

# QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES FACING HEAD TEACHERS IN MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN GHANA: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER RETENTION

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## Abstract

The study attempts to explore the challenges confronting head teachers in the management of special schools in Ghana. The study was conducted using qualitative research design. Nine out of 29 head teachers were sampled for the study. All head teachers stressed that they were confronted with numerous challenges that affect the management of the schools. The main challenge identified by the study participants was that special education teachers in Ghana were not adequately motivated. The study therefore recommended that special incentive packages be instituted for teachers in the schools and that the Ministry of Education should release funds on time to the schools to enable the school management acquire the resources needed for effective teaching and learning in the special schools.

**Keywords:** special school, special education, head teacher, retention, attrition.

## Introduction

The head teacher is influential in the school setting and his leadership roles are necessary components of the process of school improvement. The mandate of the head teacher requires that he or she should provide leadership roles to affect school transformation. Wanzare and Da Costa (2001) conceptualised school leadership as those activities taken on by the head teacher to produce satisfying working environments and conditions for both teachers and students that affect school success. Therefore, leadership in schools is crucial as it enhance teachers' job performance which translates to better educational outcomes. Mostly, the head teacher is the senior most teacher of the school whose major responsibility is the general supervision of the activities of the school. These include management of the teachers, pupils' learning or academic achievements, implementation of the school's policy and smooth running of the school. As the most experience teacher in the school, he or she is expected to provide the school's vision and leadership rather than directly involving in the teaching and learning activities of the school although, some head teachers have a few teaching duties.

The job of the school head is both administrative and managerial in nature and requires some level of desk work. This is to say that the head teacher's task involve the day-to-day management, organisation and administration of the school in order to create a productive, disciplined learning environment. Effective school leaders have been shown to significantly improve the performance of all students at the school, at least in part through their impacts on selection and retention of good teachers (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). Harris and Chapman (2002) citing Ofsted (2000) indicated that effective leadership is globally recognised as a key factor in achieving school improvement. A study conducted by Hopkins (2001) revealed that leadership has a significant impact in securing school improvement and change. Several studies have demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between effective school leadership and student learning (Day, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Cotton, 2003; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008).

Notwithstanding this, it is widely known that in most developing countries including Ghana, the head teachers of basic schools are confronted with many problems in managing schools (Harber & Davies, 2002). With the view of improving educational standards in Ghana, the Government introduced educational reforms in 1992 known as Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) which among other things aimed, to improve the quality of educational provision in the country. The FCUBE policy requires head teachers to receive training in school management to enable them perform their tasks effectively (Ghana Education Service, 2001). Despite efforts put in place by the Ghana Education Service and its development partners in building the capacity of the head teachers, the effect of such training have not had any significant impact on schools outcomes among individuals with disabilities. Bush and Oduro (2006) opined that in Ghana, efforts are being made to support educational leaders to perform their roles effectively, yet such attempts have not been successful in equipping them with the knowledge, skills and competencies required for effective discharge of their responsibilities as school managers. Therefore, this

current study was purposed to explore the challenges that confronts head teachers in the management of special needs schools and how it impact on retention and attrition of special needs education teachers in Ghana. It examines the issues and concerns faced by head teachers in relations to teachers' job dissatisfaction, attrition, availability of material resources, financial limitations as well as low management support.

### 1.1 Research Question

To address the issues, the following research question guided the study: What are the views of head teachers on challenges in the management of special schools in Ghana?

## 2. Literature Review

As reported in the literature, the head teacher of a school is the administrator and manager of that educational institution. As leaders, they encounter a number of challenges in the management of their schools. Working with children with disabilities could be very challenging when one considers the nature of work done by the teachers in special schools and this could affect their morale and their job satisfaction. Landy and Trumbo (1989) observed that nature of work performed by employees has a significant impact on their level of job satisfaction and retention. Maniram (2007) explained job satisfaction as a collection of attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviour one has towards his or her job. He opined that job satisfaction was the result of intrinsic motivating factors such as recognition. According to Price (1977), although job dissatisfaction is the central factor in the turnover process, job dissatisfaction would lead to turnover only when opportunity is relatively high. However, it must be noted that despite the general dissatisfaction among teachers, there are others who are happy with the job of teaching children with special needs. Stephens and Fish (2010) reported that special needs educators experienced high levels of job satisfaction. In a related study, Salehi, Taghavi and Yunus (2015) explored the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and their attitudes towards students' beliefs and motivation among English teachers in Iran. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research methods in data collection and analysis. The study results revealed that teachers' level of job satisfaction was high, despite the fact that they were not satisfied with their financial issues.

