

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,**

**KUMASI GHANA**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

**SCHOOL OF MEDICAL SCIENCES**



**ATTITUDE OF TEACHER TRAINEES TOWARDS PUPILS WITH  
DISABILITIES. A CASE STUDY IN THE NANUMBA NORTH DISTRICT OF  
NORTHERN GHANA**

**By  
DAHAMANI TAHIDU**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
HEALTH, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF SCIENCE DISABILITY, REHABILITATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

**SEPTEMBER 2014**

## DECLARATION

I DAHAMANI TAHIDU, declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in the published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, are entirely my own field research work, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

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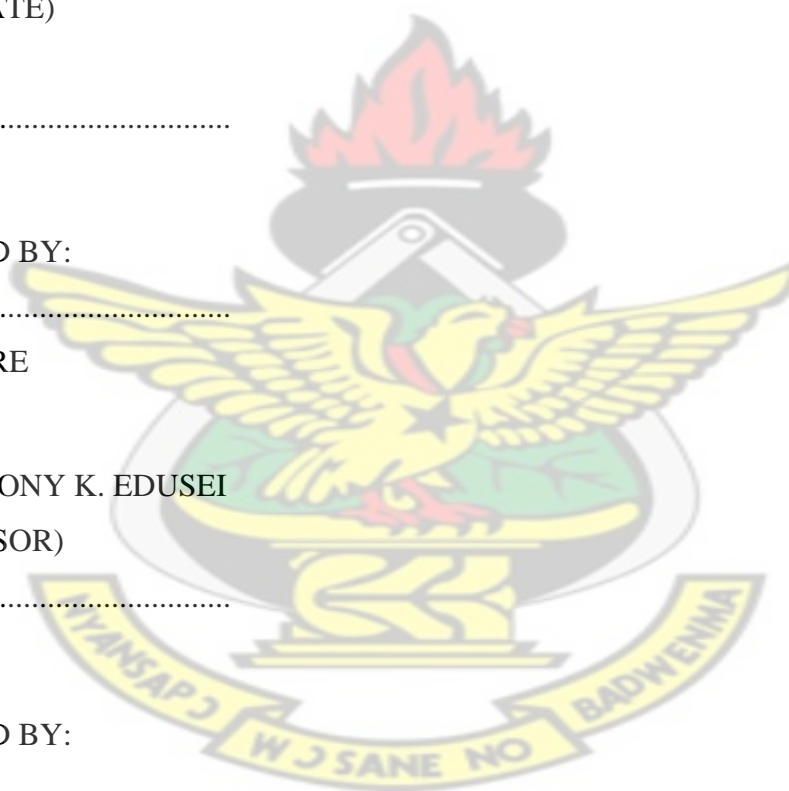
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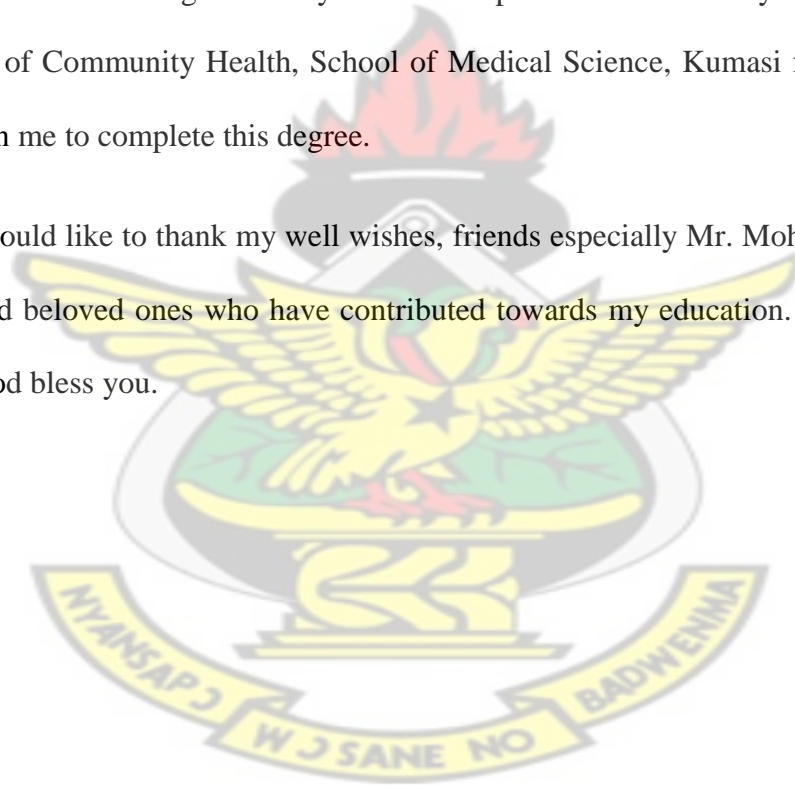
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## DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my late father Adam Dahamani and the entire family especially Tahidu Wumpini, Tahidu Suglo and their mother Ziblim Suada

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## ABSTRACT

Towards the realization of the goals of inclusive education the attitude of teacher trainees towards pupils with disabilities cannot be under estimated as an important factor. The study was therefore carried out to assess the attitude of teacher trainees of E. P College of Education, Bimbilla towards pupils with disabilities in the Nanumba North District in the Northern Region of Ghana.

The study design was descriptive and cross sectional. In all 150 trainees were selected by the use of stratified random sampling technique out of the total of 283 trainees in the out segment of the in-in-out programme of the college. The respondents were given a set of questionnaires to respond to as a means of ascertaining their attitude towards pupils with disabilities at the basic schools. The questionnaire items were four rated Likert scales questions for the respondents to respond to. The research used the independent sample t-test as the statistical tools for data analysis in order to test the research hypothesis.

The major findings are that, there was no gender difference in the teacher trainee's attitude towards pupil with disabilities. Trainees held positive perceptions towards persons with disabilities because of their exposure to disabilities issues in special needs education. Finally both male and female trainees do not differ in their attitude towards pupils with disabilities.

It is recommended that refresher courses taking the form of seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized regularly to update the teacher's knowledge and skills in the area of their teaching profession and disability. Teacher trainees should be given opportunities to experience inclusive education practice in inclusive schools.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Teacher training and preparation in Ghana were based strictly on handling students without disabilities at the expense of children with disabilities in the classroom. Avoke (2004) commented that, methodologies at initial teacher training programs continue to be directed towards practices of regular schools. Consequently, teachers do not teach towards differential learning outcomes since the approaches adopted by many teachers in Ghana tend to be exam driven. The author further explained that, schools have encouraged assessment practice that alienate children with disabilities that struggle to meet the learning and achievement targets of the general curriculum. However, current trends in education are moving towards inclusion which tries to solve the problems of persons with disabilities in the regular school setting. This system will help combat major if not all negative practices that do not promote achievement of students with disabilities in the regular schools. As commented by Barton (1997) that, inclusive education should be about listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering all members and importantly, it is about celebrating differences in dignified ways, and aimed at not leaving anyone out of school. Inclusion is the opportunity for all persons with a disability to participate fully in all the educational, employment, consumer, recreational, community and domestic activities that typify every society (Tilton, Florian & Rose, 1998)

Despite the move towards inclusive education, teachers are not still conversant with the basic policies governing inclusion in their classrooms. Recent studies found that in Austria, many teachers have less than positive attitude towards students with disabilities

and their inclusion in general education classroom (D'Alonzo, Giardino & Cross, 1996). According to the limited amount of recent literature available, attitudes towards persons with disabilities in Ghana are strongly based on religious and cultural beliefs. Disabilities are often considered as curses or punishments for sins committed by the persons with disabilities their relatives or as a result of witchcraft or 'juju'. This religious-cultural thinking about disability results in several barriers for persons with disabilities and forms of exclusion and discrimination have in turn influenced the self-confidence of many persons with disabilities and their interaction with society (Slikker, 2009). In another study on "student-teachers perception on inclusive education in Ghana", Hayford (1999) found that, many undergraduate teachers would be willing to receive and maintain special children in their classes. However, the study further revealed that, in spite of their willingness to teach special needs children in their classrooms, they thought they were professionally incompetent to handle children with special needs in regular classes.

More so, Gathing, LaCour and Wheeler (1994) stated that, people's negative attitudes towards students with disabilities or that they view individual with disabilities as different from and inferior to individual without disabilities. These attitudes do not in any way help the individuals with disabilities. Hasting and Oarford (2003) cited in Milsom (2006) also found that, student teachers possessed more negative attitude towards individual with behaviour and/or emotional problem than towards students with cognitive disabilities. They further explained that the former were perceived to have more negative impact on the school and on other students. These findings revealed that individuals' perceptions of disabilities and how they approach people with disabilities strongly influence their behaviours. Due to the problems teachers face in handling students with disabilities in the regular schools, the Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast which is in charge of the Colleges of Education in Ghana introduced a three hour introductory course in special

needs education to give teacher-trainees background knowledge of persons with disabilities. As it is stated in the “Framework for Action on Special Needs Education” (UNESCO, 1994) that pre-service training programmes should provide to all student teachers, primary and secondary alike, positive orientation towards disability thereby developing an understanding of what can be achieved in school with locally available support services. Bimbilla E.P College of Education as a College of Education helps in the process of training professional teachers who will be capable of handling all pupils either with or without special educational needs. The college practices the in-in-out programme among the institutions that run this style of education. During the out segment of the in-in-out programme, the college posts its trainees to two main districts. These are Nanumba North and South districts to enable the trainees gain practical skills from experienced teachers (mentors) to complement the theories they learned.

