2022

Professional Dispositions and Perceptions of Principals About Inclusion in Senior Secondary Schools

Desmond Prince, George Williams
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Desmond P. G. Williams

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. James Bailey, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Donald Wattam, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Cheryl Burleigh, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Professional Dispositions and Perceptions of Principals About Inclusion

in Senior Secondary Schools

by

Desmond P. G. Williams

MPA, Keller Graduate School of Management, Devry University, 2012

BEd, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education Policy, Leadership, and Management

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

Providing inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities entails educating these students in general education classrooms. There are no consistent practices or regulations for administering programs for such students in general education classrooms in Sierra Leone. This problem is supported by the lack of literature about administrative inclusive education practices. This basic qualitative study was conducted to explore the professional dispositions, perceptions, and rules or regulations that school principals hold for administering programs for students with special educational needs and disabilities in general education classrooms. The conceptual framework of the study was based on moral leadership and transformational leadership theories. The study fills a research gap, in that no study has been done in Sierra Leone about school leadership and inclusive education for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Research questions centered on the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that school principals hold about including students with special educational needs and disabilities in general education classrooms. Twelve principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone were interviewed in person. Thematic analysis was applied to the data. Findings showed an absence of expert knowledge and the need for professional development training for school principals, which informed the recommendation for a policy on professional development training for principals. The study's results have social change implications, in that they may help in addressing the need to provide proper, high-quality education for students with special educational needs and disabilities.

Professional Dispositions and Perceptions of Principals About Inclusion

in Senior Secondary Schools

by

Desmond P. G. Williams

MPA, Keller Graduate School of Management, Devry University, 2012

BEd, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education Policy, Leadership, and Management

Walden University

May 2022

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study in memory of my late mother, Princess Georgestone. This study is also dedicated to my one and only daughter, Desmonda, Princess, Georgiana, Williams. I hope this study will be an inspirational source to her so she too can pursue a doctoral degree program on her intended career. This is my challenge to you, my dearest daughter, to follow my academic footprint and make your mark. I am pretty certain that you will live up to this academic challenge. Also, I would like to dedicate this study to my fiancé, Beola Atere-Roberts, who was always there to morally support me to pursue this dissertation without relenting.

Additionally, I dedicate this study to all the students with special educational needs and disabilities. The learning challenges that they face in general education classrooms motivated me to undertake a research topic that would help address the need to provide them with proper and quality education alongside their nondisabled peers in regular classrooms.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my thanks to my family and friends for their invaluable support throughout the dissertation journey. To my daughter, Desmonda, thank you for demonstrating the understanding that Dad needed the time commitment to complete the dissertation writing successfully and the limited time I had with you on the phone. To my fiancé, Beola, my many thanks go to you for your support and encouragement to overcome the hurdles meted out during the dissertation journey.

I am appreciative of the help and support of my friend, Dr. Bockarie Lansana. He was a source of inspiration for embarking on a doctoral problem while he was reading for his doctoral degree. He once told me that I am a doctoral material, and I should pursue it to the end. Also, he proofread every chapter of the dissertation and spotted out critical mistakes that I needed to correct. I am also grateful to all my course instructors for the knowledge they imparted on me, especially Dr. Paula Dawidowicz, who approved my dissertation premise and subsequently the university research reviewer for my research proposal. Her feedback helped mold the proposal for approval.

I would also like to acknowledge members of my dissertation committee, Dr. James Bailey (chair), Dr. Donald Wattam (second member), and Dr. Cheryl Burleigh (reviewer). Both Drs. Bailey and Wattam gave me the needed support in every step of the dissertation journey. Their comments helped me to shape the final content of the dissertation. They exhibited their respective expertise for the successful completion of the dissertation.

Table of Contents

ii

List of Tables

Chapter: 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is a global phenomenon rooted in international conventions and human rights law in addressing the primary concerns of educating SEND students in general education classrooms. These concerns encompass the search for continuous improvement in instructional leadership and pedagogical instruction combined with the rigorous drive to provide equal educational opportunities to every learner (Dreyer, 2017; Hanafin et al., 2018; Poon-McBrayer, 2017). An inclusive educational environment encompasses learners from varied cultural and linguistic orientations and with different aptitudes and learning needs. Both school leaders and teachers are faced with the challenges to match up with the academic demands of schooling of the 21st century and beyond (Hanafin et al., 2018; Thomas, 2020).

In the quest to accord SEND students equal educational opportunities in an inclusive educational setting, school leaders and teachers in Sierra Leone need to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the historical roots and evolution of IE within the international and national milieu. At the international level, the roots of IE can be traced from the disability movement. There are some fundamental international declarations and conventions that acknowledge the right to education for all children and form essential signposts in the drive toward IE for SEND children (Phiri, n.d.; Right to Education Project, 2016). Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 enumerated the right to education, which should be free at the

elementary and fundamental stages (United Nations [UN], 1948). The first mandatory international document that makes provision for the right to education for children with disabilities is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; UN, 1989). The UNCRC emphasizes equal educational opportunities for every child. Articles 23, 28, and 29 of the UNCRC relate to the educational rights of children and address the learning needs of children who are physically challenged (UN, 1948, 1989).

There are international legal documents that certify the right of children with disabilities to have equal access to education. The UN in 2006 accepted the Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD is the first agreement that maintains the right to IE for all children and adults with disabilities. One of the most noteworthy articles of the CRPD is Article 24, designated "Education" (UN, 2006). January 2018 witnessed the passage of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of People with Disabilities in Africa (African Union [AU], 2018). Article 16 of the charter requires states to accord all persons with disabilities the right to education on an equal basis with others (AU, 2018).

At the national level in Sierra Leone, the constitution and other legislative enactments make substantial provisions for the right of every child, including those with disabilities, to access equal educational opportunities in government and government-assisted schools throughout the country. Article 9, Subsection 1, paragraphs a and b require the government to direct state policy toward guaranteeing equal rights and ample educational chances for all citizens inclusive of protecting the susceptible groups such as women and the disabled in security educational accommodations (Government of Sierra

Leone [GoSL], 1991). The Education Act of 2004 makes provision for all children of school-going age to have 9 years of compulsory free basic education that is subjected to punitive actions for parents and guardians who cause a restriction in accessing basic education (GoSL, 2004).

The Child Right Act of 2007 encompasses a crucial provision in Subsection 2 of Section 30 that pertains to the treatment of disabled children in Sierra Leone. Subsection 2 of the Act states that all disabled children have the right to special care, education, and training with the purpose of developing their maximum potential and becoming self-reliant (GoSL, 2007). The Persons with Disability Act (2011) addressed the issue of disability in children in Sierra Leone, and it is comprehensively discussed in the literature review of this study. The government of Sierra Leone has adopted education policies such as National Education Master Plan, 1997–2006 and the Education Sector Plans (ESPs) of 2007–2014, 2014–2018, and 2018–2020, which recognize and provide mandates for equal education to be accessible to children who are physically challenged in general education schools throughout the country (GoSL, 1995, 1997, 2007, 2014, 2018; Right to Education Project, 2016; Tarawallie, 2015).

With this general background in mind, I address the background, problem statement, purpose, and research questions of the study in Chapter 1. The conceptual framework and relevant literature are introduced in this chapter. Chapter 1 also encompasses the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Background

According to Hasan et al. (2018), IE is the latest move toward instructing children with diverse aptitudes and learning problems in a way comparable with normal students, along with a similar instructional manner. The approach seeks to deal with the learning needs of every child and is geared toward the objective of taking into account those children who are susceptible to marginalization and exclusion. They noted that IE is only feasible in adaptable education systems that can integrate the learning needs of the varied array of learners and adapt the system to meet the needs of the diverse learning population. They also contended that Education for All (EFA) is significantly linked to IE. The use of IE in which SEND students are included in general education classrooms alongside their same-aged nondisabled peers is gaining ground in the educational domain, as established in the current research literature (Bhakta & Shit, 2016; Bryant et al., 2016; Majoko, 2018; Simplican et al., 2015). There is a universal demand for the school landscape to evolve from education of exclusion to education of inclusion, which will more likely apply pressure to think about or develop new skills for inclusion (Robinson, 2017; Sider et al., 2017). Several studies based on varied perceptions have been carried out on the educational problem of IE, and substantial focus in these studies has centered on the relevance of understanding IE, the role of school leaders in IE, and the instructional competencies of teachers in IE settings (Robinson, 2017; Sider et al., 2017).

There is an increasing manifestation of a shift in the educational systems in Africa from exclusive to inclusive education that will address the learning needs of SEND students in traditional classrooms (Arnaiz et al., 2019; Majoko, 2019). Several studies

signal that IE offers innumerable benefits for both SEND students and their nondisabled cohorts, and some of these benefits embrace the social, emotional, and academic growth for SEND students and their nondisabled peers; accommodation of human diversity by nonSEND students; heightening of self-esteem; and adequate preparation for functional living in society (Carrington et al., 2016; Pappas et al., 2018).

There are legal foundations that support the use of IE practices to meet the academic needs of SEND students and to develop and sustain their learning outcomes in an inclusive educational environment. Solid international legal supports for IE are evident in international conventions, regulations, and principles such as the UNCRC and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (EOPD) ratified by many countries throughout the world that eventually placed IE in the realm of international law (Kanter et al., 2014). Murphy (2018) indicated that educational leaders value the philosophy of inclusion, and they described their role in IE programs as collaborators, problem solvers, professional developers, and facilitators. Nguluma et al. (2017) found that the overall attitude of school administrators was substantially positive, and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools were influenced by some independent variables such as training related to special education, job position, and years of teaching experience in general education schools.

Several studies have demonstrated the necessity of delivering effective leadership for IE for SEND students in general education classrooms (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Gathumbi et al., 2015; Kozleski & Choi, 2018; Lyons, 2016; Murphy, 2018; Nguluma et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2018; Sider et al., 2017; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018). Carter and

Abawi (2018), Gathumbi et al. (2015), and Lyons (2016) expressed similar views on the essence of developing and strengthening the knowledge base of school principals with professional development training because IE involves providing the required leadership that will address the needs of SEND students in inclusive academic environments. The findings of Nguluma et al. (2017) and Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) were in agreement concerning how knowledge of special education and constant training for school principals and administrators can lead to the development of a positive attitude toward IE for SEND students.

However, the findings of the reviewed studies did not indicate how professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms can influence the proper and quality education provided to SEND students. This is an area of school leadership and IE in the field of educational leadership that I sought to explore in this study. A closer examination of this aspect will provide meaningful knowledge relevant to the existing gap in the research literature on school leadership and IE in Sierra Leone.

Problem Statement

Several studies based on varied perceptions have been carried out on the educational problem of IE, and the focus of some of the studies has been on the relevance of understanding IE, the role of school leaders in IE, and the instructional competencies of teachers in IE settings (Hornby, 2015; Robinson, 2017; Sider et al., 2017). The state of IE in Sierra Leone has not been well researched (Nishimuko, 2014; Sesay, 2018). Studies on school leadership and IE have been conducted in other countries in Africa and beyond

(Carter & Abawi, 2018; Dreyer, 2017; Majoko, 2019; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018).

Several studies have been carried out in Sierra Leone that have examined the issue of IE

from diverse perspectives that range from barriers to and challenges of inclusion,

attitudes and perceptions of teachers, professional development for inclusion, and policy

development for IE (Boisvert, 2017; Nishimuko, 2014; Pai, 2014; Rose et al., 2019). All

of these studies have documented the stigma and discrimination that are meted out to

SEND students and are symbolic of their marginalization in general education schools

(Pai, 2014; Sesay, 2018). Nishimuko (2014) indicated that the enrollment of SEND

students in Sierra Leone has been underreported but still conveys the invisibility of

SEND children in general education classrooms. Welfare Society for the Disabled

(2018), a rural-based welfare organization in Sierra Leone, found stigma and

discrimination as the top hindrances to education for SEND children, noted by 44% of

the disabled children surveyed. A thematic report on disability in the Sierra Leone 2015

population and housing census revealed that 37% of the total 92,076 persons with

disabilities aged 3 years and older had ever been enrolled in school, whereas 63% had

never attended school. The report also stated that 24% of those who enrolled in school

had attained basic education, with 16% and 8% for primary and junior secondary

schooling, respectively, and 6.4% attaining senior secondary education (Kabia &

Tarawally, 2017).

    The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL,

2012) found that 76% of SEND children in Sierra Leone were not enrolled in schools.

Recent data can corroborate the UNIPSIL (2012) data. A significant finding of the

Welfare Society for the Disabled (2018) showed that "91% of out of school children with disabilities who spoke to us for the study, want to be in school" (p. 2). In the same study, 27% of children surveyed indicated impairment, and 7.5% of the children in the same survey were stated to have a physical impairment. The study of Nishimuko (2014) suggested that a survey conducted in the rural Kambia of Sierra Leone found that 60% of school-aged SEND children were not attending school, and 40% stayed at home alone daily. These studies and statistical data appear to show that SEND student enrollment into general education classrooms is almost negligible and that such students face marginalization in Sierra Leone society.

Numerous studies on school principals' beliefs, skills, and attitudes about inclusion have been undertaken in school systems in other countries (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Majoko, 2019; Simplican et al., 2015). There is no existing research on what school leaders in Sierra Leone believe or know how to do regarding the inclusion of SEND students in their general education classrooms. With only 37% of the SEND population enrolled in contrast to 63% not nationally enrolled in schools (Kabia & Tarawally, 2017), it is critical to understand the role of school leadership in this problem because school principals are construed as the main conduit for the provision of effective instructional leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms (Gallo-Toong, 2020; Khan & Don, 2020; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018). The problem for this study appears to be that there are no consistent practices or regulations for administering programs for SEND students in general education classrooms by senior secondary school principals. This seems to be supported by the lack of literature about administrative IE

practices. The gap in the research literature is that no study has been done that relates to school leadership and IE in the country and addresses the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that senior secondary school principals hold about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms.

Purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that school principals hold for administering programs for SEND students in general education classrooms. There have been opinion papers, articles, and position documents that indicate the importance of IE for SEND students in Sierra Leone, but no research study has been conducted in the area of school leadership and IE. The impetus for providing IE for SEND children is gaining more recognition across the global educational landscape (Dreyer, 2017; Nguluma et al., 2017; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018). The research literature on IE in Sierra Leone shows that some studies have been carried out that pertain to the role that teachers can play in the implementation of IE, the need for professional development of teachers for IE, and the perceptions of teachers about inclusion (Pai, 2014; Sesay, 2018; Welfare Society for the Disabled, 2018). Most of the studies in the existing literature on school leadership and IE have been done in school systems outside Sierra Leone (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Dreyer, 2017; Majoko, 2019; Simplican et al., 2015; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018).

However, Murphy (2018) posited that educational leaders frequently say that they lack the required knowledge and skills to lead or implement IE programs successfully. Billingsley et al. (2017) maintained that some research studies have indicated that school

principals feel that they are not responsible for providing instructional leadership for SEND students and others struggling to learn. No research study is evident in the existing literature on school leadership and IE in Sierra Leone about how the professional dispositions and perceptions of senior secondary school principals can limit or enhance the acquisition of proper and quality education by SEND students in general education classrooms. It is this gap that I sought to address in this study by contributing new knowledge to the current literature in the field of school leadership and IE in Sierra Leone. The existence of limited information limits the fulfillment of quality education for SEND students because senior secondary school principals and educators do not have the professional training that would equip them with the expertise to create a school climate and pedagogical instruction for every child regardless of disabilities (Murphy, 2018a, 2018b).

Therefore, the apt delivery of instructional leadership for effective inclusive schools depends on how the efficacy, attitudes, skills, and beliefs of principals align with the knowledge and understanding of the diverse learning needs of SEND students (Amin & Yasin, 2018). It is the responsibility of school leadership to provide SEND students with learning opportunities so that they can achieve within the traditional educational curriculum (Amin & Yasin 2018; Billingsley et al., 2017). The central focus of the study was exploring the professional dispositions and perceptions that senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone hold about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. The findings of the study may contribute new knowledge to the current research literature in Sierra Leone that examines school leadership and IE.

Research Questions

This basic qualitative research study warranted the need to ask the following research questions, which drove the objective of the inquiry to find answers to the research problem of the professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals in senior secondary schools hold regarding the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms:

1. What perceptions and practices or regulations do principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND students in general education classrooms?

2. What professional dispositions and practices or regulations do senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include SEND students in general education classrooms?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The conceptual framework of this study primarily used two leadership theories: moral leadership and transformational leadership. The rationale for the conceptual framework being driven in this study by these two theories stemmed from the fact that both theories indicate how the beliefs, attitudes, professional dispositions, perceptions, and skills that leaders hold affect the behaviors of members of their organizations (Balyer, 2012). The beliefs of leaders allow them to be pivotal in shaping the moral quality of society and organizations through positive or negative behavioral influences (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). Moral disparagement occurs when the actions and behavior of a leader are in contrast with shared moral values and ethics, which can be malignant to

the moral strength of society (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). The attitudes and values of

transformational leaders encourage their followers to map out mutual goals that can

trigger positive outcomes (Tucker & Russell, 2004). Every school system should ensure

that principals have skills and knowledge through ongoing professional development that

will equip them to set the appropriate school climate for inclusive programs and practices

(Nguluma et al., 2017).

Therefore, a better understanding of the problem and the need to explore the

professional dispositions and perceptions that senior secondary school principals in Sierra

Leone hold about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms can be

accomplished through the theoretical foundation of moral leadership and transformational

leadership theories. Both theories emphasize how the attitudes, professional dispositions,

perceptions, beliefs, and skills of leaders can positively or negatively impact an

organization (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). The conceptual framework, underpinned by

moral and transformational leadership, may give better insight into the relevance of

restricting the research questions of the study to professional dispositions and perceptions

that senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone hold about the inclusion of SEND

students in general education classrooms.

Moral Leadership Theory

The leadership literature indicates that moral leadership owes its origin to the

classical leadership theories of Burns (1978) on transactional leadership and

transformational leadership. Some authors have researched the concept of moral

leadership as a separate concept. Barnard (1938) was very much concerned with the

moral dimension of executive behavior, as were later researchers such as Greenfield (1986, 1991), Hodgkinson (1991, 1996), Sergiovanni (1992, 1996, 2006), and Starratt (1994). Recent works on moral leadership are negligible in the current literature. Pijanowski (2017) posited that regardless of a spike in scholarly endeavor in support of moral leadership and augmented consideration to ethics regulation, the body of study investigating the nature of moral leadership remains thin.

Moral leadership theory indicates that leaders play a decisive role in shaping the moral wellbeing of a society and organization through positive or negative influences (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). There is a manifestation in the moral leadership literature that the beliefs of leaders allow them to provide education for all children regardless of disabilities or other learning difficulties (Grogan, 2006; Starratt, 1994). Applying moral leadership theory in the school environment, school leaders can use equity and equality as driving beliefs, skills, and professional dispositions to eliminate gaps in learning achievement across ethnicity, class, race, ability, and indicators of exclusion. Their actions should be demonstrative of how they instruct, guide, and lead (Fullan, 2014; Furman, 2004). Carroll (2003) suggested seven key attributes or qualities of moral leaders: Moral leaders have strong ethical character, have a passion to "do right," are morally proactive, use stakeholder-inclusive practices, have an obsession with fairness., are principled decision makers, and integrate ethics wisdom with management wisdom. According to Carroll, these qualities need to be predominant in leaders' approach and style such that they become accustomed to this leadership approach. I drew upon these

qualities to further drive the conceptual framework of the study by illustrating how the seven attributes are critical to professional dispositions and beliefs of school principals.

Carroll's (2003) seven attributes of moral leaders are central in the dispensation of school leadership duties. In the school domain, school leaders are expected to imbibe high moral standards in the execution of the responsibilities entrusted to them. Since school leaders are the principal decision makers in the placement of all students (Vazquez, 2010), possessing a sound ethical character of what is right or wrong (Wart, 2003) can achieve the goal of accomplishing the required beliefs, perceptions, professional dispositions, and skills for successful IE programs. The outcome is that principals will have the aptitude to create a school climate whereby teachers and other supporting staff will be imparted with those beliefs, values, and educational practices characterized by positive learning outcomes for all children under their jurisdiction (Ardichvili et al., 2016; Leo & Barton, 2006). The seven qualities of moral leaders as posited by Carroll can be paralleled to the dispositions identified by a participant in a study by Oyugi (2015). These dispositions include commitment, empathy, tolerance, honesty, and inclusivity, and they are crucial in administrative procedure. Fullan (2003), Sergiovanni (2001), and Wang (2018) noted that managing schools as a moral imperative creates effective school leaders. According to them, the moral imperative empowers leaders to develop successful practices and the appropriate craft that permits them to comprehend leadership techniques and the required skills to employ the techniques successfully.

According to Brooks and Normore (2005), it is imperative for educational leaders to cultivate a moral grounding for their schoolwork. In the absence of studies in Sierra Leone on the professional dispositions and beliefs that principals hold about IE of SEND students into general education classrooms, moral leadership theory supported the conceptual framework to better explain the need to investigate the problem of the study and the research questions that I sought to answer. The professional dispositions and perceptions of school leaders have a potent force to affect the behavior of teachers in how they respond to the pedagogical needs of SEND students and to provide academic conditions that will meet the learning needs of all students (Bublitz, 2016).

Transformational Leadership

The premise for the conceptual framework of this study was also driven by the concept that school principals, as organizational leaders, establish the atmosphere for IE in their schools by encouraging and inspiring their teachers and other professional staff who work within the inclusive educational environment. The theory of transformational leadership emphasizes that transformational leaders possess the capacity to identify the change that is appropriate for implementation within the structures of the organization and help transform people's beliefs (Beauchamp et al., 2011). Burns (1978) illustrated that transformational leadership is a process that paves the way whereby leaders and followers reciprocally inspire themselves to a higher level of motivation and morality. In 1985, Bernard M. Bass expanded on the theory of transformational leadership by indicating that transformational leadership encourages followers to have beliefs in the vision and goals of the leader (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2008). One of the primary

interests of transformational leadership pertains to employees' moral development (Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008). Transformational leaders seek to challenge the ways that their employees think, encourage, and inspire them on the utilization of high moral standards and values to guide their performance (Bass et al., 2003). The most dominant transformational model by Bass (1985) comprised four main elements that describe a transformational leader: (a) idealized influence or charismatic leadership, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) individualized consideration. Each of these components is crucial for successful school principalship. The four elements provide a background in which leadership is labeled as a creation of multiple sources instead of one single authority (Hallinger, 2003).

The identified components of transformational leadership can be manifested in the leadership domain of principals within the school system. School principals with idealized influence are respected and trusted within and outside the confines of the school building, and teachers and students follow their values and ideals (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). In the context of Sierra Leone, inspirational motivation is crucial for school principals to provide a school climate whereby SEND students will have the inspiration and confidence to pursue and reach their academic goals in an inclusive learning environment (Tucker & Russel, 2004). Balyer (2012) noted that principals, particularly those with a vast academic background, are influential on their teachers and encourage them to accomplish high standards with their students. Furthermore, school principals influence the performance of their teachers and students, and transformational leadership is crucial in the drive to make schools accelerative (Balyer, 2012). Intellectual stimulation

is a vital component of the transformational leadership theory for school principals in

Sierra Leone. It enables the professional dispositions that they hold to match the vision

and goals of the school to meet the learning needs of SEND students regardless of

varying degrees of aptitude (Chandler, 2015).

Moreover, the professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals

hold about SEND students should encompass the individualized consideration component

of the transformational leadership theory. Individualized consideration denotes the need

for school principals to meet the teaching and learning needs of both students and

teaching staff based on the recognition of the individual's growth and development

(Chandler, 2015). In an inclusive learning environment, individualized consideration is

significant because SEND students need to have the confidence that they are active

participants in the learning environment (Chandler,2015). School principals are construed

as major organizational leaders in the school sphere, and study has demonstrated that the

impacts of idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and

inspirational motivation generate useful inclusive learning settings (Beauchamp et al.,

2011; Navickaite, 2013).

Therefore, school principals can play a significant role in the process of providing

quality IE to SEND students. Grounding the conceptual framework of the study by

utilizing the moral leadership and transformational leadership theories, they are the ideal

theory-informed explanation of the problem, purpose, and research questions of this

study. There is further discussion on both moral leadership and transformational theories

in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I applied a basic qualitative research approach through the use of interviewing as the research instrument for collecting data and addressing the research questions. Merriam (2009) posited that basic qualitative research originated philosophically in constructivism, phenomenology, and symbolic collaboration. Basic qualitative research is being used by researchers who are concerned about "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). The overall rationale for the use of basic qualitative research is to comprehend how people perceive both their lives and experiences (Merriam, 2009).

The historical source of qualitative research originates from anthropology, sociology, the humanities, and evaluation, and researchers often employ the philosophical worldview of constructivism (Creswell, 2018). Social constructivists believe that people pursue an understanding of the world in which they live and work, and, in the process, people develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2018). The qualitative research methodology allows the investigator to explore comprehensive information from a small group of participants in a study (Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The utilization of the qualitative method is influenced by the researcher's focus on the phenomenon to be studied and the data to be obtained, combined with the analytical approach of the data acquired from participants of the inquiry (Creswell, 2018, 2020). The qualitative research method is suitable for the

purpose of the study because it empowers the researcher to acquire an in-depth insight of the problem being investigated in inclusive educational environments (de Klerk, 2018).

The concepts being investigated in the study were the professional dispositions and perceptions of school principals in the context of IE for SEND students. Effective school leadership is essential to creating inclusive schools that meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of SEND students (DeMatthews, 2015; Kozleski, 2019). The professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold about the inclusion of SEND students into their general education classrooms will dictate the instructional leadership practices that they exhibit in their schools (DeMatthews et al., 2019). Leadership preparation for IE for SEND students is indispensable in the drive to meet the learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms (DeMatthews et al., 2019), and it is inextricably linked to the need for the need to generate professional development programs for school leaders that will equip them with apt professional dispositions and perceptions for the inclusion of SEND students into general education classrooms (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Gathumbi et al., 2015; Lyons, 2016; Nguluma et al., 2017; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2015).