Similarly, Oduro (2003) explored challenges facing new principals in Africa and found that the principals are faced with daunting challenges including inadequate trained staff and limited resources. These challenges affect the morale and job satisfaction of employees. For instance in Ghana, it has been reported that, most of the public schools had poor infrastructural facilities like classrooms and furniture which caused dissatisfaction among teachers and affected their retention (Louis, 2007). In a study conducted by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders and cited by Albrecht, Johns, Mounstevan and Olorunda (2009), lack of current, appropriate textbooks and materials as well as no access to resource services was observed as significant factors that determine teachers' intention to leave the profession of teaching children with emotional and behaviour disorders. Most schools in Africa lack basic amenities like piped water, electricity, staff rooms and toilets.

In a similar study, Ngithi (2013) researched into administrative challenges faced by primary school head teachers in Embakasi district of Kenya. The study sought to determine the challenges public primary school head teachers face in relation to the availability of resources in schools. A sample of ten public primary schools from a population of forty two schools was randomly selected for the study. The data collection was done using questionnaires while the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. From the findings, the study concluded that majority of the head teachers faced administrative challenges in the management of the schools. These challenges included inadequate textbooks and other learning resources, lack of adequate classrooms and furniture as well as poor sanitation.

Mutua (2011) conducted a study on constraints faced by head teachers in instructional supervision among secondary schools in Kenya. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 35 head teachers and 375 public secondary school teachers serving in the 35 secondary schools within Machakos district. The overall sample size was 48 subjects. The qualitative data obtained from the head teachers revealed that the head teachers faces numerous challenges in their instructional supervision work with regards to students' performance, teacher absenteeism, and delays in release of government bursaries and inadequate teaching and learning materials. In a related study, Appiah-Agyekum, Suapin and Pepra (2013) investigated the determinants of job satisfaction among Ghanaian teachers using 270 teachers from Senior High Schools in the Asuogyaman District of Ghana. The study identified problems/frustrations with the variety of administrative routines and accompanying paperwork; poor communication channels; low pay; few possibilities for career promotion or growth; and the

declining respect for the profession as key issues on teacher satisfaction that often influenced teacher retention. Locklear (2010) conducted a study on factors contributing to teacher retention in Georgia and found that most of the teachers considered leaving their chosen careers due to low morale and low pay. The study further revealed that the teachers had chosen to remain in education due to the intrinsic rewards such as making a difference in the life of children.

The review clearly noted poor infrastructural facilities, inadequate teaching and learning resources and poor sanitation as some of the administrative challenges confronting the head teachers of special schools in Ghana. Besides, available studies on teachers' perceptions on job satisfaction and retention in Ghana basically focused on regular education teachers particularly secondary school teachers to the apparent neglect of special education teachers who constitute a critical resource in the country's educational system. The research gaps identified in the related literature deserve immediate attention since issues about teachers' job satisfaction and retention are crucial for teacher effectiveness and school performance. For example, perceptions of teachers' of the Deaf, Blind and Intellectually Challenged in residential special needs educational settings in Ghana are yet to be established. Similarly, comparing the views and perceptions of the various categories of special education teachers in a single study deserve systematic investigations and analysis through a scientific study. The current study addressed these issues to a large extent. Since research in this field is limited in Africa particularly in Ghana, the present study sought to help fill that gap in the existing literature by exploring the perceptions of special education teachers' job satisfaction and retention.