The pre-service training programmes were meant to influence the trainees towards developing positive perception of persons with disabilities. Also, the pre-service training programme would help give appropriate training on the behaviour of persons with disabilities to foster healthy relationship and personal development of trainees and persons with disabilities. However, less research has been carried out to find the impact of this course on the trainees’ attitude toward the disabled. This research is therefore geared towards ascertaining the attitude of teacher-trainees of Bimbilla E.P College of Education towards pupils with disabilities in the Nanumba North district in the Northern Region of Ghana. According to Chan et al. (1988 & 2002) and Leung (1990 &1993), it is important to study attitudes towards people with disabilities because societal attitudes have been assumed to be a significant factor in defining the life experiences, opportunities and help-seeking behaviour of people with disabilities. Also, knowledge of attitude would suggest ways of modifying negative attitudes by drawing upon those factors that support positive

attitudes and contribution to development of successful rehabilitation programme (Chen, Martin, Elizabeth & Chan, 2002).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Schools have special responsibilities in promoting positive attitudes throughout the school community and in arranging for effective co-operation between class teachers and persons with disabilities. Schools with persons with disabilities should take the pain to know the relationships that exist among student with disabilities and students without disabilities. It is also necessary to look at the relationships that exist between teachers and students with disabilities in order to promote healthy school climate. To this end, the Government of Ghana introduced a concept of free and compulsory education for every school-age child to be realized through the introduction of a Free Compulsory Basic Education programme (FCUBE), which was launched in 1996. It is being implemented in fulfillment of the Fourth Republican constitutional mandate (Chapter 6 Section 38 Sub-Section 2). The main policy goal of the FCUBE programme is to provide opportunity for every school-age child in Ghana to receive quality basic education by the year 2005. This provision was done to cater for the educational needs of both pupils with and without disabilities.

Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) also states that in teacher-training practice schools, specific attention should be given to preparing all teachers to exercise their autonomy and apply their skills in adapting curricula and instruction to meet pupils' needs as well as to collaborate with specialists and co-operate with parents. Although various policies are enacted to protect the dignity of individuals with disabilities, it is not clear whether people have changed in terms of their attitude. For example, empirical evidence shows that there was a mixed perception as to whether full inclusion would lead

to improved general education teacher tolerance of students with disabilities. D'Alonzo and Giordano (1997) found that, 40% of the teachers in New Mexico feel full inclusion will lead to improved general education teacher tolerance of students with disabilities, while 40% disagreed. It is also not certain whether the special education programme that was introduced into the curriculum of the colleges of education in Ghana has influence on the teacher-trainees' attitude. The aim of the study therefore, is to determine whether teacher-trainees hold a particular attitude towards pupils with disabilities. The research is also to determine whether there is gender difference in the teacher-trainees' attitude towards pupils with disabilities. This is because the experiences of persons with disabilities can be influenced positively or negatively by the attitude and subsequent reactions of people in their environment.

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

Individuals with disabilities are often stigmatized, labeled and encounter attitudinal and physical barriers both in work and daily life. Though there are policies and legislations to protect the dignity and self image of persons with disabilities. Even though several researchers have been conducted to find attitudes of people toward persons with disabilities, the purpose of this study is to assess the following:

- The kind of attitude held by teacher-trainees of colleges of education in Ghana.
- Identify whether there is any significant difference existing between male and female teacher-trainees' attitude towards pupils with disabilities.
- Find the reasons associated with the kind of attitude held by the teacher-trainees and to make recommendations for further actions.

## 1.4 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The following questions guided the researcher in carrying out the study:

1. How do teacher-trainees perceive persons with disabilities?
2. What gender differences exist in teacher-trainees' attitude towards pupils with disabilities?
3. What reasons account for the kind of attitude held by the teacher-trainees?

### Hypothesis

HA There is a significant difference between male and female teacher-trainees' attitude towards pupils with disabilities.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

Research is not carried out in vain, but to benefit stakeholders. Persons with disabilities are humans just like the individual without difficulties. Since the individual is a human just like others, there is the need to make frantic efforts to influence people to change their negative attitude toward the individuals with disabilities. The study is carried out to identify the attitudes and to put appropriate measures in place to curtail the inappropriate attitudes. This would help in the following ways:

- The findings of the study would help special education tutors in the colleges of education in Ghana to use appropriate methods in teaching the trainees during their training. It will enable the trainees to carefully handle, persons with special educational needs as well as serving as morale booster.
- The findings on gender difference will inform Ghana Education Service as to how to make decisions on posting of male and female graduates to certain schools.



- It will also help parents, teachers, non-governmental organizations and education service to initiate appropriate workshops and awareness programmes to address the factors that account for the kind of attitude held by people toward individuals with special needs.
- Assess the significance of the special needs education course in the colleges of education in Ghana. This will assess the impact of the course curriculum on the trainees' negative attitude towards pupils with disabilities.

### 1.6 Delimitation

The focus of the research is on final year teacher-trainees attitude 'towards pupils with disabilities. It is further limited to teacher-trainees of Bimbilla E.P Colleges of Education who have been posted to schools within the Nanumba North District Assembly. Furthermore, the study focuses on the teacher-trainees' attitude towards pupils with special educational needs in terms of their academic achievements and social relations in the regular schools. As regarding their social relations, close contact, fair treatment, personal feelings were the items tested in the hypotheses.

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

In the course of the write up, the following terminologies were used:

**Attitude:** Attitude refers to “affective, cognitive, and behavioural components that correspond, respectively, to one’s evaluations of, knowledge of, and predisposition to act toward the object of the attitude” (Wagner, 1969, p. 7).

**Perception:** It refers to what is subjectively experienced as existing in a given social situation (Hudson & Rosen, 1953).

**Disability:** It is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being (World Health Organization, 1976).

**Teacher –trainees:** These are students who are under training in order to gain the status of professional teachers after completion.

**Special needs individual:** Any person who needs exclusive attention to maximize his or her potentials.

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### 1.8 Organization of the Study

The research report is organized into five chapters. The chapter one is the introduction chapter.

It consists of the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and hypothesis, significance of the study, delimitation, and definition of terms and organization of the study. The second chapter discussed detailed review of related literature.

It includes theoretical and empirical study. This is followed by the detailed methodology of the study; that is chapter three. The chapter four is the discussion of findings and data representation. The last chapter consists of the conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

A number of studies have established that behaviour is a potent determinant of teacher expectations. The behaviours influencing teachers' attitudes become increasingly important as special educators attempt to include persons with disabilities into the regular education system. Taking a look at the teacher training programmes in the country (Ghana), it is observed that the current institutions do not ensure inclusion of person with disabilities. Few opportunities are created for persons with disabilities in terms of admission and provision of appropriate services. This chapter reviews literature related to the issues of attitude of student teachers towards persons with disabilities in other studies. The following sub-heading is discussed.

- Attitudes of people towards persons with disabilities
- Reasons for attitude of people
- Effect of people attitudes on person with disabilities
- Interventions to improve people positive attitudes
- Empirical review of the study
- Theoretical framework of the study
- Summary

## 2.2 Attitudes of People towards Persons with Disabilities

In Ghana, as in many parts of Africa, culture, social status and religion have interacted and influenced people's perception and attitude towards disability. Disabilities are often considered as curses or punishments for sins committed either by the persons with disabilities, parents of the persons with disabilities, or one of his or her ancestors. In most Ghanaian communities, people believe in reincarnation of human beings and as a result there is a high tendency among people to believe that some families disregard the general principles of nature for which they should be punished by the gods of the land (Slikker, 2009). Recent research suggest that students and teachers possess somewhat negative attitudes towards students with disabilities, or that they view individuals with disabilities as different from and inferior to individual without disabilities (Gething, LaCour& Wheeler, 1994). It is not only teachers and students but people in general possess somewhat negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. Hasting and Oarford (2003) revealed that, student teachers possessed more negative attitudes towards students with behaviour and/or emotional problems than towards students with cognitive disabilities. The author explained that, the former were perceived to have a more negative impact on the school and on other students. The society considered the emotional and/or behaviour disorders as persons who can at any point in time brings the society or community to shame during important occasions and ceremonies.