A purposive sampling (Etikan et al., 2016) technique was used to select the participants of the study who were principals in general education senior secondary schools, and they were selected on the basis of experience and academic and professional development qualifications. Data for the study were collected from 12 participants via one-on-one semistructured interviews. Open-ended questions were primarily used to explore experiences and insights about professional dispositions and perceptions

regarding IE for SEND students. Collected data were coded and recoded based on the information retrieved from the participants. The process of coding and recoding led to patterns, categories and emerging themes in the analysis process (Saldaña, 2016).

Definition of Terms

This section of Chapter 1 provides official definitions of the terms used in the study to give more knowledge and understanding of the concepts used in this research. The definitions are those provided by the UN and its related agencies and other international education-related bodies that have concerns over the issue of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms.

Disabilities: Long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory deficiencies that, in interface with barriers, may impede individuals' full and active participation in society on an equal basis with others (UN, 2006).

General education classrooms: Also known as *mainstreaming/mainstream education*; the method of instructing students with learning difficulties in regular classes during precise time periods based on their skills (UNESCO, 2017).

Inclusion: Involves educational settings that adjust design and physical structures, teaching methods, curriculum, culture, policy, and practice of learning environments so that they are available to all students without prejudice (UNICEF, 2017).

Inclusive education: Refers to the accommodation of all students, whatever their abilities or requirements, and at all levels inclusive of preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational, and lifelong education (UNICEF, 2017).

Special educational needs: Impairments that are perceived as demanding extra support" (UNESCO, 2017). *Special educational needs* is a legal term that refers to children with learning problems or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children the same age. Additionally, children with special educational needs are likely to need extra or different help from that given to other children their age. This may include differentiated instruction and accommodations.

School principal: The person in charge of all activities that take place in and around the school structure. It is the leadership of the school principal that sets the atmosphere of the school, the climate for teaching, and the levels of professionalism, determination of teachers, and intensity of concern for what students may or may not become (U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, 1970).

Senior secondary school principals: In the context of Sierra Leone, they are responsible for the day-to-day administration of senior secondary schools that are under their jurisdiction. In other words, they are in charge of schools in the grade level referred to senior secondary schools.

Assumptions

The research was based on the following assumptions: first, it was assumed that the participants of the study would accurately respond to questions about their professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations about the inclusion of SEND students into general education classrooms during the interview sessions. There was also the assumption that the school principals of the study would co-operate with by providing the needed information for the study. Their cooperation in the study was

accomplished by emphasizing the protection of their confidentiality and identity and the right to leave the research procedure at any point. It was presumed that participants of the study had thought about the problem of SEND students in general education classrooms. Another assumption was that the participants of the study were familiar with research in the area of school leadership and IE.

<div align="center">**Scope and Delimitations**</div>

In the study, the ensuing delimitations identified the peripheries of the research. In the first place, the scope of the study included school principals of senior general education secondary schools in a selected geographical entity within Sierra Leone. The focus of the study was on exploring the professional dispositions and perceptions of school principals about the inclusion of SEND students into their schools. This focus of the problem under study was chosen because school principals are the main determinants in the admission of students into their schools, and they can be instrumental in the enrollment of SEND students into their general education classrooms (Chandler, 2015; Vazquez, 2010).

However, there were significant populations such as school guidance counselors, teachers, parents, community and religious leaders, lecturers at teacher education colleges, and officials that comprised the senior secondary school unit of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education. The excluded identified populations are key stakeholders in the drive to enhance quality IE for SEND students. The conceptual framework of the study was limited to the two theories of moral leadership and transformational leadership. The theory of social justice was also suitable to underpin the

conceptual framework of the study but was excluded in the study. The social justice

theory pivots on the underlying essential principles of inclusion, collaboration, equal

access, and equal opportunity, which are critical in the quest to address the issue of IE for

SEND students (Sue, 2001). The issue of potential transferability has been addressed by

providing a detailed explanation of the research procedures that encompassed data

collection and the content of the inquiry within the final report of the study (Anney,

2014). With this rich, detailed description of the inquiry, the criterion of Lincoln and

Guba (1985) on the trustworthiness of transferability was used to address the issue of

potential transferability.

Limitations

Some constraints limited the study. The first was the sample size of the study, as

only 12 senior secondary school principals participated in the study. The results of the

study can be questioned in terms of trustworthiness. The issue of the trustworthiness of

the results was resolved by using the criteria of trustworthiness as postulated by Lincoln

and Guba (1985), which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The second limitation of the study was based on the limited data that were collected from

a small sample in the four geographical zones of Sierra Leone, which are the Western

Area, Eastern, Northern, and Southern Provinces. Some of the participants in the study

were former colleagues who had been promoted to the rank of school principals of senior

secondary schools of the research environment. My former professional relationship with

the participants of the research had no influence on the results of the study because I had

no supervisory control over them and was no longer working with them. However, efforts

were made to overcome this limitation by ensuring that the interview questions elicited all the required information from the participants of the study that was needed to answer the research questions. Timing was another critical limitation of the study. Ample time was needed to ensure effective work on the writing process. This limitation was addressed by using a weekly reading and writing plan that helped me to manage time for the dissertation process and helped me to track progress being made in the dissertation journey.

Significance

The current research literature on school leadership and IE in Sierra Leone shows that no research work has been done on the professional dispositions, beliefs, perceptions, and instructional leadership skills that school principals of the country hold regarding the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. Studies on the beliefs, skills, perceptions, and attitudes of school principals about IE have been carried out in the school systems of other countries in Africa and elsewhere (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Majoko, 2019; Simplican et al., 2015). In the absence of studies in the existing research literature in Sierra Leone about the professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold about IE of SEND students, this study provides data on what senior secondary school principals throughout Sierra Leone believe or know as to practices for implementing the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. The findings of the study may fill in the gap that currently exists in the school leadership and IE research literature in Sierra Leone.

Key findings from the study within Sierra Leone may have educational and policy implications for school leaders, professional educators, and researchers as a springboard for professional work in the field of educational leadership, administration, and management throughout the country. The results from the study may be used to deliberate on the potencies and requirements of prevailing IE practices in the country. There is the prospect that school principals, educators, and critical education stakeholders will employ the findings of this study to refine educational practices that impede SEND students from accessing quality education with their nondisabled peers in general education classrooms. Results of the study will be shared with school principals and other stakeholders of IE to establish the relevance of developing a framework on the professional dispositions, beliefs, perceptions, and instructional leadership skills that school principals should hold regarding the quality education that should be accorded to SEND students in general education classrooms. The findings of the study will provide school principals with the opportunity to understand their responsibilities in the establishment of a favorable school climate that encompasses the required inclusive practices for SEND students to excel as their nondisabled peers can academically.

There is the potential for the results of the investigation to ignite positive social change at different levels of Sierra Leone society, such as individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions. Additionally, the results may help pave the way forward for all key stakeholders of education, including government and policymakers, to formulate policies that will lead to the professional development of school principals. The change may bring social justice to SEND students who are marginalized in the

educational system in Sierra Leone. The findings also have the potential to promote

positive change because school principals, the government, and essential education

stakeholders may become fully aware of the relevance of according SEND students the

right to education in an inclusive learning environment as provided by national education

laws and policies and supported by international treaties, conventions, and human rights

law.

Summary

Chapter 1 of the study consisted of the introduction to the study, which

encompassed descriptive data regarding the context of the study. The section outlining

the background of the study contained a concise summary of research literature related to

school leadership and IE. The problem statement in this chapter demonstrated the gap in

the existing literature on school leadership and IE. The problem of the study was that

there are no coherent practices or regulations for managing programs for SEND students

in general education classrooms. This appears to be supported by the lack of literature on

administrative IE practices. The gap in the literature was that no study had been done

addressing school leadership and IE in Sierra Leone. Various studies on school

principals' beliefs, skills, and attitudes have been embarked upon in school systems in

other countries (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Majoko, 2019; Simplican et al., 2015). There is

no current research on what school leaders in Sierra Leone believe or know how to do

about the relevance of the inclusion of SEND students in their general education

classrooms. With only 37% of SEND students enrolled in senior secondary schools

compared to 63% not nationally enrolled in senior secondary schools (Kabia &

Tarawally, 2017), it is essential to understand the role of school leadership when

addressing this problem. Therefore, it was prudent to conduct a study on the professional

dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold about including SEND students

in their general education classrooms. The study addressed a significant gap in the

existing research literature, as no study had been carried out in the country that related to

the literature of school leadership and IE. The problem statement was followed by

sections addressing the purpose of the study, research questions, nature of the study,

definitions of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the

significance of the study.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature. The literature is organized by topics

that cover areas that were relevant to the study, organized as follows: (a) historical and

legal foundations of IE as a global phenomenon, (b) background of SEND law in Sierra

Leone, (c) school principals and IE, (d) professional dispositions of school principals

about IE, (e) perceptions that school principals hold about IE, and (f) the theoretical

framework of the study. A detailed description of the research design and methodology of

the study is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 also consists of a comprehensive

explanation of the sampling technique that was used in the study, the criteria that were

used for the selection of participants, and the instrumentation of the study. The method of

collecting and analyzing the data was discussed in this chapter. Measures were adopted to

address ethical issues in protecting the participants of the study as well as the entire

context of the study, which are highlighted in this chapter. The presentation of the

findings of the study is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5, which is the final chapter of

the study, contains a discussion of findings, recommendations for policymakers and other

relevant stakeholders in education in Sierra Leone, and implications for potential positive

social change in the educational landscape of the country.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore the professional dispositions and perceptions that senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone hold regarding the inclusion of SEND students into general education classrooms. The rationale for the literature review was to examine studies related to the professional dispositions and perceptions of school principals about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. A thorough review of existing scholarly studies on the subject provides a better understanding of the phenomenon of professional dispositions and perceptions of school principals.

Literature Search Strategy

A search for empirical and peer-reviewed literature was digitally conducted through education databases such as Education Source, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, and SAGE Journals. These databases were retrieved from the subject resources search engine of the Walden University Library. An additional search strategy for the study was the use of Google Scholar weekly feeds. Printed versions of articles, journals, and books were consulted for the literature search. Keywords that were used in the search process were *special education, special educational needs*, *disabilities*, *general education classrooms*, *classroom instruction*, *inclusion*, *inclusive education*, *peer*, *inclusive practices*, *educational leaders*, *school principals*, *educators*, *norms*, *capacity*, *learning needs*, *school leadership*, *inclusive educational practices*, *exploring*, *knowledge*, *skills*, *values*, *leadership*, *beliefs*, *perceptions*, *general education*, *classroom settings*, and *Sierra Leone*.

Literature abounds in the area of school leadership and IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. The following topics were addressed in the literature review: (a) the theoretical framework for the study, (b) the historical and legal foundations of IE as a global phenomenon, (c) the background of SEND law in Sierra Leone, (d) school principals and IE, and (e) perceptions that school principals hold about IE.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Two leadership theories primarily used to support the conceptual framework of this basic qualitative study were the moral leadership and transformational leadership theories. The conceptual framework of the study was based on these two theories because both theories may be used to elucidate how the beliefs, attitudes, professional dispositions, perceptions, and skills that leaders hold influence the behaviors of followers of their organizations (Balyer, 2012). Yasir and Mohamad (2016) postulated that the beliefs of leaders permit them to be central in determining the moral quality of society and establishments via positive or negative behavioral influences. Moral denigration occurs when the actions and behaviors of leaders are in conflict with collective moral values and ethics, which can be malevolent to the moral strength of society (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). The attitudes and values of transformational leaders inspire members of their organizations to plot out shared goals that can generate positive outcomes (Tucker & Russell, 2004). Nguluma et al. (2017) maintained that school principals should develop needed leadership skills through ongoing professional development training that prepares them to create the required school climate for inclusive programs and practices.

The use of moral leadership and transformational leadership theories to support the study provided a better understanding of the problem of the study. The necessity to investigate the professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals in Sierra Leone hold regarding the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms can be attained through the foundations of both theories. It is evident that both moral leadership and transformational leadership theories underscore how the attitudes, professional dispositions, perceptions, beliefs, and skills of leaders can positively or negatively influence the behavior of members of their organizations (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016).

Moral Leadership Theory

Moral leadership theory originates from James MacGregor Burns's (1978) established theories of transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Some writers have explored the concept of moral leadership as a separate concept. Barnard (1938) was very much involved with the moral dimension of executive behavior, as were later scholars such as Greenfield (1986, 1991), Hodgkinson (1991, 1996), Starratt (1994), and Sergiovanni (1992, 1996, 2006). Recent works on moral leadership are negligible in the existing leadership literature. Pijanowski (2017) suggested that irrespective of a spike in scholarly effort in support of moral leadership and supplemented consideration to ethics regulation, the body of study examining the nature of moral leadership remains miniature.

The moral leadership theory contends that leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the moral well-being of a society and organization through positive or negative influences (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). There is a demonstration in the moral leadership scholarly

works that the beliefs of leaders allow them to provide education for all children

regardless of disabilities or other learning difficulties (Grogan, 2006; Starratt, 1994).

Harnessing the moral leadership theory in the school situation, equity and equality can be

the driving beliefs, perceptions, skills, and professional dispositions that school leaders

can use to reduce the existing gaps in learning attainment across ethnicity, class, race,

ability, and indicators of exclusion. Their activities should be indicative of how they

instruct, guide, and lead (Fullan, 2014; Furman, 2004). Carroll (2003) described seven

essential attributes of moral leaders: strong ethical character, a passion to "do right,"

being morally proactive, stakeholder-inclusive practices, an obsession with fairness.,

principled decision making, and integration of ethics wisdom with management wisdom.

Carroll maintained that these qualities required to be prevalent in the leader's approach

and style and become accustomed to them as a leadership approach.

Carroll's (2003) seven attributes of moral leaders are fundamental in the

execution of school leadership duties. School leaders are presumed to imbibe high moral

standards in carrying out the responsibilities delegated to them. Because school leaders

are the principal decision makers in the placement of all students (Vazquez, 2010),

possessing a sound ethical character regarding what is right or wrong (Wart, 2003) can

achieve the goal of attaining the necessary beliefs, perceptions, professional dispositions,

and skills for the implementation of successful IE programs. The result is that principals

will have the needed capacity to produce a school climate in which teachers and other

key supporting staff will be instructed with those beliefs, values, and educational

practices embodied in positive learning outcomes for all children under their jurisdiction

(Ardichvili et al., 2016; Leo & Barton, 2006). The seven qualities of moral leaders as conceived by Carroll can be equated to the dispositions recognized by a participant in a study done by Oyugi (2015). These dispositions include commitment, empathy, tolerance, honesty, and inclusivity, and they are crucial in administrative procedure. Wang (2018), Fullan (2014), and Sergiovanni (2001) noted that managing schools as a moral imperative creates an effective school leader. They posited that the moral imperative empowers leaders to develop successful practices and the appropriate craft that permits them to comprehend leadership techniques, as well as the required skills to employ the techniques successfully.

The development of the reputation of school moral leadership over the past 20 years has been conveyed by theory development, with new models evolving and recognized approaches being redefined and further advanced (Bush & Glover, 2014). However, for decades, writers and researchers have been attempting to develop models that will fit into the practical demonstration of moral leadership. The past three decades have witnessed a growing interest in the role and impact of moral leadership in schools (Hallinger, 2014; Notman, 2016). Stefkovich and Begley (2007) addressed the moral leadership issue of the "best interests of students" by developing the best interests model that fits into what constitutes the concept of the "best interests of students." The need for the model emanates from the quest to explore how the concept is conceptualized in educational leadership literature based on diverse foundational perspectives that include psychology, critical theory, and case law. Considering the enormous influences that school leaders have in determining students' best interests, the best interests model

emphasizes that school leadership must make ethical and moral decisions that justly

replicate the needs of students and not their adult self-interest (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Carroll (2003) addressed models that pertain to immoral and amoral management

and leadership and moral management. Immoral management or leadership is a model

that is barren of ethical principles and rules and is in opposition to the realities of the

ethical or the seven moral habits of moral leaders as postulated by Carroll. In the immoral

management/leadership model, management resolutions, behaviors, actions, or leadership

style are dissenting with ethics or morality. The immoral management model embraces

that management's purposes are egotistic and endorses what the organization can

accomplish (Carroll, 2003).

In the amoral management or leadership model, ethics are not taken into

consideration in the course of decision making and practice, and leaders occupy a neutral

position. Amoral leaders can be manifested in the category of being intentional or

unintentional. Intentionally amoral leaders do not prime ethical considerations in the

dispensation of their actions. Intentionally amoral leaders cannot be perceived as amoral

or immoral because they see the application of rules variedly in all spheres of life

(Carroll, 2003). Unintentionally amoral leaders are in contrast to intentionally amoral

leaders because they are morally casual, careless, unaware, or distracted in relation to the

fact that their decisions and actions may make unfavorable impressions on other

stakeholders (Carroll, 2003). The moral leader model falls in between the two extreme

models of immoral and amoral leadership. The moral leader has a more profound sense

of vision, mission, change, challenge, and creativity and seeks to address people as

humans (Carroll, 2003).

Additionally, Brooks and Normore (2005) maintained that several researchers have called for educational leaders to cultivate a moral grounding for their schoolwork. In the absence of studies in Sierra Leone on the professional dispositions and beliefs that principals hold about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms, moral leadership theory can support the conceptual framework to better explain the need to investigate the problem of the study and the research questions that the study was conducted to answer. The professional dispositions and beliefs of school leaders have a potent force to affect the behavior of teachers in how they respond to the pedagogical needs of SEND students and to provide academic conditions that will meet the learning needs of all students. (Bublitz, 2016).

Some of the writers on moral leadership theory have common relationships in their thoughts about the theory. Carroll's (2003) seven qualities of moral leaders (i.e., strong ethical character, a passion to "do right," being morally proactive, stakeholder-inclusive practices, an obsession with fairness, principled decision making, and integration of ethics wisdom with management wisdom) run parallel to the dispositions that Oyugi (2015) discovered from a participant in his study, which were commitment, empathy, tolerance, honesty, and inclusivity. The best-interests model developed by Stefkovich and Begley (2007) that seeks the " best interests of students" is reflective in the position that Bush and Glover (2014) took in expressing the need for school leadership to make ethical and moral decisions that justly replicate the needs of students and not their adult self-interest.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory also supports IE in schools. The theory of transformational leadership underscores that transformational leaders possess the ability to recognize the change that is apt for implementation within the structures of their organizations (Beauchamp et al., 2011). Additionally, there is evidence that transformational leadership and IE are intertwined because transformational leadership theory can help school leaders to cultivate the essential ingredients needed to turn schools around into effective inclusive academic environments (Opiyo, 2019).

The term *transformational leadership* was first formulated by Downtown (1973). However, its development as an influential style of leadership commenced with the work by Burns (1978) titled *Leadership*. Transformational leadership is shown by leaders who, based on their personal vision and energy, get their organization to dizzy altitudes by making members of the organization perceive problems differently and accept some sense of responsibility (Mapolisa et al., 2011). Gabriel (2003) maintained that transformational leadership presents a leader's high level of confidence and direction to get things done. It has one disadvantage: The leader does not exclusively ascertain what subordinates do. Burns elucidated that transformational leadership is like a conduit through which leaders and followers mutually inspire themselves to a higher echelon of motivation and morality. In 1985, Bass magnified the theory of transformational leadership by exhibiting that transformational leadership emboldened followers to hold beliefs in the vision and goals of the leader (Bass & Riggio, 2008). One of the basic interests of transformational leadership relates to the moral development of the employee

(Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008). Transformational leaders pursue the practices of challenging the ways in which their employees think, nurturing them, and inspiring them with the application of high moral paradigms and values to monitor their performance (Bass et al., 2003). Avolio et al. (1985) stated that the aftermath of the process is that transformational leaders gain confidence, reverence, and commendation from their employees. Transformational leadership incorporates a moral element with consideration paid to the role of the leader in helping to inspire their followers to follow the various stages of moral development (Grogan, 2006; Murphy, 2018). Transformational leaders affect the degree to which the followers of the organization recognize the organizational goals as important and achievable, impacting positively the work engagement of the workers (Li et al., 2019; Steinmann et al., 2018).

The most influential transformational model by Bass (1985) encompassed four main elements that depict a transformational leader: (a) idealized influence or charismatic leadership, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) individualized consideration. Each of these constituents is essential for effective school principalship. The four components offer a backdrop in which leadership is regarded as an establishment of several sources instead of a single authority (Hallinger, 2003). In transformational leadership, leaders are expected to engage staff and other essential stakeholders to maximize their levels of commitment to realizing the goals of the organization, which are associated with the vision. There is proof signposting that transformational leadership is operative in the enhancement of student learning outcomes and performance (Bush & Glover, 2014; Widodo & Mawarto, 2020).

The four known components of transformational leadership can be exhibited in the leadership realm of principals within the school organization. The element of idealized influence or charismatic leadership deals with the high moral benchmarks of the leader combined with their proficient use of power within the domain of the organization. In the school context, principals with idealized influence or charismatic leadership command respect and trust within and outside the school premises, and teachers and students readily imbibe their values and ideals (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). Intellectual stimulation refers to the ability of the leader to motivate followers so that they can be innovative, explorative, and receptive to new methods of learning. The element of inspirational motivation involves how a leader motivates and inspires members of the organization. This element is also characterized by the leader's portrayal of optimism and communication of high expectations. The fourth component, individualized consideration, involves the leader's provision of a supportive climate for individual growth, development, and taking into consideration individual needs of members. The identified components of transformational leadership are critical to the professional dispositions and perceptions of school principals in respect of the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms (Chandler, 2015).

There is evidence in the literature that studies have explored how school principals have used transformational leadership in depicting their responsibilities as school leaders. Opiyo (2019) carried out a secondary data review to explore IE and transformative leadership pertaining to the professional development of school leaders in Kenya. Results of the study showed evidence that IE and transformative leadership are

closely interwoven. The findings indicate that all initiatives directed toward establishing effective execution of IE must interrogate the leadership capability of school leaders and improve them as essential components in turning around schools into effective inclusive learning settings.

Jovanovic and Ciric (2016) investigated the benefits of transformational leadership as they relate to education. They concluded that transformational leadership in education, particularly in the school system is essential because the model can develop schools, change the classroom practices of teachers, augment quality teaching, student learning, and attainment and student engagement as a product of learning. Jovanovic and Ciric noted that several authors have established that transformational leadership is resourceful for educational institutions. They added that studies in the area of school leadership specify the benefits inherent from transformational leadership. Jovanovic and Ciric discussed that the transformational leadership style of school principals would produce job satisfaction, favorable school environment, improvement of school performance, problem solving and decision-making skills, combined with the development of quality at varied levels, the progression of commitment, capacity, engagement of teachers and other staffs in meeting goals , and the development of acceptance, motivation, dedication, and professional advancement. Tengi et al. (2017) concluded that transformational leadership plays significant role in the efficacy of the leadership of school leaders. They posited that school leaders in Malaysia are accorded enough exposure and training to augment their leadership so that they demonstrate effective school leadership in their respective schools.

In the reviewed studies, there is evidence that transformational leadership has been applied as a leadership model by school principals to portray their role as effective school leaders. The common trend in the reviewed studies is that transformational leadership is viewed by the different writers as an appropriate model that can equip school principals to address the learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms. These studies show that transformational leadership is applicable in school organizations and school principals should have this leadership style to turn their schools around for IE for SEND students. The studies of Opiyo (2019), Jovanovic and Ciric (2016), Tengi (2017) conveyed findings with agreement in the element that transformational leadership is indispensable to school leadership as it prepares them to demonstrate effective leadership in the school system.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Current literature abounds the area of school leadership and IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. The following topics were addressed in the literature review: (a) the conceptual framework for the study, (b) the historical and legal foundations of IE as a global phenomenon, (c) the background of SEND laws in Sierra Leone, (d) school principals and IE, and € perceptions that school principals hold about IE.

Historical and Legal Foundations of Inclusive Education

To study the professional dispositions and perceptions of senior secondary school principals in inclusive education systems, it is important to understand the historical roots and legal evolution, and foundations of IE from both international and national echelons.

Historical documents regarding the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms are evident in the literature of IE. This section of the literature review focuses on the historical and legal foundations of IE at international level.

Historically, the inclusion of SEND students into general education classrooms can be traced from the United Nations' (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The preamble of the UDHR recognizes that "inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" (UN, 1948, Preamble, para. 1). Kanter (2007) posited that people with disabilities are not explicitly included or excluded in the UDHR. The inclusion of SEND students into general education classrooms has legal foundations that support IE practices to meet the learning needs of SEND students (Dreyer, 2017). Inclusive education has solid international legal foundation as manifested under international conventions, treaties, regulations, and principles ratified by several countries in the world. This ratification puts IE under the limelight of international law. Kanter et al. (2014) traced the historical roots of IE from an international law perspective based on the adoption of conventions, protocols, agreements, and documents about the importance of IE for SEND students by member states of international education related organizations. Dreyer (2017) referred to these conventions, protocols, agreements, and documents as the key international milestones regarding IE.

