcripts were crosschecked to ensure there were no apparent mistakes. Also, I ensured that the codes were well defined and used consistently. Lastly, the codes and the data were crosschecked by my supervisors for accuracy and authenticity.

4.9 Data collection procedure

In this section, how the data were collected for the study is described. It describes that of the questionnaires and the interview schedule.

4.9.1 Questionnaire

Permission to carry out the study was obtained via a letter from the Director of SpED and the Regional Directors of Education (see Appendix G and H). Permission was granted and the participating schools informed.

For ethical reasons, at the schools, I explained the rationale and all other ethical issues involved in the study, to the headteachers and elicited their voluntary consent. Their questionnaires were administered.

Before the data collection it had been planned that the parents' questionnaire would be mailed and would include a self-addressed return envelope. This method is reported to decrease labour and travelling costs, and help standardisation (Sarantakos, 2013; Sommers and Sommers, 2002). However, this method was abandoned due to the cost of postage in Ghana and the reported low return rate (Sarantakos, 2013; Sommers and Sommers, 2002; Oppenheim, 1992).

The lists of pupils obtained from the headteachers were used for the systematic sampling. Letters were sent to parents of selected pupils, explaining the rationale and ethical issues of the study. Parents' written informed consent was elicited. My contact details were provided so that parents could contact me for any clarification. The questionnaire and the letter described was given to some of the parents personally at their PTA meetings and, for those who did not turn up, the headteachers gave it to them personally. The parents were given a maximum of three weeks to return the completed questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were returned to the headteachers, and these were then passed on ready for analysis.

The major challenges of using the questionnaire as the procedure for data collection were the time and cost of travelling and the cost of phone calls to the headteachers. This was worsened because some of the parents did not heed to the timeframe for the return of the questionnaires and even returned them between one to six weeks after the agreed period. The method employed, however, yielded high questionnaire return rates: 97.1% for headteachers and 92.9% for parents.

4.9.2 Interviews

All interviewees were given copies of the interview schedule to study before the interview was conducted. This was to facilitate interaction between the interviewer (me) and the interviewees. The interviewees were given the opportunity to choose the time, date and venue in order not to disrupt their normal schedules. Additionally, they were assured of confidentiality and also that at no point in time would their identities be revealed. No participant was pressured or forced to participate in the study. The principles of informed consent and voluntarism were strictly adhered to (Denscombe, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007; Sarantakos, 2005; Neuman, 2003; Denscombe, 2002; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2000). Even though the interviewees were given the option to choose where the interview should be conducted (home, work or their child's school), all of them opted to be interviewed in their child's school.

To ensure that the data were accurately recorded, permission was sought from the interviewee to tape-record the session. Furthermore, after the interviews, the tape was played back to each interviewee. This was to enable parents to correct comments, add additional information or simply validate what they had said during the interview.

4.10 Data analysis

As the study involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, this was taken into consideration when making decisions on the data analysis.

4.10.1 Questionnaires

The completed questionnaires were serially numbered for easy identification and were coded. The completed and returned questionnaires totalled 520 for the parents and 34 for the headteachers. Items on the four-point Likert scale were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 for items with the response strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, respectively. Items in the negative were reverse coded. The same scale was used for items with the response always, often, sometimes, and never. Age-

ranges of the respondents were coded 1 to 5, starting from the least to the highest age-range (see Appendix B and C).

The educational levels of parents were coded 1 to 7, starting from Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC), which is the lowest, to master's degree, which was the highest. To facilitate meaningful or significant results, GCE 'O' and 'A' level holders were put together to constitute a group. Additionally, three Year Post-Secondary certificate holders were merged with those who hold diploma certificates, as this is equivalent to a diploma in Ghana (see section 2.3.1.1).

Lastly, the master's degree holders were also merged with the degree holders to constitute a group. As a result, the categories of educational level used for the analysis in Sections B, C and D were reduced to four and were coded 1-4, with MSLC being the lowest and degree the highest.

The professional qualification(s) of headteachers were coded on a scale of 1–5. These were: 1=Certificate A 4 Year Post Middle, 2=Certificate A 3 Year Post-Secondary; 3=Teacher's diploma; 4=B. Ed degree, and 5=master's degree. The teaching experience of headteachers' was coded on a scale of 1-4 for 1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–20 years and 21 years or more.

The options for where parents want their children to be educated were coded 1 to 3, that is, 1 for regular schools, 2 for special schools and 3 for inclusive schools. Finally, headteachers' rating of PI was also coded on a scale of 1–4. Dichotomous items were coded 1 and 2. For example, responses that demanded "male" or "female", and "yes" or "no" responses were coded 1 and 2 respectively.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages and cross tabulations when necessary) were used to analyse and describe the responses for part of research question one and two (see section 5.3.1 to 5.3.4, 5.4.1 and 5.4.2). Frequency and percentage tables and charts were constructed to give an overall view of the findings, to identify the trends and to display relationships between parts of the findings (Sarantakos, 2005).

For part of research question one (specifically the variation in PP), one-way between groups ANOVA was used to determine whether the perception of the parents varied in terms of their age-range and educational level (see section 5.3.5.1 and 5.3.5.2). One-way ANOVA is a parametric test. It is used for analysing numerical data and for comparing several means and for data that has been collected using different participants in each condition (Pallant, 2010; Field, 2009).

It is for these reasons that it was considered the best statistical measure for comparing the means of the parents based on their educational level and their age-ranges.

Where significant F values were identified from the ANOVA results, Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc test was employed to examine the mean differences. The decision to use Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc test was based on an observation by Coakes' (2005) that a significant F value indicates that the population means are probably not equal. Also, Black (2004) opines that post-hoc pairwise comparisons should be made after the ANOVA to test for any significant differences in the samples based on a significant overall F value. The main justification for using this test was because it is the preferred post-hoc test if the sample sizes are different (Field, 2009). Since my sample sizes were different (see section 5.2, Tables 5-1 and 5-2) and it passed the test of homogeneity of variance, it was considered the best post-hoc test for the study.

To determine parents' perceptual variations based on gender and whether they had a child with SEN or not, the independent sample t-test was used (see section 5.3.5.3 and 5.3.5.4). The t-test was chosen because it gave the opportunity to compare the mean scores of the two groups in each category (Pallant, 2010; Field, 2009). Error bars with 95% confidence intervals were constructed to illustrate findings when necessary.

The chi-square test of association was chosen to determine demographic variations in PE and to help in answering research question two (see section 5.4.3). Chi-square is a non-parametric test and is recommended by Field (2009) for testing for association between categorical variables. Since the PE component of the questionnaires consisted of categorical variables, chi-square test of association was deemed the best statistical measure to test for demographic variations between them.

For part of research question three, means and SDs were used to determine the nature and extent of PI in IE in Ghana (see sections 5.5.1, 5.5.2 and 5.5.4 to 5.5.6). This helped to determine the areas where there was more or less PI and give meaningful analysis of the data.

The ANOVA and post-hoc tests were used to explore the data further and determine the variation in parents' current involvement based on age-range and educational level (see sections 5.5.3.1 and 5.5.3.2). For variations in parent's current involvement based on gender and parents with and without children with SEN, the independent sample t-test was used and error bars with 95% confidence intervals

were constructed to illustrate the findings. (see sections 5.5.3.3 and 5.5.3.4). Where applicable, descriptive tables showing the mean scores across the set of items was presented for the variations in PP and PI aspect of the analysis (see Tables 5-6 to 5-9, 5-27 to 5-29 and 5-31).

To explore the data further, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between parents' knowledge, perceived benefits and concerns about IE and their current involvement in IE (see section 5.5.7). Correlation was further used to explore the relationship between parents' knowledge and perceived benefits of IE, parents' knowledge and concerns about IE, and finally parents' perceived benefits of IE and their concerns about IE (see section 5.5.8). Scatter plots were presented to show the nature and strength of the relationships (see Figures 5-20 to 5-25).

4.10.2 Analysis and coding of the interview data

The aim of this section is to give an overview of how the interview data were transcribed and coded. This is to aid future replication of the study.

Interviewing generates a large amount of data which needs to be meaningfully analysed and the results presented. A common approach to analysing qualitative data developed by Strauss and Glaser (1967) is Grounded Theory. With this approach, the researcher is supposed to approach the data with a blank mind and let the data speak for itself. Using this approach alone was not considered the most feasible for this study, as the research questions and instruments were developed based on the literature. Also, it would have meant that I would have had to rid myself temporarily of all previous knowledge gained from my readings and experience. Bryman (2012) and Bulmer (1979) question whether this is possible. Bryman suggests that “social researchers are typically sensitive to the conceptual armoury of their disciplines, and it seems unlikely that this awareness can be put aside” (p. 574).

Having read works of various researchers on qualitative analysis Grounded Theory did not appear to be a viable option (Robson, 2011; Taylor and Gibbs, 2010; Creswell, 2009; Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Some of the core principles of the thematic approach to qualitative data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) were adapted for use in this study. Thematic analysis “is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail”

(Braun and Clarke 2006, p.79). The general approaches to analysing qualitative data were considered (Creswell 2009, chapter 9). The steps were:

1. Organising and preparing the data for analysis.
2. Reading through the data for familiarisation.
3. Coding the data.
4. Using the coding process to generate themes or descriptions.
5. Describing how the descriptions and themes will be represented in the analysis.
6. Making interpretation or meaning of the data.

Even though it had some similarities with that of Braun and Clarke (2006), I preferred the latter because I could effectively adapt it to my study. Thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) has six phases which have been stated and described in Table 4-7

Table 4-7: Phases of the thematic analysis

1. Familiarising yourself with the data:	Transcribing the data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes :	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all the data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names of each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid compelling abstracts examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87)

The analysis was conducted thematically building on the steps outlined above. The following section describes how it was done.

1) Familiarisation with the data

The audio recordings of the interviews were listened to repeatedly for familiarisation purposes (Gay et al., 2009). Each interviewee was given a numeric code for easy referencing (Sommers and Sommers, 2002). The code assigned was based on the order in which the parents were interviewed (1-20). The recording of each interview was typed verbatim and hesitations and pauses were noted (McLellan, Macqueen and Neidig, 2003). The goal was to preserve originality and ensure that no information was misinterpreted or lost. Three of the interviews were in the vernacular. These were translated and transcribed verbatim into English. Examples of how a pause was recorded include '(long pause) *In fact academically*' (**Parent 1**) and a hesitation '*Well, umr urm....socially*' (**Parent 3**).

The transcribed version was read through while listening to the audio tape several times to ensure there were no omissions. Each interview was then summarised. Doing this helped to conceptualise what the interviewees said and identify similarities and differences in their statements. It also drew attention to the close link between the research questions and the responses given. Additionally, general notes and comments were written about initial thoughts and relevant issues that were starting to emerge from the data. This stage subsumes the first two stages in the approach to qualitative analysis suggested by Creswell, (2009). The modifications made to this phase of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was to give each interviewee a code and to write the summary of each interview.

2) Generating initial codes

Coding is part of analysing qualitative data and helps the researcher to think critically about the meaning of the data (Bryman, 2012; Huberman and Miles, 1994). Robson (2002) defines codes as "a symbol applied to a section of a text to classify or categorise it" (p.447). Coding, according to Taylor and Gibbs (2010), is the process of examining the data for themes, ideas and categories and marking similar passages of text with a code label so that it can easily be retrieved at a later stage for further comparison and analysis. Similarly, Creswell (2007, p.148) describing the steps in the coding process, said:

Central steps in coding data (reducing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names for the segments), combining the codes into broader categories or themes, and displaying and making comparisons in the data graphs, table, or charts. These are the core elements of qualitative data analysis.

Robson (2011) points out that the segment of the raw data to which the codes will be applied should be meaningful and should have something of interest and be related to the study.

The units of analysis were identified. These are described as the basic text unit that contains the essential idea in relation to the research questions (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). The similar essential ideas were colour-coded, underlined and notes made to make meaning of the text (Taylor and Gibbs, 2010). This process was guided by the general topics under investigation. These were:

- PE for their children in inclusive schools.
- How parents were involved in IE.
- The factors that affected PI.

To address coding of multiple issues in a single response, I split the response into segments and coded them under the appropriate theme or sub-theme. For example, a response given by Parent 3 was coded as follows:

Well, by also involving me in their decision-making. {decision-making} They also tell me what they want me to do for my child and what I am to do or not for my child. {informed/educated} Don't forget the encourage me to come to PTA in the school. {PTA/other school activities} Most important, I has to give my child all his needs to learn effectively if he is to excel. {provide needs}

Four codes could be identified from the response. Sometimes the response was based on a single issue making it easier to give a code. For example, Parent 7's response, '*Culturally, he should know what we as Ghanaians admire or love and always do them*', was coded as "learn the cultural norms and values" (see Appendix F for a sample of the coded transcripts). The interviews were coded manually due to not being very conversant with the available software programmes like Nvivo despite having undertaken some training in this area.

3) Searching for themes

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.89) point out that searching for themes:

Involves sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded extracts within the identified theme. Essentially, you are starting to analyse your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme.

This stage involves thinking about the relationship between codes, themes, subthemes, and re-arranging and organising the coded extracts to be meaningful. In doing this, the procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) was not followed. This was because I used a structured interview schedule and had predefined main

themes that were closely linked to the research questions and the quantitative data. However, I was able to identify one main theme that was not predefined. This was “parents’ emotions”.

The subthemes however, were not predefined but rather identified from the data. The process of arriving at the final subthemes or ideas involved constant referral to the transcribed interviews and the already identified ideas/themes; if they matched existing ones I added them, if not, they were named and included.

This exercise helped me to see how the different parts of the data fitted together to form a whole and helped to generate a framework for the analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) advocate ending this stage with “a collection of candidate themes and subthemes and all extracts of the data that have been coded in relation to them” (p.90). The main themes were compiled along with the extracts and the codes given to them. By the end of this stage I had nine main themes as seen in Figure 4-3 and 4-4.

4) Reviewing subthemes

The model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was adapted to help to review the subthemes. I evaluated and tried to refine the subthemes instead, since the main themes were predefined. I crosschecked the data and ensured that I had captured all subthemes, their relevant verbatim examples and codes, and that they were coherent and meaningful and they all had a story to tell. I realised that all was in order and therefore no change occurred at this stage.

5) Defining and naming subthemes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this stage was in order to “define and further refine the themes you will represent for your analysis, and analyse the data within them” (p. 92). Again this process was adapted to the subthemes. I further read the coded data and the illustrative extract of the responses, and organised it into a coherent whole. I ensured that the names I had given to the subthemes were “concise, punchy, and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about” (p.93). By the end of the whole process, I had nine main themes and forty nine subthemes. Figure 4.3 and 4.4 gives a summary of them; for the details and examples of the coded extracts see Appendix J.

6) Producing the report

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), writing the report is an integral part of the analytic process. At this stage the researcher has to make sense of the raw data

and present it in a way that it will be understood by others. Furthermore, it is important that the analysis gives a “concise, coherent logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell – within and across themes” (p.93). Also, the “write-up must provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data - ie, enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme” (p.93).

In view of this, when writing the findings chapter of the study, all the ideas were reviewed and put under themes. The main themes were selected and included in the final report. This offered the opportunity for the “selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.87). The selections of verbatim extracts included in the final write-up were chosen from the pool of responses based on their detail, clarity, relevance and vividness. Also, the number of responses used to support each theme varied; this was to lay emphasis and also to illustrate the different aspects of the responses to that particular theme. I tried to go beyond just describing the data to interpret the results obtained in the analysis.

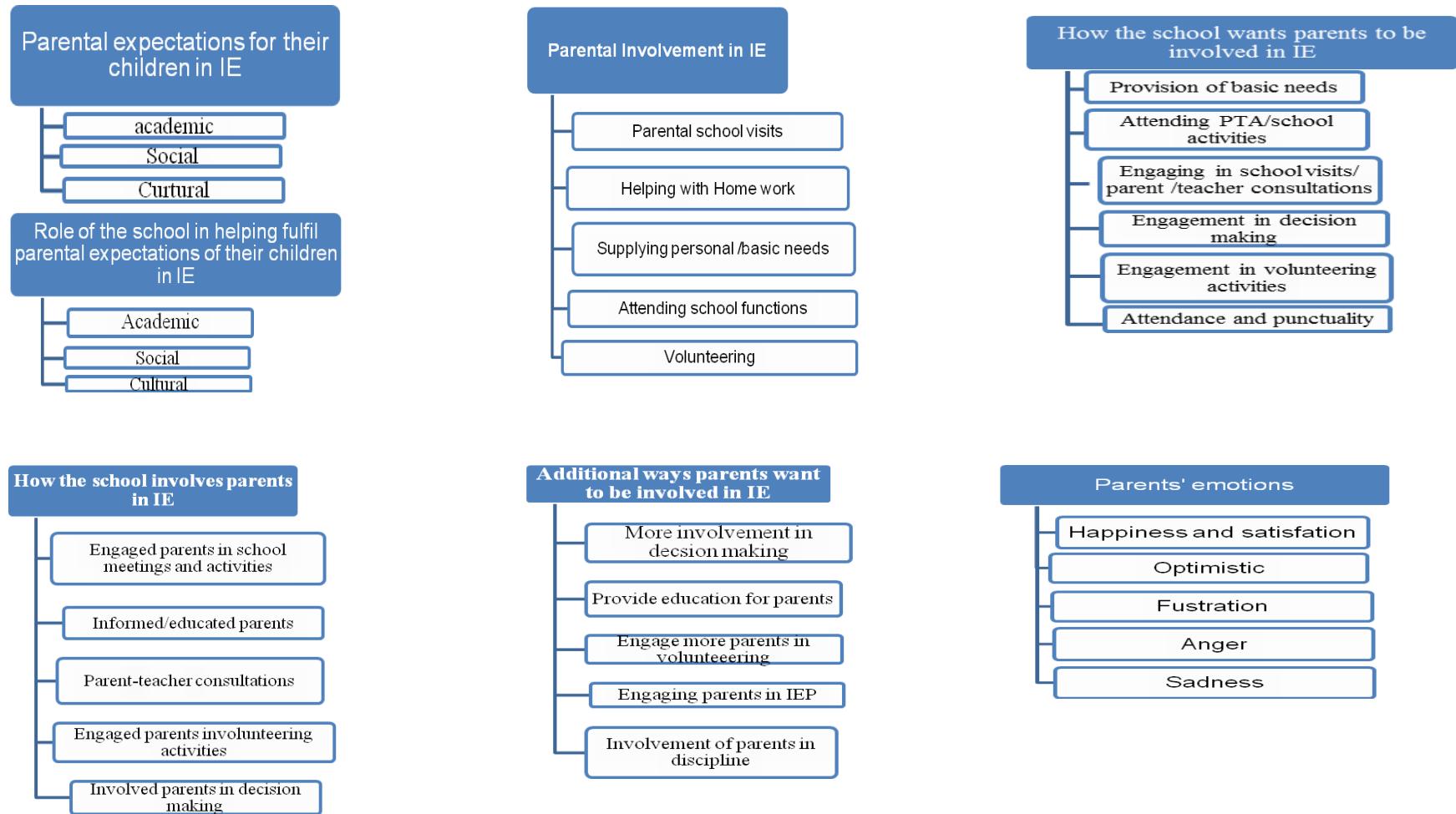


Figure 4-3: Summary of themes and subthemes

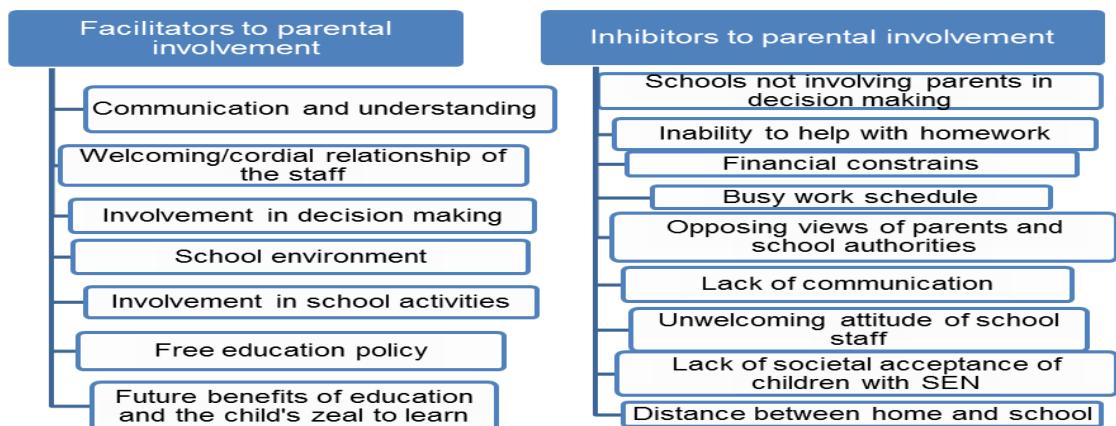


Figure 4-4: Summary of themes and subthemes continued

4.11 Ethical consideration

In order to address ethical issues, ethical approval was sought for the research from AREA Faculty Research Committee, University of Leeds, for clearance to conduct the study. This clearance was given via a letter (see Appendix A). After this, I obtained approval from SpED. They granted approval and gave me a letter introducing me to the schools (see Appendix I).

I went to the regional offices and the Directors of Education wrote to the respective schools informing them of my research. I then went to the selected schools to inform the headteachers and parents about the study. Informed consent was sought directly from the parents and headteachers thereby avoiding an observation by Homan (2001) that sometimes educational researchers do not directly seek informed consent from their research subjects. Neuman (2003) points out that "it is not enough to get permission from people; they need to know what they are being asked to participate in so that they can make an informed decision" (p.124). Participants become aware of their rights and the details of the study when they read and sign a statement giving informed consent (Sarantakos, 2005; Neuman, 2003). This statement need not always be written; it can also be given verbally.

In this study, full details were made explicit to the research participants at their normal school PTA meeting and opportunity was given to them to ask any question for clarification. This was done by the researcher herself. However, I made sure the headteachers were well-informed about the study for them to be able to give the full details to parents who had not attended the PTA meeting. My contact details were provided so that I could be contacted directly if there were any questions that the headteachers could not answer relating to my study. This was to ensure that the parents fully understood what the research was about. The research participants

were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. At the PTA meeting parents' verbal consent was obtained.

Secondly, when disseminating the questionnaires a letter explaining the details of the study was attached. Parents were told the period within which to return the questionnaire if they decided to participate in the study. It was agreed between the headteacher and the parents at the PTA meeting that the questionnaires were to be returned to the headteachers. The parents requested the headteachers reminded them about the return date if they had not returned the completed questionnaire within one week of the deadline. The headteachers handed the completed questionnaires over to me after the agreed time. I was therefore in constant touch with the headteachers.

The parents were sent letters inviting them to participate in the interview. They were requested to indicate their consent by indicating "Yes I will take part" or "No I will not take part" on a sheet of paper and then return this to the headteacher stating where and when they wanted the interview to take place. On the day of the interview they signed consent forms (see Appendix E).

Another issue that arises about giving full or explicit information in the process of obtaining informed consent is the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. This helps to establish trust between the researcher and participant. Assurance of confidentiality means that the researcher promises that any information divulged by the participant will be treated as private and will not be revealed publicly (Denscombe, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007; Sarantakos, 2005; Neuman, 2003).

In this research, the participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in the letters that were sent out to them and at the PTA meeting (Sommers and Sommers, 2002). They were assured that their identity and comments would not be revealed without their approval. Additionally, the questionnaire and interview schedule excluded any identification details such as name and address of the respondent. Other forms of identifiers were replaced with pseudonyms immediately after the questionnaire and interview data were recorded (Creswell, 2009; Sommers and Sommers, 2002).

As mentioned in section 4.9.2 the interviews were tape-recorded with permission from the interviewees after they had been assured of confidentiality. The data collected has been stored under lock and key and is only available to my supervisors on request. The interview recordings and transcripts have been stored

in the University of Leeds M drive and a personal storage device. These are both encrypted and password protected and therefore no unauthorised person has access to them. Sieber (2008) suggests that after the analysis the data should be kept for five to ten years before being discarded. Based on this, the data would be kept for five years. The next chapter presents the analysis of the quantitative data.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 DATA ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the methodology used for the study was presented. This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the questionnaire data. The analysis is presented in four sections (A to D). Section A presents the background information of the respondents. Section B focuses on PP about IE and the demographic variations in PP and it answers research question one. Section C addresses PE of their children in inclusive schools and the demographic variations in PE. It answers research question two. While Section D addresses PI in IE and it answers research question three. The focal points of the analysis are the research questions stated in section 1.4.

5.2 Section A: Respondents' demographic information

This section relates to the background information of the parents and headteachers who responded to the questionnaires. Demographic variables for the parents included gender, age-range, and educational level of their child. The demographic variables for the headteachers include gender, age-range, teaching experience in years and professional qualification. The excerpt from Figure 4-2 indicates the data to be analysed in this section (see Figure 5-1 below).

Demographics of
respondents

Figure 5-1: Excerpt one from Figure 4-2

5.2.1 Gender of respondents

More females than males completed the questionnaires. Out of the 554 (100%) respondents, 301 (54.3%) were females while 253 (45.7%) were males. The parents totalled 520 (93.9%) and headteachers 34 (6.1%). Of the 520 parents 275 (52.9%) were females and 245 (47.1%) were males. Eight (23.5%) out of the 34 (100%) headteachers were males.

5.2.2 Age-range of respondents

The results in Table 5-1 indicate that 191 (36.7%) parents were aged 41–50, 155 (29.8%), were aged 31–40, 125 (24%) were aged 21–30 and 12 (2.3%) were 20

years or below. The majority 28 (82.4%) of the headteachers were between 41–50 years and none were below 31 years of age.

Table 5-1: Age-range of respondents (N=554)

Age-range	Parents		Headteachers		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
20 and below	12	2.3	-	-	12	2.2
21 - 30	125	24.0	-	-	125	22.6
31 - 40	155	29.8	1	2.9	156	28.2
41 – 50	191	36.7	28	82.4	219	39.5
51 – 60	37	7.1	5	14.7	42	7.5
Total	520	100	34	100	554	100

5.2.3 Analysis of parents' educational level

Table 5-2 shows that 270 (51.9%) of parents had below tertiary level education. Out of this number 185 (35.6%) had a MSLC and 18 (3.5%) had a GCE 'A' level. Among those with tertiary level qualification, 162 (31.2%) were diploma holders and 9 (1.7%) were master's degree holders. All the parents involved in the study had above basic level of education and were literate (see section 2.3.1.1).

Table 5-2: Educational level of parents (N=520)

Educational level	Freq	%
MSLC	185	35.6
GCE 'O' level	67	12.9
GCE 'A' level	18	3.5
3 Year Post Secondary	15	2.8
Diploma	162	31.2
Degree	64	12.3
Master's	9	1.7
Total	520	100

5.2.4 Information about the children of the parent respondents

In all, 348 (66.9%) parents did not have children with SEN in the pilot inclusive schools. In Ghana, national data on the prevalence rate of children with SEN in schools are not available. However, at the inception of the pilot IE programme in the 2003/2004 academic year, all 14,596 children in the targeted schools were screened and assessed. Children with SEN identified were 255 (1.8%). Of this, 101 (0.7%) had intellectual or learning difficulty and 154 (1.1%) had hearing problems (GES, SpED, 2005). Since then, there has been no further screening and assessment. Noting that the population of the children in the schools were used to

determine that of the parents (see section 4.5.2), the 172 (33.1%) of the parents with children with SEN in the current study are 1.2% of the total population. Based upon this it is reasonable to suggest that the 172 (33.1%) parents with children with SEN in the pilot inclusive schools in this study was a representative sample.

A total of 272 (52.3%) and 248 (47.7%) parents had male and female children respectively. Table 5-3 shows that out of the 172 (33.1%) parents who had a child with SEN attending the school, 80 (46.5%) said their child was between 6–11 years, while 60 (34.9%) said their children fell in the 12–14 age-range. One (6%) parent had a child below 6 years. Comparing this to the parents who said they did not have children with SEN, the majority 193 (55.5%) had children aged 6–11. On the other hand, 88 (25.3%) had children within the age-range of 12–14 and 12 (2.3%) had children aged below 6 while 87 (16.7%) had children above 15 years. Over half of the parents 265 (52.5%) had children between 6–11 years. Parents who had younger children in the schools were in the majority. This was consistent with the fact that this was a pilot project and early intervention is essential.

Table 5-3: Age-range of children with and without SEN

Age-range	Children with SEN		Children without SEN		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Below 6	1	.6	11	3.2	12	2.3
6 – 8	30	17.4	88	25.3	118	22.7
9 – 11	50	29.1	105	30.2	155	29.8
12 – 14	60	34.9	88	25.3	148	28.5
15 and above	31	18.0	56	16.0	87	16.7
Total	172	100	348	100	520	100

5.2.5 Headteachers' teaching experience

In all, 27 (79.4%) of the headteachers had 21 or more years of teaching experience, while 6 (17.7%) and 1 (2.9%) had 11–20 and 6–10 years of teaching experience respectively. Comparing the 27 (79.4%) of the head teachers with 21 or more years teaching experience with their age-ranges in Table 5-1 suggests that they had acquired a considerable amount of teaching experience before they became headteachers.

5.2.6 Headteachers' qualifications

More than 85% of the headteachers had a tertiary level professional qualification. Table 5-4 shows that 18 (53%), 9 (26.5%) and 3 (8.8%), have a Bachelor of Education degree, teacher's diploma and master's degree in education respectively.

Altogether, 4 (11.7%) headteachers had Certificate 'A' 4 Year Post Middle and Certificate 'A' 3 Year Post Secondary certificate in teaching.

Table 5-4: Headteachers' professional qualification (N=34)

Professional qualification	Freq	%
Certificate of 'A' 4 Year Post Middle	1	2.9
Certificate 'A' 3 Year Post Secondary	3	8.8
Teacher's diploma	9	26.5
Bachelor of Education degree	18	53.0
Master's degree in Education	3	8.8
Total	34	100

Cross-referencing the demographic detail about the sample of headteachers and parents used for the study suggests that they are fully representative of the population of the headteachers and parents in the pilot inclusive schools in Ghana. This gives me confidence in the sampling approach I adopted (see section 4.5). Based upon this the generalisation of the results is plausible.

5.3 Section B: Parental perception about inclusive education

The excerpt from Figure 4-2 indicates the data to be analysed in this section (see Figure 5-2 below). The Likert scale format with scores ranging from 1 to 4 on a four-point scale was used for the items. The responses were strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. They were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Comparison was made by gender and between the response of parents who have children with SEN and those who do not.

Parental perception (PP) of IE

1. Knowledge
2. Benefits
3. Concerns
4. Preference for placement

Figure 5-2: Excerpt two from Figure 4-2

5.3.1 Parental knowledge about inclusive education

Figure 5-3 shows that parents are knowledgeable about IE. This is evident from the percentages of parents who either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements. For example, items a, b, g, h, i, k, and l recorded 26.2% to 38.1% and 39.4% to 54.1% of parents strongly agreeing and agreeing to the statements in Figure 5-3.

Even though statements c and j had 35.0% to 56.7% of the parents strongly disagreeing and disagreeing, critical analysis of these statements “Inclusion benefits only those with SEN” and “Inclusion is about children with disability and and SEN only” shows that the parents understand IE.

- a. Inclusive education involves all children having the right to participate actively in school.
- b. Inclusive education is about whole school development and improvement.
- c. Inclusive education benefits only those with SEN.
- d. Inclusive education removes barriers to learning.
- e. Inclusive education requires significant changes in regular classroom procedures.
- f. Inclusive education is a process of finding better ways of responding to diversity.
- g. Inclusive education involves catering for the needs of all children in one class.
- h. Inclusive education makes children with SEN feel better about themselves.
- i. Inclusive education is about presence, participation and achievement of all pupils.
- j. Inclusive education is about children with disability and SEN only.
- k. Inclusive education is about education for all children.
- l. Inclusive education provides children access to appropriate aids, support and assessment.

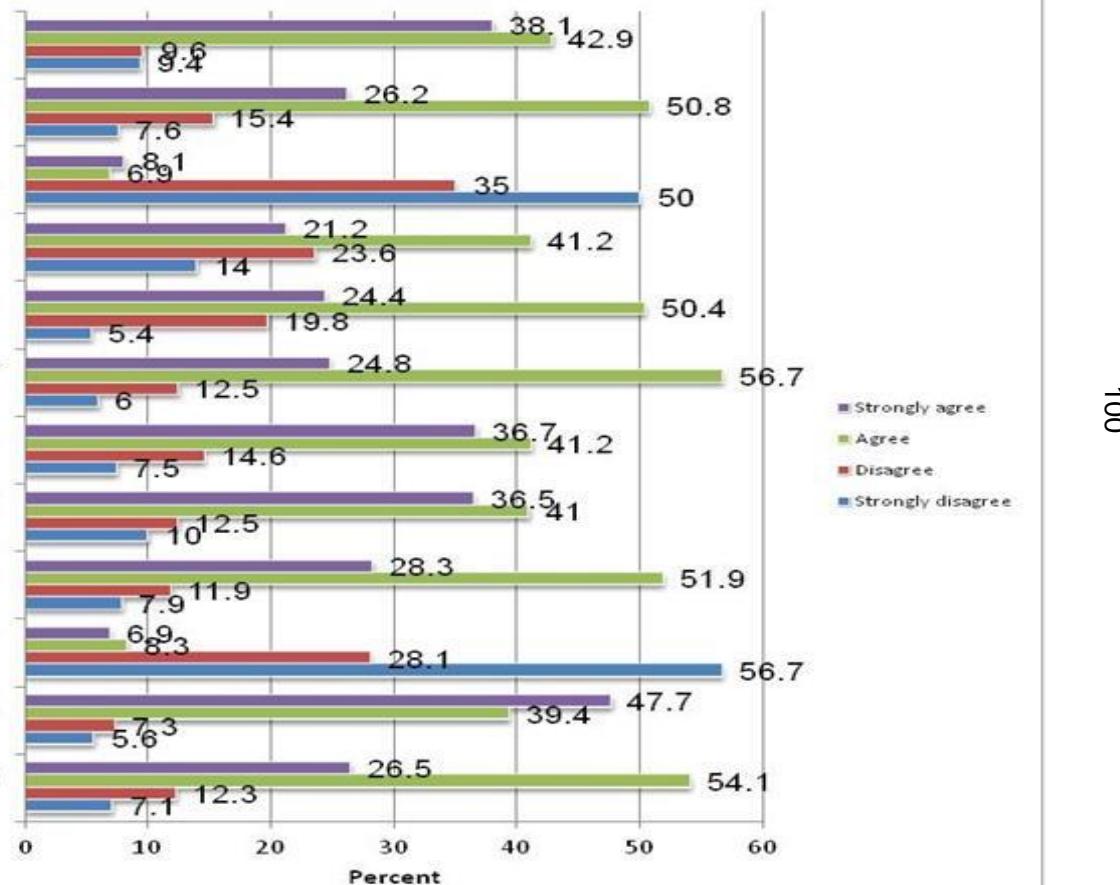


Figure 5-3: Parents' knowledge about IE (N=520)

5.3.2 Parents' perceived benefits of inclusive education

The results in Figure 5-4 indicate that parents regard IE as beneficial. This can be seen from the way the majority of the parents are in agreement with the statements. Between 24% - 38.9% and 43.3% - 55.4% of the parents agreed and strongly agreed with the statements.

It must be noted that some of the parents did not perceive the benefits of IE. In all, 14.8% - 32.5% parents disagreed with the statements. Even though they are in the minority, it is important to note that this can influence their involvement in their child's IE.

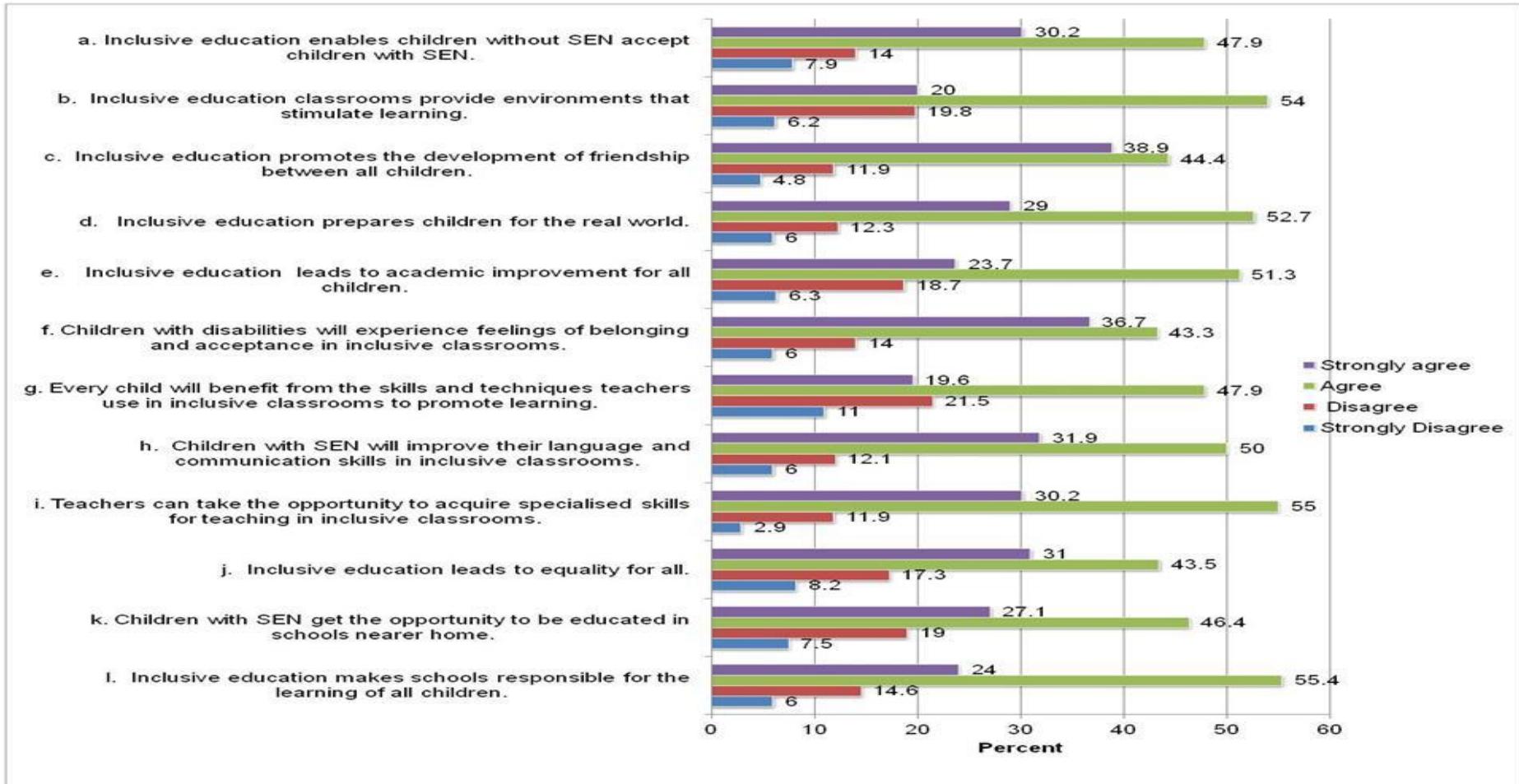


Figure 5-4: Parents' perceived benefits of IE (N=520)

5.3.3 Parental concerns about inclusive education

Figure 5-5 shows that issues raised in statements b, j, and l pose concerns to over half of the parents as they strongly agreed or agreed to the statements. The majority of the parents' strong disagreement or disagreement to statements a, c, d, e and g is an indication that they did not pose a worry to them. A major area of concern to 81.7% of the parents was IE will require intensive teacher retraining. Some other concerns are that children with SEN are likely to:

- a. Slow the learning rate of those without SEN in inclusive settings (strongly agree 20.8% agree 37.7%).
- b. Be bullied, teased or harmed in inclusive settings (strongly agree 22.3%, agree 35.6%).

Figure 5-5 also shows the areas that the majority of parents were not concerned about. These were:

- a. Contact with children with SEN can be harmful to children without SEN (strongly disagree 46.7%, disagree 29.8%).
- b. Presence of children with SEN in the same class will not motivate my child or other children to learn (strongly disagree 36.2%, disagree 36.0%).

Figure 5-5 shows that the areas the majority of the parents did not express concerns outnumbered the areas concerns were expressed.

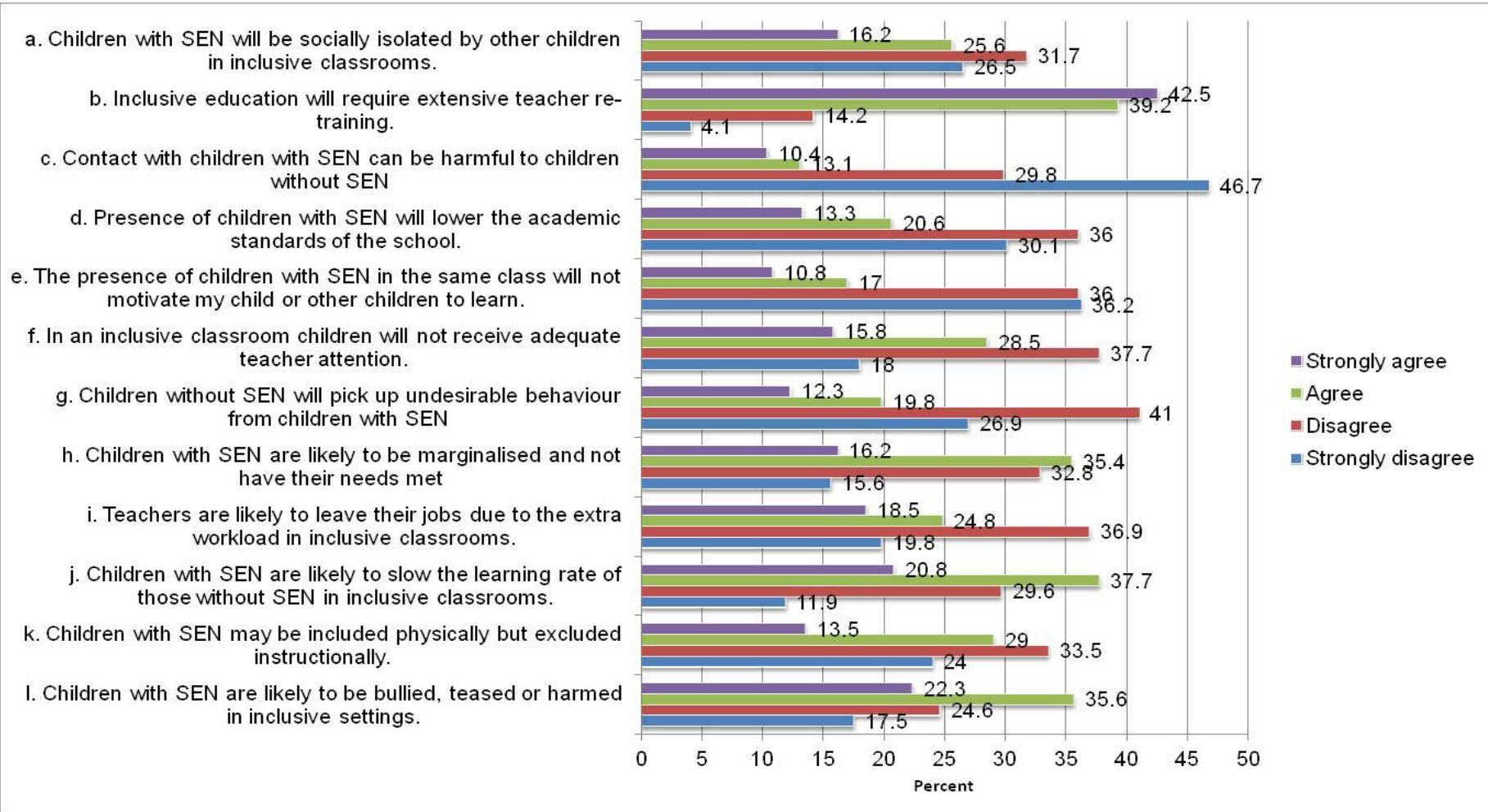


Figure 5-5: Parents' concerns about IE (N=520)

5.3.4 Parental preferences for placement

Twenty nine (5.6%) parents opted for regular school placement for children with SEN, 251 (48.2%) preferred special schools while 240 (46.2%) preferred inclusive school placements. This means that more than half, 280 (53.8%) of the parents preferred children with SEN receiving their education outside the inclusive schools.

5.3.4.1 Parents' reasons for choice of placement options

Parents were required to give reasons for their choice of placement option. The reasons have been grouped into seven categories and compared with the placement option the parents chose for children with SEN in Table 5-9. Out of the 520 (100%) parents, 38 (7.3%) did not respond to the item.

Table 5-5: Comparing parental choice of placement option with reasons for choice of placement option (N=482)

Reasons	Regular		Special		Inclusive		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Good education	7	1.5	87	18.0	39	8.1	133	27.6
Equal treatment	8	1.6	36	7.5	81	16.8	125	25.9
Children learn from each other and socialise	7	1.5	8	1.7	88	18.3	103	21.4
They have specially trained teachers	2	.4	93	19.2	7	1.5	102	21.1
Children with SEN will spread their disability	0	0	7	1.7	0	0	7	1.5
Schools are nearer home and cheaper	0	0	2	.4	5	1.1	7	1.5
Children with SEN will disturb other children's learning	0	0	5	1.0	0	0	5	1.0

Table 5-5 shows that out of the 133 (27.6%) parents who gave good education as a reason for their choice, 87 (18%) think that children with SEN should be in special schools as against 39 (8.1%) who view inclusive schools to be the best placement option. Another reason given in favour of special schools by 93 (19.2%) parents is that "they have specially trained teachers" while 7 (1.5%) gave the same reason for inclusive schools.

On the contrary, out of the 125 (25.9%) parents who gave “equal treatment” as a reason for their choice, 81 (16.8%) opted for inclusive placements as against 36 (7.5%) for special schools. Also, “children learning from each other and socialise” is the reason given by 88 (18.3%) parents in favour of inclusive schools as against 8 (1.7%) for special school placements.

Three of the reasons recorded the least numbers of parental responses. The first is “children with SEN will spread their disability”, said by 7 (1.5%) parents. Due to this, these parents believe that children with SEN should be in special schools. The second is “schools are nearer home and cheaper”, said by 7 (1.5%) parents. Out of this number, 5 (1.1%) parents were in favour of inclusive schools and 2 (.4%) were in favour of special schools. The third is, “children with SEN will disturb other children’s learning” was the reason given by 5 (1.0%) parents who for this reason choose special schools as the best placement option for children with SEN.

From Table 5-5 it can be concluded that the parents gave three major reasons for choosing the inclusive school placement as the best placement option for children with SEN. These are that children can learn from each other and socialise, they receive equal treatment and a good education. Parents who favour special school placement do so because they have specially trained teachers, they provide good education and it leads to equal treatment.

5.3.5 Demographic variations in parental perception of inclusive education

This section addresses how the components of PP as shown in the excerpt from Figure 4-2 varies in terms of the demographic variable of the parents (see Figure 5-6 below).