### **3. Research Methods**

A non-experimental study design incorporating qualitative research approach was adopted to investigate the challenges confronting the head teachers. This design was chosen because in my view, it will help to explore the issues under investigation. The qualitative paradigm helped to ascertain the perceptions of the head teachers on management issues through interviews. In a qualitative study, the researcher conduct the study in the natural setting of the participants with data primarily collected through the interview process (Creswell, 2012). This study targeted all the head teachers operating in the 29 public basic special schools in Ghana. However, the accessible population comprised 9 head teachers selected through stratified random sampling from the special needs schools. Though Creswell (2009) recommended that the number of participants in a qualitative research could be between 12 and 10, this study considered 9 head teachers which constituted about 64% of the entire population. This was found to be representative enough as a sample size. The stratified random sampling allows the researcher to put the target population into similar subgroups and then selecting members from each subgroup using simple random technique (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). I used proportional representation method to ensure that the number of schools selected from each category of schools was proportional to the total number of special needs schools under study.

Semi-structured interview guide was used to interview 9 head teachers selected for the study. The face-to-face interviews allowed a wider interaction, allowing the interviewer to ask participants to clarify or repeat answers (Vander, Stoep, & Johnson, 2009). The interview encouraged the respondents to open up and responded freely during the interviewing, bringing out information that was very useful to the study.

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

To ensure trustworthiness in the interview session, I recorded the interviews and this approach helped to minimise bias. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) postulated that the most practical way of achieving greater validity and reliability in qualitative study is to minimize bias. To ascertain the validity of the instrument, I first of all, critically inspected the items to ensure the face and content validity of the instruments. Furthermore, expert opinion and judgment from senior faculty members were sought. Also, to improve the reliability of the interview schedule, the researcher carefully recorded the entire data and crosschecked all the transcripts to ensure there were no apparent mistakes. The trustworthiness of a qualitative study is judged by whether they meet standards for ethical conduct (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

#### **3.2 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

As a result of the assurance given to the participants on their confidentiality, all the nine head teachers voluntarily participated in the study. The participants were also made aware that the interview was being tape recorded. After data collection, thematic approach of data analysis was adopted to analyse and interpret the data. Thematic analysis is

a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Letters of the alphabets from A –I were used as pseudonyms in place of the names of the schools to conceal the identity of the respondents for ethical reasons. The interview data were transcribed immediately after the interview in order to capture relevant details. The qualitative data obtained from the interview have been presented based on the following themes: issues of job satisfaction among teachers; attrition and retention related problems and administrative challenges facing special schools.

#### 4. Analysis of Results

##### 4.1. Biographical Information on Head Teachers

Table 1 presents the findings on the biographical-data of the head teachers. Letters of the alphabets from A –I were used as pseudonyms to conceal the identity of the respondents for ethical reasons.

**Table 1: Head teachers' biographical information**

Headmaster	Gender	Age (yrs.)	Highest qualification
A	Female	48	Bachelor's
B	Female	54	Masters
C	Male	43	Masters
D	Female	49	Bachelor's
E	Male	52	Bachelor's
F	Female	55	Master
G	Female	54	Masters
H	Male	51	Masters
I	Male	58	Bachelor's

Table 1 indicates the gender distribution of the head teachers. The table revealed that the majority of the head teachers (N=5; 56.0%) were females whilst the minority (N=4; 44.0%) were males. In the face of these facts, it can be assumed that the Ghana Education Service preferred female head teachers to their male counterparts when it comes to the management of schools that deal with students with special needs in Ghana. Table 1 also indicates that majority of the head teachers (N=6; 67.0%) were above 50 years of age while the minority (N=3; 33.0%) were between 43 and 50 years of age. It is clear that majority of the head teachers were in their late adulthood or old age. The implication of these findings is that the Ghana Education Service appoints matured and experienced people to head the special school in Ghana.

The last column of Table 1 further indicates the educational qualification of the head teachers who participated in this study. Majority of the head teachers (N=5, 56.0%) had Master's degree whilst the minority of the head teachers (N = 4, 44.0%) had Bachelor of Education degree. This result showed that, on average, all the head teachers in the special needs schools had a minimum of first degree and this was encouraging. The implication of this finding could be that all the head teachers were aspiring to obtain higher degrees. This was consistent with the Ghana Education service (G.E.S) practice that requires head teachers of special needs schools in Ghana to have a minimum qualification of at least a bachelor's degree.