After the adoption of UDHR, the UN adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1966 (UN, 1966). Both documents in combination with

the UDHR formed the International Bill of Human Rights (IBHR) in 1966. In actual fact, the IBHR comprises the five main human rights treaties of the UN that function to improve basic freedoms and to safeguard the fundamental human rights of all people. The Bill influences the actions and decisions of governments, states, and other meaningful organizations to regard economic, social, and cultural rights a prime priority in the process of formulating and implementing national, regional, and international policy and law (International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights [INESCR], n.d.). The five core human rights as enshrined in the IBHR are the UDHR (1948), ICESCR (1966), ICCPR (1966), Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (1966), and Optional Protocol to the ICESCR (2008). The IBHR contained a comprehensive list of human rights that government, state, and non-state actors are mandated to respect and promote, and they include right to life, equality, security of person, freedom from slavery, freedom from arbitrary arrest/ detention, freedom of movement and residence, due process of law, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association and assembly, right to safe and healthy working conditions, right to education, and right to health (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.; United Nations, n.d.). Kanter et al. (2014) posited that as in the case of the UDHR, both the ICESCR and ICCPR never indicated an inclusion or exclusion of people with disabilities as a protected group. Kanter et al. (2014) noted that articles 13 and 14 of ICESCR which acknowledge the right to education for all may be interpreted as the first conventional acknowledgment of the right to education of all people including people with disabilities, under international law.

However, the CRC was the first obligatory international treaty that explicitly mentioned the right to education for children with disabilities. The CRC was launched for ratification on November 20, 1989. Since this date, the CRC has been ratified by almost all member states with the exception of United States and Somalia. Articles 23, 28, and 29 convey the educational rights of children and also recognize the special needs of children with disabilities to effectively access and receive an education (UN, 1989). The committee on the Rights of the Child has approved several general comments and documents depicting clarification of its interpretation of the CRC that are applicable to IE. General comment number 9 of the rights of children with disabilities was endorsed in acknowledgement of the poor condition of several children with disabilities (Center for Studies on Inclusive Education, n.d.). In Paragraphs 66 and 67 of general comment number 9, the issue of IE was specifically addressed. The aforementioned paragraphs indicated that IE should be the primary target for supporting students with disabilities. The comment further stated that the approach and method of inclusion must be determined by the individual educational needs of the student. The paragraphs accentuated that the education of some disabled children necessitates the type of support that be unavailable in general education classes (Center for Studies on Inclusive Education, n.d.).

Another international milestone in the historical and legal foundations of IE centers on the Standard Rules on EOPD which was adopted by the UN in 1993 (UN, 1993). The Standard Rules on EOPD have been developed based on the experience reaped during the UN's Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992). The political and

moral underpinning of the Standard Rules on EOPD stemmed from the IBHR that

incorporates the UDHR, ICESCR, ICCPR, and the Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the World Program of Action

concerning Disabled Persons (Kanter et al., 2014: UN, 1993;). The 22 Standard Rules

signify developing understanding within the international community about the abilities

on the range of needs of persons with disabilities. The Standard Rules support the right of

all people with disabilities to equal education and encourage member states to conform

accordingly (UN, 1993). The issue of children with disabilities was addressed in the

Standard Rules. Standard Rule six demands that educational programs are carried out in

an integrated setting and children with disabilities should be recognized as equal

participants within the educational system (UN, 1993; Rioux & Carbert, 2003). Quinn

and Degener (2002) noted that the UN Standard Rules on EOPD implied the UN's

affirmation of the human rights ploy to disability.

Originally, the UN Standard Rules on EOPD were not legally mandatory as

international law. They were regarded as guidelines for policy development and

illustrated a dedication to empowering the human rights of people with disabilities based

on equalization of opportunities. In 2000, the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted

a resolution that reaffirmed resolution 1998/31 which was a general recognition of the

UN's responsibility for the human rights of people with disabilities. The 2000/51

resolution indicated that actions meted out against people with disabilities that are

inconsistent with the Standard Rules on EOPD is an encroachment on the human rights

of people with disabilities (UN Commission on Human Rights , 2000).

Likewise, the UN Standard Rules on EOPD was followed by UNESCO's adoption of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Education Needs. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Education Needs originated from a world conference held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994 and stated the need to provide equal education to all persons with special educational needs (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Statement reiterates the responsibility of representatives from 92 governments and 25 international organizations regarding the prominence of delivering equal education to all persons with disabilities in the world. (UNESCO, 1994). Unlike earlier international documents, the Salamanca Statement centers solely on special education and the advancement of IE. The Salamanca Statement commences with Education for All (EFA) by acknowledging the need and importance of delivering education for every child, young people and adults within the general education structure. The emphasis is evident as the Salamanca Statement points out that general education schools with inclusive alignment are the most valuable ways of tackling discriminatory mindsets, establishing friendly communities, developing an inclusive society, and attaining education for everyone (UNESCO, 1994).The rationale for the Framework for Action on Special Education Needs (FASEN) was to inform policy and direct action by governments, international organizations, national aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and other bodies in the implementation process of the Salamanca Statement on principles, policy, and practice in special needs education (UNESCO, 1994). The driving principle of FASEN is that schools should accommodate all children irrespective

of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. The

FASEN maintained that the children the school should accommodate should include

disabled and gifted children, street children, and working children, children from remote

or nomadic populations, children from linguistic , ethnic or cultural minorities, and

children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups (UNESCO, 1994).

Hasan et al. (2018) posited that the Salamanca Statement and FASEN (UNESCO, 1994)

offers a framework for considering how to move policy and practice further. They

maintain that the Salamanca Statement and its associating Framework of Action is

possibly the most substantial international document has ever featured in special

education.

The first World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) was held in Jomtien,

Thailand in 1990. The WCEFA was a historic idea intended to encourage international

devotion to meet the learning needs of all, to equip people with the required knowledge,

skills, values, and attitudes they need for a dignified living so that they can improve their

lives and contribute to the advancement of their respective communities and countries

(World Bank, 2000). The conference assembled representatives of governments,

international agencies, non-governmental organizations, professional associations and

prominent personalities in the sphere of education from around the world. The World

Declaration and a Framework for Action was signed by 155 governments which

committed them to guarantee the provision of quality basic education to children, youths,

and adults (Torres, 1999). The focus of the WCEFA was on the recognition of the fact

that a substantial number of vulnerable and marginalized groups of learners were

excluded from education systems, globally (Miles & Singal, 2008). It was reported that in 1990 about 100 million children between ages 6 and 11 were not attending schools and in 2000 this number had increased to 125 million (World Bank, 2000). It was not only children with disabilities that were taken into account, but also children marginalized because of poverty, geographic location, culture, and war. The WCEFA was an important breakthrough in the international dialogue on the place of education in human development policy. The consensus arrived at the WCEFA revitalized the worldwide drive to provide universal primary education and eradicate illiteracy. It has also stirred efforts in the improvement of quality basic education and to meet the basic learning needs of diverse disadvantaged groups (UNESCO, 1990). Hasan, Halder, and Debnath (2018) noted that Education for All (EFA) guarantees the accessibility of quality basic education to all children and warrants the need for the creation of an academic environment that would enable children to learn.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) which was adopted on July 1, 1990, and came into force November 29, 1999, has been ratified by 49 AU member states and the last signature was June 27, 2019. Article 11 of the ACRWC stipulates that children have the right to education and to improve their personality, mental, and physical abilities to their maximum potential. The Article requires governments of member states to adopt specific actions regarding female, gifted, and disadvantaged children with the objective of ensuring equal access to education for every section of the community (AU, 1990). Article 13 guarantees special protection of children who are mentally or physically disabled so as to safeguard their dignity, self-

reliance, and active involvement in society (AU, 1990). It is important to note here that there is no Article in the ACRWC that addresses the issue of IE and SEND students.

However, the third major UN action pertaining the right of people with disabilities to education before the adoption of the CRPD was the ratification of the Dakar Framework of Action at the World Education Forum which took place in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 (UN, 2000). The Dakar Framework of Action (DFA) endorses the goal of the 1990 EFA presented in Jomtien, Thailand. The DFA was focused on national education for all assessments. The assessments resulted to numerous conclusions indicating that 113 million primary school-aged children with a significant percentage of girls were out of school, there were 880 million illiterate adults in the world with substantial number of women, education quality is often questionable, and there was a growing impact on education emanating from poverty, child labor, violence and conflict, and HIV/AIDS (World Education Forum, 2000). Consequently, the DFA highlighted several goals in meeting these challenges. Each of the goals have unique significance to education for rural development. The primary goal borders on the expansion and improvement of comprehensive early childhood care and education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged (World Education Forum, 2000). The DFA acknowledges education as an effective tool in dealing with serious world problems like illiteracy, poverty, and the outbreak of disease and war. The vision of the DFA was that by 2015 all children, especially girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those from ethnic minorities gained access to and complete free and compulsory quality primary education (UN, 2000). Another crucial target of the DFA borders on the creation of a

safe, healthy, inclusive, and fairly equipped educational settings favorable to excellence in learning with clearly well-defined levels of attainment for all (UN, 2000).

The CRPD came into existence in 2007. Kanter et al. (2014) suggested that collectively the DFA, the Salamanca Statement, the Standard Rules on EOPD, and other general UN human rights documents, laid the groundwork for the legally binding right to IE as embedded in the CRPD. The CRPD was the outcome of five years of consultations at the UN by the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disability, 2005). A major article of the CRPD is Article 24 entitled "Education." Subsection 1 of Article 24 requires state governments to recognize the rights of persons with disabilities to education and to ensure an "inclusive education system at different levels and lifelong learning" (UN, 2007, Article 24, para. 1). Kanter (2007) noted that Article 24 was one of the most contentious Articles considered by the drafting committee of the CRPD because it triggered a debate bordering on the definition of disability in the milieu of IE and objection by some committee members that the phrase " inclusive education system" (UN, 2007, Article 24, para. 1) should not be mandatory that will require member states to change their existing education systems to embrace inclusion. As endorsed, Article 24 does not require that each disabled child or adult be placed in an inclusive classroom nor that all schools be inclusive (Kanter et al., 2014). Subsection 1 of the Article 24 only requires that states parties "ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning" (Article 24, para. 1).

However, Kanter et al. (2014) posited that Article 24 of the CRPD has the possibility of bringing about legislative change in several countries of the world by enacting laws and policies that will safeguard the right to IE for every child and adult with disability. The Article can also be used by countries as a model in modifying their national laws with the objective of increasing and improving access to IE and lower rates of illiteracy. In Sierra Leone, Article 24 has influenced the enactment of the Child Right Act of 2007, Persons with Disability Act of 2011, and other government education policies such as the, the Education Sector Plans of 2007-2014, 2014-2018, and 2018-2020 that acknowledge and stipulate mandates for equal educational opportunities to SEND students in general education classrooms in public schools in the country (GoSL, 1995, 1997, 2007, 2014, 2018Pai, 2014; Right to Education Project, 2016; Tarawallie, 2015).

Thus, this section of the literature review looks at the historical and legal foundations of IE as a global phenomenon. From the review, it is evident that the history of IE at global level is influenced and supported by international conventions, documents, conferences, agreements, and resolutions that provided the legal foundations of IE. The adoptions of the UDHR, ICESCR, ICCPR, CRC, Standard Rules on EOPD, Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Education Needs, CRPD and other resolutions at international conferences were milestones in the history of IE. These milestones bring IE in the limelight of international law.

Background of Special Educational Needs and Disability Laws in Sierra Leone

Leadership beliefs, professional dispositions, and IE have become the central focus in the educational landscape of Sierra Leone. The country has ratified most international and regional treaties that safeguard the right of every child to access equal, quality, and affordable education. The country is a signatory to the UDHR, CRC, the Standard Rules on EOPD, DFA , and the CRPD. These international conventions have helped Sierra Leone to pass legislations that make provisions for according equal educational opportunities to people with disabilities.

Therefore, national laws and policies are crucial in the process of providing equal education access to SEND students in general education classrooms because they document in concrete terms the framework of the rights and obligations that are accorded to people in the country (Right to Education Project, 2016). The 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone is the supreme legislative norm of the country as it spells out the general tenets that all other domestic laws and policies should follow. Educational laws and policies enacted by the government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) are the Education Act, 2004, Child Right Act, 2007, Persons with Disability Act, 2011, National Education Master Plan-1996-2007, the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plans (ESPs), 2007-2014, 2014-2018, and 2018-2020. These national laws and policies acknowledged and provided orders for equal education to be granted to all children who are physically challenged in general education schools throughout the country (GoSL, 1991, 1995, 2004, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2018 ; Pai, 2014; Right to Education Project, 2016; Tarawallie, 2015). These

education Acts and policies necessitate school leaders to establish a school environment that will meet the learning needs of every child for better learning outcomes (Right to Education Project, 2016).

Article 9 of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone relates to the fundamental principles and objectives of education in the country. It is stipulated in Article 9 Subsection 1 and Paragraphs a and b that the GoSL will direct its policy by guaranteeing equal rights and enough educational opportunities to all citizens so that every citizen is accorded the chance to acquire an education based on his or her ability. Also, protecting the rights of vulnerable groups inclusive of children, women, and disabled people in secured educational environments (GoSL, 1991). In Article 27 of the constitution, the issue of protection from discrimination is addressed. According to Section 2 of the Article, a person is not allowed to be treated in a discriminatory way by any individual acting in respect of the law or in the execution of public office duties (GoSL, 1991). It is important to emphasize here that the 1991 constitution as last amended in 2008 does not acknowledge education as a human right. Education as provided for in the 1991 constitution is construed as a fundamental principle of government policy (Right to Education Project, 2016).

The Education Act of 2004 provided 9 years of basic education to all children which is free and compulsory, and imposes punitive actions on those who cause hindrance in gain access to education. Part 2 of the Act establishes the structure of the education system of the country and stipulates the provision of the right of free and compulsory education to all children (GoSL, 2004). Section 4, Subsection 1 of the same

Part of the Act institutes the principle of non-discrimination and states that there should

be no discrimination between students in the issue of their enrollment and treatment

accorded to them in any educational institutions in the country (GoSL, 2004).

Discrimination in the context of the Education Act of 2004 was defined as follows:

> For the purposes of this section "discrimination" includes any distinction,
>
> exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, color, sex,
>
> disability, language, religion, political, national or social origin, economic
>
> condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of impairing equality of treatment in
>
> education at any level. (p. 7)

Therefore, the Education Act of 2004 was a domestic primacy that encompasses

the commitment of the government of Sierra Leone to the Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs) on education which was established at the UN Millennium Declaration of

2000. The objective of the MDGs was to certify that all children have and completion of

primary schooling by 2015 and the elimination of gender disparity at any levels of

education domain by 2015. Records show that the GoSL has over the years committed its

policy towards the accomplishment of the MDGs to enhancing the quality of education

for its citizens at varied levels (World Bank, 2007).

On June 13, 2007, the Child Right Act was passed by the Sierra Leone

parliament. The Act is to provide and promote the rights of the child and it is compatible

to the UN's CRC of 1989, and its Optional Protocols of 2000, and the African Charter on

the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ICRC n.d.). The Child Right Act of 2007

encompasses a crucial provision in Subsection 2 of Section 30 that addresses the

treatment of disabled children in Sierra Leone (GoSL, 2007). Subsection 2 of the Act

adds that "a disabled child has a right to special care, education and training wherever

possible to develop his maximum potential and be self-reliant" (p. 16).

However, the legislation that explicitly refers to the concern of disabled children

is covered in the Persons with Disability Act of 2011. The Act was passed with the aims

of establishing a National Commission for Persons with Disability, the proscription of

discrimination against persons with a disability, accomplishing equalization of

possibilities for persons with a disability, and to offer for other related issues (GoSL,

2011). Part 5 of the Act institutes rights and privileges of persons with disability. Section

15 Subsections 1 and 2 give protection to persons with disability from discrimination in

educational institutions. The section states that:

> A person with disability shall not be denied admission to or expelled from an
>
> educational institution by reason only of his disability. Educational institutions
>
> shall take into account the special needs of persons with disability concerning the
>
> use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements and other
>
> similar considerations. (p. 12)

Basically, the Persons with Disability Act safeguards individuals with disability

from all forms of discrimination in any educational institution in Sierra Leone. It is

therefore obligatory for all leaders of educational institutions to conform to the

requirements of the Persons with Disability Act of 2011.

The educational laws passed in Sierra Leone were legal guarantees to ensure the

right to education for every child in the country. These educational laws cover specific

areas such as free and compulsory 9 years basic education, quality education,

nondiscrimination, and persons with disabilities. The government of Sierra Leone

formulated various policies to implement certain provisions of the educational laws.

Education policies such as the Sierra Leone ESPs 2007-2014, 2014 -2018, and 2018 -

2020, the Sierra Leone Education Sector Capacity Development Strategy, 2012-2016

(GoSL, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2018).

The Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan (ESP) of 2007-2014 specifies the tasks

involved in meeting the cost of providing free education programs and there associated

outcomes. The ESP contains various areas which include among other things expansion

and improvement of post-primary education, accomplishing universal primary education,

enhancing the quality of education, and monitoring it, and making certain the financing

of education based on viable programs. One of the objectives of the Plan was to make

certain that every child enter primary school at the age of 6 years through the

enforcement of the Education Act of 2004, birth registration of all births, and the

construction of new schools, and the rehabilitation old schools (GoSL, 2007). Another

objective of the ESP was to ensure that every school in the country provide a safe

learning environment for all children, specifically with respect to discrimination (GoSL,

2007). There was also the objective of ensuring that vulnerable and disadvantaged

children including orphans, children with special needs and, those in need of protection

are enrolled, and stayed in school. Some strategies highlighted to accomplish this

objective include the provision of essential social aid, and follow-up. The ESP also

focused on the need of improving quality education with the aim of making sure that physically disabled children can use schools safely and also creating an enabling environment for the mentally challenged children at primary level (GoSL, 2007). Right to Education Project (2016) stated that the Sierra Leone ESP (2007-2014) was a planned document built on the government's Country Status Report of 2006 and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2004. Both documents they maintained paved the way in which the government will improve the education accomplishments since the end of the rebel war in 2000 so that by the end of 2015 every child will attend school and obtain quality education.

The aim of the Sierra Leone ESP of 2014-2018 was to go on with the strategies established in the first ESP of 2007-2014 and deal with issues confronted the phase of its implementation. There was a strong emphasis on capacity building in the 2014-2018 ESP and regular supervision and evaluation of policies to match costs (Right to Education Project, 2016). Objective 2(1) of the ESP (2014-2018) was centered on the need for the improvement of learning environments by adopting strategies such as the reconstruction of existing schools to make them conducive for safe learning, provision of adequate furniture in classrooms, improvement of sanitary conditions and the increase availability of sanitation facilities, and delivery of teaching and learning materials. Strategic objective 14 of the Sierra Leone Education Sector Capacity Development Strategy of 2012-2016 authenticated the relevance for the education system to identify children with special education needs, notably for emotional, mental or physical reasons and such students must be provided with the necessary support where possible in an inclusive school

environment.

The writers of the 2012-2016 Sierra Leone Education Sector Capacity Development Strategy noted that an ample body of expertise and research needs to be adopted in Sierra Leone to reinforce and provide information on important decisions related to inclusion and special educational needs methods and working framework of support and integration at varied levels (GoSL, 2011). An intervention that could accomplish this involves the process of building professional capacity within the university and teacher training college domains, to bolster IE components in teacher training colleges, and take the lead of identifying and supporting children with special educational needs. Another intervention was to create domestic tools and systems to identify students with special educational needs and establish guidance for teachers to identify students with hearing or visual impairments (GoSL, 2011).

The 2018-2020 ESP (GoSL, 2018) aims at the continuation, expansion, and the sustenance of improvements that were accomplished under the ESP of 2014-2018 in access and equity, quality and relevance, and system strengthening. The ESP of 2018-2020 incorporates a new focus on the relevance of boosting the emergency preparedness system to ensure better response to sudden shocks like natural disasters, epidemic disease, and insecurity. One of the strategic outcomes in the 2018-2020 ESP was access, equity, and completion. The 2018-2020 ESP set out goals and interventions to improve access, equity, and completion rates in the school system of the country. The ESP under review seeks to boost access to free GoSL preprimary schooling for children ages 3 to 5 from 11 % in 2016 to 15% in 2020 and to increase the entry and completion rates in

primary education from 75.4% in 2016 to 85% in 2020 (Go.SL, 2018). The ESP of 2018-2020 sought out to develop a costed action plan to steer the increase of preprimary schooling deliveries that are inclusive of the expansion of public preschooling in primary schools. The latter is intended to be achieved by lowering the cost of schooling to parents by streaming the payment method of grants to schools to make certain that funds reach recipients in a timely manner, and delivering supplementary support to the most susceptible communities through a targeted school grants program (GoSL, 2018).

However, the content or package of the 2018-2020 ESP never specifically mention the issue of SEND students as evident in the Sierra Leone Education Sector Capacity Development Strategy of 2012-2016. The aims and interventions on access, equity, and completion rates may be construed as taking into cognizance the issue of SEND children in the country. However, the reviewed documents are indicators of the Sierra Leone government's commitment to adhere to national and international laws that center on the relevance of providing SEND students the access to education in general education classrooms.

School Principals and Inclusive Education

This section of the literature review deals with school principals and IE that pivot on studies related to the roles, responsibilities, and challenges school principals face in the drive to provide quality IE For SEND students in general education classrooms. Various studies have been carried out to explore the issue of school principals and IE and some of these studies are reviewed in this section of the literature review.

Poon-McBrayer (2017) interviewed 10 principals in a qualitative case study to

examine the dilemmas and measures facing principals when they managed changes to bring about IE in Hong Kong. Results of the study demonstrated that the process of conducting change was very convoluted. Two dilemmas were found, and they were manifested in principals' battles between benefits and issues of IE participation, and the dilemma of arbitrary initial decisions contrasted with the need for staff involvement. The writer indicated that the first dilemma triggered struggles in the process of making decision whereas the second dilemma produced impediments for execution and necessitated actions involving the combination of transactional and transformational leadership styles to bring about changes for effective practices. A major strength of the study rests on the actions which school leaders could use to tackle the obstacles emanating from the noninvolvement of key staff in change implementation that required their active input. Pong-McBrrayer (2017) stated that the leadership measures to tackle the obstacles commenced by creating a common vision that required both transactional and transformational leadership actions so as to intensify teacher dedication to the change.

The focus of the study centers on the problems and actions school leadership face in the process of managing school reforms that hinges on IE. The study has a semblance of a research by Carter and Abawi (2018) which sought to investigate school leadership in facilitating effective inclusive practices. Carter and Abawi (2018) maintained that social justice leadership can be enacted into inclusive practices whereas Poon-McBrayer (2017) posited that transactional and transformational leadership approaches are essential in the change management process of implementing IE as a school reform.

In another study, Amka (2019) obtained primary data through surveys and interviews from 100 school administrators, 500 teachers, 45 parents of special educational needs (SEN) students and various stakeholders to explore the practice of IE in schools under the jurisdiction of south Kalimantan province in Indonesia. The study underscores the status of IE in schools which involves the execution of inclusive policies by school administrators, appropriate supervision by teachers, and the perception of the community. Findings of the study show that local government policies have brought about the enhancement of IE in schools established in south Kalimantan. It was also found that majority of school leaders and parents of non-SEN students support IE, and are inclined to work with SEN students. Amka maintained that the implementation of IE in practice differs from school to school, subject to the perceptions of school administrators, and the determination of teachers. It is indicated in the study that to create an academic environment that support all students, most school administrators had embarked on the need to improve the understanding of teachers and employees on IE. Amka reiterated the need of special training for IE by mentioning the statement of a school administrator, a participant of the study that appropriate IE training for school principals and teachers are not often conducted.

In a study by Espositoa, Tanga and Kulkarnib (2019), the historical outlook of the inclusive movement and the responsibility school leaders perform in guaranteeing inclusive environments were discussed followed by recommendations for future school leaders and teachers. The writers refer to the significant role that school administrators perform in the establishment and enhancement of a culture of inclusiveness combined

with the development and execution of inclusive practices. They reiterated the relevance of school administrators acquiring and sustaining some level of knowledge and competencies in the field of special education. This requires school administrators to be aware of the needs and concerns of their students with disabilities. The authors highlighted the need to infuse special education into the curriculum of school administration preparation and continuing education programs because universities they asserted are only starting to integrate special education concepts into the curriculum of their school administration preparation programs. This study corroborates the work of Bateman et al. (2017) in which the authors stated that when school administrators are well equipped with the special education knowledge and dexterities required to improve and foster inclusive practices for all students, the entire educational organization benefits. There are other studies which have emphasized the need for school leaders to acquire the apt knowledge and competencies in special education and IE so that can be adequately prepared to confront the challenges in managing inclusive learning environments (Billingsley et al., 2017; Lyons, 2016; Murphy 2018; Nguluma et al.; 2017; Sider et al., 2017 Ugwu and Onukwufor, 2018;).

Furthermore, DeMatthews, Kotok, and Serafin (2019) investigated the preparation and leadership experiences of six principals who effectively established inclusive schools in one midsized school district in west Texas. Findings of the study center on the beliefs, values, knowledge and expertise, and leadership practices of principals. Principals of the study pinpointed beliefs, values, and mindsets are crucial to inclusive schools. Most of the principals stated their programs encouraged the inclusion of students with disabilities

and these principals saw the need to lead for inclusion resulting from the advocacy of their professors during coursework. Principals of the study identified special education content knowledge as a significant field in which their preparation could have been augmented. Each of the principals recounted learning challenging lessons on the job and wished they had had more preservice training to expedite Individualize Educational Program meetings and make tough decisions. The principals believed co-teaching was mostly disregarded in their preparation. Regardless of limited preparation, principals conveyed using instructional leadership practices to identify teaching needs of teachers, provide professional development that is designed from outside resource, and supervise and assist teachers based on their progress. The findings of this study are in alignment with other studies indicating that principals lack preparation in IE and the necessity of providing effective school leadership to embrace the challenges of IE. (Billingsley, DeMatthews, Connally, & McLeskey, 2018; Carter & Abawi, 2018; Gathumbi et al., 2015; Kozleski & Choi, 2018; Lyons, 2016; Murphy, 2018; Nguluma et al., 2017; Roberts, Ruppar, & Olson, 2018; Sider et al., 2017; Tuters, & Portelli, 2017; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018).