In a research on gender in Nigeria (Obani & Doherty, 1984) and in Zambia (Simui, 2009), studies indicate that in most cases, the trainee teachers had negative attitudes towards inclusive education with female trainee teachers having more favourable attitudes. The trainee teachers were reported to have developed positive attitudes towards the principle of inclusion as a result of exposure to children with disabilities. Also, Chireshe (2011) indicated that, sixty four percent of both male and female respondents indicated that

parents of children without disabilities resented inclusion because they did not understand disability. They felt that special needs education children should be included where possible because they are human beings and this will make them feel near normal. Chan and his associates (Chan, Hua, Ju and Lam, 1984, Chan et al, 1988, Chan, Lee, Yuen & Chan, in press, Tsang, Chan & Cheign, in press) found that Chinese students in Hong Kong and Taiwan were more positive towards people with physical disabilities than towards those who have developmental disabilities and mental disorders. They also found that Chinese did not make any significant differentiation in their attitudes towards people with mental retardation and individual with psychiatric disabilities.

Also, looking at trainees' attitudes from a cross-cultural perspective, Chan et al (1988) and Chan, Lee, Yeun and Chan (in press) stated that while American students have more positive attitudes towards people who are mentally retarded than towards persons with a history of psychiatric disabilities, Chinese students hold less positive attitude towards people with disability (both physical and mental). Judging from the above citations, it is realized that the students do not hold the same attitudes towards persons with disabilities but their attitudes are based on the kind of disabilities, severity and form. In social context of examining attitudes towards disabilities, Grand, Bernier and Strohmer (1982) found that attitudes of Americans towards disability varies significantly with more positive attitudes held toward people with disabilities in work situation than in dating and marriage. The students perceived persons with disabilities positively when it comes to work placement than when it is concerning marriage and social relationship. Also, Tang et al (in press) revealed that when it comes to placing a facility in the student own neighbourhood, their attitude are not different from the general public. In relation to trainees 'attitude and the type of programme pursued in school, Carney and Cobia (1994) found that students in school counseling program had significantly more positive attitudes

than students in other programmes. They however explained that, whether individual with more positive attitude actually possessed positive attitude or simply less negative attitude is unclear. This is in line with the statement that acceptance of students with disability is unlikely to happen when individuals have negative attitudes (Antonak&Livneh, 2000).

Theorists suggest that negative attitudes towards a person can be changed through a regular contact with them ( Zajonc, 2001). The hypothesis that attitudes can be shaped by contact is expounded by Zajonc (2001). Student behaviours related to negative attitudes toward their peers with disabilities are also important to examine. As discussed previously, students prefer interacting with peers without disabilities (Nowicki&Sandieson, 2002), and related to that finding, Heinrichs (2003) indicated that, students with disabilities experience more rejection by peers than do students without disabilities. Bullying directed toward students with disabilities is common, and Heinrichs suggested that the cognitive, behavioural, and/or physical differences of these students make them "easy targets" (p. 196). Bullying can take many forms, and rejection can have long lasting effects (Beale & Scott, 2001). Yunker and Block (1986) reported that, attitudes toward individuals with disabilities are positively correlated with attitudes toward mainstreaming. Although mainstreaming and inclusion are conceptually different, both relate to the idea of integrating students with disabilities into regular education classrooms. There is no research to support positive correlations between attitudes about inclusion and attitudes toward students with disabilities; however, given the positive correlation between attitudes toward students with disabilities and attitudes toward mainstreaming, it seems likely that such a relationship might exist.

Focusing on research carried out in country, Slikker (2009) states that care and support for Persons with disabilities in Ghana is still mainly based on the traditional charity model of disability which considers persons with disabilities as objects of pity who need to be

catered for. Recognition of the rights and capabilities of persons with disabilities is limited. According to the researcher, limited amount of recent literature available, attitudes towards persons with disabilities in Ghana are strongly based on religious and cultural beliefs. Disabilities are often considered as curses or punishments for sins committed by the persons with disabilities or his or her relatives or as a result of witchcraft or ‘juju’. This religious-cultural thinking about disability results in several barriers for persons with disabilities and forms of exclusion and discrimination, which has in turn influenced the self-confidence of many persons with disabilities and their interaction with society. Also, many student teachers in Ghana perceive physical, visual and hearing impairments as the only clear and recognized type of disabilities. Students have a limited knowledge about intellectual disabilities and mental illnesses and its diverse characteristics. Most of them do not consider chronic illness, mental illness, learning difficulty and albinism as disabilities (Slikker, 2009).



### 2.3 Reasons for the Attitude of People

Negative attitudes and behaviours of students toward their peers with disabilities may occur for many reasons, but empirical research has not identified any specific causes. Nevertheless, assessing student attitudes is important prior to implementing any school-based intervention.

Negative attitudes and behaviour of trainees towards persons with disabilities occur for many reasons but specific causes through empirical research have not been identified. Milsom (2003) states that, although research identifying reasons for negative attitudes is scarce, a number of explanations for negativity from educators towards persons with disabilities have been proposed. Milsom (2002) reported that completing minimal formal training related to students with disabilities prior to being employed as school counsellors indicated they felt somewhat prepared to provide services to students with disabilities.

Additionally, Forlin (2001) reports that, teachers felt stressed when working with students with disabilities because they did not possess knowledge or feel incompetent. Finally, Pavri (2004) found that both special education and regular education teachers received little pre-service training related to effective inclusion of students with disabilities. In fact, special education teachers reported receiving less training in this area than did regular education teachers.

In addition to not feeling prepared, school personnel also feel demands placed on them by superiors, Disability legislation (e.g., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and current educational reforms, including No Child Left Behind, create systems in which school personnel are held accountable for student outcomes. Forlin (2001), cites teachers reported high levels of stress because they are held accountable for the educational outcomes of students with disabilities. The teachers also worried that spending more time



addressing the needs of students with disabilities would result in them having less time to focus on students without disabilities. "The highest levels of stress appear to come from teacher's personal commitment to maintaining effective teaching for all students in their classes" (Forlin, p. 242). Praisner (2003) cites that, one reason students possess negative attitudes towards persons with disability is that they did not receive adequate training regarding those individuals and therefore feel unprepared to provide services to them effectively. The author further linked the trainees' attitudes to attitudes of school principals. Those principals with positive attitudes were more likely than principals with negative attitudes in admitting students with disabilities. Another reason is that in some cultural settings, persons with severe mental retardation and mental illness are often viewed as a source of shame by their parents and may be kept at home, away from public attention (Cheung, 1990; Yang, Leung, Wang & Shim, 1996). This means, trainees from those cultural backgrounds are likely to have negative attitude towards persons with disabilities. Taking a look at the research carried out in Ghana by Slikker (2009), it was revealed that people who believe in Spiritual causes of disabilities were thirty eight percent (38%) of the total sample population of the study. Thus, witchcraft, juju and (generational) curses. The researcher stated that, majority of respondents who belief in spiritual causes had a low level of education. Intellectual disability most often explained spiritually. These and others are the reasons for the trainees' attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

#### **2.4 Effect of People's Attitudes on Person with Disabilities**

Negative attitudes and actions of others can negatively affect the behaviour, social relationships, education, employment, and health of individuals with disabilities (Yuker, 1994) because their self-perceptions are greatly influenced by the attitudes and

expectations of others (Oermann& Lindgren, 1995). Medina and Luna (2004), explored the experiences of Mexican-American students enrolled in special education and reported negative educational and personal/social outcomes. The students reported feeling disrespected by teachers; indicated that, teachers did not notice derogatory comments directed at them by their peers without disabilities, and reported that they did not believe that their teachers cared about them. They also reported feeling "alienation, disinterest, and anxiety regarding their classrooms, teachers, and classmates" (Medina & Luna, p. 15). For all students, negative attitudes and behaviours exhibited by peers can have long-lasting effects. Bullying and relational aggression have been addressed in recent professional literature, and the avoidance or rejection of students with disabilities by their peers as well as potential physical or verbal aggression directed toward them should be viewed as bullying and addressed as such. Numerous negative outcomes have been associated with bullying and common outcomes include academic problems, absenteeism, loneliness, and loss of friends (Roberts & Coursol, 1996).

## **2.5 Interventions to Improve People's Positive Attitudes**

A number of programmes could be initiated in an effort to address the training needs of teacher-trainees and school personnel to facilitate positive interactions among them and all students. Praisner (2003) advocated in-service training related to students with disabilities in general, and Pace (2003) found professional development seminars effective in increasing awareness about students with disabilities among regular education student teacher supervisors. However, other studies have recommended identifying one specific content area (e.g., behavioural interventions for students with disabilities) as important for teacher professional development. Also numerous researchers (Lieberman, James, & Ludwa, 2004; Pavri, 2004) have recommended that school staff be trained to help promote cooperative relationships between students with disabilities and students

without disabilities. They suggested that successful interactions between these students often do not occur naturally, and teachers must be able to facilitate interactions effectively if they want students with disabilities to engage socially with their peers.

In fact, Lieberman James and Ludwa (2004) note that positive contact with students with disabilities is the only effective way to help students gain an understanding and knowledge about students with disabilities. Therefore, student interaction seems an important goal, and structured activities have been recommended with regard to helping students develop skills to successfully interact with each other. A number of specific suggestions have been provided in the literature.