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- ```

graph TD
 A[Demographics of parents] --> B[Parental perception (PP) of IE
1. Knowledge
2. Benefits
3. Concerns
4. Preference for placement]

```
- Parental perception (PP) of IE**
1. Knowledge
  2. Benefits
  3. Concerns
  4. Preference for placement

Demographics  
of parents

**Figure 5-6: Excerpt three from Figure 4-2**

One-way between groups ANOVA was used to identify variations based on age-range and educational levels for knowledge, benefits and concerns. The independent sample t-test was used for variations based on gender and between

parents with and without children with SEN for the three variables mentioned (see section 4.10.1 for justification of the chosen statistical tools). Where statistically significant results were obtained from the ANOVA, Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc test was conducted to identify where the differences were coming from. To illustrate the results 95% confidence intervals were generated. The mean overall and SDs for knowledge was ( $M = 2.79$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ), Benefits was ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ), and concerns was ( $M = 2.40$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ).

For the analysis of variations based on placement options, frequency and percentage distributions were used. This was because parents were required to choose one option only, therefore frequency count and percentages indicating the proportions of parents' choice were deemed the best choice.

### **5.3.5.1 Variations in parental perception based on age-range**

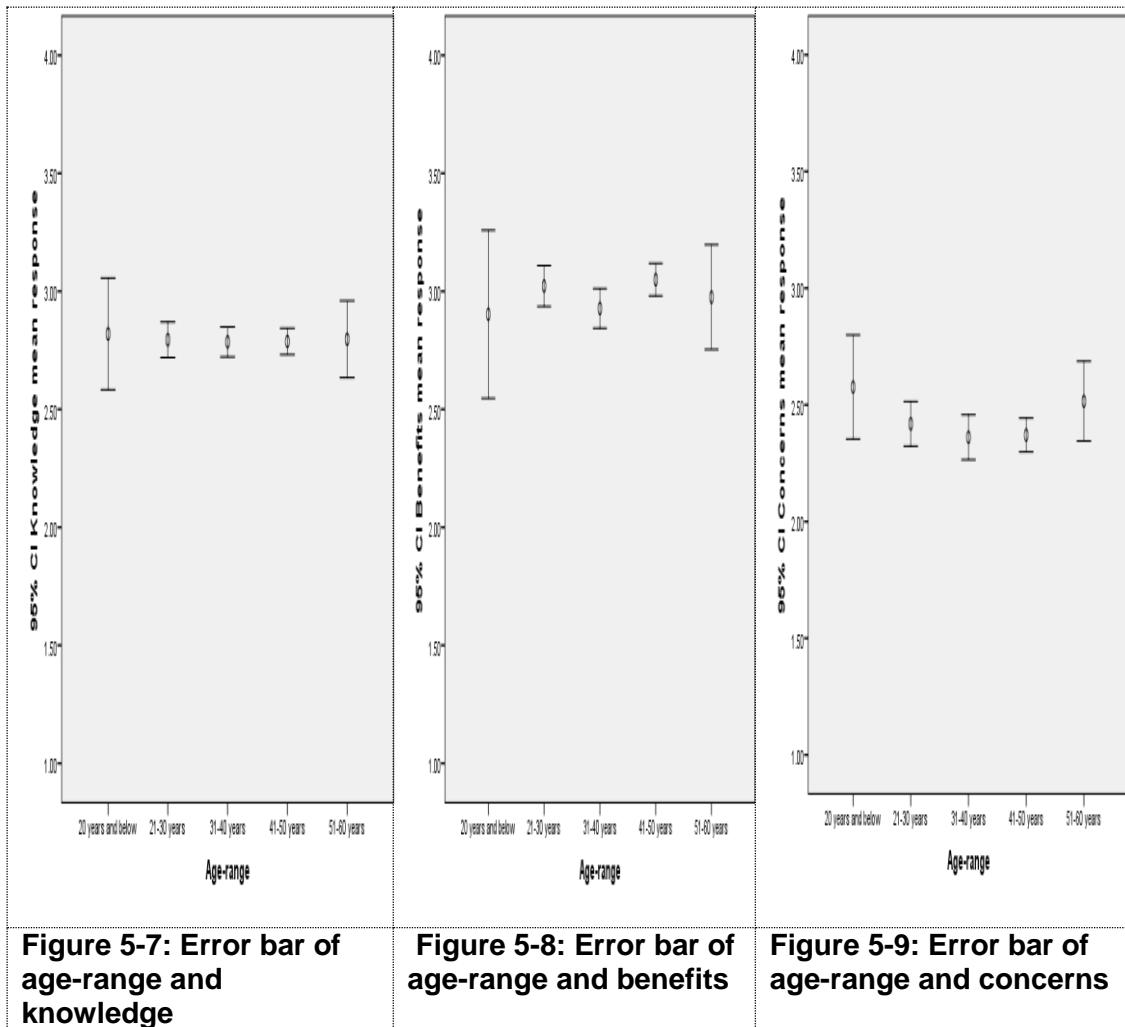
Table 5-6 presents the descriptive statistics for PP (knowledge, benefits and concerns) about IE based upon the age-range of the parents. Figures 5-7, 5-8 and 5-9 present the 95% confidence intervals of parental knowledge, benefits and concerns about IE based on the respondents' age-range.

**Table 5-6: Descriptive statistics for age-range variations in parental perception about IE (N=520)**

| Variable  | Age-range | N   | Mean | SD   |
|-----------|-----------|-----|------|------|
| Knowledge | ≤ 20      | 12  | 2.82 | 0.37 |
|           | 21-30     | 125 | 2.80 | 0.42 |
|           | 31-40     | 155 | 2.79 | 0.39 |
|           | 41-50     | 191 | 2.79 | 0.39 |
|           | 51-60     | 37  | 2.80 | 0.48 |
| Benefits  | ≤ 20      | 12  | 2.90 | 0.56 |
|           | 21-30     | 125 | 3.02 | 0.49 |
|           | 31-40     | 155 | 2.93 | 0.53 |
|           | 41-50     | 191 | 3.05 | 0.48 |
|           | 51-60     | 37  | 2.98 | 0.67 |
| Concerns  | ≤ 20      | 12  | 2.58 | 0.35 |
|           | 21-30     | 125 | 2.42 | 0.54 |
|           | 31-40     | 155 | 2.36 | 0.61 |
|           | 41-50     | 191 | 2.37 | 0.51 |
|           | 51-60     | 37  | 2.52 | 0.51 |

Table 5-6 shows that the means were close for the various age-ranges. The parents aged 20 and below had the highest mean and lowest SD ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ) for knowledge. For perceived benefits of IE, parents aged 41-51 had the highest mean and lowest SD ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ).

Amongst the three variables concerns recorded the lowest means, indicating that parents had less concerns about IE. The findings above are further confirmed by the 95% confidence intervals in Figures 5-7, 5-8 and 5-9.



A one-way between groups ANOVA results show that there were no statistically significant effects of age on knowledge,  $F (4,515) = .29$ ,  $P=.998$ , benefits,  $F (4,515) = 1.409$ ,  $P = .230$  or concerns,  $F (4,515) = 1.089$ ,  $P = .361$  about IE. The 95% confidence intervals in Figures 5-7, 5-8 and 5-9 confirm this finding. The ANOVA results imply that parental age has no influence on their knowledge or what they consider to be the benefits and concerns about IE. The conclusion is, parents of different ages have similar perceptions about IE.

### 5.3.5.2 Variations in parental perception based on educational level

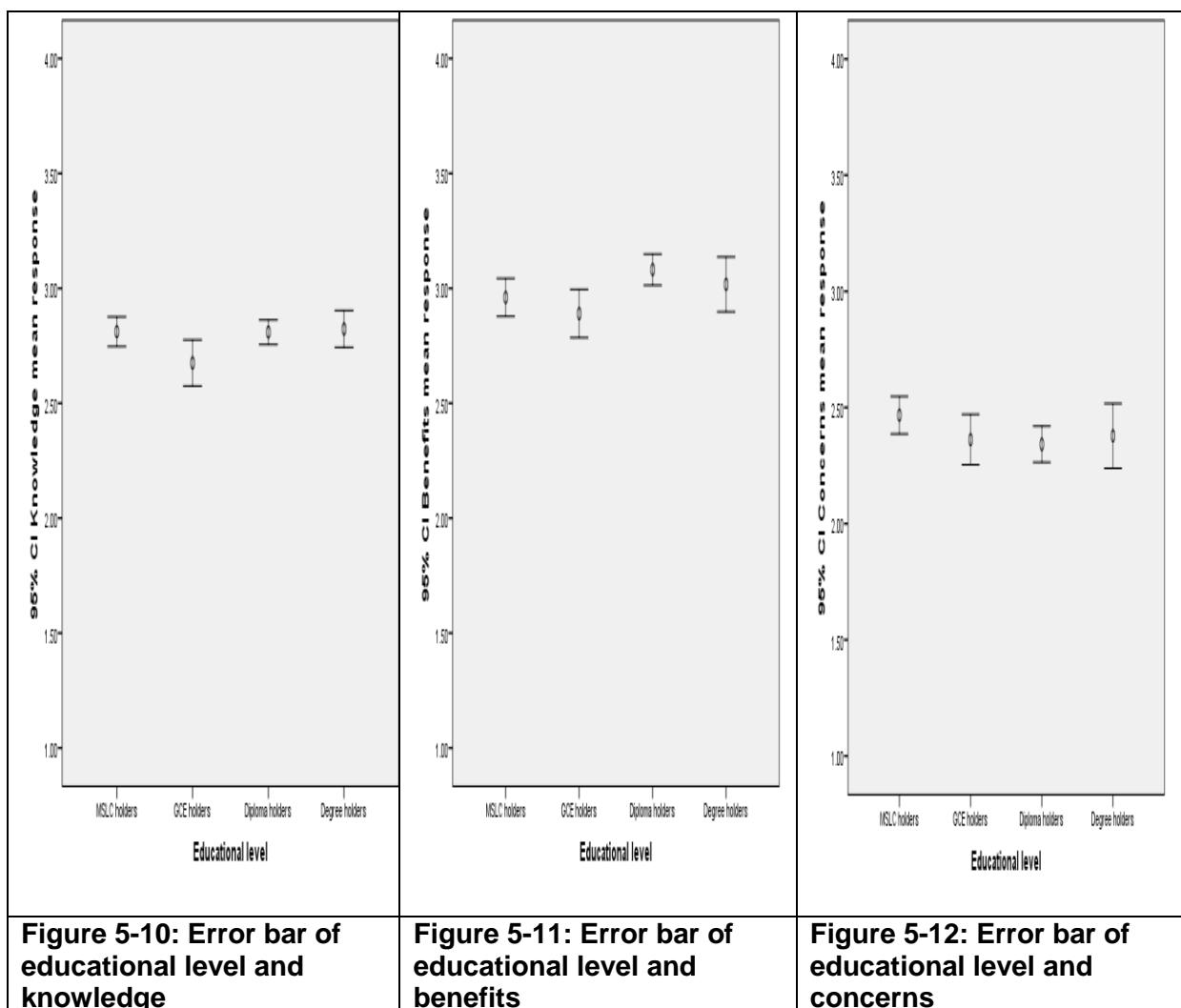
Table 5-7 presents the descriptive statistics for PP (knowledge, benefits and concerns) about IE based upon the educational level of the parents. Figures 5-10, 5-11 and 5-12 present the 95% confidence intervals of parental knowledge, benefits and concerns about IE based on the parents' educational level.

**Table 5-7: Descriptive statistics for educational level variations in parental perception (N=520)**

| Variable  | Educational level | N   | Mean | SD   |
|-----------|-------------------|-----|------|------|
| Knowledge | MSLC              | 185 | 2.81 | 0.44 |
|           | GCE               | 85  | 2.68 | 0.46 |
|           | Diploma           | 177 | 2.81 | 0.36 |
|           | Degree            | 73  | 2.82 | 0.34 |
| Benefits  | MSLC              | 185 | 2.96 | 0.57 |
|           | GCE               | 85  | 2.89 | 0.49 |
|           | Diploma           | 177 | 3.08 | 0.46 |
|           | Degree            | 73  | 3.02 | 0.51 |
| Concerns  | MSLC              | 185 | 2.47 | 0.56 |
|           | GCE               | 85  | 2.36 | 0.50 |
|           | Diploma           | 177 | 2.34 | 0.53 |
|           | Degree            | 73  | 2.38 | 0.60 |

Table 5-7 shows that within the knowledge component, with the exception of the GCE holders who had ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ), the other groups had means that were very close. From their means overall it can be seen that they had knowledge of IE.

The 95% confidence intervals in Figures 5-10, 5-11 and 5-12 confirm the findings in Table 5-7. The one-way between groups ANOVA was again conducted to evaluate whether parental knowledge, benefits and concerns about IE vary by educational level.



A one-way between groups ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant main effect of educational level on knowledge  $F(3, 516) = 2.707, p = .045$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .010$  indicates that 1.0% of the variation in knowledge is accounted for using the predictor variable educational level. A statistically significant main effect of educational level on benefits was also obtained,  $F(3, 516) = 3.199, p = .023$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .013$ . There was no statistically significant effect of educational level on concerns  $F(3, 516) = 1.791, p = .148$ .

As a result of the statistically significant result obtained for knowledge and benefits, Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc tests were conducted. The results for knowledge show no statistically significant effect. The results for benefits indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of diploma holders ( $M = 3.08, SD = 0.46$ ) and GCE holders ( $M = 2.89, SD = 0.49$ ). This was further confirmed by the descriptive statistics and the 95% confidence intervals in Figure 5-

11. This means that diploma holders perceived IE to be more beneficial than the GCE holders.

### **5.3.5.3 Variations in parental perception based on gender**

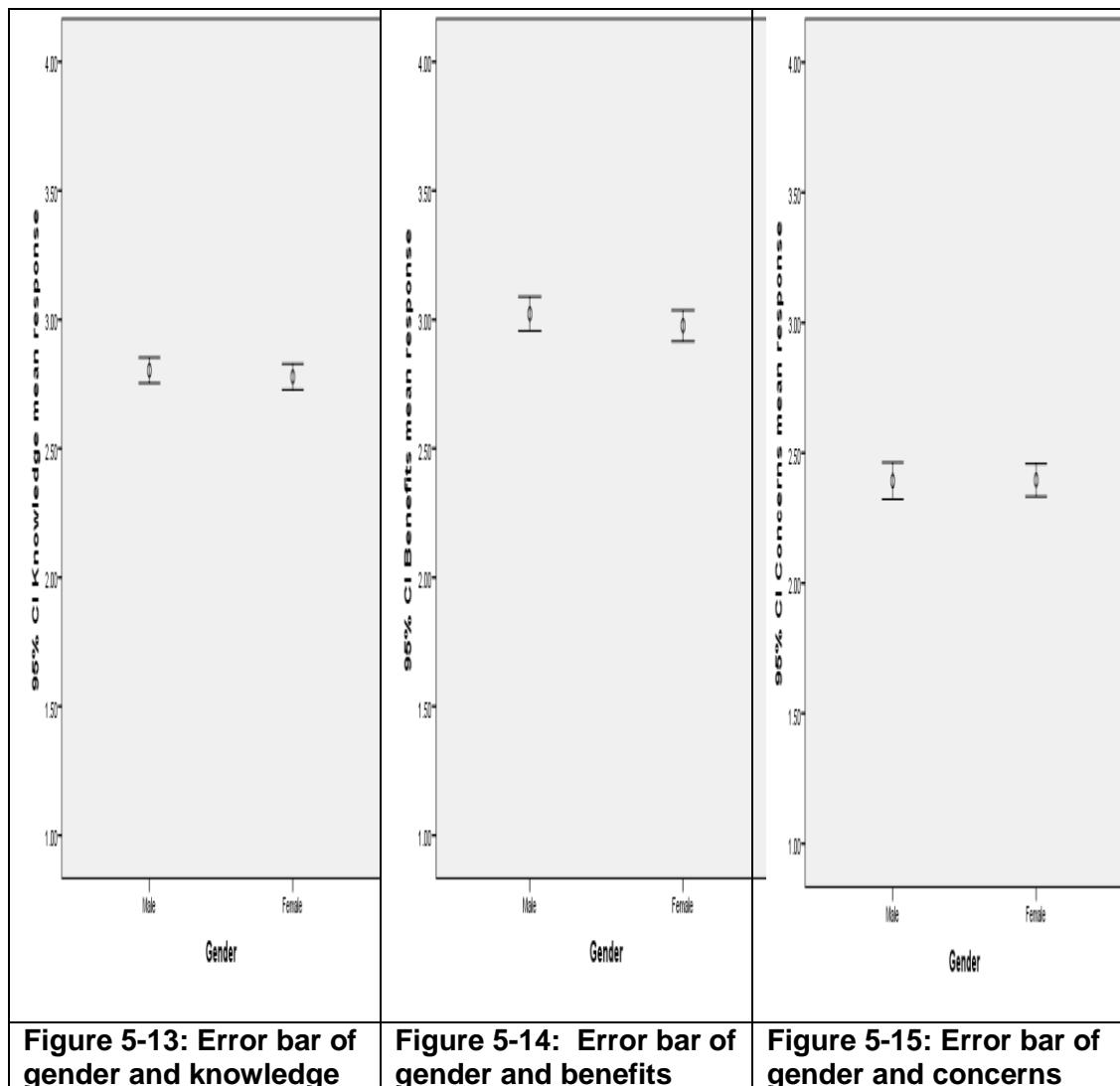
Table 5-8 presents the gender variations in PP of IE. Additionally, Figures 5-13, 5-14 and 5-15 present the 95% confidence intervals for the variables knowledge, benefits and concerns respectively.

**Table 5-8: Descriptive statistics for gender variations in parental perception of inclusive education (N=520)**

| Variable  | Gender | N   | Mean | S D  |
|-----------|--------|-----|------|------|
| Knowledge | Male   | 245 | 2.80 | 0.39 |
|           | Female | 275 | 2.78 | 0.42 |
| Benefits  | Male   | 245 | 3.02 | 0.52 |
|           | Female | 275 | 2.98 | 0.51 |
| Concerns  | Male   | 245 | 2.39 | 0.56 |
|           | Female | 275 | 2.40 | 0.53 |

Table 5-8 shows that the means response of the males and females were very close on the variables, knowledge and concerns. There were variations in the responses of the parents based on the SDs. Within the knowledge variable males recorded the least variation ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ). Additionally, the means of the benefit variable show a difference between the males ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ) and the females ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ).

The 95% confidence intervals in Figures 5-13 and 5-15 also shows that the means of males and females were very close; while that of Figure 5-14 shows that there was a difference. This confirms the results of the descriptive statistics in Table 5-8.

**Figure 5-13: Error bar of gender and knowledge****Figure 5-14: Error bar of gender and benefits****Figure 5-15: Error bar of gender and concerns**

In order to ascertain whether gender variations exist in PP of IE, an independent sample t-test was employed to test the significance of the differences observed in the data. No statistically significant effects of gender were found on parents' knowledge,  $t(518) = .702$ ,  $p = .483$ , benefits,  $t(518) = .020$ ,  $p = .308$  or concerns,  $t(518) = -.067$ ,  $p = .947$ .

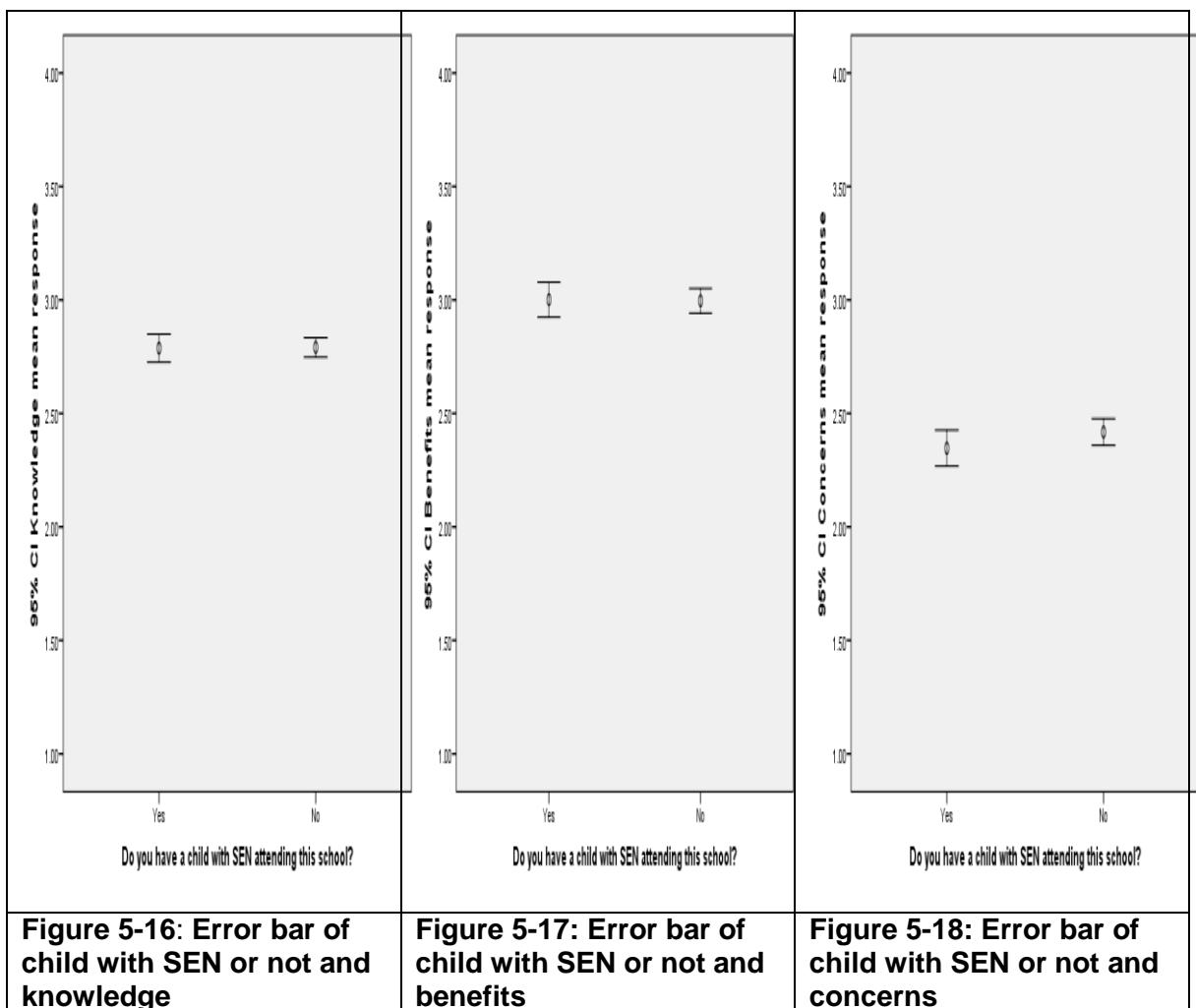
#### 5.3.5.4 Variations in parental perception based on parents with or without children with SEN

Table 5-9 presents variations in PP of IE based on parents with and those without children with SEN. Additionally, Figures 5-16, 5-17 and 5-18 present the 95% confidence intervals for the variables knowledge, benefits and concerns respectively.

**Table 5-9: Descriptive statistics for variations in parental perception based on parents with or without children with SEN (N=520)**

| Variable  | Child with SEN | N   | Mean | SD   |
|-----------|----------------|-----|------|------|
| Knowledge | Yes            | 172 | 2.79 | 0.41 |
|           | No             | 348 | 2.79 | 0.41 |
| Benefits  | Yes            | 172 | 3.00 | 0.51 |
|           | No             | 348 | 2.99 | 0.52 |
| Concerns  | Yes            | 172 | 2.35 | 0.53 |
|           | No             | 348 | 2.42 | 0.55 |

Table 5-9 shows that means and SDs of both groups on knowledge and benefits are close. There was a little difference between parents with children with SEN ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = .053$ ) and parents without children with SEN ( $M = 2.42$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) on their concerns about IE.



In order to ascertain whether perceptual variations exist in IE based on parents with and without children with SEN; an independent sample t-test was employed to test for the difference. The results show that there is no statistically significant difference in the two groups of parents based on their knowledge,  $t (518) = -.089$ ,  $p = .929$ , benefits,  $t (518) = .105$ ,  $p = .916$  and concerns,  $t (518) = -.1404$ ,  $p = .161$ . The 95% confidence intervals in Figures 5-16, 5-17 and 5-18 confirms the results in Table 5-9 and the t-test.

### **5.3.5.5 Variations in parents' preference for placement**

**Table 5-10: Variation in preference placement based on age-range (N= 520)**

| <b>Age-range</b> | <b>Regular</b> |          | <b>Special</b> |          | <b>Inclusive</b> |          | <b>Total</b> |          |
|------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|                  | <b>Freq</b>    | <b>%</b> | <b>Freq</b>    | <b>%</b> | <b>Freq</b>      | <b>%</b> | <b>Freq</b>  | <b>%</b> |
| 20 and below     | 3              | 25.0     | 3              | 25.0     | 6                | 50.0     | 12           | 100      |
| 21-30            | 5              | 4.0      | 61             | 48.8     | 59               | 47.2     | 125          | 100      |
| 31-40            | 9              | 5.8      | 75             | 48.4     | 71               | 48.8     | 155          | 100      |
| 41-50            | 11             | 5.8      | 93             | 48.7     | 87               | 45.5     | 191          | 100      |
| 51-60            | 1              | 2.7      | 19             | 51.4     | 17               | 45.9     | 37           | 100      |

The results in Table 5-10 shows that 6 (50.0%) of the parents in the age-range 20 and below prefer inclusive placements for children with SEN. Also, the majority 19 (51.4%) of the parents in the age-range of 51-60 opted for special school placement. Apart from the parents aged 20 and below and 31-40, the percentages of the other age-ranges in the table indicate higher preference for special school placement for children with SEN. The conclusion drawn from the evidence in the Table 5-10 shows that parents aged 20 and below and 31-40 years preferred inclusive placements more than parents aged 41-60 years.

**Table 5-11: Variation in preference placement based on educational level (N=520)**

| <b>Educational level</b> | <b>Regular</b> |          | <b>Special</b> |          | <b>Inclusive</b> |          | <b>Total</b> |          |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|                          | <b>Freq</b>    | <b>%</b> | <b>Freq</b>    | <b>%</b> | <b>Freq</b>      | <b>%</b> | <b>Freq</b>  | <b>%</b> |
| MSLC                     | 15             | 8.1      | 94             | 50.8     | 76               | 41.1     | 185          | 100      |
| GCE                      | 6              | 7.1      | 37             | 43.5     | 42               | 49.4     | 85           | 100      |
| Diploma                  | 7              | 4.0      | 97             | 52.5     | 77               | 43.5     | 177          | 100      |
| Degree                   | 1              | 1.4      | 27             | 37.0     | 45               | 61.6     | 77           | 100      |

The results in Table 5-11 shows that parents with MSLC recorded the lowest percentage of parents who preferred inclusive placements for children with SEN. The majority 97 (52.5%) of diploma holders opted for special school placements. Table 5-11 further shows that apart from degree holders who had the majority, 45 (61.6%), of them opting for inclusive placements for children with SEN, over 50.0% of MSLC, GCE and diploma holders opted for educational placements outside the inclusive school.

**Table 5-12: Variation in preference placement based on gender (N=520)**

| Gender | Regular |     | Special |      | Inclusive |      | Total |     |
|--------|---------|-----|---------|------|-----------|------|-------|-----|
|        | Freq    | %   | Freq    | %    | Freq      | %    | Freq  | %   |
| Male   | 4       | 1.6 | 122     | 49.8 | 119       | 48.6 | 245   | 100 |
| Female | 25      | 9.1 | 129     | 46.9 | 121       | 44.0 | 275   | 100 |

The results in Table 5-12 show that males are more favourable to IE than females. In all, 119 (48.6%) males opted for IE as against 121 (44%) females. However, both groups showed that they preferred special school placement for children with SEN rather than IE. Hence, 122 (49.8%) males and 129 (46%) females opted for special school placement for children with SEN. More females 25 (9.1%) opted for regular school placement as against 4 (1.6%) males.

**Table 5-13: Variation in placement option based on having a child with SEN or not (N=520)**

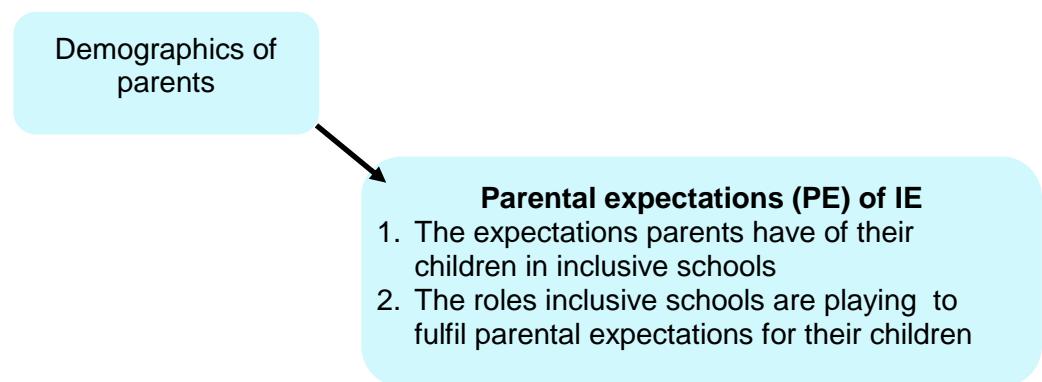
| Child with SEN? | Regular |     | Special |      | Inclusive |      | Total |     |
|-----------------|---------|-----|---------|------|-----------|------|-------|-----|
|                 | Freq    | %   | Freq    | %    | Freq      | %    | Freq  | %   |
| Yes             | 9       | 5.2 | 72      | 41.9 | 91        | 52.9 | 172   | 100 |
| No              | 20      | 5.7 | 179     | 51.4 | 149       | 42.8 | 348   | 100 |

Table 5-13 shows that 91 (52.9%) parents, with children with SEN want their children to attend inclusive schools. However, 72 (41.9%) other parents are of the view that they should be in special schools.

On the contrary, 179 (51.4%) parents without children with SEN view special school placement as the best option for children with SEN. Another 149 (42.8%) of them opted for inclusive schools. From this, it can be concluded that parents with children with SEN perceive inclusive placement as a better option than parents without children with SEN.

## 5.4 SECTION C: Parental expectations

This section presents the analysis of parental responses on the expectations they have for their children in pilot inclusive schools in Ghana. The major areas discussed are shown in the excerpt from Figure 4-2 (see Figure 5-19 below).



**Figure 5-19: Excerpt four from Figure 4-2**

For this analysis, frequency and percentage distributions of the various expectations parents have for their children has been presented in a tabular form. This helped to identify three top priority expectations that parents have for their child. Analysis of parents' responses on the question; "is your child's current educational placement helping to fulfil the expectations you have?" has been presented. Also, analysis of parents' responses on the reason why their child's current placement is helping/not helping to achieve their expectations has been presented. Cross-tabulation was used to identify the activities parents think inclusive schools are doing or yet to do to help them fulfil the expectations they have set for their children.

### 5.4.1 Parental expectations for their children in inclusive schools

From Table 5-14 "ability to read and write" is the top expectation of 308 (59.2%) parents. This is followed by "developing social skills", with 264 (50.8%) parents selecting it. The third is "doing well academically" which recorded 236 (45.4%) affirmative responses. The three lowest hierarchy expectations are "be accepted in class", "make friends", and "learn the culture of my people" recording 117 (22.5%), 94 (18.1%) and 42 (8.1%) approvals respectively.

**Table 5-14: Parental expectations**

| <b>Expectations</b>                              | <b>Freq</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Ability to read and write                        | 308         | 59.2     |
| Develop social skills                            | 264         | 50.8     |
| Do well academically                             | 236         | 45.4     |
| Be treated equally                               | 202         | 38.9     |
| Be a good citizen                                | 192         | 36.9     |
| Learning a trade or skills for future employment | 151         | 29.2     |
| Be accepted in class                             | 117         | 22.5     |
| Make friends                                     | 94          | 18.1     |
| Learn the culture of my people                   | 42          | 8.1      |

Parents were asked whether their child's current educational placement was helping to fulfil the expectations they have: 407 (78.3%) said "Yes" while 113 (21.7%) said "No". Parents were required to give reasons for their response.

These reasons have been categorised based on the response of 416 (80%) parents as 104 (20.0%) did not respond to the item. The first major reason given by 240 (57.7%) parents is the "improvement in academic performance" of their child. Followed by "child's needs not being met" and "promoted social acceptance" said by 79 (19.0%) and 77 (18.5%) parents. Last in the group is "leads to equal treatment" which was said by 20 (4.8%) parents.

#### **5.4.2 Role of inclusive schools in helping to fulfil parental expectations**

Parents were asked to indicate the things the school is doing or yet to do to fulfil the expectations they have for their children. The analysis of their response is presented in Table 5-15.

**Table 5-15: Activities being done or yet to be done to fulfil parental expectations**

| <b>Activities</b>                                               | <b>Being done</b> |          | <b>Rank</b> | <b>To Be done</b> |          | <b>Rank</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|----------|-------------|
|                                                                 | <b>Freq</b>       | <b>%</b> |             | <b>Freq</b>       | <b>%</b> |             |
| 1. Making good use of academic learning time                    | 451               | 86.7     | 1           | 69                | 13.3     | 6           |
| 2. Involving parents in decision-Making                         | 425               | 81.7     | 2           | 95                | 18.3     | 5           |
| 3. Keeping me informed about my child's progress in school      | 413               | 79.4     | 3           | 103               | 20.6     | 4           |
| 4. Taking into consideration my child's needs when teaching     | 355               | 68.3     | 4           | 165               | 31.7     | 3           |
| 5. Making the curriculum flexible to meet the needs of my child | 277               | 53.3     | 5           | 243               | 46.7     | 2           |
| 6. Giving my child one-to-one Support                           | 248               | 47.7     | 6           | 272               | 52.3     | 1           |

From Table 5-15, it is clear that parents report that the schools are “making good use of academic learning time”, “involving parents in decision-making” about their children’s education, keeping parents informed about their children’s progress and taking into consideration the children’s needs when teaching. This was supported by 451 (86.7%), 425 (81.7%), 413 (79.4%) and 355 (68.3%) parents respectively. There is evidence from the affirmative responses of 248 (47.7%) parents that the schools are giving the children one-to-one support. However, over half 272 (52.3%) of the parents said that this is yet to be done for their child. One-to-one support has therefore been ranked as number one among the activities that are yet to be done because of the number of negative responses received from the parents. This is followed by “making the curriculum flexible to meet the needs of their child”, and then taking into consideration their child’s needs when teaching with 243 (46.7%) and 165 (31.7%) parents supporting that it was yet to be done.

To further assess whether there is a difference in the responses given by parents with children with SEN and those without, comparison was done between parental responses on what was being done or yet to be done to help fulfil PE for their child and whether parents had children with SEN or not. The results are presented in Table 5-16.

**Table 5-16: Comparison of activities to fulfil parental expectations and whether parents have a child with SEN N=520**

| Activities                                                      | Child with SEN? |      |            |      |     |            |            |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|------|-----|------------|------------|------|
|                                                                 | Yes             |      | To be done |      | No  |            | To be done |      |
|                                                                 | Being done      | Freq | %          | Freq | %   | Being done | Freq       | %    |
| 1 Making good use of academic learning time                     | 144             | 83.7 | 28         | 16.3 | 307 | 88.2       | 41         | 11.8 |
| 2. Involving parents in decision making                         | 130             | 75.6 | 42         | 24.4 | 295 | 84.8       | 53         | 15.2 |
| 3. Keeping me informed about my child's progress in school      | 140             | 81.4 | 32         | 18.6 | 273 | 78.4       | 75         | 21.6 |
| 4. Taking into consideration my child's needs when teaching     | 112             | 65.1 | 60         | 34.9 | 243 | 69.3       | 105        | 30.2 |
| 5. Making the curriculum flexible to meet the needs of my child | 80              | 46.5 | 92         | 53.5 | 197 | 56.6       | 151        | 43.4 |
| 6. Giving my child one-to-one support                           | 88              | 51.2 | 84         | 48.8 | 160 | 46.0       | 188        | 54.0 |

Table 5-16 shows that apart from “making use of academic learning time”, “keeping me informed about my child’s progress” and “giving my child one to one support” that higher percentage of parents with children with SEN reported that it was being done, on all the other activities parents without children with SEN recorded a higher affirmative responses on things “being done” by the schools.

#### **5.4.3 Demographic variations of parental expectations**

The excerpt from Figure 4-2 shows the area being addressed in this section see (see Figure 5-20 below). The demographic variables variations discussed are age-range, educational level, gender and parents with and without children with SEN.

Demographics  
of parents



**Parental expectations (PE) of IE**

1. The expectations parents have of their children in inclusive schools
2. The roles inclusive schools are playing to fulfil PE for their children

**Figure 5-20: Excerpt five from Figure 4-2**

#### **5.4.3.1 Variations in parental expectations based on age-range**

Table 5-17 presents the percentage responses and chi-square of association results of the expectations of the parents by age-range (see section 4.10.1 for the reason chi-square was used).

Table 5-17 shows that, overall, over 50% of the parents within the age-ranges expect their children to be able to read and write. However, parents within the age-range of 21-30 recorded the least percentage response (52.0%).

Also, 50.0% and over of parents within the age-ranges of 20 and below to 31-40 expected their child to develop social skills, while, less than 50% of parents aged 41-60 had a similar expectation.

**Table 5-17: Comparing parents' age-range and parental expectation**

| <b>Expectations</b>                           | <b>≤ 20<br/>n=12<br/>%</b> | <b>21-30<br/>n=125<br/>%</b> | <b>31-40<br/>n=155<br/>%</b> | <b>41-50<br/>n=191<br/>%</b> | <b>51-60<br/>n=37<br/>%</b> | <b>X<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>df</b> | <b>p</b> | <b>Cramer's v</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Ability to read and write                     | 58.3                       | 52.0                         | 60.6                         | 62.8                         | 59.5                        | 3.863                | 4         | .425     | .086              |
| Develop social skills                         | 50.0                       | 60.0                         | 53.5                         | 42.9                         | 48.6                        | 9.504                | 4         | .050     | .135              |
| Do well academically                          | 58.3                       | 42.4                         | 41.9                         | 48.7                         | 48.6                        | 3.006                | 4         | .557     | .076              |
| Be treated equally                            | 33.3                       | 43.2                         | 37.4                         | 38.7                         | 32.4                        | 1.925                | 4         | .749     | .061              |
| Be a good citizen                             | 58.3                       | 31.2                         | 38.7                         | 38.7                         | 32.4                        | 4.924                | 4         | .295     | .097              |
| Learning a trade/skills for future employment | 16.7                       | 25.6                         | 28.4                         | 30.9                         | 37.8                        | 3.349                | 4         | .501     | .080              |
| Be accepted in class                          | 16.7                       | 27.2                         | 18.1                         | 23.0                         | 24.3                        | 3.669                | 4         | .453     | .084              |
| Make friends                                  | 8.3                        | 21.6                         | 18.7                         | 17.3                         | 10.8                        | 3.260                | 4         | .515     | .079              |
| Learn the culture of my people                | 8.3                        | 8.0                          | 9.7                          | 6.3                          | 10.8                        | 1.737                | 4         | .784     | .058              |

Additionally, while 58.3% of parents in the age-range 20 and below expect their child to learn to be a good citizen whilst at school. All the other age-ranges recorded 31.2% to 38.7% of the parents having this expectation. “Learn the culture of my people” recorded the lowest percentage of parental responses. Although the percentages in the table shows that there are some variations in the expectations of the parents based on their age, the chi-square test of association shows no significant association of 8 of the items and the age-range of the respondents. Only one item “develop social skills” shows borderline association,  $\chi^2 = 9.504$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.05$ , Cramer’s V = 0.135). In other words, there is no relationship between the age-range of parents and the expectations they have for their children in inclusive schools.

**Table 5-18: Comparing parents' age-range and school fulfilment of expectations**

| <b>Age-range</b> | <b>School fulfilment of expectations</b> |             |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                  | <b>Yes %</b>                             | <b>No %</b> |
| 20 and below     | 83.3                                     | 16.7        |
| 21-30            | 77.6                                     | 22.4        |
| 31-40            | 78.7                                     | 21.3        |
| 41-50            | 80.1                                     | 19.9        |
| 51-60            | 67.6                                     | 32.4        |

Table 5-18 shows that parents aged 20 and below had the most affirmative responses (83.3%) about the fact that their child's educational placement was helping to fulfil their expectations. Although 67.6 % of the parents aged 51-60 also responded "Yes", they recorded the highest number of negative responses (32.4%).

#### **5.4.3.2 Variations in parental expectations based on educational levels**

Table 5-19 presents the percentage responses and the chi-square test of association results of the expectations of the parents by educational level.

**Table 5-19: Comparing parents' educational level and parental expectations**

| <b>Expectations</b>                           | <b>MSLC<br/>n=185<br/>%</b> | <b>GCE<br/>n=77<br/>%</b> | <b>Diploma<br/>n=185<br/>%</b> | <b>Degree<br/>n=73<br/>%</b> | <b>X<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>df</b> | <b>p</b> | <b>Cramer's<br/>V</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
| Ability to read and write                     | 65.4                        | 58.8                      | 53.7                           | 57.5                         | 5.278                | 3         | .153     | .101                  |
| Develop social skills                         | 47.6                        | 49.4                      | 57.1                           | 45.2                         | 4.530                | 3         | .210     | .93                   |
| Do well academically                          | 44.3                        | 50.6                      | 37.9                           | 60.3                         | 11.59                | 3         | .009     | .149                  |
| Be treated equally                            | 33.0                        | 41.2                      | 45.2                           | 35.6                         | 6.207                | 3         | .102     | .109                  |
| Be a good citizen                             | 34.1                        | 45.9                      | 37.3                           | 32.9                         | 4.107                | 3         | .250     | .089                  |
| Learning a trade/skills for future employment | 36.2                        | 25.9                      | 24.9                           | 24.7                         | 7.217                | 3         | .065     | .118                  |
| Be accepted in class                          | 22.2                        | 20.0                      | 22.0                           | 27.4                         | 1.343                | 3         | .719     | .051                  |
| Make friends                                  | 22.7                        | 12.9                      | 18.1                           | 12.3                         | 5.816                | 3         | .121     | .106                  |
| Learn the culture of my people                | 9.7                         | 4.7                       | 6.2                            | 12.3                         | 4.586                | 3         | .205     | .094                  |

The result in Table 5-19 shows that 65.4% of the parents having MSLC expect their children to be able to read and write as against 57.5% of the parents with a degree.

Also, 57.1% of the parents with a diploma expect their children to develop social skills, while the other educational levels recorded less than 50% of the parents having this expectation.

Table 5-19 further shows that 60.3% of the parents with a degree expect their children to do well academically, while only 37.9% of the parents with a diploma had this expectation. The chi-square test of association shows that this item is the only one that shows significant association with educational level (chi-square = 11.59, df = 3, p = 0.009, Cramer's V = 0.149). Based on this identified association it may be

concluded that there is a relationship between the parents' educational level and the academic expectations they have for their child.

**Table 5-20: Comparing parents' educational level and school fulfilment of expectations**

| <b>Educational level</b> | <b>School fulfilment of expectations</b> |             |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                          | <b>Yes %</b>                             | <b>No %</b> |
| MSLC                     | 81.1                                     | 18.9        |
| GCE                      | 76.5                                     | 23.5        |
| Diploma                  | 76.8                                     | 23.2        |
| Degree                   | 78.7                                     | 23.3        |

Table 5-20 shows that over 76% of the parents in all the educational levels said their expectations for their children were being met by the inclusive schools.

#### **5.4.3.3 Variations in parental expectations based on gender**

Table 5-21 presents the percentage response and chi-square test of association results of the expectations of the parents by gender.

**Table 5-21: Comparing parents' gender and parental expectations**

| <b>Expectations</b>                              | <b>Males<br/>n= 245<br/>%</b> | <b>Females<br/>n=275<br/>%</b> | <b>X<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>df</b> | <b>p</b> | <b>Cramer's<br/>V</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
| Ability to read and write                        | 55.9                          | 62.2                           | 2.105                | 1         | .147     | .064                  |
| Develop social skills                            | 52.9                          | 48.2                           | .005                 | 1         | .946     | .003                  |
| Do well academically                             | 49.0                          | 42.2                           | 2.415                | 1         | .120     | .68                   |
| Be treated equally                               | 42.4                          | 35.6                           | 2.531                | 1         | .112     | .070                  |
| Be a good citizen                                | 34.3                          | 39.3                           | 1.384                | 1         | .239     | .052                  |
| Learning a trade/skills<br>for future employment | 26.9                          | 30.9                           | .991                 | 1         | .319     | .044                  |
| Be accepted in class                             | 20.4                          | 24.4                           | 1.163                | 1         | .281     | .047                  |
| Make friends                                     | 19.2                          | 17.1                           | .383                 | 1         | .536     | .027                  |
| Learn the culture of my<br>people                | 8.6                           | 7.6                            | .153                 | 1         | .696     | .017                  |

Table 5-21 shows that there are some percentage variations within the respondents based on gender. A greater proportion of females (62.2%) than males (55.9%) expect their children to be able to read and write.

Furthermore, a greater proportion of males (49.0%) than females (42.2%) expect their children to do well academically. Similarly, 52.9% of the males and 48.2% of the females expect their children to develop social skills.

Although the percentages in the table shows that there are variations in the expectations of the parents based on gender, chi-square test of association shows no significant association of all the items and the gender of the respondents. This means that, statistically, there is no relationship between the gender of parents and the expectations they have for their children in inclusive schools.

**Table 5-22: Comparing parents' gender and school fulfilment of expectations**

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>School fulfilment of expectations</b> |             |
|---------------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
|               | <b>Yes %</b>                             | <b>No %</b> |
| Male          | 79.6                                     | 20.4        |
| Female        | 77.1                                     | 22.9        |

Table 5-22 shows that a greater proportion of males (79.6%) than females (77.1%) said inclusive schools were helping to fulfil the expectations they had for their child.

#### **5.4.3.4 Variations in parental expectations based on having a child with SEN or not**

Table 5-23 presents the percentage responses and chi-square of association results of the expectations of the parents based on having a child with SEN or not.

Table 5-23: Comparing categories of parents and parental expectations

| Expectations                                     | Child<br>with SEN<br>n= 172<br>% | No child<br>with SEN<br>n=348<br>% | X <sup>2</sup> | df | p    | Cramer's<br>v |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----|------|---------------|
| Ability to read and write                        | 59.3                             | 59.2                               | .001           | 1  | .981 | .001          |
| Develop social skills                            | 48.3                             | 52.0                               | .650           | 1  | .420 | .035          |
| Do well academically                             | 35.5                             | 50.3                               | 10.203         | 1  | .001 | .140          |
| Be treated equally                               | 41.9                             | 37.4                               | .983           | 1  | .321 | .043          |
| Be a good citizen                                | 29.1                             | 40.8                               | 6.806          | 1  | .009 | .114          |
| Learning a trade/skills<br>for future employment | 35.5                             | 25.9                               | 5.151          | 1  | .023 | .100          |
| Be accepted in class                             | 26.2                             | 20.7                               | 1.977          | 1  | .160 | .062          |
| Make friends                                     | 22.7                             | 15.8                               | 3.668          | 1  | 0.55 | .084          |
| Learn the culture of my<br>people                | 5.2                              | 9.5                                | 2.801          | 1  | .094 | 0.73          |

Table 5-23 shows that both groups of parents have the same three top priority expectations. The table also shows that a higher percentage (50.3%) of parents without children with SEN have expectations that their children will do well academically and be good citizens (40.8%) compared to parents with children with SEN who recorded 35.5% and 29.1% of responses respectively. A higher percentage of parents with children with SEN alternatively wanted their children to learn a trade for future employment (35.5%), be accepted in class (26.2%) and make friends (22.7%) than parents without children with SEN who recorded 25.9%, 20.7% and 15.8% of responses respectively.

The chi-square test of association shows that the items “do well academically”, “be good citizens” and “learning a trade/skills for future employment” shows significant association with having a child with SEN or not. They recorded the following values; ( $\chi^2 = 10.203$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , Cramer’s V = 0.140), ( $\chi^2 = 6.806$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.009$ , Cramer’s V = 0.114) and ( $\chi^2 = 5.151$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.023$ , Cramer’s V = 0.100) respectively. Based on these identified associations it may be

concluded that there is an association between the parents with and without children with SEN and parental expectations for their children in inclusive schools.

**Table 5-24: Comparing categories of parents and school fulfilment of expectations**

| <b>Gender</b>     | <b>School fulfilment of expectations</b> |             |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                   | <b>Yes %</b>                             | <b>No %</b> |
| Child with SEN    | 76.2                                     | 23.8        |
| No child with SEN | 79.3                                     | 20.7        |

Table 5-24 shows that a greater proportion of parents without children with SEN (79.3%) than parents with children with SEN (76.2%) reported that the inclusive schools were helping to fulfil their expectations for their children. The majority of the parents in both groups have their expectations for their children being fulfilled. The conclusion for this section is that there are variations in PE based on educational level and having a child with SEN or not.

## **5.5 Section D: Parental involvement in inclusive education**

This section presents the analysis of the parents' and headteachers' responses on PI in IE. The components to be discussed are presented in the excerpt from Figure 4-2 (see Figure 5-21 below).

### **Parental involvement (PI) in IE**

1. What the parents are currently doing
2. The additional ways parents want to be involved
3. How the inclusive schools expect parents to be involved
4. How the schools promote PI
5. Facilitators and inhibitors

**Figure 5-21: Excerpt six from Figure 4-2**

For this analysis, mean and SD distribution scores of the parents' current involvement and how the school currently tries to involve them have been presented. Also, one-way ANOVAs and independent sample t-tests were used to identify variations in the parents' current involvement based on their age-range, educational level, gender and having a child with SEN or not, 95% confidence intervals were further used to confirm the results. Additionally, factors that facilitated or hindered PI in IE have been presented. Also, the ways the parents want the school to involve them and the ways the headteachers think parents want to be involved in IE have been presented.

### 5.5.1 Parents' current involvement

Parents were required to respond to statements about their current involvement in IE. The mean and SD of their responses have been presented in descending order in Table 5-25.

**Table 5-25: Parents' current involvement (N =520)**

| Statements                                                                                 | M    | SD   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| 1. I take care of my child's personal care                                                 | 3.37 | 0.66 |
| 2. I attend PTA meetings                                                                   | 3.26 | 0.89 |
| 3. I provide all information the school will need about my child                           | 3.26 | 0.86 |
| 4. I contribute to decision-making in my child's school                                    | 2.91 | 0.98 |
| 5. I create a conducive home environment for learning                                      | 2.84 | 0.93 |
| 6. I help my child with his/her homework                                                   | 2.82 | 1.02 |
| 7. I contact the school for information about my child's progress                          | 2.59 | 1.02 |
| 8. I set learning goals with my child                                                      | 2.46 | 1.06 |
| 9. I go to the school to look through my child's books and discuss issues with the teacher | 1.98 | 0.99 |
| 10. I volunteer my services to the school                                                  | 1.73 | 0.96 |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = Never and 4= Always

Results in Table 5-25 show that the parents report that they are engaged in a number of activities as far as their current involvement in their children's education was concerned. The majority of the parents report that they took care of their children's personal care; this had a high mean score of 3.37. Also, attending PTA meetings and providing all the information the school will need about their children had the same mean score of 3.26 and SD of 0.89 and 0.86 respectively. Finally, the mean score of 2.59 and SD of 1.02 indicate that parents contacted the school for information about their children's progress.

Table 5-25 further shows that some of the activities recorded lower parental current involvement. Amongst them were parents' volunteering their services to the school ( $M = 1.73$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and going to the school to look through their children's books and discussing issues with the teacher ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ).

### 5.5.2 Headteachers' views of parents' current involvement

The headteachers were also required to respond to a set of items on parental current involvement in IE. The means and SDs of their responses have been presented in descending order in Table 5-26.

**Table 5-26: Headteachers' response on parents' current involvement IE  
(N=34)**

| Statements                                                                                            | M    | SD   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| 1. Parents take care of their children's personal care                                                | 2.62 | 0.78 |
| 2. Parents provide all information the school will need about their child                             | 2.59 | 0.70 |
| 3. Parents attend PTA meetings                                                                        | 2.50 | 0.79 |
| 4. Parents contribute to decision-making in the school                                                | 2.34 | 0.78 |
| 5. Parents create a conducive home environment for learning                                           | 2.21 | 0.59 |
| 6. Parents help their children with their home work                                                   | 1.88 | 0.48 |
| 7. Parents contact the school for information about their child's progress                            | 1.88 | 0.48 |
| 8. Parents come to the school to look through their child's books and discuss issues with the teacher | 1.50 | .056 |
| 9. Parents set learning goals with their child                                                        | 1.50 | 0.71 |
| 10. Parents volunteer their services to the school                                                    | 1.50 | 0.62 |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = Never and 4 = Always.

The results in Table 5-26 show that headteachers were of the view that there are very few activities that the parents currently did to be involved in the IE of their children. These were "parents take care of their children's personal care" ( $M = 2.62$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ), "parents provide all the information the school will need about their child" ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) and "parents attend PTA meetings" ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ).

The means of the headteachers' in Table 5-26 shows that to them, the majority of the parents were not doing some of the other activities. Three of such activities have the same lowest mean. They are, "parents come to the school and look through their child's books and discuss the issues with the teacher", "parents set learning goals with their child" and "parents volunteer their services to the school". They had means of 1.50 and SD of 0.56, 0.71 and 0.62 respectively. These activities therefore recorded the lowest PI.

Comparing the means of the parental responses of their current involvement in their children's education in Table 5-25 to that of the headteachers in Table 5-26, one

finds some discrepancies. The discrepancy can be seen with parents helping their children to do their homework and contacting the school for information about their children's progress. The means for the parents on these items are 2.82 and 2.59 while the SD is 1.02 each. The headteachers had means of 1.88 and SD of 0.48 for both items which shows that to them, the majority of the parents do not engage in these activities. Additionally, the majority of the parents do not set learning goals with their children and engage in volunteer work in the school.

In six out of ten activities, the headteachers means show that the majority of the parents do not do them. Since the headteachers reported their perception of what the parents did, their perceptions may not be right. As a result of their perception, when they were asked to rate PI in IE in their school on a 5 point scale with 1=poor and 5=very high, the mean of their response was 2.88 and the SD was .81. This shows that to the headteachers, PI in IE was just above average.

### **5.5.3 Demographic variations in parents' current involvement**

To investigate whether the parents' current involvement varied in terms of their age-range, educational level, gender and between parents with and without children with SEN, one-way ANOVAs and independent sample t-tests were used. Where statistically significant differences were identified for the ANOVA, Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc test was conducted to identify where the differences were coming from. To further confirm the results error bars with 95% confidence intervals were generated. The mean overall and SD for the parents' current involvement was  $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ .

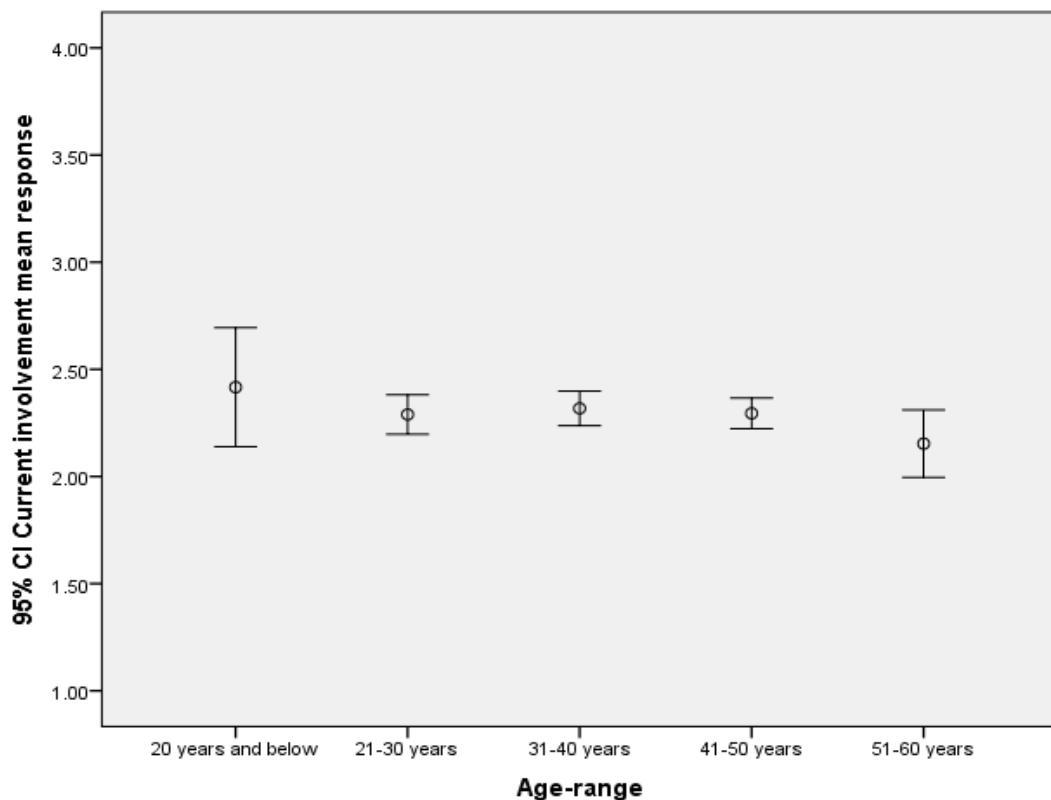
#### **5.5.3.1 Age-range**

**Table 5-27: Descriptive statistics of age-range variation in parents' current involvement**

| Variable                   | Age-range | N   | Mean | SD  |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----|------|-----|
| <b>Current involvement</b> | $\leq 20$ | 12  | 2.90 | .52 |
|                            | 21-30     | 125 | 2.75 | .63 |
|                            | 31-40     | 155 | 2.78 | .61 |
|                            | 41-50     | 191 | 2.75 | .61 |
|                            | 51-60     | 37  | 2.58 | .57 |

Table 5-27 shows that age-ranges 21– 30, 31– 40 and 41– 50 had means and SDs that were close. These were ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ), ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) and ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) respectively. Amongst the groups, parents aged 20 and below had

the highest mean ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ) and those within 51-60 years had the lowest.



**Figure 5-22: Error bar of age-range and current involvement**

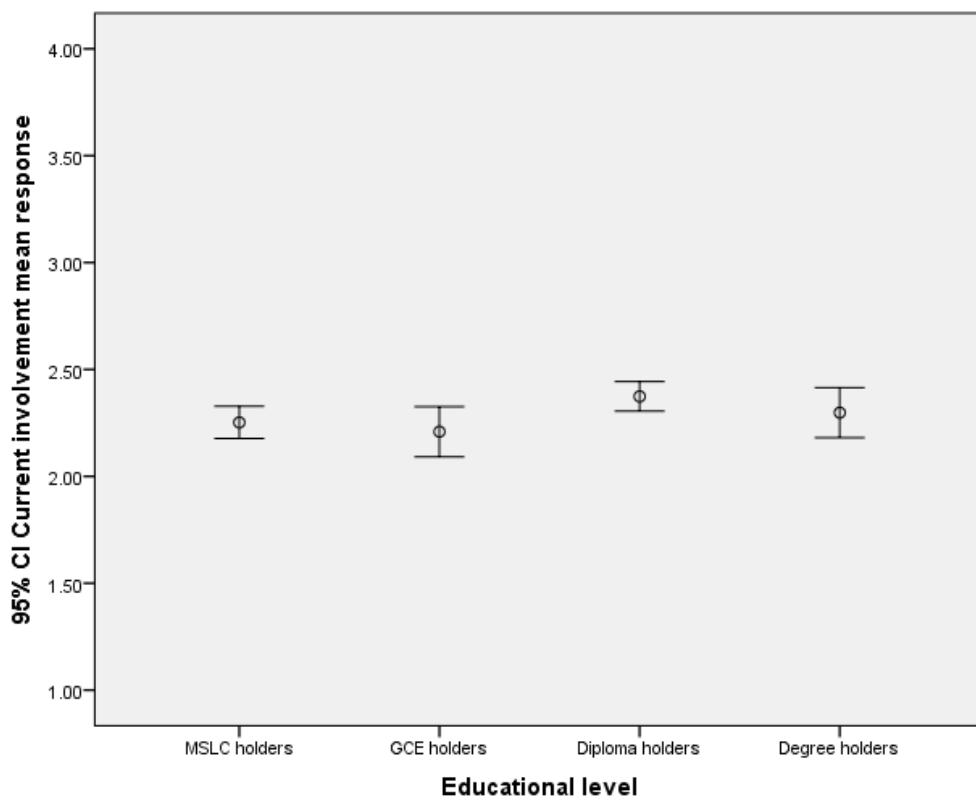
The 95% confidence intervals in Figure 5-22 show that the means of the parents aged 20 and below and those who were 51-60 years were different. The one-way between groups ANOVA that was conducted to compare whether parents' current involvement varied with their age-range showed that there were no statistically significant difference of age-range on the parents' current involvement  $F(4, 515) = .979$ ,  $p = .419$ .

#### 5.5.3.2 Educational level

**Table 5-28: Descriptive statistics of educational level variation in parents' current involvement**

| Variable            | Educational level | N   | Mean | SD   |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----|------|------|
| Current involvement | MSLC              | 185 | 2.70 | 0.63 |
|                     | GCE               | 85  | 2.65 | 0.65 |
|                     | Diploma           | 177 | 2.85 | 0.56 |
|                     | Degree            | 73  | 2.76 | 0.60 |

Table 5-28 shows that differences in the means exist. The means of the MSLC holders ( $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) and degree holders ( $M = 2.76$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ) were close. Diploma holders had the highest mean ( $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ).



**Figure 5-23: Error bar of educational level and parents' current involvement**

The 95% confidence intervals in Figure 5-23 confirm that differences exist between the means of the various groups and especially between diploma holders and GCE holders. The one-way between groups ANOVA that was conducted to compare whether parents' current involvement varied with their educational level show that there was a statistically significant difference between educational level and parents' current involvement  $F (3,516) = 2.715$ ,  $p = .044$  and the adjusted  $R^2 = .010$ . This indicates that 1% of the variation in the parents' current involvement is accounted for using the predictor variable educational level.

Due to the statistically significant difference identified by the ANOVA represented by  $p=.044$ , Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc test was conducted. The post-hoc test results (see Appendix K) show that there was no statistically significant differences even though the overall ANOVA result show ( $p=.044$ ) a statistically significant difference. This shows that, even though differences in means exist, these differences were not statistically significant. The conclusion is that, educational level is showing an effect on parents' current involvement in IE, but the post-hoc test was unable to identify where this difference was coming from.

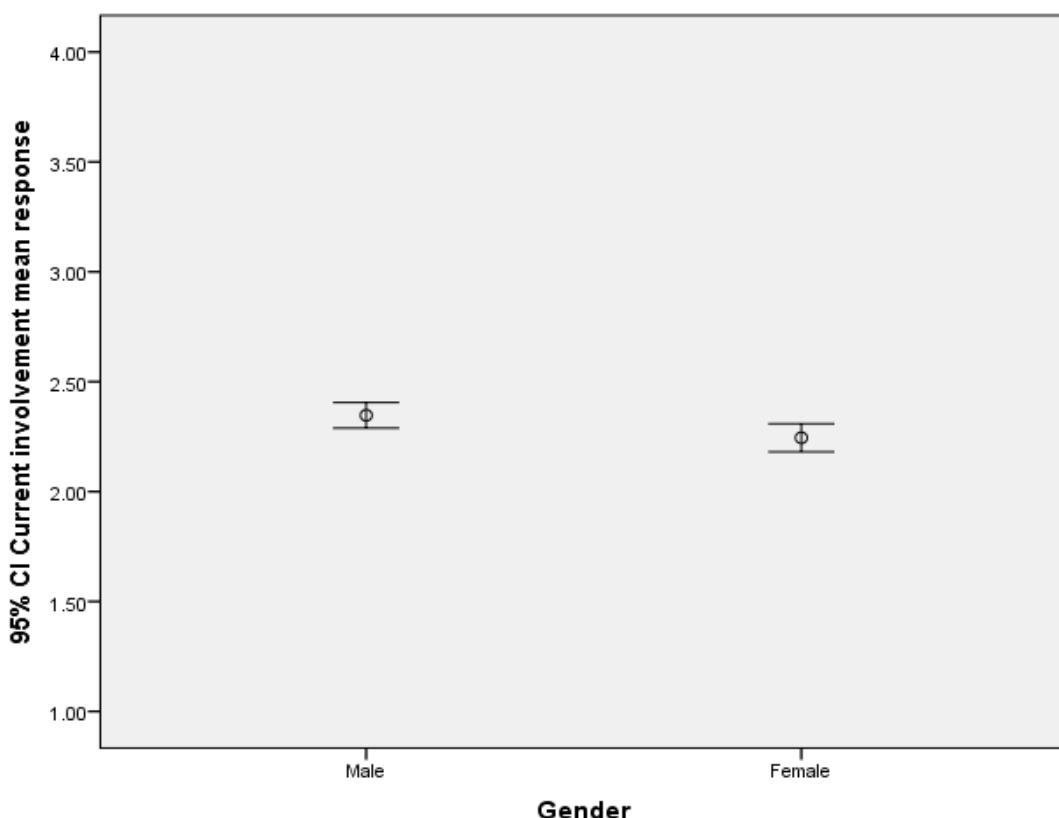
### 5.5.3.3 Gender

**Table 5-29: Descriptive statistics of gender variation in parents' current involvement**

| Variable            | Gender | N   | Mean | SD   |
|---------------------|--------|-----|------|------|
| Current involvement | Male   | 245 | 2.82 | 0.55 |
|                     | Female | 275 | 2.69 | 0.65 |

The independent sample t-test conducted to explore variations in parental current involvement based on gender shows that there was a statistically significant difference  $t(518) = 2.304$ ,  $p = .022$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .008$  indicates that 0.8 % of the variation in the parents' current involvement is accounted for using the predictor variable gender.

Table 5-29 confirm the statistically significant result obtained from the t-test. The table shows that males ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) have a higher mean than females ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ). The 95% confidence intervals in Figure 5-24 confirm that males are scoring higher on the average. The conclusion is that gender does have an effect on parents' current involvement in IE. Males report being more currently involved than females.



**Figure 5-24: Error bar of gender and parents' current involvement**

#### 5.5.3.4 Having a child with or without SEN

In this section, comparisons have been done between the current involvement of parents with and without children with SEN using the means and SDs. The results are presented in Table 5-30. An Independent sample t-test and 95% confidence intervals have been used to further ascertain which of the two groups were more currently involved in their children's IE.

Table 5-30 shows that the means of the two groups of parents are close across the responses. Parents without children with SEN in all instances recorded higher means than the parents with children with SEN. This shows that the parents without children with SEN report being more involved in IE than the parents with children with SEN. It must be noted however that, the differences between the two groups are small.

**Table 5-30: Comparing categories of parents and their involvement**

| <b>Parent's current involvement</b>                                                        | <b>Child with SEN?</b> |           |          |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                                                                                            | <b>Yes</b>             | <b>No</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 1. I take care of my child's personal care                                                 | 3.64                   | 0.68      | 3.68     | 0.65      |
| 2. I attend PTA meetings                                                                   | 3.13                   | 0.94      | 3.33     | 0.86      |
| 3. I provide all information the school will need about my child                           | 3.19                   | 0.85      | 3.29     | 0.87      |
| 4. I contribute to decision-making in my child's School                                    | 2.70                   | 1.07      | 3.02     | 0.92      |
| 5. I create a conducive home environment for Learning                                      | 2.70                   | 0.94      | 2.91     | 0.91      |
| 6. I help my child with his/her home work                                                  | 2.60                   | 1.07      | 2.92     | 0.98      |
| 7. I contact the school for information about my child's progress                          | 2.54                   | 1.06      | 2.61     | 0.99      |
| 8. I set learning goals with my child                                                      | 2.27                   | 1.06      | 2.55     | 1.05      |
| 9. I go to the school to look through my child's books and discuss issues with the teacher | 1.86                   | 0.94      | 2.04     | 1.01      |
| 10. I volunteer my services to the school                                                  | 1.58                   | 0.96      | 1.81     | 0.95      |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = Never and 4 = Always

When the means and SDs of both groups were computed in Table 5-25 "I set learning goals with my child" recorded a low mean ( $M = 2.46$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) showing that many of the parents did not do this. However, the results in Table 5-30 ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) show that more parents without children with SEN were setting

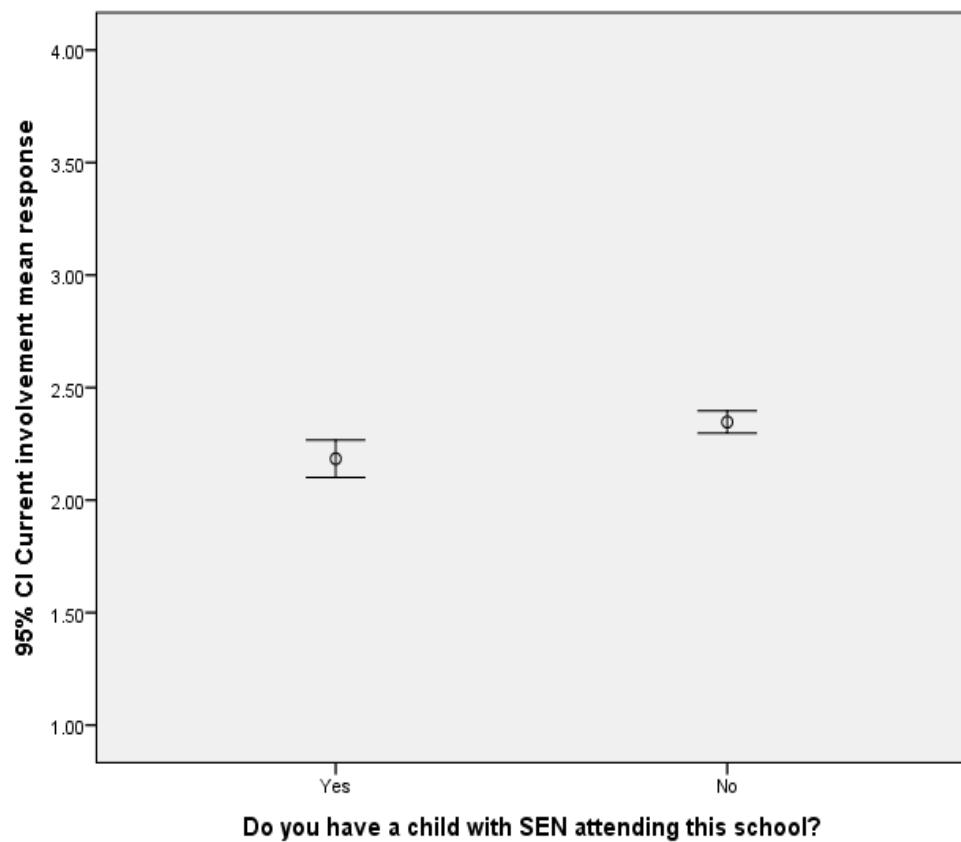
learning goals with their children as against fewer parents ( $M = 2.27$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) with children with SEN.

The independent t-test conducted to explore variations in parental current involvement based on parents with or without children with SEN showed a statistically significant difference  $t (518) = 3.499$ ,  $p = .001$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .02$ . The adjusted  $R^2$  indicates that 2.1% of the variation in the parents' current involvement is accounted for using the predictor variable parents with or without children with SEN.

**Table 5-31: Descriptive statistics of parents' current involvement variation based on parents with or without children with SEN**

| Variable            | Child with SEN? | N   | Mean | SD   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----|------|------|
| Current involvement | Yes             | 172 | 26.2 | 0.66 |
|                     | No              | 348 | 2.82 | 0.57 |

Table 5-31 confirms the statistically significant result obtained from the t-test. The table shows that parents without children with SEN ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ) recorded a higher mean than parents with children with SEN ( $M = 2.62$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). The 95% confidence intervals in Figure 5-25 confirm that parents without children with SEN are scoring higher on average. The conclusion is that having a child with or without SEN does have an effect on parental current involvement in IE. Parents without children with SEN report being more currently involved in their children's IE than parents with children with SEN.



**Figure 5-25: Error bar of parents with and without children with SEN and parents' current involvement**

#### 5.5.4 How the school involves parents in inclusive education

##### 5.5.4.1 Parental responses on how the schools involve them in inclusive education

The parents were required to respond to a set of statements on how the school involved them in IE. The means and SDs of their response have been presented in descending order in Table 5-32.

**Table 5-32: Parents' responses on how schools involve them in IE (N=520)**

| <b>Activities</b>                                                                                                              | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. My child's school encourages all parents to be part of the PTA                                                              | 3.52     | 0.79      |
| 2. My child's school keeps me informed of PTA activities                                                                       | 3.40     | 0.98      |
| 3. My child's school contacts me when they want any information about my child                                                 | 3.07     | 0.98      |
| 4. My child's school has laid down rules as to what parents can or cannot do as far as their children's education is concerned | 2.89     | 0.98      |
| 5. My child's school offers me the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process in the school                         | 2.87     | 0.97      |
| 6. The school educates me on how to take care of my child                                                                      | 2.84     | .096      |
| 7. The school communicates with me about every aspect of my child's education                                                  | 2.67     | 0.97      |
| 8. The school authorities encourage me to come to the school to talk about my child's education                                | 2.66     | 1.02      |
| 9. My child's school encourages me or invites me to act as a volunteer                                                         | 2.02     | 1.01      |
| 10. Staff members from my child's school visit our home to discuss educational issues.                                         | 1.74     | 0.88      |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = Never and 4= Always.

The means in Table 5-32 show that the majority of the parents reported that the schools involved them in a number of activities. Prominent amongst them are, encouraging parents to be part of the PTA ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ), keeping parents informed about PTA activities ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) and contacting parents when they want information about their children ( $M = 3.07$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ). Additionally, the results for the statements "my child's school has laid down rules as to what parents can or cannot do as far as their children's education is concerned" ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) and "my child's school offers me the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process in the school" ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ), shows that many parents are of the opinion that the school does the mentioned activities to enhance their involvement in IE.