In a qualitative case study, Carter and Abawi (2018) used semi-structured interviews to collect a six-month period data from the head of special education and a principal of a complex multicultural school perceived as an inclusive educational setting. The purpose of the research was to investigate leadership in facilitating effective inclusive practices. Results of the study showed that social justice leadership could be enacted to both entrench inclusive practices and accomplish high-quality learning

outcomes for all students. The researchers concluded that leadership for inclusion involves making firm decisions. It is a compounded and complicated act requiring deliberately targeted effort, advocacy, and particular ways of leading. This study provides an understanding of how social justice leadership is intertwined on the efficacy and attitudes of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with learning needs.

In another study, Gathumbi et al. (2015) surveyed 140 teachers and 13 principals from selected schools in Kenya to assess the level of teachers' and school administrators' preparedness to handle IE. Findings of the study indicated that physical infrastructure and instructional resources are inappropriate to support students with special needs. School management policies related to special needs children were not inclusive enough to provide for all students and teamwork among teachers to support learners with special needs falls below expectation. They maintained that there is a need to develop knowledge base on inclusive education, to meet the learning needs of every student. The findings of this study acknowledge the relevance of developing the knowledge base on inclusive education and this will give the significance of undertaking a study that centers on the professional dispositions and perceptions of general education school leaders toward IE for SEND students.

In a similar study, Kozleski and Choi (2018) utilized a two-year data from a set of schools located across the United States partnering with federally funded inclusive schools to determine how school leadership can improve learning outcomes for all students. The data indicated evidence of changes in specific school leadership practices as manifested in the findings of the study. Findings of the study showed that schools that

are supported with technical assistance in administrative leadership considerably

improved their leadership performance based on the measurement of a research tool

called School-wide Integrated Framework for Transformation Fidelity of Implementation

Tool. Improvements were manifested in two significant aspects of leadership

measurement of Strong and Engaged Site Leadership and Strong Educator Support

System features. The results of the study are underpinned with the need to focus on the

improvement of administrator leadership beliefs to connect more comprehensive school

systems of support for learning that are linked with higher levels of student learning

outcomes.

In addition, Murphy (2018) mentioned in his article that school principals and

their assistants played crucial roles in ensuring the accomplishment of inclusive special

education in the schools under their instruction. However, he maintained that these school

leaders frequently report they lack the required expertise to offer quality supervision of

inclusive special education programs. Murphy came up with nine tips along with 11

immediately implementable practical strategies in the article to help school leaders to

improve and sustain effective inclusive education practices. Thus, the intention of the

article, is to provide school leaders with knowledge, skills, and practical approaches to

sustain and expand upon the inclusive special education programs in their schools

through the framework of transformational leadership theory. The tips and strategies

highlighted in the article will provide a solid base for comparison of themes that will

emerge from my study.

In general, each of the studies reviewed in this section of the literature review

pivots on school leadership in IE and demonstrated the need for providing effective

school leadership for IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. Some of the

studies emphasized the relevance of providing administrative support and training for

school leaders so that they can be professionally prepared to meet the challenges of IE for

SEND students in general education classrooms. The studies of Carter and Abawi

(2018), Gathumbi et al. (2015), and Lyons (2016) convey the same views of the need to

developing and strengthening the knowledge base of school principals through

professional development training because IE involves providing the required leadership

that will address the needs of SEND students in inclusive academic environments. The

findings of Nguluma et al. (2017) and Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) have an agreement

on the importance of how knowledge of special education and constant training for

school principals and administrators can lead to the development of positive attitude

towards IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. The studies of

Billingsley et al. (2018), Carter and Abawi, (2018), Gathumbi et al., (2015), Kozleski and

Choi, (2018), Lyons, (2016), Murphy (2018), Nguluma et al. (2017), Roberts et al.

(2018), Sider et al. (2017), Tuters and Portelli (2017) and Ugwu an Onukwufor (2018)

demonstrate an agreement in the findings that school leaders lack the necessary

preparation in IE and the need to provide effective school leadership to deal with the

challenges of IE. Esposito et al. (2019) and Bateman (2017) have an agreement on the

element of the need for school administrators to have knowledge on special education

which will enable them to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of IE for

SEND students in general education classrooms. There is a disagreement in ideas

between Carter and Abawi (2018) and Poon-McBrayer (2017) about what theory is suitable for application in IE. Carter and Abawi (2018) asserted that social justice leadership theory can be enacted into inclusive practices as opposed to Poon-McBrayer (2017) who believed transactional and transformational approaches are fundamental in the change management process of executing IE as a school reform.

Perceptions That School Principals Hold About Inclusive Education

The section of this literature review reviewed studies that pertain to the perceptions that school principals hold about IE. The reviewed studies in this section look at the perceptions and attitudes of school principals from different perspectives. The findings of the reviewed studies have a common trend in illustrating the positive attitudes and perceptions that school principals hold about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms.

Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) used an adapted instrument called the Scale of Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusive Classroom (STATIC) developed by Cochran (1997) to investigate the attitude and factors that influence the attitudes of 116 principals toward the implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the participants in Port Harcourt Metropolis, River State in Nigeria. Findings showed a high percentage of school heads had a positive attitude towards inclusion. Principals with knowledge of special education exhibited a high positive attitude towards inclusion in contrast with those without previous knowledge. Gender, years of service, and the type of school they head whether public/private did not yield significant difference.

However, Roberts et al. (2018) used semi-structured interviews to interview 12 administrators entrusted with the responsibility of evaluating teachers of students with severe disabilities across different educational backgrounds. The administrator participants were selected purposively. The purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions of administrators regarding teachers' expertise and their ideal vision of instruction for students with severe disabilities. Results of the research indicated that administrators were unable to articulate specific instructional practices exhibited by teachers of students with severe disabilities. The results of the study suggested that administrators' vision of instruction and the expertise of teachers about severe disabilities centered on the mixture of professional expectations of teachers outside their classrooms, combined with the need for their inside classroom activities that are inclusive of managing, uplifting, determining behavior and communication, and giving care to their students.

Furthermore, a quantitative study by Nguluma et al. (2017) employed a customized questionnaire entitled Principals' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education scale to discover the attitudes of school administrators and the possible factors that might influence their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classes. The study comprised 232 school administrators, principals, and assistant principals from the public elementary and middle schools in Sakarya Province of Turkey. Key findings of the study indicated that overall attitude of the school administrators was substantially positive, and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools were influenced by some independent variables such as training

related to special education, job position, and years of teaching experience in general

education schools. Constant training was one of the utmost factors in the establishment of

favorable attitudes among the school administrators toward IE; and perceived as an

effective strategy of surmounting their lack of confidence while working with the

disability students.

In another study, Murphy (2018) used a qualitative case study design to collect

data from seven education leaders via structured email interviews about their perception,

roles, and responsibilities. The predominant themes that appeared from the study were

culture, collaboration, limited staff, purposeful inclusion, consideration of individual

needs, acceptance, relationships, appreciation of diversity, and student learning. Findings

indicated that educational leaders value the philosophy of inclusion, and they described

their role in IE programs as collaborators, problem solvers, professional developers, and

facilitators. The results also revealed that it is vital for education leaders to have positive

insights toward IE so that they can support a positive culture of inclusion in the schools

and districts they superintend. It was evident that all educational leaders in the study

believed in and supported a culture of inclusion in their district. All leaders specified they

believed IE had a positive effect on students and the school community. The findings

from this study served as a foundation for discussion concerning the strengths and needs

of existing school leadership for inclusive practices.

Geleta (2019) in a qualitative study used questionnaire, structured interview, and

observational check to explore the perceptions of school principals and teachers of grade

1-8 on IE in the Sebeta town primary government schools in Ethiopia. Data were

obtained from 16 school principals and 78 teachers. Findings of the study showed that school principals and teachers have positive perceptions regarding IE. Results of the study also revealed the lack of inclusive educational materials, inappropriate physical structures of the schools, and the level of implementation of IE in general schools were considerably deficient. The findings of Geleta (2019) are in alignment with the results of Murphy (2018) that it is essential for education leaders to have positive insights about IE so they can enhance positive culture in the schools and districts they supervise.

Timothy and Agbenyega (2018) carried out a phenomenological study to explore the roles and experiences of five primary and seven secondary school leaders from two independent schools in metropolitan Victoria. The study focuses on those school leaders that adopt and use Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in their schools in planning for quality IE for students with disability and additional needs. Thematic analysis of collected data revealed that IEPs are used by the school leaders as programming documents which provide the way of conveying the learning needs of students. School leaders of the study perceived ongoing professional learning as the conduit for the effective implementation of IEPs. They also reported that there is no single best approach in acquiring professional development for the utilization of IEPs to instruct students with disability and additional needs. The findings of these authors are in agreement with the earlier studies by Carter and Abawi (2018), Gathumbi et al. (2015), and Lyons (2016) that conveyed similar views on the necessity of expanding and bolstering the knowledge base of school leaders through professional development training because IE involves providing the essential leadership that will match the needs of SEND students in

inclusive academic environments.

Similarly, Gallo-Toong (2020) investigated to determine the extent of knowledge and the level of attitude of the internal stakeholders toward IE. The sample of the study included five school heads, 130 teachers, and 150 students that were randomly selected in secondary schools located in the district of Hinoba-an, Division of Negros Occidental. A descriptive correctional research method was adopted by the researcher combined with a validated researcher-made questionnaire for measuring knowledge and attitude of the internal stakeholders. Based on the statistical tools of weighted mean and Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, results indicated that the internal stakeholders possessed a high level of knowledge of IE. The study discovered that school heads have a positive attitude towards IE and there is a strong relationship between the school heads, educational accomplishment and their level of knowledge and attitude toward IE. The finding of positive attitude of school heads towards IE is in agreement with the data obtained by Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) that a significant percentage of school principals had positive attitude about inclusion. School principals with sufficient knowledge of special education demonstrated high level of positive attitude about IE than those with inadequate knowledge. The result of the strong relation between educational attainment and attitude of school heads toward IE is in alignment with the study of Nguluma et al. (2017) that emphasized the relevance of professional development based on ongoing training that centers on special education. The essence of ongoing training for school heads is that it is a building block that could foment favorable attitudes in school principals toward IE. The ongoing training can serve as a conduit through which school

administrators can overcome their lack of confidence while dealing with SEND students

for IE (Gallo-Toong, 2020). Gallo-Toong found that there was a weak relationship

between school heads' experience in dealing with students with disabilities and their

knowledge and attitude toward inclusion. This finding is in disagreement with the finding

of Nguluma et al. (2017) that showed school administrators' experience with students

with disabilities contribute to the cultivation of positive attitude towards IE for SEND

students.

However, Khan and Don (2020) in a quantitative study used a survey method to

measure the attitudes of principals toward mainstream education and inclusive education.

The independent variable was principals' attitudes toward mainstream education and

principals' attitudes toward inclusive education as the dependent variable. The sample

size of the study was 197 secondary school principals selected from the Lahore district of

Pakistan. Results of the study based on the paired sample t- test revealed a significant

difference between the attitude of principals towards mainstream education and inclusive

education. Generally, the attitudes of school principals toward IE were very low as

opposed to mainstream education. The study showed that principals were less

enthusiastic and inclined to enroll SEND students in general education classrooms

because of the workload on teachers and the absence of professional training. The

researchers maintained the need for professional training for school leaders to address the

learning needs of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Some of the findings of the studies reviewed in this section of the literature

conveyed similar views and agreements. The study of Geleta (2019) showed findings are

in agreement with the results of the study by Murphy (2018) that it is important for school leaders to have positive insights about IE so that they can enhance positive culture in the schools and the districts they supervise. The results in the study of Timothy and Agbenyega (2018) are in agreement with elements in the findings of previous studies by Carter and Abawi (2018), Gathumbi et al. (2015), and Lyons (2016) that conveyed similar views on the necessity of expanding and bolstering the knowledge base of school leaders through professional development training because IE involves providing the essential leadership that will match the needs of SEND students in inclusive academic environments. The findings of Poon-McBrayer (2017) is in alignment in element with the results of Esposito et al. (2019), Bateman et al. (2017) regarding the relevance of school principals having knowledge of special education which will help them exhibit positive attitude toward inclusive practices.

Current studies in the literature of school leadership and IE abound and researchers have explored school leadership and IE for SEND students that is grounded in varied perspectives and the focuses of these studies centered on the relevance of understanding IE, the role of school leaders in IE, and the instructional competencies of teachers in IE settings (Hornby, 2015; Robinson, 2017; Sider et al., 2017). The studies reviewed in the literature in general have looked at the need for effective school leadership for the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms from different perceptions. The findings of these studies are in association with the findings of other studies in the existing literature. These studies entwined in a common pathway that is discernible in the findings. The reviewed studies have demonstrated the need to

professionally develop school leaders so that they can be equipped with the appropriate

instructional leadership skills to meet the learning needs of SEND students in general

education classrooms (Carter & Abawi 2018, Gathumbi et al., 2015; Lyons, 2016;

Timothy & Agbenyega, 2018). Findings in the studies of Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018),

Nguluma et al. (2017), Murphy (2018), and Geleta (2019) revealed agreement in the

positivity of attitude and perceptions held by school leaders about the inclusion of SEND

students in general education classrooms.

      However, all the findings of the studies reviewed in the current literature of

school leadership and IE hinge on the positive attitude of school principals about IE for

SEND students in general education classrooms. There is no indication of how

professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold about IE for SEND

students in general education classrooms can influence the proper and quality education

provided to SEND students in general education classrooms. This is an area of school

leadership and IE in the field of educational leadership which I sought to explore. A

closer examination of this aspect will provide a meaningful knowledge to the existing gap

in the research literature of school leadership and IE in Sierra Leone and address the

research questions of the study that pertain to the perceptions and professional

dispositions that school principals of senior secondary schools hold regarding the

inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms

Summary

      The need for inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms has

become an issue in the educational landscape of most countries in the world. There is

evidence in current literature that IE for SEND students has strong international legal foundation as specified in international conventions, regulations, and treaties endorsed by several countries in the world and placed IE for SEND students under the attention of international law.

The literature review in this study showed that some studies have been conducted in Sierra Leone that explored the IE from varied perspectives. Some of these studies center on barriers and challenges of inclusion, attitudes, and perceptions of teachers, professional development for inclusion, and policy development for IE (Boisvert, 2017; Nishimuko, 2014; Pai, 2014; Rose, Garner & Farrow, 2019). Studies related to school principals' beliefs, skills, and attitudes about inclusion have been carried out in school systems in other countries (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Majoko, 2019; Simplican et al., 2015). There is no current research on what school principals in Sierra Leone believe or know how to do concerning the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms . Scanty information is available about the professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. The gap in the literature which this study seeks to fill is that no study has been conducted that relates on school leadership and IE and addresses the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that senior secondary school principals hold regarding the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. Findings of the study may contribute to the extension of body of knowledge in the discipline of education policy, leadership, and management in relation to school leadership and IE in the research literature of Sierra Leone.

The first section of the literature review presents an examination of the two theories of moral leadership and transformational leadership that guide the conceptual framework of the study. The two theories were examined through the lenses of seminal works of specific writers combined with the treatment of both theories in subsequent literature. This section of the literature review is followed by a discussion of the historical and legal foundations for IE based on available international documents such as the UDHR, UNCRC, the UN Standard Rules on EOPD, and the Salamanca Statement and FASEN. The literature review goes on to discuss the background of SEND laws in Sierra Leone based on the passage of legislations and education policies to address the issue of SEND students in the country. The other sections of the literature present a review of studies with synthesis in the current literature of school leadership and IE that are relevant to the problem being studied.

Chapter 2 is followed by Chapter 3 where the description of the research design and methodology that was used in the study is illustrated. The chapter encompasses a comprehensive explanation of the sampling method and size of the study, and the criteria that was used to select participants of the study. The chapter also discusses the measures that were used for ethical considerations to protect the identity of the participants and the specific strategies that were employed to establish the trustworthiness of the results of the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of the research was to explore the professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals of senior secondary schools of Sierra Leone hold pertaining to the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. A basic qualitative research approach was used to accomplish the purpose of the study. The participants of the study were principals of general education senior secondary schools from the four regions of Sierra Leone. To obtain the needed information from participants about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms, two concerns were directed to the participants about the problem being studied: (a) their professional dispositions about the inclusion of SEND students in their schools and (b) their perceptions regarding the inclusion of SEND students into their schools.

A section of this chapter presents a description of the research design and its appropriateness for the study. In another section of this chapter, I explain my role in the research process and address my personal and professional relationships with the participants of the study. There is also an explanation of the sample size of the study, including the sampling technique used to select participants. The chapter also addresses the instrumentation of the study, the method of data collection, and the procedures used to analyze the collected data. A summary of the key points of the chapter is presented at the end of the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions drove the objective of the inquiry to find answers to the research problem of the professional dispositions and perceptions that

school principals in senior secondary schools hold regarding the inclusion of SEND

students in general education classrooms:

1. What perceptions and practices or regulations do principals of senior

    secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND students in general

    education classrooms?

2. What professional dispositions and practices or regulations do senior

    secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include SEND students in

    general education classrooms?

The emphasis of this basic qualitative study was on the concept of IE for SEND

students in general education classrooms with a focus on the professional dispositions

and perceptions that school principals hold about the inclusion of SEND students in

general education classrooms of the schools that they manage. Traditionally, qualitative

research permits the researcher to ask qualitative research questions that start with the

word *what* or *how*, permitting the researcher to have a better comprehension of the

phenomenon under study with an in-depth focus (Creswell, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2013).

However, the research questions for this study began with *what* to enhance the

understanding of the concepts under exploration.

This study was rooted in a basic qualitative research approach. Merriam (2009)

posited that basic qualitative research originates philosophically from constructivism,

phenomenology, and symbolic interaction. Basic qualitative research is used by

researchers who are concerned about "how people interpret their experiences, how they

construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam,

2009, p. 23). Merriam (2009) postulated that the overall rationale for the use of basic qualitative research is to comprehend how people perceive both their lives and experiences. The necessity of delivering effective school leadership for IE for SEND students in general education classrooms has been revealed in several studies (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Gathumbi et al., 2015; Kozleski & Choi, 2018; Lyons, 2016; Murphy, 2018a, 2018b; Nguluma et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2018; Sider et al. 2017; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018). A basic qualitative research approach via semistructured in-depth interviews was apposite to discover the professional dispositions, perceptions, and experiences of the participants of the study to address the research questions, which centered on the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that school principals hold about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. In other words, basic qualitative research is suitable for a study in which the researcher seeks to describe and interpret issues or phenomena methodically based on the viewpoints of the individuals and population being studied and the choice of the methodology is directed by the questions to be answered in the study (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016).

The historical source of qualitative research originated from anthropology, sociology, the humanities, and evaluation, and researchers often employed the philosophical worldview of constructivism (Creswell, 2018). Social constructivists believe that people pursue an understanding of the world in which they live and work, and, in the process, people develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research methodology allows the investigator to explore

comprehensive information from a small group of participants (Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The use of the qualitative method is influenced by the researcher's focus on the phenomenon to be studied and the data to be obtained, combined with the analytical approach of the data acquired from participants of the inquiry (Creswell, 2018, 2020).

Contrasting with other methods of research in which researchers seek independent truths through impartial observation, qualitative research methodology locates the researcher in the domain (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), tied with recognition that there is an indication of a connection between the investigator and the investigated (Ormston et al., 2014). The qualitative research method is chosen by researchers for varied reasons. The use of qualitative research allows the researcher to acquire perceptions and feelings from participants about the phenomenon being studied (Green, 2002; Seale, 2006; Silverman, 2006; Sutton & Austin, 2015). Merriam (2014) stated that researchers use the qualitative research design to investigate human events, social relationships, and social constructs combined with the goal of comprehending a particular phenomenon from a personal perspective.

The quantitative research method was not appropriate for this study because the purpose of the study was not to examine, establish, or determine the hypothetical and statistical relationships that existed among variables (Merriam, 2014). A quantitative study requires the use of surveys and questionnaires to obtain quantitative data for examining the statistical relationships among variables and determining their correlations and differences (Frankfort-Nachmias & Leone-Guerrero, 2018; Sousa et al., 2007).

Therefore, a quantitative research design was not appropriate for this study, in which I sought to explore the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that general education school principals hold about the inclusion of SEND students in their schools.

Role of the Researcher

An element of qualitative research revolves around the assertion of the role of the researcher within the qualitative inquiry procedure (Roger et al., 2018). In this research study, I adopted the role of participant-as-observer. Baker (2006) claimed that the participant-as-observer role allows the researcher to become more engaged with the central activities of insiders. Takyi (2015) maintained that a researcher who presumes the role of participant-as observer is more likely to obtain reliable information than is a researcher who uses the observer-as-participant role. The participant-as-observer role enables the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the context of the problem being investigated and to gain the confidence of the researched. The outcome of the process is obtaining rich and accurate data that can be easily understood by the researcher (Takyi, 2015). The intention of this research was to experience the life of the participants of the study and understand it better, and to gain deeper insight into the background of the problem being studied. The role of participant-as-observer enabled me to accomplish the objective of the study by developing the confidence of the participants, which resulted in eliciting the needed information for the study.

Participants in the study were identified and selected through purposeful sampling and then contacted through their available personal emails. Twelve senior secondary

school principals were selected for interviews in their respective locations. Data collected were transcribed verbatim and coded and recoded for analysis to report the findings of the basic qualitative study. My former professional relationship with these participants did not unduly influence the interpretations of the study. To minimize undue influences and biases in the interpretation of the results, the trustworthiness criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were used. The criteria determine the extent to which people can have confidence in the results of this basic qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The objective of pursuing a study on this topic stemmed from my 15 years as a senior teacher in a general education senior secondary school where I experienced the professional dispositions and perceptions of the principals about IE for SEND students. My teaching years in the same school witnessed three successive changes of school leadership. The three principals were reluctant to enroll students with SEND on the assumption that teachers were not competently trained to teach SEND students in the school. This merited me having discussions with these principals about the inevitability of them generating programs on instructional leadership that will equip them to prepare teachers with the appropriate skills to address the learning needs of SEND students.

Additionally, I have a cousin who could not complete his secondary education because he is hearing and speech impaired and the general education system could not address his learning needs. In the research process, I saw my roles as those of graduate student, participant-as-observer, and researcher seeking to research a problem in a way that would make a difference in the lives of the target population of the study. Some of

the participants in the study were former colleagues who had been promoted to the rank
of principal.

The study was not conducted in my work environment, and data for the study
were collected from the participants in different locations, specifically in their respective
offices. Because the study was not carried out in my work environment, conflict of
interest and power differentials cannot be considered to be major ethical challenges to the
study that I needed to address. However, it is important to state here that I had a previous
working relationship with one of the participants, who was my vice principal. Some of
the participants were collegemates who had been promoted to the rank of principal. The
Institutional Review Board (IRB) was notified about this potential conflict of interest for
further guidance. The ethical issues of conflict of interest and power differentials are
evident in a study undertaken in the researcher's work environment, which may manifest
existing relationships or prior activities of the researcher. Fleming and Zegwaard (2018)
posited that a researcher's current and previous relationships may create a conflict of
interest and need to be reported to the ethics approval committee so that its members can
provide guidance on how the conflict of interest can be addressed. Participants of the
study were duly informed that no incentives would be provided to them for participating
in the study, but findings of the study could be useful to them in developing instructional
leadership strategies for addressing the learning needs of SEND students in IE.

Based on my experience and in combination with the role of participant-as-
observer, I deemed it pertinent to carry out research on this topic with the focus of
exploring the problem of the study and reported the findings accordingly so that actions

could be taken to address the issue of IE for SEND students in the country. It is my

conviction that the research exercise on the subject of IE for SEND students will ignite

positive social change because the marginalization of people with disabilities is a social

justice issue that warrants effort to make a positive difference in the lives of this affected

population (Marimuthua & Cheong, 2015). The results of the study may help education

stakeholders to pool their resources together in developing strategies to address the

professional dispositions and perceptions of school leaders toward the inclusion of SEND

students in general education classrooms.

Methodology

In this section of the chapter, more details are provided about how the research

was conducted, where the study was conducted, who the participants of the study were,

and which criteria were used to select them. This section also addresses the

instrumentation employed to obtain the needed data from the participants of the study.

The process used to analyze the collected data and the validation of the results are

explained in this section of the chapter.

Participant Selection

The identified population for the study stemmed from the number of school

principals in senior secondary schools located in Sierra Leone. The ESP of 2018–2020

reported that by 2016, there were 341 senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone, and this

implied that during the stated period, there were 341 school principals of senior

secondary schools (GoSL, 2018). Out of this number, there were 141 senior secondary

schools located in the west, 59 in the south, 84 in the north, and 57 in the eastern part of

the country (GoSL, 2018). Participants were selected from these geographical zones of the country.

Participants for the study were principals of general education senior secondary schools located within the above-mentioned four geographical zones of Sierra Leone. Generally, qualitative research involves small sample sizes, in contrast to quantitative research approaches, which usually require larger sample sizes. Robson (2011) suggested that the sample size for a qualitative study should span from 1 to 25 participants. Maxwell (2012) indicated that the sample size for qualitative research should be restricted between 5 and 25 participants. Creswell and Poth (2017) maintained that the sample size for qualitative research is subject to the qualitative design being used. Robinson (2013) asserted that in qualitative research studies, the sample size is left with the researcher to decide. This basic qualitative study met the saturation and sample size based on the assertions posited by these writers mentioned above.