Salisbury, Gallucci, Palombaro, and Peck (1995) provided recommendations for promoting social interactions between students with and without disabilities. Included in their list were cooperative learning groups, which they indicated could provide both social and academic benefits to students with disabilities. Additionally, they suggested that teachers engage students in collaborative problem-solving (e.g., through regular classroom meetings) in order to provide students a voice for concerns related to students with disabilities and to help them develop understanding or empathy. Research examining student attitudes toward their peers with disabilities has suggested that contact with students with disabilities might lead to positive attitudes. In addition to being able to interact cooperatively with each other, students benefit from gaining an appreciation for diversity in general. Heinrichs (2003) suggests that schools can help students develop tolerance and respect for differences by teaching empathy and anger-management skills and promoting respect for others via the general curriculum. The variety of character education programs available can be used as a foundation from which discussions and activities specific to students with disabilities can be incorporated.

Vaughan (2002) cited in Milsom (2006) recommended that, schools should make time to assess their cultures (i.e., attitudes and beliefs about students with disabilities) as well as existing policies and procedures. Negative messages can unintentionally be communicated to students via language or procedures. For example, schools that single out students with disabilities as different (e.g., issuing special diplomas for students in special education), rather than acknowledge that all students learn differently, might unintentionally communicate to those students that they are less worthy than other students.

In another effort to prevent students with disabilities from being singled out, school personnel might examine their enforcement of school rules. All students should be expected to adhere to school rules, and disciplinary actions should be equitable (Milsom, 2006) citing (Salisbury Gallucci, Palombaro & Peck, 1995). Bullying and teasing will likely ensue when some students are held to different standards than others. Similarly, high expectations for all students with regard to both behaviour and academics (Corbett, 2001; Salisbury et al., 1995) will help students with disabilities reach their potential and help other students develop an understanding that students with disabilities do not need special treatment in every area of their life.

## **2.6 Empirical Evidence**

Empirically, related studies have been carried out in different locations on different populations in assessing the attitudes of students towards persons with disability. In a study of 297 first- and fourth-year medical and dental students and health care professionals in the United States of America (USA), Paris (1993) reported attitude towards disabled persons (ATDP) (Form B) mean scores of 111.9 for dental students and 122.1 for medical students. First-year medical students had significantly lower mean

scores (119.8) than did the fourth-year medical students (127.2). Health care professionals, however, did not differ significantly from the student groups (mean=125.2). Paris (1993) also found a significant difference between females and males on mean ATDP scores: women in general and women medical students in particular, have more positive attitudes towards people with physical disabilities than their male peers. Previous research has been inconclusive. Yunker and Block (1986) reported that, in 13 studies, five found higher ATDP scores for women, two found higher ATDP scores for men and six found no gender-related difference. More recent studies have found that women express more favourable attitudes towards individuals with physical disabilities. In a similar study, Tervo, Palmer, and Redinius (2004) surveyed 338 graduate and undergraduate students majoring in various healthcare professions in U.S. These researchers used the ATDP Scale Form O and reported a mean score of 73.8. Nursing, medical and other health professional students had more positive ATDP scores than the norm for college students without disabilities, with no differences identified for gender (Tervo et al., 2004).

Lee, Paterson and Chan (1993) assessed ATDP scores for 144 occupational therapy students in Years 2 through 4 of their academic degree programme. Students were administered retrospective pre-tests and post-tests at the end of the first semester of an academic year during which they had experienced dissemination of accurate information about and exposure to persons with disabilities through clinical experiences as a part of the academic curriculum. Retrospective pre-test scores (122.8, 107.6, and 105.7 respectively for students in Years 2 through 4) were significantly lower than their post-test scores; therefore students perceived that they experienced a change to a more positive attitude towards persons with disabilities. While not significantly different among the

second-, third- and fourth-year students, the post-test means showed a positive attitude, with scores of 131.8, 137.3 and 136.2 respectively.

The study authors concluded that positive attitudes of occupational therapy students towards persons with disabilities are initiated through dissemination of accurate information about disabilities and maintained through continued exposure to information about and contact with persons with disabilities (Lee, Paterson & Chan, 1993). Chan, Lee, Yuen and Chan (2002) surveyed Chinese students enrolled in rehabilitation (n=73) and business (n=107) during the students' first and third year of study, using the ATDP scale (Form A). At the end of the first and third years, rehabilitation students had significantly more positive attitudes towards persons with disability while business students were more negative. First-year rehabilitation students scored a mean of 103.4 at the beginning of the year and 106.9 at the end of the year. Business students at the beginning of the first year scored a mean of 100.5 and decreased in mean score to 96.4 at the end of the year. The same trend held true for third-year students, with rehabilitation students compiling final mean attitude scores of 107 and 108, while business students scored 97 and 98. The authors recognized that the students may have scored lower than the ATDP norms due to their ethnic background.

A study carried out on 269 creational students of United States of America by Perry, Ivy, Conner and Shelar (2008) indicated the frequency of interaction with persons with disabilities, as measured through four time categories (daily, weekly, monthly, less than six times a year), was significant using an analysis of variance ( $f=3.785$ ;  $df=176$ ;  $p=.012$ ). It was revealed that participants who interacted with persons with disabilities on a weekly basis (n=58) had the highest mean ATDP scores (121.33) followed by those with daily interaction (n=30) with a mean ATDP score of 117.90. Participants who interacted with persons with disabilities monthly (n=44) had mean ATDP scores of 112.34, while the

lowest mean ATDP scores of 109.93 were from participants who interacted with persons with disabilities less than six times a year (n=45). The quality of interaction variable was measured using a six-point Likert scale that ranged from very positive to very negative interactions with persons with disabilities.

## 2.7 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is driven by Vygotsky's (1993) socio-cultural theory blended with Oliver (1990) social model of disability. According to Vygotsky (1993) socio-cultural theory, the development of a child is both a natural and cultural process set within socio-cultural perspectives. This theory explained that children relate to the world through culturally and historically developed tools (Kozulin, 2004). Vygotsky's theoretical argument is that the practice of institutional activities and cultural factors influence children's cognitive development and have an impact on a child's concepts formation. These theoretical arguments provided a dynamic framework to examine the impact of integration on regular children's attitudes in the contexts of a regular school.

Vygotsky (1993) advocated that, human development was a complex, socio-genetically driven process but that the common laws of child development apply to children with special needs. In his study of 'defectology', Vygotsky (1993) referred to the study of children with special needs and their education in Russia during the early 1900s

He proposed that the notion of disability should be understood from socio-cultural development perspective. According to Vygotsky, disability is a social construct. To this end, he introduced the concepts of primary disability and secondary disability (Viktorija & Gediminas, 2004). Broadly, primary disability refers to the contemporary understanding of organic impairment that prevents one from mastering social skills and acquiring knowledge at the same rate as those without disabilities and in a form that is

acceptable by society. The primary disability affects a child's interaction with people and thus alters the child's relationship with the world. A primary disability 'leads to a restructuring of social relationship and to a displacement of all the system of behaviour'(Vygotsky, 1993). Primary disability is perceived as an abnormality only when and if it is brought into the social context.

Vygotsky (1993) also viewed "secondary" disability as the distortions of higher psychological functions due to social factors. An organic impairment prevents a child from mastering some or more social skills and acquiring knowledge at a proper rate and in an acceptable form. It is the child's social milieu, however, that modifies his/her course of development and leads to distortions and delays. From this point of view, many symptoms such as behavioural infantilism or primitivism emotional reactions in individuals with mental retardation are considered to be secondary handicapping condition, in the process of social interaction. Vygotsky pointed out that, from the psycho educational perspectives the primary problem of a disability is not the organic impairment itself but its social implications. Thus, an organic defect is recognized by society as a social abnormality in behaviour. Expectations and attitudes of social milieu and conditions created by the society influence the access of the child with disability to socio-cultural knowledge, experiences, and opportunity to acquire the "psychological tools".

Changing negative societal attitudes towards the individuals with disabilities should be one of the goals of special educators (Vygotsky, 1995). The search for positive capacities and qualitative characteristics in the upbringing (nurturing) of children with disabilities is the "trademark" of Vygotsky's approach. He called for the identification of a disability in a child from a point of strength, not weakness. This is what he labeled as "positive differentiation". The essence of Vygotsky's findings was that the development of the child, with or without disabilities, was a series of qualitative transformations of



internalizing adults which can be gained in an educational setting. Children's relationship with the people around them had a distinct impact on their development and their worldview. Therefore the development of a person with a disability largely depends on the attitudes towards that person among the people he/she lives with (Yaroshevsky, 1989). The social mediation enables children to acquire ways of thinking and behaviour that make up a community's culture (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2004). Vygotsky (1993) emphasized the importance of creating an environment that encouraged socialization of a child with his/her peers. In Vygotsky's theory, the collective of an organized peer group was a powerful mediating factor that empowered children's learning. The focus of an inclusive paradigm is thus to increase the quantity and improve the quality of communication, and the social relationships with peers.

The Vygotsky's theory is supported by the social model of disability which also views disabilities as a result of social limitation imposed on the person with special needs.