#### 4.2. Teachers' Level of Job Satisfaction

The first interview question sought to find out from the head teachers about the level of job satisfaction among their teachers. Analysis of their responses provides more information to answer the research question.

When asked about the level of job satisfaction of the teachers, the responses given by the head teachers are presented as follows: Majority of the head teachers indicated that the job satisfaction of the teachers was either low or very low. This showed that teachers who worked with these head teachers were not happy with their job.

The head teacher from school E said;

*So far as am concerned and from the point of view of my teachers, I will say that their job satisfaction is very low*

Most of the interviewees were all in agreement with this. For instance, the head teacher from school F said;

*I can see that majority of my teachers are not enthused about teaching in the special school. As a head teacher, I can tell you about those who are happy with their job and those who wish they were not teaching in special school. But as management, we are trying to make everyone happy so that they can give out their best to the kids.*

The implication is that the head teachers attested to the fact that most of their teachers experienced low job satisfaction. This situation in my view can affect the quality of teaching and learning in the special schools. Explaining why they thought that the job satisfaction of their teachers was low, most of the responses from the head teachers were focused on the monies that teachers in the regular schools were getting from extra classes teaching, which teachers in special needs schools did not get. They indicated that teachers in special needs schools relied only on their basic salary. The following comments serve as examples:

This is what the head teacher from school A said:

*Teachers in regular schools do get extra classes allowance, they take money from the parents to do extra classes for their children but over here, we don't get anything like that. Then the government too, is not giving us any allowance apart from our basic salary that we take.*

Another head teacher from school I also remarked that:

*In regular schools in town, teachers have extra classes and the children pay for the extra classes that the teachers conduct for them but in special needs school, teachers don't have any extra classes so some of the teachers feel that they have not been treated well so they always complain to me and If you are a special education teacher and you don't experience job satisfaction, you get stressed and you would want to leave to regular school or abandon the teaching service entirely.*

However, the head teacher from school D was not certain with regards to the level of job satisfaction of her teachers. She stated:

*I can't say it is high or low, I think it is in between high and low.*

From the comments that was emanating from the head teachers, it appeared that there was no incentive packages for special needs education teachers in Ghana. This situation can be demotivating as they continue to compare themselves with mainstream teachers. Thus, the responses from the head teachers suggested clearly that low level of teacher job satisfaction remained one of the major challenges confronting heads of special schools in Ghana.

The job dissatisfaction as expressed by the head teachers of special schools seemed to have negatively impacted on retention of the special school teachers. This finding was supported by Locklear (2010) who conducted a study on factors contributing to teacher retention in Georgia and found that most of the teachers considered leaving their chosen careers due to low morale and low pay. Other researchers such as Emery and Vandenberg (2010) also reported that high attrition rates and low retention levels were some of the negative consequences of job

dissatisfaction. These responses given by the head teachers needed to be addressed to enable policy makers and implementers develop a strong teacher base for the special needs education sector in Ghana.

On the other hand, the data from the interviewees also revealed that some of the teachers were satisfied with their job. However, it must be noted that this position was reported by the minority of the head teachers. This is what the head teacher from school C said:

*Well, I can confidently report that my teachers are very happy with what they do in this school for that matter their job satisfaction is high.*

The head teacher from school H also added:

*Teachers in this school are very comfortable working here and as a result, you don't hear them complaining about their job dissatisfaction and that could mean that their job satisfaction is high.*

When these head teachers were further asked as to what made them think that the job satisfaction of their teachers was high, the responses from the various head teachers correlated with each other.