Based on the identified population of the study, the criteria of academic qualifications and leadership experience of the school principals were used to narrow the identified population of the study to 12 participants. A significant number of the school principals did not have a master's degree in an education-related field, which was one of the criteria for eligibility to participate in the study. This warranted the use of the purposive sampling technique to select the sample for the study. A total of 60 emails were sent to the senior secondary school principals in the four regions of the country. The email specified the academic qualifications and leadership experience criteria to be eligible to participate in the study. Out of the 60 emails sent out to potential participants

of the study, 15 individuals responded, but only 12 met the criteria for selection.

Thus, in the study, 12 principals of senior secondary schools were the participants, and the sample size met the recommendations for saturation and sample size of qualitative research as indicated by the previously mentioned writers on qualitative research methodology. The 12 senior secondary school principals for the study were purposively sampled. The purposive sampling approach is also referred to as *judgment sampling*, which involves the careful selection of participants of a study based on the qualities that they possess. It is a nonprobability sampling method and does not require underlying theories or a set number of participants (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sampling is characteristically employed in qualitative studies, and researchers who utilize this technique deliberately select participants with the expectation that each participant will provide unique information about the research problem of interest (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2013; Zhi, 2014).

For the purposive sampling, two criteria were used for the selection of the senior secondary principals for the study. One of the requirements was based on the leadership experience of the senior secondary school principals. For this criterion, principals with leadership experience of 10 years and above were selected. This standard stemmed from the fact that research studies have shown that productive and effective leadership requires a mixture of cognitive and emotional understandings associated with clear sets of norms and values, as well as experience (Day & Sammons, 2013). Research and practice corroborate that there is a rare chance of generating and sustaining a high-quality learning setting without a skilled, experienced, and committed instructional leader to mold

teaching and learning. Research has clearly shown that the principal is a crucial element in the performance of a school, primarily if that school enrolls a substantial number of low-performing and/or poor minority students and special needs students who demand experienced and effective school leadership (Jolley et al., 2018). Based on research explanation about the importance of school leadership experience, it was worthwhile to select the sample of the study using the experience criterion.

Another criterion for the selection of participants of the study was their academic and other professional development qualifications attained by them. The senior secondary school principals should have a master's degree in an education-related area of study. Thus, eligible participants of the research were senior secondary school principals who hold a master's degree in an education-related field of study and have prior experience in teaching in inclusive schools or educational administration. A primary reason that has frequently been advanced for poor results in schools is that principals are not aptly skilled and trained for school management and leadership. This educational qualification rule for participants selection provided a set of a sample population that has the experience, knowledge, and first-hand information about the research problem that was explored. The criterion fits into the purposeful random sampling, whereby targeted participants of the study had the fair chance of being selected. The purposeful random sampling minimized research bias and added credibility to the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The qualifications, experiences, and identity of the participants were accessed via the databases of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education. Those who met the criteria for recruitment and participation were individually contacted through their

respective emails about their eligibility to participate in the study. The procedures for recruitment of participants is detailed in the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection section of this chapter.

Instrumentation

The key research instrument used to collect data for the study was qualitative semistructured interviews which primarily contained open-ended questions that explore the experiences and insights of school principals' professional dispositions and perceptions about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. Each interview session was audiotaped in person and participants were duly informed about it in advance. The open-ended questions for the semistructured interviews was drafted by the me and was in alignment with the research questions as suggested by Castillo-Montoya (2016). Questions for the interview were divided into four topics. Topic one were general questions that allow interviewees to say their respective experiences on IE for SEND students. Topic two encompasses questions that address research question 1 which is What perceptions, practices or regulations do principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND students in general education classrooms? The third topic was the research question 2 which is What professional dispositions, practices or regulations senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include SEND students in general education classrooms? Questions were designed to elicit information that address the above research question. The final topic of the interview was the closing questions that asked the participants if they had anything, they would like us to discuss regarding the research topic.

The open-ended questions were embedded in the interview protocol (IP) which was created by the me. The IP was sent to a panel of three experts with terminal degrees in the area of IE for SEND students for validation combined with their expert advice and suggestions to obtain a better IP. The review of the panel of experts was the final IP that was used for the interviewing of the participants because the inputs of the three panel of experts enhance the trustworthiness of the IP. Castillo-Montoya (2016) posited that by improving the reliability of IP, researchers can enhance the quality of data they acquire from research interviews.

Face-to-face semistructured interviews can facilitate additional detailed responses than online or self-completed questionnaires (Mclntosh & Morse, 2015). Interviews form the central pillar of primary data collection in qualitative research projects. Rubin and Rubin (2012) posited that interviews provide researchers with rich and detailed qualitative data for understanding the experiences of the participants, the description of those experiences, and the meaning they attach to those experiences. Contrasting quantitative studies, the span of a qualitative study is associated to the objective of exploring and justifying why a specific phenomenon is a way it is (Stewart et al., 2008). It is evident in the qualitative research literature that the use of interviews to obtain data for qualitative research designs does have a more extended history (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The roots of qualitative semistructured interview can be traced in anthropological and sociological studies of the early decades of the 20th century (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Despite the inadequate historical coverage of qualitative semistructured

interviews, the instrumentation has made significant progress as a tool for gathering quality data for qualitative research. There is a manifestation in the existing literature that the growth of qualitative interviews is linked to the philosophical advancement of the research worldviews (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; Creswell, 2018; Edwards & Holland, 2013). The semistructured interview is in alignment with purposive sampling that can enhance valid results that may be extended to other grounds (Mclntosh & Morse, 2015). Tables 1 and 2 present data about the sample of interview questions used for Research Questions 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1 shows the sample of the interview questions used to interview the senior secondary school principals. These sample interview questions address research question 1 of the study. The importance of Table 1 is that it illustrates the nature of the interview questions used to elicit information from the participants of the study that would answer Research Question 1.

Table 1

Research Question 1 and Sample of Interview Questions

Research question	Interview questions
What perceptions, practices or regulations do principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND students in general education classrooms?	What do you know about the policy or rules for IE ? Do you believe SEND students should be taught in general education classrooms? What is your perception about the need for providing instruction for SEND students in general education classrooms? How do your perceptions about SEND students affect their learning? What kinds of instructional leadership do you provided for SEND students? Tell me, what do key stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, board of governors perceive as essential leadership concerns about SEND students in general education classrooms? What other issues do school leaders face regarding SEND students ? How can the efficacy and attitude of school principals affect learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms?

Table 2 illustrates the nature of the sample interview questions used to address Research Question 2. Sample interview questions were crafted to obtain the needed information that would address research question 2. In Table 2, four sample interview questions were used for the illustration.

Table 2

Research Question 2 and Sample of Interview Questions

Research question	Interview questions
What professional dispositions, practices or regulations do senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include SEND students in general education classrooms?	How do you understand professional dispositions? Tell me your beliefs about the professional dispositions that school principals of senior secondary schools should hold about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. What professional dispositions have you developed and sustained in your current position as principal to accelerate quality and proper education for SEND students? How would you describe the role professional dispositions can play in helping school principals in addressing the learning needs and academic accomplishments of SEND students in general education classrooms? Tell me, is there any relationship between professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold to drive quality education for SEND students in general education classrooms? if yes, how? If no, how?

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Following the approval of the IRB to proceed with the research procedures, the main source of data for the study was obtained from school principals of senior secondary general education schools. A face-to-face semistructured interview was conducted with each participant of the study to elicit information on their experiences, perspectives, and expert knowledge pertinent to the research topic. The participants of the study were

individually contacted by the me via their personal emails requesting their participation in the study. They were informed in the email that the interview would be in their respective offices within two weeks after they received emails. Also, the email notified the participants that their permission was needed to gain access to the office to conduct the interview. Senior secondary school principals for the study were informed in the email that the duration of the interview was 60 minutes, and the nature of the interview would be semistructured with open-ended questions. Attached to the email was the letter of informed consent which they accepted a week before the scheduled interviews. Email contacts were obtained from the website of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education.

Interviewees of the study were informed that the interviews would be audiotaped in person, and this was done after obtaining informed consent which contained the permission to audiotape the entire interviews. An interview guide was prepared to ensure that participants were asked all the same questions. Participants were notified about the time of the interview and to initially prepare interviewees for the interviews. Copies of questions were provided to them before the interviews which helped them get prepared for the interview exercise. Interviewees were informed that individual interview session would last approximately 60 minutes.

During the interview section, I used probing to ask follow-up questions to responses of participants that need clarification and elaboration (Mclntosh & Morse, 2015). Probing questions in the interview for each participant of the study were unscheduled, and were not scripted after the question. The probing questions arise from

the conversation. Mclntosh and Morse (2015) stated that unscheduled probes are improvisational, and some researchers discover that unscheduled probes can allow interviewees to fully articulate their perceptions on what they have been probed. To capture important gestures and comments of each participants of the study during the interview session, I took note about them for clarifications during the data analysis process. A follow-up was not adopted because there were not too few participants recruited for the study. The interviewed senior secondary school principals were provided through their personal emails with the interview transcripts for verification and the transcript were verified by them. The transcript verification by the senior secondary school principals paved the way to commence the data analysis. The senior secondary school participants exited the study after a brief summary of the results of the study were presented to them via their personal emails for comments. Based on their comments about the summary of the results presented to them, follow-up telephone conversations was done with those senior secondary school principals that required clarification. After the follow-up telephone conversations, an email extending thanks, and appreciation was sent to every participant, and this was seen as their final exit of the study.

Data Analysis Plan

The data that were obtained from the interviews was prepared for content analysis. Individual interview of participants of the study was transcribed verbatim and transcripts were imported into a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software called NVivo. Transcripts were individually sent to the 12 senior secondary school principals for verification. After the verification, each participant was coded with a

pseudonym of Principal 1 to Principal 12 so as to maintain confidentiality of personal

information shared by each of the participants. The objective of the content analysis was

to sort and condense the informational content of the data, by item and commonalities

within the data (Mclntosh & Morse, 2015). The first step in the content analysis process

was to derive codes for the data. This is because content analysis is reliant on forming

codes that can be applied to the data so that data can be developed into significant

categories which can be analyzed and interpreted (Blair, 2015).

Two coding cycles were used to aid the content analysis process. In the first cycle

coding, attribute, and structural codings were used to create an overview of the data and

to enable subsequent exploration of patterns of similarities and differences in the second

cycle coding. Saldaña (2016) indicated that some form of attribute coding is used in all

qualitative studies. The attribute coding was used to assign basic information pertaining

to the fieldwork setting such as the school name and country, the demographic

characteristics of the participants related to age, gender, qualifications, and school

leadership experience, and the data format which included interview transcripts and field

notes (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019 ; Saldaña, 2016). The structural coding was used

based on the research questions and interview questions of the study (Meanwell, 2018;

Saldaña, 2016). The segments of the data were preceded by the research questions of the

study in the structural coding process. Similar coded data segments of each participants

were collected in combination for further coding and subcoding to obtain data relevant to

the research questions that the study seeks to answer (Saldaña, 2016).

In the process of the first coding cycle, discrepant cases were searched for that do not support patterns that were emerging from the data analysis. The discrepant data were sent to a reviewer for a revision or confirmation of the emergent patterns from the data analysis. After the segments of the data have been summarized, a second cycle coding followed. The prime objective of doing a second cycle coding was to rearrange and reconfigure the first cycle codes and their accompanying coded data that will lead to smaller and broader categories, concepts, themes, and assertions (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016). The pattern coding method was used in the second cycle coding. Saldaña (2016) posited that pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes that are capable of identifying emergent themes. The pattern coding process allows the researcher to draw collectively much material from the first cycle codes into significant and prudent elements of analysis (Saldaña, 2016). During the second cycle pattern coding, corresponding coded segments of the data corpus was collected. The use of NVivo searches, queries, and retrievals aided the process (Saldaña, 2016). The NVivo was used to categorize the data by item, and then sorting and categorizing in accordance with the coded data. Emerging themes and patterns were identified and reduced to major themes which were presented as the results for this study (Elliot, 2018; Saldaña, 2016).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Based on the necessity for augmenting high-quality qualitative research results, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that trustworthiness of a research results is important qualitative research. Their trustworthiness criteria entailed: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Shenton (2004) stated that Lincoln and Guba's

constructs correspond to the criteria employed by the positivist investigator:

- credibility (in preference to internal validity);

- transferability (in preference to external validity/generalizability);

- dependability (in preference to reliability); and

- confirmability (in preference to objectivity) (Shenton, 2004, p. 64).

Credibility

Credibility as a criterion for determining the trustworthiness of research results

can be defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings

(Ravitch & Carl, 2016). There are strategies that can be used to determine the credibility

of the results of a qualitative study (Anney, 2014). For this study, the strategies of

debriefing and member checks were used to establish the credibility of the results. The

debriefing involved me seeking the professional support of former course instructors at

Walden University and they provided me with scholarly guidance. The strategy of peer

debriefing was also used to establish the credibility of the findings of the study.

Anney(2014) maintained that feedback from peers is crucial in aiding the researcher in

enhancing the quality of the findings of the study. Findings of the study were presented to

peers who were course mates for their comments and perceptions which aided the process

of developing the conclusion of the research report (Bitsch, 2005). Member checks was

used to improve the quality of the data. Member checks is the heartbeat of establishing

the credibility of the findings of a qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985;

Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). A focus group of the participants was convened to review

the findings of the study. Comments of the participants of the review were incorporated

into the final report. The rationale of using member checks was to reduce research bias in the process of analyzing and interpreting the findings of the study (Anney, 2014).

Transferability

Transferability signifies the level of which the results of a qualitative study can be transferred to other situations with other participants. (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The strategy adopted was by providing a detailed description of the inquiry which involves me explaining all the research procedures ranging from collecting the data, the content of the investigation onto the production of the final report of the study (Anney, 2014). A rich detailed description of the participants, setting, and themes of the study was undertaken. A purposive sampling strategy was also used to establish the credit worthiness of the results of the study. The purposive sampling approach is mostly employed in naturalistic inquiry studies (Anney, 2014). It is the selection of individuals, groups of individuals or institutions built on explicit purposes connected with responding to the research questions of a study (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). By purposively selecting the participants of the study, in-depth findings of the study was obtained which would have not been accomplished in other probability sampling techniques (Cohen et al., 2011; Nowell et al., 2018).

Dependability

Dependability entails participants of the study evaluating the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the research to verify that they are all backed by the data received from them (Cohen et al., 2011; Nowell et al., 2018; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The code-recode plan was adopted to determine the dependability of the study.

The results from the two codings were compared to see if the results are the same or different. The coding results were in agreement and enhance the dependability of the research findings (Anney, 2014).

Confirmability

Tobias and Begley (2004) stated that confirmability concerns with the need for establishing that the data and interpretation of the research results were not the figment of the researcher's mind. Some earlier studies maintained that confirmability of a qualitative research can be determined through the use of audit trail, triangulation, and reflexive journal (Bowen, 2009; Koch, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the study, reflexive journal was used to achieve confirmability. The reflexive journal included all the events that happened in the field and including personal reflection in connection to the study. It documented the researcher's social and professional background, experience, interests, values, and observational field notes during the interviews that would have affected the interpretation of the results (Anney, 2014; Nowell et al., 2018).

<div align="center">

Ethical Procedures

</div>

Ethical procedures and issues are inevitable in the research process, and it is binding on the researcher to address them in the research plan (Creswell, 2018). Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) revealed that the most important ethical issues in doing a research are informed consent, beneficence- do not harm, respect for autonomy and confidentiality, and respect for privacy. Informed consent is paramount in addressing ethical concerns related to research. The Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association, 1964) centers on informed consent. In the research, ethical compliance was

followed in every step of the way as prescribed by the Walden University.

The principals of senior secondary schools were informed that participation in the study was confidential, and their names and identity would not be stored with the data they provided, but coded with pseudonyms. The data was safely and securely stored in place with a password protection. Permission to proceed with the research was obtained by sending an application to the IRB of Walden University. The application encompasses a detailed explanation regarding the procedures and information pertinent to the participants of the study and the nature of the study protected the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, and they were not exposed to any risk.

Summary

The objective of this basic qualitative research was to understand the professional dispositions and perceptions that senior secondary school principals hold regarding the inclusion of SEND students into general education classrooms. The prominent concept of the study was the concept of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms with an emphasis on the professional dispositions and perceptions of school principals about including SEND students in general education classrooms of the schools they lead. The basic qualitative research approach through the use of in-depth interview was suitable to understand the problem investigated. Basic qualitative research is fitting for a study that seeks to describe and interpret issues or phenomena, methodically based on the viewpoints of the individuals and population being studied, and the choice of the methodology was directed by the questions to be answered in the study (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016). The study employed the basic qualitative research design because it was

set to explore the professional dispositions, perceptions, practices or regulations that school principals hold about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. This research design was based on the collection and analysis of individuals' perceptions that were associated to a certain definable problem. The senior secondary school principals of the study were purposively selected. The purposive sampling technique allows the researcher to decide what needs to be studied and reaches out to seek the people who can be willing to provide the information based on their expertise, knowledge, or experience of the issue being studied. The main research instrument that was used to collect data for the study was qualitative semistructured interviews which primarily contained open-ended questions. To address the issues of trustworthiness, the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were used. The next chapter is Chapter 4 which presents the findings of the study as derived from the research methodology adopted and described for this study.

Chapter 4: Results

This basic qualitative study was undertaken to explore the professional

dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that school principals use for

administering programs for SEND students in general education classrooms. Opinion

papers, articles, and position documents have indicated the importance of IE for SEND

students in Sierra Leone. Still, no research study has been done that centers on the area of

school leadership and IE. In other words, there is no current study on what school

principals in the country believe or know how to do concerning the inclusion of SEND

students in their general education classrooms. With only 37% of the SEND population

enrolled in contrast to 63% of SEND students not nationally enrolled in schools (Kabia &

Tarawally, 2017), it is pertinent to comprehend the role of school principals in this

problem. School leaders are the main conduit for delivering effective instructional

leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms (Gallo-Toong, 2020; Khan

& Don, 2020; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018). This chapter presents the setting,

demographics of the participants, data collection, data analysis, evidence of

trustworthiness, and results of the study, concluding with a summary of the chapter.

Setting

I conducted 12 interviews with principals of senior secondary schools in the

Western Area and the Eastern, Northern, and Southern provinces of Sierra Leone where

the research was undertaken. The geographic distance between the east and west of the

Western Area was 15 minutes' drive on a private transportation service and 20 minutes

using public transportation services. I used the former to facilitate the interview process

for the areas mentioned above for data collection. The distance for the Eastern, Northern, and Southern Provinces varied. I also used public transportation to travel to the provinces. All interviews were conducted in person in the offices of the respective senior secondary school principals. The date and time of the interviews were scheduled with the study participants, and they agreed to work on my proposed interviewing schedules. I had a situation in which one of the potential participants was to retire a week after the interview. Therefore, that principal was the first participant I interviewed for the study. However, the participant informed me that the retirement date had been rescheduled for another year on the interview day. Additionally, I arrived in the country during the rainy season. There were usually heavy rainfalls that caused flooding, which in some circumstances resulted in delays in getting to the principals' offices to conduct interviews. All protocols for Covid-19 were observed, and therefore there were no threats to interview participants. In addition, none of the participants conveyed any fears that would affect their participation in the study.

Demographics

The 12 principals interviewed were principals of senior secondary schools in the general education classroom setting. The principals had a varied number of experiences in the field of education. One of the participants had spent almost half of her age in the school system. None of the principals had professional training on IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. However, they had prior knowledge of IE from their undergraduate and graduate courses.

A common trend in the demographics of the principals was that they all went through the prerequisite stages before becoming a principal in a public school in Sierra Leone. The stages range from assistant teacher to senior teacher, to head of a department, to vice principal, and on to the final principal stage. In terms of years as principals, the years were varied, but the average was 15 years. The principal who had served the longest tenure in their position was Principal 1, who had spent 25 years as a principal and was supposed to retire a week before the interview, but her retirement was extended for a year. Out of the 12 principals, five were women, and the rest were men. Each principal was designated with a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality, as indicated in a Table 3. The principals worked in different types of schools. Some were heads of schools exclusively attended by male students, female students, and those heading coeducational schools (attended by both male and female students).

Table 3 provides demographic information for the 12 senior secondary school principals who participated in the study. The qualifications, years as principal, type of school, and grade level of each senior secondary school principal are shown.

Table 3

Demographic Information of Participants

Principal	Prior job experience	Years as principal	Qualifications as principal	Type of school	Grade level
Principal 1	Assistant teacher, teaching English and French	25	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for girls)	Senior secondary school
Principal 2	Assistant teacher, teaching government and history	18	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for girls)	Senior secondary school
Principal 3	Assistant teacher, teaching biology and chemistry	16	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for girls)	Senior secondary school
Principal 4	Assistant teacher, teaching home economics	16	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for girls)	Senior secondary school
Principal 5	Assistant teacher, teaching English and literature	15	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for girls)	Senior secondary school
Principal 6	Assistant teacher, teaching accounting and business studies	16	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for boys)	Senior secondary school
Principal 7	Assistant teacher, teaching geography and economics	16	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for boys)	Senior secondary school
Principal 8	Assistant teacher, teaching history and government	15	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for boys)	Senior secondary school
Principal 9	Assistant teacher, teaching physics and math	15	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (for boys)	Senior secondary school
Principal 10	Assistant teacher, teaching economics and math	14	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (coeducational)	Senior secondary school
Principal 11	Assistant teacher, teaching biology and chemistry	12	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (coeducational)	Senior secondary school
Principal 12	Assistant teacher, teaching English and geography	10	Undergraduate and graduate degrees	Public school (coeducational)	Senior secondary school

Data Collection

In this study, the data sources were the 12 school principals of senior secondary schools. A face-to-face semistructured interview was conducted with each school principal to collect data that focused on the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that school principals held for administering programs for SEND students in general education classrooms. Each interview was conducted in the office of the participant and lasted approximately 60 minutes. Interviews were audiotaped, and I subsequently manually transcribed the recordings verbatim for coding and analysis. Transcripts of interviews were sent to each of the senior secondary school principals for verification. There was no variation in the data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3, and no unusual situations were faced in the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the study's participants were prepared for content analysis. The recorded interviews were manually transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were imported into the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. Each principal was coded with a pseudonym to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the personal information of the participants. The purpose of the content analysis was to sort and condense the informational content of the data by item and identify commonalities within the data (Mclntosh & Morse, 2015). For the first step in the content analysis process, I derived codes for the data. This was because content analysis relies on forming codes that can be applied to the data to be developed into significant categories that can be analyzed and interpreted (Blair, 2015).

Table 4 shows sample quotes and codes derived from the coding process. The quotes were from some of the participants of the study. Table 4 presents the various codes that were derived for each quote. Five quotes are presented with their associated codes.

Table 4

Sample Quotes and Codes

Sample quotes	Code
"My perception is positive because as educators we should treat all children equally irrespective of their learning difficulties and physical disabilities."	Thought about inclusion Belief Attitude
"Before and after I became principal I have not acquired any substantial professional training that would prepare me to handle the challenges of meeting learning needs of these students more effectively."	Previous and current inclusion knowledge
"Lack of needed funding, need for professional training, inadequate support from major stakeholders of education, unattractive conditions of service, need for sufficient supply of teaching and learning materials, and restrictive accommodation for disabled students."	Teaching and learning resources Training for teachers Lack of support
"Just recently, the government through the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education approved the first policy of inclusive education. This policy only deals with inclusive education in general. It is not specific about the inclusion of special educational needs and students with disabilities."	Need for specific inclusion laws and policies Role of government
"Professional dispositions such as honesty, respect, perseverance, commitment, and empathy depict positive behavior that can create a learning environment."	Dispositions and learning Favorable dispositions

I used two coding cycles to aid the content analysis process. In the first coding cycle, attribute and structural codings were used to create an overview of the data, which enabled successive examination of patterns of similarities and differences in the second coding cycle. The attribute codes were used to assign necessary information connected to the fieldwork setting, such as the school name and country; the demographics of the participants correlated to age, gender, qualifications, and school leadership experience;

and the data format, which includes interview transcripts and field notes (Linneberg &

Korsgaard, 2019; Saldaña, 2016). The structural coding was used based on the study's

research and interview questions (Meanwell, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). The segments of the

data were preceded by the study's research questions in the structural coding process.

Comparable coded data segments for each participant were obtained in combination for

supplementary coding and subcoding. Data pertinent to the research questions were

obtained (Saldaña 2016). Examples of the structural coding are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 shows examples of the structural coding derived for research question 1.

Similarly, Table 6 shows examples of the structural coding obtained for research question

2. Both Tables 5 and 6 highlight how the structural coding for research questions 1 and 2

were processed.

Table 5

Example of Structural Coding for Research Question 1

Research question	Quotes	Code	Category
Research Question 1			
What perceptions and practices or regulations do principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND students in general education classrooms?	"My perception is positive because as educators we should treat all children equally irrespective of their learning difficulties and physical disabilities."	Thought about inclusion Belief Attitude	Perception
	"Before and after I became principal I have not acquired any substantial professional training that would prepare me to handle the challenges of meeting learning needs of these students more effectively."	Previous and current inclusion knowledge	Professional knowledge

Table 6

Example of Structural Coding for Research Question 2

Research question	Quotes	Code	Category
Research Question 2 What professional dispositions and practices do senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include students in general education classrooms?	"Professional dispositions such as honesty, respect, perseverance, commitment, and empathy depict positive behavior that can create a learning environment."	Dispositions and learning Favorable dispositions	Professional dispositions
	"Professional dispositions do play an effective role in helping school principals to attend to the learning of students who need special attention in their learning as they make principals to develop a suitable school environment where these students would excel in their academic work."	Beliefs of dispositions Dispositions and learning	Professional dispositions

In the first coding cycle, discrepant cases were searched for that did not support patterns emerging from the data analysis. The discrepant data were sent to a reviewer for a revision or confirmation of the emergent patterns from the data analysis. Following the summarized data segments was the second cycle coding that rearranged and reconfigured the first cycle codes and their accompanying coded data, which led to the emergence of smaller and broader categories, concepts, themes, and assertions (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

The pattern coding process was used in the second cycle coding. Saldaña (2016) posited that pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes capable of identifying emergent themes. During the second cycle pattern coding, corresponding coded segments of the data corpus were collected. NVivo was used to categorize the data by item and

then sort and categorize according to the coded data. Emerging themes and patterns were

identified and reduced to major themes presented as the study results (Elliot, 2018;

Saldaña, 2016). In Table 7, data are presented showing sample quotes and codes to

broader categories.