The model focuses on the need to modify societal norms to enable the individual with disabilities function properly without difficulties. The social model of disability proposes that, systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) are the ultimate factors defining who is disabled and who is not in a particular society. It recognizes that while some people have physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological variations, which may sometimes cause individual functional limitation or impairments, these do not have to lead to disability, unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_model\\_of\\_disability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_model_of_disability)). According Oliver (1990), social model of disability does not deny the problem of disability but locates it squarely within society. It is not individual limitations, of whatever kind, which are the cause of the problem but society's failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure the

needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organization. Further, the consequences of this failure does not simply and randomly fall on individuals but systematically upon disabled people as a group who experience this failure as discrimination institutionalized throughout society.

Both Vygotsky (1993) socio-cultural theory and Oliver (1990) social model of disability are relevant to this study in the sense that, the child with disability develops problem in performing the routine activities because the society places barriers on the individual. The child with disability should be made free to participate in social activities be it community or school related.

This in both short and long term will reduce the negative perceptions society has towards persons with disabilities. This will also make persons with disabilities feel accepted in their communities. Also, the participation of individuals with disabilities will make them acquire skills to grow in a culturally accepted manner and enhance the interaction to children with or without disabilities in their environment.

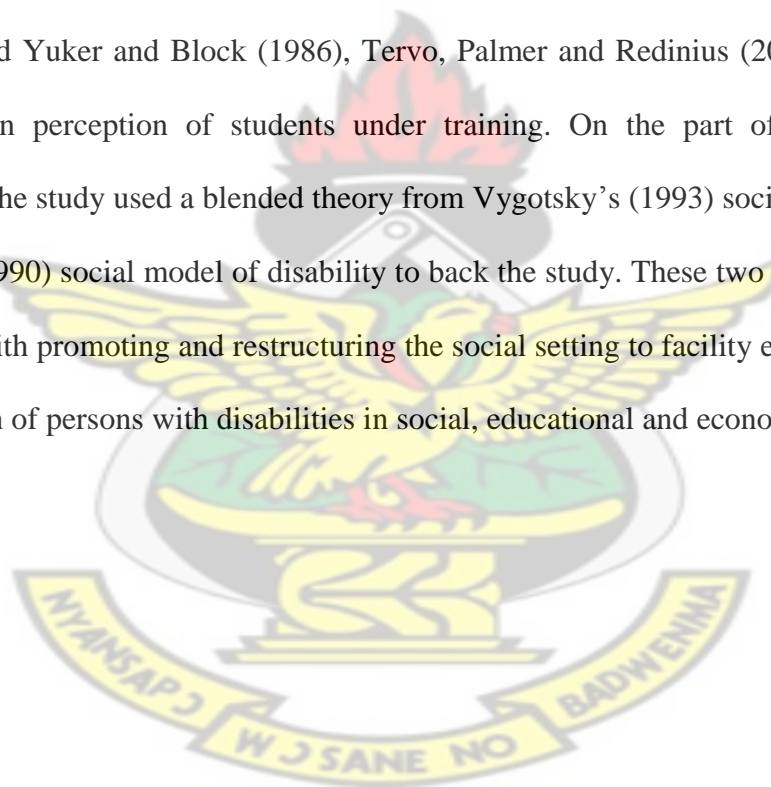
### **2.8 Summary**

The review of the literature started with identifying the attitude of people towards persons with disabilities. It was realized that, people of different society and of different status held a particular attitude towards persons with disability. Some people held the view that disabilities are as a result of curse or punishment for sins committed by the persons themselves or the family and had a particular style of approaching and relating to them. Also, the literature identified the effects of peoples' attitude on persons with disabilities. It was revealed that negative attitudes and actions of others persons without disability affect the behaviour, social relationships, education employment and health of individuals with disabilities. Various ways of enhancing positive attitude among persons with and

without disabilities were also reviewed. It included training of staff (teachers) to promote cooperative relation between students with and without disability using cooperative learning groups.

Finally, the literature did not overlook the empirical evidence and theoretical framework of the research work. The empirical study reviewed related researches carried out to identify the trend of peoples' perception and attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

It reviewed the study carried out by Paris (1993) on first and fourth-year medical and dental students and health care professionals' perception of persons with disabilities. It also reviewed Yaker and Block (1986), Tervo, Palmer and Redinius (2004) and various researches on perception of students under training. On the part of the theoretical framework, the study used a blended theory from Vygotsky's (1993) socio-cultural theory and Olive (1990) social model of disability to back the study. These two theories are both concerned with promoting and restructuring the social setting to facility easy participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in social, educational and economic activities.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This research was conducted in order to assess teacher-trainees' attitude towards basic school pupils with special educational needs in the Nanumba North District within the catchment area of Bimbilla E.P College of Education. The chapter discussed the research design that was employed in carrying out the study. Apart from the research design, population of the study, research instrument, ethical consideration and the data analysis procedures were also discussed.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This research adopted the descriptive survey research design for ascertaining teacher-trainees' attitude towards basic school pupils' with special education needs in the Nanumba North district.

According to Martyn (2008), descriptive research design is a research design which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. Many scientific disciplines, especially social science and psychology, use this to obtain a general overview of the subject. The author further states that, descriptive research design is often used by anthropologists, psychologists and social scientists to observe natural behaviours without affecting them in any way. It is also used by market researchers to judge the habits of customers, or by companies wishing to judge the morale of staff.

Descriptive research design has certain advantages in the conduct of research. In the first place, descriptive research design makes it possible for the subject to study, be observed

completely in its natural and unchanged natural environment. Also in the view of Martyn (2008), descriptive research is often used as a pre-cursor to quantitative research, the general overview giving some valuable pointers as to what variables are worth testing quantitatively.

As it is stated, descriptive survey research design is an attempt to describe and explain conditions of the present by using many subjects and questionnaires to fully describe a phenomenon. (Carroll (nd) <http://www.dissertation-statistics.com/research-designs.html>).

Furthermore, the descriptive survey design is used because it generally takes raw data from questionnaires and summarizes it in a useable form and can also be qualitative in nature if the sample size is small and data are collected from interviews or observations (Biscoe, 2003).

Despite the numerous advantages of descriptive research design, it has certain disadvantages in term of research conduct. One of the disadvantages is that, because there are no variables manipulated, there is no way to statistically analyze the results. Many scientists regard this type of study as very unreliable and ‘unscientific’ (Martyn, 2008). In addition, the results of observational studies are not repeatable, and so there can be no replication of the experiment and reviewing of the results.

### 3.2 Population of the Study

The population of students of Bimbilla E.P College of Education is presented in the table 1.

**Table 1 Distribution of student population**

level	Population		Total
	Male	Female	
1st year	185	100	285
2nd year	187	95	282
3rd year	190	93	283
Total	562	288	850

The table 1 shows that, the 285 first years are made up of 185 males and 100 females. Also, the 282 second years are made of 187 male and 95 female. And the 283 final year student are 190 male and 93 females. This sums the total male population of the school to 562 and total female population of 288 students.

### 3.3 Sample Size

This study specifically targeted the final year students of Bimbilla E.P College of Education who are in the out programme after being introduced to special needs education. Out of the total final year population of 283, 150 (53%) students were selected to respond to the research instrument (questionnaire). This sample was made up of 75 males and 75 females. The basis for selecting the sample size was to cover approximately 50% of the target population in order to make sound judgment.

### 3.4 Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique that was used for selecting the population sample was the stratified random sampling technique. Trochim (2006) states that stratified random sampling involve dividing the population into male and female and then taking a simple random sample in each group. This technique is preferred to simple random sampling. In the first place, it ensures that the researcher represents not only the overall population, but also key subgroup (male and female) of the population. It also makes it possible for the researcher to give analysis of each group (Trachim, 2006). Stratified random sampling technique is applicable to this study because it made it possible for both final year male and female trainees of the college to have equal chance of being chosen as respondents to the questionnaire. The researcher first of all defined the population, which are all final year teacher-trainees of Bimbilla E.P College of Education in the out segment of the in-out programme within Nanumba North district bearing in mind the two groups (male and female). In all, 53 percent of the target population was selected to respond to the questionnaire which consisted of 75 males and 75 female trainees. This is because, the researcher wanted to represent equal number of both male and female trainees in the study for the purpose of objective analysis. Despite the notion that more female voices were heard, there was the need to select equal number of male and female trainees to test the research hypothesis.

### 3.5 Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used for the study was questionnaire. A questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic.