However, in two areas the effort of the schools to involve the parents appears to be less. These activities are, staff members visiting parents' homes to discuss educational issues ( $M = 1.74$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) and the school inviting parents to act as volunteers either in fundraising, teaching or being resource persons ( $M = 2.02$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ).

#### **5.5.4.2 Headteachers' responses on how the school involves parents in inclusive education**

The headteachers also responded to a set of items on how the schools involved parents in IE. The means and SDs of their responses have been presented in descending order in Table 5-33.

**Table 5-33: Headteachers' responses on how schools involve parents in IE (N=34)**

| <b>Statements</b>                                                                                                       | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. The school encourages all parents to be part of the PTA                                                              | 3.85     | 0.36      |
| 2. The school keeps parents informed of PTA activities                                                                  | 3.82     | 0.39      |
| 3. The school offers parents the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process in the school                    | 3.59     | 0.66      |
| 4. The school authorities encourage parents to come to the school to talk about their child's education                 | 3.50     | 0.71      |
| 5. The school contact parents when they want any information about their child                                          | 3.47     | 0.79      |
| 6. The school educates parents on how to take care of their child                                                       | 3.38     | 0.74      |
| 7. The school has laid down rules as to what parents can or cannot do as far as their children's education is concerned | 3.35     | 0.88      |
| 8. The school communicates with parents about every aspect of their child's education                                   | 3.06     | 0.81      |
| 9. The school encourages parents or invites them to act as a volunteer                                                  | 2.06     | 0.65      |
| 10. Staff members from the school visit parents at home to discuss educational issues                                   | 1.94     | 0.81      |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = Never and 4= Always.

The results in Table 5-33 show that the head teachers reported high school involvement of parents in IE. Analysis of the result shows that almost all the activities were reportedly being done by the school to enhance PI. The results are similar to that of the parents' responses in that the parents also recorded high school involvement in most of the activities with the exception of the school encouraging or inviting parents to act as volunteers and home visits by school staff to discuss educational issues just like the headteachers.

Overall, the headteachers recorded higher means and lesser SDs than the parents. Meaning that more headteachers perceived the school to be involving parents in their children's IE.

#### 5.5.4.3 Additional ways parents want to be involved in inclusive education

Parents were required to indicate other ways they would like to be involved in their children's IE. The headteachers were also asked to indicate other ways they think parents want to be involved. Responses of both groups were collated and presented in Table 5-34.

**Table 5-34: Other ways parents want to be involved in IE**

| <b>Activities</b>                                                | <b>Parents</b> |          | <b>Headteachers</b> |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
|                                                                  | <b>Freq</b>    | <b>%</b> | <b>Freq</b>         | <b>%</b> |
| 1. Assisting children with road crossing before and after school | 369            | 71.0     | 26                  | 76.5     |
| 2. Helping in the school library                                 | 280            | 53.8     | 17                  | 50.0     |
| 3. Listening to pupils read in class                             | 276            | 51.3     | 15                  | 44.1     |
| 4. Acting as guest speaker on speech Days                        | 240            | 46.2     | 25                  | 73.5     |
| 5. Helping in preparing teaching and learning materials          | 233            | 44.8     | 11                  | 32.4     |
| 6. Helping on class trips.                                       | 228            | 43.8     | 15                  | 44.1     |
| 7. Helping in the school canteen                                 | 202            | 38.8     | 19                  | 55.9     |
| 8. Helping with sports coaching                                  | 163            | 31.3     | 23                  | 67.6     |

Table 5-34 shows that “assisting children with road crossing before and after school” recorded the highest number of responses for both parents 369 (71%) and headteachers 26 (76.5%). The second and third items with more parental responses were “helping in the school library” 280 (53.8%) and “listening to pupils read in class” 276 (51.3%). These had 17 (50%) and 15 (44.1%) headteachers selecting them. “Helping on class trips” is an activity that had close to the same percentage of parents, 228 (43.8%), and headteachers 15 (44.1%) selecting it.

“Helping with sports coaching” was the activity which least percentage of parents 163 (31.3%) want to be involved in. On the contrary, a higher percentage of the headteachers 23 (67.7%) are of the view that parents would want to be involved.

It is evident from the results in Table 5-34 that apart from assisting with road crossing and helping on class trips which had closer percentages of parents and headteachers choosing it, on all other activities, the parents and headteachers had different opinions. However, the three top ways that parents want to be involved in IE based on the parents’ responses in Table 5-34 are, “assisting children with road

crossing before and after school”, “helping in the school library” and “listening to pupils read in class”.

Parents were requested to supply other ways they wanted to be involved in their children’s education that were not stated in the options, 264 parents responded. Out of this number, 132 (50.0%) wanted to be part of the decision-making process, 35 (13.3%) “wanted to be able to raise funds and volunteer as a resource person”, another 35 (13.3%) said they needed further education on how to help their child, 25 (9.5%) wanted to be involved in the discipline of their child, 20 (7.5%) were of the view that it is the government’s responsibility not theirs and finally 17 (6.4%) wanted to be able to “decide what goes into the curriculum of their children”.

In addition to the three top ways identified in the parents’ section of Table 5-34, it may be concluded that some parents also want to be part of decision-making, volunteering, and be involved in disciplinary decisions. However, some parents were of the view that they need more education on how to help their child. Other parents took the stand that it is the responsibility of the government rather than being theirs.

### **5.5.5 Factors that facilitate parental involvement in inclusive education**

Parents and headteachers were asked to indicate their views as to whether some specific factors facilitated PI in IE or not. The means and SDs of their responses has been collated and presented in Tables. 5-35 and 5-36.

#### **5.5.5.1 Parents’ responses on factors that facilitated parental involvement**

The means and SDs of the parents’ responses to factors that facilitated PI in IE has been presented in descending order in Table 5-35.

**Table 5-35: Parents' responses on factors that facilitated PI in IE**

| <b>Factors</b>                                                                                  | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. School authorities and teachers respecting parental decisions and views                      | 3.25     | 0.71      |
| 2. A school environment that makes parents feel welcomed                                        | 3.24     | 0.73      |
| 3. Schools educating parents on the need of involvement and how to be involved                  | 3.21     | 0.71      |
| 4. Effective communication between the school and the home                                      | 3.17     | 0.75      |
| 5. School authorities treating parents as equals                                                | 3.04     | 0.81      |
| 6. Government introducing a policy on PI                                                        | 3.04     | 0.87      |
| 7. Intensive teacher training on how to involve parents in their children's inclusive education | 3.01     | 0.81      |
| 8. Schools providing support for parents and addressing their concerns                          | 2.93     | 0.76      |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 4= strongly agree

The means in Table 5-35 shows that the majority of the parents are of the view that all the factors mentioned facilitated PI in IE. The item that had the highest mean was “school authorities and teachers respecting parental decisions and views” ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). This was followed by “a school environment that makes parents feel welcomed” ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

“Schools educating parents on the need of involvement and how to be involved” was the next facilitator of PI ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). The facilitator of PI which had the lowest mean was “schools providing support for parents and addressing their concerns” ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ).

#### **5.5.5.2 Headteachers' responses on factors that facilitated parental involvement**

The means and SDs of the headteachers' responses to factors that facilitated PI in IE have been presented in descending order in Table 5-36.

**Table 5-36: Headteachers' responses on factors that facilitated PI in IE**

| <b>Factors</b>                                                                                  | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Government introducing a policy on PI                                                        | 3.44     | 0.82      |
| 2. Schools educating parents on the need of involvement and how to be involved                  | 3.44     | 0.50      |
| 3. School authorities and teachers respecting parental decisions and views                      | 3.38     | 0.65      |
| 4. School authorities treating parents as equals                                                | 3.35     | 0.77      |
| 5. Effective communication between the school and the home                                      | 3.32     | 0.64      |
| 6. A school environment that makes parents feel welcomed                                        | 3.29     | 0.80      |
| 7. Schools providing support for parents and addressing their Concerns                          | 3.09     | 0.57      |
| 8. Intensive teacher training on how to involve parents in their children's inclusive education | 3.06     | 0.95      |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 4= strongly agree

The means of the headteachers' responses in Table 5-36 show that they viewed all the factors stated as facilitators to PI. The headteachers perceived facilitators to PI in IE that had the highest means were "government introducing a policy on PI" ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) and "schools educating parents on the need of involvement and how to be involved" ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ). The next facilitator to PI was "school authorities and teachers respecting parental decisions and views" ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ). The perceived facilitator to PI that had the lowest mean was "intensive teacher training on how to involve parents in inclusive education" ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ).

From Tables 5-35 and 5-36 it can be seen that the priority placed by the parents and the headteachers on the individual factors vary. For example, while the parents had "government introducing a policy on PI" as the sixth facilitator when they were arranged according to descending means, it was the first factor for the headteachers. It can be concluded that both parents and headteachers considered a number of things as facilitators to PI. Amongst them are, "a school environment that makes parents feel welcomed", "schools educating parents on the need for involvement and how to be involved", "good communication between the school and the home" and the "government introducing a policy on PI".

### **5.5.6 Factors that inhibit parental involvement in inclusive education**

Parents and headteachers were asked to respond to a set of items on factors that inhibited PI in IE. Means and SDs of their collated responses are presented in Table 5-37 and 5-38.

#### **5.5.6.1 Parental responses on factors that inhibit parental involvement in inclusive education**

Table 5-37 shows the means and SDs of the parents' responses to factors that inhibit PI in IE in descending order.

**Table 5-37: Parents' responses on factors that inhibit PI in IE**

| <b>Factors</b>                                                                                              | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Parental lack of financial resources                                                                     | 2.80     | 0.99      |
| 2. Parental lack of knowledge on how to help their child                                                    | 2.61     | 0.93      |
| 3. Lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved                                                         | 2.58     | 0.90      |
| 4. Parents' inability to communicate effectively in English                                                 | 2.54     | 1.01      |
| 5. Parents and school authorities having opposing view about what should be involved in the IE of the child | 2.49     | 0.95      |
| 6. Parents not having time for their children                                                               | 2.44     | 1.08      |
| 7. Teachers not having adequate training on parental involvement                                            | 2.34     | 0.93      |
| 8. Lack of communication between the school and the home                                                    | 2.27     | 1.00      |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 4= strongly agree

From Table 5-37 it is evident that the majority of the parents consider four factors as inhibitors to PI in IE. These are, "parental lack of financial resources" ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ), "parental lack of knowledge on how to help their child" ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), "lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved" ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) and "parents' inability to communicate effectively in English" ( $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ).

Table 5-37 further shows that "teachers not having adequate training on parental involvement" ( $M = 2.34$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) and "lack of communication between the school and the home" ( $M = 2.27$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) were amongst the factors that a substantial number of parents did not consider as inhibitors to PI in IE.

### **5.5.6.2 Headteachers' responses on factors that inhibit parental involvement in inclusive education**

Table 5-38 shows the means and SDs of the headteachers' responses to factors that inhibit PI in IE in descending order.

**Table 5-38: Headteachers' responses on factors that inhibit PI in IE**

| FACTORS                                                                                                     | M    | SD   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| 1. Parents not having time for their children                                                               | 2.94 | 1.25 |
| 2. Parental lack of financial resources                                                                     | 2.85 | 0.99 |
| 3. Lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved                                                         | 2.68 | 0.98 |
| 4. Parents' inability to communicate effectively in English                                                 | 2.50 | 1.13 |
| 5. Parental lack of knowledge on how to help their child                                                    | 2.32 | 0.91 |
| 6. Teachers not having adequate training on parental involvement                                            | 2.18 | 0.90 |
| 7. Lack of communication between the school and the home                                                    | 2.18 | 1.11 |
| 8. Parents and school authorities having opposing view about what should be involved in the IE of the child | 2.15 | 0.99 |

Rated on a 4 point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 4= strongly agree

From Table 5-38 it is evident that the majority of the headteachers, just like the parents, perceived four factors that are inhibitors to PI. These are "parents not having time for their children" ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ), "parental lack of financial resources" ( $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ), "lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved" ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) and "parents' inability to communicate effectively in English" ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). The headteachers were in agreement with the parents on three of the factors being inhibitors to PI.

However, differences in opinion of the two groups occurred. The parents' responses showed that "parental lack of knowledge on how to help their children" was an inhibitor while the headteachers perceived "parents not having time for their children" as an inhibitor. Since we are dealing with their perception and opinion this naturally may vary.

Despite this, based on the responses of both groups, it can be concluded that overall, all the following factors inhibit PI in IE:

- Parents not having time for their children.
- Lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved.
- Parental inability to communicate effectively in English.
- Parental lack of knowledge on how to help their children.
- Parental lack of financial resources.

However, a substantial number of people in both groups did not consider the following as inhibitors to PI:

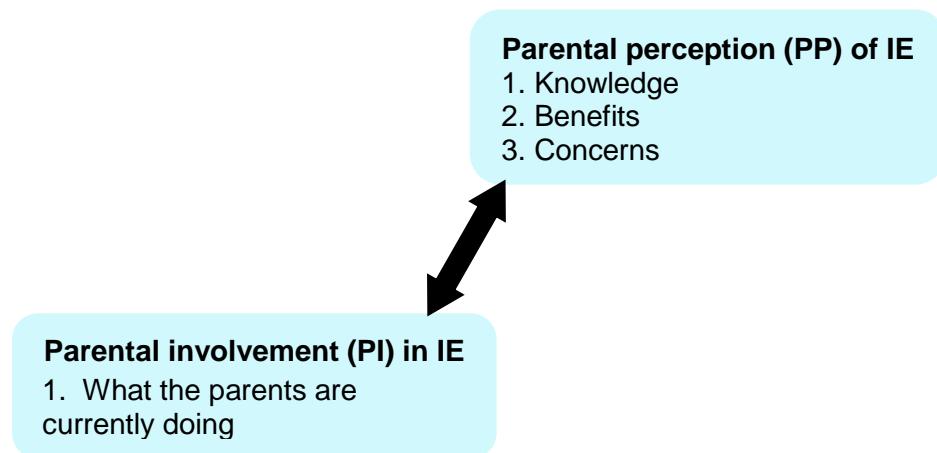
- Teachers not having adequate training on PI.
- Lack of communication between the home and the school,
- Parents and school authorities having opposing view about what should be involved in the education of the child.

On all the factors, parents recorded means of above 2.25 meaning that over half of them consider them as barriers to their involvement.

#### **5.5.7 Relationship between parental perception and parents' current involvement in inclusive education**

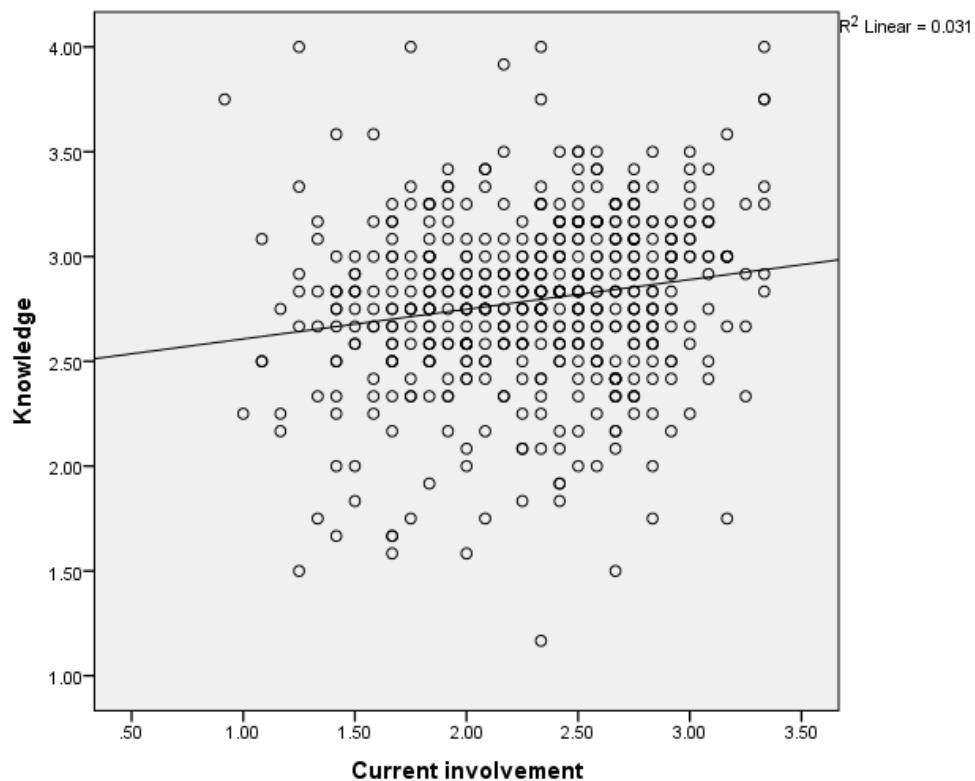
In this section, the relationship between the components of PP shown in the excerpt from Figure 4-2 and the parents' current involvement is explored (see Figure 5-26).

The bold black arrow in Figure 5-26 is to depict the exploration of the relationship between the excerpts from Figure 4-2.



**Figure 5-26: Excerpt seven from Figure 4-2**

### 5.5.7.1 Knowledge and parents' current involvement

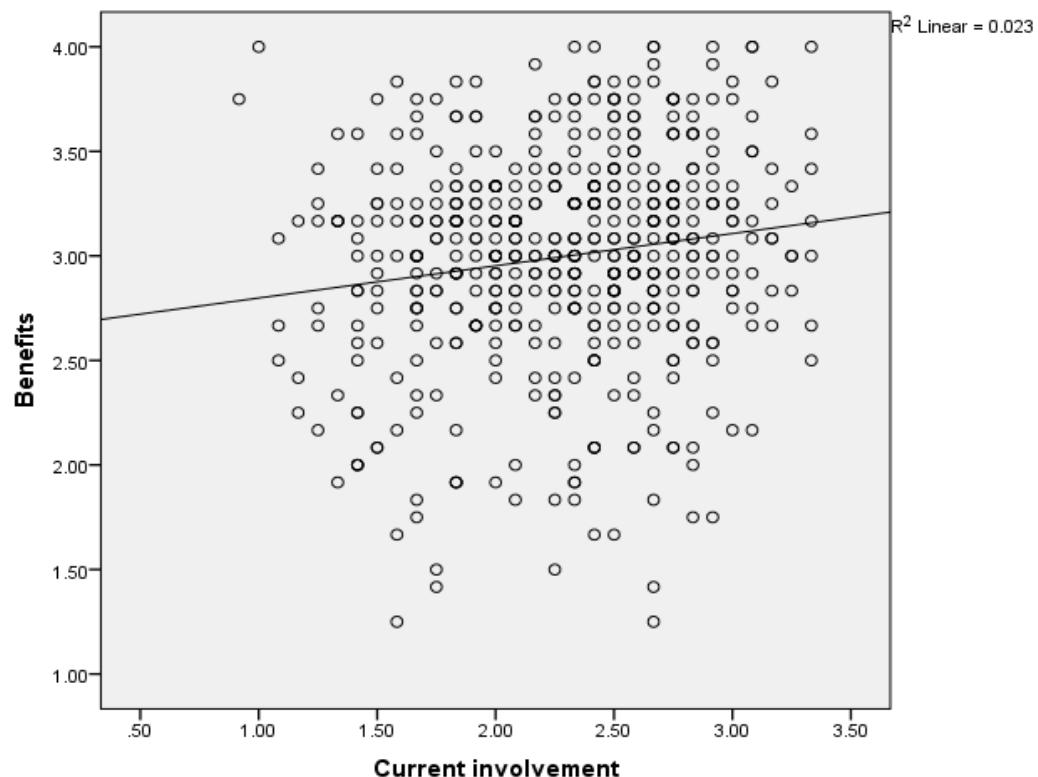


**Figure 5-27: Relationship between knowledge and parents' current involvement**

The regression line in Figure 5-27 is angled upwards suggesting a positive relationship. This indicates some association between parents' knowledge about IE and their current involvement in IE. To quantify the relationship the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used. The result shows there is a positive weak relationship  $r = .175$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < 0.001$  between knowledge and parents' current involvement, implying that the relationship is statistically significant but has a small strength. The effect size ( $r^2 = .031$ ) means that 3.1% of the variation in one variable is shared with the other variable. Although the correlation is statistically significant it only explains a small portion of the variance and therefore in realistic terms may not be logically significant. Despite this, it may be said that high levels of knowledge in IE may tend to be associated with high levels of parents' current involvement in IE.

### 5.5.7.2 Benefits and parents' current involvement

The regression line in Figure 5-28 is angled upwards to the right suggesting a positive relationship. This means that there is some association between parents' perceived benefits of IE and their current involvement in IE.

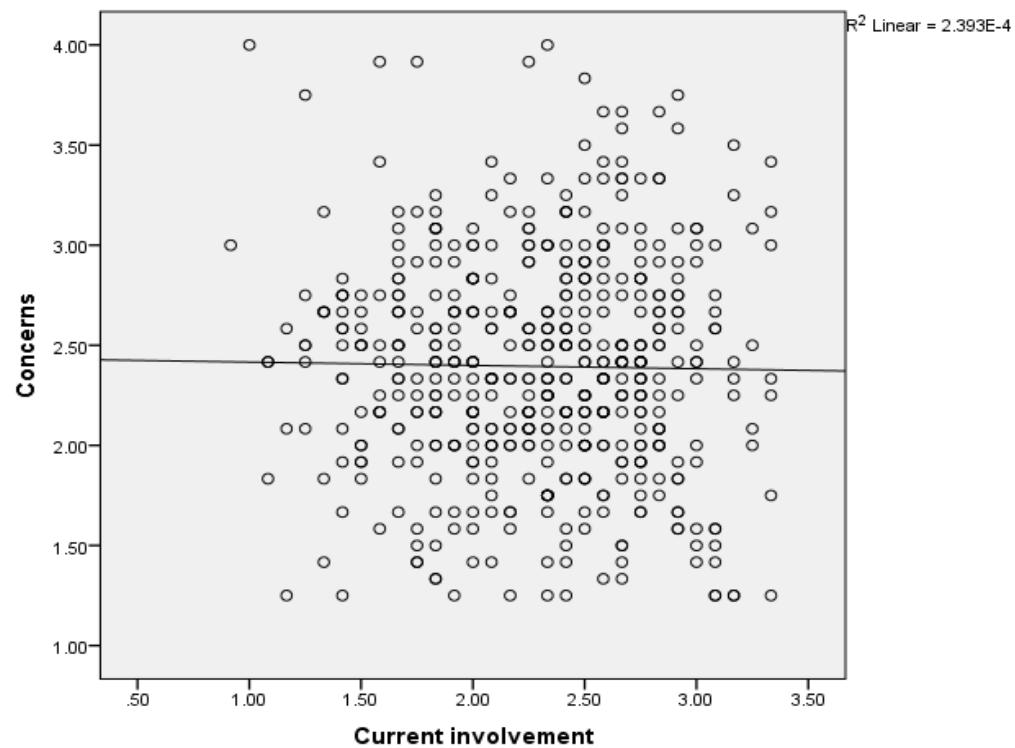


**Figure 5-28: Relationship between benefits and parents' current involvement**

To quantify the relationship the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used. The result shows that there is a positive relationship  $r = .152$ ,  $n=520$ ,  $p < 0.001$  between benefits and parents' current involvement. This implies that the relationship is significant but has small strength. The effect size ( $r^2=.023$ ) means that 2.3% of the variation in one variable is shared with the other variable. Although the correlation is statistically significant it only explains a small portion of the variance and therefore in realistic terms it may not be logically significant. Despite this, it may be said that high levels of perceived benefits of IE may tend to be associated with high levels of parents' current involvement in IE.

#### 5.5.7.3 Concerns and parents' current involvement

The regression line in Figure 5-29 is showing zero slope, indicating that there is no relationship. Meaning that, there is no association between parents' concerns about IE and their current involvement in IE.



**Figure 5-29: Relationship between concerns about IE and parents' current involvement**

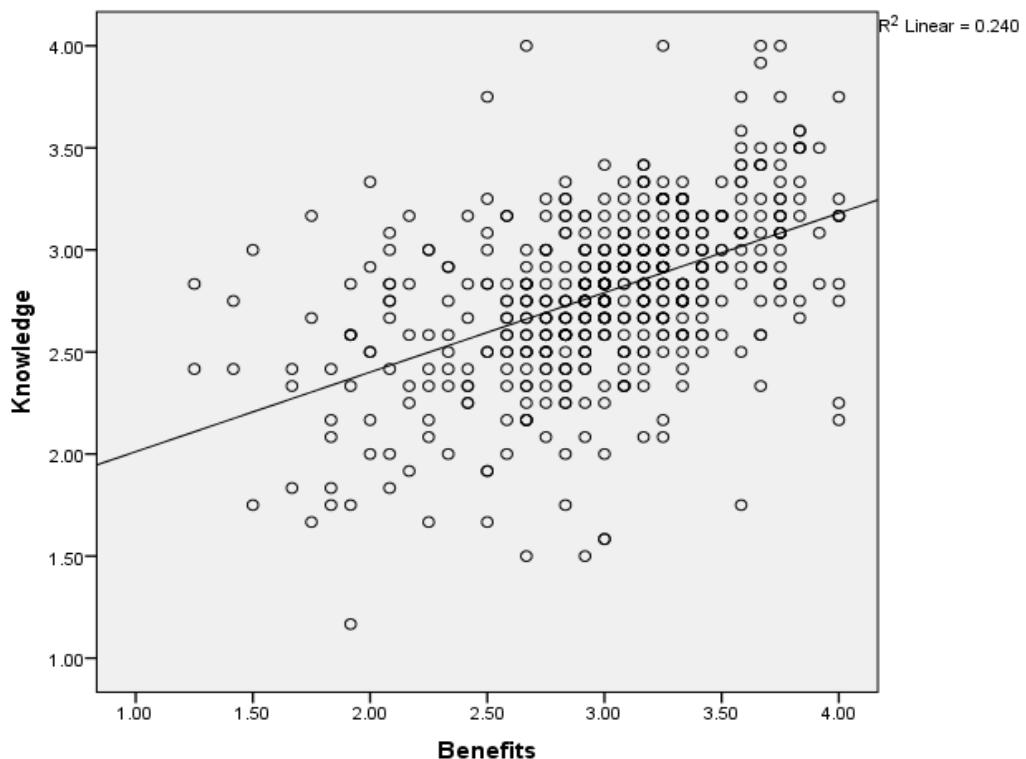
The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient shows that there is no relationship  $r = -.015$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < .725$  between concerns and parents' current involvement. This implies that the parents' concerns and their current involvement are not linked.

### 5.5.8 Relationship between the components of parental perception

This section explores the relationship between the components of PP shown in Figure 5-21 in section 5.5. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to run the tests.

#### 5.5.8.1 Knowledge and benefits

The regression line in Figure 5-30 is evidently angled upwards and it shows that there is a positive relationship between parents' knowledge about IE and their perceived benefits of IE.



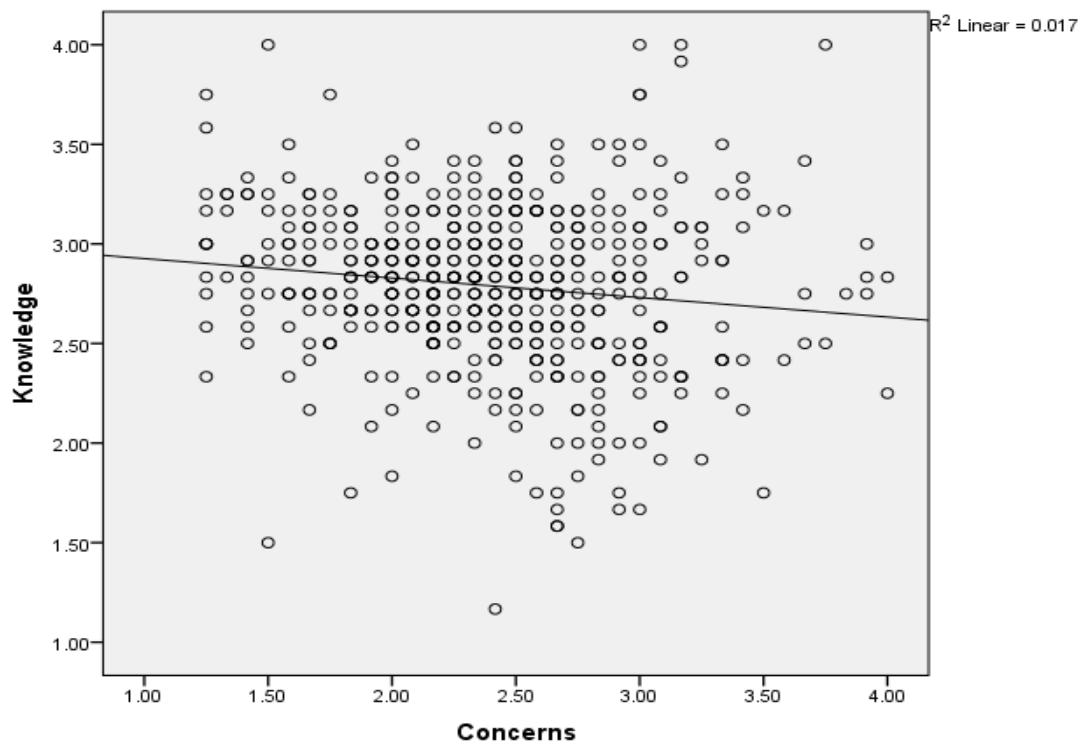
**Figure 5-30: Relationship between parents' knowledge and perceived benefits of IE**

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient shows that there is a significant strong positive relationship  $r = .490$ ,  $n=520$ ,  $p < 0.000$  between parents' knowledge and their perceived benefits of IE. The effect size ( $r^2=.240$ ) means that 24% of the variation in one variable is shared with the other variable. It may be said that high levels of knowledge in IE may tend to be associated with high levels of perceived benefits of IE.

#### 5.5.8.2 Knowledge and concerns

The regression line in Figure 5-31 is angled upwards to the left. This suggests that there is a negative relationship between parents' knowledge about IE and their concerns about IE.

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient shows that there is a negative weak relationship  $r = -.130$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < 0.003$  between parents' knowledge and their concerns about IE

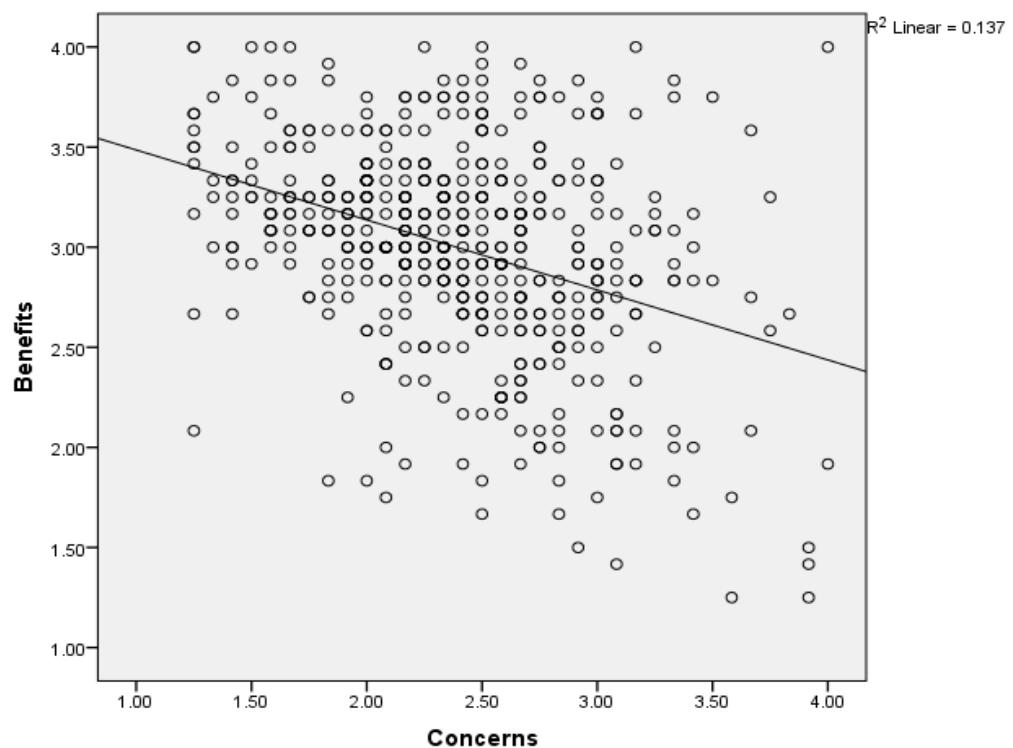


**Figure 5-31: Relationship between parents' knowledge and concerns about IE**

The effect size ( $r^2 = .017$ ) means that 1.7% of the variation in one variable is shared with the other variable. Although the correlation is statistically significant it only explains a small portion of the variance and therefore in realistic terms it may not be logically significant. Despite this, it may be said that as parental knowledge increases their concerns about IE may decrease.

#### 5.5.8.3 Benefits and concerns

The regression line in Figure 5-32 is angled upwards to the left. This suggests that there is a negative relationship between parents' perceived benefits about IE and their concerns about IE.



**Figure 5-32: Relationship between parents' perceived benefits and concerns about IE**

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient shows that there is a negative relationship  $r = -.370$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < 0.003$  between parents' perceived benefits and their concerns about IE. The effect size ( $r^2 = .137$ ) means that 13.7% of the variation in one variable is shared with the other variable. Although the correlation is statistically significant it only explains a small portion of the variance and therefore in realistic terms it may not be logically significant. Despite this, it may be said that as parental perceived benefits of IE increase their concerns about IE may decrease.

## 5.6 Summary

The analysis shows that parents have knowledge about IE and perceive it as beneficial but have some concerns. It be concluded that age, gender and having a child with SEN or not has no effect on the knowledge parents have, the benefits they perceive of IE and the concerns they have about IE. The educational level of parents was found to have a significant effect on parents' perceived benefits of IE. The difference was between diploma holders and GCE holders.

From the analysis it can be concluded that the majority of parents' preference placement for children with SEN was outside the inclusive schools. Males were more favourable to IE than females. While parents with MSLC, GCE or a diploma preferred educational placements outside the inclusive schools for children with SEN, degree holders preferred inclusive placements. Younger parents preferred inclusive placement more than older parents.

The three top PE for their children in inclusive placements were "ability to read and write", "developing social skills" and "doing well academically". The majority 407 (78.3%) of the parents said the inclusive schools were helping to fulfil the expectations they had for their children. Some of the ways the inclusive schools were helping to achieve PE are "making good use of academic learning time", "involving parents in decision-making" and keeping parents informed about their children's progress.

The study found no relationship between the age-range and gender of parents and the expectations they have for their children in inclusive schools. However, there was an association between the parents' educational level and the academic expectations they have for their child. Also, there is an association between the parents with and without children with SEN and parental academic and social expectations for their child.

Additionally, the study found that the majority of parents engaged in a range of activities that showed their involvement in IE. Amongst them were taking care of their children's personal care, attending PTA meetings and providing all the information the school needs about their children.

Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA test conducted found no statistically significant difference of age-range on the parents' current involvement. The study found that gender and having a child with or without SEN does have an effect on parents' current involvement in IE. Males and parents without children with SEN report being more currently involved in IE than females and parents with children with SEN. Finally, educational level showed an effect on parents' current involvement in IE, but the post-hoc test was unable to identify the source of the difference.

The majority of the parents reported that the schools involved them in a number of activities. However, parents wanted to be part of the decision-making process, raise funds or volunteer as a resource person, be involved in the discipline of their children and be given further education on how to help their children among other

things. Twenty parents (7.5%) were of the view that it is the responsibility of the government.

Some facilitators to PI in IE are “school authorities and teachers respecting parental decisions and views”, “a school environment that makes parents feel welcomed” and “schools educating parents on the need of involvement and how to be involved”. Some inhibitors identified were parents not having time for their children, lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved and on how to help their children.

Using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient the study found a positive weak relationship  $r = .175$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < 0.001$  between knowledge and parents' current involvement and  $r = .152$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < 0.001$  between benefits and parents' current involvement. There was however no relationship  $r = -.015$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < .725$  between concerns and parents' current involvement.

Finally, using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient the study established the existence of a significantly strong positive relationship  $r = .490$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < 0.000$  between parents' perceived knowledge and their perceived benefits of IE and a negative relationship  $r = -.370$ ,  $n=520$ ,  $p < 0.003$  between parents' perceived benefits and their concerns about IE. There was also a negative weak relationship  $r = -.130$ ,  $n = 520$ ,  $p < 0.003$  between parents' perceived knowledge and their concerns about IE. Despite the statistically significant results obtained from the correlations I acknowledge that they only explain a small portion of the variances in the tests conducted. In realistic terms therefore they may not be logically significant. The results therefore must be interpreted cautiously. The next chapter presents the analysis of the interview data.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6 DATA ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

#### 6.1 Introduction

Analysis of the questionnaire data were presented in the previous chapter. This chapter presents the analysis of the interview data. The background of the interviewees is presented along with an overview of four of the interviews. The analysis is presented thematically. The PE and PI analysis were based on the responses of 20 and 19 parents respectively as a parent opted out of the interview since he had difficulty expressing himself. The information in this chapter is aimed at answering research questions two and three. Code identities given to parents and some words and phrases are in bold type for emphasis and attention. Also, verbatim responses are in italics and single quotation marks.

#### 6.2 General background information of interviewees

There were 20 interviewees with equal numbers of males and females. The interviews took place in the inclusive schools. Nine of the interviewees were between 31-40 years, six were 41-50, three were 21-30 and two were 51–60. Four interviewees had a MSLC, two had GCE O Level, one had GCE A Level, and two had a certificate A 3 year qualification. There were six diploma holders, four degree holders and one person with a master's degree (see Appendix L). Six interviewees were purposively selected from each of the three regions used for the study. Two additional interviewees were selected from the Central region for the same reason given in section 4.5.2.

##### 6.2.1 Overview of a cross section of the interviews

The analysis is presented across all the interviews. However, to illustrate the diversity within the group, interview summaries from four parents are highlighted in Figures 6-1 to 6-4 below.

**Parental expectations and how schools were helping to fulfil them**

She is a female aged 21-30 with a degree. Academically, her child should be able to read, write and perform well. Socially, she should mingle with others in the school and community. Culturally, she should ‘... know the culture of the society or the family ...’.

The school is teaching her child reading and writing and ‘takes care of what the child will need educationally to learn by focusing on only her and helping her to understand things’. Also, she takes part in ‘some school or learning decisions to improve the child and other children learning’. The school engages children in group work through which children learn to socialise and make friends. Culturally, the school teaches children the dances, art and societal values.

**How she was involved and how the school involved her in IE**

On her current involvement, she reports that she supplies her child with the necessary logistics to ‘learn effectively’ and:

*‘normally come to the school to enquire about my child’s well doing, how she is coping with the lessons, then during open days I come to the school to look into her books, then interact with the teachers then during PTA meetings too we discuss the welfare with the teachers’.*

She is expected to go to the school to talk about her child’s educational progress, attend all school activities including PTA meetings, answer questions, provide information about her child and provide her child’s basic needs.

Describing how the school involves her in her child’s IE, she said they informed and invited her to attend school meetings, invited parents to come to the school regularly to enquire about their child’s progress, the school communicated all information about her child’s education and let her know their expectations as a parent.

She reported that she attended all school meetings (PTA meetings, open days and sporting activities). She was asked if the school engaged her in the development of IEP and setting specific educational goals for her child with SEN. She said this was not being done. She was however, willing to be involved in these, as it will help increase involvement in her child’s IE.

**Additional ways she wants to be involved in her child’s inclusive education**

She wants to be involved in decision-making. The decisions made should be implemented in teaching and learning to enable her child ‘to perform well and fit well in the society’. She said that PTA meetings can be a forum where parents can be educated on PI. For a change, teachers should engage in home visits to discuss educational issues as it will be beneficial to herself and her child and she ‘will feel more supported by the school’.

**Facilitators and inhibitors to her involvement**

Communication facilitated her involvement in her child’s IE and helps her know what was happening and how her child was faring. Having the opportunity to take decisions at PTA meetings showed that the school valued her contribution and used it to implement strategies that promoted the smooth running of the school. To her, these factors made it easy for her child to fit in the society.

Her non-involvement in all decisions was a challenge. She attributed this to reluctance on the school’s part or that they feel it is not part of GES procedure to involve parents in all decisions. Other challenges were, opposing views about education leading to misunderstandings and financial constrains resulting in inability to provide all her child’s needs. To overcome the challenges, she discussed them at PTA meetings and has resulted in an improvement in the way teachers talk to parents.

**Figure 6-1: Summary of Parent 4’s interview**

### **Parental expectations and how schools were helping to fulfil them**

The interviewee was a male aged 21-30 and had a GCE 'O' Level qualification. Academically he wanted his child to complete JSS with certification as this would gladden him. Socially he expected his child '*to make friends and interact with everyone*'. Culturally, '*he should know the culture of his ethic group*', use the culture appropriately and answer questions correctly about it.

Teachers are teaching his child well and he can read, thereby fulfilling his expectations. Socially he said:

*'well, well the school gets the children to play together, football for example as a result they learn to interact and the group work they do in class, sitting in circles and in fours or fives also helps children take turns and accept whoever they are to work with and do same outside school, I think'.*

Culturally, the school was engaging the children in cultural dances, teaching of art and culture.

### **How he was involved and how the school involved him in IE**

According to him he supplies all his child needs to facilitate his education, attends PTA meetings when possible and monitors his child's academic progress.

The school expects him to be part of the PTA, attend meetings and monitor his child's progress. These he does willingly.

Describing how the school involves him in his child's education, he said, they invite him for various meetings, encourage him to engage in school visits to talk to the teacher about the child's progress, send him regular reports on his child's performance, regularly communicate with him and answer all questions about his child's education, and let him know what he should do for his child.

He said he had not attended any open days but, he had attended PTA meetings, speech days and school dramas. He had not heard of IEPs so it was briefly explained to him. He had not been involved in the development of any IEP nor was he engaged in setting specific educational goals for his child with SEN. He was however willing to be involved in them.

### **Additional ways he wants to be involved in his child's inclusive education**

He will like to be more involved in decision-making and wants the school to educate him more about what to do for his child.

### **Facilitators and inhibitors to his involvement**

He reported that taking part in decision-making was a facilitator and that it made him feel '*important*' knowing his '*views are sought*'.

Inability to go to school meetings due to insufficient time or work load, not being given the opportunity to take part in decisions, opposing views or desires by the parents and the school, lack of communication and when the school do not tell him all he needs to know about his child's education were inhibitors to his involvement. He has done nothing to try and rectify the situation and is '*hoping that things will sort themselves out*'

**Figure 6-2: Summary of Parent 6's interview**

### **Parental expectations and how schools were helping to fulfil them**

She was a female aged 51- 60 and had a MSLC. She expects her child to be able to read and write. Socially, she wants her child '*to grow up to become a good adult and a good Ghanaian and treat all people as her own self.*' Culturally, her daughter should be respectful. To fulfil her expectations for her child she reports that:

*'The teachers are teaching the children well in all areas that is socially, academically and culturally to grow up to become a good citizen in the future. They also invite us the parents to discuss and arrive at learning decisions at meeting. My child and other children get to learn the dances and art in the country and also get to socialise through group games'.*

### **How she was involved and how the school involved her in IE**

She attends PTA meetings, school functions, goes to school to monitor her child's progress and look through her books and discuss it with the teacher, monitors her child's attendance, engages in volunteering and provides her child's personal needs.

She said the school expects her to supply her child's basic needs, continue coming to the school to monitor her child's academic progress and provide teachers with the information they needed about her child.

She said, the school informs parents about pending activities, encourages them to attend and to come to the school to discuss their child's welfare. The school invites individual parents for parent-teacher meetings and at times tells parents what they expect them to do for their children.

### **Additional ways parents want to be involved in their child's education**

She said she needs more information/education on what to do for the progressive learning of her child and how to be involved educationally. She advocated for home visits by teachers.

### **Facilitators and inhibitors to parental involvement**

She reported that knowing that her child's current education '*will help her become an independent adult and a good citizen in future*', the welcoming attitude of the school staff and the advice and patience they have to listen to her, involvement in decision-making and the implementation of these decisions makes her feel that her contribution is valued and her help needed. Finally, communication with the teachers about her child's education and being informed that all is well was a further facilitator to her involvement.

She had the following to say about inhibitors to her involvement:

*'... when I am so busy and I cannot make time to visit the school, or they bring homework and me and my man do not understand and so we cannot help the child or it is French which we do not understand, or sometimes the school forget to send notice of a meeting and you do not go and they blame you for it. Sometimes too they will tell you this is school decision so what you as a parent say do not matter'.*

She has done nothing to overcome the challenges as she cannot control them.

**Figure 6-3: Summary of Parent 8's interview**

**Parental expectations and how schools were helping to fulfil them**

The interviewee was a male aged 31–40 with a master's degree. Academically he expected his child to '*excel in her studies*' and be able to read and write. Socially, she should be able to interact with people in the society. Culturally, she should know the culture of the society.

Academically the school was helping to fulfilling his expectations by teaching his child based on the curriculum. Socially he said;

*'Yes, socially I think in the school there is a lot of group work that the students are normally involved. They play games here and there. They will work together on assignments or whatever it is and I think that is also helping the child in the social life. They also engage the children in extracurricular activities through which they socialise'.*

Culturally, the school teaches Religious and Moral Education (RME) which deals with culture and societal values. The children are also taught cultural performances.

**How he was involved and how the school involved him in IE**

He said, he provided his daughter's basic needs, attended PTA and other meetings, monitored her school attendance and helps with homework. He said the school expects him to attend PTA meetings, school activities and support his child with school materials and her studies.

He said, the school invites him to activities which he is to attend, communicate information about the child through reports, informs parents of their expectation of them, lets parents know they are welcomed at any time to discuss their children's education and expect parents to support the school financially.

**Additional ways he wants to be involved in his child's inclusive education**

He wants to be more involved in decision-making, be a member of the school board to influence decisions in parents favour, and he can assist the school to run INSET programmes for teachers provided he is informed. His opinion was parents needed '*more education on what is expected of them and their responsibilities as far as their involvement in their children's education was concerned*'.

**Facilitators and inhibitors to his involvement**

Communication, welcoming attitude of staff and the physical environment were facilitators to his involvement. Communication makes him aware of school activities. His main challenge was the inability to attend school functions due to his work schedule, the imposition of decisions by the school (in his opinion, this was autocratic and unhelpful), and conflict due to opposing desires and wishes of the parents and the school. He said if he was unable to attend a school meeting his wife goes and he has raised his concerns with the head or at PTA meetings about the other issues which he says the school is '*trying to work at it but there is more room for improvement*'.

He had the following suggestion when asked if he had something to say:

*'Ok, I will only want to suggest that if possible the school should periodically organise some sort of workshop or seminar for parents. To educate parents on what they expect the parents to do or to be involved in the education of their children. Not just assume that parents should know these things or know that. But if they can invite us to the school and probably give us some sort of education on the extent to which they want us to be involved in the education of our children that will be very good for us'.*

**Figure 6-4: Summary of Parent 19's interview**

From the summaries of the interviews, it can be concluded that, the parents gave some similar responses (for example, see parent 4, 8 and 19 responses on academic expectations) despite the diversity in their educational level, gender and age-ranges. In the subsequent sections, the analysis of the interviews is presented thematically based on the responses of all the parents interviewed.

### 6.3 Parental expectations for their children

The excerpt from Figure 4-2 indicates the interview data to be analysed in this section (see Figure 6-5 below).

#### Parental expectations (PE) of IE

1. The expectations parents have of their children in inclusive schools
2. The roles inclusive schools are playing to fulfil parental expectations for their children

**Figure 6-5: Excerpt one from Figure 4-2**

Parents were required to talk about their expectations for their children academically, socially and culturally. Their responses were grouped and presented below.

#### 6.3.1 Academic expectations

Out of the 20 parents interviewed 14 want their children to be able to read, write and manipulate figures. The parents want the children to be very skilful in these areas. Hence, a parent specifically said '*I want the child to be able to read, write and manipulate figures effectively*' (**Parent 2**). The parents actually want their child to be able to acquire these skills at a functional level. For example, **Parent 10** said:

*'Academically, I expect the child to be able to read and write and to be able **use this** to communicate effectively in English and the local dialect and I expect him also to be able to do basic numeracy where he **can buy things on his own**'.*

The parents recognise the need for education and know that it helps to increase chances of future employability. They therefore want their children to be gainfully employed and be financially independent in the future. Hence they said:

*'If my child goes to school in future when I am not there he can look after himself when I am not there but when I am not around he cannot do anything without education. Education helps us get good jobs in the future'. (**Parent 5**)*

*'I like my ward to achieve academically because at long last the educated child is supposed to know how to read and write in future and also use it to seek something for feeding him or her and the family as a whole and then even the nation entirely'. (Parent 1)*

Also, 9 out of 20 parents want their children to do well academically and acquire certification and go to the university or go up the academic ladder. In the light of this, a parent said '*I also want him to do well so that he can go very high in education, right to the university to get a degree*' (Parent 5). While another said. '*...He should do so well that he gets a degree or even a PhD in future to make me proud*' (Parent 15). Some of the parents' aspiration for their children was not to get to the ultimate level of the educational ladder but at least to get certification for whatever level they were at. An example of what a parent said in connection to this was, '*If he can at least finish the Junior Secondary School and get a certificate to show for it I will be glad*' (Parent 6).

### 6.3.2 Social expectations

The parents reported four social expectations for their children. The first expressed by 12 out of 20 parents was that they want their child to be able to mingle with peers or others in the community and make friends. Four of them with children with SEN expressed this expectation. Two parents said:

*'I want my child to interact with, communicate, and play with other children and make as many friends as he can'. (Parent 11)*

*'Socially I want her to mingle with the colleagues in school, here and there even with the teachers, to cooperate with the teachers and other colleagues in the school. Not only in the school even our surrounding areas where we stay she should be able to mingle with all the people around there and even to the church everywhere we go she should be able to socialise with everybody'. (Parent 17)*

The parents were expecting their child to socialise with people in their whole community not only their peers.

The second was said by 7 out of 20 parents. They wanted their child to treat and be treated equally. One parent's response was:

*'Well, urm urm.....socially he should not say that because of his disability he cannot be treated the same. Socially I want him to respect everybody as equal partner, treat everybody equal and be treated likewise because each person has strengths and weaknesses where one person might be weak another person might be strong. So in an inclusive setting, to be able to appreciate the strengths of people with visual challenges, hearing challenges and their strengths so that he will be able to accept them as equal members of the society'. (Parent 3)*

From this, it may be said that the parent does not want the child's disability to affect how he is treated or how he threats others. Inherent in her statement was the need to look beyond the disability or weakness of people and consider their strengths and their right to equal treatment.

The third was expressed by 5 out of 20 parents. They want their child not only to fit into the society but be accepted:

*'Is also a bit of it because without sociality I don't think he can fit into the society I like the sociality also so that my child can be accepted by people'. (Parent 1)*

*'He should be able to live in the community and the community accept him as one of them'. (Parent 9)*

What these parents are saying is that they want their children to be not only physically present but be accepted as full members of the society.

Lastly, 3 out of 20 parents interviewed expect that their child will '*be a good adult and citizen*' (**Parent 20**) in the future as a result of the training they receive in school. One of them after careful thought (indicated by three hesitations and a long pause before responding) said:

*'Actually.... {Pause} ....socially.... I expect the training she is getting in this school to mould her into a responsible, good woman and a very good and obedient citizen in the future'. (Parent 17)*

### 6.3.3 Cultural expectations

In relation to culture, 16 and 4 parents respectively reported two main expectations of their children in inclusive schools. These were to learn the cultural norms and values of the people and be respectful and polite especially to elders. Excerpts of their comments are:

*'Culturally, I want my child to know the values of our nation and our society, to know the culture of a place, for instance, we are in {Mankobi}, I want my child to know the way they speak, the language they speak, dress and what have you so that he will not be an outcast of his own culture and people'. (Parent 18)*

*'I want my son to know all the cultural values of our society. You know society is such that, we have our own way of doing things and culture differs from one society to the other so I want my child to be able to greet people, for example, especially the elderly when he meets them, know how to eat like nowadays we use fork and knife so I want my child to know all those things so that he will be accepted or he will get all the cultural things in our society'. (Parent 16)*

*'What is important in our culture is to talk nicely and respectfully to people especially older people; this is a virtue I want my child to have'. (Parent 14)*

*'My boy should be respectful and behave very well as the Ghanaian culture demands. When he sees an elderly person on the bus standing for example, he should give up his seat without being told to do so'. (Parent 15)*

Evident from these excerpts are the different aspect of cultures. These are the way people speak, their language, dress and the norms and values that they uphold. Parents want their children to imbibe all these so that they will be accepted in their cultural setting.

A statement made by a parent draws attention to the fact that apart from the culture of the society there is the culture of the school since the school is a micro-organism of the larger society. This parent wanted his child not only to know the culture of the society but that of the school as well. This is what he had to say '*I want her to learn the culture of our tradition and the culture they have at school itself, I want her to know everything about that' (Parent 17)*. When he was asked what he meant by the culture of the school his response was '*That is the way the school or the children are supposed to do their things the school logo, song or anything that makes the school special' (Parent 17)*.

#### **6.3.4 Role of schools in helping to fulfil parental expectations**

The parents were required to talk about how the schools were helping their children fulfil the expectations they have academically, socially and culturally. The roles they mentioned have been grouped and presented.

##### **6.3.4.1 Ways the school fulfil academic expectations**

According to 19 out of the 20 parents interviewed, the teachers are teaching their children numeracy and literacy (reading and writing) or giving them the necessary education and using the learning time effectively:

*'Erm.... in fact academically, teachers are doing their best of teaching my ward how to read and write so academically he is getting good education as the nation demands, I like it in that way'. (Parent 1)*

Other parents said:

*'Well, academically I think that the school's curriculum has been able to capture all these subjects they are teaching and that has been able to help her academically'. (Parent 19)*

*'The school is doing their best by giving my child the correct education that she needs...' With the teachers teaching, my child can read and write'. (Parent 2)*

*'He teaches all of them how to read, write and do maths. They go by the timetable and make sure they teach everything they are asked to by the government'. (**Parent 5**)*

From the statements it is evident that the schools are teaching the children literacy and numeracy which is consistent with the parental expectations.

Additionally, 13 out of 20 parents said that the schools are involving them in decision-making for academic excellence at PTA meetings. Two parents' comments on this are:

*'I as a parent, my opinion in decision is accepted and used to fashion school teaching. This decision-making is mostly done when we the parents go for PTA meetings'. (**Parent 12**)*

*'At parents' meetings too, we as parents help to take some decisions to improve the school and teaching and learning'. (**Parent 7**)*

The parents were involved in decisions that helped to improve the learning of the children. Based on the parents' comments, parents were involved in decisions about whether or not the school should engage in extra classes to help improve the children's academic performance among others. **Parent 14** made the following comment about the benefit of letting her child engage in extra classes:

*'Academically I'm seeing improvement in her studies after the last decision that we took at PTA meetings that the children should have one hour lessons to improve their learning after school'*

From **Parent 14's** statement, it may be said that the decision to engage in extra classes was a good one as it improved the learning of her child.

Finally, 2 out of 20 parents said:

*'They give all attention to him and make sure he is comfortable and can hear the teacher as he has hearing problems'. (**Parent 3**)*

*'Takes care of what the child will need educationally to learn by focusing on only her and helping her understand things'. (**Parent 4**)*

The bolded aspect of the comments shows that the parents were talking about the teachers giving their children individual attention and focusing on the children's needs when teaching. This means that apart from teaching, teachers paid attention to the individual and peculiar needs of the children, as without this, it may be difficult for the children to achieve academically and ultimately fulfil their parents' academic expectations.

From the above, it may be said that to fulfil parental academic expectations for their children in inclusive schools, the teachers were teaching the children well and using academic learning time efficiently. Additionally, they were engaging parents in some

academic decisions at PTA meetings to help improve the learning of the children. Lastly, they focused on the learning needs of some of the children.

#### **6.3.4.2 Ways the school fulfils social expectations**

The parents reported that the schools were doing three things to help their children achieve the social expectations they have of them. These were organising extracurricular activities to promote socialisation, schools/teachers engaging children in group work to promote social acceptance and socialisation and the children learning to make friends and playing together during games.

Eleven out of 20 parents made comments in relation to the schools or teachers engaging children in group work to promote social acceptance and socialisation. Some of these comments are:

*'What I know is that in the classroom they encourage the children to do group work, then during break the opportunity is given to the child to play around with his friends'. (**Parent 20**)*

*'Socially, they learn in the same classroom, they are given group assignment where both children with handicap conditions and regular children work together and in groups and in teams and by so doing they interact and so they feel free with each other. They respect things that they say'. (**Parent 10**)*

From the excerpts, engaging the children in group work was helping them learn the ability to mingle or interact with others, treat others equally and be treated as such and fit in the society. **Parent 6** specifically mentions that group work '*helps children take turns and accept whoever they are to work with and do same outside school*'. **Parent 10** also pointed out that in these groups the teachers combine both children with and without SEN.

Additionally, 10 out of 20 parents mentioned that the schools were organising extracurricular activities to promote socialisation. While some of the parents mentioned '*extracurricular activities*' for example, **Parent 19**, others mentioned '*after school clubbing activities*' for example, **Parent 15**. Other parents went on to give examples of these activities. Below are excerpts of the comments of the latter group of parents:

*'The school also has funfairs drama, sports, and reading groups that is done after classes to get the children socialising'. (**Parent 16**)*

*'Another is that after school things like Scripture Union or drama groups meetings that take place too children learn to socialise and share their interests'. (**Parent 18**)*

The parents observed that when children engaged in these activities, they learn behaviours and the rubrics of socialisation.

Lastly, half of the parents interviewed (10) were of the view that '*children learn to make friends and play during games*' (**Parent 2**). Apart from learning to socialise and make friends, children '*learn not to discriminate*' (**Parent 7**). Possibly, playing is an effective medium through which children learn to socialise and acquire social skills in order to fulfil PE.

#### **6.3.4.3 Ways the school fulfils cultural expectations**

Fifteen out of 20 parents were of the view that parental cultural expectations for their children were being met by the school through the teaching of RME and social studies. Some parents' comments are:

*'The school teaches cultural studies as a subject and also RME which has parts of it teaching religion and the culture of our land'. (**Parent 3**)*

*'Quite apart from that there is this subject that they teach which is religious and moral education which talks about the cultural study of the children of the community and the children are taught societal values'. (**Parent 19**)*

The comments show that the parents are saying almost the same things. To them, the teaching of RME and social studies was one of the ways the school were teaching the children Ghanaian culture and subsequently helping to fulfil PE for their children.

Cultural displays, cultural group activities, art and craft and teaching values that society accepts are other ways the schools are helping to fulfil parental cultural expectations. Some parents said:

*'Then when it comes to culture aspect, nowadays they have been organising this cultural display and so she has been learning a lot from it'. (**Parent 14**)*

*'....{Pause}....urm....urm, Yes that too, grouping the children for dancing and art teach them our culture and they end up teaching all the things that Ghanaians love and treasure'. (**Parent 4**)*

It was the opinion of these parents that as children engaged in these activities they learn Ghanaian dances, art, indigenous customs and cultural activities. Additionally, the teachers use these to portray societal values. Through this, parental desire of their children acquiring the Ghanaian culture is satisfied.

#### **Summary**

From the above, it may be said that, parents have a number of expectations for their children academically, socially and culturally. Prominent among their academic expectations are, wanting their children to be able to read, write and do well

academically. Socially, parents expect children to develop social skills, interact with others in the society, be accepted, treat and be treated equally and become good adults and citizens. Culturally, parents expect their children to learn the Ghanaians cultural norms, values, and be respectful and polite.

The schools are playing an active role in meeting parental academic expectations for their children through teaching, involving parents in decision-making, and giving individual attention to children who need it. Socially, the teachers are engaging children in group work, games, play activities and organising other extracurricular activities to help them acquire social skills and to socialise them. Finally, culturally, the teachers are teaching children the specific subjects to help them learn the culture and engaging them in specific cultural activities.

#### **6.4 Parental involvement in inclusive education**

This section presents the analysis of PI in IE. The components of PI that will be presented are shown in the excerpt from Figure 4-2 (see Figure 6-6 below). An additional component, ‘parents’ emotions’ is also presented.

##### **Parental involvement (PI) in IE**

1. What the parents are currently doing