Table 7 presents a sample of how the quotes and codes were moved to broader

categories. Table 7 contains quotes from some of the participants of the study and how

these quotes were coded. From the coded quotes, broader categories were derived.

Table 7

Sample: From Quote and Code to Broader Categories

Quotes	Code	Category
"My perception is positive because as educators we should treat all children equally irrespective of their learning difficulties and physical disabilities."	Thought about inclusion Belief Attitude	Perception
"Before and after I became principal I have not acquired any substantial professional training that would prepare me to handle the challenges of meeting learning needs of these students more effectively."	Previous and current inclusion knowledge	Professional knowledge
"Professional dispositions such as honesty, respect, perseverance, commitment, and empathy depict positive behavior that can create a learning environment."	Dispositions and learning Favorable dispositions	Professional dispositions
"Professional dispositions do play an effective role in helping school principals to attend to the learning of students who need special attention in their learning as they make principals to develop a suitable school environment where these students would excel in their academic work."	Beliefs of dispositions Dispositions and learning	Professional dispositions

The major themes that emerged revolved around the research questions which the study seeks to answer. In other words, the major themes addressed the research questions of the study. The following were the identified major themes: positive perceptions, absence of expert knowledge, challenges of inclusive education, professional development training, formulation and implementation of specific laws and policies, collaboration, curriculum restructure, variation of teaching, the role of government, and appropriate leadership styles. In table 8 below, the process of codes to categories and then to themes is shown.

Table 8 shows how the codes moved to category and from category to themes. The purpose of Table 8 is to show a sample of how the codes were categorized and the themes that were identified. Table 8 has been presented in a simple way for easy understanding.

Table 8

Sample: From Code to Category to Theme

Code	Category	Theme
Thought about inclusion Belief Attitude	Perception	Positive perceptions
Previous and current inclusion knowledge	Professional knowledge	Professional development/Training
Teaching and learning resources, Training for teachers, Lack of support	Challenges	Challenges of inclusive education
Need for specific inclusion laws and policies Role of government	Laws and policies	Formulation and implementation of specific laws and policies
Dispositions and learning, Favorable dispositions	Professional dispositions	Identified professional dispositions

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Based on the requirement for enhancing high-quality qualitative research results, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that the trustworthiness of a research results is an essential ingredient of a qualitative research. Their trustworthiness criteria entailed: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria were used to validate the results of the study.

Credibility

Some strategies can be used to determine the credibility of the results of a qualitative study (Anney, 2014). For this study, I used the technique of debriefing and member checks to establish the credibility of the results. The debriefing involved me seeking the professional support of former course instructors at Walden University and they provided me with scholarly guidance. The strategy of peer debriefing was also used to establish the credibility of the findings of the study. Anney(2014) maintained that feedback from peers is essential in helping the researcher in augmenting the quality of the study's findings. Findings of the study were presented to peers who were course mates for their comments and perceptions, which aided the process of developing the conclusion of the research report (Bitsch, 2005). Member checks were used to improve the quality of the data. A focus group of the participants was convened to review the findings of the study. The findings of the study were sent to them via email. Comments of the participants of the review were incorporated into the final report. The rationale of using member checks was to reduce research bias in analyzing and interpreting the study's findings (Anney, 2014). Also, member checks are essential in establishing the credibility

of qualitative research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Transferability

To establish the transferability of the study's results, a detailed description of the study was adopted. The detailed description of the inquiry involves explaining all the research procedures ranging from collecting the data, the content of the investigation, and the production of the study's final report (Anney, 2014). A rich, detailed description of the participants, setting, and themes of the study were undertaken. A purposive sampling strategy was also used to establish the trustworthiness of the results of the study. School principals of the study were purposively selected because they have the lived experiences to elicit the needed information of the study. The participants represented school principals in the category of senior secondary schools. By purposively selecting the study participants, in-depth study findings were obtained, which would not have been accomplished in other probability sampling techniques (Cohen et al., 2011; Nowell et al., 2018).

Dependability

The dependability of the study's findings was ensured through the use of the code-recode plan. The results from the two coding cycles were compared to see if the results were the same or different. The coding results were in agreement and enhanced the research findings' dependability (Anney, 2014). Also, participants were allowed to review the transcripts of the interviews to verify their responses. This process was necessary to ensure their individual experiences in the study were accurately conveyed.

Confirmability

Confirmability is regarded as the last aspect of the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. According to Tobias and Begley (2004), confirmability is concerned with verifying that the data and interpretation of the study's findings were not the creation of the researcher's mind. In this study, a reflexive journal was used to achieve confirmability. The reflexive journal included all the events in the field and personal reflection connected to the study. It documented my social and professional background, experience, interests, values, and observational field notes during the interviews that would have affected the interpretation of the results (Anney, 2014; Nowell et al., 2018).

Results

The study was conducted to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What perceptions and practices or regulations do principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND students in general education classrooms?

2. What professional dispositions and practices or regulations do senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include SEND students in general education classrooms?

To accomplish the objective of finding answers to the research questions, I Conducted 12 face-to-face semistructured interviews with 12 school principals of senior secondary schools. The questions were open-ended, and the interviews lasted for 60 minutes for each interviewee. I manually transcribed each interview, and the responses were coded and recoded to identify themes that explore the professional dispositions,

perceptions, and practices or regulations that school principals hold for administering

programs for SEND students in general education classrooms. Suffice it to state here that

the results of this study are the analyzed data obtained from the study's participants.

Research Question 1

As seen in Table 9, Research Question 1 explores the perceptions and practices or

regulations principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND

students in general education classrooms. Following is a discussion on the following

identified themes for Research Question 1: positive perceptions, absence of expert

knowledge, professional development/training, formulation and implementation of

specific laws and policies, and collaboration. Seven themes were identified for Research

Question 1.

Table 9

Identified Themes for Research Question 1

Research Question 1	Themes
What perceptions and practices or regulations do principals of senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone hold about SEND students in general education classrooms?	Positive perceptions
	Absence of expert knowledge
	Challenges of inclusive education
	Professional development/Training
	Formulation and implementation of specific laws and policies
	Collaboration

Positive Perceptions

All the interviewees admitted they hold positive perceptions about the inclusion

of SEND students in general education classrooms. According to participants, the

practices and regulations they maintained in the enrollment of SEND students are tied to

the provisions of national laws and policies such as the country's 1991 constitution, Child

Right Act of 2007, Persons with Disability Act of 2011, and the Sierra Leone Education

Sector Plans of 2007-2014, 2014-2018, and 2018-2020. These domestic laws and policies

are fundamental in the drive to provide quality and equal education to SEND students in

general education classrooms. Principal 1 expressed,

> The requirements of these national laws and policies made us as school leaders
>
> inculcate positive perceptions towards inclusive education for students with
>
> special educational needs and disabilities. As school principals, it is incumbent on
>
> us to uphold the practices and regulations that require us to provide a school
>
> climate that will meet the learning needs in an inclusive teaching and learning
>
> environment. Notwithstanding the mandatory policies, special educational needs
>
> and disability students have the right to general education classroom teaching and
>
> learning like any other students. Depending on the level of accommodation or
>
> instructions, most of them have proven to be doing well with their limited
>
> potential.

In responding to the interview question about the need of providing instruction to

SEND students in general education classrooms, Principal 2 stated,

> I have a positive perception that all students regardless of their physical or
>
> learning incapability should be taught in general education classrooms. I believe
>
> inclusive education of all children will lead to socialization and exchange of
>
> learning skills between those students who have special education needs and those
>
> without.

Absence of Expert Knowledge

The 12 school principals revealed that they do not have the required expert knowledge on IE for SEND students to effectively handle the learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms. The participants perceived the absence of this needed expert knowledge as a limitation in providing school leadership that will take into cognizance the learning needs of diverse learners. All the participants indicated that expert knowledge on IE for SEND students is a needed critical competency for school leaders. They maintained that such knowledge would equip them to prepare their teachers and other supporting staff to meet SEND students' learning needs in general education classrooms. All the participants claimed that they had attended workshops and seminars on IE for SEND students. The content aspects of IE and SEND concepts were not adequate to acquire expert knowledge on IE and school leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms. Principal 3 stated:

> All school leaders must have expert knowledge of inclusive education and school leadership for special educational needs and disabilities in general education schools. It would equip them with the required leadership skills to effectively respond to children's teaching and learning needs with special educational needs and disabilities. It is saddening to say in this interview that the lack of expert knowledge in this area of education is limiting our leadership's ability to provide quality education to this group of disadvantaged students.

Principal 5 added that

As a principal who equally lacks the needed professional training to tailor instructional leadership that will match the academic needs of special educational needs and disability students, creates a school climate in which special educational needs and disability students are to some extent educationally marginalized in general education classrooms.

Challenges of Inclusive Education

On the question about the challenges associated with providing instructional leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms in Sierra Leone, a significant number of the participants believed that they are facing enormous challenges. These challenges are central to the lack of expert knowledge, inadequate school materials, unfavorable learning environments, and unsuitable resources. They perceived these as barriers creating overwhelming challenges to school leaders to provide effective instructional leadership for SEND students in their respective schools. Principal 5 commented,

> In the absence of professional training in inclusive education, the challenges of providing instructional leadership for SEND students have been a daunting task for me as a school leader. The task of providing quality education for SEND students alongside their non-disabled peers has been overwhelming because teachers do not have the required inclusive education background to meet the learning needs of SEND students in an inclusive educational environment. As a principal who equally lacks the needed professional training to tailor instructional leadership that will match the academic needs of SEND students, creates a school

climate in which SEND students are to some extent educationally marginalized in general education classrooms. However, in collaboration with the teaching staff, efforts have been directed towards exploring avenues for professional development in inclusive education.

In addition to the challenges of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms, Principal 8 highlighted some obstacles which can be seen as the challenges of inclusive education for SEND students:

Some of the obstacles of inclusive education for special educational needs and disability students revolves on lack of professional preparation for teachers and school leaders, lack of equipped general education classrooms to accommodate SEND students, insufficient support staff, the difficulty for children with special educational needs, and physically challenged to be socially accepted by their non-disabled peers in the general education classrooms.

Professional Development/Training

All the participants perceived professional development training as a fundamental requirement to overcome the barriers of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. Most of the principals reiterated that professional development in the area of IE and school leadership is essential for school leaders. It will equip them with skills and knowledge to develop in-service training programs for teachers and other supporting staff that would prepare them to effectively handle the learning needs of special educational needs and disability students in an inclusive educational climate. One of the participants, Principal 7 pointed out that professional development should not be limited to school

leaders, but teachers and other supporting staff should also be included. In addition, Principal 7 suggested that seminars and workshops on IE for SEND students should be held at specific intervals. Principal 7 expressed,

> I do not have an education that professionally prepared me to appropriately deal with special educational needs and disabled students in general education classrooms. The situation is the same for all the teachers in my school. The education they received was to other students and not students with special educational needs.

Regarding the need for professional development of school principals on IE for SEND students in general education classrooms, Principal 9 expressed the concern about the importance of the colleges and universities restructuring their curricula to incorporate professional training programs in the area of IE for SEND students. Principal 9 stated, "the colleges and universities have not developed programs on special education and inclusive education which would provide teachers and school principals the opportunity to acquire professional knowledge in these areas of study."

Formulation and Implementation of Specific Laws and Policies

All the 12 participants of the study expressed the need for government to formulate and implement specific legislations and policies that can address the issue of IE and school leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms. They agreed that there are national laws and policies that require the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. However, they maintained the laws and policies are limited in scope for the successful implementation of IE in the country. The participants

asserted that a policy of IE for SEND students should take into consideration the varied

roles education stakeholders can play to provide quality and equitable education to SEND

students in general education classrooms. At the school level, the study participants

revealed the need for the policy to encompass the relevance of ongoing professional

development training for principals, teachers, and supporting staff. Some participants

expressed the concern that the policy should not only be in writing but put into action.

Principal 1 maintained that "over the years, the government has not been giving the

needed support to implement existing education laws and policies." Principal 2 added

that, "the government needs to formulate law and policy that would clearly address how

these students are to be included and taught in general education classrooms."

Recently, the government approved the first ever policy on IE which many of the

principals viewed as a policy that contains no specific provisions regarding the inclusion

of SEND students in general education classrooms. Principal 4 stated,

> There is the recent adoption by the government of the first policy of inclusive
>
> education that deals with inclusive education in broad and general terms. No
>
> specific provisions are contained in the policy about how special educational
>
> needs and disability should be taught in general education classrooms. Also, the
>
> professional training needs of educators who have to deal with these students are
>
> not taken into consideration.

Collaboration

The 12 participants reported that collaboration is a required entity in the efforts to deliver quality and accessible education to SEND students in general education classrooms. Collaboration is seen as an effective means to facilitate working with essential education stakeholders to galvanize support and assistance to address the individualized needs of SEND students in general education classrooms. The participants revealed that consultation and partnership with parents is the relevant and necessary approach for both school leaders and teachers to handle the individual needs of all students in general education classrooms. Participants believed that consulting and partnering with parents and other key education stakeholders would help the school system to coordinate home and school interventions that can be used to successfully meet the teaching and learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms. According to principal 12,

> Parental involvement is an essential factor when it comes to providing education for all students. Involving parents of special educational needs students will enable school authorities to understand the individual learning needs of these students and design instructions to meet their individualized learning requirements. Moreover, it would make them feel satisfied that they are actively involved in the education of their children.

Principal 6 showed similar concern about the essence of partnership and collaboration to provide proper and quality education for SEND students in general education classrooms. Principal 6 stated,

All the important stakeholders of education need to be on board and collectively

address these weaknesses for the betterment for these students and society.

Teaching these students requires differentiation of instruction, and this cannot

happen in the absence of the relevant training needed to carry it out. the colleges

and universities in the country need to revisit their curricula and adapt it to the

needs of society.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was crafted to elicit responses from the participants of the

study about the professional dispositions and practices or regulations that senior

secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include SEND students in general

education classrooms. The identified themes for this research question are identified

professional dispositions, variation of teaching, appropriate leadership styles, and the role

of government. Table 10 also presents identified themes for research question 2. Four

themes were identified.

Table 10

Identified Themes for Research Question 2

Research Question 2	Themes
What professional dispositions and practices or regulations do senior secondary school principals in Sierra Leone use to include SEND students in general education classrooms?	Identified professional dispositions Variation of teaching Appropriate leadership styles The role of government

Identified Professional Dispositions

All the participants identified professional dispositions that are salient for school leaders to demonstrate in dealing with the issues of SEND students in general education classrooms. These professional dispositions range from tolerance, honesty, empathy, respect, accommodative to perseverance. The participants indicated that professional dispositions are central to administrative practice and can yield positive learning outcomes for IE and SEND students in general education schools. Most of the participants recognize professional dispositions as a guide that can imbibe positive attitudes in both principals and teachers toward every student irrespective of any physical or mental challenges. Principal 9 stated,

> Professional dispositions can positively affect the beliefs and attitudes of my teaching staff if they are followed or adhered to. They are a guide for positive results or compliance. Negatively they can affect the teaching and learning environment if they are lacking.

In addition, Principal 2 maintained,

> The professional dispositions that school leaders hold about special needs students for inclusive education can positively or negatively affect the beliefs and attitudes of my teachers in meeting the learning needs of special educational needs and disability students. My teaching staff will practice the positive professional dispositions that I demonstrate in my leadership to address the learning needs of special educational needs and disability students.

Another principal, Principal 5 attempted to give her perception about what professional dispositions entail. According to her,

Based on my professional dispositions, they can be considered the principles or standards that emphasize a school leader's and teacher's success in the classroom domain. Also, they appear to be the values, commitments, and professional ethics that govern how a school principal or teacher acts with students, families, colleagues, and communities.

Variation of Teaching

All the participants reported that variation of teaching is a practice that should be adopted in general education schools that enroll SEND students. They believed variation of teaching is inextricably linked with IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. However, all the participants stated that variation of teaching is tied to expert knowledge and professional development. The principals agreed that variation of teaching which involves the use of different teaching methods would help meet the individualized learning needs of all children in general education classrooms. The participants reinstated the requirement for teachers to be given the opportunity professionally developed.

Principal 2 stated,

It is appropriate to state here that if special educational needs and disabled students are to be given quality inclusive education, there is the need for school leaders and teachers to be offered the opportunity of undergoing professional development training. It would make them fully abreast with the required skills

and knowledge to support these disadvantaged students' learning needs.

Some principals expressed the need for colleges and universities to review and restructure their curricula to develop professional courses on IE for SEND students. It would help meet the quest for professional development training for school administrators, teachers, and supporting staff. They see the colleges and universities as important education stakeholders and can play a role in the issue of IE and school leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms. According to principal 10,

The curricula of colleges and universities should match the current teaching and learning needs of the schools in the country. The requirements of inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities make it necessary for colleges and universities to devise programs that would produce professionally trained teachers with the competency of adapting the curriculum content of general education schools to the different levels of cognitive development of individual learners.

Appropriate Leadership Styles

All the participants asserted that they mostly use transformational leadership style because it is apt for IE to handle students' teaching and learning needs, and other physical difficulties in general education classrooms. They acknowledge that adopting transformational leadership in their schools enabled them to influence and positively change the culture of their respective schools. The participants see

transformational leadership as a critical practice to include SEND students in general education classrooms. They also perceived transformational leadership approach promotes the inclusive practice of adhering to the country's national laws and education policies that seek to promote social justice for every learner. Principal 1 stated,

> Over my years as a principal, I have endeavored to ensure to provide the appropriate leadership style that would meet the needs of government rules and regulations in according the right which every child has to learn. This is accomplished by ensuring that every learner is allowed to actively be involved in the teaching and learning to achieve better learning outcomes.

In responding to a probe about the frequent use of transformational leadership style, Principal 6 pointed the usefulness of the leadership style that is responsive for her effective leadership. She stated,

> Transformational leadership is entwined with inclusive education and as such it is a suitable leadership style for administering general education schools that are having students with special educational needs and disabilities in their classrooms. The use of a transformational leadership style has helped me as a school principal to guide and direct my teaching and supporting staff, and community members to work collaboratively to manage school activities or programs and to improve the overall achievements of the school.

However, all the 12 senior secondary school principals maintained that the use of the transformational leadership style is not static. Different approaches are sometimes

adopted based on the existing situations in the school system in the local context, and

regulations and policies instituted by the education ministry. Principal 2 noted that " the

leadership strategies I used in my school depend on the conditions prevailing in the

school and then prepare the relevant organizational plans to sustain inclusivity for all

learners in the school." Another participant, Principal 3 stated that "rules and

regulations from the government through the education ministry require us as school

leaders to frequently change our leadership approaches and adopt strategies that will

accomplish the requirements of those rules and regulation."

The Role of Government

All the 12 participants acknowledged that the government's support is crucial in

addressing SEND students' teaching and learning needs in general education classrooms.

They believed the equal right of all children to quality education without discrimination

is a fundamental responsibility of the government. The 12 principals agreed that the

education system should always be adapted to every child's learning needs and delivered

in an inclusive educational environment. They stated that the government is not much

committed to implementing education laws and policies at local and national levels.

According to Principal 5, "the government in particular should be at the forefront in the

race to overcome the obstacles to IE for SEND students in genera education classrooms.

We expect the government to double its support by providing financial and material

resources for the education of these children." In addition, they believed that IE for

SEND students need to be seen as an integral component of the broader objective of

creating a less discriminatory society and advocacy of social justice to every child through IE delivery. Principal 1 stated,

> I need to say here that there is a need for the government to follow the provisions of international conventions and other humanitarian laws on the rights of children with disabilities to be provided with equal and quality in the same learning environment as other children. Over the years, the government has not been giving the needed support to implement existing education laws and policies. The government and its education ministry should be committed to providing the relevant resources to implement inclusive education successfully.

Summary

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Responses from the participants showed all 12 of the participants have positive perceptions toward the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. Also, findings of the study indicated that all the participants of the study maintained that professional dispositions are crucial for school leaders to use in the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. These professional dispositions include tolerance, honesty, respect, empathy, accountability, and perseverance. The findings of this study are interpreted and discussed in relation with the results of other similar studies in Chapter 5. The chapter also encompasses recommendations, implications for positive social change, and the conclusions of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative was to explore the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that school principals of senior secondary schools use for administering programs for SEND students in general education classrooms. Audio-taped interviews of principals were manually transcribed verbatim and coded and recoded and placed into broader categories that led to the emergence of themes for the two research questions that the study was conducted to answer. The study addressed the research gap that there were indications about articles, documents, and opinion papers showcasing the relevance of IE for SEND students in Sierra Leone, but no research study had been done that focused on the field of school leadership and IE.

The themes that emerged from the data analysis are presented as the results of the study. Findings for Research Question 1 were that school principals have positive perceptions about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms in the midst of absence of expert knowledge of IE for SEND students. There were also the challenges of IE that warranted professional development training in the area of IE for SEND students. Based on the responses from the 12 senior secondary school principals, there is the need for the government to formulate and implement specific legislation and policy regarding IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. Another finding was collaboration among key stakeholders of education, such as policy makers, parents, teachers, students, community and religious leaders, colleges and universities, and government to address the challenges of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. Findings for Research Question 2 included identified professional

dispositions, variation of teaching, appropriate leadership styles, and the role of government. In the section that follows, the findings of the study are interpreted as they relate to other similar studies reviewed in the literature review and the conceptual framework used.

Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretation of the findings is done in conjunction with similar studies in the literature and the conceptual framework used in the study. The findings of the study centered on the two research questions that the research was conducted to answer. There were identified themes for each of the research questions.

Interpretation for Research Question 1

Positive Perceptions

Positive perceptions was one of the identified themes for Research Question 1. All the participants maintained that they had positive perceptions regarding the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. The participants reported that the practices and regulations that they used to enroll SEND students were based on national laws and policies of education and were fundamental in the quest to provide quality and equal education to SEND students in general education classrooms. The finding on positive perceptions corroborates the findings of similar studies about the perceptions that school leaders hold about IE (Gallo-Toong, 2020; Geleta, 2019; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018; Murphy, 2019; Nguluma et al., 2017). From the perspective of the moral leadership theory, the beliefs of leaders permit them to provide education for all children regardless of disabilities or other learning difficulties (Grogan, 2006; Starratt, 1994). Positive

perceptions are mostly manifested in school leaders with a transformational leadership style. It was evident in the studies of Opiyo (2019), Jovanovic and Ciric (2016), and Tengi (2017) that transformational leadership is indispensable to school leadership as it prepares school leaders to demonstrate effective leadership in the school system.

Absence of Expert Knowledge

Another identified theme of Research Question 1 was absence of expert knowledge. The 12 school principals disclosed that they did not have the needed expert knowledge on IE for SEND students to effectively handle the learning needs of such students in general education classrooms. The participants recognized the absence of the required expert knowledge as a constraint in providing school leadership that would take into account the learning needs of diverse learners. All the participants indicated that expert knowledge on IE for SEND students is a needed critical competency for school leaders. This finding is in alignment with other studies that have put emphasis on the necessity for school leaders to obtain the appropriate knowledge and competencies in special education and IE so that they can be adequately prepared to confront the challenges in managing inclusive learning environments (Billingsley et al., 2017; Lyons, 2016; Murphy, 2018; Nguluma et al., 2017;Sider et al., 2017 Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018).

Challenges of Inclusive Education

The challenges of IE was another theme that emerged from the data analysis for Research Question 1. In response to the question about the challenges associated with providing instructional leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms, a significant number of the participants indicated that they were encountering immense

challenges. These challenges are crucial to the lack of expert knowledge, inadequate school materials, unfavorable learning environments, and unsuitable resources. The 12 senior secondary school principals identified these challenges as barriers preventing school leaders from providing effective instructional leadership for SEND students in their respective general education schools. The finding of this study agrees with the findings of Billingsley et al. (2018), Carter and Abawi (2018), Gathumbi et al. (2015), Kozleski and Choi (2018), Lyons (2016), Murphy (2018), Nguluma et al. (2017), Roberts et al. (2018), Sider et al. (2017), Tuters and Portelli (2017), and Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) that school leaders lack the necessary preparation in IE and need to provide effective school leadership to deal with the challenges of IE.

Professional Development Training

Professional development training was another theme that emerged for Research Question 1. All the participants recognized professional development training as a fundamental prerequisite to overwhelm the obstacles of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. The school principals echoed that professional development training in the field of IE and school leadership is important for school leaders. It will prepare them with the relevant skills and knowledge to develop in-service training programs for teachers and other supporting staff that will enable them to successfully handle the learning needs of SEND students in an inclusive educational environment. This finding was confirmed by previous studies of Carter and Abawi (2018) and Lyons (2016) that conveyed the same views on the need to develop and strengthen the knowledge base of school principals through professional development training. Inclusive

education involves providing the required leadership that will address the needs of SEND students in inclusive academic environments. In addition, this finding agreed with the findings of Nguluma et al. (2017) and Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) on the significance of how knowledge of special education and constant training for school principals and administrators can lead to the development of positive attitude toward IE for SEND students.