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Questionnaire>). When properly constructed and responsibly administered, questionnaires become a vital instrument by which statements can be made about specific groups or people or entire populations. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts which included; part A for the bio-data of the respondents consisting of the gender, age, qualification and area of origin. Part B consisted of 24 items on the Likert scale rating questions. The scales included strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The issues that were captured in part B included teacher-trainees' feelings towards basic school pupils with special education needs, their views on pupils' academic achievements and others which are under appendix A.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

#### **Pilot testing**

In order to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire used for the study, the researcher piloted the study on ten (10) teacher-trainees of Bagabaga College of Education. Twenty five (24) question items were used in the pilot testing to rate teacher-trainees' view on special education introductory course in the college in terms of their feelings about pupils with special education needs, causes of disability as well as reasons for their views. These respondents as well as their answers were not part of the actual study process and were only used for testing purposes. After the questionnaire items had been answered, the researcher asked the respondents for any suggestions or any necessary corrections to ensure further improvement and validity of the instrument. The researcher revised the survey questionnaire based on the suggestions of the respondents and



colleagues in order to validate the instrument. The researcher then excluded irrelevant questions and changed vague or difficult terminologies into simpler ones in order to ensure comprehension. Statistical reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha result is in table 1 below.

**Table 2 Reliability Statistics of the research instrument**

Number of items	Cranach's alpha	Mean	Variance	std. Deviation
27	0.706	56.7778	68.444	8.27312

Table 2 shows that, the reliability coefficient of the piloted questionnaire items administered was .708 for the gathering of the data. Therefore, the piloted questionnaire is highly reliable and valid for the use in conducting the main research

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

As this study required the participation of individual respondents, specifically personal and ethical issues were addressed. The consideration of these ethical issues was necessary for the purpose of ensuring the privacy as well as the safety of the respondents. Among the significant ethical issues that were considered in the research process include consent and confidentiality. In order to secure the consent of the selected respondents, the researcher relayed all important details of the study, including its aim and purpose. By explaining these important details, the respondents were able to understand the importance of their role in the completion of the research. The respondents were also advised that they could withdraw from the study even during the process. With this, the respondents were not forced to participate in the research. The confidentiality of the participants was also ensured by not disclosing their names or personal information in the

research. Only relevant details that helped in answering the research questions were included.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

Permission was sought from the various school heads where the population sample was found. This was done after personal introduction of the researcher to the heads of the schools to seek the approval for the data gathering in their schools. This was followed by a visit to the schools two days later to meet the selected teacher-trainees for briefing on the purpose of the study and to win their full assistance.

The questionnaire items (see Appendix A) were delivered personally by the researcher to the schools. The researcher explained the objective of the study to the respondents and also responded to pertinent questions from the respondents.

After the discussion with them, the questionnaire to trainees of the selected 10 schools of practice for completion in one week's time. The questionnaire included the bio-data of the respondents and 25 Likert scale rated questions. The bio-data included gender, age, qualification and area of origin of the respondents. Also, the 25 Likert scale questions considered personal feelings of respondents towards basic school pupils with special education needs, trainees' view of pupils academic achievements, causes of disabilities as well as reasons for the trainees' view (details in appendix A). The researcher personally went to the schools one week later and collected the entire completed questionnaire.

### **3.9 Data Analysis Process**

After gathering all the completed questionnaires from the respondents, total responses for each item were analyzed using independent t-test to determine the significant level of perception between male and female trainees. According to Awanta and Aseidu-Addo

(2008), t-test compares the means of males and female teacher-trainees samples and determines if the probability of any difference between them has been obtained by chance. In comparing the mean of male and female trainees, the independent sample t-test was used to compare the means of each sample and determine if they are statistically significant. The significant level is established if p-value is less than 0.05 or when the variance is unequal.

In order to interpret the data properly and objectively, the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used to compute the figures or relationships among the variables.

Also, tables were used to represent the frequencies of the respondents' responses on the questionnaire items. This gives it a pictorial and quick reference to the responses.

### **3.10 Limitations**

One limitation of this study was the small number of the population sampled. The sample size was limited to one College of Education out of the 40 Colleges of Education in the country. Due to the small sample, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the larger population of final year teacher-trainees of the country.

## CHAPTER FOUR

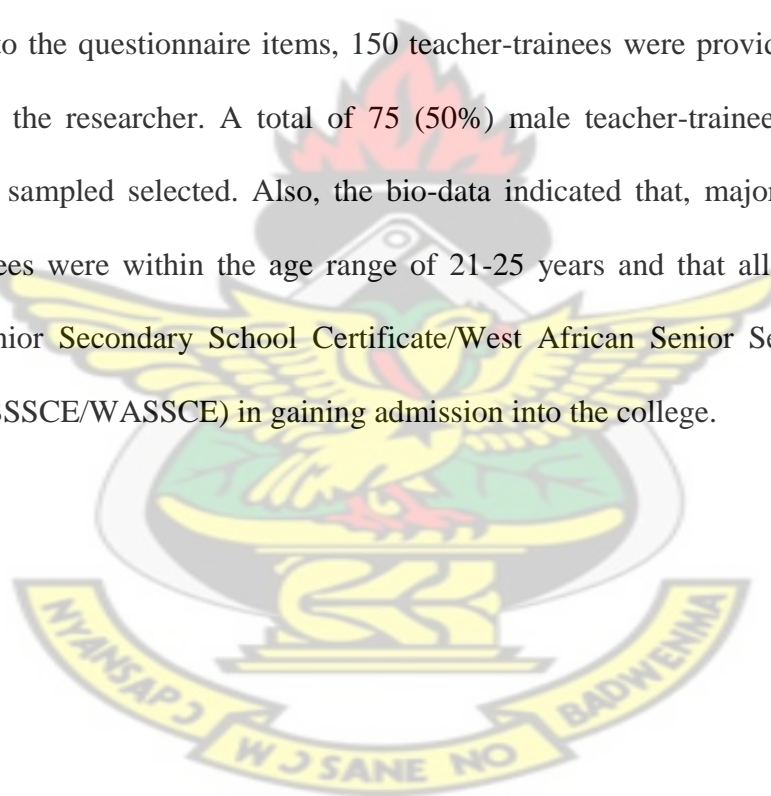
### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study aimed at finding out the attitude of final year teacher-trainees toward basic school pupils with special education needs. This chapter presents the results of the study.

##### **Bio-data results**

In response to the questionnaire items, 150 teacher-trainees were provided with a set of questions by the researcher. A total of 75 (50%) male teacher-trainees and 75 (50%) female were sampled selected. Also, the bio-data indicated that, majority (135) of the teacher-trainees were within the age range of 21-25 years and that all the respondents used the Senior Secondary School Certificate/West African Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSCE/WASSCE) in gaining admission into the college.



The table below gives a summary of the bio-data of the respondents (teacher-trainees).

**Table 3: Distribution of Bio-data of respondents**

Item	Options	Male	Female	Total
Gender		75	75	150
Age	15-20	0	3	3
	21-25	67	68	135
	26-30	7	5	12
Qualification	SSCE/WASSCE	75	75	150

Source: Field work

#### 4.2 Teacher-trainees' perception of persons with disabilities

This part of the results presents findings on the research question on how teacher-trainees perceive persons with disabilities. For the purpose of analyzing the perception of the trainees, strongly agree and agree were merged as 'agree', while strongly disagree and disagree were also merged as 'disagree'. The table 4 shows the results of respondents to questions pertaining to perception items of the questionnaire administered.

**Table 4: Views of trainees about persons with disabilities**

Statement	Agree	Disagree
Special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potentials	138(92%)	12(8%)
Students with disabilities can actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities	86(57%)	64(43%)
Students with disabilities improve socially when educated in regular school	120(80%)	30(20%)
Students with disabilities can get their educational needs met only in special schools	59(39%)	91(61%)
Teacher-trainees are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms may lower their overall academic performance	62(41%)	88(59%)
Teacher-trainees regularly have close contact(one – on- one) with students with disabilities	117(78%)	33(22%)
Students with special needs are fairly treated in regular schools	97(65%)	53(35%)
Students with disabilities are quick-tempered	82(55%)	68(45%)
Students with disabilities are friendly	85(57%)	65(43%)
Students with disabilities are slow learners	88(59%)	62(41%)
Students with disabilities can benefit	110(73)	40(27%)
Disability is caused by evil spirits	54 (36%)	96 (64%)
Disability is inheritable	91 (61%)	59 (39%)
Disabilities can only be managed	92 (61%)	58 (39%)

Source: Field Work

On one of the question items seeking the views of trainees on the meaning of students with special need, 138 (92%) of the trainees agreed that special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potential, while 12 (8%) disagreed with the statement. Also, the trainees' views were sought on whether students with disabilities can actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities, more than half, that is 86, (57%) of the respondents agreed with the statement and 64 (43%) disagreed. One hundred and twenty (80%) of the trainees further agreed that, students with disabilities will improve socially when educated in the regular schools with their peers without disabilities, while 30 (20%) disagreed that students with disabilities can improve socially in the regular schools.

It is evident from the data gathered that, 91 (61%) of the trainees respondents disagreed that students with disabilities can get their educational needs met only in special schools while 59 (39.3%) agreed that students with disabilities can get their educational needs met only in special schools. Also, 88 (59%) of the trainees disagreed with the statement that, trainees are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms may lower their overall academic performance, while 62 (31%) agreed with the statement. On issue bothering on trainees' regular contact (one –on – one) with students with

Disabilities, 117 (78%) of the trainees agreed they have close contact with students with disabilities while 33 (22%) disagreed with that statement.