2. The additional ways parents want to be involved
3. How the inclusive schools expect parents to be involved
4. How the schools promote PI
5. Facilitators and inhibitors

**Figure 6-6: Excerpt two from Figure 4-2**

##### **6.4.1 Parents’ current involvement**

The responses related to parents’ current involvement in IE were analysed using five themes. These were: school visits, helping with homework, supplying personal/basic needs, attending school functions/meetings and volunteering. Analysis of this section was based on these themes. The number of parents who made comments that were in line with the identified themes is mentioned. Additionally, some of their verbatim responses are presented.

###### **6.4.1.1 School visits**

The parents interviewed gave responses that were categorised as school visits. These visits were for various reasons. Sixteen of the parents interviewed visited the

school to find out about their child's progress or how well their children were performing academically. Some parents' comments to this effect are:

*'Sometimes....{Pause}.... sometimes I used to go to the school to interact with my child's teacher. To interact with him to verify how my child is doing in class and school work'. (Parent 1)*

*'Yes, I come to the school often to find out my child's current performance. Today for example, apart from this interview that is my other aim for coming to the school, after this I am going to talk to the teacher'. (Parent 6)*

*'I come to the school two times a term to interact and discuss issues about my child so that the teachers can handle and educate my child well for me. This way I can find out how well he is doing in learning'. (Parent 7)*

Other parents (9 out of 19), do not only go to their child's school to inquire about their child's current academic progress, they were also interested in going through the child's books and discussing whatever they see with the teacher and getting reassurance from them. These parents were interested in monitoring their child's school work. Some parents, for example said:

*'.... I go there to have a look at his exercises books and other work to find if improvement has come from last. What I see, I talk to the teacher about it. Even sometimes when my child comes home and I tell her to read and she is not able to do so. I go to the school to discuss this with the teachers and the teachers assure me that it will be well'. (Parent 8)*

*'From time to time I visit the school to see how he is coping in class. On such visits I examine his books, taking note of his marks and tidiness of his work. I then discuss this with the teacher. Most of the time she tells me that my boy is doing fine and I do not have to worry. With this, I am happy and know all is ok'. (Parent 10)*

Furthermore, 9 out of 19 parents said that sometimes their aim for undertaking school visits was to monitor their child's attendance at school. Some parents who said this mentioned that their child had been a truant in the past and as such needed to be monitored to ensure they were going to school. Some parents, for example said:

*'My daughter sometimes lies to me about going to school when she does not. On such times she leaves the house wears school uniform and goes to play with other friends. The only way I can be sure that she actually goes to the school is by going there to talk to the teacher and look at the school register. Since I started doing this a year ago she always goes to classes'. (Parent 1)*

*'Also in the case of (Mensahbaboni) he sometimes plays football instead of going to school. I have to go and check-up that he goes to school otherwise my hard earned money will be wasted'. (Parent 12)*

Going to school to check on the child's attendance could be just a precautionary measure to ensure the child always attends school as seen from the parent's comment below:

*'To be sure he always goes to school I sometimes go to ask the teacher if he is always in school, you can never tell with these children you know'. (Parent 10)*

Parents' school visits may also be a way they show concern about their children's IE. In the words of a parent:

*'Am a parent who is much concern in my child's education so from time to time, I visit my school to talk.... I visit my child's school, talk to the teachers about her work'. (Parent 2)*

Evident in the parents' comments is concern for their child. This is apparent through the use of phrases such as 'wellbeing', 'verify how', 'coping' and 'how my child is faring'.

*'I normally come to the school to enquire about my child's wellbeing, how he is coping with the lessons'. (Parent 3)*

*'From time to time I visit the school to see how he is coping in class'. (Parent 10)*

The conclusion that may be drawn from the analysis is that parents visit their child's school for various reasons, whatever the reason it is in the best interest of their child. Attesting to the benefits of school visits one parent had this to say:

*'This has made the child feeling very feel free because I visit the school when I can and I know her problems, whenever she is in need, I know she needs those things so I give it to her and because she sees me frequently in the school she becomes very happy and that has made learning very simple and easy for her'. (Parent 15)*

Her appeal to the parents was:

*'I will like to entreat or encourage all parents to do the same, to be very familiar with the teachers visit them regularly and know the things that are going on in the school and especially, how their children are faring so if they have any advice, they can give to the child if the child comes to the house. So because I have gained a lot from visiting the school frequently, I will like all parents to visit the school frequently'. (Parent 15)*

#### 6.4.1.2 Helping with homework

In all, 10 out of 19 parents confirmed that they helped their child with their homework. Some parents, for example said:

*'My child is given homework three times in a week; I make sure she does it and sometimes help her with the ones she find hard'. (Parent 5)*

*'I also take an interest in his homework and look at the comments that has been written and if possible help him to overcome them. Sometime, I have to do the homework with him if it is a bit complex'. (Parent 10)*

Sometimes in helping children do their homework the parents encountered some difficulties, especially when they do not understand what the subject matter is about or what is required. Some parents, for example said:

*'Yes, yes with her homework too I help her do it if is not too difficult for me. As some things they teach the children now in school we never did it in our days at school. What I do not know how can I teach or help my child with it'. (Parent 14)*

*'What I think should be done to help my child's education I do it for example supervising the child to do homework sometimes this is hard as I may not understand well even though I have a diploma but I do my best'. (Parent 18)*

From Parent 13's comment, '*Another thing is not getting time to help my son with his homework all the time*', it can be seen that it was not only the issue of lack of subject matter that could pose a problem but also lack of time.

#### **6.4.1.3 Supplying personal/basic needs**

Almost all (18 out of 19) of the parents who responded to this aspect of the interview were quick to mention that they took care of their child's personal or basic needs. Examples of these basic/personal needs parents gave are food, clothing, grooming, school books and providing any other thing the child will need to study. A parent made a strong case for feeding her child before going to school by saying:

*'I make sure my child has eaten very well before going to school as if he is hungry he cannot learn. I buy all books and clothes he will need. I also buy anything the school wants me to get for him to do well'. (Parent 12)*

Another parent also said:

*'Provision of his basic needs, like food and shelter. Without this he cannot have peace of mind to learn and be who I want him to be in the future'. (Parent 10)*

Yet another parent echoed a similar view but added the need for parents to ensure that their child is well groomed for school. She said:

*'The first thing is you will have to take care of the appearance or the dressing of your child. Every time you need to make sure your child appears neat and all the child's needs has to be provided. I have to provide anything at all the school asks me to give to the child. Also, I need to feed the child well when going to school as this will help the child to learn well'. (Parent 5)*

Another parent pointed out the need to not only supply the child's need but that parents need to get the child ready for school on time:

*'The specific things I do is that I prepare him to go to school early. Taking care of anything he needs to go to school with it like books and school uniform'. (Parent 17)*

From the above discussion, it is clear that the parents interviewed were of the view that supplying basic needs are part of parental responsibilities for successful IE. Parents are to ensure that their children are well groomed, fed and all their needs met if they are to learn effectively.

#### **6.4.1.4 Attending school functions/meetings**

Attending school functions and meetings was another thing parents mentioned as part of what they currently did to show their involvement in IE. Sixteen of the parents interviewed specifically mentioned that they attended PTA meetings. In their own words, '*Yes.... um, I attend PTA meetings anytime I am informed about them'* (Parent 5).

To confirm their attendance at PTA meetings and other school functions, parents were asked to mention the school activities they were involved in. All the parents (n=19) reported that they took part in PTA meetings or they were members of the PTA. Some of the parents' statements have been presented below:

*'Well here I am one of the executives of the PTA so in the decision-making I take part and I am also the secretary to the executive committee so I am always present, yes'. (Parent 3)*

*'Like I said initially, I always attend PTA, I always make sure that that I go for PTA meetings and contribute my quota to the development of the school and for that matter my child'. (Parent 16)*

Being a member of the PTA was not optional; all parents were automatic members and were expected to attend meetings (see Parent 10's comment in section 6.4.3.1). Yet some parents did not attend or attended meetings only when they felt they had the time to, for example, Parent 10 said '*Currently I'm a member of PTA even though I do not get time to go*'.

Nevertheless, the parents acknowledged the importance of PTA meetings and gave reasons for attending them:

*'When the school call me for PTA I go because there we discuss things that will help all the children in the school I always make sure I go'. (Parent 1)*

*'I have the chance to be part of decision-making through being a member of the PTA. This gives us the parents the opportunity to make our voices heard and be part of the group that decides what*

*goes on in our child's education and the school. This makes me feel important'. (Parent 2)*

**Parent 1** reported that he attends School Management Committee (SMC) meetings when invited. Parents went to these meetings because there they have the opportunity to discuss and make decisions about the education of their children in the school and also it gave them the opportunity to air their views. This according to **Parent 2** made him '*feel important*'.

When parents were asked to mention what they specifically do to show their current involvement in their child's IE, six of them said they attended other school functions or activities. Examples of other school functions and activities they mentioned were attending opening days where parents go to the school to look at children's books and craft on display, cultural and drama displays, chorus night in December and speech and prize giving day. Yet, when they were asked to talk about the school activities they were involved in 16 of them said they attended other school functions (examples of which have been mentioned above). For example, a parent said:

*'I attend open days and then sometimes the school organises sporting activities where parents are invited and I try as much as possible to be present when there is this sports. Other times too, they organise cultural activities which I like so most of the time I go for these cultural programmes which is organised by the school'. (Parent 16)*

#### **6.4.1.5 Volunteering**

Four parents mentioned that they volunteered their services to the school. Those who did act as resource persons and they teach the children either craft or local dance or give talks to the children or help in sports. One mother said that she was '*called to teach cultural dance and raise funds this I did. I help the school whenever. Sometimes I teach craft*' (**Parent 2**). A father also said that '*I sometimes go to help them during sports as I was a very good sports man*' (**Parent 1**). The third parent said he at times helped with school repairs as he was '*good with his hands*'. (**Parent 11**) The fourth parent said, '*I have been to the school to give talks; I do this only when they request it*'. (**Parent 13**)

For confirmation, parents were asked to talk about the school activities they were involved in. Examples of what the parents said are:

*'I remember that one time a teacher wanted to handle a concept in the syllables and according to the teacher, she wasn't all that abreast with the issues so I was consulted if I could help and yes, fortunately for the teacher, I knew something about what she was trying to put across and therefore I was invited to the school to be a resource person to help the children get that very concept'. (Parent 11)*

*'Sometimes I'm invited to be a resource person as I just like to help in some of the areas. I remember I was once called to give the children a talk on the HIV/AIDS and I was able to deliver because when they saw me, they saw me as a different person, not that their teacher. They saw me as a parent so I was able to go through the thing with them bringing in practical examples and all that so they appreciated from the way they clapped and they shouted and the questions that came showed that they were very interested'. (Parent 13)*

The comment made by **Parent 13** indicates that when parents are engaged in teaching as resource people, it had a positive impact on the children's learning. Even though the other two parents probably forgot to mention what they did in this capacity in the course of the interview, their response implied they volunteered their services. An example was **Parent 1** who said, '*SMC, sometimes they invite me and I do support them in whatever they like me to do*'.

This shows that he willingly volunteered in whatever capacity when required. The responses of the parents actually confirmed that they volunteered their services to the school.

The statements by the parents show that there were various opportunities given by the school to involve parents. The parents displayed their current involvement by going on school visits for various reasons. These were to:

- find out about the progress of their child;
- looked through their child's books;
- discussed issues with the teachers; and
- monitor their child's progress.

Additionally, parents helped their child with their homework when they could. They also attended PTA meetings and other school functions. Some parents volunteered their services to the school. The majority (n=18) of the parents provided their child's personal or basic needs.

#### **6.4.2 How the school want parents to be involved in inclusive education**

Each parent's responses on how their child's inclusive school wanted them to be involved in IE were analysed. Analysis of each parent's responses shows that the parents identified six ways they think their child's school wanted them to be involved. These have been presented below.

#### **6.4.2.1 Provision of basic needs**

According to 18 parents the school expected them to provide all the needs of their child. To sum up what the parents said in relation to this, a parent concisely said:

*'They want us to provide our child with books, pencils and all stationary. Additionally, we have to feed the child, buy uniforms and make sure there is a peaceful house the child can come to after school and a place to learn after school. In short, they want us to provide that child with everything he will need personally to help learning'. (Parent 20)*

#### **6.4.2.2 Attending PTA/other school activities**

Being part of the PTA and attending meetings in addition to, taking part in other school functions and programmes were mentioned by 17 parents as an expectation of the school for parents. Expressing their opinion two parents said:

*'The basic requirement for every parent is to be involved with PTA and above all attend meetings. Not only PTA but anything the school is doing'. (Parent 10)*

*'The PTA and dramas, sports, and going to other school organised function is a must for us to attend'. (Parent 11)*

This shows that without excuse, every parent should be part of the PTA, attend its meetings and take part in all school functions and activities.

#### **6.4.2.3 Engaging in school visits / parent-teacher consultation**

Thirteen parents mentioned that '*the school expects {them} to continue on coming to the school to discuss {their} child's progress with them*' (**Parent 8**). As part of this, parents are expected to visit the school and go through their child's books and discuss their child's performance with the teachers. Also, 10 parents said that they are expected to communicate with their child's teacher and headteacher and provide all necessary information about their child concisely and also, '*any question they have {parents} have to answer*' (**Parent 4**).

Additionally, a parent mentioned that apart from monitoring their child's progress in school, parents are to discuss the child's progress with the child and help them with their homework. This is important as it helps to draw the child's attention to their performance. Accordingly, the parent said:

*'They also want us to monitor the progress of our kids and then discuss whatever they did at school, with them when they come home, especially with their homework. We help them to do their homework'. (Parent 16)*

#### **6.4.2.4 Engagement in decision-making**

Five parents said the school expected that parents will be involved in the decision-making process in the school. An example of the statement passed by these parents is presented below:

*'I have the chance to be part of decision-making through being a member of the PTA. This gives we the parents the opportunity to make our voices heard and be part of the group that decides what goes on in our child's education and the school. This makes me feel important' (Parent 2)*

The parents' responses showed that they are to take part in any decision affecting all the children in the school when they go to PTA meetings.

#### **6.4.2.5 Parents to engage in volunteering activities**

Four parents mentioned that the school expected them to volunteer their services in various capacities. From Parent 15's statement below, the school expects parents to raise funds, help in developmental projects and act as resource persons.

*'They also expect me to offer to do things for the school like fund raising or helping in development projects or even coming to help with teaching culture or dancing'. (Parent 15)*

**Parent 16** made a very important comment. She said:

*'As a parent sometimes they want us to come to the school if we can to assist in the teaching. You know to be as a resource person in some of the subjects especially those in the kindergarten if we could manage to help the teachers. Because they believe that when this is done, then the kids get what is going on sometimes when it is coming from the parents'.*

From this it may be said that parents perceive volunteering and coming to the school to occasionally teach the children to have a tremendous impact on their children's learning.

#### **6.4.2.6 Attendance and punctuality**

A parent said the school expected parents to:

*'... bring {their} children to school every day and on time, not to be late for school so that lessons can begin and whatever is supposed to be done in the day can be achieved'. (Parent 16)*

This was a very significant contribution by this parent as if parents do not observe attendance and punctuality, classes and school activities may be seriously affected.

From the interviews it may be said that the parents are aware of various ways the school expected them to be involved in IE. Some of these ways are providing their children's basic need and being part of the PTA and attending meetings.

### **6.4.3 How the school involves parents in inclusive education**

Analysis of the parents' responses on how the school involved them in IE revealed five main ways. The results have been presented below.

#### **6.4.3.1 Engaged parents in school meetings and activities**

Firstly, the school invited or encouraged the parents to attend PTA meetings/other school activities and also informed them about impending school activities. This was attested to by 17 out of 20 parents. An example of what was said by a parent was:

*'By calling me to attend PTA meetings, Open days and through communication with the teachers as well as the heads. They tell me when these special activities will happen and want you to be there'.*

**(Parent 2)**

Additionally, 2 out of 20 parents reported that the school engaged them in SMC meetings. Parent 20 explained that he was a member of the mentioned committee and that it is '*where we are involved in the management or the affairs of the school*'.

#### **6.4.3.2 Informed/Educated Parents**

Additionally, 14 parents said the school informed them about what they expected parents to do or not to do as far as their child's education was concerned. One parent's response reflects concisely what the other parents said. It is: '*They also tell me what they want me to do for my child and what I am to do or not for my child*' **(Parent 3)**. Another parent said '*They sometimes write to me about what they want me to do for the child*' **(Parent 1)**. From the above, it can be seen that the school informed or educated the parents verbally or through writing to them. **Parent 2** confirmed that this was a means of educating her; specifically she said '*so it is also education for me*'.

#### **6.4.3.3 Parent-teacher consultation**

Furthermore, 14 and 10 of the parents respectively reported that the school encouraged them to come and talk about their child's IE and communicated with them about every aspect of their child's education. PI in these activities could best be described as parent-teacher consultation. For such meetings the school either encouraged or invited parents to come and talk about their child's education and also communicated with them about every aspect of their child's education. The following statements are examples of what the parents said:

*'The way the school involves me, is by inviting me or parents to come to the school to discuss issues about the child or when the child does something teachers or the school calls you and you the parent comes to express your views. If my child is also not*

*performing I discuss it with the teacher. The teachers also talk to me about my child's behaviour. Sometimes the teachers find out from me how the child is behaving at home and I tell them. Through this my child's teacher then knows how to handle my child. For this reason it is important that I maintain constant contact with the teachers in my child school'. (**Parent 5**)*

*'Also they encourage me to come to school always to talk to the teacher about my child's progress. They also send me my child's report so I can see how well my child is doing. The truth is they regularly communicate with me about everything that is going on in my child's education. Also, they are ready to answer any question I have regarding my child.' (**Parent 6**)*

From the parents comments it is evident that the subjects of these meetings were not centred only on the academic progress of the child but anything to do with the child, including the child's behaviour. A parent identified the activities she engaged in by saying that:

*'Apart from the organisation of PTA, they sometimes send us newsletters or communiqués on specific issues and sometimes depending on the peculiarity of the case, they **conduct one-to-one conferences** with us to get us involved especially when they identify a peculiar problem with the child. For example, my child had problems with handwriting so I was called in so that I will be able to do some sand work with him at home so that he will be able to improve upon his writing skills. So we are to go and talk about our child's schooling. And help take decisions about that'. (**Parent10**)*

#### **6.4.3.4 Involved parents in decision-making**

Seven parents mentioned that the school involved them in decision-making. From section 6.4.1.4, **Parent 2** mentioned that she had the opportunity to be part of the decision-making body through being a member of the PTA. At these meetings the parents are given the opportunity to be heard and make decisions collectively. PTA meetings are therefore forums where parents get the opportunity to be actively involved in the decision-making process in the school. **Parent 2** buttressed this by saying:

*'They also try whenever there is an urgent decision to be taken. They invite all the parents so that we bring out our mind to see to how they will solve that particular problem'.*

#### **6.4.3.5 Engaged parents in volunteering activities**

Three parents said the inclusive schools encouraged them to give financial aid to the school and be volunteers in various capacities. Parent 7's comment below summarises how the school tries to involve parents in volunteering their services.

*'They encourage us that we..... we... volunteer to help the school with.. urm ..urm.... money for example, for development projects*

*and also come to teach dance or our culture to the children or anything that we can be of help with, they want us to do'. (**Parent 7**)*

From the comment, it is evident that the schools requested financial assistance from the parents to undertake projects in the school and parents contributed to that effect. Also, they tried to get parents to volunteer as resource persons to help teach practical things like, dancing, or culture.

#### **6.4.4 Additional ways parents want to be involved in inclusive education**

During the interviews, the parents were asked to mention additional ways they wanted the schools to involve them in IE. The ways they mentioned are presented below.

##### **6.4.4.1 More involvement in decision-making**

Prominent among the responses was that parents want the schools to involve them more in decision-making and planning of the school affairs. This was commented upon by 18 parents. Below are some of the statements the parents made to this effect:

*'Well, the only thing is that I expect to be part is probably decision-making in the school. Yes, I wish that I have the opportunity to represent parents fully on the school board, or whatever it is. I can influence certain decisions that will be in favour of parents. What I mean is that I wish I have the opportunity to probably serve on the school board, so that I will be able to influence certain decisions that will be in the favour of parents and ultimately the school children in the school it will not be like always the school is imposing ideas on parents'. (**Parent 19**)*

*'Erm.... I want them to make us parents more involved in decision-making in the school. That is all I have to say'. (**Parent 20**)*

*'Also, I know they try to involve me in decisions but it is only sometimes I want it always'. (**Parent 7**)*

From **Parent 7's** response it is evident that the school sometimes involved the parents in making decisions. The parents do not want it occasionally, they want it always. The comments also show that apart from the desire to be involved in educational decisions about their child, some parents want to go beyond that and be at the helm of affairs such that they will be able to take part in decisions that will favour all parents who have their children in the school as **Parent 19** desires.

##### **6.4.4.2 Provide education for parents**

Thirteen parents' request was for the school to educate them on how to be involved in their child's IE. Some of them said:

*'I want the school to give me proper training or education about what to do for my child not occasionally when things go wrong before'. (Parent 7)*

*'Yes, some of the things are that I need more information and teaching on is what to do for my child's learn to stay good and how to be a good mother who takes part in her child's education'. (Parent 8)*

*'At PTA meetings too they can teach us the parents what to do for our children or how to be best involved'. (Parent 4)*

The parents' statements show that they really wanted to be involved in their child's IE but felt they lacked knowledge of how to do this effectively. They are therefore appealing to the inclusive schools not to wait till things go wrong or when they do not do what is expected rather, '*proper training or education*' or '*information*' should be given to parents on what they should do for their child or '*how to be best involved*' in their child's IE.

Towards the end of the interview when parents were asked if they had any comment or suggestion, this is what one parent had to say:

*'Ok, I will only want to suggest that if possible the school should periodically organize some sort of workshop or seminar for parents. To educate parents on what they expect the parents to do or to be involved in the education of their children. Not just assume that parents should know these things or know that. But if they can invite us to the school and probably give us some sort of education on the extent to which they want us to be involved in the education of our children that will be very good for us. (Parent 19)*

#### **6.4.4.3 Engaging in home visits**

The parents were also of the view that teachers should visit their homes to have first-hand knowledge of what was going on and discuss the children's welfare. This was the suggestion given by 13 parents. This was the question posed by one parent: '*Yes why do not they come home to talk about my child, why do I only have to come to the school all the time?*' (**Parent 4**). This draws attention to the fact that the relationship was a two-way relationship and therefore as parents go to the school, teachers should also go to the parents' homes. **Parent 5** also wondered why teachers were not doing this in the country, she had this to say: '*another thing is that in some countries teachers go to pupils' homes to check on them in Ghana I do not see that.*'

Some other statements made by the parents on home visits by teachers were:

*'The teachers should come home regularly to visit us, for example, after school he can come over to find out how my child is faring at home. Also if anything happens in the school the teacher can come*

*home and discuss it with me. If this happens if anything occurs in the house that is relevant to my child's education I can discuss it with the teacher'. (Parent 5)*

*'I would want the teachers to collaborate effectively with the parents so that what they do at school, if the children come home we will also continue so that there wouldn't be any gap. They can even come home to talk and find out if this is continuing and giving me information or letting me know how to partake in my child's education'. (Parent 11)*

The parents wanted the home visits to be on a regular basis. They were also of the view that this exercise would be beneficial to the parents and the child. Expressing this idea **Parent 4** said '*the coming home to talk about home and school thing will help me and the child*'. When she was asked how this would help, she said:

*'I will feel more supported by the school and my child will know that the teacher can come home can actually see all that is happening or will be told to them by me so the child will end up being well-behaved. Yes, it will also improve my relationship with the school'. (Parent 4)*

The issue of the child being well-behaved as a result of this exercise was supported by other parents. For example, **Parent 14** said '*It is about time they come home too as this can get my child to behave well*'. Engaging teachers in home visits from the Parent 4's perspectives will be beneficial to her child and herself.

#### **6.4.4.4 Engaging more parents in volunteering**

Twelve parents were of the view that the school should invite or encourage more parents to volunteer their services. Examples of the parents' comments are:

*'.... I realise that they keep inviting only few parents who talk to the children or teach one thing or the other or even model. Why does it have to be only those parents? Are they more special than others or what? That opportunity should be given to all parents' (Parent 15).*

*'They should request for our help more often I will willingly give it'. (Parent 7)*

*'Yeah, probably I can help the school by in-service training for the teachers being a professional teacher myself, I think from time to time when the school invites me to train their teachers for them, in-service training, I think I will be useful to the school. They can also involve any other parent who they think can help to do this'. (Parent 19)*

The statements show the parents' willingness to volunteer their services to the school. They also show that parents are not happy with the way they are invited or selected to be volunteers and would wish that more parents or all willing parents be given the opportunity to volunteer.

#### **6.4.4.5 Engaging parents in individualised education programmes**

All parents (n=7) who mentioned that they had a child with SEN were asked if the school involved them in the drawing up of the IEP for their child. They responded in the negative. Three of the parents had not even heard the term before, this is what one of them said '*No never, I have never heard of that and the school has not even mentioned it*' (**Parent 3**). Others said:

*'No, they teach what the timetable in the school says'. (**Parent 4**)*

*'No, in Ghana, I do not know of any school that develops IEPs for the children with special needs let alone involve parents in it. I because I have a Bachelor of Education degree I know what it is but have never been involved in the development of one'. (**Parent 10**)*

The parents' responses show that they had never been invited to take part in IEP development. **Parent 10's** statement throws further light on the fact that in Ghana the schools do not engage in IEP development for the children. They only stick to the national curriculum.

The parents (n=7) also said that they were not involved in educational goal setting by the schools. Some of them said:

*'All schools use the national curriculum. Goals are set by the teachers and have nothing to do with parents'. (**Parent 11**)*

*'Not at all, I am just given guidance occasionally on how to improve writing and learning generally'. (**Parent 10**)*

*'They just tell me to make sure she learns when she comes home and to help her with her homework. If there is any problem, I can go to the school for advice'. (**Parent 4**)*

From the parents' comments, it is clear that they were not involved in educational goal setting (not even at home with their children). All goals were set by teachers. Parents were however given guidance as to what to do for the child and areas to address when they were supporting their child to learn. The school staff were there for the parents when needed.

Parents were asked if they would want the school to involve them in IEP development and educational goals setting, all seven of them said yes. Examples of their responses are;

*'If the school thinks my contribution will be vital and the invite me then, I will do it'. (**Parent 4**)*

*'Yes, if that will improve my child's education, then I will do anything'. (**Parent 3**)*

*'Knowing its importance I am more than ready to be involved'. (**Parent 10**)*

The consensus among the parents was that they want the school to involve them in these two areas, if it will help improve their children's learning. **Parent 6** made a point by saying that '*Yes, as it will make me more involved in my boy's education and I will know exactly what is going into his education*'.

#### **6.4.4.6 Involvement of parents in discipline**

Five parents mentioned the issue of discipline. In **Parent 16's** own words, '*Another thing is when it comes to the disciplinary issues of my child, I want to be involved*'. Similar views were echoed by the other parents.

The conclusion arrived at based the above analysis is that parents were actually involved in IE in a variety of ways. Also, parents are aware of how the school expected them to be involved. The schools were doing things to get parents involved or be more involved in IE. The parents wanted the schools to involve them more in the decision-making, volunteering and educate them on how to be involved in their children's IE. Additionally, the parents suggested that there should be home visits by the teachers to discuss educational issues. Also, they wanted the school to involve them in developing IEPs and setting specific educational goals for their children.

#### **6.4.5 Facilitators to parental involvement**

The parents identified a number of factors as facilitators to their involvement in IE. These factors are discussed below.

##### **6.4.5.1 Communication and understanding**

The parents (n=18) were of the opinion that good communication between parents and teachers facilitated PI in IE. Below are some of the things the parents said about communicating with the school:

*'One of the factors that make it easy for me to be involved in my child's education is the good communications that exist between the school and me. This way the school has a good communication point whereby they've got the phone numbers of all the parents so that if there any information that they want conveyed to we the parents, they'll ring us and also sometimes they send letters through the children to us which I think makes it very good for us to be involved'. (**Parent 16**)*

*'Yeah, I think the school is doing well in terms of communication. They always make sure they communicate to us whatever is happening is the school. They write to us and they communicate to us through our children to us, so that makes it easy for some of us'. (**Parent 19**)*

The parents' comments show that they are satisfied with the communication that exists between the school and themselves. This communication was not done through just one channel but through several. The schools phone, send letters, newsletters and even '*communiqués*' on specific issues. Other times, the communication was sent verbally through the children. Through this communication the parents got to know what was going on in the school and about pending school activities. Also, the school lets the parents know about what they observed about the children or what was happening in the educational life of the children. This was confirmed by **Parent 20** who said '*also, they inform us of up-and-coming school activities and share with us things they observe about our child*'. The communication was a two-way communication judging from what **Parent 20** said: '*we can talk to the teachers about everything and they too can talk to us*'. The word 'everything' shows that the parents communicated with the teachers without reservations. **Parent 7** also said: '*any question they ask us about our child we have to answer*'. This shows that parents were expected to provide information about their child to the school.

**Parent 11's** comment summarises the nature of the communication between the school and the parents:

*'I think the school and we the parents have a good relationship in terms of communication. There is that flow, whatever is concerned with my children, we are invited to come and then contribute'.*

Some of the parents gave reasons why communication was a facilitator to their involvement by saying that:

*'Yes what I mean by communication is that, the communication actually makes me know exactly what goes on in the school'.  
(Parent 19)*

*'Communication makes it easy to be involved because that is the only way I can also air my views. If they do not involve me in their communication, I cannot say what I want to say'. (Parent 18)*

*'It also helps you to fully participate in the educational life of your child as you know everything and you even take decisions with the school sometimes. This makes your child's education progress smoothly'. (Parent 7)*

*'Yeh for example, my child for instance had problems with language, where sometimes the consistency is like he misplaces the tenses but they helped me to realize that is part of the process because of the loss of hearing they miss out on some of the auxiliary verbs and things like that and so is a natural thing and with time he will overcome it. This is to say communication is good'. (Parent 10)*

*'Again the way they talk to me about most things and I can talk back and together we make any decision'. (Parent 7)*

Analysing the reasons given by the parents, I can say that communication facilitates PI in IE through six main ways:

1. Gives information
2. Opportunity for parents to express their views
3. Ensures full participation
4. Broadens parents' understanding of issues
5. Collective decision-making
6. Gives reassurance

Closely linked to communication was the issue of understanding. Some of the parents (n=3) mentioned this as a facilitator to their involvement. They used the phrase/sentence '*understanding me*' as in the case of **Parent 8** and '*The fact that they understood me and my child*' as in the case of **Parent 13**. To these parents, when the teachers/staff understand their situation or concerns they were motivated to be involved in their children's IE.

#### **6.4.5.2 Welcoming/cordial relationship of the school staff**

The parents (n=14) attested to the fact that the welcoming or cordial relationship of the school staff facilitated their involvement. Some of their comments are:

*'Whenever I visit the school, the teachers are always welcoming so it makes me feel at home, you feel you are part of the school and you don't feel bored'. (Parent 16)*

*'I can also say that the school has a good relationship with the parents whenever you come to the school, there is that hospitality you are received alright'. (Parent 11)*

*'Also, when I come to the school to discuss issues about my child the headteachers and teachers have a very welcoming attitude, they welcome me with a warm "hello" and give me a chair to sit on comfortably and listen patiently to whatever I have come to say and they advise or discuss the issue with me accordingly'. (Parent 8)*

According to the parents the welcoming or cordial attitude of the school staff facilitated their involvement because:

*'Oh it helps me a lot in the way that anytime you go there you can chat with the teachers, they will welcome you, and anything you need to hear about your child, they will make it easily for you to know'. (Parent 17)*

*'These are what I have said at first that the teachers are friendly, they are ready to talk to anyone who comes to them so it is not difficult at all for me at all to visit them any time I need to go there'. (Parent 15)*

*'I realise that when I come and discuss or enquire about my child the school teachers and headteacher receive me well due to that I happy to support the school in whatever they are doing'. (Parent 8)*

*'Where the climate of the school is very conducive, where the teacher-pupil relationship is very good, where the teacher-parent relationship is very good, I think it also goes to encourage we the parents to be around all the time in the school and these conditions are of daily factors which are driving me very much to have a special love especially for the school'. (Parent 12)*

*'You realise that if there is no good teacher-parent relationship, it will be very difficult for you or a parent like me to visit my child in the school. So one of the factors that have made this possible is that the school has opened their doors wide to we the parents. We are always welcome to the school and that has motivated me to contribute my quota'. (Parent 10)*

From the parents' statements, it may be said that the welcoming or cordial attitude of the school staff made it easy for the parents to go to their child's school often and facilitated communication between the two groups. Also, it made the parents more willing to support the school. In addition to this, the open door policy of the schools where parents can walk in at any time makes the parents feel welcomed and hence encourages them to be more involved in their children's IE.

A parent's expression of gratitude and appeal to teachers was:

*'Yes I thank all the teachers and I employ them to continue to having patience for we the parents so that our children's education will go on smoothly. So that any time they call us to have discussions with us we can come and have a fruitful discussion with them about our children's education'. (Parent 7)*

#### **6.4.5.3 Involvement in decision-making**

According to the parents (n=13) when the school involves them in decision-making it facilitated their involvement in the IE of their child. Below are some of the excerpts of the comments the parents made:

*'Also by the way they allow me to take part in decisions at PTA meetings and the way they hold high what I have to say and use it to run the school sometimes'. (Parent 3)*

*'When they make decisions with me and implement it I know they value my contribution, making me feel needed'. (Parent 8)*

*'Also, knowing that occasionally we the PTA are allowed to take some major decisions about our children's education also pushes me to go on despite difficulties at time'. (Parent 15)*

The parents' statements show that they valued the opportunity the school gave them to be involved in decision-making. It is clear that these decisions were not in connection with only their child but sometimes it involved things that affected all the

children in the school as in the case of decisions taking at PTA meetings. **Parent 2** points out that when these decisions are taken the school should 'respect {her} views and include it in everyday running of the school'.

The implementation of the joint decisions taken by the school and the parents, according to the parents, makes them feel valued or important or made them feel needed. The words of **Parent 10** sums up how PI in decision-making was a facilitator to PI:

*'As I said when they use the decisions that together we come to in the shaping up of things I end up feeling important as my contribution is significant to bring a change for the better'.*

#### 6.4.5.4 Involvement in school activities

According to some of the parents (n=5) the school involving them in activities or programmes facilitated their involvement in their child's IE. The following statements were given by the parents when they were asked to mention what factors facilitated their involvement in their child's IE:

*'They can tell me when all activities is coming on like game, PTA, speech day and invite me, I will go I enjoy going to these'. (**Parent 1**)*

*'They calling me to PTA and others school programmes or functions. Involving me this way makes me part of the school and very much part of my child's education'. (**Parent 17**)*

The parents' statements showed that when the school involves them in its activities they enjoyed them and made them feel part of their child's IE. According to **Parent 3** it made it 'easy' for him to be involved in his child's IE.

#### 6.4.5.5 School environment

Four parents mentioned the nature of the school environment being a facilitator to their involvement in their child's IE. The statements below summarises the views of the parents on this issue.

*'What I am talking about is both the attitude of the school staff and the clean and well painted and nicely arranged environment makes going to the school a pleasure'. (**Parent 19**)*

*'Yes, the friendly atmosphere of the school that is, the environment being clean and well laid out and colourful is one of the factors'. (**Parent 12**)*

The statements show that parents were concerned with two main things about the school environment. They are aesthetics and ambience, which were generally the beauty of the surroundings and the 'friendly' or 'welcoming' nature resulting from it. This according to **Parent 19** made it pleasurable to go to the school.

#### 6.4.5.6 Free education policy

The issue of basic education in Ghana being free, as a result of the Government's FCUBE policy (parents do not have to pay school fees in public schools), two parents mentioned that this facilitated their involvement in their child's IE.

*'One of the factors that make it easy is the free education policy by the Government so I do not have to pay school fees. I only need to supply a few items for him to take to school and this has lifted a big financial burden, off my shoulders'. (Parent 7)*

From what the parents said, the FCUBE policy has relieved them of the burden of paying school fees and so their obligation to the IE of their children has been lessened.

#### 6.4.5.7 Future benefits of education and the child's zeal for learning

Some of the parents (n=2) were of the view that the future benefits that their child will derive out of their IE were enough to serve as a facilitator to their involvement.

The parents said:

*'Knowing that the education my child is going through today will help her become an independent adult and a good citizen in future. This makes me more than willing to be involved in my child's education'. (Parent 8)*

*'Ok the expectations that I have for my child is very high. Even at where I am, I want the child to bypass me too so because of that I am always on my toes so as to push my child forward and knowing that the education he is having today will make him what he will be tomorrow is a great motivation'. (Parent 13)*

Their statements show that the parents have high expectations for their child and would not want them to be liabilities in the future. Also, the knowledge, type and quality of education their child gets will influence the quality and standard of life they will live in the future, and this spurs the parents on to do whatever they can and be involved in the IE of their child.

Additionally, the child's zeal for learning was mentioned by a parent as a facilitator to her involvement. She had this to say:

*'Again, my child is ever ready to go to school and learn even though he is visually impaired. This desire to learn makes me want to do all I can and be part of his education life to help him become somebody in future'. (Parent 12)*

This shows that when the children exhibit the desire to learn in the face of all adversities, as in the case of this child with visual impairment, parents become motivated to be involved in IE.

From the above it can be concluded that the parents identified a number of things that facilitated their involvement in IE. Among them were communication and understanding, welcoming/cordial relationship of the school staff and involvement of parents in decision-making.

#### **6.4.6 Inhibitors to parental involvement**

The parents mentioned a number of factors as inhibitors to their involvement in IE. These are discussed below.

##### **6.4.6.1 School not involving parents in decision-making**

The parents (n=15) were of the view that lack of involvement in decision-making was an inhibitor to their involvement. The issue was not that parents were not totally uninvolved in decision-making; rather they were involved in some while others were impositions from the school. From the parents' statements, indications of imposed decisions by the school were made explicit. An example of what the parents said was: '*Again sometimes the school imposes their views on us rather than we all discussing it and deciding together*' (**Parent 13**). Looking at the decision-making section under 'facilitators to PI', **Parents 4** and **Parent 15** mentioned that they were involved in decision-making yet when asked the challenges or inhibitors to their involvement, they said:

*'In the decision-making process. I want them to involve me more but they may feel reluctant to involve me since they might think it is not part of the GES procedure to involve parent in decision-making all the time. So that at times hinders my involvement in the decision-making process and my child's IE ultimately'. (**Parent 4**)*

*'Another thing is that at times I am not told and then changes are made to my child's education for example, they moved him from one class to the other without telling me, making me very angry'. (**Parent 15**)*

The parents' statements show that they want to be more involved in decision-making and that this should not be on an occasional basis, rather it should be done '*all the time*'. Also, they disliked the autocratic way some decisions were imposed on them. On such occasions the school told the parents, '*... this is a school decision so what you as a parent say do not matter*' (**Parent 8**). **Parent 19** points out that '*this autocratic way does not help, after all the children are ours so we should have a say in everything*'.

The parents were asked what measures they had taken to address this problem. Nine of them said they had voiced their displeasure at PTA meetings or convinced school authorities to involve parents more in decision-making as in the case of

**Parent 2** who said: '*I am always trying to convince the school authorities so as to involve the parents in their decision-making through PTA meetings*'. The outcome of these steps have been mixed, for example, **Parent 2** reported that it was '*not quite positive but we are still working on*'. **Parent 5** on the other hand was of the view that, '*I think is improving*'. Other parents like **Parent 6** said they '*have done nothing*' and is '*hoping that things will sort themselves out*'.

#### 6.4.6.2 Financial constraints

The parents (n=13) identified financial constraints as an inhibitor to their involvement. According to them '*in these hard times it is difficult to find money to give our children all they need and it makes me not feel happy*' (**Parent 18**). **Parent 13** said:

*'Despite the fact that the government has taken up some of them, there are so many financial problems. Because he is not the only child, they are five so financially is difficult, but we are managing'.*

This shows that parents with more than one child may be faced with greater financial burdens and this may impact on their ability to provide for their children despite the FCUBE policy.

**Parent 12** also said:

*'... the materials for the visually impaired children are a little bit costly so as a parent, even though I have the will to see through the smooth training of the child in terms of his academic work, not all materials as a parent I'm able to buy for him and this is a very big challenge'.*

This shows that parents with a child with SEN may have additional financial responsibility of providing specific equipment or materials for their child and this may make things difficult for the parents.

Inability to supply children with their needs does not make parents comfortable and parents are concerned about the image that it portrays. For example, **Parent 7** said '*when you do not have money and you are to buy books it makes you look irresponsible*'. In response to what measures they have taken to resolve the issue, **Parent 1** said: '*I am working very hard to make enough money*'.

#### 6.4.6.3 Busy work schedule

Another inhibitor identified by the parents (n=11) was their busy work schedule which resulted in their inability to attend some school functions. The following are what some of the parents had to say:

*'My work is so much and I do not get time to attend all the meetings I would have loved to attend'. (**Parent 18**)*

*'Since I am a teacher, going to the school is a problem for me as at the same time I will have to be teaching other people's children'. (**Parent 15**)*

*'My greatest challenge is my inability to attend all school activities or meeting because most of the school meeting days and times normally conflict with my personal or work schedule. So it makes difficult for me to participate fully in most of the school activities'. (**Parent 19**)*

The parents' statements show that parental workload and work schedule sometimes prevented them from fully participating in school activities. Also, the time of these activities may conflict with their personal schedules.

Among the measures that some parents have taken was to delegate someone to go for the school activities they are unable to attend. For example, **Parent 19** sometimes lets his wife attend on his behalf. According to him when this happens '*she comes back to communicate whatever happens there*' to him. **Parent 20** on the other hand said:

*'...when I am not able to go to the PTA due to my business I call the headmaster, and later when I am free I go and ask what they discussed during my absence, I do the same if I hear there was a meeting I did not attend for any reason'.*

This she reported was not good as she realises that she may miss some of the information and that the head:

*'... just mentions the area he thinks, I will benefit or they stand to benefit more'*

#### **6.4.6.4 Opposing views of parents and school authorities**

The parents (n=10) reported that opposing views of parents and school authorities at times was an inhibitor to their involvement. The parents had this to say concerning the issue:

*'Also sometimes we have different ideas about education, I mean the parents and teachers and this is a problem as if you say what you think teachers say no it should be this leading to exchange of words'. (**Parent 4**)*

*'Other times we have different views on issues and it is a problem'. (**Parent 13**)*

*'At times to what we want is not what they do and that makes me angry'. (**Parent 14**)*

The parents' statements show clearly that at times the parents and the school have different opinions about education or issues. This situation at times resulted in the school not doing what the parents wanted. This made some parents 'angry'.

**Parent 17** said to resolve the opposing views issue he '*met the teachers and the headmaster's to talk about the differences in our thinking for the child*'. According to him the school and the PTA were still talking about it and he hasn't '*seen anything yet*'. This meant that he had not yet seen any results.

#### 6.4.6.5 Inability to help with homework

Parents' inability to help their children with their homework was identified as an inhibitor to their involvement. The following are what some parents had to say:

*'Let me think...sometimes my wife has difficulty helping with homework as she may not understand and I am not home most of the time due to busy work schedule. I cannot help the boy'. (Parent 7)*

*'I do not speak good English since I am only a form four leaver and my wife is uneducated, helping with homework is therefore difficult, but I try my best'. (Parent 17)*

*'Yes another thing is that I sometimes cannot help my child with homework because I do not know the things they are teaching him and teachers think I do not care about my child but that is not the case'. (Parent 3)*

Deducing from the above, parental inability to help with homework is because they:

- lack knowledge in subject matter;
- are uneducated;
- have a busy work schedule; or
- have problems with English language.

The question **Parent 11** posed in relation to her inability to help with her child's homework was '*... when I cannot understand what the child is to do how do I help?*' **Parent 3** was concerned that teachers would think that he did not care about his child when in reality he cared but had no knowledge in the subject matter to be of assistance to his child.

When the parents were asked what they have done to help overcome the inhibitors they mentioned, none of them said anything. **Parent 8**, however, said that she had '*not done anything as most of them {she} cannot control*'.

#### 6.4.6.6 Lack of communication

The parents (n=7) identified lack of communication between themselves and the school staff as inhibitors to their involvement. This is what some parents had to say:

*'Sometimes they do not tell me everything I need to know, I need to ask and ask sometimes and I am told nothing'. (Parent 6)*

*'Another issue is when there is a problem with communication flow, such that the school fails to notify some parents of some activities or decision it is an issue indeed'. (**Parent 18**)*

The parents' comments show that their main concerns about lack of communication was the school not informing them about pending school events. Also, the school do not tell or inform them about all that they '*need to know*', despite parents asking for information. **Parent 6** said this makes him '*stay in the dark and that is not a good feeling*'. Additionally, some decisions the school makes end up not being communicated to the parents.

When the parents were asked what measures they had personally taken to overcome the issue they mentioned, some of them did not say anything. One parent said:

*'I also told the head that to write and put all notifications of meetings into my child's school bag instead of handing it to her as that way she misplaces it and it seems to be working'. (**Parent 18**)*

#### **6.4.6.7 Unwelcoming attitude of school staff**

Some of the parents (n=6) identified the unwelcoming attitude of the school staff as an inhibitor to their involvement. Examples of what the parents said are:

*'..occasionally you go to the school and teachers or the head are not friendly or willing to talk or tell you 'I am busy'. (**Parent 7**)*

*'Also, once in a while you go to the school and meet a teacher who does not want to talk to you or listen as they say you like to worry them with your child issues'. (**Parent 20**)*

The statements of the parents show that the teachers at times displayed their unwelcoming attitude by telling the parents they were busy, or they had come at a bad time and therefore could not be given audience, or they were impolite. A typical example of impoliteness was given by **Parent 14** who said:

*'At times the teachers may say you think you know everything. At times some will ask you, do you think you are the only person who has her ward here'.*

Sometimes parents could detect from the teacher's body language that they were not welcomed. This can be deduced from **Parent 1's** statement: '*when I come to the school the teacher or head will squeeze {frown} their face to show they do not want me...*'. The effect of this unwelcoming nature of the school staff was summarised by a parent who noted that:

*'if the teachers are not free with you to be honest when you are coming to the school you will be scared but if there is a good relationship anytime you can come to the school if this is not there as I said you will be scared and will not like to bring your problems*

*or your child's problems to the school as the teachers will be complaining that you are constantly bring your child's problems to the school'. (**Parent 5**)*

When the parents were asked what measures they had taken to address this issue, they gave a range of responses. **Parent 20** said she did '*nothing*'. **Parent 14** said: '*told the headmistress to make it a point to welcome all parents*'. Other parents reported that they had '*...been talking to the teachers about this unwelcoming attitude and have even mentioned it at PTA meetings*' (**Parent 5 and Parent 1**). According to **Parent 5**, '*other parents collaborated this attitude of the teacher*'. The outcome she said was that '*The headteacher called a staff meeting with the teachers to discuss this and then advised them to stop this bad behaviour*'.