The head teacher from school A commented that:

*Job satisfaction is not about money but attitude of the people towards work and for my interaction with them during this brief stays in this school, I see that they are committed to their job and they love doing what they do so you find less people complaining.*

In response to the same question, this is what the head from school G said:

*The job satisfaction of the teachers in this school is generally not bad rather it is good. Here, I will say that their motivation is the child. That is what is motivating and encouraging them because the ultimate goals is that they are here to help the child to excel to be somebody tomorrow and that is what is keeping them going, for that reason I will say that their job satisfaction is ok.*

Responses from these head teachers revealed that special education teachers in their schools were satisfied with their job. It can be deduced from the interview that a high level of job satisfaction could positively impact on retention of special education teachers. Responses of high job satisfaction for special needs educators correspond with reviewed literature. Stephens and Fish (2010) support this finding when they reported that special needs educators experienced high levels of job satisfaction. This finding were further affirmed by Salehi, Taghavi and Yunus (2015) which revealed that Iranian english teachers' level of job satisfaction was high, despite the fact that they were not satisfied with their financial issues.

#### 4.3. Attrition and Retention Issues

Attrition plays a significant role in the teacher shortage problem. Therefore, the head teachers were requested to share their views on the attrition problems in their schools. While the majority reported low attrition rates, the others had contrary view indicating that the attrition was high in the special schools. Specific examples as follows:

In analysing the responses of those who reported of low attrition, the following responses emerged:

The head teacher from school E reported that:

*Attrition is very low in my school because I have not experienced teachers leaving the school. Most of the teachers I came to meet, it was only one person who left because he had Master's degree and he is currently teaching in a College of Education but the rest are still teaching here.*



Also, the head teacher from school G remarked that:

*As for attrition, it is very low. The teachers do not normally leave the school. Some of the teachers have been here as long as twenty- four (24) years. Though, on some few occasions we had one or two people leaving but generally retention is ok.*

From the responses, it is evident that some of the schools experienced low attrition rates. When asked to explain further what in their opinion accounted for the high retention in the schools, there were two major themes that emerged. Thus, the love for the job and the unemployment situation in the country. A couple of specific examples from the interviewees chosen to highlight the responses.

The following was the answer from the head teacher of school G:

*I know that it is because of the love that they have for the children that cause them to remain teaching in the school.*

The head teacher from school E simply stated that:

*I believe that it is a calling on them to give out their best and to see disabled children live a successful life in future.*

A head teacher from school H also cited unemployment situation in the country as the reason for the low attrition rates among special education teachers. This is what he said:

*With the current high rising unemployment in the country, it is not easy for a teacher to leave his job just because he or she is not paid well and am sure this is one of the factors that is making attrition low in the school.*

The same head teacher continued by emphasizing that:

*To be honest with you, my teachers don't have the option of leaving the school to go and seek for other jobs because these days it is difficult to get a new job. At the moment, there is a high graduate unemployed youth out there hunting for a job so, as soon as they leave, those guys will quickly apply to take their positions.*

The responses revealed that although, the teachers were not motivated enough, they still remained in the schools due to the love that they had for children with disabilities as well as the unemployment situation in the nation. I am of the view that the teachers willingness to continue to teach in the special schools may be due to the fact that they did not have any job alternatives as a result of the high level of unemployment challenges confronting the nation. It is therefore possible for one to conclude that the low attrition rate that characterise the special schools is due to non-availability of alternative job opportunities for the teachers. This finding supports Price (1977) who stated that job dissatisfaction would lead to turnover only when opportunity is relatively high.

On the other hand, few of the head teachers also reported of high attrition rates among their teachers. Responses of two of the head teachers were chosen to sum up the views of those head teachers.

This is what the head teacher from school B had to say:

*Attrition is very high in this school. This is because we are in the city and there are a lot of secondary schools around us and so they just drift to the second cycle schools and some even move to the junior secondary schools.*

The head teacher from school B further added that:

*Yes we have big attrition problem. Our teachers always threaten to stop teaching in the special school. In the regular schools, the parents are ready to pay for extra classes so they make a lot of money there as compared to the special school. This makes our teachers feel like quitting special education.*

Evident in the head teachers' comments show that special education teacher either seek for transfer from special school to regular schools or abandon the teaching service entirely. This view appears to contradict the earlier assertion given by some of the head teachers that the teachers do not have any job opportunity that could cause them to leave the special schools. Also, I observed from the respondents that there was a strong emphasis on special education teachers not earning any extra allowance as compared to their colleagues in regular schools who are able to make extra monies from the private classes they organize for their students. This phenomenon is likely to discourage many teachers from teaching in the special needs schools.