Formulation and Implementation of Specific Laws and Policies

This was another theme identified for Research Question 1. All the 12 participants of the study stated the necessity for government to formulate and implement specific legislation and policy that will address the concern of IE and school leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms. They reported that there are nationwide laws and policies that necessitated the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. According to Principal 2, "some of these education laws and policies include the 1991 constitution, Child Right Act of 2007, Persons with Disability Act of 2011, and the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plans of 2007-2014, 2014-2018, and 2018-2020." The principals stated that these existing education laws and policies are limited in scope in addressing the issue surrounding the successful implementation of IE for SEND students in general education schools in the country. They also maintained that education and policy of IE for SEND students in general education schools should encompass the diverse roles that education stakeholders can play in the drive to provide proper and quality education to SEND students alongside their nondisabled peers.

At the school level, the school principals divulged the essence for education law and policy to incorporate the need for ongoing professional development training for principals, teachers, and supporting staff. Some participants, Principals 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, expressed the concern that education law and policy should not only be in writing, but also be put into action. Recently, the government through the education ministry approved the first-ever IE policy, entitled National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, which most of the school principals considered as a policy that makes no clear-cut provisions about how SEND students can be educated in general education classrooms. This finding was not supported by the studies in the literature review in Chapter 2, and it is interpreted as an extension of knowledge in the area of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms.

Collaboration

The 12 senior secondary school principals reported that collaboration is an essential component of efforts to deliver quality and accessible education to SEND students in general education classrooms. The 12 senior secondary school principals see collaboration as an effective process to accelerate working with critical education stakeholders such as policy makers, parents, guardians, teachers, students, community and religious leaders, colleges and universities, and the government to captivate support and assistance to deal with the individualized needs of SEND students in general education classrooms. They also stated that consultation and partnership with parents and guardians are pertinent and necessary for both school leaders and teachers to handle the individual needs of all students in general education classrooms. The senior secondary

school principals believed that consulting and partnering with parents and other major education stakeholders would help the school system to coordinate home and school interventions that can be used to efficaciously meet the teaching and learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms. This finding of the study supports one of the findings in a study undertaken by Amka (2019) to explore the practice of IE in schools under the control of south Kalimantan province in Indonesia. The study found that a significant number of school leaders and parents of children with nonspecial educational needs support IE. This finding is also tied to the four elements posited by Bass (1985) in his most influential transformational model, which are (a) idealized influence or charismatic leadership, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) individualized consideration. All of these elements are crucial for effective school leadership.

The use of transformational leadership theory enables leaders in the engagement of staff and other key stakeholders to boost appreciable levels of commitment in accomplishing the goals of the organization that are related to its vision. Transformational leadership is fundamental in enhancing students' learning outcomes and performance (Bush & Glover, 2014; Widodo & Mawarto, 2020).

Interpretation for Research Question 2

Identified Professional Dispositions

All of the 12 senior secondary school principals identified professional dispositions that are relevant for school leaders to exhibit in addressing the issues of IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. The prominent professional

dispositions that they identified were tolerance, honesty, empathy, respect, accommodation, and perseverance. The senior secondary school principals suggested that professional dispositions are pivotal to administrative practices that can result in positive learning outcomes for SEND students in an inclusive learning environment. Most of the senior secondary school principals acknowledged professional dispositions as a manual that can cultivate positive attitudes in both principals and teachers toward every student regardless of the presence of any physical or mental challenges. This finding confirms the findings of other studies undertaken by Gallo-Toong (2020), Nguluma et al. (2017), and Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) indicating that a substantial number of principals in their studies had positive attitudes about inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. Positive attitudes can be paralleled to professional dispositions because they depict the moral imperative of school leaders. In relation to the moral leadership theory used in the conceptual framework of the study, there is evidence of the theory in this finding. Carroll (2003) identified seven qualities of moral leaders: strong ethical character, a passion to "do right," being morally proactive, stakeholder-inclusive practices, an obsession with fairness, principled decision making, and integration of ethics wisdom with management wisdom. These seven attributes can be compared to the dispositions identified by a participant in a study done by Oyugi (2015): commitment, empathy, tolerance, honesty, and inclusivity, and they are crucial in administrative practices.

Variation of Teaching

All of the participants stated that variation of teaching is a practice that should be embraced in general education schools that enroll SEND students. They believed that variation of teaching is inseparably related to IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. However, all of the participants stated that variation of teaching is tied to expert knowledge and professional development. The 12 senior secondary school principals established that variation of teaching involved the use of different teaching methods that would meet the individualized learning needs of all children in general education classrooms. The participants reiterated the necessity for teachers to be given the chance to professionally developed in the area of IE for SEND students. In addition, three senior secondary school principals, Principals 6, 7, and 9, communicated the need for colleges and universities to examine and restructure their curricula and create professional training courses on IE for SEND students. The above mentioned three senior secondary school principals believed that this would help meet the need for professional development training for school administrators, teachers, and supporting staff. Principals 6, 7, and 9 see the colleges and universities as essential education stakeholders that can play a role in the issue of IE and school leadership for SEND students.

This finding indicates that variation of teaching can only be accomplished when school leaders and teachers have the required skills and knowledge on IE for SEND students, combined with ongoing professional training that keeps them abreast with the dynamics of IE for SEND students. Therefore, this finding of the study confirms the findings of studies that explored the relevance of school leaders acquiring the appropriate

knowledge and professional development training on IE for SEND students (Billingsley et al., 2018; Carter & Abawi, 2018; Gathumbi et al., 2015; Kozleski & Choi, 2018; Lyons, 2016; Murphy, 2018; Nguluma et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2018; Sider et al., 2017; Tuters & Portelli, 2017; Ugwu & Onukwufor, 2018).

Appropriate Leadership Styles

All of the participants claimed that they primarily used the transformational leadership style because it is suitable for IE to handle the teaching and learning needs of students with learning and other physical difficulties in general education classrooms. The 12 senior secondary school principals recognized that implementing transformational leadership in their schools enabled them to inspire and positively change the culture of their respective schools. The senior secondary school principals saw transformational leadership as a vital practice to include SEND students in general education classrooms. The senior secondary school principals also perceived transformational leadership as an approach that promotes the inclusive practice of clinging to Sierra Leone laws and education policies that strive to foster social justice for every learner. However, the senior secondary school principals asserted that the use of the transformational leadership style is not constant. Different approaches of other leadership styles are occasionally used, depending on the prevailing school situations and regulations and policies issued by the government through the education ministry. This finding demonstrates how the use of an appropriate leadership style in the context of transformation leadership can help school leaders to face the challenges involved in administering inclusive schools. This finding supported what Poon-McBrayer (2017) posited: that transactional and transformational

approaches are necessary in the change management process of accomplishing IE as a school reform.

The frequent use of transformational leadership style by the school principals of this study illuminates the importance of transformational leadership theory which is the conceptual framework of the study. Studies have investigated how school leaders have used transformational leadership in illustrating their school leadership responsibilities. For instance, Opiyo (2019) conducted a secondary data review to explore IE and transformational leadership concerning the professional development of school principals in Kenya. Findings of the study revealed that IE and transformational leadership are entwined. The findings of the study also encourage that all ideas directed towards supporting effective execution of IE must cross-examine leadership competence of school leaders and improve them as essential components in creating schools into effective inclusive learning atmospheres.

The Role of Government

All of the 12 senior secondary school principals agreed that the government's support is essential in tackling SEND students' teaching and learning needs in general education classrooms. They believed the equal right of all children to proper and quality education without discrimination is a basic responsibility of the government. The 12 senior secondary school principals established that the education system should always be tailored to every child's learning needs and provided in an inclusive educational environment. They stated that the government is not doing much to implement education laws and policies at local and national levels. In addition, the 12 senior secondary school

principals believed that IE for SEND students, needs to be seen as a fundamental piece of the broader purpose of establishing a less discriminatory society and advocacy of social justice to all children through IE delivery. This finding did not support any findings in the scholarly works reviewed in the literature. However, this finding of the study conveyed the lived experiences of the participants about the role government should play in the education of SEND students in general education classrooms.

In connection with the transformation leadership theory, leaders of government are expected to embody this leadership theory so that they can become transformative leaders to inspire their followers to adopt positive actions for the betterment of the organization and the people they serve. (Li et al., 2019; Steinmann et al., 2018). In the moral leadership theory, there is the contention that leaders play decisive role in shaping the moral well-being of a society and organization through positive or negative influences (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). Also, there is indication in the moral leadership scholarly works in that the beliefs of leaders permit them to deliver education for all children irrespective of disabilities or other learning problems (Grogan, 2006; Starratt, 1994).

Limitations of the Study

Some constraints limited the study. The first was the sample size of the study as only 12 senior secondary school principals participated in the study. The results of the study can be questioned in terms of trustworthiness. The issue of the trustworthiness of the results was resolved by using the criteria of trustworthiness as postulated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The second limitation of the study was based on the limited data that were collected from a small sample in the four geographical zones of Sierra Leone, which are the Western Area, Eastern, Northern, and Southern Provinces. Some of the participants in the study were former colleagues who had been promoted to the rank of school principals of senior secondary schools of the research environment. My former professional relationship with the participants of the research had no influence on the results of the study because I had no supervisory control over them and was no longer working with them. However, efforts were made to overcome this limitation by ensuring that the interview questions elicited all the required information from the participants of the study that was needed to answer the research questions. Timing was another critical limitation of the study. Ample time was needed to ensure effective work on the writing process. This limitation was addressed by using a weekly reading and writing plan that helped me to manage time for the dissertation process and helped me to track progress being made in the dissertation journey.

This section of the study contained three sets of recommendations. The first recommendation deals with the findings of the study and warranted the need to recommend partnership and collaboration among key stakeholders of education. The second recommendation also emanated from findings of the research and deals with policy for professional development training for school principals. The third recommendation is the relevance of future research on IE and school leadership.

Recommendation for Partnership and Collaboration

There is a need for partnership and collaboration to take place among major education stakeholders such as the government, principals, teachers, students, parents, guardians, religious and community leaders, colleges and universities, and other local and international education-related organizations, to map out plans that can address the concerns and challenges facing the education of SEND students in general education classrooms. This recommendation stems from the findings of the study which indicated that there is need for expert knowledge and professional training on IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. Also, the theme of collaboration emerged from how the challenges of IE can be overcome. It is important for the government to get involved in this partnership and collaboration process by providing the needed funding for successful IE practices in general education schools that enroll SEND students. The government should endeavor to come with legislation and policy that would specifically address the education of SEND students in general education classrooms. Key education actors should be involved in the drafting of such law and policy so that they can give their inputs. This part of the recommendation emanates from a finding of the study that centers on specific legislation and policy for IE for SEND students in general education classrooms.

Recommendation for a Policy on Professional Development Training

Absence of expert knowledge and professional development training were two of the findings of the study. Based on these findings, it is relevant to recommend that the government through the education ministry formulate a policy on professional

development training for school principals in general education schools. The policy

should make it mandatory for all school principals in general education schools to have

professional development training on IE and school leadership for SEND students in

general education classrooms. The policy should make it clear that before assuming the

office of principalship, professional development training on IE and school leadership for

SEND students in general education classrooms is a prerequisite. The formulation of such

policy is inextricably linked with the recommendation on the need for partnership and

collaboration among education stakeholders. The colleges and universities are crucial in

the process because they are providing degree and certificate courses to train teachers and

school principals. Therefore, they need to revise their curricula to create training

programs on IE for SEND students. Such training programs would professionally develop

school principals and provide them with the required skills and knowledge to handle the

learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms and accelerate

meaningful educational outcomes for these students. Those senior secondary school

principals who do not have training on IE would have the opportunity to benefit from

these training programs. The policy should make provision for the establishment of a

professional development commission that would oversee the practical operation of the

policy. The commission should be under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Basic

and Senior Secondary Education.

Recommendation for Future Research

The sample size of this research was limited to 12 participants that met the criteria

of sample sizes for a qualitative study (Robson, 2011; Maxwell, 2012). I recommend a

future research in the area of IE and school leadership with an increase in the sample size of the participants. This future research should use another sampling technique as the sampling method used in this study was purposive sampling. Participants of the study could be selected from other schools in different areas of the country. The study must also include junior secondary school principals. The rationale for this recommendation is to see whether such future research with a different sampling size and technique would produce similar results.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Crucial findings from the study within the researched country could provide educational and policy implications to school leaders, professional educators, and researchers as a catalyst for professional work in the field of educational leadership, administration, and management in the country. The results from the study may be employed to consider the strengths and requirements of existing IE practices in the country. There is the expectation that school principals, educators, and essential education stakeholders may use the findings of this study to improve educational practices that impede SEND students from gaining access to quality and proper education with their nondisabled peers in general education classrooms. The findings of the study may provide school principals with the opportunity to understand their responsibilities in the establishment of a favorable school climate that encompasses the required inclusive practices for SEND students to excel as their nondisabled peers academically. The moral leadership theory in the school context depicts equity and equality as the motivating beliefs, perceptions, skills, and professional dispositions that school principals may

employ to reduce the current disparities in learning attainment across ethnicity, class, race, ability, and indicators of exclusion. The activities of school leaders should be suggestive of how they instruct, guide, and lead (Fullan, 2014; Furman, 2004).

There is the possibility for the results of the study to ignite positive social change in the different levels of society. The results of the study may help direct the way forward for all key stakeholders of education, including government and policymakers to formulate specific legislations and policies on IE and school leadership that will lead to the professional development of school principals. The positive social change would bring social justice to SEND students who are marginalized in the educational system in Sierra Leone. The findings may also have the potential for positive change because school principals, the government and crucial education stakeholders will become fully aware of the significance of affording SEND students the right to education in an inclusive learning environment as provided by domestic education laws and policies, and reinforced by international treaties, conventions, and human rights law.

The positive social change implications of the study's findings are central to the four main components enshrined in the transformational model by Bass (1985). These four components are (a) idealized influence or charismatic leadership, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) individualized consideration. Each of these elements is essential for effective school leadership. The four components present a foundation in which leadership is considered as an establishment of several sources instead of a single authority (Hallinger, 2003).

Conclusion

Inclusive education (IE) and school leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms in Sierra Leone seemed to be a new area of research exploration. Evidence in the research literature showed that there have been opinion papers, articles, and position documents that revealed the significance of IE for SEND students in Sierra Leone, but no research study has been conducted in the area of school leadership and IE for SEND students in general education classrooms. This basic qualitative study was undertaken to explore the professional dispositions, perceptions, and practices or regulations that senior secondary school principals hold for administering programs for SEND students in general education classrooms.

Thus, the essence of undertaking the study was to fill in existing gap in the research which is no study has been done in Sierra Leone on IE and school leadership for the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms. The findings of the study have answered the research questions of the study, which was about the perceptions, professional dispositions, and practices or regulations that school principals hold and use to include SEND students in general education classrooms in senior secondary schools in the country. The study revealed that school principals have positive perceptions about the inclusion of SEND students in general education classrooms and they hold favorable professional dispositions regarding the inclusion of these students in general education classrooms.

The findings of the study have the implications for positive social change because findings may help pave the way forward for major stakeholders of education including

government and policymakers, to formulate and implement specific legislations and policies that will help address the issue of IE and school leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms. There is the need to state here that it is the constitutional right of SEND students to be accorded the opportunity to proper and quality education alongside their nondisabled peers in general education classrooms. The findings of this study could be used as a springboard to prepare the ground for IE for SEND students in general education classrooms.

References

Adhabi, E. & Anozie, C. B. (2017). Literature review for the type of interview in qualitative research. *International Journal of Education, 9*(3), 86-97. https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v9i3.11483

African Union. (1990). *African charter on the rights and welfare of the child*. https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-rights-and-welfare-child

African Union. (2018). *Protocol to the African charter on human and peoples' rights on the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa.* https://au.int/en/treaties/protocol-african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights-rights-persons-disabilities-africa

Amin, N. B. M., & Yasin, M. H. B. M. (2018). The role of instructional leadership in implementation of inclusive educational programs for special need students. *International Journal of Education and Social Science, 5*(1), 10-21. http://www.ijessnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2.pdf

Amka, A. (2019). Implementation of inclusive education in schools under the local government jurisdiction: A study of south Kalimantan province in Indonesia. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 10*(4), 20-30. https://doi.org/doi:10.2478/mjss-2019-0049

Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies, 5*(2), 272-281. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1419/f7b54e6b7f1215717a5056e0709f8946745b.pdf

Ardichvili, A., Nat och Dag, K., & Manderscheid, S. (2016). *Leadership development: Current and emerging models and practices.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316645506

Arnaiz, P., de Haro, R., & Maldonado, R. M. (2019). Barriers to student learning and participation in an inclusive school as perceived by future educational professionals. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, *8*(1), 18-24. https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2019.1.321

Atkinson, M. (2013). *Educational leadership and management in an international school context.* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256303007_Educational_leadership_and_management_in_an_international_school_context

Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d.). *Human rights explained: Fact sheet 5—The International Bill of Rights.* https://www.humanrights.gov.au/ourwork/education/human-rights-explained-fact-sheet-5the-international-bill-rights

Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (2004). *MLQ: Multifactor leadership questionnaire*. Mind Garden.

Baker, L. (2006). Observation: A complex research method. *Library Trends, 55*(1), 171-189. https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2006.0045

Ball, K., & Green, R. L. (2014). An investigation of the attitudes of school leaders toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. *National Forum of Applied Educational Research Journal, 27*(1/2), 57-76.

https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/551088

Balyer, A. (2012). Transformational leadership behaviors of school principals: A

    qualitative research based on teachers' perceptions. *International Online Journal*

    of Educational Sciences, *4*(3), 581-591.

    https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Transformational-Leadership-Behaviors-

    of-School-A-Balyer/d4f314cb874ce89511e80f857c56748ec1542182

Barnard, C. I. (1938). *The functions of the executive*. Harvard University Press.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance*. Free Press.

Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003), Predicting unit performance

    by assessing transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Applied*

    Psychology, 88(2), 207-218. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.2.207

Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2008). *Transformational leadership*. Psychology Press.

Beauchamp, M., Barling, R. J., & Morton, K. L. (2011). Transformational teaching and

    adolescent self-determined motivation, self-efficacy, and intentions to engage in

    leisure time physical activity. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 3*(2),

    127-150. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2011.01048.x

Bhakta, D. K., & Shit, B. (2016). Assessment of school teachers attitude towards

    inclusion of special educational need (SEN) children in regular classroom.

    International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2(6), 249-255.

    https://www.ijhsss.com/files/25.-Deb-Kumar-Bhakta.pdf

Billingsley, B., DeMatthews, D., Connally, K., & McLeskey, J. (2018). Leadership for

    effective schools: Considerations for preparation and reform. *Australasian*

Journal of Special Education, 42(1), 65-81. https://doi.org/10.1017/jsi.2018.6

Billingsley, B. S., McLeskey, J., & Crockett, J. B. (2017). *Principal leadership: Moving toward inclusive and high-achieving schools for students with disabilities.* https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Principal-Leadership-IC-2017-Revision.pdf

Bitsch, V. (2005). Qualitative research: A grounded theory example and evaluation criteria. *Journal of Agribusiness, 23*(1), 75-91. https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.59612

Blair, E. (2015). A reflexive exploration of two qualitative data coding techniques. *Journal of Methods and Management in the Social Sciences, 6*(1), 14-29. https://doi.org/10.2458/V6I1.18772

Boisvert, K. (2017) Case study report: Save the children Sierra Leone *Center for International Education and Education in Crisis and Conflict Network.* https:// www. scholarworks.umass.edu/cie_eccn/1

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Supporting a grounded theory with an audit trail: An illustration. International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 12(4), 305- 316. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570802156196

Brooks, J. S., & Normore A. H. (2005). An Aristotelian framework for the development of ethical leadership. *Journal of Values and Ethics in Educational Administration, 3*(2), 1-8.

Bryant, D.P., Bryant, B.R. & Smith, D.D. (2016). *Teaching students with special needs in inclusive classrooms.* Sage Publications.

Bublitz, G. (2016). *Effective strategies for district leadership to create successful inclusion models: Special education directors and school reform in context of least restrictive environment* (Publication No. 10118412) [Doctoral dissertation, Loyola University-Chicago]. ProQuest Dissertation and These Global.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper Collins.

Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2014). School leadership models: What do we know? *School Leadership and Management, 34*(5), 553-571 https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2014.928680

Carrington, S., Pillay, H., Tones, M., Nickerson, J., Duke, J., Esibaea, B., Malefoasi A. & Fa'asala, C. J. (2016). A case study of culturally informed disability-inclusive education policy development in the Solomon Islands. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 21*(5), 495-506. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2016.1218952

Carroll, A. B. (2003). Ethical Leadership: From Moral Manager to Moral Leader. In O. C. Ferrell, S. L. True, & L. E. Pelton (eds.), *Rights, Relationships & Responsibilities: Business Ethics and Social Impact Management 1*, (pp. 7-17). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270216635_Ethical_Leadership_From_ Moral_Manager_to_Moral_Leader

Carter, S., & Abawi, L. A. (2018) Leadership, inclusion, and quality education for all. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education, 42*(1), 49-64. https://doi.org/10.1017/jsi.2018.5

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview: The interview protocol refinement

framework. *Qualitative Report, 21*(5), 811-831.

https://www.nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss5/2

Center for Studies on Inclusive Education (n. d.). The United Nations convention on the

rights of the child. https://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/child-rights.shtml

Chandler, T. L. (2015). *School principal attitudes toward the inclusion of students with*

disabilities (Publication No. 3671458). [Doctoral dissertation, Walden

University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). Research methods in education (7th ed.).

Routledge.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N.(2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design:*

Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). Sage Publications

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative,*

and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell Báez, J. (2020). *Thirty essential skills for the qualitative*

Sage Publications.

Day, C. & Sammons, P. (2013). Successful leadership: A review of the international

literature. https://www.files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED546806.pdf

de Klerk, M. (2018). Exploring educator's experiences regarding empathy within

inclusive classrooms. I*nternational Journal of Special Education, 33*(3), 657-674.

https://www.files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1196704.pdf

DeMatthews, D. E. (2015). Clearing a path for inclusion: Distributing leadership in a

high performing elementary school. *Journal of School Leadership, 25*. 1000-

1038. https://doi.org10.1177/105268461502500601

DeMatthews, D. E., Kotok, S., & Serafini, A. (2019). Leadership preparation for

special education and inclusive schools: Beliefs and recommendations from

successful principals. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 00*(0), 1-27.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775119838308

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of

qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of*

qualitative research (pp. 1-32). Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). The discipline and practice of qualitative

research. In *The landscape of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp.1-44). Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-

binaries/17670_Chapter1.pdf

Downtown, J. V. (1973). *Rebel leadership: Commitment and charisma in a*

revolutionary process. Free Press.

Dreyer, L. M. (2017). Inclusive education. In L. Ramrathan, L. Le Grange, & P. Higgs

(Eds), *Education studies for initial teacher development*. (pp. 383-400). Juta.

Edwards, R., & Holland, J. (2013). *What is qualitative interviewing?* A&C Black.

https://www.eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3276/1/complete_proofs.pdf

Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. \

Qualitative Report, 23(11), 2850-2861.

https://www.nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss11/14

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling

and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics,5*(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Esposito, M. C. K., Tang, K., & Kulkarni, S. S. (2019). Ensuring inclusive environments for students with disabilities: school leaders play a linchpin role, *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 51*(1), 43-52. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2018.1515185

Fleming, J., & Zegwaard, K. (2018). Methodologies, methods, and ethical considerations for conducting research in work-integrated learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, 19*(3), 205-213 https://www.files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1196755.pdf

Frankfort-Nachmias, C & Leone-Guerrero, A. (2018). *Social Statistics for a diverse society* (8th ed). Sage Publications

Fullan, M. (2014). Leadership: Maximizing impact. https://www.michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/14_Spring_Maximizing-Impact-Handout.compressed.pdf

Gabriel, V. (2003). *Management* (3rd ed.). Prentice Hall.

Gallo-Toong, N. (2020). Internal stakeholders' knowledge and attitude towards inclusive education. *International Journal for Research in Social Science and Humanities, 6*(5), 1-34. https://www.gnpublication.org/index.php/ssh/article/view/1306

Gathumbi, A., Ayot, H., Kimemia, J., & Ondigi, S. (2015). Teachers' and school

administrators' preparedness in handling students with special needs in inclusive

education in Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(24), 129-138.

https://www.files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1078812.pdf

Geleta, A. D. (2019). School principals and teachers' perceptions of inclusive education

in Sebeta Town Primary Government Schools, Sebeta, Ethiopia. *International*

Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education, 8, 1364-1372.

https://doi.org/10.20533/ijtie.2047.0533.2019.0166

Giorgi, A. (1985). *Phenomenology and psychological research*. University Press.

Government of Sierra Leone. (1997). National education master plan, 1997-2006.

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000201869

Government of Sierra Leone (1995). New education policy for Sierra Leone.

file:///C:/Users/DESMOND%20WILLIAMS/Desktop/sierra_leone_edu_policy.pd

f

Government of Sierra Leone (1991). The constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991.

https://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf

Government of Sierra Leone (2004). Education act, 2004. https://www.sierra-

leone.org/Laws/2004-2p.pdf

Government of Sierra Leone (2007). Child right act of 2007. https://www.sierra-

leone.org/Laws/2007-7p.pdf

Government of Sierra Leone (2007). Education sector plan of 2007-2014: A road map to

a better future.

https://www.planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/sierra_leon

e_esp.pdf

Government of Sierra Leone (2011). The Persons with disability act, 2011.

https://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2011-03.pdf

Government of Sierra Leone (2011). Sierra Leone education sector capacity development

strategy, 2012-2016. https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/2011/sierra-leone-

education-sector-capacity-development-strategy-2012-2016-5724

Government of Sierra Leone (2014). Education sector plan of 2014-2018: Learning to

succeed. https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/sierra-leone-education-sector-

plan

Government of Sierra Leone (2018). Education sector plan of 2018-2020: Getting it

right-service delivery, integrity, and learning in Sierra Leone.

https://www.planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/sierra_leon

e_education_sector_plan_2018-2020_0.pdf

Green, S. (2002). *Research Methods in Health, Social and Early Years Care*.