**Parent 18** said he goes '*to the school when they are on break so that the teachers can get time*'. The outcome of this she said '*is not bad ... so most of the time they get time for me and we all sit down and they listen to what I have come to say*'.

#### **6.4.6.8 Lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN**

Some of the parents (n=3) mentioned the lack of societal acceptance of their children as inhibitors to their involvement. The following statements were made by these parents:

*'You know my child has talking problem so people laugh at him, you know in our society people with such problems have hard times. It sometimes embarrasses me when I come to school functions with my child and he starts to talk and people look at us strangely and ask all sorts of questions'. (**Parent 3**)*

*'The major challenge as at now is societal acceptance. The way society labels them and do not make children with disabilities feel part of the society is a major challenge and in the process labels you as a parent with a child with a problem, this makes me not want to go to functions with him to spare him the pain'. (**Parent 10**)*

*'A major problem is how other children or people look down on people with disabilities it makes me sad and the way they pass cruel comments affects my child and makes me angry. So I really do not like accompanying him to public school events'. (**Parent 12**)*

These statements show that these parents with children with SEN are embarrassed, sad or angry by the way the public reacted when they went to school functions with their children. They were also concerned about the labelling of children with SEN and the subsequent labelling of them as parents with children with SEN. To spare their children the pain of these comments and derogatory looks, the parents preferred not to go to school functions with their children and this ultimately affects their involvement in their children's IE.

Children with SEN do not only experience these kinds of treatment from adults but they do so from other children in the class as well. This is confirmed by a comment made by a parent who at the end of the interview was asked if she had any comment or suggestion. He said:

*'I think inclusive education in general is a good idea but sometimes when the children are at the class that is the kindergarten and the nursery, some of the children make mockery of those children who have problem, because of that the children are not happy when they come'. (**Parent 18**)*

To address this unfortunate trend he suggests that '*The children should be told that that behaviour is bad and should be punished for it*'. The punishments that he proposed were '*standing in the corner or writing lines*' or in his view '*any punishment that will work will be fine*'.

When the parents were asked what they had done to personally address the lack of societal acceptance of their children with SEN, **Parent 12** said that: '*There is very little I can do on my own*'. This means that he saw it as a fight that as an individual he was unlikely to win. **Parent 10** on the other hand reported that:

*'We the parents and the teachers tried organising a radio discussion on the radio once on social acceptance of disabled people but it was not very successful but we hope to do it again'.*

This shows that along with the teachers they tried embarking on public education but was not very successful. **Parent 3** also said he had '*said it at PTA meetings many, many times*'. Yet he had '*not seen any change*' he was still hopeful that '*maybe one day change will come!*'

#### **6.4.6.9 Distance between home and school**

Finally, three parents identified the distance between their home and their child's school as an inhibitor to their involvement. **Parent 15's** statement virtually sums up the views of the other parents. This was:

*'I'm not staying quite close to the school so at times when I'm to go there, it takes me a lot of time or I have to adjust certain things before I am able to go. So because of the distance at times it makes it difficult to visit the child in the school'.*

According to **Parent 16** at one of the PTA meetings they '*discussed a school bus for the school.*' So far nothing had come out of it. **Parent 17** said '*I intend to move closer or move the child to another school*' to help solve this problem.

From the above it can be seen that the parents identified a number of factors that are inhibitors to their involvement. Among these were the school not involving parents in decision-making, financial constraints, busy work schedule of parents,

parents' inability to help with homework, lack of communication, unwelcoming attitude of the school staff and lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN.

## **6.5 Parents' emotional expressions**

In the course of responding to the questions the parents expressed some emotions. These emotions were deduced from their statements and presented below.

### **6.5.1 Happiness and satisfaction**

The parents expressed feelings of happiness and satisfaction with certain things. For example, **Parent 1** said: '*When I go to the school and the teacher and headteacher are like 'hello what do you want can I help' this make me feel very happy*'. This parent was happy when the staff were pleasant and had a welcoming attitude. **Parent 8** went on to say that this made her '*.... happy to support the school in whatever they are doing....*'.

Another parent said: '*When I come to the school and I see that the teachers are helping the children learn well I am happy*' (**Parent 3**). Going into more detail **Parent 7** said:

*'Erm the school is helping and doing well in the education of my child. When I come to the school I see that the teachers are helping the children learn well. Even the children with disabilities are being taught well due to the expertise of teaching at the disposal of the teachers'.*

The happiness and satisfaction of these parents was because all the children in the school were being helped to learn effectively by teachers who had the necessary expertise in teaching both children with and those without SEN.

**Parent 7** also expressed feelings of happiness and satisfaction when the school staff accepted issues he raised and had discussions with them. He said '*They actually welcome every issue I raise and discuss this and it makes me very happy and content*'.

**Parent 10** said she was happy when she engaged in school visits and the teacher '*tells me that my boy is doing fine and I don't have to worry. With this, I am happy and know all is ok*'. Another parent said:

*'Some times the school calls us the parents to discuss issues about our children individually and I make sure I go. On such occasion they can talk to you about the problems the child is encountering in her learning or any other thing they feel is going wrong. As a result of these discussions whatever is going wrong can be rectified as a result I am very happy that my child is going to an inclusive school'. (**Parent 8**)*

The discussions parents have with teachers about the education of their children revealed things that were not going on well. As a result of this, steps were taken to correct them, and it was this that made the parents happy and satisfied that their children were attending inclusive schools.

Finally, some of the parents reported that they will be happy if the school will engage them more in decision-making. An example of such a parent is **Parent 10** who said '*I will be happy if the school can make more decisions with parents...*'.

### **6.5.2 Optimism**

Some of the comments passed by the parents showed that they were optimistic. Even though these parents had not seen any change or positive outcome, the suggestions they gave shows that they had not given up. They were hopeful that either '*... things will sort themselves out*' (**Parent 6**), or that '*maybe one day change will come*' (**Parent 3**).

### **6.5.3 Frustration**

Parents were frustrated when things did not go the way they expected. For example, the frustration the following parents felt were evident in their statements:

*'Well sometimes initially you may see that is working but at (stumbling) on the way you see that the teachers go back to their old ways. There is really nothing I or any other parent can do to change them.'* (**Parent 1**)

*'I have said it at PTA meetings many, many times. I still have not seen any change.'* (**Parent 3**)

The frustration was due to the fact that the parents made some suggestions and initially it appeared as if they were being taken by the teachers, yet after sometime they resorted to their old ways of doing things. The frustration was resulting from a system where people do not change permanently for the better.

### **6.5.4 Anger**

The parents also expressed feelings of anger. When the school fails to implement decisions arrived at or they fail to do what the parents want, this can make parents angry. In this vain, **Parent 14** said '*at times too what we want is not what they do and that makes me angry*'. The 'they' she was referring to were the school authorities.

Sometimes too, the anger parents felt towards the school staff was because they fail to inform them before they implement certain decisions. For example **Parent 15** said: '*at times I am not told and then changes are made to my child's education. For*

*example, they moved him from one class to the other without telling me, making me very angry'.*

Lastly, according to **Parent 12**, the way people passed '*cruel comments affects my child and makes me angry*'. This anger was not directed at the school staff rather at the general public.

#### 6.5.5 Sadness

Some of the parents expressed feelings of sadness. This feeling was as a result of various issues. For example, **Parent 18** was sad because he did not have money to provide his child with all his needs. He had this to say: '*the issue is however financial in these hard times it is difficult to find money to give our children all they need and it makes me not feel happy*'. Thus, inability of the parents to fulfil all their responsibilities towards their children can make them sad. It may also make them appear as if they do not want to be involved in their child's IE.

Parental sadness can also result from opposing views. That is, parents wanting one thing and the school wanting another. A typical case was **Parent 20** who said: '*sometimes what I as a parent want for my child is not what the school does and in that case I am not happy at all*'.

Societal attitude or reaction towards children or people with SEN can result in the parents feeling sad. For example, **Parent 12** said: '*A major problem is how other children or people look down on people with disabilities, it makes me sad*'.

It can be concluded that, the parents expressed various emotional reactions some were, happiness and satisfaction, optimism, frustration, anger and sadness towards various issues in the IE placement of their child.

#### 6.6 Summary

The analysis of the interview data established that parents have academic, social and cultural expectations of their children attending inclusive schools. Some academic expectations were, their children should be able to read, write and manipulate figure and do well academically. Socially, parents want their children to be able to mingle with others and make friends, treat and be treated equally, be accepted and be good adults and citizens. Culturally, they want their children to learn the cultural norms and values of the people and be respectful and polite.

To help the children fulfil PE, the inclusive schools are teaching, involving parents in decision-making, giving individual attention to children, engaging children in group

work, games, play activities, organising other extracurricular activities to help children acquire social skills and engaging them in specific cultural activities.

The interview analysis further showed that parents were involved in IE. Parents were involved in school visits, helped their children with homework when possible and attended PTA meetings/school activities. Some parents volunteered their services to the school and the majority ( $n=18$ ) of the parents provided their children's personal or basic needs.

The parents reported that the inclusive schools expected them to provide their children's basic needs, attend PTA meetings/school activities, engage in school visits and parent-teacher consultations, decision-making, volunteering and ensure the attendance and punctuality of their children at school.

Parents further reported that the inclusive schools were involving them in school meetings and activities, parent-teacher consultations, decision-making, volunteering and informed or educated them on what they should/not do for their children.

Parents want to be more involved in decision-making and volunteering. Aside this they want to be involved in IEP development. Furthermore, parents want the schools to engage in home visits and educate them on how to be involved in IE.

Some facilitators to PI mentioned by the parents were communication, understanding, a welcoming and cordial relationship between the school and parents and involvement in decision-making. Also, the free education policy by the government also facilitated PI in IE.

Some of the inhibitors to PI mentioned by the parents were the schools not involving them in decision-making, financial constraints, and busy work schedules. Finally, in the course of the interviews parents expressed various emotions to various issues. These have been analysed in section 6.5. In the next chapter, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the literature.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7 DISCUSSION

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the investigation into parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE in Ghana. The study was guided by three research questions (see section 1.4). The interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in inclusive education presented in section 7.2 has been developed (based on Figures 2-6 and 4-2) to account for the findings from this study. Sections 7.3 and 7.4 relate to research question one, sections 7.5 and 7.6 relate to research question two and research question three is addressed in sections 7.6 and 7.7.

The applicability of the models of PI, as suggested by Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000), to Ghana is discussed and the Ghanaian model of parental involvement in inclusive education is presented. Based on the findings of the study, I propose areas for further research. I then discuss the reflections on the methodology and the limitations of the study. The chapter ends with a brief discussion on the inter-link and use of the proposed models.

#### **7.2 The interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in inclusive education**

There are three main variables which emerged from review of the literature (chapter 2), namely, PP, PE and PI in IE. Figure 2-6 in chapter 2 gives an overview of the areas covered by the literature review and serves as the conceptual framework for the study. Figure 4-2 in chapter 4 shows the focus of the instruments for data collection. This was developed based on the literature, aims of the study and the research questions. The findings of the study were therefore derived from these areas and were used as a starting point for creating the interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE shown in Figure 7-1.

From Figure 7-1, it can be seen that PP shows four components:

- 1) Knowledge is concerned with the information or the facts parents have about IE.
- 2) Benefits are concerned with the advantages parents perceive of IE.

- 3) Concerns address the issues that cause parents anxiety about IE and/or the disadvantages they perceive of IE.
- 4) Parents' preference for placement options is concerned with where parents think children with SEN should receive their education.

PE includes two components:

- 1) The expectations the parents have for their children in inclusive schools.
- 2) The roles the inclusive schools are playing to fulfil parental expectations for their children in inclusive schools.

PI includes five components:

- 1) What the parents are currently doing to be involved in IE.
- 2) The additional ways parents want to be involved.
- 3) How the inclusive schools involve parents.
- 4) How the schools expect parents to be involved in IE.
- 5) The facilitators and inhibitors to PI in IE.

The conclusion I arrived at based on the findings of the present study is that: demographic variables influence PP, PI and PE. Also, there is a relationship between PP and PI in their child's IE. Specifically, the relationship is between the parents' knowledge and perceived benefits of IE and parents' current involvement in IE (see section 5.5.7). The literature in section 2.3 suggests that every parent has expectations for their child in an inclusive school. As pointed out in section 2.5, PE may influence PI in their child's IE and PP of IE. PI in their child's education may also be influenced by PP and PE for their child in inclusive settings. Therefore, there may be an interdependent relationship between the three variables and this is the basis upon which the model is named.

To facilitate PI, which is an element of successful inclusive educational experience, it is imperative to educate parents, teachers and headteachers on IE and be mindful of the expectations parents have for their child. Education can help improve people's (including parents) perception and attitudes towards IE (Lewis and Doorlag, 2005; 1995) and possibly impact on the expectations they have of their child in inclusive schools.

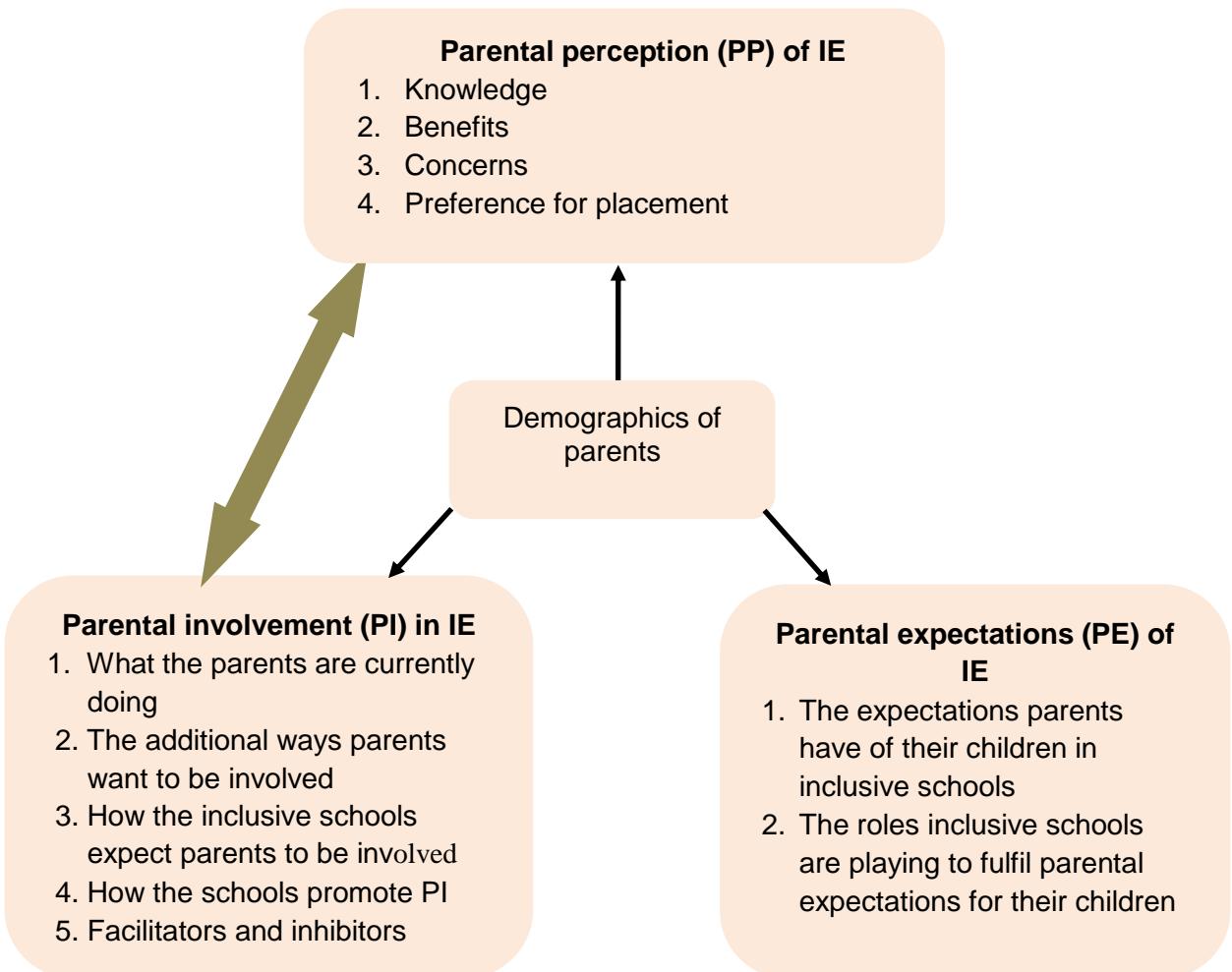
In investigating PI, it is prudent to explore the nature of the parents' current involvement, how parents want to be involved and how the school involves them. This will enable comparisons and any mismatch identified. Additionally,

opportunities and barriers to PI in IE need investigating. This will enable educationalists and policymakers to use the facilitators to enhance involvement while putting necessary measures in place to limit or eliminate the inhibitors.

The study has investigated and established that a relationship exists between PP (knowledge and benefits) and parents' current involvement in IE. This is depicted by the big green arrow. This relationship draws attention to the fact that increased parental knowledge and perceived benefits about IE can lead to an increase in the parents' current involvement in IE. The study did not investigate the relationship between PP and PE and PI and PE (see section 7.12 for explanations). As a result, there are no arrows connecting PP and PE, and PE and PI. This indicates that the relationships were not explored in this study (see section 7.12 and 7.13 for explanations and propositions for future research).

Finally, the arrows from demographics of parents pointing to the three main variables (PP, PI, PE) draw attention to the need to be mindful of the roles demographic variables may have on PP, PE and PI, as it may be used to identify variations within the parents ( see sections 5.3.5, 5.4.3 and 5.5.3).

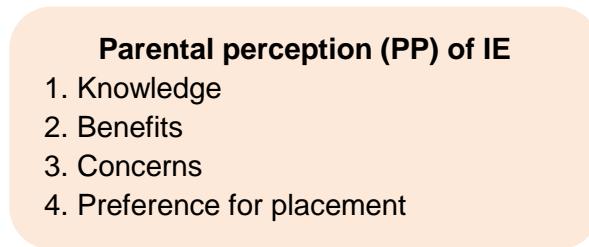
The interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE can be effectively used to investigate PP of IE, PE of their children and how parents are currently involved in IE. Furthermore, it can be used to investigate how the school involves parents and expect parents to be involved, additional ways parents want to be involved and the opportunities and barriers to their involvement in IE. Finally, it can be used to explore the relationship between PP, PI and PE.



**Figure 7-1: The interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in inclusive education**

### 7.3 Parental perception about inclusive education

In this section, the findings on the components of PP about IE in Ghana that will be discussed are shown in the excerpt from Figure 7-1 (see Figure 7-2 below).



**Figure 7-2: Excerpt one from Figure 7-1**

The findings of PP which is discussed in sections 7.3.1 to 7.3.4 shows that parents were knowledgeable, perceived IE as beneficial but had some concerns. However,

the majority of them preferred children with SEN not to be educated in inclusive schools.

### **7.3.1 Parental knowledge about inclusive education**

Before a parent develops any type of perception or attitude towards IE, it would be presumed that, the extent of their prior knowledge would vary and that may influence their support for IE. Over the past two decades studies have been conducted on parental views, concerns and perspectives about IE. Some studies showed that all parents (with and without children with SEN) supported inclusive practices and were satisfied with them (Seery, et al., 2000; Lowenbraun et al., 1990). Other studies showed that parents without children with SEN expressed concern about the negative effects inclusion can have on their child (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 1998). Furthermore, a few parents without children with SEN were not in favour of including children with severe conditions in inclusive settings (Peck et al., 2004). Studies also showed that parents with children with SEN held more positive beliefs, accepted IE and had positive attitudes towards it (Elzein, 2009; Stoiber et al., 1998). Studies have reported that parents of children with severe SEN have positive attitudes towards IE (Gallagher et al., 2000; Palmer et al., 1998). Contrary to this, Leyser and Kirk (2004) and Palmer et al. (2001) found less support for IE from parents with children with severe SEN. The possible reasons for these varied and sometimes contradictory findings could be that they were carried out in different countries and used different methods and samples. As such, country specific conditions pertaining to IE and the different research methodologies and samples could be factors that account for the disparity in results.

None of the studies in the literature reviewed explored parents' knowledge about IE. The present study investigated this and has revealed that the majority of parents in the sample were knowledgeable about IE as seen in Figure 5.3. In all, 81% of the parents were in agreement that "IE involves all children having the right to participate actively in the same educational setting". This is in line with a notable feature of IE identified by Mitchell (2005, p.4) which is "entitlement to full membership in regular, age-appropriate class" (see section 2.2.1.1). Furthermore, it supports the suggestion by Peters (2003, p.1) that "the fundamental principle of inclusive education is that all children should have the opportunity to learn together".

Another notable feature of IE in the literature, and agreed by the majority of the parents is about whole school development and improvement. This involves making

inclusive schools conducive to accommodate diverse learners. This finding relates to the suggestion by McLeskey and Waldron (2000) and Ainscow (1995) for the need for change or restructuring every aspect of the school for effective IE. Mitchell (2005) suggests that this development and improvement should be directed at; pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and support amongst others (see section 2.2.1). If schools are to meet the needs of all children, then this change or restructuring is vital (Loreman, 2007). The effectiveness of IE depends on the school's ability to restructure and adapt to meet the needs of diverse learners and within this forge different relationships with parents (Loreman et al., 2005; Loreman and Deppeler, 2002; Kennedy and Fisher, 2000).

The parents' agreement in Figure 5-3 that IE removes barriers to learning is supported by the literature on IE (Ainscow, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Flem et al., 2004; CSIE, 2002). The literature emphasises this for effective inclusion. For instance, Booth and Ainscow (1998) recommend that schools, communities, governments and local authorities should make considerable effort to remove barriers to participation and learning.

The parents in the present study agreed that IE is the process of finding better ways to respond to diversity and that it is frequently characterised as catering for the needs of all children in one classroom; this is in agreement with literature on IE (Blecker and Boakes, 2010; Ainscow et al., 2006; Ainscow, 2005b; Mitchell, 2005; UNESCO, 2005; Advani, and Chadha, 2003; Skrtic et al., 1996). These two areas in my view are intertwined. In the process of catering for the needs of all children one attempts to respond to the diversity inherent in the learners through, for example, giving children individual attention and the help each child requires.

The notion that "IE makes children with SEN feel better about themselves" was agreed on by the majority of the parents in the present study (see Figure 5-3). This is also supported by the literature on IE (Loreman, 2007; Hines, 2001; Carpenter, Bloom and Boat, 1999; Ritter, Michael and Irby, 1999; Walter-Thomas, Bryant and Land, 1996).

The majority of parents in the present study were also in agreement that IE is about presence, participation and achievement of all children and education for all (see Figure 5-3) and this is widely supported in the literature in section 2.2. (Ainscow et al., 2006; Ainscow, 2005b; Mitchell, 2005; UNESCO, 2005; Flem et al., 2004; UNESCO, 1994). Thus, children with SEN do not just have to be physically present as in the case of integration, measures must be put in place to ensure their full

participation and membership (Gyimah, 2006). Also, they must be given support to ensure they achieve their maximum potential.

Finally, the majority of the parents in the present study agreed that IE involves providing children access to appropriate aids, support and assessment (see Figure 5-3). Consistent with the data collected in this study, Deiner (2005) and Mitchell (2005) said that for successful inclusion, necessary support services and curriculum adaptation have to be made to meet the needs of the children. This curriculum adaptation in my view will include alternative modes of assessment for children who need it, for example, the use of portfolio, dialogue or observation. It is essential that the children's needs are assessed and arrangements made by the school to meet these needs prior to placement of the children with SEN.

Figure 5-3 showed parental disagreement to IE being about and being beneficial only to children with SEN. This displayed parents' understanding of IE. Consistent with the literature, parents did not view IE as only the prerogative of children with SEN; rather it is beneficial to all children (UNESCO, 2005; Advani and Chadha, 2003).

SpED (2005) confirmed that parents were given training about IE at the inception of the pilot IE programme. The knowledge of IE displayed by the majority of parents may therefore be attributed to this.

Despite the findings that the majority of the parents in the present study can be perceived as having knowledge about IE, the responses revealed that some parents were not as knowledgeable (see Figure 5-3). The parents with the least knowledge strongly disagreed or disagreed with all the items in Figure 5-3 with the exception of items c and j in which case they strongly agreed/agreed to. The findings about parents' knowledge about IE in Ghana are important as they help to fill the gap in the literature regarding parental knowledge about IE and raise questions about the position in other countries. Results of the analysis of parents' knowledge about IE can help the MOESS to design effective parental education programmes which can be implemented in IE schools periodically. The responses to items c and j highlight areas for further consideration. The parental education programme will be further discussed under the implications of the study which appear in Chapter 8.

Unlike previous studies, the present study has identified parental knowledge about IE as a crucial factor in PP about IE. The findings showed that there is a relationship between parents' knowledge, benefits and concerns about IE (see section 5.5.8). The more knowledge parents have about IE the more they may perceive it as

beneficial and the less concern they may have. Based on this, it may be prudent for all countries to consider enhancing parental knowledge about IE alongside developments within schools and systems.

### **7.3.2 Perceived parental benefits about inclusive education**

Confirming the literature in section 2.2.4.1 the majority of the parents (with and without children with SEN) in the present study found IE to be beneficial. Socially, the parents agreed that inclusion encourages children without SEN to accept children with SEN (see Figure 5-4). This confirms findings of previous studies conducted in the USA (Peck et al., 2004) and Greece (Tafa and Manolitsis, 2003) with parents without children with SEN. The findings of the current study are based on the responses of parents with and without children with SEN. Lewis and Doorlag (2005) pointed out that the attitude of children without SEN are “affected by meeting and interacting” with children with SEN (p.114). This means that if children without SEN are given opportunity to have contact with children with SEN and education about disabilities then this may help to improve their acceptance of children with SEN. The parents’ response was therefore relevant.

Additionally, the majority of the parents in the present study were of the view that “IE promotes the development of friendship between all children” and that children with SEN will experience feelings of belongingness and acceptance in inclusive classrooms (see Figure 5-4). This confirms existing literature (Ryndak et al., 1995; Peck et al., 1992; Green and Stoneman, 1989).

As children interact, natural bonds may develop and these may lead to the development of friendships. To enhance this friendship, the necessary platform must be laid through preparing both groups of children for inclusion (Mangal, 2011; Lewis and Doorlag, 2005). Children without SEN should be given knowledge about SEN and encouraged to see the similarities between themselves and children with SEN. This helps to improve their attitude towards children with SEN (Lewis and Doorlag, 2005). Development of friendships, acceptance and belongingness do occur as acknowledged by parents, but in my view, consciously implemented strategies are needed to facilitate them, for example, the use of cooperative learning and peer tutoring.

Of the parents in the present study, 82% were in agreement that “IE prepares children for the real world” (see Figure 5-4), a term used to refer to the world beyond school. Similar results were obtained with parents with children with SEN,

parents with children without SEN, and mothers of children with and without SEN (Tafa and Manolitsis, 2003; Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Guralnick, 1994).

In this study, both groups of parents (with and without children with SEN) held similar views. This agreement by the parents is significant since the “real world” is not made up of segregated groups of people (people with SEN or those without SEN only).

Confirming the findings of Cole et al. (2004) the majority of the parents in the present study agreed that IE will lead to the academic achievement of all groups of children as they can help each other. Cole et al. (2004) said that increase in academic performance of children without SEN can result from support given, which was initially intended for the children with SEN. This support, coupled with other adaptations to instruction helps to create an environment that stimulates learning. In all, 74% the parents were in agreement that IE created environments that stimulated learning (see Figure 5-4). In developed countries like the USA, additional adults are placed in the classes to help children with SEN. This is not so in Ghana, rather teachers have to deal with large class sizes (Ocloo and Subbey, 2008; Vanderpuye et al., 2006).

Creating environments that stimulate learning requires teachers to use divergent techniques and strategies. Mangal (2011, p.50) suggest that some of these are:

Team approach, activity based learning, cooperative learning and experiences, data based instruction, creative problem solving, peer to peer support.

According to Mangal (2011, p.50) these approaches can be used for all children based:

on the ground that the basic principles of teaching and learning are the same for all children of a particular age group irrespective of their normality or exceptionality.

Consistent with this, 67.5% of the parents in the present study were in agreement that every child will benefit from the skills and techniques teachers use in inclusive classrooms to promote learning (see Figure 5-4).

The majority (85.2%) of the parents in the present study were of the view that, teachers can take the opportunity to acquire specialised skills in teaching in inclusive classrooms (see Figure 5-4). As noted earlier, Mangal (2011) pointed out that the basic skills of teaching and learning are the same for all children. The majority of the parents agreeing to the fact that teachers can take the opportunity to acquire specialised skills in teaching in inclusive classrooms is therefore problematic as there are no distinct pedagogy for children with SEN (Norwich and

Lewis, 2001). Since supporting teachers is part of IE, schools can update teachers' knowledge in the basic principles of teaching and learning through periodic INSET programmes. Teachers may then combine the techniques and strategies for teaching and learning to cater for the diverse learners in their class.

Furthermore, the majority (81.9%) of the parents were of the view that children with SEN will improve their language and communication skills if taught in inclusive placements (see Figure 5-4). This corroborates the opinions of parents in the study conducted by Ryndak et al. (1995).

Improvements in language and communication do not happen by chance. Teachers need to ensure that the learning environment is conducive for developing language and communication skills (Allen and Cowdery, 2012; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008). Teachers can use divergent strategies and techniques to make this happen (Mangal, 2011). Additionally, children without SEN may serve as role models for language and communication skills.

The majority of the parents (74.5%) were of the opinion that IE leads to equality (see Figure 5-4). This is confirmed in the literature (UNESCO, 2005; 2001).

In the process of providing access to education and restructuring the school to accommodate all learners, IE aims at making the schools responsible for all learners (UNESCO, 2005). In all, (24.0%) of the parents strongly agreed and (55.4%) of them agreed as shown in Figure 5-4, that this was a benefit of IE. Unlike mainstreaming or integration, IE ensures that schools make adequate provision in all aspects for all learners (Idol, 1997).

Finally, the parents agreed that IE is beneficial because it enables children with SEN to be educated in neighbourhood schools. This is one of the basic requirements of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). In Ghana, the pilot inclusive schools are situated in the central parts of the districts where population is dense and the schools are easily accessible. The parents living within these localities are expected to send their children to the nearest inclusive school.

From the results, (see Figure 5.4) few parents did not perceive IE to be beneficial and they are the ones that should be of concern to the Government, MOESS and the IE schools as they may derail successful running of IE programmes in Ghana (Lewis and Doorlag, 2005; 1995). In my view, intensifying parental education about IE and giving parents the opportunity to see first-hand the success all children may achieve in inclusive classrooms may give parents more insight into the benefits of

IE. This may be done through well-organised activities and programmes and could include open days where parents can visit the school.

### **7.3.3 Perceived parental concerns about inclusive education**

In the literature, parents expressed several concerns about IE, for example, teachers will not be able to give individualised attention or it will negatively impact on emotional development (Rafferty et al., 2001). Parents in this study also expressed some concerns which cannot be ignored if Ghana aims at having a successful IE programme (see Figure 5-5).

A parental concern expressed by 58.5% of the parents which was consistent with previous findings was that children with SEN are likely to slow down the learning of children without SEN (O'Connor, 2007; Palmer et al., 2001). Heward (2012) reports that some educators also expressed this concern, yet there is no evidence supporting this. On the contrary evidence suggests that children without SEN placed in IE classrooms actually performed better than their counterparts in traditional classrooms (Cole et al., 2004).

The present study also revealed that 57.9% of the parents expressed concern that children with SEN were likely to be teased, bullied or harmed in inclusive settings. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Palmer et al., 2001; Bailey and Winton, 1987; McDonnell, 1987). The parents do have reason to be concerned as Vanderpuye and Deku (2007) found that children without SEN teased and bullied children with SEN in inclusive schools in Ghana. This happened to the extent that 60% of the children with SEN who participated in that study said this made them sad.

About 81% of the parents in the present study expressed concern that IE will require intensive teacher retraining. Previous studies have reported that parents expressed concern about teacher expertise in inclusive classrooms (O'Connor, 2007; Palmer et al., 2001; Laurel et al., 2000) but none of the studies reviewed reported that parents expressed concern that IE will require intensive teacher retraining. Giving intensive teacher retraining in my opinion may be impossible due to lack of time and finance. A more realistic approach may be the use of INSET programmes to update teachers' knowledge. The parents who participated in this study perceived this as a concern probably because they were not convinced about the teachers' expertise in educating diverse learners. However, this study could not confirm this. If this is the case, however, then the parents' concerns are not unfounded as previous studies have revealed that Ghanaian teachers report that they lack adequate knowledge

and skill in teaching children with SEN (Agbenyega. 2007; Obeng, 2007). Vanderpuye et al., (2009) found that teacher pre-service training in the area of special/IE was inadequate and INSET programmes were almost non-existent and even when available, areas covered were inadequate, leaving teachers not fully equipped in teaching children with SEN in inclusive classrooms. This is a serious situation. In my view all major stakeholders in education in the country (the Government, GES and MOESS), can deliberate on ways to solve this situation. In my opinion The Government should not rhetorically support IE but rather, provide enough funds for regular in-service training to update teachers' knowledge and skills. The MOESS and GES can monitor to ensure that when these funds are provided they will be well utilised for INSET of teachers in IE.

Furthermore, 51.6% of the parents in the present study expressed concern that children with SEN are likely to be marginalised and not have their needs met in inclusive settings (see Figure 5-5). This finding corroborates the concerns of parents in studies conducted by Palmer et al. (2001) and Laurel et al. (2000). Based on the information that teachers in Ghana lack adequate knowledge and skill in teaching children with SEN (Agbenyega. 2007; Obeng, 2007), coupled with the knowledge that class sizes are large (Ocloo and Subbey, 2008; Vanderpuye et al., 2006), the parents have genuine concerns. Especially when Obeng (2007) reported that less than 40% of teachers in her study did not give children with SEN any special assistance in their classroom.

The majority of the parents in the present study were not in agreement with the following statements in Figure 5-5:

- Children with SEN will be socially isolated by other children in inclusive classrooms.
- Contact with children with SEN can be harmful to children without SEN.
- Presence of children with disabilities will lower the academic standards of the school.
- In an inclusive classroom children will not receive adequate teacher attention.
- Children without SEN will learn undesirable behaviour from children with SEN
- Teachers are likely to leave their jobs due to the extra workload in inclusive classrooms.

- Children with SEN may be included physically but excluded instructionally.

The parents' responses indicate that they do not perceive the issues mentioned as concerns to IE. To these parents, unlike the parents in previous studies (Palmer et al., 2001; Bailey and Winton, 1987; Mc Donnell, 1987) children with SEN will not be socially isolated in inclusive classrooms. The results of this study are comparable to previous studies (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 2001; McDonnell, 1987) where the majority of the parents did not show any concern about the following issues. These include children with SEN will be harmful to the other children, they will lower the academic standard of the school and their presence will affect the motivation of the other children to learn. Also, children will receive inadequate teacher attention, children without SEN will copy undesirable behaviours exhibited by children with SEN, teachers are likely to leave their jobs due to extra work load and children with SEN will be included physically and not instructionally.

However, a few of the parents in studies carried out by Leyser and Kirk (2004), Palmer et al. (2001) and McDonnell (1987) expressed their concern about the issues mentioned above. In the current study, some of the parents were also concerned about some of the issues raised (see Figure 5-5). The findings of this study are significant in that they give an insight into parental concerns about IE.

#### **7.3.4 Parental preferences for placement**

The placement preference of the parents for children with SEN is important as it gives insight to how the parents perceive IE. The present findings showed that the preferred placement for children with SEN (for 53.8% of parents) was not the inclusive school (see section 5.3.4). This shows that the majority of the parents in the present study were not in favour of IE. This finding was not unexpected as Runswick-Cole (2008) and Kenny et al. (2005) reported that parental views about placement are varied, some advocate for inclusive schools while others prefer special schools. The question is what is contributing to the parents not wanting IE placement for children with SEN? Can it be based on the reasons advanced by researchers in section 2.2.4.3 or can it be attributed to the influence of negative societal attitude to people with SEN? The situation is of serious concern as IE is the current trend in educating children with SEN (Mittler, 2002; Sebba and Ainscow, 1996). The results may have serious consequences for IE in Ghana, as it has been established that without parental support the programme is likely to fail (Elkins, van Kraayenoord and Jobling, 2003).

The parents were given the opportunity to give reasons for their choice of placement option. The three major reasons parents gave for choosing inclusive school placement as the best placement option for children with SEN are:

- I. Children can learn from each other and socialise
- II. For equal treatment
- III. Good education

Parents who favoured special school placement did so because they were of the view that they have specially trained teachers, provide good education and it leads to equal treatment. The parents' views are not what is currently existing in the country. For example, even though, there are specially trained teachers teaching in these schools and therefore the needs of these children are likely to be met (Peetsma et al., 2001), specially trained teachers are not restricted to only these schools. In Ghana, upon completion of their training, specialist teachers are posted by GES to both special and inclusive schools or even to the district office as peripatetic teachers helping a cluster of schools. Specially trained teachers are therefore available in inclusive schools.

Providing good education is not restricted to only special or inclusive schools. GES, MOESS and all schools in the country are set up to provide good education for all children (MOESS, 2008; 2003). Finally, the view that special school placement leads to equal treatment in my view is problematic as special schools by their nature involve labelling and segregation which implies unequal treatment.

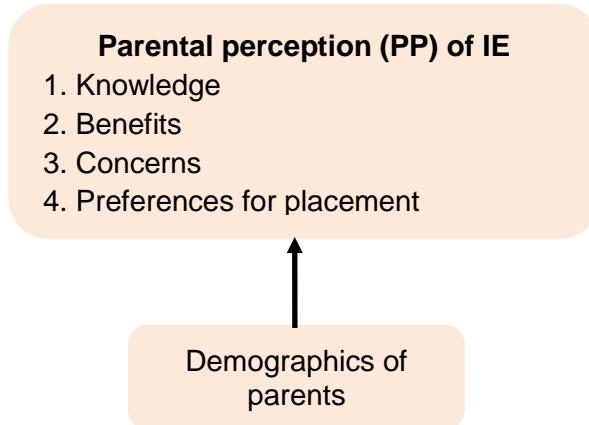
The parental responses however show that they had specific reasons for their choice of placement options for children with SEN. The present study has successfully identified the reasons behind the parents' preference placement for children with SEN in Ghana.

In the present study, 2.0% of the parents indicated that their choice of special school placement was because "children with SEN will spread their disability" to the other children. This is an issue of great concern as it is a clear indication that these parents have little knowledge about SEN. To them, SEN is spread through physical contact. As mentioned earlier, GES said they educated parents prior to the inception of the pilot IE programme. However, Vandepuye et al. (2009) investigating preparation for IE in Ghana, reported that all 120 parent participants said they were not informed about inclusive activities nor were they educated about SEN conditions as part of their preparation for IE. This makes me question the content of the education given to parents about IE and how many of the parents accessed it. Does this mean that over the years parents are given general factual information about IE,

yet are not informed or educated about the types and causes of SEN? Parents' responses indicate their negative attitude towards IE. Since the attitude that parents convey can affect their children's attitude (Vanderpuye and Deku, 2007; Lewis and Doorlag, 2005; 1995), this can be detrimental to IE in Ghana. For example, Vanderpuye and Deku (2007) reported that children without SEN were not interacting with children with SEN because they were instructed by their parents not to do so. Situations such as this may result in the social isolation of children with SEN in inclusive settings.

#### **7.4 Demographic perceptual variations within the sample of parents**

This section addresses the findings on perceptual variation within the sample of parents based on: age, educational level, gender and having a child with SEN or not. The extract from Figure 7-1 shows the part of the figure being discussed (see Figure 7-3 below).



**Figure 7-3: Excerpt two from Figure 7-1**

##### **7.4.1 Perceptual variations within the parents based on age**

The findings of the study showed that there was no variation within the sample of parents based on age in their knowledge, benefits and concerns about IE (see section 5.3.5.1). This finding is contrary to that of Besevegis et al. (1997) cited in Kalyva et al. (2007, p.297) which found that parental age influenced Greek parents without children with SEN attitudes to IE. The findings of this study complement that of Kalyva et al. (2007) which found that parents' attitude towards inclusion is not influenced by their age. Even though the two studies researched different areas (attitude—core perspectives, expected outcomes and classroom practices as against perception—knowledge benefits and concerns), collectively they show that age has

no effect on either parents' attitude to and perception (knowledge, benefits and concern) about IE in Greece and Ghana respectively.

#### **7.4.2 Perceptual variations within the parents based on educational level**

The previous research findings on the effect of parental educational level on their perception towards IE are contradictory. Parents with higher educational levels hold more positive beliefs towards IE (Stoiber et al., 1998; Guralnick, 1994). However, Tofa and Manolitsis (2003) report that Greek parents' education does not affect their attitudes towards IE. The inconsistencies in these findings may be due to country specific conditions. The results of the present study showed that educational levels of parents do not affect the concerns they have about IE (see section 5.3.5.2). Educational level was found to have a borderline effect on parental knowledge about IE. However, post-hoc tests showed no statistical differences.

Pertaining to parents' perceived benefits of IE, educational level was found to have a statistically significant effect. The difference was found to be between diploma holders and GCE holders. The parents who had tertiary education (diploma and degree holders) had higher means (see Table 5-7), implying they perceived IE to be more beneficial than holders of GCE and MSLC. This confirms the findings of studies by Stoiber et al. (1998) and Guralnick (1994) that parents with higher educational levels hold more positive beliefs towards IE.

In this study, unlike that of Tofa and Manolitsis (2003), parents' educational level does affect their perception about IE. Specifically it affects the knowledge they have and the benefits they perceive of IE. To compensate for the effect educational level can have on parents' perception and subsequent involvement in IE, parents with lower educational levels can be identified by the respective IE schools and be given more intense education. There can be collaboration between the government, school and all stakeholders of IE to provide this education. PTA meetings will be good platforms for this.

#### **7.4.3 Perceptual variations within the parents based on gender**

The findings of previous studies on variations based on gender were mixed. The study by Tafa and Manolitsis (2003) found no variations based on gender. Besevegis et al. (1997) and Kalyva et al. (2007) on the other hand identified gender variations. While Besevegis et al. (1997) found women to have a more positive attitude to IE than men, Kalyva et al. (2007) found fathers to be more favourable to inclusion than mothers.

The current study showed that males (fathers) had a higher mean on parents' perceived benefits of IE  $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ) than females (mothers), ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ), implying that, females perceive IE to be less beneficial than males (see Table 5-8). However, the t-test results show that no gender differences existed in the parents' perceived knowledge, benefits and concerns about IE (see section 5.3.5.3). This supports the findings of Tafa and Manolitsis (2003) and is contrary to the findings of Besevegis et al. (1997) and Kalyva et al. (2007). Educational programmes for parents therefore should not target any specific gender; rather both genders may attend and it should take into account the roles and needs of both groups of parents.

#### **7.4.4 Perceptual variations within the parents based on having a child with SEN or not**

Unlike any previous study, the present study found no statistically significant difference between parents with and those without children with SEN and their knowledge about IE (see section 5.3.5.4). Thus, parents in the present study did not differ in their knowledge about IE based on whether they have a child with SEN or not.

Contrary to previous studies which reported that parents without children with SEN expressed concern about the negative effects IE can have on their child (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 1998), the present study shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups of parents based on their concerns about IE (see section 5.3.5.4).

Finally, previous studies showed that parents with children with SEN hold more positive beliefs about IE (Elzein, 2009; Stoiber et al., 1998). The present study however showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the two groups of parents based on their perceived benefits about IE (see section 5.3.5.4). When organising parent educational programmes, focus should not be on any specific group of parents. It is more appropriate to adopt an inclusive approach.

#### **7.4.5 Perceptual variations based on placement options**

Studies conducted by Kalyva et al. (2007) and Balboni and Pedrabissi (2000) reported that the age of parents was not related to their attitudes to inclusion and that younger parents do not hold a different attitude from older ones respectively. The present study found, contrary to these findings, that the preferred placement option for children with SEN was influenced by parental age (see section 5.3.5.5).

Evidence in Table 5-10 shows that younger parents (aged 20 and below and 31-40) preferred inclusive placements more than older parents (41-60). The possible reason for this, in my view, may be older parents are more entrenched in their attitudes as a result of exposure to the negative societal attitude reported by Adera and Asimeng-Boahene (2011) and Okyere (2003). The difference between the older and younger parents is however marginal.

Evidence in Table 5-11 shows that the majority of the parents (61.1%) with the highest educational qualification (degree) opted for inclusive placement for children with SEN. Over 50% of the parents with other qualifications opted for placements outside the inclusive school. In my view, by the virtue of their educational qualifications, degree holders may be more enlightened and objective and recognise the need to include children with SEN in all spheres of life.

The study also found that males (48.6%) were more favourable to IE placement for children with SEN than females (44.0%). However, the main preference placement option for both groups was the special school even though slightly higher percentage of males (49.8%) as against females (46.9%) opted for this (see Table 5-12). It is important to note that the difference between males and female was marginal.

Parents with children with SEN perceived IE placement as a better option than parents without children with SEN (see Table 5-13). This notably diverges from the findings of Evans and Lunt (2002), who found that parents with children with SEN most often perceived placement in special schools as the best option. In this study, parents with children with SEN see IE placement as the better option than parents without children with SEN.

## **7.5 Parental expectations of inclusive education**

In this section, the findings on PE of their children in inclusive schools in Ghana are discussed. The components of PE that will be discussed are shown in the extract from Figure 7-1 (see Figure 7-4 below).

### **Parental expectations (PE) of IE**

1. The expectations parents have of their children in inclusive schools
2. The roles inclusive schools are playing to fulfil PE for their children

**Figure 7-4: Excerpt three from Figure 7-1**

### **7.5.1 Parents' expectation of their children in inclusive Schools**

All parents have expectations for their children. Parents develop these expectations about their children's education through their own experiences or through information provided by the school, media and other parents (Russell, 2003). The parent participants in this study are no different. The results of both sets of data revealed that parents did have expectations for their children in inclusive schools. The questionnaires revealed that the three topmost expectations that parents have for their children are the ability to read and write, develop social skills and do well academically (see Table 5-14). The interview results also showed that parents had academic expectations for their child. Paramount amongst them was their child being able to read and write and manipulate figures. This goes to fulfil some of the aims of acquiring education which are literacy and numeracy. The expectations of the parents in the present study are not different from that of parents internationally as reported by OECD (2006) and parents who have children in general education schools in Ghana (Brooke, 2009). This confirms the assertion of Adeniji-Neill (2012) that PE are universal. Using two different categories of parents (with and without children with SEN), the current study revealed the commonalities in that they had similar academic expectations for their children. The interviews revealed that the parents wanted their children to acquire these skills at a functional level; that is, they should be able use the skills acquired for daily living. This brings to mind the use of functional academics proposed by Lewis and Doorlag (2005) in teaching children with SEN. This involves using role plays and practical examples. For example, in teaching mathematics children role play a market scene where buying and selling is taking place. Lewis and Doorlag (2005, p.244) point out that:

Basic skill instruction must go beyond textbook and workbook pages: it must extend into the real world if special students are to use tool subjects to solve the problems of everyday life.

As there are no special methods (basically methods of teaching are universal) for children with and without SEN (Mangal, 2011), both groups of children will profit from the use of this approach.

Unlike the questionnaire, the interview results revealed that parents expected their children to acquire some form of accreditation. For parents without children with SEN, for example, parent 5 and 15 (see section 6.3.1), their expectation was that their child will be able to acquire a degree or a PhD. Parents with children with SEN, for example parent 6, also had similar expectations. In his case he wanted his child to complete JSS with certification (see section 6.3.1). There is a link between this finding and that of the questionnaire where 45.4% of the parents expected their child to do well academically (see Table 5-14). This PE is similar to that of parents

who have children in regular schools in Ghana, Hungary and England (Brooke, 2009; OECD, 2006; Batterham, 2003). Currently in Ghana, there is no way a child can acquire certification without doing well academically.

Results of the questionnaire and the interview analysis showed that parents had social expectations of their children (see Table 5-14 and section 6.3.2). Danish parents also had similar expectations for their children (OECD, 2006). For the questionnaire 50.8% of the parents expected their child to acquire social skills, while only 94 (18.1%) expected their child to make friends. The disparity between the number of parents who wanted their children to develop social skills and make friends is outstanding. It raises the question of how parents understand the development of social skills and how they expect it to be used. This certainly warrants further investigation.

In the present study, 12 out of the 20 parents interviewed expected their children to interact with their peers and make as many friends as possible. Previous researches have established that inclusion generally improves the social climate, children benefit from social interaction and it facilitates friendship between the two groups of children (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994; Peck et al., 1992; Green and Stoneman, 1989). Palmer et al. (2001) reported that one of the reasons parents supported IE was because it resulted in social skill improvement. It may be for this reason the parents in the current study expected their children to acquire social skills.

Results of the questionnaire and the interview analysis revealed that some parents, irrespective of whether they had a child with SEN or not, expected their child to treat and be treated equally, be accepted in class, and be a good citizen (see Table 5-14 and section 6.3.2). Treat and be treated equally and be accepted not only in class but society has to do with the fundamental human right of people. Everyone deserves to be treated equally irrespective of having SEN or not.

Rambiyana and Kok (2002) pointed out that school education is to benefit the whole state. Thus, it is the desire of the state to have good citizens; education is the means through which this can be achieved (Rambiyana and Kok, 2002). For children with SEN however, it may not be any type of citizenship education that may help them achieve the expectations of their parents and the state. It is probably for this reason that Lawson, H. (2003, p.121) advocates for education through citizenship as “the most enabling and empowering perspective on citizenship education for pupils with learning difficulties”. Unlike any prior study in IE in Ghana, this finding is significant as the review of literature did not identify any study where parents reported that they wanted their children to be good citizens.

Results of the questionnaires and interviews further revealed that parents expected their children to learn the cultural norms and values of their society. It is worth noting that only 8.1% of the parents who responded to the questionnaire had this expectation. The interview data recorded 16 out of the 20 parents interviewed having this expectation. The disparity in response in the two data sets is difficult to explain. Since the interview was face-to-face the parents were more open and it helped to reveal in-depth information as the parents in their response came out with different aspects of culture that they wanted their children to learn (see section 6.3.3). Learning these different aspects of culture will enable all categories of children to be prepared for adult living and be accepted in society (Rambiyana and Kok, 2002).

Investigating and analysing PE is vital as it may give the Government, MOESS and the IE schools indications of what the parents expect of their children both in the present and the future and they may in turn do everything in their power to ensure that the children fulfil these expectations. A notable contribution of this study is that the majority of the parents (78.3%) affirmed that IE schools were helping to meet their expectations for their children (see section 5.4.1). This means that 21.7% of both groups of parents were not having their expectations for their children being met. The educational placement of children can be aimed at meeting PE for their child provided these expectations are in line with the educational goals and expectations of the nation. It therefore calls on the inclusive schools to intensify their efforts to help the children meet the expectations the nation as well as the parents. Investigating PE of their children in their educational placements is therefore crucial to help identify the parents' expectations and then this can be compared to that of the nation and any identified mismatch discussed. Collectively, the inclusive schools and the parents can work towards fulfilling nationally acceptable educational expectations for children.

Since parents have definite expectations for their children attending inclusive schools. A hypothesis is that they would want to be involved and are knowledgeable and have positive perceptions about IE. The discussion from the previous section showed that the parents in the present study have knowledge about IE. However, the majority (53.8%) of them were of the opinion that children with SEN should be educated either in the special or regular schools (see section 5.3.4), indicating that the majority of the parents were not in favour of IE placements for children with SEN. Section 7.7 also shows that parents were involved in their children's IE. Although no testing was done to establish the relationship between PE, PP and PI because the structure of the PE component of the questionnaire did not yield to

statistical analysis, the assumption is that there is a relationship between them (see section 2.5). The nature of the relationship will have to be explored by future research as proposed in section 7.13.