Moreover, the trainees' views were sought on fair treatment of students with disabilities in the regular school. It revealed that, 97 (65%) of the trainees agreed that students with special needs are fairly treated in regular schools, while 53 (35%) disagreed that student with special needs are fairly treated in regular schools. It was also revealed that, 82 (55%) of the trainees are of the view that students with disabilities are quick tempered while 68

(45%) disagreed with the statement. Even though more than 50 percent of the trainees' view students with disabilities as quick tempered, 85 (57%) agreed that students with disabilities are friendly, while 65 (43%) of the trainees disagreed with the statement that students with disabilities are friendly. Furthermore, trainees' views were sought on students with special needs educational achievement. It was realized that 110 (73%) of the trainees agreed that students with disabilities can benefit academically while 40 (27%) disagreed that the student cannot benefit academically. On further enquiry, 88 (59%) of the trainees agreed that, even though students with disabilities can benefit academically, they however are slow learners while 62 (41%) disagreed that the students are slow learners.

More importantly, the trainees' views on the causes of disabilities were sought. On the issue that disability is caused by evil spirits, 96 (64%) of the trainees disagreed to the statement, while 54 (36%) of them agreed with the statement. Also, another issue that was sought in relation to the causes of disability was whether disability is inheritable. Ninety one 91 (61%) of the trainees are of the view that disability is not inheritable.

Finally, trainees were of the view that disabilities can only be managed because 92 (61%) agreed with the statement that disability can only be managed, while 58 (39%) disagreed with the statement.

### **4.3 Gender difference in teacher-trainees' attitude towards basic school pupils with disabilities**

The research question is to address the kind of gender difference that exists in the trainees' attitude towards pupils with disabilities. The responses from the questionnaire items are discussed in table 5.



**Table 5: Gender difference in perception**

Statement	Response	Male	Female
Special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potentials.	Agree	69 (92%)	69 (92%)
	Disagree	6 (8%)	6 (8%)
The introduction of special needs education has equipped trainees with relevant knowledge and skills to handle students with special needs.	Agree	63 (84%)	64 (85%)
	Disagree	12 (16%)	11 (15%)
Students with disabilities can actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities.	Agree	46 (65%)	37 (49%)
	Disagree	26 (35%)	38 (51%)
Teacher-trainees have knowledge and skills to handle students with disabilities in their classrooms	Agree	60 (80%)	56 (75%)
	Disagree	15 (20%)	19 (25%)
Through special needs education trainees have developed negative attitude towards students with Disabilities	Agree	21 (28%)	23 (31%)
	Disagree	54 (72%)	52 (69%)
Disability is inheritable	Agree	44 (59%)	47 (63%)
	Disagree	31 (41%)	28 (37%)

Source: Field work

The table 5 presents data on gender differences in male and female teacher-trainees' attitude toward pupils with disabilities. On the issue on “special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potential”, both male and female trainees hold the same perception. Similar perceptions also exist on the following question items; the introduction of special needs education has equipped trainees with relevant knowledge and skills to handle students with special needs; teacher-trainees have knowledge and skills to handle students with disabilities in their classrooms. In addition, through special needs education, trainees have developed negative attitude towards students with disabilities, and disability is inheritable.

However, on the issue of whether students with disabilities can actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities, 46 (65%) male trainees agreed as against 26 (35%) male trainees disagreeing.

Also, while 37 (49%) female trainees agreed, 38 (51%) female trainees disagreed. This indicates that more male trainees agreed to the statement more than the female trainees.

**4.4 Reasons accounting for the kind of attitude held by the teacher-trainees.** The responses to questions meant to elicit the reasons accounting for the kind of attitude held by the teacher-trainees are presented in table 6 below.

**Table 6: Reasons accounting for teacher-trainees' views on their attitudes**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
The introduction of special needs education has equipped trainees with relevant knowledge and skills to handle students with special needs	127(85%)	23(15%)
Teacher-trainees have knowledge and skills to handle students with disabilities in their classrooms	116(77%)	34(23%)
Through special needs education, trainees have developed positive perception towards students with disabilities	116(77%)	34(23%)
Through special needs education, trainees have developed negative attitude towards students with disabilities	44(29%)	106(21%)
Disability is caused by early childhood diseases	92(61%)	58(39%)
Parental negligence causes disability	92(61%)	58(39%)
Disability is caused by evil spirits	54(36%)	96(64%)
Teacher-trainees' perceptions are as a result of past experiences with persons with disabilities	84(56%)	66(44%)

Source: Field work

From table 6, the eight issues concerning the reasons for trainees' attitudes are discussed below.

Among the reasons, 127 (85%) of the trainees agreed that the introduction of special education they under took in the second year has equipped them with relevant knowledge and skills to handle students with special needs as against 23 (15%) who disagreed with

the statement. This view is supported by the readiness of the trainees to handle student with disabilities in their classrooms. It was revealed that, 116 (77%) of the trainees were ready to handle student with disabilities because they have gained vital information about persons with disabilities while 34 (23%) disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, 116 (77%) of the trainees accented that through the special needs education they went through, they have developed positive attitude towards students with disabilities as against 34 (23%) trainees who said it is not through special needs education they have developed positive attitude. Also, 44 (29%) of the trainees agreed that through special needs education they have developed negative perception while 106 (71%) disagreed with the statement. More so, 92 (61%) agreed that disabilities are caused by early childhood diseases which are not contagious, while 58 (39%) disagreed that it is caused by early childhood diseases. Also, 92 (61%) agreed that disabilities are as a result of parental negligence, while 58 (39%) disagreed. To this end, majority 96 (64%) of the trainees believed that disability are not caused by evil spirits or curses from community gods.

Finally, among the reasons for the attitude of the trainees, 84 (56%) agreed that their past experience with persons with disabilities greatly affect their attitude while 66 (44%) disagreed with the statement that trainees' attitude are as a result of past experience with persons with disabilities.

**Testing the hypothesis** The null hypothesis states that, “there is no significant difference between male and female teacher-trainees’ attitude toward basic school pupils with disabilities”. The following is a measure to test whether or not to accept or reject the hypothesis. The independent sample t-test was conducted for all items on teacher-trainees ‘attitude which took into consideration, how trainees have close contact with persons with disabilities. Other items considered were, trainees’ view on fair treatment of special needs

pupils, the personal feelings of trainees towards persons with disabilities, the view of trainees on how special needs pupils should be educated, the kind of perception in academic achievement that they have about persons with disabilities and what they (trainees) think are the causes of disabilities.

**Table 7: Independent sample t-test on teacher-trainees' perception**

Question items	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potentials.	Male	75	1.547	.721	-.702	.484
	Female	75	1.627	.673		
Through special needs education, trainees have developed positive perception towards students with disabilities.	Male	74	1.703	.806	-1.474	.143
	Female	75	1.920	.983		
Teacher-trainees regularly have close contact (one-on-one) with students with disabilities	Male	75	2.120	.677	1.512	.133
	Female	75	1.933	.827		
Students with special needs are fairly treated in regular schools	Male	75	2.320	.681	.111	.912
	Female	75	2.307	.788		

Students with disabilities are quick tempered.	Male	75	2.267	.935	.088	.930
	Female	75	2.253	.917		
Students with disabilities are friendly	Male	75	2.320	.701	-.302	.763
	Female	75	2.360	.910		
Disability is caused by evil Spirits	Male	75	2.840	1.014	.512	.610
	Female	75	2.760	.899		
Parental negligence causes disability.	Male	75	2.400	.869	-.374	.709
	Female	75	2.453	.874		
Teacher-trainees' perceptions are as a result of past experiences with persons with disabilities	Male	75	2.253	1.002	-1.198	.233
	Female	75	2.453	1.044		
Students with disabilities are included in regular schools	Male	75	1.786	.741	-3.596	.026
	male		2.106	.981		
Students with disabilities can Get their educational needs met only in special schools	Male	75	2.813	.865	2.499	.014
	Female	75	2.440	.961		

\*P < 0.05\*

The results indicated that no statistical significant difference was between male and female teacher-trainees' attitude towards persons with disabilities to 25 items out of the 27 items of the measure. However, only two questionnaire items "Students with disabilities are included in regular schools' shows a significant statistical difference between male and female teacher-trainees' attitude toward persons with disabilities as ( $t = -3.596$ ;  $p = .026$ ) as well as on question item "Students with disabilities can get their educational needs met only in special schools" with ( $t = 2.499$ ,  $p = .014$ ). With these, the alternative hypothesis is retained while the null hypothesis is rejected. Even though the two items show significant levels, the table clearly shows no significant difference found on the questionnaire item "Special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potentials" ( $t = -.702$ ;  $p = .484$ ) with both male and female trainees having almost the same view about special needs individuals. Also, there was no significant statistical difference between male and female trainees' view on how pupils with special needs are fairly treated in their school with ( $t = .111$ ;  $p = .912$ ), no significant difference on whether Students with disabilities are quick tempered ( $t = .088$ ;  $p = .930$ ). Furthermore, the table shows no significant difference between male and female trainees concerning whether disability is caused by evil spirits. It displays ( $t = .512$ ;  $p = .610$ ) on the independent sample t-test. On the trainees' perception of the causes of disabilities there was no significant statistical difference between male and female teacher-trainees with ( $t = .783$ ;  $p = .435$ ).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 DISCUSSIONS

#### 5.1 Perception of teacher-trainees towards persons with disabilities

From the data gathered, it is revealed that the perceptions of the teacher-trainees are geared toward positive perception of persons with disabilities. This is due to the fact that the table 4 indicated that over 60% of the questionnaire items measuring the perception of teacher-trainees revealed positive perception towards persons with disabilities.