Nelson Thornes Limited.

Greenfield, T. B. (1986). The decline and fall of science in educational administration.

Interchange 17(2): 57-80.

Greenfield, T. B. (1991). Re-forming and re-valuing educational administration: Whence

and when cometh the Phoenix? *Educational Management and Administration

19*(4): 200-217.

Grogan, M. (2006). Encyclopedia of educational leadership and administration. In F.W.

English (Ed.) *Morality, Moral Leadership* (pp. 1-3).

https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412939584.n384

Gumus, S., Bellibas, M.S., Esen, M., & Gumus, M. (20163). A systematic review of studies on leadership models in educational research from 1980 to 2014. *Educational Management, Administration, and Leadership, 46*(1) 25-48. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143216653239

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership, *Cambridge Journal of Education, 33*(3) , 329-352. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764032000122005

Hallinger, P., & Chen, J. (2014). Review of research on educational leadership and management in Asia: A comparative analysis of research topics and methods, 1995-2012.*Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214535744

Hallinger, P. (2014). Reviewing reviews of research in educational leadership: An empirical assessment. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(4), 539-576. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13506594

Hanafin, J., Boyle, A., Boyle, L., & Flynn, M. (2018). Inclusion and leadership in diverse and challenging contexts: Irish travellers and early years education. *Journal of Leading and Managing,* 1-34. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328743916_Inclusion_and_Leadership_in_Diverse_and_Challenging_Contexts_Irish_Travellers_and_Early_Years_Education

Hasan, M., Halder, U. K., & Debnath, D. (2018). Inclusive education and education for

all. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, 5*(3), 605-608.

    https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327755398_Inclusive_Education_and_E

    ducation_for_All

Hodgkinson, C. (1991). *Educational Leadership: The moral art.* State University

    of New York.

Hodgkinson, C. (1996). *Administrative philosophy: Values and motivations in*

    administrative life. Pergamon Press.

Hornby, G. (2015). Inclusive special education: Development of a new theory for the

    education of children with special educational needs and disabilities. *British*

    Journal of Special Education, *42*(3). https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12101

International Committee of the Red Cross. (n.d.). National implementation of

    international humanitarian law. https://www.ihl-

    databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihlnat.nsf/implementingLaws.xsp?documentId=62C6

    1E472B8A67F5C125767F004825BD&action=openDocument&xp_countrySelect

    ed=SL&xp_topicSelected=GVAL-

    992BUD&from=state&SessionID=DN2HKXTO4Q

Jolley, E., Lynch, P., Virendrakumar, B., Rowe, S., & Schmidt, E. (2018). Education and

    social inclusion of people with disabilities in five countries in West Africa: A

    literature review. *Disability and Rehabilitation, 40*(22), 2704-2712.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2017.1353649

Jovanovic, D., & Ciric, M. (2016). Benefits of transformational leadership in the context

    of education. *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 496-503

https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.09.64

Kabia, F., & Tarawally, U. (2017). Sierra Leone 2015 population and housing census:
Thematic report on disability.
https://www.sierraleone.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-
pdf/Disability%20Report.pdf

Kanter, A. S., Damiani, M. L., & Ferri, B. A. (2014). The right to inclusive education
under international law: Following Italy's lead. *Journal of International Special
Needs Education* 21-32. https://doi.org/ 10.9782/2159-4341-17.1.21

Kanungo, R. N., & Mendonca, M. (1996). *Ethical Dimensions of Leadership.*
Sage Publications

Khan, T. M., & Don, Yahya (2020). A needs analysis of principals' attitude towards
inclusive education at the secondary level. *International Journal of Innovation,
Creativity, and Change 13*(7), 67-79. https://www.ijicc.net

Koch, T. (2006). Establishing rigor in qualitative research: The decision trail. *Journal of
Advanced Nursing, 53*(1), 91-100.
https://doi.org/10.1111/j.13652648.2006.03681.x

Kozleski, E. B., & Choi, J. H. (2018). Leadership for equity and inclusivity in schools:
The cultural work of Inclusive schools. *Inclusion*, *6*(1), 33-34.
https://doi.org/10.1352/2326-6988-6.1.33

Leo, E. L., & Barton, L. (2006). Inclusion, diversity, and leadership: Perspectives,
possibilities and contradictions. *Journal of Educational Management,
Administration and Leadership*, *34,* 167-176.

Li, H., Sajjad, N., Wang, Q., Ali, A. M., Khaqan, Z., & Amina, S. (2019). Influence of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior in sustainable organizations: Test of mediation and moderation processes. *Sustainability, 11*(1594), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061594

Lim, M. B. (2000). From Jomtien to Dakar and beyond: Literacy, adult learning for empowerment. https://www.accu.or.jp/appreb/09/pdf31-1/8_10ABD31-1.pdf

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage Publications

Linneberg, M. S., & Korsgaard, S. (2019). Coding qualitative data: A synthesis guiding the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-12-2018-0012

Lyons, W. (2016). Principal preservice education for leadership in inclusive schools. *Canadian Journal of Action Research, 17*(1), 36-50. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1098199

Majoko, T. (2018). Zimbabwean general education preschool teacher needs in inclusion. *SAGE Open, 8*(2), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018777568

Majoko, T. (2019). Teacher key competencies for inclusive education: Tapping pragmatic realities of Zimbabwean special needs education teachers. *SAGE Open,* 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1177/215824401882345

Mapolisa, T., & Chimbadzwa, Z. (2011). Transformational leadership in schools: Threats and opportunities in enhancing school effectiveness. *Zimbabwe International Journal of Open and Distance Learning, 1*(2), 117-128.

Marimuthua, S., & Cheong, L.S. (2015). Inclusive education for social transformation.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.370

Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* Sage Publications.

Meanwell, E. (2018). Qualitative coding: Strategies for transparency and reproducibility. https://www.scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/22052/2018-0427_wim_meanwell_coding_slides.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Mclntosh, M. J., & Morse, J. M. (2015). Situating and constructing diversity in semi-structured interviews. https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393615597674

Meanwell, E. (2018). Qualitative coding: Strategies for transparency and reproducibility. https://www.scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/22052/2018-0427_wim_meanwell_coding_slides.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (2014). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Wiley.

Miles, S., & Singal, N. (2008). The education for all and inclusive education debate: Conflict, contradiction or opportunity. *International Journal of Inclusive Education.* https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110802265125

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014) *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Mitchell, D. (2016). Inclusive education strategies in New Zealand: A leader in inclusive Education. *Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri,nr4*(2), 2016, 19-29

https://doi.org/10.12697/eha.2016.4.2.02a

Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related

subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment, and Development,*

7(1), 23-48.

https://www.mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/85654/1/MPRA_paper_85654.pdf

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.

Moman Basham, L. (2012). Transformational and transactional leaders in higher

education. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, *77*(2), 15-37.

Murphy, C. D. R. (2018a). Transforming inclusive education: Nine tips to enhance

school leaders' ability to effectively lead inclusive special education programs.

Journal of Educational *Research and Practice, 8*(1), 87-100.

https://doi.org/10.5590/JERAP.2018.08.1.07

Murphy, C. D. R. (2018b). Educational leaders and inclusive special education:

Perceptions, roles, and responsibilities. *Journal of Education and Culture Studies,*

2(8), 248-270. https://doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v2n4p248

Navickaite, J. (2013). The expression of a principal's transformational leadership during

the organizational change process: A case study of Lithuanian general education

school. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century, 51*, 70-82.

Nishimuko, M. (2014). How can children with disabilities be included in school

education? : A case study in Sierra Leone. *Journal of International Cooperation*

in Education, 16(2), 71-85.

https://www.pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a4bd/5fe0e2c2f7f84a547477c95e56a53173

1808.pdf

Nguluma, H. F., Bayrakcı, M., & Titrek, O. (2017). School administrators' attitudes

toward inclusion of children with disabilities in the general education classrooms.

International Journal on Lifelong Education and Leadership, 3(2), 1-12.

https://www.dergipark.org.tr/download/article-file/551088

Njelesani, J., Hashemi, G., Cameron, C., Cameron, D., Richard, D., & Parnes, P. (2018).

From the day they are born: A qualitative study exploring violence against

children with disabilities in West Africa. *BMC Public Health, 18*(153), 1-7.

https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5057-x

Notman, R. (2016). An overview of educational leadership research in the east Asia

region. *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies, 18*(2), 29-42.

http://www.nzasia.org.nz/journal/NZJAS_Dec2016/nzjas_dec2016_notman.pdf

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2018). Thematic Analysis:

Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative

Methods*, *16*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Opiyo, R. A. (2019). Inclusive practice and transformative leadership are entwined:

Lessons for professional development of school leaders in Kenya. *Global Journal

of Transformative Education, 1*(1), 52-67.

https://doi.org/10.14434/gjte.v1i1.25981

Ormston, R., Spencer, L., Barnard, M., & Snape, D. (2014). The foundations of

qualitative research. In J. Ritchie, J. Lewis, C. M. Nicholls, & R. Ormston (Eds.),

Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers

(2nd ed., pp. 1-26). Sage Publications.

Oyugi, P. (2015). Knowledge, skills, and dispositions of school principals: Perspectives from Kisumu County, *Kenya. American Journal of Educational Science, 1*(3), 79-90. https://www.aiscience.org/journal/ajes

Pai, G. (2014). Particularizing universal education in postcolonial Sierra Leone. *Current Issues in Comparative Education 16*(1), 62-73. https://www.files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1020656.pdf

Palaganas, E. C., Sanchez, M. C., Molintas, M. P., & Caricativo, R. D. (2017). Reflexivity in Qualitative Research: A Journey of Learning. *Qualitative Report, 22*(2), 426-438. https://www.nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss2/5

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2013). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health, 42*(5), 533-544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Pappas, M. A.; Papoutsi, C., Drigas, A. S. (2018). Policies, practices, and attitudes toward Inclusive Education: The Case of Greece. *Soc. Sci, 7*(90), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7060090

Pijanowski, J. (2017). Teaching educational leaders to move from moral reasoning to moral action. *International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership Review, 18*(1). https://www.files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1162580.pdf

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., Fetter, R. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader,

satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Leadership Quarterly, 1*(2), 107-142. https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(90)90009-7

Poon-McBrayer, K. F. (2017). School leaders' dilemmas and measures to instigate changes for inclusive education in Hong Kong. *Journal of Educational Change, 18,* 295-309. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-017-9300-5

Qaddo, M. (2019). Participant observation as research methodology: Assessing the validity of qualitative observational data as research tools. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334726309_Participant_Observation_as _Research_Methodology_Assessing_the_Validity_of_Qualitative_Observational_ Data_as_Research_Tools

Quinn, G., & Degener, T. (2002). A survey of international comparative and regional disability law reform. https://www.dredf.org/news/publications/disability-rights-law-and-policy/a-survey-of-international-comparative-and-regional-disability-law-reform/

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bringing the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological.* Sage Publications.

Right to Education Project (2016). Right to education country factsheet Sierra Leone. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resourceattachments/RTE_country_factsheet_Sierra_Leone_Ja nuary_2016_0.pdf

Rioux, M., & Carbert, A. (2003). Human rights and disability: The international context. *Journal on Developmental Disabilities, 10*(2), 1-14.

https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Human-Rights-and-Disability%3A-The-International-Rioux-Carbert/8ec04b42db20da27b239b1feb0c390123b6f3104

Roberts, C. A., Ruppar, A. L., & Olson, A. J. (2018). Perceptions matter: Administrators' vision of instruction for students with severe disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities 43*(1), 3-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/1540796917743931

Robinson, D. (2017). Effective inclusive teacher education for special educational needs and disabilities: Some more thoughts on the way forward. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 61,* 164-178. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.09.007

Robinson, O. (2013). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 11*(1), 25-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543

Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research: A resource for users of social research methods in applied settings.* Wiley.

Rose, R., Garner, P., & Farrow, B. (2019). Developing Inclusive Education Policy in Sierra Leone: A Research Informed Approach. In S. Halder, & V. Argyropoulos (Eds.), *Inclusion, Equity and Access for Individuals with Disabilities: Insights from Educators across the World* (1st ed., pp. 427- 444). Macmillan Ltd.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed). Sage Publications.

Seale, C. (Ed), (2006). *Researching Society and Culture* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Sesay, C. (2018). *Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education in Sierra Leone* (Publication No. 10825745) [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Schwandt, T. A. (2015). Reconstructing professional ethics and responsibility: Implications of critical systems thinking. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389015605199

Sider, S. Maich, K., & Morvan, J. (2017).School Principals and students with special education needs: Leading inclusive schools *Canadian Journal of Education 40*(2) https://www.cje-rce.ca/wp content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/Regular-2417-Sider.Final_.June_.21.pdf

Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Simplican, S. C., Leader, G., Kosciulek, J., & Leahy, M. (2015). Defining social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An ecological model of social networks and community participation. *Research in Developmental Disabilities,* 38, 18-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2014.10.008

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects. *Education for Information 22, 63-75.* https://www.pdfs.semanticscholar.org/452e/3393e3ecc34f913e8c49d8faf19b9f89 b75d.pdf

Sousa, V. D., Driessnack, M., & Mendes, I. A. C. (2007). An overview of research designs relevant to nursing: Part 1: Quantitative research designs. *Revista Latino-*

Americana de Enfermagem 15(3), 502-7. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-11692007000300022

Starratt, R. J. (1994). Building an ethical school: A practical response to the moral crisis in schools. Falmer Press.

Stefkovich, J., & Begley, P. T. (2007). Ethical school leadership: Defining the Best Interests of Students. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 35*(2), 205-224. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143207075389

Steinmann, B., Klug, H. J. P., Gunter, W. M. (2018). The path is the goal: How transformational leaders enhance followers' job attitudes and proactive behavior. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02338

Stewart, K., Gill, P., Chadwick, B., & Treasure, E. (2008). Qualitative research in dentistry. *British dental journal, 204*(5), 235-239. https://doi.org/10.1038/bdj.2008.149

Sue, D. W. (2001). Multidimensional facets of cultural competence. *Counseling Psychologist, 29*, 790-821.

Sutton, J. and Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: data collection, analysis, and management. *Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, 68,* 226-231. https://www.doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456

Tarawallie, M. (2015). Sierra Leone research and knowledge systems: A rapid literature review. https://www.inasp.info/sites/default/files/201804/Country%20profile%20%E2%80%93%20Sierra%20Leone.pdf

Takyi, E. (2015). The Challenge of Involvement and Detachment in Participant

    Observation. *Qualitative Report, 20*(6), 864-872.

    https://www.nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss6/12

Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling. *Journal of Mixed Methods*

    Research, 1(1), 77-100. https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678906292430

Tengi, M. L., Mansor, M., Hashim, Z. (2017). A review theory of transformational

    leadership for school. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business*

    and Social Sciences, 7(3), 792-799. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i3/2847

Timothy, S., & Agbenyega, J. S. (2018). Inclusive school leaders' perceptions on the

    implementation of individual education plans. *International Journal of Whole*

    Schooling, 14(1), 1-30.

    https://www.pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4954/82638ac17586bbdaa4d4ebeecd58d2d

    3ef28.pdf?_ga=2.86868826.39041721.1587350623-1349722733.1547950357

Thomas, B. (2020). The status of concepts and perceptions regarding inclusive education

    for students with intellectual disabilities in India. *Mukt Shabd Journal, 9*(5), 563-

    577. http://www.shabdbooks.com/gallery/61-may-2020.pdf

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigor within a qualitative

    framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 48*(4), 388-396.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.x

Tucker, B. A., & Russell, R. F. (2004). The influence of the transformational leader.

    Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 3(22), 1-5.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190401000408

Torres, R. M. (1999). One decade of education for all: The challenge ahead.

  https://www.pdfs.semanticscholar.org/288e/4aa1e1491a84016c636d1a18ed6126a

  6afb2.pdf

Tuters, S., & Portelli, J. (2017). Ontario school principals and diversity: Are they

  prepared to lead for equity? *International Journal of Educational Management,*

  31(5), 598-611. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-10-2016-0228

Ugwu, C. J., & Onukwufor, J. N. (2018). Investigation of principals' attitude towards

  inclusion of special needs students in public and private secondary schools in

  Rivers State, Nigeria. *American Journal of Applied Psychology,6*(1), 1-7.

  https://doi.org/10.12691/ajap-6-1-1

United Nations Children's Fund (2017). Inclusive education understanding article 24 of

  the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

  https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/IE_summary_accessible_220

  917_0.pdf

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (1990). World

  declaration on education for all: Meeting basic learning needs.

  https://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127583

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (1994). *The Salamanca*

  statement and framework for action on special needs education. Author

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2017). A guide for

  ensuring inclusion and equity in education.

  https://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254

United Nations Integrated Peace building in Sierra Leone. (2012). Moving forward

together: From national commitment to concrete action. *Report on the rights of*

persons with disabilities in Sierra Leone. http://www.unipsil.unmissions.org/

United Nations (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/pages/home.aspx

United Nations (1989). Convention on the rights of the child.

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/pages/home.aspx

United Nations (n.d.). Education outcomes.

https://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/education.shtml

United Nations (1966). International covenant on civil and political rights.

https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx

United Nations (1966). International covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights.

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx

United Nations (1966). International covenant on civil and political rights.

https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx

United Nations (1993). The standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for

persons with disabilities.

https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/standard-rules-on-the-

equalization-of-opportunities-for-persons-with-disabilities.html

United Nations (2000). World education forum in Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April to boost

drive for education for all.

https://www.un.org/press/en/2000/20000411.soc4543.doc.html

United Nations (2006). Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

    https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-

    persons-with-disabilities.html

United Nations (2007). Article 24: Education.

    https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-

    persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html

United States Congress, Senate Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity (1970).

    Equal educational opportunity. https://www.congress.gov/bill/93rd-

    congress/house-bill/40

Vazquez, M. F. (2010). *Inclusionary practices: Impact of administrators' beliefs on*

    placement decisions (Publication No. 3415053) [Doctoral dissertation, University

    of Central Florida- Orlando]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Viswambharan, A. P., & Priya, K. R. (2016). Documentary analysis as a qualitative

    methodology to explore disaster mental health: Insights from analyzing a

    documentary on communal riots. *Qualitative Research, 16*(1), 43-59.

Wang, Y. (2018). The panorama of the last decade's theoretical groundings of

    educational leadership research: A concept co-occurrence network analysis.

    Educational Administration Quarterly, 54(3), 327-365.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18761342

Wart, M. V. (2003). Public-sector leadership theory: An assessment. *Public*

    Administration Review, 63(2), 214-228.

Welfare Society for the Disabled (2018). Street child: A study on the barriers to

education for children with disabilities in Sierra Leone.

https://www.static1.squarespace.com/static/531748e4e4b035ad0334788c/t/5b589f

21575d1f52f87309f5/1532534767765/Barriers+to+Education+for+Children+with

+Disabilities_Sierra+Leone.pdf

Widodo, W., & Mawarto, M, (2020). Investigating the role of innovative behavior in

mediating the effect of transformational leadership and talent management on

performance. *Management Science Letters, 10*(10), 2175-2182.

https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.3.019

Wong, T. P. (2020). Inclusive education in ASEAN countries: How to support children

with disabilities in schools.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tze_Peng_Wong/publication/340862634_In

clusive_educaton_in_ASEAN_countries_how_to_support_children_with_disabilit

ies_in_schools/links/5ea162e92851c87d1ad3315/Inclusive-education-in-ASEAN-

countries-how-to-support-children-with-disabilities-in-schools.pdf

World Bank (2000). Education for all: From Jomtien to Dakar and beyond.

https://www.siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-

1099079877269/547664-1099079993288/efa_jomtien_dakar.pdf

World Bank (2007). Global Monitoring report, 2007: Millennium development goals.

https://www.documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/309311468324011934/pdf/394

730GMR02007.pdf

World Education Forum (2000). The Dakar framework for action. education for all:

Meeting our collective commitments.

https://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1681Dakar%20Fr

amework%20for%20Action.pdf

Yasir, M., & Mohamad, N. A. (2016). Ethics and morality: Comparing ethical

leadership with servant, authentic and transformational leadership styles.

International Review of Management and Marketing, 6(4).

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303789610_Ethics_and_morality_Comp

aring_ethical_leadership_with_servant_authentic_and_transformational_leadershi

p_styles

Zhi, H. L. (2014). A comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

PubMed, *61*(3). https://doi.org/10.6224/JN.61.3.105

Zohar, D., & Tenne-Gazit, O. (2008). Transformational leadership and group interaction

as climate antecedents: A social network analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology,

93*, 744-757. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.4.744

Appendix A: Letter of Approval from Institutional Review Board

Dear Mr. Williams,

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your

application for the study entitled, "Professional Dispositions and Perceptions of

Principals About Inclusion in Senior Secondary Schools."

Your approval # is 01-06-21-0728742. You will need to reference this number in your

dissertation and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-

mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format,

you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and

expiration date.

Your IRB approval expires on January 5, 2022 (or when your student status ends,

whichever occurs first). One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a

Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond

the approval expiration date.

Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described

in the final version of the IRB application document that has been submitted as of this

date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB

approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If

you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled,

your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection

may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain

IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will

receive confirmation with a status update of the request within 10 business days of

submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to

receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or

liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University

will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and

procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you made a commitment to communicate

both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their

occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of

academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can

be obtained on the Tools and Guides page of the Walden

website: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/research-center/research-ethics/tools-guides

Doctoral researchers are required to fulfill all of the Student Handbook's Doctoral

Student Responsibilities Regarding Research Data regarding raw data retention and

dataset confidentiality, as well as logging of all recruitment, data collection, and data

management steps. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB

materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the

link

below: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKlmdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Libby Munson

Research Ethics Support Specialist

Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

Walden University

100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 1210

Minneapolis, MN 55401

Email: irb@mail.waldenu.edu

Phone: (612) 312-1283

Fax: (612) 338-5092

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including

instructions for application, may be found at this

link: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Appendix B: Letter of Participation

Subject: Request for Participation in a Dissertation Study

Dear Principal,

My name is Desmond P.G. Williams, and currently a Ph.D. student at Walden University. I will be coming to Sierra Leone to collect data for my dissertation study. I am inviting principals with at least 10 years of experience, have taught in inclusive schools, and have a master's degree to participate in this study. I am kindly requesting your participation in the study via a face-to-face interview, which would be conducted in your office, and it will last for approximately 60 minutes.

The purpose of the research is to explore the professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals in Sierra Leone hold about the inclusion of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in general education classrooms.

If you are interested in participating, please email me at desmond.williams@waldenu.edu

Sincerely,

Desmond P.G. Williams

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

The Interview Protocol Guideline for Principals

The interview questions for principals of the study encompassed four topics that addressed pertinent issues to the study in providing answers to the research questions, and they are illustrated as follows:

Topic One Questions

1. What appropriate professional training do school principals of senior secondary schools experience in supporting special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) students in general education classrooms? Describe what educational or professional training that you obtained in inclusive education (IE) for SEND students preceding your current position as principal.

2. How would you describe your experience as a school principal in dealing with the challenges associated with providing instructional leadership for SEND students in general education classrooms?

3. What professional development training in IE for SEND students have you received since assuming the office of principal?

4. Describe your experience in designing in-service training for teachers to meet the learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms.

Topic Two Questions

1. What do you know about the policy or rules for IE ? Do you believe SEND students should be taught in general education classrooms?

2. What is your perception about the need for providing instruction for SEND

students in general education classrooms?

3. How do your perceptions about SEND students affect their learning?

4. What kinds of instructional leadership do you provided for SEND students?

5. Tell me, what do key stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, board of governors perceive as essential leadership concerns about SEND students in general education classrooms?

6. What other issues do school leaders face regarding SEND students ?

7. How can the efficacy and attitude of school principals affect learning needs of SEND students in general education classrooms?

8. Describe your thoughts regarding the strengths and weaknesses of providing pedagogical instruction for SEND students with their non-disabled peers in general education classrooms.

9. How would you address the weakness for a better educational attainment for SEND students in your school?

Topic Three Questions

The focus of this section of the interview is on professional dispositions. I am going to give a theoretical working definition which is appropriate in the context of this interview and it was defined by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 20060), a professional accreditation council for schools, colleges, and departments of education, defined professional dispositions as " professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive

behaviors support learning and development (p. 10)

1. How do you understand professional dispositions?

2. Tell me your beliefs about the professional dispositions that school principals of senior secondary schools should hold about IE for SEND students in general education classrooms.

3. What professional dispositions have you developed and sustained in your current position as principal to accelerate quality and proper education for students in your school?

4. How would you describe the effective role professional dispositions can play in helping school principals in addressing the learning needs and academic accomplishments of SEND students in general education classrooms of senior secondary schools?

5. Tell me, is there any relationship between professional dispositions and perceptions that school principals hold to drive quality education for SEND students in general education classrooms? if yes, how? If no, how?

6. How would the professional dispositions you hold about SEND students for IE can positively or negatively affect the beliefs and attitudes of your teaching staff in the quest to meet the learning needs the SEND students?

Topic Four Question: Closing Question

This is the end of the interview. You can still share anything else we did not talk about in the interview about the research topic. If not, thanks for your participation in this interview.

(Note: I will prepare some cues like tell me more about that or what do you mean by ….)