### **7.5.2 The roles of the inclusive schools in fulfilling parental expectations for their children**

The study gave parents the unique opportunity to identify activities inclusive schools were doing or yet to do to meet PE for their children. The questionnaires revealed that paramount among the activities being done was making good use of academic learning time, involving parents in decision-making and keeping parents informed about their child's progress. It was also discovered that even though the schools were doing the following, there was the need for them to intensify their efforts in:

- Making the curriculum flexible to meet the needs of all children.
- Taking into consideration children's needs when teaching.
- Giving children one-to-one support (see Tables 5-15 and 5-16).

These are really important when there are diverse learners and the goal is to restructure the schools to make them conducive to meet the needs of all learners (Loreman et al., 2005; Loreman and Deppele, 2002; Kennedy and Fisher, 2001). A worrying thing about these findings is that 53.5%, 34.9% and 48.8% parents with children with SEN respectively indicated that the three activities were yet to be done for their child (see Table 5-16). Gyimah (2011) suggests that teachers can adapt both the physical environment and the curriculum to ensure that all children benefit from inclusion. If the parents are saying that this was not being done then it is an obstacle to successful inclusion.

The interviews provided data about the specific ways the school fulfils academic, social and cultural PE for their children in inclusive settings. From section 6.3.4 there is evidence that the teachers are teaching numeracy and literacy, and also, involving the parents in academic decision-making. One common PE that can be said to be universal is the ability of their children to be able to read and write. This has been established in this study (see previous section) and by Brooke (2009) and OECD (2006). The teachers are effectively achieving this expectation through teaching. Involving the parents in academic decisions is also very important at promoting PI (Epstein, 2001; Hornby, 2000).

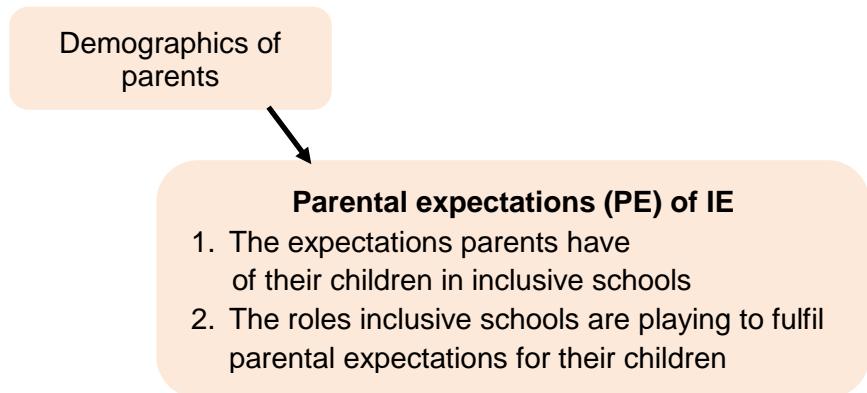
Additionally, only 2 out of the 19 parents interviewed said the teachers were giving their children individual attention (see section 6.3.4.1). As noted earlier from the questionnaire findings, this needs more attention (see Tables 5-15 and 5-16).

Socially, the parents reported that the schools were engaging their children in group work; extracurricular activities like games, drama, sports, reading groups and the Scripture Union meeting (see section 6.3.4.2). These various activities gave the children the opportunity to interact with their peers and develop socially.

Culturally, 15 of the 19 parents interviewed attested that the schools were teaching RME and social studies through which the children learn the culture of the community (see section 6.3.4.3). In addition, there were cultural group activities and displays, and art and craft through which the values that society accepts were taught to the children. Rambiyana and Kok (2002) draw attention to the fact that exhibiting behaviours and attitudes that are culturally acceptable in society signifies adulthood. The schools teach these accepted values and culture and in the process, they are meeting PE for their children in inclusive schools. This was further confirmed by 78.3% of the parents who indicated that their child's educational placement was helping to fulfil the expectations they have for their child and 57.7% of them said that their child's current educational placement was helping to improve their child's academic performance (see section 5.4.1).

## 7.6 Demographic variations in parental expectations

This section discusses demographic variations on the parents' expectations for their children in inclusive schools. The extract from Figure 7-1 shows the components of the figure being discussed (see Figure 7-5).



**Figure 7-5: Excerpt four from Figure 7-1**

### 7.6.1 Variations in parental expectations based on age-range

Unlike any of the studies reviewed, the present study addressed age-range variations in PE for their children in inclusive schools (Russell, 2003; Russell, 2005; Wolman et al., 2001; Foot et al., 2000; Tartar and Horenczyk, 2000; Crozier, 1999; Bennet et al., 1998; Au and Pumfery, 1993). The results of the questionnaires

showed that percentage variations in PE based on age-range existed, for example, over 50.0% parents aged 20 and below to 40 years expected their children to develop social skills, while 42.0% and 48.0% of parents aged 41-50 and 51-60 had a similar expectation (see Table 5-17).

Also, while about 58.0% of the parents aged 20 and below expected their children to be good citizens, a lesser percentage of parents (31.0% to 38.0%) between ages 21-60 had this expectation (Table 5-17). I find this interesting as my expectation was that older parents may be more concerned about this than very young parents as they were more matured.

Furthermore, the study showed that few (16.7%) very young parents (20 and below) expected their children to learn a trade or skills for future employment. As parents get older more of them expect this. Table 5-17 shows that 37.8% of parents aged 51-60 had this expectation.

Despite these variations in the percentages of the responses the chi-square test of association in Table 5-17 showed that only one item had a borderline association ( $p=0.05$ ). Based on the findings in section 5.4.3.1 it may be concluded that parental age does not influence PE for their children in inclusive schools.

### **7.6.2 Variations in parental expectations based on educational level**

The present study also revealed that percentage variations in PE based on educational levels existed. The evidence in Table 5-19 showed that although parents in all the educational levels expected their children to be able to read and write, a higher percentage of parents with MSLC (65.4%) expected this compared to parents in the other educational levels. Also, development of social skills was the expectations of 57.1% of the parents with a diploma while the highest percentage response from the parents in the other educational levels was 49.4%. Chi-square test for association results in Table 5-19 showed that there is an association between parents' educational level and their academic expectations for their children.

Table 5-19 showed that the majority of parents (60.3%) with a degree expected their child to do well academically compared to the other parents in the other educational levels. The possible reason for this could be that because parents with a degree were highly educated and had achieved academic success therefore expected their children to do likewise.

### **7.6.3 Variations in parental expectations based on gender**

Evidence in Table 5-21 showed gender percentage variations existed in PE. A greater proportion of female than male respondents expected their children to be able to read and write (62.2% and 55.9%), be a good citizen (39.3% and 34.3%) and learn a trade for future employment (30.9% and 26.9%). However, a greater proportion of male than female respondents expected their children to be able to develop social skills (52.9% and 48.2%), do well academically (49.0% and 42.2%) and be treated equally (42.4% and 35.6%).

Despite these variations in the percentages of the responses, the chi-square test of association reported in Table 5-21 showed that on all the items, no statistically significant association existed. Based on the findings in section 5.4.3.3 it may be concluded that gender does not influence parental expectations for their children in inclusive schools (fathers and mothers have similar expectations).

### **7.6.4 Variations in parental expectations based on having a child with SEN or not**

This study, unlike any previous study, compared the expectations of parents with and without children with SEN and found that variations in PE for their children existed. Chi-square results in Table 5-23 showed that there was an association between parents wanting their children to do well academically, be good citizens and learn a trade.

The evidence in Table 5-23 revealed that a greater proportion of parents with children with SEN (41.9%) expected their children to be treated equally, and be accepted in class (26.2%) than parents without children with SEN (37.4% and 20.7% respectively (see Table 5-23). In my view, these parents may be feeling that due to their child's SEN their acceptance and treatment by other children may be affected.

Contrarily, a higher percentage of parents without children with SEN (40.8%) compared to parents with children with SEN (29.1%) wanted their children to be 'good citizens'. This study however failed to reveal why fewer parents with children with SEN had this expectation. Future research can examine this.

A higher percentage of parents who had children with SEN (35.5%) compared to those without (25.9%) expected their children to learn a trade or skills for future employment (see Table 5-23). Rambiyana and Kok (2002) reported that parents wanted their children to be prepared for adult living and be employable. Wolman et al. (2001) mentioned that parents wanted their children to be financially

independent. Parents with children with SEN in this study were more concerned about their children learning a trade and skills for future employment than parents without children with SEN, probably because they were worried about their children's ability to be employed and gain financial independence due to their SEN.

#### **7.6.5 Demographic variations in parents responses on whether inclusive schools are fulfilling their expectations**

As noted in section 7.5.1, the majority of the parents who participated in the study professed that inclusive schools were helping to fulfil the expectations they had for their children. Observing the parents responses in Table 5-18, it is evident that variations based on age-range existed, despite the fact that the majority of them were satisfied. Parents aged 20 and below were the most satisfied followed by parents in the age-range of 41-50. Parents aged 51-60 recorded the least affirmative percentage response of 67.6%, meaning that 32.4% of them felt their child's inclusive school was not helping to fulfil their expectations. It is possible that being older and more experienced they expected more from IE.

Table 5-20 also showed that variations based on educational level existed. More parents with MSLC (81.1%) reported that the inclusive schools were helping to meet their expectation than all the other educational levels. However, over 76.0% of all the other educational levels affirmed that the schools were helping to meet their expectations.

Furthermore, Table 5-22 showed that variations based on gender existed. A greater proportion of males (79.6%) than females (77.1%) reported that the inclusive schools were helping to meet their expectations. The final interesting finding is that 79.3% of the parents without children with SEN as against 76.2% of the parents with children with SEN had their expectations being fulfilled (see Table 5-22).

No apparent reason can be offered for some of the variations in responses observed. In my opinion, the schools can investigate the expectations of parents, and compare them to the national goals and expectations of education. If they are found to be in line with the nationally expected goals of education then the schools along with the parent can work towards achieving them. If they are not then discussions may be held with the parents as to the reason why these expectations cannot be fulfilled. This makes research studies such as the present one very important as it will save the school time and resources in carrying out research in exploring parental expectations.

## 7.7 Parental involvement in inclusive education

This section discusses the parents' current involvement in IE. The components of PI that will be discussed are shown in the extract from Figure 7-1 (see Figure 7-6 below).

### Parental involvement in IE

1. What the parents are currently doing
2. The additional ways parents want to be involved
3. How the inclusive school expect parents to be involved
4. How the schools promote PI
5. Facilitators and inhibitors

**Figure 7-6: Excerpt five from Figure 7-1**

### 7.7.1 Parents' current involvement in inclusive education

The results of the study showed that the parents in the present study were involved in their children's IE. From the questionnaire results, the prominent areas of PI were, providing children's basic needs, attending PTA meetings, providing information about their children, helping with homework and contributing to decision-making (see Table 5-25 and 5-26). The interview results in section 6.4 confirm that the parents were engaged in these activities. Additionally, the results from the interviews provided further details. For example, it showed that the parents attended other school functions like open days and cultural activities besides PTA meetings. One parent reported that he was part of the SMC. SMCs are the schools attempt to involve the community in managing the school. It comprises parents, community leaders, and stakeholders in education. The questionnaire results further showed that some parents visited the school to look through their child's books or enquire about their child's progress. The interview results revealed that besides these, parents visited their child's inclusive school to monitor their attendance or out of concern for their child. This shows that the interviews helped to produce more in-depth and detailed information and extended knowledge beyond the existing ideas in the published literature.

The parents' reported ways of involvement in IE are in line with some of the ways of PI stated in the models of Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000). From the model suggested by Epstein (1995) these are: Epstein's Type 1 (parenting), Type 2 (communicating), Type 4 (learning at home), Type 5 (decision-making) and Type 6 (collaborating with the community). Few parents in the present study engaged in Type 3 (volunteering) (see Table 5-25, 5-26 and section 6.4.1). However, contrary to the study by Ingram et al. (2007) which found parents to be involved in only the

first two types of PI in the model proposed by Epstein (1995), in the present study, evidence in the tables and section mentioned showed that all Types of Epstein's PI were in operation in Ghana although Type 3 was less patronised. The present study further revealed two ways parents can be categorised as being involved in IE. These are school visits and attending school functions and meetings. The parents reported to have gained a lot from these visits and encouraged all parents to do likewise (see section 6.4.1.1). The schools however, can consider adopting an open door policy to accommodate parental visits and also invite parents to all school activities as invitation for involvement is a motivator to PI (Simon, 2004; Kohl et al., 2002; Epstein, 1986).

Areas of PI in IE that need to be encouraged in Ghana are Epstein's Type 3 (Volunteering) or Hornby's parents as resources and school visits to look through their children's books and discuss issues with the teachers. Previous studies have also shown that few parents engaged in volunteering (Dhingra et al., 2007; Ingram et al., 2007). Hornby (2011) reports that volunteering helps parents to get information that would enable them to understand their children better. They gain confidence in their ability and even may end up furthering their own education. The results of the present study shows that when parents volunteer and teach, teachers can learn from the wealth of information parents have and the children become more interested in the lesson (see section 6.4.1.5). In my view, parent volunteer teachers or those who engage in school visits gain first-hand knowledge of the curriculum and their children's academic performance and may be in a better position to help their children with their homework. Also, it may help them set realistic learning goals with their children as the questionnaire results revealed that not many parents did this (see Tables 5-25 and 5-26).

### **7.7.2 How the school involved and expected parents to be involved in inclusive education**

During the interviews, parents described how the inclusive schools expected them to be involved in their child's IE. The results showed that the schools wanted parents to provide their children's basic needs such as, stationery, books, food, a peaceful home environment, a place to study after school and everything the child needs to learn effectively (see section 6.4.3). Under Epstein (1995) this falls under Type 1 (parenting). Providing a place at home where children can learn is important as it gives the child a personal space for studying. According to Ingram et al. (2007) providing such a place encourages children to learn in a serene atmosphere. In my opinion however, it is not all home environments that are serene and conducive for

learning. Parents can consider making the home environment conducive for learning by removing or reducing the presence of anything that may hinder the child's learning at home.

Providing the basic needs of children in my view is essential as it may give the children the peace of mind to focus on their studies. Knowing the importance of a balanced diet, the Government of Ghana launched the School Feeding Programme in 2005 to help combat malnutrition and boost school enrolment (Ohene, 2012).

The parents also mentioned that they were expected to be members of the PTA and attend meetings, engage in school visits, decision-making, parent-teacher consultations, volunteering, ensure attendance and punctuality of their children at school, help with homework and discuss whatever transpired during the school day with them (see section 6.4.3.1). These fall under Type 1-6 and parental contributions of models by Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000) respectively.

The questionnaire results showed that the inclusive schools were involving the parents in IE (see Tables 5-32 and 5-33). The ways the parents were being involved are in line with Epstein (1995) Types 1-6 of PI numerated in her model (see Table 2-1), and contributions of parents identified by Hornby (2000) (see section 2.4.4.3).

From the interview responses, it may be said that the pilot inclusive schools in Ghana are involving parents in PTA/other school activities. They informed and educated parents on things they should or should not do for their children, communicated with parents about every aspect of their children's IE, engaged parents in parent-teacher consultations, decision-making. Also, 3 out of 20 parents mentioned that parents were involved in volunteering and 2 out of 20 mentioned that they were members of the SMC (see section 6.4.3).

Tables 5-32 and 5-33 and section 6.4 showed that there are two areas that the schools needed to intensify their efforts in involving parents. These are engaging parents in volunteering (which has already been discussed in section 7.7.1) and engaging in home visits. Using principals as their research subjects, Hornby and Witte (2010) reported minimal use of home visits by school staff in New Zealand; the present study used both headteachers and parents and had similar results. Agreeing with Hornby and Witte (2010) the results of the present study showed that this component of PI is being underutilised in New Zealand and Ghana.

Hornby and Witte (2010) pointed out that parents (especially those with children with SEN) appreciate home visits. They mentioned that it is an opportunity for teachers to deal with parental questions and concerns. The interview results (n=13)

showed that the parents would want the schools to engage in home visits. Parent 4 mentioned that she '*will feel more supported by the school*' and children will be better behaved if this was done (see section 6.4.4.3). Also, it enables teachers to build rapport and be able to understand the home situation of the children and how it affects learning (Meyer and Mann, 2006; Hornby, 2000). Additionally, it has been reported to result in parents having more confidence to be involved in the education of their child (Logan and Feiler, 2006). Additionally, it is a way the school can strengthen its partnership relationship with parents. For these associated benefits, the MOESS can consider including home visits in the policy document of the inclusive schools (see section 8.1.3.2 for further discussion on this).

### **7.7.3 Additional ways parents want to be involved**

The results showed that the parents had additional ways they wanted to be involved in IE. From Table 5-34 the three top ways the parents wanted to be involved are: assisting children in road crossing, helping with the school library, and listening to pupils read in class. These can be categorised under Resources (Hornby, 2000) or Volunteering (Epstein, 1995). The opinion of the majority of the headteachers was that the parents would want to assist children with road crossing, act as guest speaker on speech days and help with sports coaching. Since the majority of the parents chose the mentioned options it may be concluded that they are the areas of preference for them, followed by the other areas in the table.

Additionally, 50.8% of the parents who responded to the questionnaire mentioned other ways they wanted to be involved in IE. These parents wanted to be part of decision-making, be resource persons or fundraisers and be involved in disciplinary issues relating to their children. Some of them felt they needed more education on how to help their child (see section 5.5.4.3). These were corroborated by the interview results as the parents interviewed had similar desires (see section 6.4.4). Parent 19 suggested that the school run seminars and workshops to educate parents on how they wanted them to be involved and that schools should not just assume that parents know how to be involved (see section 6.4.4.2). To Hornby (2011), parents are interested in engaging in educational programmes aimed at "promoting their child's progress or managing their behaviour" (p.36). The results of the present study showed that parents are interested in engaging in educational programmes that give information on how to be involved and educate them on their expected roles.

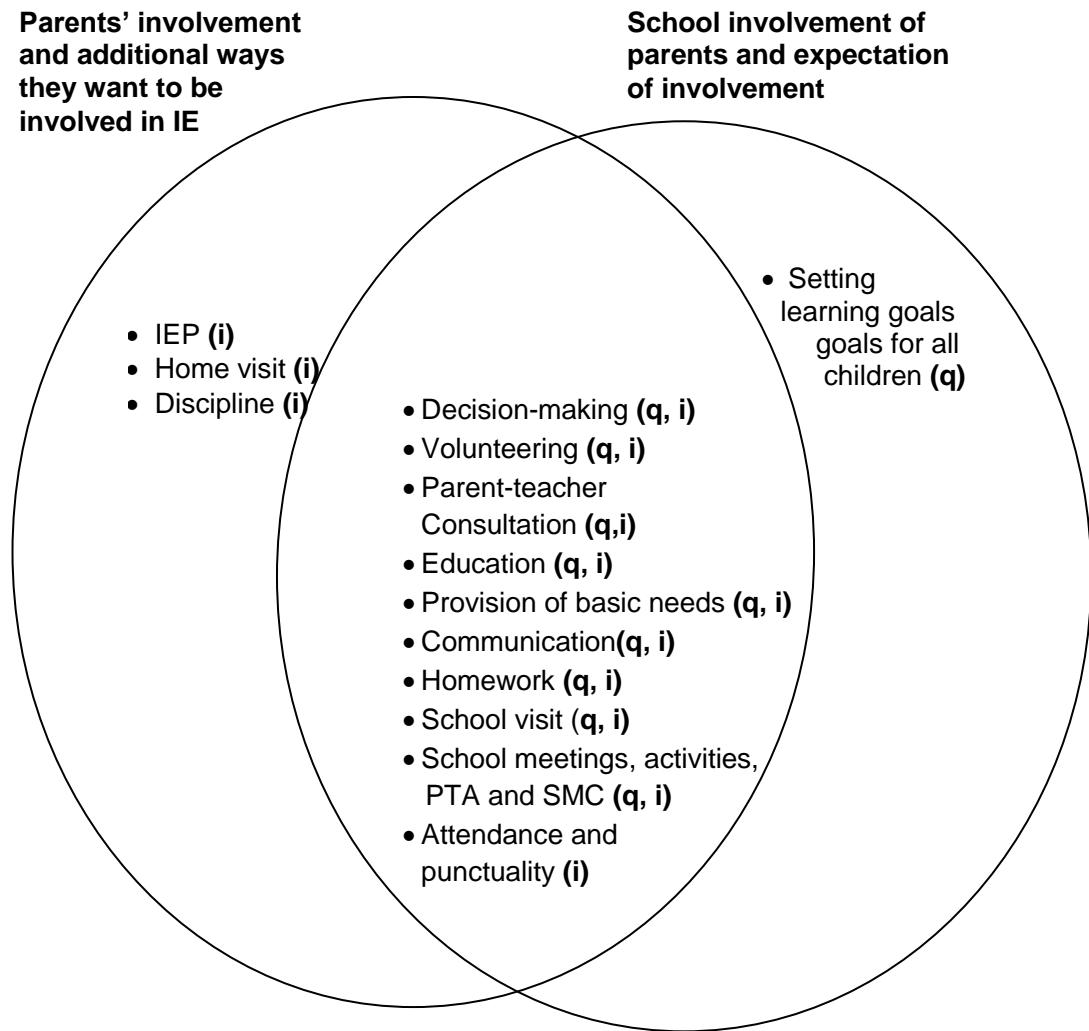
Parents with children with SEN wanted the school to involve them in IEP development. This is important as the interviews showed that the parents with children with SEN were not involved in IEP development (see section 6.4.4.5).

Some of the parents had not even heard of IEPs. This is not unexpected as Hooker (2007) reports that even amongst teachers in Ghana the concept of IEP is not widely known and that the link between the IEP and general curriculum has not been clarified. The question is, do inclusive schools in Ghana develop and use IEPs? If they do, how were they developed without parental input and signature? If they do not, what justification do they have for not using it? There is need to investigate these issues further. If interviewing headteachers had been part of the present study, then this issue could have been addressed. The headteachers could have been asked if they use IEP for children with SEN in their schools. If so, who developed it, how is it used and how often is it revised? Most of the ways mentioned by the parents in both instruments have been numerated by Hornby (2000). Engaging parents in them can help boost their involvement in IE.

The opinion of some of the parents (7.5%) was that it is the government's responsibility to be involved in the education not theirs (see section 5.5.4.3). By this the parents meant that the education of children is the government's sole duty and parents have no part to play and therefore did not have to be involved. This response indicates that parents with such an attitude may not want to be involved in their children's IE. It is possible that, in their view, once the child is in school their responsibility ends. This mentality may be as a result of their lack of knowledge on how to be involved. Epstein (1990) pointed out that parents lacked the knowledge of how to be involved in their children's education. Consequently, 13 out of the 20 parents interviewed and (13.3%) of the parents who responded to the questionnaire said they need education on how to be involved and the roles and responsibilities expected of them (see sections 6.4.4.2 and 5.5.3). DfES (2001) states that it is important to help parents "recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as parents and play an active and valued role in their children's education" (p.16). Educating parents on how to be involved and their expected roles and responsibilities as suggested by the parents in this study is a way parents can be made aware of how to be involved and the roles and responsibilities expected of them in the school. Before this education is given, a national policy on PI can be put in place as suggested by Hornby (2000). This will enumerate parental responsibilities for their children along with how parents can be involved in IE. Parents can then be educated on the policy. The inclusive schools and parents may then work in partnership to enhance PI and optimise the educational experience of children.

#### 7.7.4 Comparing parental involvement and how the school wants and expects parents to be involved in inclusive education

Figure 7-7 shows the parents' current involvement and additional ways parents want the schools to involve them compared to how the schools involve and expect parents to be involved in IE. The items in Figure 7-7 which are derived from the questionnaires are indicated with letter **q** and those from the interviews are indicated with letter **i**.



**Figure 7-7: Parents' involvement and how schools involved parents**

The evidence in the intersection of the two circles in Figure 7-7 show that the parents are involved and also, that the schools are involving the parents in IE in various ways. Figure 7-7 shows that there are three additional ways the parents want to be involved that is not currently happening. These are: IEP development, discipline and the school staff engaging in home visits (see section 5.5.4.3 and 6.4.4).

Also, the schools expect parents to be involved in setting learning goals for their children but evidence in Tables 5-25 and 5-26 show that few parents do this. Section 6.4.4.5 shows that all (n=7) parents with children with SEN interviewed said they did not set learning goals with their child and the schools did not involve them in setting learning goals.

It is important to note that although the intersection between the two areas shows that the enumerated types of PI are being done, the data is more nuanced. It is not simply the forms of involvement that is being evidenced. For example sections 6.4.4.1, 6.4.4.2 and 6.4.4.4 show that parents want to be more involved in decision-making, volunteering and education on how to be involved in IE. A later section notes how contextual factors also impact on the level of involvement (see section 7.8)

### **7.7.5 Facilitators to parental involvement in inclusive education**

The results of both instruments showed that effective communication and understanding between the home and the school are facilitators to PI (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36 and section 6.4.5.1). The parents reported that various channels were used to communicate with them. Amongst these were phone, letters, newsletters, communiqués and verbal information. Both Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000) identified this as crucial. Hornby identified communication as one of the needs of parents, while Epstein (1995) emphasised the need for a two-way communication between school and home.

The parents in the present study were satisfied with the communication that existed and acknowledged the importance of not only communication (see section 6.4.5.1), but also the school's ability to understand them and their children. The schools should continue communicating with parents through as many channels as possible (Hornby 2011; 2000). It may also be helpful to find out from parents their preferred mode of communication so that the schools utilise them. The focus of the communication may be information about upcoming school programmes and may also include information on their children's progress, their strengths and weaknesses (Hornby, 2000; Epstein, 1995). Good communication can help facilitate a strong relationship between school and home.

The results of both instruments showed that the parents identified participation in decision-making as a facilitator to their involvement in IE (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36 and section 6.4.5.3). The questionnaire results further indicated that when schools respect parents' decisions and views then parents are more motivated to be

involved in the IE of their children. Decision-making is one of the identified ways of PI in the model proposed by Epstein (1995) whereas Hornby (2000) refers to this as a parental contribution.

The parents and headteachers acknowledged that a welcoming school environment facilitated their involvement in IE (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36). The interview results showed that this is about the physical environment (see section 6.4.5.5). The MOESS in conjunction with the schools may consider keeping the schools well painted and having well cared for flowers to improve the physical environment of the school. Closely related to this is the attitude of the school staff as they contribute to making the school welcoming. During the interviews some parents (see section 6.4.5.2) pointed out that if teachers are friendly and ready to talk and listen to them they feel more willing to come to the school to discuss issues with them. Teachers and all school staff can, as a matter of policy, be trained on how to welcome and interact with parents. This may form part of the pre-service or INSET programmes. The schools can also maintain an open door policy as this will encourage parents to come to the school and be involved in IE.

Five parents interviewed identified the school involving them in school activities as a facilitator to their involvement (see section 6.4.5.4). There is need for effective communication between the parents and the school if parents are expected to attend these activities. The goal is to keep parents informed and involved in all school activities and programmes (Epstein, 2008; 1995).

The questionnaire results revealed that the majority of the parents and headteachers were of the view that, when the schools educated parents on the need for involvement and how to be involved, it facilitated PI (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36). The interview results revealed (in section 6.4.4.2) that parents wanted to be educated on what to do for their children and how to be involved in their children's IE. This is an indication that given the requisite education, parents may be more involved as they will have adequate knowledge of what is expected of them and they can even initiate involvement activities like coming to the school for information or requesting consultations with the teachers. The inclusive schools can educate parents on their expected roles and responsibilities as it can help to strengthen home-school partnership.

Intensive teacher training on how to involve parents in IE was identified by both groups of questionnaire respondents as a facilitator to PI (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36). Even though the present study did not investigate to establish if this was being done, I examined the curriculum for training teachers at the University of Cape

Coast, Winneba and the colleges of education in Ghana. This showed that what was missing from the pre-service training of teachers was how to involve parents in IE or how teachers and parents can work in partnership to help children fulfil their educational potential. Hornby and Witte (2010) point out that without pre- and in-service training of teachers on PI, the success of government initiatives for improving PI may be limited. In Ghana, there is no documented government initiative in improving PI in IE. However, the SENPF (2005) expects parents to enrol their children in school and be involved in their education.

Furthermore, the majority of the parents and headteachers identified school authorities treating parents as equals, providing support for parents and addressing their concerns as facilitators to PI (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36). Support for parents was identified by Hornby (2000) as part of needs of parents. The parents interviewed pointed out that all parents were expected to be part of the PTA which served as a support group for parents (see section 6.4.3.1). The parents also mentioned consultation with teachers (see section 6.4.2.3) as an activity the school expected them to be involved in. During such meetings, they can ask questions for clarification, advice or help and this further constitutes parental support. The parents can also offer vital information or suggestions about their children. The inclusive schools can consider broaden the scope of parental support to include counselling services.

Hornby (2010, 2000) point out that having a policy on PI will help to promote PI as it will spell out various ways parents can be involved as well as the ways the schools can help. Ghana however lacks such a policy. At the pilot study stage of the present study, headteachers were asked whether such a policy existed; the 10 headteachers who participated in the pilot said there was no policy. I contacted the MOESS to find out if such a policy existed. If it did then individual schools could develop their own school policies of PI based on that, but I was told that there was none. There is the need for the MOESS, in conjunction with the schools and parents, to consider developing a policy on PI in Ghana as the majority of the questionnaire respondents were of the opinion that such a policy would facilitate PI in IE (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36).

Unique to this study, the results of the interviews showed that the FCUBE policy of the government, which resulted in free education at the basic level (primary education), acted as a facilitator to PI as parents no longer had to pay school fees. This shows that the parents do appreciate this initiative. Additionally, the parents reported that knowing the future benefits of education and their child's zeal for

learning also facilitated their involvement. The question is will these parents still feel motivated to be involved in their children's IE when the FCUBE programme ends in 2015? This will merit further research. This study can investigate parental views about the impact of FCUBE on IE in Ghana. Unstructured interviews can be used to get in-depth information from the parents. The parents can be asked whether they will still be motivated to be involved in their children's IE when the FCUBE programmes ends and what they think should be the next step the government should take in the area of education.

A unique result of the interviews was parents' emotional expressions (see section 6.5). The parents expressed happiness, satisfaction and optimism with some issues about their children's IE (see sections 6.5.1 and 6.5.2).

Emotions have been reported to have a direct and powerful influence on behaviour (Loewenstein, Weber, Hsee, and Welch, 2001; Booth and Pennebaker, 2000; Solomon, 2000). Using it in this context will mean that if parents are expressing positive emotions about various issues in relation to their children's IE, then they may want to be more involved. Supporting this, Parent 8 mentioned that the pleasant attitude of the teachers made her want to support the school in everything. This shows that the teachers' pleasant attitude which resulted in the feeling of happiness (which is an emotion) triggered the desire for increased involvement (which will result in behaviour, for example, more school visits) and support for the school. Parental emotional reactions may therefore lead to parents' increased involvement in IE. There is the need to investigate this area further. However, the inclusive schools should be aware of the emotions the parents are expressing in relation to various aspects of IE as some of these emotions may help to facilitate PI in IE in Ghana.

#### **7.7.6 Inhibitors to parental involvement in inclusive education**

The analysis of both the questionnaire and the interview data showed that financial constraints were an inhibitor to PI in Ghana. So far, in the literature reviewed, no study mentioned that parents had identified this as being an inhibitor to PI (see section 2.4.3.1). The reason for this may be that most of the studies were conducted in more developed countries where the poverty rate is not high, unlike Ghana where 28.5% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012) of the population are living below the poverty line.

The means of the headteachers and the parents in Tables 5-37 and 5-38 showed that the majority of them were of the view that "parental lack of knowledge to be involved" was an inhibitor to their involvement. Closely related to this was "parental

lack of knowledge on how to help their child". Epstein (1990), identifying barriers to PI, noted that very few parents know what the school expects from them or how they should contribute towards their children's education. This is exactly the case for parents in Ghana. It was probably for reasons such as these that the parents in section 6.4.4.2 requested to be provided adequate education on how to be involved and what is required of them as parents. As suggested by Parent 19 the schools should have periodic training for parents in this area.

Morris and Taylor (1998) pointed out that due to language barriers, parents may be unable to help their children with homework. The results of the questionnaires showed that the majority of the parents and the headteachers perceived "parents' inability to communicate effectively in English" as a barrier to PI (see Tables 5-37 and 5-38). The interview results in section 6.4.6.5 showed that the parents' inability to help with homework was a barrier to their involvement. Reasons for this might be, they did not understand or lacked knowledge about what was required, they were uneducated or had problems with English. All these are related to ability to communicate, lack of which affects PI in IE. The effect of language barrier goes beyond helping with homework to actual communication with teachers or school authorities. Parents with this problem may feel self-conscious and be reluctant to interact with the school personnel. For such parents, the local dialect may be used for communication.

Closely related to the parents' inability to help with homework were the parents' busy work schedule and parents not having time for their children as identified in section 6.4.6.3 and Tables 5-37 and 5-38. Some of the parents interviewed said that they were unable to help with homework or attend school activities or programmes due to their busy work schedules. This corroborates with the study carried out by Williams, Williams and Ullman (2002) which found that parents in England cited work commitment and lack of time as barriers to their involvement amongst other factors (see section 2.4.3.1). In my view, parents who make such excuses may not be committed to the education of their children and may require counselling.

Some of the parents and headteachers considered "parents and school authorities having opposing views about what should be involved in the IE of the child" as an inhibitor to PI (Tables 5-37 and 5-38). In section 6.4.6.4, 10 of the 19 parents interviewed also identified this as a barrier to PI. Opposing views can seriously affect the parents' desire to be involved as they will not feel listened to. Opposing views can arise when parents do not really understand what is going on or the nature of their children's SEN or where the school is not empathising with parents.

In my view, to address this, parents may have to be communicated with and everything well explained to them, and collective decisions between the teachers and parents taken. Teachers have to ensure they do not impose their views. They can employ effective communication and listening skills as recommended by Hornby (2011) to effectively communicate with parents about the issue being discussed.

The means in Tables 5-37 and 5-38 show that some of the parents and headteachers perceived “teachers not have adequate training on PI” as an inhibitor to PI. Documented in the literature is the observation that many teachers lack the skills, knowledge, strategies and attitudes they need to effectively interact with parents (Hornby, 2000; Morris and Taylor, 1998). This has been attributed to lack of training to work with parents (de Acosta, 1996; Epstein and Dauber, 1991). Another possibility might be that the teachers do not have time for the parents (Hornby, 2000). This can be manifested in the teachers not listening to the parents with the excuse that they are busy (see section 6.4.6.7). As pointed out in section 7.7.5, the curriculum of the teacher training institutions in Ghana did not include how teachers should involve or work with parents in the IE of their children. As a matter of urgency MOESS can consider revising the curriculum to include how to involve or work with parents in IE.

Related to the issue of training on how to involve parents in PI is the “unwelcoming attitude of school staff” identified as a barrier to PI in section 6.4.6.7. Some of the parents interviewed mentioned that the teachers were not ready to talk with them or listen to what they had to say or were unfriendly or impolite. These attitudes of the teachers are very unprofessional. There is the need to emphasise during pre-service and INSET programmes the need for teachers to be professional in their dealings with parent. During PTA meetings the parents can be informed about the suitable times within the school day they can come and discuss with staff any issues or concerns they have and how these meetings should be booked. One parent described how she felt that the teacher had more time for her if she went during break time rather than class time. Even though it worked, in my view it is inappropriate as it meant the teacher was forfeiting her break.

Lack of communication between the home and the school was another identified barrier by some of the respondents (see section 6.4.6.6 and Tables 5-37 and 5-38). Additionally, several researchers have identified it as a possible inhibitor (Lawson, M 2003; Thompson, 1996; Armstrong, 1995; Mannan and Blackwell, 1992; Epstein, 1986).

Some of the parents interviewed ( $n=7$ ) complained that the school sometimes did not tell them everything they needed to know or failed to notify them of some decisions or school activities (see section 6.4.6.6). The result of this is either they failed to turn up for some school events or they were left in '*the dark*' which Parent 6 reported as being an unpleasant feeling. Roffey (2002) points out that parents want to know all that is going on for their child in the school. This includes information directly concerned with their child's progress and pending school activities and programmes. Communication is a basis for formation of a strong relationship between the parents and the school (Baker and Manfredi-Petitt, 2004). Also, Epstein (2008; 1995) and Hornby (2000) identified it as essential components in PI due to its importance. The schools must endeavour to maintain effective two-way flow of communication between them and the parents to facilitate PI. According to Hornby (2011) some examples of exemplary practice being used in England, New Zealand and Barbados include schools communicating to parents their rights and responsibilities through their websites and handbooks. They also use letters, forums, newsletters, text messages, telephone calls, emails and homework diaries. Hornby (2011) describes how parents can communicate with the school using letters or notes, telephone calls and emails. Although parents are expected to make appointments to see staff, they are still attended to if they turn up unexpectedly at the school.

The results of the interview revealed that not being involved in decision-making was an inhibitor to PI. As established in the previous section, decision-making is part of the core components of the models of PI proposed by Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000) respectively. The parents ( $n=15$ ) acknowledged that they were not totally left out of decisions, rather they were involved in some while others were impositions from the school and this was what they did not want. Parent 19 pointed out that the autocratic decision-making process by the schools did not help and that they as parents must be involved in all decisions concerning their children. It is disturbing to note that a critical decision such as moving a child from the present class to another was not made with the parent in attendance as Parent 15 mentioned in section 6.4.6.1. The pilot inclusive schools must endeavour to include parents in all vital decisions concerning their children and major changes in the school activities or programmes. Sometimes it might be difficult to include all parents in administrative decisions. However, PTA meetings can be held and issues discussed and parents' opinions and views sought before such decisions are taken. The inclusive schools in Ghana must start treating parents as equal partners. When they do, they will include parents in all decisions concerning their child.

Some (n=3) of the parents mentioned that lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN was a barrier to their involvement (see section 6.4.6.8). The parents who mentioned this had children with SEN. This finding was unique to this study as the literature available did not document this as an inhibitor to PI rather as a challenge to IE in Ghana (see section 2.2.3.1).

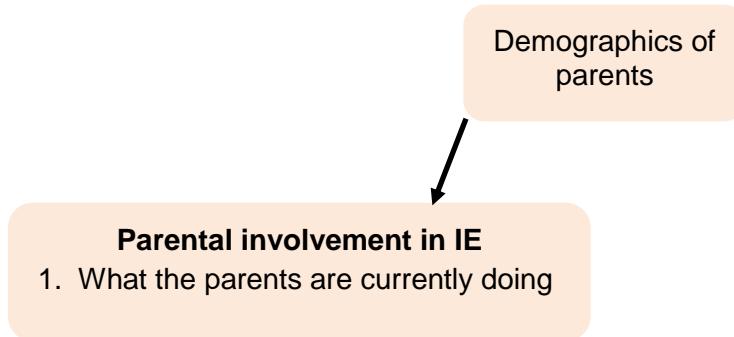
The areas of concern of these parents were people ridiculing their children, labelling and passing cruel comments about their children with SEN. It has already been established that society's attitude towards people with SEN in Ghana was negative (Adera and Asimeng-Boahene, 2011; Agbenyega, 2003; Oliver-Commey, 2001). If these negative attitudes are causing parents to be embarrassed and not want to take their children to school activities and programmes, then it is an issue of great concern. These negative societal attitudes may be limited or eradicated with education using the mass media. For example, there can be periodic programmes on radio and television about SEN conditions and the need for the public to treat people with SEN equally. Such programmes can sensitise people about the plight of people with SEN.

Three parents mentioned that the distance between their home and school were inhibitors to their involvement (see section 6.4.6.9). Mitchell (2005) in identifying features of IE mentioned that the children are entitled to "full membership in regular, age-appropriate classes in their neighbourhood schools" (p.4) (see section 2.2.1.1). In my view, Mitchell advocated for neighbourhood schools to foster community integration of children with SEN and also due to proximity to the child's home. This calls on the Government and GES to establish more inclusive neighbourhood schools to ease the travel distance for both the parents and their children.

In section 7.7.5, it was pointed out that parents expressed positive emotions which may facilitate their involvement in IE. Parents also expressed some negative emotions (frustration, anger and sadness - see sections 6.5.3, 6.5.4 and 6.5.5). Since emotions can influence behaviour (Loewenstein et al., 2001; Booth and Pennebaker, 2000; Solomon, 2000) it is likely that the parents' negative emotions may also influence their behaviour (in this case their involvement in IE). Since the emotions they were expressing were not pleasant, it is likely that the behaviour they will emit towards IE and their involvement in their children's IE will be negative. The pilot inclusive schools and MOESS can monitor the emotions parents are expressing as it may give indication of things parents are unsatisfied with. They can then put the necessary measures in place to rectify things. This may help ensure that parents are satisfied and happy.

## 7.8 Demographic variations in parental current involvement

This section discusses demographic variations of age, educational level, gender and having a child with SEN or not on the parents' current involvement. The extract from Figure 7-1 shows the components of the figure being discussed (see Figure 7-8 below).



**Figure 7-8: Excerpt six from Figure 7-1**

### 7.8.1 Variations in parental current involvement based on age-range

Unlike any of the studies reviewed (Dhingra et al., 2007; Parsons and Bynner, 2007; Williams et al., 2003; Williams, Williams and Ullman, 2002; Ho Sui-chu and Willms, 1996), the present study found that parental age-range did not impact on their current involvement (see section 5.5.3.1 and Figure 5-22). Even though Table 5-27 showed that there were variations in the means of the various age-groups and especially parents less than 20 and parents within 51-60 age-ranges, there were no statistically significant differences of age on the parents' current involvement, implying that, parents of all age-ranges can equally participate in IE.

### 7.8.2 Variations in parental current involvement based on educational level

The results of the present study showed that educational level of parents does have an effect on parents' current involvement in IE (see section 5.5.3.2). Implying that parents with different educational qualifications varied in their level of involvement in their children's IE. The average educational levels in Table 5-28 showed that differences existed. This was confirmed by one-way ANOVA which showed statistically significant differences. However, the post-hoc tests conducted were unable to identify the source of the differences.

Despite this, diploma and degree holders recorded the highest average in Table 5-28. The conclusion is that the higher the educational level of the parents, the more involved they may be in their children's IE. This adds more credence to the research finding that parents with low literacy are less likely to help their children

with reading and writing (Parsons and Bynner, 2007; Williams et al., 2003). Based on the results of the current study, the parents' low involvement may not only be limited to the mentioned areas but rather PI in general. The implication of this is that in developing PI programmes, parents with lower educational levels can be given more attention. Also, parents with lower educational levels can be encouraged to further their education or engage in adult literacy programmes.

### **7.8.3 Variations in parental current involvement based on gender**

The findings of the present study showed that gender does have an effect on parents' current involvement in IE. Males reported being more currently involved than females (see section 5.5.3.3). This finding was rather unexpected as it is the general belief that females are more involved in their children's education than males. In support, Williams et al. (2002) reported that in England more mothers than fathers are likely to feel more involved in their children's education if they do not have to work full time. Dhingra et al. (2007) reported that mothers engaged in more school visits and discussion with teachers about academic issues than fathers. However, their study showed no statistically significant differences in the participation of parents in school activities based on gender.

The findings of the current study imply that there is need to engage and involve mothers more in IE. This can be done through directly inviting them to school activities and programmes (Simon, 2004; Kohl et al., 2002; Epstein, 1986), or school staff going on home visits and holding discussions with them about the importance of their involvement in their children's IE (Hornby, 2011; 2000). The national media can be used to educate them in this area. For example, television and radio programmes on the importance of PI in IE can be aired with parents having the opportunity to call in and ask questions or seek clarifications. Also, newspaper and magazine articles can be published about PI in IE and the roles and responsibilities of parents in their children's education.

### **7.8.4 Variations in parental current involvement based on having a child with SEN or not**

The present study showed statistically significant differences in the current involvement of parents with and without children with SEN (see section 5.5.3.4). Parents without children with SEN were more currently involved in IE than parents with children with SEN.

Although there was limited literature in this area, research conducted by Ho Sui-chu and Willms (1996) revealed that parents with children with learning and behavioural problems were less involved in their children's education. The present study did not focus on only parents with children with learning and behavioural problems but rather parents with various SEN conditions enrolled in the pilot inclusive schools in Ghana.

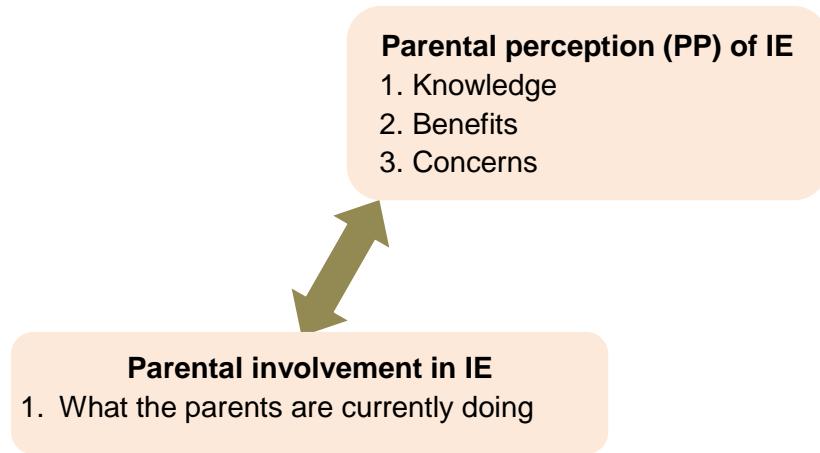
This finding was unexpected as my initial position was that parents with children with SEN would rather be more involved considering their children may need more assistance to succeed educationally. There is the need to further investigate why there is this disparity. Further qualitative research can be carried out to find out what is causing parents with children with SEN to be less involved in IE.

Could it be that their low involvement is associated with the negative societal attitudes towards children with SEN in Ghana as reported in the literature? If so, there will be the need to engage in public education on SEN as this will help to erase the negative age-long superstitious beliefs and negative societal attitudes described by Adera and Asimeng-Boahene (2011) and Okyere (2003).

The medium for this can be the national media and also parent education programmes during PTA meetings. Parents with children with SEN need to be educated on their roles and responsibilities towards their children in inclusive schools. Developing a nationwide policy on PI, which may be adopted by the pilot inclusive schools, may help to get all parents (not only those with children with SEN) more involved in IE. Or can their low involvement be due to the additional demands PI brings? Whatever the reason, parents need to be given education about SEN, IE and their expected roles as they suggested in section 6.4.4.2.

## **7.9 Relationship between parental perception and current involvement in inclusive education**

This section discusses the findings on the relationship between PP and parental current involvement in IE. The extract from Figure 7-1 below shows the aspect of the figure being discussed (see Figure 7-9)



**Figure 7-9: Excerpt seven from Figure 7-1**

Unlike any previous study I am aware of, the current study has established that there is a relationship between PP (knowledge and benefits) and parents' current involvement in IE. The regression line in Figures 5-27 and 5-28 showed that there is some association between parents' knowledge and their perceived benefits, and their current involvement. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient test conducted to quantify the relationship showed a positive weak relationship. However, it may be said that, high level of knowledge and perceived benefits in IE may tend to be associated with high levels of parents' current involvement in IE.

The study however found no association between parental concerns about IE and current involvement (see Figure 5-29). The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient test conducted showed no relationship between the two variables. This implies that the parents' concern and their current involvement are not linked in any way. This is also unexpected as rationally one would expect that the more concerns parents have about IE the less they will be involved. This study contradicts this popular notion.

These findings are very important as they draw attention to the need to consider increasing parental knowledge about IE (if the goal is to increase PI in IE) through carefully planned and structured parental education programmes (see chapter eight for further recommendations).

Even though the study established that there is no relationship between parental concerns and their current involvement. Policymakers, MOESS, GES and the inclusive schools should not overlook or underrate the concerns the parents have. Rather they can periodically conduct research to find out these concerns and address them in their inclusive educational programmes for parents. Some of the concerns the parents have may be due to lack of adequate knowledge about IE. The study shows in section 5.5.8.2 that as knowledge increases concerns of

parents about IE may decrease. Also, section 5.3.1 showed that some parents lacked adequate knowledge in IE.

It was not possible to statistically test for a relationship between PP and PE, parental current involvement and PE of their children in inclusive schools. This was because while the PP and PI aspect of the questionnaire were both Likert scale, the PE component was not. This made it impossible to conduct statistical analyses such as; correlation, t-test or ANOVA. There is the need to explore this area in future research. In doing this, the PE component of the questionnaire can be changed from parents just ticking three top priority expectations (see Appendix B) to Likert scale items.

### **7.10 The applicability of Epstein and Hornby's model of parental involvement in the Ghanaian context**

My justification for the use of the models of PI, suggested by Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000), as the theoretical basis for the PI component of this study was given in section 2.4.4.4.

The results of the study showed that both theories were applicable to the Ghanaian context as components of both theories were identified in section 7.7. All types of PI mentioned in Epstein's (1995) model are in operation in Ghana. The discussion in section 7.7 further showed that Hornby's (2000) model could also be applied. For example, all parents were part of the PTA and at their meetings they have the opportunity to contribute to policy. Additionally, a few parents acted as resources. They provided the school with information about their children and they collaborated with the school by helping their children with homework and engaging in school visits for various reasons. School visits was part of collaboration in the model proposed by Hornby (2000). The empirical data also showed that parents had needs in relation to communication, liaison (indicated by request for home visits), education and support in terms of counselling and how to be involved in IE.

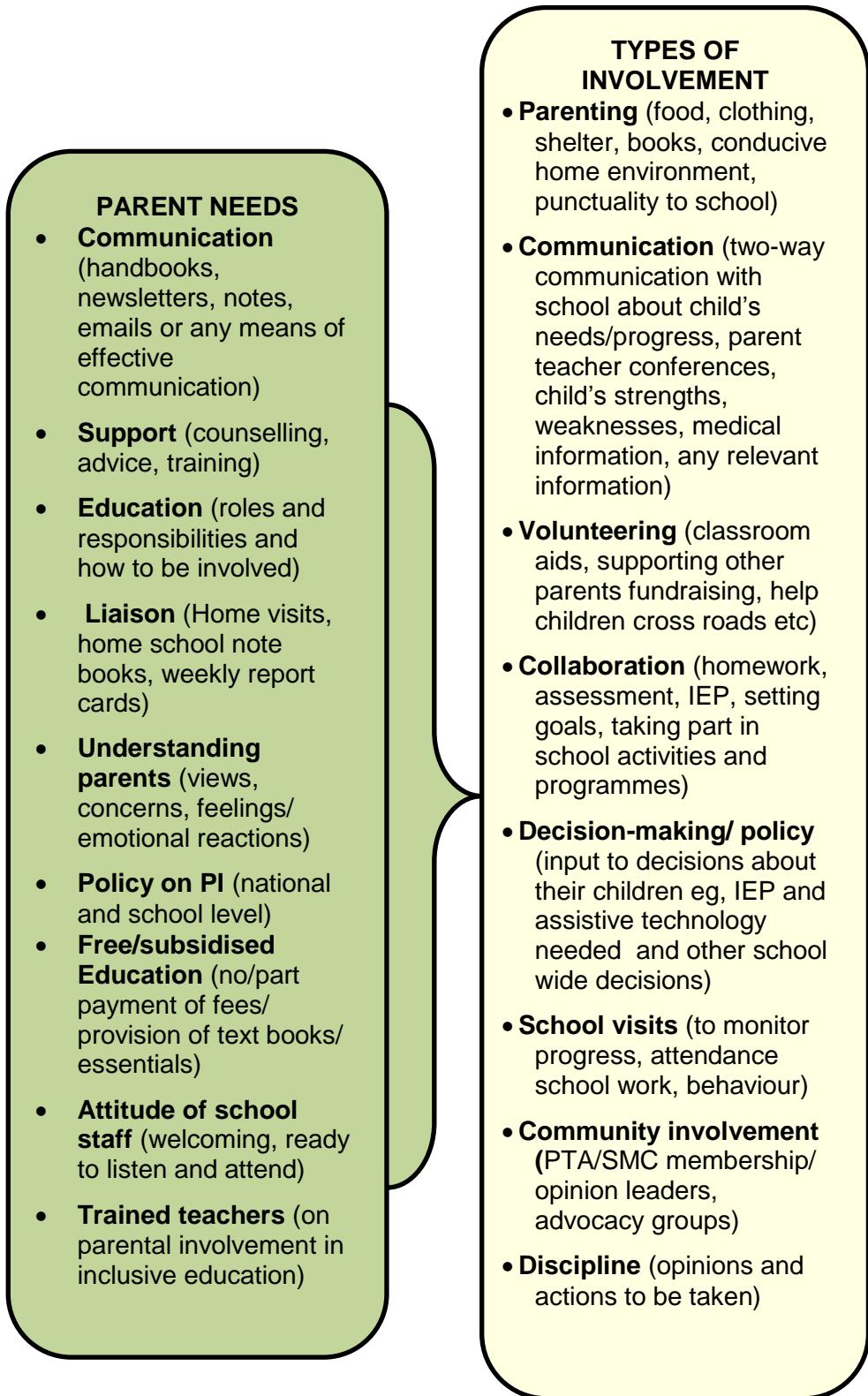
In section 7.7, parental needs and ways they were or wanted to be involved in their children's IE were discussed. Some of these were not explicitly mentioned in the models of PI proposed by Epstein (1995) and Hornby (2000). Table 7-1 shows a comparison of parental needs and types of PI mentioned by the two theorists and those identified by the present study. The source of this table is information from the quantitative and qualitative data presented in sections 5.5 and 6.4 respectively and discussed in section 7.7 and information from Hornby and Epstein models of PI presented in section 2.4.4.

Table 7-1 shows that there are parental needs and types of PI common to the two pre-existing models. There are some, for example, “free/subsidised education” and “discipline” that are unique findings of this study.

**Table 7-1: Comparison of the components of Hornby (2000) and Epstein (1995) models and the findings from the empirical data**

| Parents' needs                       | Hornby | Epstein | Empirical data |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|----------------|
| Communication                        | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| Support                              | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| Education                            | Yes    | No      | Yes            |
| Liaison                              | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| Understanding parents                | No     | No      | Yes            |
| Policy on PI                         | No     | No      | Yes            |
| Free/subsidised education            | No     | No      | Yes            |
| Attitude of school staff             | No     | No      | Yes            |
| Trained teachers on PI               | No     | No      | Yes            |
| <b>Types of parental involvement</b> |        |         |                |
| Parenting                            | No     | Yes     | Yes            |
| Communication                        | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| Volunteering                         | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| Collaboration                        | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| Decision-making/policy               | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| School visits                        | No     | No      | Yes            |
| Community involvement                | Yes    | Yes     | Yes            |
| Discipline                           | No     | No      | Yes            |

These indicate the need to develop a model which is contextually relevant. Figure 7-10 shows the Ghanaian model of PI in IE that has been developed from the findings of this study and the adaptation and merger of the Hornby (2000) and Epstein (1995) models of PI.



**Figure 7-10: The Ghanaian model of parental involvement in inclusive Education**

The Ghanaian model of parental involvement in inclusive education is more comprehensive than either Hornby's (2000) or Epstein's (1995) model. Furthermore, it is enriched with additional information from the present study.

The Ghanaian model of PI in IE similar to Hornby's model is based on the premise that parents have needs and ways they can be involved or contributions they can make to their children's IE. It is not only important to identify the things that parents need to facilitate their involvement in their children's IE' but also, provide for these needs as this may facilitate PI in IE. When these needs are not provided parents may find it difficult to be involved as, for example, without communication parents may not be aware of upcoming school programmes to attend. Also, if teachers have negative attitudes towards parents, the parents may feel reluctant to come to the school for parent teacher conferences or to enquire about their child.

The new parental needs introduced by the Ghanaian model of parental involvement as seen in Table 7-1 are:

- Understanding parents; school staff need to understand parental views, concerns, and feelings/emotional reactions as it will reveal how parents feel and what they want the IE schools to be able to do for their child.
- Policy on PI at the national and school level indicating how parents have to be involved and how the schools will have to involve parents. In the preparation of this policy, parental input and views must be sought.
- Free/subsidised education; free or subsidised school fees to ease parental financial burden along with the provision of textbooks, pencil pens and erasers.
- Attitude of school staff, where they will be welcoming, ready to listen, attend or offer advice or solutions to parental concerns and problems.
- Trained teachers on PI. Parents need teachers who are well trained on how to involve and work with parents on the IE of their children.