This finding has confirmed other research findings that acceptance of students with disability is unlikely to happen when individuals have negative attitudes (Antonak & Livneh, 2000). Also, theorists suggest that negative attitudes towards a person can be changed through a regular contact with them ( Zajonc, 2001). The hypothesis that attitudes can be shaped by contact is expounded by Zajonc (2001). This literature is confirming the findings of the trainees because 117 (78%) of the trainees agreed they have close contact with students with disabilities regularly in their various schools. In addition, this study supports the finding of Lee, Paterson and Chan (1993) that positive attitudes of occupational therapy students towards persons with disabilities are initiated through dissemination of accurate information about disabilities and maintained through continued exposure to information about and contact with persons with disabilities.

#### 5.2 Gender differences in teacher-trainees' attitude towards pupils with disabilities

The data gathered indicated that both male and female teacher-trainees perceived persons with disabilities in similar way. Out of the 27 items on attitude of trainees, the response of 25 items showed similar responses for both male and female trainees, while only 2 responses showed differences in the trainees' attitude. For example, on question item



“Special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potentials” both male and female teacher-trainees agreed with 69 (92%) while 6 (8%) of them disagreed with the statement. This confirms the study of Chireshe (2011) that, 64% of the teacher-trainees who represent both male and female respondents indicated that parents of children without disabilities resented inclusion because they did not understand disability. However, they felt that special needs education children should be included where possible because they are human beings and this will make them feel near normal.

### **5.3 Reasons accounting for the kind of attitude held by the teacher-trainees**

It is clear from table 6 that, the trainees’ attitude has been influenced by the knowledge and skills that they acquired from the introduction to special needs education. This shows that 116 (77%) trainees who gained knowledge and skills through the introductory course. Besides, 84 (56%) trainees agreed that their past experience with persons with disabilities is a major influence in perceiving the individuals positively.

This confirms the view of Praisner (2003) that, one reason students possess negative attitudes towards persons with disability was that they did not receive adequate training regarding those individuals and therefore feel unprepared to provide services to them effectively. The author further linked the trainees’ attitudes to attitudes of school principals. Those principals with positive attitudes were more likely than principals with negative attitudes in admitting students with disabilities. Forlin (2001) reports that, teachers felt stressed when working with students with disabilities because they did not possess knowledge or feel incompetent. Finally, Pavri (2004) found that both special education and regular education teachers received little pre-service training related to effective inclusion of students with disabilities. In fact, special education teachers reported receiving less training in this area than did regular education teachers.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Conclusion

Teacher training and preparation in Ghana is essential for the purpose of handling students without disabilities in both regular and special schools for the development of students. Since current trends in education are moving towards inclusion which tries to solve the problems of persons with disabilities in the regular school setting. Teacher-trainees' attitude are very important since they are teachers in the making to handle both students with or without disabilities. The conclusions drawn from this study are;

Teacher-trainees of Bimbilla E.P College of Education have positive attitude towards basic school pupils with disabilities in the Nanumba North District.

Both male and female teacher-trainees of Bimbilla E.P College of Education do not differ in their attitude toward basic school pupils with disabilities.

Finally, it is concluded that Bimbilla E.P College of Education teacher-trainees held positive perceptions about persons with disabilities because of their exposure to disabilities issues in special needs education and their past experiences with persons with disabilities.

#### 6.0 Recommendations

In light with the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

- Adequate provision is made to introduce more courses in special education in training institutions to equip trainees with knowledge and skill about persons with disabilities.

- Re-fresher courses such as seminars, workshops and conferences be organized regularly to update teachers skills in the teaching job. Some re-fresher courses will bring about change in behaviour and attitude towards persons with disabilities.
- It is also recommended that teacher-trainees be given structured opportunities to experience inclusive education practices in inclusive pilot schools. The educational studies department of colleges of education should organize educational visits to special schools so that student teachers can have firsthand experience on how various categories of special needs students receive instruction from special education teachers.



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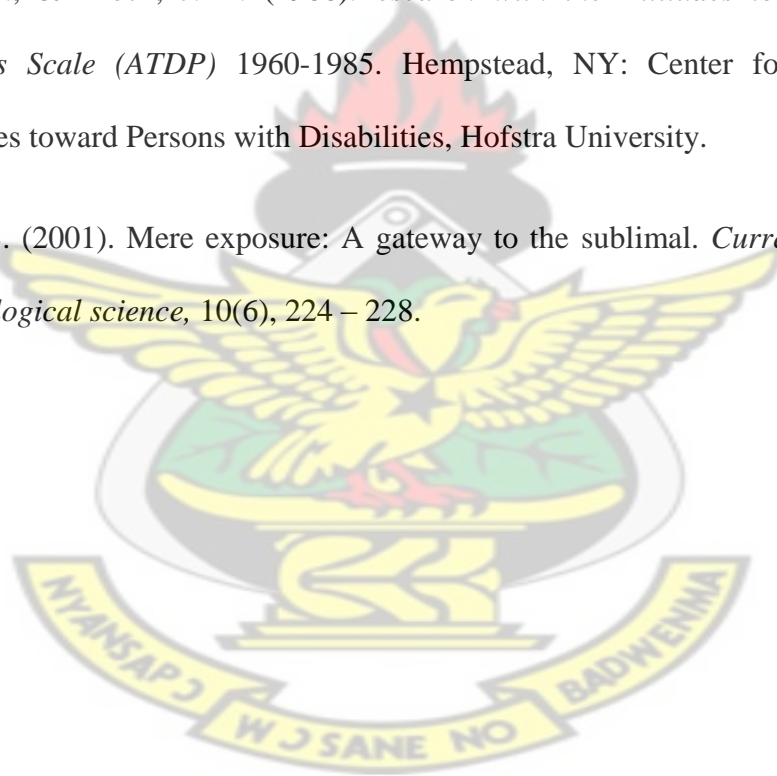
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## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHER-TRAINEES

Please read each question carefully and respond to the best of your ability. There are no correct or incorrect responses; it is merely focused on your personal point of view. All responses to these questions are completely confidential. The researcher will not publish your personal details. All identifying information will be removed from this questionnaire and destroyed as soon as all data have been collected. Please, be assured that the information you provide in this study will have no effect on your school grade.

#### PART A

##### Instruction

Please respond by ticking in the appropriate column that reflects your opinion

1. Gender: Male [  ] Female [  ]
2. How old are you? [  ]
3. What qualification did you used in gaining admission into the college?  
SSSCE/WASSCE [  ] A or O'level [  ] Vocational certificate [  ]
4. Which of the areas below do you come from?  
Rural area [  ] Semi-urban [  ] Urban [  ]

## PART B

Please rate the following statements that indicate your opinion on a scale from 1 to 4 by ticking in the column.

**1 = Strongly agree**

**2 = Agree**

**3 = Disagree**

**4 = strongly disagree.**

Statement	Responses			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. Special needs students are those who need exclusive attention to maximize their potentials.				
6. The introduction of special needs education has equipped trainees with relevant knowledge and skills to handle students with special needs.				
7. Students with disabilities are included in regular schools.				
8. Students with disabilities can actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities.				
9. Students with disabilities improve socially when educated in regular school.				

10. Students with disabilities can get their educational needs met only in special schools.				
11. Teacher-trainees have knowledge and skills to handle students with disabilities in their classroom				
12. Teacher-trainees are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms may disrupt the education of students without disabilities				
13. Teacher-trainees are concern that having students with disabilities in their classroom May lower their overall academic performance.				
14. Through special needs education, trainees have developed positive perception towards students with disabilities.				
15. Through special needs education, trainees have developed negative attitude towards students with disabilities.				
16. Teacher-trainees regularly have close contact (one –on- one) with students with disabilities				
17. Students with special needs are fairly treated in regular schools.				
18. Students with disabilities are quick tempered.				
19. Students with disabilities are friendly.				
20. Students with disabilities are slow learners				

21. Students with disabilities can benefit academically.				
22. Students with disabilities are not to be sympathized with				
23. Disability is caused by early childhood diseases.				
24. Disability is caused by evil spirits.				
25. Disability is inheritable.				
26. Parental negligence causes disability.				
27. Disabilities can be cured.				
28. Disability can only be managed.				
29. Teacher-trainees' attitudes are as a result of past experiences with persons with disabilities				