The Ghanaian model of PI in IE proposes eight types of PI or ways parents can be involved in IE, instead of the six proposed by Epstein (1995). The first three types of PI are the same as in Epstein's model. Collaboration as used by Hornby (2000) has been used to replace Type 4 (Learning at home) from Epstein (1995).

This is to elaborate on Epstein's view. Her Type 5 (Decision-making) is mentioned and policy has been added. This is because parents can take part in decisions about their child and about the learning of all children and also about school policies as suggested by Hornby (2000) or even national policies. In IE, these decisions can be about the specific needs of the child with SEN, for example, the appropriate assistive technology for their child and what should be included in the child's IEP.

The sixth type of PI is “School visits” and is based on section 6.4.1.1 where parents indicated various ways they engage in school visits. “Community involvement” is the seventh type of PI and it replaces Epstein’s Type 6 (Collaborating with the community). Community involvement therefore involves how the school involves parents and other community members in the affairs of the school. Parents are members of the PTA/or in some cases SMC. Others are opinion leaders or part of advocacy groups and they contribute to the running of the school in various capacities. Also, there is a sharing of resources between the schools and community. This can further be conceptualised as school-community relations.

The final type of PI in Figure 7-10 is “Discipline”. Parents can be part of the school discipline committee. Any child going through a corrective/behavioural management programme will automatically have their parents as part of this committee so that they can have input. Section 6.4.4.6 shows that some parents want to take part in the discipline of their children in inclusive schools in Ghana.

It must be noted that some “Parent needs”, and “Types of involvement” can be country specific as in the case of “Free/subsidised education” and “Discipline” (see Figure 7-10). This means that the model is not static but can be adapted to suit the local context.

## **7.11 Methodological reflections**

I used both questionnaires and an interview schedule to generate data for this study (see section 4.6). Using questionnaires gave me the opportunity to gather data from a relatively large sample of respondents (554) within a short period of time (3 months). Additionally, the questionnaire enabled me to conduct statistical analysis (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012; Robson, 2011; Creswell, 2009). I was able to conduct one-way ANOVAs and independent sample t-tests to test for variations within my sample of parents and even use correlation to test for the existence of a relationship between PP and parents’ current involvement (see sections 5.4, 5.7.3 and 5.7.7). This enabled me to identify a ground-breaking finding in section 5.5.7, that there is a relationship between parents’ current involvement and their perception about IE.

Despite these advantages, I found the construction of the questionnaire time-consuming as I had to pay attention to detail, rubrics of questionnaire construction and ensure that the individual items were understandable and measured what was intended (Sarantakos, 2013; Creswell, 2012; Robson, 2011). Hence, Creswell (2012, p.385) describes the process as “challenging and complex”. Robson (2011)

points out that it involves considerable time and effort to develop questionnaires but less time and financial cost in administering. For me, using the questionnaires was financially costly. I spent a lot of money in printing and travelling to disseminate and retrieve the completed questionnaires.

Finally, using the questionnaire data for statistical analysis was challenging as I had to first understand the concepts, determine which one was applicable for testing a specific concept, and then learn how to use the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software, run the required tests and then interpret the results.

The interviews enabled me to interact with the respondents for longer and be better acquainted. Also, it helped to yield information that the questionnaire was unable to, for example, section 7.5.2 showed that the interview data revealed specific ways the IE schools were helping to fulfil PE. It also helped to identify the various emotions some parents expressed (see section 6.5). I was then able to link the emotions they expressed with literature and conclude that these emotional expressions can lead to behavioural outcomes which could either facilitate or inhibit PI in IE. Finally, the interview generated verbatim responses which were transcribed and analysed, out of which useful findings were deduced.

Despite the benefits I derived from the use of the interviews, I found that it generated very large data. Having not undertaken qualitative research before, this was a big challenge. Transcribing, analysing and reporting the findings was a time-consuming experience.

Combining questionnaire and interviews for data collection was very useful as they enabled me to get in-depth information that I explored and combined to come out with meaningful and detailed analysis. Also, they enabled me to get the views of the respondents about the issues under investigation. Additionally, using both sets of data helped to confirm some of the findings, for example both data sets revealed that parents have social and academic expectations of their children in inclusive schools. Finally, the use of both methods helped to eradicate the shortfalls in each method. For example, getting in-depth information from the interviews yet I was not able to do statistical analysis, while the questionnaires did not reveal in-depth information yet I was able to use it to do statistical analysis.

## **7.12 Limitations of the study**

Some limitations of the study were identified. Prominent amongst them was the use of the structured interview. Being inexperienced in the use of qualitative data, I used a structured interview instead of a semi-structured or unstructured interview. This

prevented me from getting new emerging themes that would have further enhanced the findings of the study. Based on the experience gained, given the opportunity to do this study again, I would consider the use of the semi or unstructured interviews.

Also, I should have put an identification tag on the questionnaires of the parents interviewed to enable retrieval and the direct comparison of responses to their interview responses. Not doing this made it impossible to compare the responses of the parents interviewed with their individual questionnaire responses.

Given the opportunity to do this study again, the interview schedule would be expanded to include the perception component to aid triangulation. Since I now have a better understanding of the value of qualitative data, I would expand the sample size to include the headteachers and regional directors of education in further study.

In relation to the quantitative data, I was unable to statistically test for a relationship between PP and PE and PE and PI. This was due to how the PE component of the questionnaire was structured. Any future research should modify this aspect.

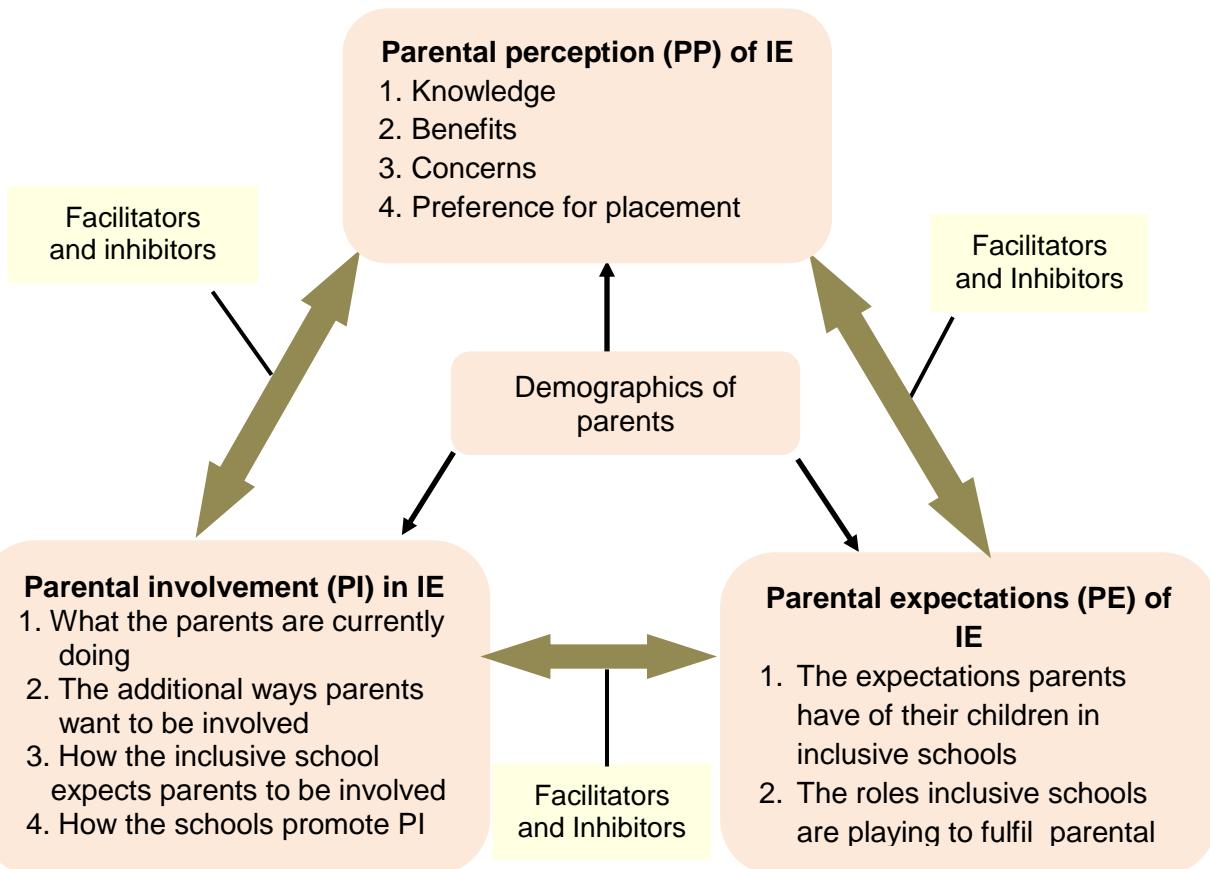
Finally, since the instruments I used for data collection were based on self-reports which are affected by respondent characteristics (Robson, 2011; Denscombe, 2010), coupled with the fact that I did not investigate the relationship between some of the variables, I suggest that the results should be interpreted and generalised cautiously.

### **7.13 Areas for future research**

In section 2.5 I hypothesised that there may be a relationship between PP, PE and PI. The findings of the study have confirmed the existence of a relationship between PP (knowledge and benefits) and parents' current involvement (see section 5.5.7). In sections 7.1 and 7.12, I mentioned that I did not test for relationships between PP and PE, and PE and PI. I strongly recommend that this should be conducted in future research. This will help establish my claim based on the Eurocentric literature and the findings of the current study that there is a possibility that a relationship exists between the three variables.

In conducting the research to test for relationships between PP and PE, and PE and PI, the PE component of the questionnaire should be redesigned to a Likert scale. Additionally, the facilitators and inhibitors should be investigated for all the three variables and not only PI. When this is done and the relationships between the three variables (PP, PI and PE) are statistically confirmed, the final outcome of the

interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement will be as seen in Figure 7-11.



**Figure 7-11: The interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in inclusive education (future outcome)**

In section 7.7.3, I pointed out that there is the need to investigate PI in the IEP process in Ghana. This study can be entitled “Parents and the development of IEP in Ghana: A case study in the pilot inclusive schools”. The suggested samples would be parents, teachers, headteachers and district education officers. Both questionnaire and interviews should be employed to gather data. They should be aimed at collecting in-depth information and triangulation.

#### 7.14 The interlink and use of the proposed models

The Ghanaian model of PI in IE can be used to assess the needs of parents and the ways parents can be actively involved in IE. To effectively identify parental needs, I suggest that the interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE described in section 7.2 can be used to do a comprehensive analysis of:

- PP about IE
- PE for their children attending inclusive schools;
- How parents want to be involved;
- How the school involves parents;
- Additional ways parents want to be involved; and
- The facilitators and inhibitors to PI.

The models can also be utilised independently. I suggest that when the focus is only on PI in IE, the Ghanaian model of parental involvement in IE should be applied. For example, it can be used to assess the extent of PI in IE and develop materials to train teachers on the needs of parents, how to work effectively with parents, and ways teachers can involve parents in IE. It can also be used to generate a checklist to assess if the schools are meeting parental needs and to educate parents on the ways they can be involved in IE.

When the focus is on IE and parental roles, perceptions and expectations, the interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE should be applied to assess PP, PE and PI in IE. Collectively, the two models can yield valuable findings to help enhance PP, PE and PI in IE and also develop action-based policies to improve IE. The final chapter addresses the conclusions, implications and recommendations of the study and presents my final reflections and remarks.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 8 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **8.1 Introduction**

In this final chapter, I provide a summary of the full study (section 8.1.1), identify its contribution to knowledge (section 8.1.2), present implications of the study and offer some recommendations (section 8.1.3). The chapter ends with my final reflections and remarks (section 8.1.4).

##### **8.1.1 Summary of the study**

In this study, I investigated parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE. The study was carried out in Ghana using the 35 initial pilot inclusive schools; eight years after Ghana started piloting IE (see Table 4-1).

My research was a descriptive survey. The data were collected using questionnaires and an interview schedule. In all, 520 parents and 34 headteachers responded to the questionnaire and 20 parents were interviewed.

Research question one investigated parental perspectives of IE. It investigated parental knowledge of IE, the perceived benefits and concerns parents had, their preferred educational placement for children with SEN, and the variations within the parents based on demographic variables. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVAs, and independent sample t-tests where applicable. The study found parents to be knowledgeable, to perceive IE as beneficial, and to have some concerns.

More educated parents perceived IE to be more beneficial than less educated parents. Based on age, gender and whether parents had a child with SEN or not, there were no variations in parental knowledge, perceived benefits and the concerns parents had about IE. The study further revealed that more parents preferred children with SEN to be educated outside the inclusive school. Analysis of the proportion of parents who preferred IE placements for their children showed that more parents with children with SEN, fathers, and younger parents ( $\leq 20$  and 31-40 years) preferred inclusive placements for children with SEN than parents without children with SEN, mothers and older parents (41-60 years).

Research question two investigated the expectations of parents for their children in inclusive schools, the extent to which these expectations were met and the

demographic variations in PE. The questionnaire data for PE was analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests of association to determine whether there were statistically significant demographic variations in PE. The interview data were transcribed, coded and analysed thematically. The study established that parents had academic, social and cultural expectations for their children. The three topmost expectations parents had were the ability to read and write, to develop social skills and to do well academically. Also, the majority of the parents reported that the inclusive schools were helping to fulfil their expectations for their children and that their children had improved academically. The chi-square test performed showed that there were demographic variations in PE based on educational level and having a child with SEN or not (see section 5.4.3).

Research question three investigated the extent and nature of PI and the facilitators and inhibitors to PI and the demographic variations in PE in the pilot inclusive schools in Ghana. Using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis of the interview data, the study found that parents were involved in IE. The ways the parents were involved and how the schools involved them fell between Type 1-6 in the model of PI proposed by Epstein (1995) and in parental needs and contributions as suggested by Hornby (2000). However, Type 3 (volunteering) was underutilised by the schools. The parents wanted to be more involved in Type 2 (decision-making), Type 3 (volunteering) and IEP development. They also wanted the school staff to take part in home visits and to educate them on how to be involved in their children's IE. Some parents felt it was not their responsibility to be involved and that it was solely the government's responsibility.

Additionally, using one-way ANOVAs and independent sample t-tests, the study found no statistically significant differences in parents' current involvement based on age-range. A statistically significant difference was identified based on educational level; however, the post-hoc test performed was unable to identify the source of the difference. Finally, statistically significant differences in parents' current involvement existed based on gender and having a child with SEN or not. The means showed that males and parents without children with SEN reported being more involved than females and parents with children with SEN.

Also, a number of factors were identified as facilitators to PI (see sections 5.5.5 and 5.5.6). Some facilitators to PI in IE in Ghana were having a policy on PI, teacher training on PI and the free education policy by the government. Some inhibitors were an unwelcoming attitude of school staff, lack of communication between the

school and parents, non-involvement of parents in decision-making and lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN.

The study revealed other findings. Using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient test, the study established a positive but small relationship between parents' current involvement and parents' knowledge about IE, and parents' current involvement and parents' perceived benefits of IE (see section 5.5.7).

Furthermore, the study established a strong positive relationship between parents' knowledge about IE and parents' perceived benefits of IE. Finally, the study established a negative weak relationship between parents' knowledge about IE and their concerns about IE, and between parents' perceived benefits and concerns of IE.

Two models have been proposed based on the findings of the study. They are the interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE and the Ghanaian model of parental involvement in IE (see sections 7.2 and 7.10).

### **8.1.2 Major contributions to knowledge**

In this section I highlight the main contribution of my study to knowledge about IE in Ghana and in the international context. It is divided into subsection of the contribution to the literature, to theory, to policy, to teacher education and to wider understandings of inclusive education.

#### **8.1.2.1 Contribution to literature on inclusive education**

IE as a principle involves multiple stakeholders, a fact that is sometimes overlooked in the literature (see sections 1.1 and 2.2). Parents are part of the stakeholders and are an integral part of education as they can provide vital insight about their children. Parents' involvement and contribution to education helps children optimise their educational experience. Parents and teachers have the best interest of the children at heart and they work in partnership to help the children achieve their potential (see section 2.4.1). As discussed in section 2.4.1 establishing partnership between the parents and the teachers is therefore vital for a successful educational experience.

Those comments were influenced by the international literature (section 2.4) which was largely Anglo-centric. Previous studies on PP, PE or PI in IE were done in countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States where there are established policies on IE and PI, and developing conceptualisations of SEN/disability. In the Ghanaian context, I have not identified any study that

investigated PP, PE or PI in IE. The limited Ghanaian literature showed that generally society had a negative perception about people with SEN.

Although the current study did not investigate the attitude of parents towards children with SEN, the responses of the parents in section 6.4.6.8 is an indication that there is lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN. Also, the majority of parents not opting for inclusive placement for children with SEN is an indication that possibly parents may have a negative attitude towards children with SEN. Further studies may have to be done to confirm this.

Studies conducted on PI in general education in Ghana showed that parents appeared to be indifferent or uninterested in the education of their children. In contrast, the evidence from the parents who participated in my study is different. The responses of the parents in section 6.4 showed that that parents are involved in their children's IE and are eager to be more involved but they did not know how to do this. Hence the parents specifically requested to be given education on how to be involved in their children's education (see sections 5.5.4.3 and 6.4.4.2). The high questionnaire return rate for this study gives a further indication that the parents are interested in the education of their children (see section 4.9.1). The Ghanaian model of parental involvement presented in section 7.10 offer some ways parents can be encouraged to be involved in their children's IE.

The review of the literature on IE in Ghana further showed that there was no information about PP of IE, specifically the knowledge they have and their perceived benefits of IE. Furthermore, there was no information about PE for their children in inclusive schools and PI in IE. Also, there was no information on the variations in PP, PE and PI based on age, educational level and gender.

My study, the first of its kind in Ghana has demonstrated the possibilities that are available when we involve parents in the IE of their children (see sections 7.2, 7.10 and 7.13). Furthermore, it has demonstrated the potential of involving parents and headteachers as respondents in research. This is not frequently done in Ghana and sets a model for other researchers. I can therefore say that my study provides empirical evidence on PP, PE and PI in Ghana and may be used as reference by researchers in other African countries.

Furthermore, my study to the best of my knowledge is the first study in the field of IE that has statistically established a relationship between parental knowledge, perceived benefits and concerns about IE and between PP (knowledge and benefits) and parents' current involvement in IE (see sections 5.5.8 and 5.5.7).

Based on the findings of this study, it may be said that increased parental knowledge about IE may lead to increase perceived benefits and decreased concerns about IE. Also to some extent, high levels of parental knowledge and perceived benefits of IE may be associated with high level of PI in IE. This study is contributing to the body of knowledge in IE.

### **8.1.2.2 Contribution to theory**

My two main theoretical contributions are the interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE, and the Ghanaian model of parental involvement in IE that I developed based on the findings of this study (see sections 7.2, 7.10 and 7.13). The interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement can be used to investigate parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE. To do this, my questionnaire items and interview schedule (Appendix B and D) and approach to analysis (Chapter 5 and 6) could inform the research of others. The results will provide insight to the parents' perception, expectations and involvement in IE.

The interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement can also be used to establish the existence of a relationship between parental perception, expectation and involvement. To do this, statistical analysis should be done between the variables to determine the extent and nature of the relationship between them (see section 5.5.7 and 5.5.8 for example).

The Ghanaian model of PI (section 7.10) can be used to increase PI in IE in Ghana. It gives clear indicators of what parental needs are and ways the inclusive schools can involve parents in IE (see sections 7.14 on suggestions of how to use this model).

The study has effectively established that a relationship exists between PP (benefits and knowledge) and parents' current involvement in IE. The results of this study gives an indication that any step taken to increase either parents knowledge about IE or the benefits parents perceive of IE, may result in an increase in parents' current involvement in IE. Contrary to my initial belief that the more concerns parents have about IE, the less likely they may want to be involved in their children's IE, the current study shows that there is no relationship between the concerns parents have and their current involvement in IE (see section 5.5.7).

### **8.1.2.3 Policy on parental involvement**

The majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the existence of a policy on PI would facilitate PI in IE (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36). Based on this, my study has established the need for Ghana and all other countries to have a policy on PI in IE to guide practice. This policy can be informed by the findings of the current study. I propose that this policy be developed in partnership with parents an approach consistent with the ethos of PI. When developed, this policy can outline specific ways parents can be involved, how the schools can effectively work in partnership with parents, and the roles and responsibilities of the parents, teachers and all stakeholders in education.

### **8.1.2.4 Teacher training**

In my introduction, I noted how my experiences in teacher education influenced this study. Based on these experiences, I have come across teachers complaining of parents' apparent lack of interest in their children's education and teacher's lack of knowledge on what to do to elicit parents' interest or to get them involved in their children's education. Some of the parents and headteachers in the current study were of the opinion that intensive teacher training on PI will facilitate PI in IE in Ghana (see Tables 5-35 and 5-36). In section 7.7.5, I mentioned that an examination of the teacher training curriculum revealed that there was no component on how teachers and parents can work in partnership or how teachers can effectively involve parents in IE. This situation may not be unique to Ghana and it may be for this reason Hornby and Witte, (2010) pointed out that for government initiatives on PI to be successful, there is the need for a teaching force that is adequately informed and has the necessary skills to involve parents.

Based on this, the MOESS can consider revising the curriculum of colleges of education and all teacher training institutions in Ghana to include how teachers can not only effectively involve parents but will form partnership with parents in IE. Forming partnership with parents will transform parents from the position of recipients of knowledge, information and direction; and the schools with teachers being the custodians of knowledge, information and direction to an equal status. Parents, teachers and the schools can receive and share knowledge and information and make decisions in the interest of the children, making them equal partners in education.

### **8.1.2.5 Contributions of the study to the broader understanding of the role of parents in Ghana and inclusion in general**

Based on the responses of the parent in sections 5.5.1, 5.5.4.3 and 6.4 on how they were involved or wanted to be involved in the IE of their children it may be said that, in Ghana IE goes beyond the inclusion of children in general education classrooms and the removal of barriers to learning. It also includes PI in the educational life of their children. Such that parents apart from fulfilling their basic responsibilities as parents or “Parenting” as Epstein (1995) presents it (for example, the provision of basic needs as mentioned in section 6.4.1.3), they are to also engage actively in school meetings/activities, school visits and decision making in the school. Additionally, parents are to help their children with their homework and volunteer their services to the school. Parents, teachers and all other stakeholders are to work in partnership for IE to achieve success.

### **8.1.3 Implications and recommendations of findings**

Having considered the contribution of my thesis, I now discuss the implications and recommendations of my findings to theory, policy and practice.

#### **8.1.3.1 Implications for theory**

The implications of the interdependent model of parental perceptions, expectations and involvement in IE proposed in section 7.2 are as follows:

In investigating PE for their children in inclusive schools, there is the need to identify parental academic, social and cultural expectations. Whilst the international literature informed my study, there were aspects that were particular to Ghana. There is the need to find out what the inclusive schools are doing to fulfil PE that data gives insight to what parents expect of their children attending inclusive schools. This may shed light on their perceptions and how they want to be involved in IE.

In investigating PI there is the need to know how parents are currently involved in IE, how the schools involve and expect parents to be involved in IE and additional ways the parents want to be involved. This may help identify any disparity between how the schools are involving parents in IE and how the parents want to be involved. It may also help to reveal any shortfall in how the schools are involving parents and also identify any promising practices.

Using this theory may help identify the facilitators and inhibitors to PP, PE and PI. Also, it may help to establish the relationship between PP, PE and PI. The existence of such a relationship means that the variables can be used to facilitate each other.

PP, PE and PI can be influenced by demographic variables such as age, educational level, gender and parents having a child with SEN or not.

There is evidence in Figure 7-10 that the main components of the Ghanaian model of PI in IE can be country specific. This implies that researchers may have to investigate the needs of parents and ways parents want to be involved in IE in their respective countries and incorporate them in the model.

### **8.1.3.2 Implications for Policy**

#### **8.1.3.3**

##### **Government policy on parental involvement in inclusive education**

For the comprehensive practice of IE in Ghana, there is the need for the country to consider developing a policy on PI in IE as mentioned in section 8.1.2.3. The importance of a policy on PI has been emphasised by Hornby (2010; 2000). This policy can provide detailed guidelines of parental and school responsibilities and how the schools and parents can work in partnership for effective inclusive educational programmes. Additionally, the policy can stress the need and importance of the inclusive schools to form partnership with parents.

The absence of such a policy means in Ghana PI is being done arbitrarily and left to the discretion of school staff. This can result in underutilisation of some aspect of PI, for example, less involvement of parents in volunteering as seen in section 7.6.

Every country (including Ghana) can have a policy on PI at the national level and school level to guide practice. In developing the policy, all stakeholders including parents must be involved. Beyond the need for a policy on PI that is relevant to all children; specific attention should be given to the involvement of parents with children with SEN. A specific example of this aspect relates to IEP development. Evidence in section 6.4.4.5 shows that parents do not know about nor were they involved in the development of IEPs.

In terms of possible processes, the majority of the parents requested teachers to engage in home visits (section 6.4.4.3). The importance of home visits has been underscored in section 7.7.2. Additionally, home visits may be used by schools to strengthen partnership between parents and teachers. The message the parents may get from home visits may be that the teachers or the school is interested in the welfare of their children both in and out of school and that they are ready to partner with them in all areas in the best interest of the children.

Based on this, the policy on PI in IE can emphasise the use of home visits by teachers. Hornby (2011) provides useful guidelines. Parents' consent for home

visits will have to be elicited and the time agreed. For this to be effective the Ministry of Finance would need to provide allocation in the budget to MOESS for this. When eventually this policy is formulated and implemented, there can be continuous education of parents and teachers about the policy and their roles and responsibilities.

### **Government policy on research into parental perceptions, expectations and involvement**

Since perceptions, expectations and levels of involvement in IE are not static, there can be continuous research in the field of IE. This can inform MOESS on any changes to PP, PE and PI. This research can inform policy and practice and thereby help parents and the inclusive schools form a better working relationship.

### **Policy on teacher education and continuous professional development**

Teachers' lack of adequate training on PI has been identified as a barrier to PI by Hornby and Witte (2010). This has been confirmed by the questionnaire respondents in the present study (see Tables 5-37 and 5-38) and section 7.7.5 where I drew attention to the fact that the curriculum for training teachers in Ghana did not include how to involve/work with parents in IE. There is the need for a paradigm shift in the area of teacher training in Ghana. MOESS can consider formulating a policy which would mandate the curriculum for pre-service training of teachers throughout the country to include how teachers can involve/work in partnership with parents in IE specifically and in education generally. Such training can equip teachers with the requisite knowledge to involve parents in IE. For teachers already in the field, the policy can mandate that regular INSET programmes be run to educate and/or update teachers' knowledge in this area.

The INSET programmes can cover factual information about IE, good IE practices, knowledge about the various types of SEN and its educational management and adaptations teachers can make in their class to accommodate diverse learners. Colleges of education and all teacher training institutions can incorporate systematic training in IE into their programmes to better equip teacher trainees to teach in inclusive classrooms.

### **Policy on parental sensitisation about IE**

Even though the study found that the majority of the parents were knowledgeable or perceived IE as beneficial or had few concerns, some parents were not knowledgeable or did not perceive IE as beneficial or had some concerns (see Figure 5-3, 5-4 and 5-5). MOESS can therefore consider having a policy on parental

sensitisation/education about IE. This policy can mandate inclusive schools to run parental programmes or workshops on IE. These can cover factual information about IE, types of SEN, interventions available and benefits of IE. The policy can also mandate all the schools to have counsellors who can offer counselling for parents who may need it (Hornby 2011; 2000).

#### **8.1.3.4 Implications for practice**

Findings of this study have implications for the practice of IE. The study found that increased parental knowledge about IE may lead to increased perceived benefits of IE (see section 5.5.7). Also, concerns about IE are likely to decrease as parental knowledge about IE increases. Therefore MOESS, in conjunction with the pilot inclusive schools and all interested NGOs and international organisations, can work at increasing parental knowledge about IE. These organisations (in conjunction with the inclusive schools in a bid to increase parents' knowledge about IE) can organise seminars, workshops or training programmes on a regular basis for parents who have just enrolled their children in the school as they might not have adequate knowledge in IE and may therefore need more information about IE.

This can be done, if possible, prior to enrolment or at the beginning of the school year. Flyers with information about IE can also be distributed to parents who come for school visits for the various reasons identified in section 6.4.1.1. For illiterate parents, the information in the flyers can be explained to them by teachers or at PTA meetings. Additionally, the media (print and electronic) can be used as a forum to provide information for parents on IE nationwide.

Based on the request of the parents in sections 5.5.4.3 and 6.4.4.2, and the suggestion by DfES (2001) that parents need to be assisted to recognise and fulfil their role as parents, the inclusive schools can educate parents on their roles and how they are expected to be involved in IE. As part of this education, parents can be encouraged to set educational goals with their children as evidence in Tables 5-25 and 5-26, and section 6.4.4.5 shows that some parents do not do this.

Additionally, the schools in partnership with parents can organise activities and programmes like open days more than once a term which is what is being done currently. This may give parents more insight into the benefits of IE. The schools will have to send letters inviting or reminding parents to attend these activities or programmes as parents are motivated to be involved if they are invited by significant people like teachers or headteachers (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997).

During parent-teacher consultations, for example, teachers can enquire from parents what their expectations for their children in inclusive schools are. The parents' expectations can then be compared to the national expectations of education; if they match, the schools can strategize on how to help children achieve these expectations. If they do not match then school authorities may have to explain to parents why their expectations for their children cannot be met. Discussions may have to be held with these parents on the nationally acceptable expectations of education for children.

Also, the study identified that a relationship exists between parental knowledge, perceived benefits and parents' current involvement in IE (see sections 5.5.8 and 7.9), it is important that the inclusive schools work with parents at increasing parental knowledge about IE. Improved knowledge in IE may translate to more perceived benefits and more PI. Lewis and Doorlag (2005) suggest that attitudes can be improved with information. This means that providing parents' knowledge about IE may go a long way to improve the negative attitudes that Vanderpuye (2003) reported that parents had towards educating children with and without SEN together.

In section 6.4.4.4, 18 out of 19 parents said they wanted to be more involved in decision-making. Feiler (2010, p.59) points out that decision-making "means a process of partnership, of shared views and actions towards shared goals...". For this process of partnership, shared views and goals to be functional in Ghana, inclusive schools can engage parents more effectively in decision-making at all levels. They can solicit parental views and incorporate these in the running of the schools. Additionally, more parents can be encouraged to engage in volunteering as Tables 5-25 and 5-26 and section 6.4.1.5 showed that few parents engaged in this. Furthermore, in section 6.4.4.4 there is evidence that this is an area parents want to be more involved in.

Letters can be sent out to the parents for them to indicate areas where they would want to volunteer their services to the school. The schools can create opportunities for the parents to volunteer in various capacities (see sections 2.4.4.3 and 2.4.4.4 for suggestions on ways parents can volunteer).

The study found that parental emotions influence their involvement either positively or negatively (see section 7.7.5). Positive emotions may result from activities the schools may be doing that are pleasing to the parents (see section 6.5.1) or that the parents are engaging in and have been commended by the school. Negative emotions may result from things which frustrate parents about the school or they are

not happy about, or possibly things the schools have reprimanded them for not doing for their children. Whatever the source of these parental emotions, there is the need for the schools to be sensitive and handle issues tactfully. The areas which parents express negative emotions about can be investigated and if a problem is identified, the school along with the parents, can work together to effect a change.

Based on the request of the parents, see section 7.7.3, the school staff can engage in home visits especially for parents with children with SEN. During such visits they can offer counselling, education and support to the parents and their children.

The inclusive schools should consider having an open door policy such that the parents can come in to discuss issues with the staff. The schools must ensure that they have well regulated procedures and documented time in the school day where this can be done. All parents must be made aware of the agreed days and times.

Special after-school classes can be organised for children whose parents are illiterate and cannot help with school work. Alternatively, itinerant teachers can help children with special circumstances at home. This can enable these children to get the necessary support they need.

Parents with children with SEN must be members of the IEP team, not only in writing but also in reality. Prior to this, they must be given education on the roles and responsibilities of this team and what is expected of them.

#### **8.1.4 Final reflections and remarks**

This doctoral study has been the longest, frustrating and most challenging, yet thought provoking and enlightening experience I have ever undertaken. Finally, I have come to the end of three and a half years of my study.

My interest in this topic, as explained in section 1.1.2, was generated from working with parents for several years in the Child Development Research and Referral Unit of the University of Cape Coast. In the process of working with these parents, I encountered parents having several misconceptions about IE and children with SEN. Additionally, I had several complaints from teachers about what they thought parents should or should not do for their children. I tried to look for literature on what parents expected from their children in IE, their perception and the ways they were involved in IE in Ghana. I discovered that it was very limited or almost non-existent. This inspired me to undertake this research.

As a researcher, the PhD process has equipped me with insightful knowledge and skills in designing research instruments and formulating theories and models. I have

come to the realisation that the development of a model is a dynamic process and it involves doing things systematically. This has helped me develop a systematic approach to research. Additionally, the experience I gained in having parents and headteachers as respondents has activated my desire to engage with other stakeholders in research as it helps to get different perspectives to the issues under investigation.

Furthermore, I learnt that it is very important to locate any research within the existing literature. This helps you look at the broader picture and how your study may help confirm or extend existing knowledge. I have gained the invaluable skills of independent thinking, critical and academic writing.

Prior to embarking on my PhD, all research I undertook was quantitative. The use of the interview and the qualitative analysis of it have given me invaluable knowledge, skill and insight into qualitative research. Furthermore, the findings of this study have drawn my attention to the fact that all the information, theories and research findings found in the literature do not necessarily fit every country's individual situation. For example, my study has revealed additional parental needs not mentioned in the model of PI proposed by Hornby (2000). This prompted me to develop the Ghanaian model of PI in IE which is adaptable to meet the requirement of any country.

I am elated to be able, through the findings of this study, contribute to knowledge in IE, not only in Ghana but globally. This has left me with a humble feeling of fulfilment.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Research Support  
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University of Leeds  
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Tel: 0113 343 3873  
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Irene Vanderpuye  
School of Education  
University of Leeds  
Leeds, LS2 9JT

**AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee  
University of Leeds**

12 January 2011

Dear Irene

|                              |                                                                  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of study:</b>       | Piloting inclusion in Ghana: parental perception and involvement |
| <b>Ethics reference:</b>     | AREA 10-056                                                      |
| <b>Amendment number:</b>     | 1                                                                |
| <b>Amendment date:</b>       | 11/01/11                                                         |
| <b>Amendment description</b> | Further clarification                                            |

The above amendment was reviewed by the AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee at its virtual meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The following documentation was considered:

| Document                                      | Version | Date     |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| addressing ethical committee comments.doc     | 1       | 11/01/11 |
| INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS IN GHANA.doc      | 1       | 11/01/11 |
| Interviewee Consent Form.doc                  | 1       | 11/01/11 |
| LETTER TO HEAD TEACHERS and questionnaire.doc | 1       | 11/01/11 |
| Letter to parents and questionnaire.doc       | 1       | 11/01/11 |

On the basis of the information provided, the Committee approves this project.

Please let the FREC know if you make any changes to the research which may affect the research ethics approval you have received.

Yours sincerely

*J Blaikie*

Jennifer Blaikie  
Research Ethics Administrator  
Research Support  
On behalf of Dr Anthea Hucklesby  
Chair, AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee

CC: Faculty Research Office/ Student's supervisor(s)

## APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am Irene Vanderpuye, a Ghanaian, studying in the School of Education, University of Leeds, United Kingdom. I am conducting a study on the topic: PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA: PARENTAL PERCEPTION AND INVOLVEMENT under the supervision of Dr. Mary Chambers and Dr. Sue Pearson, both of the University of Leeds.

The main Purpose of the study is to identify parental views and participation in the inclusive education of their children in Ghana. This study is being conducted in all the 35 pilot inclusive schools in the country. In all 560 parents have been randomly selected to respond to a questionnaire and 15 parents have been randomly selected to be interviewed.

The study will yield information that will be useful to the Special Education Division of the Ministry of Education for planning as they will gain further insight into how parents perceive inclusive education and how they expect to be involved. I am certain the answers you will provide will help greatly in identifying ways to improve practice.

I am conscious of your busy schedules at work and at home but kindly spare me 30 minutes of your time to respond to this questionnaire. Please note that participation in this exercise 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 two page summary of the report that comes out of the findings. This will be made available to your child's school and will be posted on the notice board.

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 0244617710 or through this email address [ediv@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ediv@leeds.ac.uk).

Thank you.  
 Irene Vanderpuye  
 PhD student, University of Leeds,

### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Instruction: Please, tick (✓) the response which corresponds with your background information.

1. Gender: Male  Female
2. Age range: below 20 years  21- 40
3. Educational level: Middle School Leaving Cert. Degree  Diploma
- Degree  Master's

Any other? (Please Specify).....

4. Do you have a child or children with disability attending this school?

Yes  No

5. What is the gender of your child?

Male  Female

6. What is the age of your child? .....

- 7a. If you answered 'Yes' to question 4 where do you want your child to be educated?

If 'No', where do you think children with disabilities should be educated?

Regular school  Special school  Inclusive school

- 7b. Please give reasons for your answer.
- 
- 

| <b>YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</b>                                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Inclusive education involves all children having the right to participate actively school. |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Inclusive education is about whole school development and improvement.                     |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Inclusive education benefits only children with disabilities.                              |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Inclusive education removes barriers to learning.                                          |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Inclusive education requires significant changes in regular classroom procedures.          |   |   |   |   |
| 6. Inclusive education is the process of finding better ways to respond to diversity.         |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Inclusive education involves catering for the needs of all children in one classroom.      |   |   |   |   |
| 8. Inclusive education makes children with disabilities feel better about themselves.         |   |   |   |   |
| 9. Inclusive education is about presence, participation and achievement of all children.      |   |   |   |   |
| 10. Inclusive education is about children with disabilities only.                             |   |   |   |   |
| 11. Inclusive education is about education for all.                                           |   |   |   |   |
| 12. Inclusive education provides children access to appropriate aids, support and assessment. |   |   |   |   |

## SECTION B: PERCEPTION ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Instruction: Below is a table to be completed. It involves statements about how you view inclusive education on a 4 point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures stand for the following: **1(Strongly disagree); 2 (Disagree); 3 (Agree); and 4 (Strongly agree)**. For each of the statements, indicate with a tick (✓) the one that best reflects the information you have about inclusive education.

| <b>YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</b>                                                                                                       | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>4</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. Children with disabilities will be socially isolated by other children in inclusive classrooms.                                                   |          |          |          |          |
| 2. Inclusive education enables children without disabilities accept children with disabilities.                                                      |          |          |          |          |
| 3. Inclusive education will require extensive teacher re-training.                                                                                   |          |          |          |          |
| 4. Inclusive classrooms provide environments that stimulate learning.                                                                                |          |          |          |          |
| 5. Inclusive education promotes the development of friendship between all children.                                                                  |          |          |          |          |
| 6. Contact with children with disabilities can be harmful to children without disabilities.                                                          |          |          |          |          |
| 7. Inclusive education prepares children for the real world.                                                                                         |          |          |          |          |
| 8. Presence of children with disabilities will lower the academic standards of the school.                                                           |          |          |          |          |
| 9. Inclusive education will lead to academic improvement for all groups of children as the children can help each other.                             |          |          |          |          |
| 10. Children with disabilities will experience feelings of belonging and acceptance in inclusive classrooms..                                        |          |          |          |          |
| 11. The presence of children with disabilities in the same class will not motivate my child or other children to learn.                              |          |          |          |          |
| 12. In an inclusive classroom children will not receive adequate teacher attention.                                                                  |          |          |          |          |
| 13. Every child will benefit from the skills and techniques teachers use in inclusive classrooms to promote learning.                                |          |          |          |          |
| 14. Children without disabilities will pick up undesirable behaviour from children with disabilities                                                 |          |          |          |          |
| 15. Children with disabilities will improve their language and communication skills in inclusive classrooms.                                         |          |          |          |          |
| 16. Teachers can take the opportunity to acquire specialised skills for teaching in inclusive classrooms.                                            |          |          |          |          |
| 17. Children with disabilities are likely to be marginalised and not have their needs met.                                                           |          |          |          |          |
| 18. Teachers are likely to leave their jobs due to the extra workload in inclusive classrooms.                                                       |          |          |          |          |
| 19. Inclusive education leads to equality for all.                                                                                                   |          |          |          |          |
| 20. Children with disabilities are likely to slow the learning rate of those without disabilities in inclusive classrooms.                           |          |          |          |          |
| 21. Children with disabilities get the opportunity to be educated in schools nearer home.                                                            |          |          |          |          |
| 22. Inclusive education makes schools responsible for the learning of all children.                                                                  |          |          |          |          |
| 23. Children with disabilities may be included physically but excluded instructionally (i.e. not benefit from the teaching and learning experience). |          |          |          |          |
| 24. Children with disabilities are likely to be bullied, teased or harmed in inclusive settings.                                                     |          |          |          |          |

### SECTION C: PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR CHILDREN IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

From the list provided below, **please tick three (3)** top priority expectations that you have for your child who is attending an inclusive school.

|                                                  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Develop social skills                         |  |
| 2. Ability to read and write                     |  |
| 3. Learn a trade or skills for future employment |  |
| 4. Make friends                                  |  |
| 5. Do well academically                          |  |
| 6. Learn the culture of my people                |  |
| 7. Be a good citizen                             |  |
| 8. Be treated equally                            |  |
| 9. Be accepted in the class                      |  |

2a. Is your child's current educational placement helping to fulfil the expectations you have? Yes(  ) No (  )

2b. Explain your response in 2a.

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For each of the following, indicate whether they are being done or are yet to be done by the school to help meet the expectations you have set out for your child.

| ACTIVITIES                                                       | Being Done | Yet To Be Done |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1. Making good use of academic learning time.                    |            |                |
| 2. Involving parents in decision making.                         |            |                |
| 3. Taking into consideration my child's needs when teaching.     |            |                |
| 4. Keeping me informed about my child's progress in school.      |            |                |
| 5. Giving my child one-to-one support.                           |            |                |
| 6. Making the curriculum flexible to meet the needs of my child. |            |                |

### SECTION D: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

**Instruction:** Below is a table to be completed. It consists of            statements about parental involvement in inclusive education on a 4 point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures stand for the following: **1 (Never); 2 (Sometimes); 3 (Often); and 4 (Always)**. For each of the statements, indicate with a tick (✓) the one that reflects how often you do the following.

| <b>YOUR CURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR CHILD'S INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</b>                                          | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. I create a conducive home environment for learning.                                                       |          |          |          |          |
| 2. I take care of my child's personal care.                                                                  |          |          |          |          |
| 3. I provide all information the school will need about my child.                                            |          |          |          |          |
| 4. I personally contact the school for information about my child's progress.                                |          |          |          |          |
| 5. I go to the school and look through my child's books and discuss the issues with the teacher.             |          |          |          |          |
| 6. I help my child with his/her homework.                                                                    |          |          |          |          |
| 7. I set learning goals with my child.                                                                       |          |          |          |          |
| 8. I volunteer my services to the school (e.g. Acting as resource person, teaching assistant or fundraiser). |          |          |          |          |
| 9. I attend PTA meetings.                                                                                    |          |          |          |          |
| 10. I contribute to decision-making in my child's school.                                                    |          |          |          |          |

**Instruction:** Below is a table to be completed. It consists of statements about parental involvement in inclusive education on a 4 point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures stand for the following: **1 (Never); 2 (Sometimes); 3 (Often); and 4 (Always)**. For each of the statements, indicate with a tick (✓) the one that reflects how often your child's school does the following.

| <b>WAYS THE SCHOOL IS INVOLVING YOU IN YOUR CHILD'S INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</b>                                                             | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. The school authorities encourage me to come to the school to talk about my child's education.                                        |          |          |          |          |
| 2. The school educates me on how to take care of my child.                                                                              |          |          |          |          |
| 3. The school communicates with me about every aspect of my child's education.                                                          |          |          |          |          |
| 4. My child's school encourages me or invites me to act as a volunteer either in fund raising, teaching or acting as a resource person. |          |          |          |          |
| 5. My child's school encourages all parents to be part of the PTA.                                                                      |          |          |          |          |
| 6. My child's school keeps me informed of PTA activities.                                                                               |          |          |          |          |
| 7. My child's school offers me the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process in the school.                                 |          |          |          |          |
| 8. My child's school has laid down rules as to what parents can or cannot do as far as their children's education is concerned.         |          |          |          |          |
| 9. My child's school contacts me when they want any information about my child.                                                         |          |          |          |          |
| 10. Staff members from my child's school visit our home to discuss educational issues.                                                  |          |          |          |          |

The table below lists other ways you may want the school to involve you in your child's education. **Tick as many as you wish.**

|                                                                  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Helping in the school library                                 |  |
| 2. Helping on class trips                                        |  |
| 3. Listening to pupils read in class                             |  |
| 4. Helping in preparing teaching and learning materials          |  |
| 5. Helping with sports coaching                                  |  |
| 6. Helping in the school canteen                                 |  |
| 7. Acting as guest speaker on speech days                        |  |
| 8. Assisting children with road crossing before and after school |  |

1b. If there are any other ways you want to be involved in your child's education please list.

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**Instruction:** Below is a table to be completed. The table is using a 4 point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures stand for the following: **1 (Strongly disagree); 2 (Disagree); 3 (Agree); and 4 (Strongly agree).** For each of the statements, indicate with a tick (✓) the one that reflects your thinking.

| FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN<br>INCLUSIVE EDUCATION                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. School authorities treating parents as equals.                                                                    |   |   |   |   |
| 2. School authorities and teachers respecting parental decisions and views.                                          |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Schools providing support for parents and addressing their concerns.                                              |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Schools educating parents on the need of involvement and how to be involved.                                      |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Government introducing a policy on parental involvement.                                                          |   |   |   |   |
| 6. Effective communication between the school and the home.                                                          |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Intensive teacher training on how to involve parents in inclusive education.                                      |   |   |   |   |
| 8. A school environment that makes parents feel welcomed                                                             |   |   |   |   |
| 9. Lack of communication between the school and the home.                                                            |   |   |   |   |
| 10. Parents not having time for their children.                                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| 11. Teachers who have not had adequate training on how to involve parents.                                           |   |   |   |   |
| 12. Lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved.                                                                |   |   |   |   |
| 13. Parents' inability to communicate effectively in English.                                                        |   |   |   |   |
| 14. Parental lack of knowledge on how to help their child.                                                           |   |   |   |   |
| 15. Parents and school authorities having opposing view about what should be involved in the education of the child. |   |   |   |   |
| 16. Parental lack of financial resources.                                                                            |   |   |   |   |

## **APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS**

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am Irene Vanderpuye, a Ghanaian, studying in the School of Education, University of Leeds, United Kingdom. I am conducting a study on the topic: PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA: PARENTAL PERCEPTION AND INVOLVEMENT under the supervision of Dr. Mary Chambers and Dr. Sue Pearson, both of the University of Leeds.

The main Purpose of the study is to identify parental views and participation in the inclusive education of their children in Ghana. This study is being conducted in all the 35 pilot inclusive schools in the country. All head teachers in these schools have been given this questionnaire to respond to. In addition, 560 parents have been randomly selected to respond to a questionnaire. Out of this number 15 have been randomly selected to be interviewed.

The study will yield information that will be useful to the Special Education Division of the Ministry of Education for planning as they will gain further insight into how parents perceive inclusive education and how they expect to be involved. I am certain the answers you will provide will help greatly in identifying ways to improve practice.

I am conscious of your busy schedules at work and at home but kindly spare me 20 minutes of your time to respond to this questionnaire. Please note that participation in this exercise is voluntary. I want to assure you that your name will remain anonymous and will not be identified in any document. Please, a-two page summary of the report that comes out of the findings will be made available to you. Upon receiving it and noting the content, please posted it on the school's notice board so that parents can read it.

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 0205696003 or through this email address [ediv@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ediv@leeds.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Irene Vanderpuye

PhD student, University of Leeds, United Kingdom

### **SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Instruction:** Please, tick (✓) in the boxes provided the response which corresponds with your background information.

Gender : Male  Female

Age range: below 20  21- 30  31-40  41-50  51-60

3. How long have you been teaching?

|               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1 - 5 years   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 - 10 years  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 – 20 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 or more    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Professional Qualifications:

Certificate 'A' 4 – year post middle

Certificate 'A' 3– year post-secondary

Teachers diploma certificate

B. Ed degree

Any other? (Please Specify).....

### **SECTION B: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

**Instruction:** Below is a table to be completed. It consists of statements about parental involvement in inclusive education on a 4 point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures stand for the following: **1(Never); 2 (Sometimes); 3 (Often); and 4 (Always).** For each of the statements, indicate with a tick (✓) the one that reflects how often parents do the following.

| <b>PARENTS' CURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</b>                                                            | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. Parents create a conducive home environment for learning.                                                          |          |          |          |          |
| 2. Parents take care of their children's personal care.                                                               |          |          |          |          |
| 3. Parents provide all information the school will need about their child.                                            |          |          |          |          |
| 4. Parents personally contact the school for information about their child's progress.                                |          |          |          |          |
| 5. Parents come to the school and look through their child's books and discuss the issues with the teacher.           |          |          |          |          |
| 6. Parents help their children with their homework.                                                                   |          |          |          |          |
| 7. Parents set learning goals with their child.                                                                       |          |          |          |          |
| 8. Parents volunteer their services to the school (e.g. Acting as resource person, teaching assistant or fundraiser). |          |          |          |          |
| 9. Parents attend PTA meetings.                                                                                       |          |          |          |          |
| 10. Parents contribute to decision-making in the school.                                                              |          |          |          |          |

**Instruction:** Below is a table to be completed. It consists of statements about parental involvement in inclusive education on a 4 point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures stand for the following:

**1(Never); 2 (Sometimes); 3 (Often); and 4 (Always).** For each of the statements, indicate with a tick (✓) the one that reflects how often the school does the following.

| WAYS THE SCHOOL IS INVOLVING PARENTS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION                                                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The school authorities encourage parents to come to the school to talk about their child's education.                                |   |   |   |   |
| 2. The school educates parents on how to take care of their child.                                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| 3. The school communicates with parents about every aspect of their child's education.                                                  |   |   |   |   |
| 4. The school encourages parents or invites them to act as a volunteer either in fund raising, teaching or acting as a resource person. |   |   |   |   |
| 5. The school encourages all parents to be part of the PTA.                                                                             |   |   |   |   |
| 6. The school keeps parents informed of PTA activities.                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 7. The school offers parents the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process in the school.                                   |   |   |   |   |
| 8. The school has laid down rules as to what parents can or cannot do as far as their children's education is concerned.                |   |   |   |   |
| 9. The school contact parents when they want any information about their child.                                                         |   |   |   |   |
| 10. Staff members from the school visit parents at home to discuss educational issues.                                                  |   |   |   |   |

1a. The table below lists other ways parents may want the school to involve them in their child's education. From the table below select other ways you think parents want the school to involve them in inclusive education. **Tick (✓) as many as you wish.**

|                                                                   |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Helping in the school library.                                 |  |
| 2. Helping on class trips.                                        |  |
| 3. Listening to pupils read in class.                             |  |
| 4. Helping in preparing teaching and learning materials.          |  |
| 5. Helping with sports coaching.                                  |  |
| 6. Helping in the school canteen.                                 |  |
| 7. Acting as guest speaker on speech days.                        |  |
| 8. Assisting children with road crossing before and after school. |  |

1b. If there are any other ways parents express their desire to be involved in their child's education that has not been mentioned please list them below.

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**Instruction:** Below is a table to be completed. The table is using a 4 point scale of 1; 2; 3; and 4. The figures stand for the following: **1 (Strongly disagree); 2 (Disagree); 3 (Agree); and 4 (Strongly agree).** For each of the statements, indicate with a tick (✓) the one that reflects your thinking.

| FACTORS                                                                                                           | INFLUENCING | PARENTAL | INVOLVEMENT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. School authorities treating parents as equals.                                                                 |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 2. School authorities and teachers respecting parental decisions and views.                                       |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Schools providing support for parents and addressing their concerns.                                           |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Schools educating parents on the need of involvement and how to be involved.                                   |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Government introducing a policy on parental involvement.                                                       |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 6. Effective communication between the school and the home.                                                       |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Intensive teacher training on how to involve parents in their children's education.                            |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 8. A school environment that makes parents feel welcomed.                                                         |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 9. Lack of communication between the school and the home.                                                         |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 10. Parents not having time for their children.                                                                   |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 11. Teachers who have not had adequate training on how to involve parents.                                        |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 12. Lack of parental knowledge on how to be involved.                                                             |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 13. Parents inability to communicate effectively in English.                                                      |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 14. Parental lack of knowledge on how to help their child.                                                        |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 15. Parents and school authorities having opposing view about what should be involved in the education the child. |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |
| 16. Parental lack of financial resources                                                                          |             |          |             |   |   |   |   |

20. How will you rate parental involvement in their children's education in your school? Use the following scale. (Please circle or underline one option.)

- 5. Very high
- 4. High
- 3. Low
- 2. Very low
- 1. Poor

## **APPENDIX D: PARENTS' INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Please state your gender?
2. Within which of these age-ranges do you belong to?  
20 and below    21- 30    31 - 40    41- 50    51 - 60
3. Please what is your educational qualification

**Instruction: listen to the following questions and respond as you deem appropriate**

### **SECTION B: PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN**

4. What do you expect your child who is being educated in an inclusive school to achieve in the following areas?
  - a. academically
  - b. socially
  - c. culturally?
5. How is the school helping your child to fulfil the expectations you have?

### **SECTION C: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

6. What specific things do you do to show your involvement in your child's education?
7. How does your child's school want you to be involved in your child's education?
8. Describe how the school tries to involve you in your child's education.
9. What school activities or programmes are you involved in?

#### **For parents with children with SEN**

- a. Are you involved in IEP development?
- b. Are you involved setting goals for your child?
10. Apart from what the school is doing now, what other ways would you want the school to involve you in your child's education?
11. In your opinion what factors make it easy for you to be involved in your child's education?
12. Please, explain why the factors make it easy for you to be involved in your child's education.
13. In the process of getting involved in your child's schooling, what challenges do you face?
14. What measures have you personally taken to overcome the challenges?
15. What has been the outcome?

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA:

PARENTAL PERCEPTION, EXPECTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Name of Researcher: **Irene Vanderpuye**

*Initial the box if you agree with the statement to the left*

- 1 I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 02-02-2011 explaining the above research and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- 2 I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. If for any reason you want to withdraw you can contact me on 0244617710.
- 3 I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential [**only true**].  
**if**  
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
- 4 I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
- 5 I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the principal investigator should my contact details change.

---

|                                                         |      |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------|
| Name of participant<br><i>(or legal representative)</i> | Date | Signature |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------|

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|                                                                             |      |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------|
| Name of person taking consent<br><i>(if different from lead researcher)</i> | Date | Signature |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------|

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*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*

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|                 |      |           |
|-----------------|------|-----------|
| Lead researcher | Date | Signature |
|-----------------|------|-----------|

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*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*

## APPENDIX F: A SAMPLE OF CODED INTERVIEW

Interview 20

Interviewer: I am about to conduct another interview. Please state your gender?

Respondent: **Female**

Interviewer: Within which of this age-group do you belong?

20 and below

21 - 30

31 - 40

41 - 50

51 -60

Respondent: **21 - 30**

Interviewer: Please what is your educational qualification?

Respondent: **MSLC**

Interviewer: Ok, what we popularly call standard four.

Respondent: Standard four

Interviewer: Listen to the following questions and respond as you deem appropriate. What do you expect your child who is being educated in an inclusive school to achieve in the following areas. First of all academically?

Respondent: I want my child to acquire the skills of doing math, reading and writing **{read and write}**

Interviewer: Good ok, is that all?

Respondent: He should be able to complete school and acquire a certificate which will enable him to get a job in future and go to the university **{certification/progress academically}**

Interviewer: That is wonderful, what about socially?

Respondent: I want my child to establish cordial relationship **{fit in and be accepted}** with anybody and he should be a good adult and citizen **{be a good adult and citizen}**.

Interviewer: That's wonderful. Culturally?

Respondent: He should be able to know societal norms **{learn cultural norms and Values}**, what is acceptable in the society and understand them and practice them very well. **{fit in and be accepted}**

Interviewer: Ok. That is wonderful. How is the school helping your child to fulfil the expectation you have, first of all academically.

Respondent: Well the school is doing well at least my child can read. He can write. They have conducted few exams which he has done well academically **{teaching/necessary education}**. They are also somewhat involving parents in decision-making about their children's education through the PTA meetings we attend. **{decision-making}**.

Interviewer: That is good. What about socially?

Respondent: Socially my child is able to relate with his peers (friends) the joke they play around without any trouble **{mingle with peers or others}**.

Interviewer: Ok, but what role does the school play in that? What exactly does the school do to facilitate this social interaction of your child?

Respondent: What I know is that in the classroom they encourage the children to do group work, **{group work to promote social acceptance/socialization}** then during break the opportunity is given to the child to play around with his friends. **{friends and play during games}**.

Interviewer: That is wonderful. What about culturally?

Respondent: What I know is that the school has a cultural group where they perform. **{cultural display, cultural group activities and doing art and craft }** Sometimes they are invited to social gathering where they perform. I am also aware that in the curriculum there is something they call RME where some of these cultural practices are being taught the school **{teaching of rme or social studies}**.

Interviewer: That is good. What specific things do you do to show your involvement in your child's education?

Respondent: Sometimes I pay visits to talk to the teacher on my child's academic progression **{monitoring academic progress}**. The school organizes open days where we are invited then we look through their exercise books where we see their performance. **{attending school meetings/functions}** We also attend PTA meetings where their problems are being shared between the teachers and the parents. Any time there is any school function I try to go **{attending school meetings/functions}**. Also, also.... I help my child do homework every day, even if I am busy my husband does it. **{homework}** Yes I forgot to say that, I feed him well before he goes to school and buy books and anything he will need to learn **{supplying needs}**.

Interviewer: How does your child's school want you to be involved in your child's education?

Respondent: Usually, they encourage us the parents to pay regular visits, unannounced visits so that we will monitor them and we will see the work they are doing and the progression of our child academically **{school visits/consultation}**. They want us to provide our child with books; pencils and all stationary **{provide needs}**. Additionally, we have to feed the child, buy uniforms and make sure there is a peaceful house the child can come to after school and a place to learn after school. In short, they want us to provide that child with everything he will need personally to help learning **{provide needs}**. They want us to take part in PTA and other school organised programmes **{pta/school activities}**. As members of the PTA we are to help the school arrive at some decisions that concern our child **{decision-making}**.

Interviewer: Ok. Describe how the school tries to involve you in your child's education?

Respondent: We attend PTA meeting **{school meetings and activities}**. I am also a member of the school management committee which we usually say SMC. Where we are involved in the management or the affairs of the school **{school meetings and activities}**.

Interviewer: Oh that is wonderful. Erm.... can you please describe how the school tries to involve you in your child's education?

Respondent: Like I said earlier we have PTA meetings where we meet at least twice a term where problems concerning the school children are discussed

among us and we find solutions **{school meetings and activities}**. We see how best we can improve their academic performance and social and other skills that we want the child or children to acquire. Also the school always tells parents what they are to do for their child in his education and also informs them of things going on in their child's education. **{informed/educated}**. We the parents are always encouraged to come to the school and talk about our child's education or any thing that bothers our mind concerning our child and their learning **{parent-teacher consultation}**.

Interviewer: That is fine, ok, what school activities or programmes are you involved in?

Respondent: Erm like I said, I am a member of PTA, I also go to opening days, speech days and sometimes their cultural activities if I can **{school meetings and activities}**.

Interviewer: Ok apart from what the school is doing now, what other ways would you want the school to involve you in your child's education?

Respondent: Erm.... I want them to make us parents more involved in decision-making in the school **{decision-making}**. That is all I have to say.

Interviewer: Ok. In your opinion what factors make it easy for you to be involved in your child's educations?

Respondent: What factors?

Interviewer: Make it easy, or what factors facilitates your involvement in your child's education.

Respondent: Madam, can you please explain further?

Interviewer: Erm.... you see you are involved in your child's education and definitely in the cause of your involvement as a parent have realised that there are certain things that makes it easier for you to actually participate in your child's education so what are these factors. We want to identify them. Things that make it easy for you to be involved in your child's education.

Respondent: Communication is one

Interviewer: Ok, by communication what do you mean?

Respondent: Yes The teachers share what they see about our children and then we also tell them what we also see about our children in our homes at PTA meetings for example. Also, they inform us of up and coming school activities and share with us things they observe about our child. We can talk to the teachers about everything and they too can talk to us **{communication}**. There is good interaction and friendliness between the head, teachers and we the parents **{welcoming/cordial relationship}**

Interviewer: Ok. This interaction you mentioned can you explain why it makes it easy for you to be involved?

Respondent: I think it is because of the cordial relationship between the school and the parents we find it easy to approach the school about our child

Interviewer: What is this cordial relationship doing for you?

Respondent: It is helping me a lot at least they are helping me to shape my child to be a good adult in future.

Interviewer: Ok, ok now in the process of getting involved in your child's schooling what factors or what challenges do you face?

Respondent: Some of the challenges that I face are that, sometimes because I am doing small, small work, I am engaged in small, small business, sometimes they call for PTA meeting which I do not get opportunity to go **{busy work schedule}**. Also, once in a while you go to the school and meet a teacher who does not want to talk to you or listen as they say you like to worry them with your child issues **{unwelcomed}**. Sometimes what I as a parent want for my child is not what the school does **{opposing view}** and in that case I am not happy **{sad}** at all. Sometimes too when there are meetings for example, the school forgets to inform all the parents or they just tell my child to tell me if my child forgets and I end up not going then they blame me, but how was I supposed to know if I was not told!**{no communication}**

Interviewer: What did you do to overcome the challenges?

Respondent: So what I normally do is that when I am not able to go to the PTA due to my business I call the headmaster, and later when I am free I go and ask what they discussed during my absence, I do the same if I hear there was a meeting I did not attend for any reason. For the other things I do nothing.

Interviewer: What has been the outcome of this step that you took?

Respondent: Well what I realise is that I miss some of the things which I am supposed to hear. It is like the ..... it is not everything that the head is able to tell me that actually transpired during the PTA meeting. He, he just mentions the area he thinks, I will benefit or they stand to benefit more

Interviewer: Ok Madam is there any other thing you will wish to add?

Respondent: There is nothing.

Interviewer: We have come to the end of this interview. Thank you so much for your information and the time that you have given to me. I deeply appreciate it. Have a nice day.

Respondent: Thank you too.

**APPENDIX G: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR,  
SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION**

School of Education  
University of Leeds  
LS2 9JT

THE DIRECTOR SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISON,  
GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE,  
GHANA.

Dear Madam,

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOLS USED FOR  
PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

I am Miss Irene Vanderpuye, a lecturer, with the Department of Educational Foundations (Faculty of Education), University of Cape Coast, Ghana. I am now studying at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom under the supervision of Drs. Sue Pearson and Mary Chambers both of the School of Education, University of Leeds.

I am conducting a study on: PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA: PARENTAL PERCEPTION, EXPECTATION AND INVOLVEMENT. The schools to be used for the exercise are the 35 schools used in the first phase of piloting inclusive education in the country. The study is scheduled to take place between January 2011 and April 2011. It will involve collecting data from parents who have children in the respective schools and Headteachers of the said schools.

The study will yield information that will be useful to the Special Education Division for planning as they will be able to know how parents perceive inclusive education and how they expect to be involved.

I will be grateful if you could grant me permission to use:

1. The Headteachers in the respective schools for the exercise
2. To have access to the pupil list in the respective schools to be able to select their parents for the study and,
3. To have access to the addresses of the parents to send them the instruments for data collection.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Yours faithfully,

(Irene Vanderpuye)

PhD student

**APPENDIX H: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE REGIONAL  
DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION**

School of Education  
University of Leeds  
LS2 9JT

THE DIRECTOR EDUCATION,  
GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE,  
ACCRA/CENTRAL/EASTERN REGIONS  
GHANA.

Dear Madam,

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOLS USED FOR  
PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

I am Miss Irene Vanderpuye, a lecturer, with the Department of Educational Foundations (Faculty of Education), University of Cape Coast, Ghana. I am now studying at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom under the supervision of Drs. Sue Pearson and Mary Chambers both of the School of Education, University of Leeds.

I am conducting a study on: PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA: PARENTAL PERCEPTION AND INVOLVEMENT. The schools to be used for the exercise are the schools used in the first phase of piloting inclusive education in Greater Accra, Central and Eastern Regions. The study is scheduled to take place between January 2011 and April 2011. It will involve collecting data from parents who have children in the respective schools and Headteachers of the said schools.

The study will yield information that will be useful to the Special Education Division for planning as they will be able to know how parents perceive inclusive education and how they expect to be involved

I will be grateful if you could grant me permission to use

1. The Headteachers in the respective schools for the exercise
2. To have access to the pupil list in the respective schools to be able to select their parents for the study and,
3. To have access to the addresses of the parents to send them the instruments for data collection.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Yours faithfully,

(Irene Vanderpuye)

PhD student

**APPENDIX I: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR  
SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION**

**GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE  
(SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION)**

In case of reply the number and date  
of this letter should be quoted.

My Ref. No .SE.183/31

Your Ref. No



P.O. Box NT.451  
Accra-Newtown  
Tel.: 0302-231469

Fax: 0302 (233) 231469  
specialedgh@gmail.com

Date: 1/2/2011

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION - IRENE VANDERPUYE(MS)**  
**PHD STUDENT LEEDS UNIVERSITY, UK**

This is to introduce and recommend Irene Vanderpuye (Ms), a doctoral student from Leeds University, UK, who is conducting a study on "**PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA: PARENTAL PERCEPTION AND INVOLVEMENT**" to you for permission to enable her carry out the exercise.

Please find attached her permission letter for your perusal.

Kindly offer her all the necessary support.

Counting on your usual cooperation.

Thank you.

**ROSEMOND BLAY (MS)**  
**DIRECTOR**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION**

**MMDDE/HEADS OF SCHOOLS PILOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

## APPENDIX J: CODING SCHEME

| Main themes                                                    | Sub themes                                          | Categories of Codes                     | Example of Patterns of response                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Parental expectations for their children</b>                | <i>Parental academic expectations</i>               | Read and write                          | I want my child to acquire the skills of doing math, reading and writing. <b>Parent 20</b>                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                |                                                     | Employability/lead to independence      | ... also use it to seek something for feeding him or her and the family as a whole and then even the nation entirely <b>Parent 1</b>                                                                           |
|                                                                |                                                     | Certification/progress academically     | I also want him to do well so that he can go very high in education, right to the university to get a degree <b>Parent 5</b>                                                                                   |
|                                                                | <i>Parental social expectations</i>                 | Treat and be treated equally            | Socially I want him to respect everybody as equal partner, treat everybody equal and be treated like wise <b>Parent 3</b>                                                                                      |
|                                                                |                                                     | Fit in and be accepted                  | I want my child to be able to fit perfectly into the society <b>Parent 2</b>                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                |                                                     | Mingle with peers or others             | ..he should be comfortable around people and people around him <b>Parent 10</b>                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                |                                                     | Be a good adult and citizen             | .. he should be a good adult and citizen <b>Parent 20</b>                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                | <i>Parental cultural expectations</i>               | Learn cultural norms and values         | I think culturally he should be able to know the culture of our people <b>Parent 3</b>                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                |                                                     | Respectful and polite                   | He should listen to elders and obey them <b>Parent 10</b>                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Role of schools in helping fulfil parental expectations</b> | <i>Ways the school fulfil Academic expectations</i> | Teaching/necessary education            | May be I can say through the teaching him what he has to know and doing it when they have to <b>Parent 9</b>                                                                                                   |
|                                                                |                                                     | Decision-making for academic excellence | Academically I'm seeing improvement in her studies after the last decision that we took at PTA meetings that the children should have one hour lessons to improve their learning after school <b>Parent 14</b> |
|                                                                |                                                     | Individual attention                    | Takes care of what the child will need educationally to learn by focusing on only her and helping her understand things <b>Parent 4</b>                                                                        |

|                             |                                                     |                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Parental involvement</b> | <i>Ways the school fulfil social expectations</i>   | Group work to promote social acceptance /socialization                                       | ..and the group work they do in class, sitting in circles and in fours or fives also helps children take turns and accept whoever they are to work with and do same outside school <b>Parent 6</b>                                                                                              |
|                             |                                                     | Make friends and play<br><br>Organising extra-curricular activities to promote socialisation | Then during break the opportunity is given to the child to play around with his friends all this help to socialise my child <b>Parent 3</b><br><br>They also engage the children in extracurricular activities like after school club activities, through which they socialise <b>Parent 19</b> |
|                             |                                                     | Teaching of RME or social studies.                                                           | ..is included in the subjects like RME and cultural studies where they learn the moral or culture of our people <b>Parent 13</b>                                                                                                                                                                |
|                             | <i>Ways the school fulfil cultural expectations</i> | cultural display, cultural group activities and doing art and craft                          | My child and other children get to learn the dances and art in the country <b>Parent 8</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                             |                                                     | Monitoring academic progress                                                                 | I visit the school and ask about the development of my child in his learning <b>Parent 15</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                             | Parental school visits                              | Monitoring attendance                                                                        | The only way I can be sure that she actually goes to the school is by going there to talk to the teacher and look at the school register <b>Parent 1</b>                                                                                                                                        |
|                             |                                                     | Monitoring school work                                                                       | On such visits I examine his books, taking note of his marks and tidiness of his work. I then discuss this with the teacher. Most of the time she tells me that my boy is doing fine and I do not have to worry <b>Parent 10</b>                                                                |
|                             |                                                     | Out of concern                                                                               | I come to the school to check how my child is fairing in her exercises and how she is responding to teaching and learning <b>Parent 18</b>                                                                                                                                                      |
|                             | <i>Helping with homework</i>                        | Homework                                                                                     | When they come home, I think they bring homework. I do assist if I have the time and I can understand it <b>Parent 13</b>                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                             | <i>Supplying personal/basic needs</i>               | Supplying needs                                                                              | I feed him well before he goes to school and buy books and anything he will need to learn <b>Parent 20</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                    |                                                               |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                    | <i>Attending school functions/ meetings</i>                   | School meetings/functions  | Most at times we make sure we attend the PTA meetings and open day organized by the school, the speech and prize giving day we do that. During December the school organizes a chorus night which we attend. In fact, the family always attends that meeting <b>Parent 19</b><br>SMC sometimes they invite me and I do support them whatever they like me to do <b>Parent 1</b> |
|                                                    | <i>Volunteering</i>                                           | Volunteer                  | I at times help with some school repairs as I am good with my hands <b>Parent 11</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>How the school wants parents to be involved</i> | <i>Provision of basic needs</i>                               | Provide needs              | They want us to provide our child with books, pencils and all stationary. Additionally, we have to feed the child, buy uniforms and make sure there is a peaceful house the child can come to after school and a place to learn after school. In short, they want us to provide that child with everything he will need personally to help learning <b>Parent 20</b>            |
|                                                    | <i>Attending PTA/ other school activities</i>                 | PTA/school activities      | They want us to take part in PTA and other school organised programmes <b>Parent 20</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                    | <i>Engaging in school visits/ parent-teacher consultation</i> | School visits/consultation | Sometimes the school calls us the parents to discuss issues about our children individually and I make sure I go. On such occasion they can talk to you about the problems the child is encountering in her learning or any other thing they feel is going wrong <b>Parent 8</b>                                                                                                |
|                                                    |                                                               |                            | ... and... they also want us to monitor the progress of our kids and then discuss whatever they did at school <b>Parent 4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                    |                                                               |                            | They always insist that parents visit the school to know what is going on <b>Parent 13</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                    | <i>Engagement in decision making</i>                          | Decision-making            | Sometimes when there is a problem in the school, they do invite me so that we can or we all share ideas how to solve that particular problem or take decisions <b>Parent 3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                    | <i>Parents to engage in volunteering activities</i>           | Volunteer                  | They also expect me to offer to do things for the school like fund raising or helping in development projects or even coming to help with teaching culture or dancing <b>Parent 15</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                    | <i>Attendance and punctuality</i>                             | Attendance                 | ..and also the school expects us to bring our children to school every day and on time, not to be late for school so that lessons can begin and whatever is suppose to be done in the day can be achieved <b>Parent 16</b>                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                          |                                                          |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>How the schools involves parents in IE</b>            | <i>Engaged parents in school meetings and activities</i> | School meeting and activities | The try to involve me through the PTA meetings so as I can talk my mind out in what I expect the school to do for my child. Not only PTA but anything the school is doing <b>Parent 2</b><br>I am also a member of the school management committee which we usually say SMC. Where we are involved in the management or the affairs of the school.<br><b>Parent 20</b> |
|                                                          | <i>Informed/educated parents</i>                         | Informed/educated             | They tell me what they want me do for my son and also tell me want I can do or not as a father to help my child's education <b>Parent 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                          | <i>Parent-teacher consultation</i>                       | Parent-teacher consultation   | Sometimes only I will be called to the school for a meeting to talk about my child and there I am told all about my child and his schooling most of the time it is when he was bad <b>Parent 11</b>                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                          | <i>Involved parents in decision making</i>               | Decision-making               | They also try whenever there is an urgent decision to be taken, they invite all the parents so that we bring out our mind to see to how they will solve that particular problem <b>Parent 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                          | <i>Engaged parents in volunteering activities</i>        | Volunteer                     | They encourage us that we..... we... volunteer to help the school with.. urm ..urm.... money for example for development projects and also come to teach dance or our culture to the children or anything that we can be of help with , they want us to do <b>Parent 7</b>                                                                                             |
| <b>Additional ways parents want to be involved in IE</b> | <i>More involvement in decision making</i>               | Decision-making               | ..rather they should focus on making me more involved in direct decisions about my child <b>Parent 15</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                          | <i>Provide education for parents</i>                     | Education                     | We as parents need more information and guideline of how to handle our children and be involved in schooling <b>Parent 10</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                          | <i>Engaging more parents in volunteering</i>             | Volunteer                     | ..they can also invite more of us to teach culture dance or anything relevant that we know' <b>Parent 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                          | <i>School staff engaging in home visits</i>              | Home visits                   | The teachers should come home regularly to visit us for example after school he can come over to find out how my child is fairing at home. Also if anything happens in the school the teacher can come home and discuss it with me <b>Parent 5.</b>                                                                                                                    |
|                                                          | <i>Engaging parents</i>                                  | IEP                           | I have never heard that before so obviously the answer is they do not <b>Parent 12</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|                                             |                                                                   |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | <i>in Individualised Education programmes</i>                     |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                             | <i>Involvement of parents in discipline</i>                       | Discipline                         | Another thing is when it comes to the disciplinary issues of my child, I want to be involved <b>Parent 16</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Facilitators to parental involvement</b> | <i>Communication and understanding</i>                            | Communication                      | One of the factors that make it easy for me to be involved in my child's education is the good communications that exist between the school and me <b>Parent 16</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                             | <i>Welcoming/cordial relationship of the school staff</i>         | Welcoming/cordial relationship     | Also, the way the teachers most times smile and talk to me makes me want to go to the school always <b>Parent 7</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                             | <i>Involvement in decision making</i>                             | Decision-making                    | They allow me to make some decisions for my child and sometimes other children at PTA meetings and this shows that they value what I have to say and use it to let thing go on in school <b>Parent 4</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                             | <i>Involvement in school activities</i>                           | Partake in activities              | Letting me know what is going on in the school and involving me in all or most school activities <b>Parent 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                             | <i>School environment</i>                                         | Environment                        | ...even the school environment should be colourful and welcoming by this parents will not hesitate to come to the school at all <b>Parent 5</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                             | <i>Free education policy</i>                                      | Free education                     | The FCUBE government policy is also a great help as I do not need to pay fees and it is a great relief <b>Parent 15</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                             | <i>Future benefits of education and Child's zeal for learning</i> | Future benefits<br>Desire to learn | Knowing that the education my child is going through today will help her become an independent adult and a good citizen in future. This makes me more than willing to be involved in my child's education <b>Parent 8</b><br>This desire to learn makes me want to do all I can and be part of his education life to help him become somebody in future' <b>Parent 12</b> |
| <b>Inhibitors to parental involvement</b>   | <i>School not involving parents in decision-making</i>            | Not part of decisions              | Again sometimes the school imposes their views on us rather than we all discussing it and deciding together <b>Parent 13</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                             | <i>Financial constrains</i>                                       | No money                           | Sometimes too lack of monetary resources prevents us from becoming fully involved <b>Parent 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                                        |                                                         |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                        | <i>Busy work schedule</i>                               | Busy work schedule                                                                                                    | I am also busy at my work place and my boss will not release me or even I have an important meeting I cannot cancel then I cannot go to the school <b>Parent 1</b>                                                                                                      |
|                                        | <i>Opposing views of parents and school authorities</i> | Opposing views                                                                                                        | Other times we have different views on issues and it is a problem <b>Parent 13</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Inability to help with homework</i> | Lack knowledge in subject matter                        | ..or when I have to help with homework I may not know or understand the subject so I cannot teach her <b>Parent 1</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                        | Problems with English language                          | I do not speak good English since I am only a form four leaver .....but I try my best <b>Parent 17</b>                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                        | Uneducated                                              | ..and my wife is uneducated, helping with home work is therefore difficult <b>Parent 17</b>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                        | Busy work schedule                                      | I am not home most of the time due to busy work schedule. I cannot help the boy <b>Parent 7</b>                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                        | <i>Lack of communication</i>                            | No communication                                                                                                      | Sometimes too when there are meetings for example, the school forgets to inform all the parents or they just tell my child to tell me if my child forgets and I end up not going then they blame me, but how was I supposed to know if I was not told! <b>Parent 20</b> |
|                                        | <i>Unwelcoming attitude of school staff</i>             | Unwelcomed                                                                                                            | ..occasionally you go to the school and teachers or the head are not friendly or willing to talk or tell you 'I am busy <b>Parent 7</b>                                                                                                                                 |
|                                        | <i>Lack of societal acceptance of children with SEN</i> | Societal attitude                                                                                                     | A major problem is how other children or people look down on people with disabilities <b>Parent 12</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                        | <i>Distance between home and school</i>                 | Distance                                                                                                              | I also live very far from school so child and me going to school is a problem. <b>Parent 17</b>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Parents'</b>                        | <i>Parents' emotions</i>                                | Happiness and                                                                                                         | They actually welcome every issue I raise and discuss this and it makes me very                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                 |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>emotions</b> | satisfaction | happy and content <b>Parent 7</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                 | Optimistic   | I still have not seen any change may be one day change will come <b>Parent 3</b>                                                                                                                                                  |
|                 | Frustration  | Well sometimes initially you may see that is working but at (stumbling) on the way you see that the teachers go back to their old ways. There is really nothing I or any other parent can do to change them' ( <b>Parent 1</b> ). |
|                 | Anger        | they way they pass cruel comments affects my child and makes me angry <b>Parent 12</b>                                                                                                                                            |
|                 | Sadness      | A major problem is how other children or people look down on people with disabilities, it makes me sad <b>Parent 12</b>                                                                                                           |

## APPENDIX K: HOCHBERG'S POST-HOC TESTS

### **Educational level variations in current involvement**

| Dependent variable   | Educational level (I) | Educational level (J) | Mean difference (I-J) | Std. Error | p    |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Personal involvement | MSLC                  | GCE holders           | .52114                | .79228     | .986 |
|                      |                       | Diploma holders       | -1.45885              | .63573     | .126 |
|                      |                       | Degree holders        | -.54832               | .83571     | .986 |
|                      | GCE                   | MSCL holders          | -.52114               | .79228     | .986 |
|                      |                       | Diploma holders       | -1.97999              | .79790     | .078 |
|                      |                       | Degree holders        | -1.06946              | .96483     | .845 |
|                      | Diploma               | MSCL holders          | 1.45885               | .63573     | .126 |
|                      |                       | GCE holders           | 1.97999               | .79790     | .078 |
|                      |                       | Degree holders        | .91053                | .84104     | .859 |
|                      | Degree                | MSCL holders          | .54832                | .83571     | .986 |
|                      |                       | GCE holders           | 1.06946               | .96483     | .845 |
|                      |                       | Degree holders        | -.91053               | .84104     | .859 |

### **Educational level variations in benefits**

| Dependent variable | Educational level (I) | Educational level (J) | Mean difference (I-J) | Std. Error | p     |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|
| Knowledge          | MSLC                  | GCE holders           | 1.62925               | .63971     | .065  |
|                    |                       | Diploma holders       | .02327                | .51331     | 1.000 |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | -.14158               | .67478     | 1.000 |
|                    | GCE                   | MSCL holders          | -1.62925              | .63971     | .065  |
|                    |                       | Diploma holders       | -1.60598              | .64425     | .075  |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | -1.77083              | .77903     | .132  |
|                    | Diploma               | MSCL holders          | -.02327               | .51331     | 1.000 |
|                    |                       | GCE holders           | 1.60598               | .64425     | .075  |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | -.16485               | .67908     | 1.000 |
|                    | Degree                | MSCL holders          | .14158                | .67478     | 1.000 |
|                    |                       | GCE holders           | 1.77083               | .77903     | .132  |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | .16485                | .67908     | 1.000 |
| Benefits           | MSLC                  | GCE holders           | .84197                | .80400     | .877  |
|                    |                       | Diploma holders       | -1.45308              | .64514     | .139  |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | -.68116               | .84807     | .962  |
|                    | GCE                   | MSCL holders          | -.84197               | .80400     | .877  |
|                    |                       | Diploma holders       | -2.29505*             | .80970     | .028  |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | -1.52313              | .97910     | .536  |
|                    | Diploma               | MSCL holders          | 1.45308               | .64514     | .139  |
|                    |                       | GCE holders           | 2.29505*              | .80970     | .028  |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | .77192                | .85348     | .935  |
|                    | Degree                | MSCL holders          | .68116                | .84807     | .962  |
|                    |                       | GCE holders           | 1.52313               | .97910     | .536  |
|                    |                       | Degree holders        | -.77192               | .85348     | .935  |

\*p< 0.05 (Significant difference exist)

**APPENDIX L: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF  
INTERVIEWEES**

| <b>Parent Number</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age-range</b> | <b>Educational level</b> | <b>Child with SEN</b> | <b>Date interviewed</b> |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Parent 1             | Male          | 31-40            | Diploma                  | No                    | 21-02- 2011             |
| Parent 2             | Female        | 31-40            | Diploma                  | No                    | 22-02-2011              |
| Parent 3             | Male          | 31-40            | Diploma                  | Yes                   | 23-02-2011              |
| Parent 4             | Female        | 21-30            | Degree                   | Yes                   | 24-02-2011              |
| Parent 5             | Female        | 51-60            | MSLC                     | No                    | 24-02-2011              |
| Parent 6             | Male          | 21-30            | GCE O Level              | Yes                   | 28-02-2011              |
| Parent 7             | Male          | 31-40            | Degree                   | No                    | 01-03-2011              |
| Parent 8             | Female        | 51-60            | MSLC                     | No                    | 02-03-2011              |
| Parent 9             | Male          | 31-40            | GCE O Level              | No                    | 02-03-2011              |
| Parent 10            | Female        | 41-50            | Degree                   | Yes                   | 02-03-2011              |
| Parent 11            | Male          | 41-50            | Degree                   | Yes                   | 02-03-2011              |
| Parent 12            | Male          | 41-50            | Diploma                  | Yes                   | 05-03-2011              |
| Parent 13            | Female        | 41-50            | Diploma                  | No                    | 09-03-2011              |
| Parent 14            | Female        | 31-40            | Cert A 3yr               | No                    | 14-03-2011              |
| Parent 15            | Female        | 41-50            | Cert A 3yr               | No                    | 20-03-2011              |
| Parent 16            | Female        | 31-40            | GCE A Level              | Yes                   | 27-03-2011              |
| Parent 17            | Male          | 41-50            | MSLC                     | No                    | 29-03-2011              |
| Parent 18            | Male          | 31-40            | Diploma                  | No                    | 09-04-2011              |
| Parent 19            | Male          | 31-40            | Masters                  | No                    | 13-04-2011              |
| Parent 20            | Female        | 21-30            | MSLC                     | No                    | 17-04-2011              |