Another theme noticed in the head teachers' responses were those relating to the communication gap between the teachers on one hand and their hearing impaired students in the schools for the Deaf. The head teachers were of the opinion that despite the training given to the teachers at the university level, most of them were unable to communicate using sign language making them seek transfers to the mainstream schools.

Below are some of the comments the head teachers from schools I and D gave as reasons for special teachers leaving the school.

The head teacher from school I said:

*The attrition rate is very high in this school because some of them complain of the difficulty in communicating in sign language with the hearing impaired students and they sometimes feel like going away because they feel their presence is not relevant and that they are not giving much to the children.*

The head teacher from school D also added that:

*Most of our teachers are posted to the special schools directly from the university without being proficient in the sign language and when they report to the school, they realise that they cannot teach using sign language so they leave immediately to regular schools.*

The head teachers' comments show that newly trained teachers were not adequately prepared in the use of sign language in teaching the hearing impaired students before being posted to the schools. They get frustrated and apply for transfer to regular schools. Kumedzro (2007) also observed that newly trained teachers for the hearing impaired reported to the special schools without mastery of the sign language. The implication of this finding is that teaching and learning will not be effective in the special schools for the Deaf.

#### **4.4. Inadequate Resources and Administrative Challenges**

The interview question sought to find out from the perspective of head teachers the challenges that influenced teachers' work performance in the special needs schools. All the head teachers unanimously mentioned poor management support and inadequate resources as the most critical problems that confronted their schools. The issue of the Ministry not making resources available to the special education sector and lack of recognition of the special education teachers emerged strongly. These in the views of the head teachers affected the smooth management of the schools and translate into teachers' job dissatisfaction. Few of the head teachers' responses had been selected to be representative of the general views of all participants.

The head teacher from school B noted that:

*Inadequate materials and resources are the most important factors that affect my administration because the Ghana Education Service does not provide these materials regularly and this makes the teachers to complain a lot.*

This was supported by the head teacher from school E who described resources as an incredibly important factor:

*Educators can only do their work if they have access to appropriate and adequate resources. Students with disabilities have distinctive special educational needs that require specialized teaching – learning resources to meet these unique needs.*



The head teacher from school G also commented that:

*The government has stopped bringing us the resources we need for our teachers to use in teaching the children and so if even a teacher needs some teaching- learning materials, they complain a lot and sometimes you have to come out with something from your own pocket to buy what the teachers need for them. As head teachers, we need the teaching-learning materials so that when the teachers request, we can readily get it for them. Because when the teachers come and you don't get it readily for them, you yourself as a leader, you will feel frustrated. It is a bit worrying so for me, that is my greatest challenge.*

The conclusion that could be drawn from the responses of the participants regarding availability of resources was that head teachers in the special needs schools had challenges regarding provision of resources for effective teaching and learning. The implication of this finding is that special needs education teachers did not get adequate resource to teach the learners with special needs and as a result present their lessons in abstract form without any concrete materials. The finding is consistent with the finding by Council for Children with Behaviour Disorders (2007) cited by Albrecht, Johns, Mounstevan and Olorunda (2009), who identified lack of current, appropriate textbooks and materials as well as no access to resource services as significant factors that determine teachers' intention to leave the profession of teaching children with emotional and behaviour disorders. In a similar study which also supports the present study, Ngithi (2013) concluded that majority of the head teachers in Kenya were faced with administrative challenges in management of the pupils which include, inadequate textbooks and other learning resources, lack of adequate classrooms and furniture and poor sanitation.

Another theme that was identified in the head teachers' responses to the interview questions was delays in government release of funds to the schools.

According to the head teacher from school G:

*The flow of money from the government side was one of our major problems. Though it comes, but when we are in dire need we don't get the money. I think the flow of money have to be regular so we can cater for the children's academic, social and psychological needs.*

The above comment was supported by the head teacher of school C who reported that:

*The government normally delays in releasing funds to the school and as a result, we have to be relying on the suppliers on credit basis and they keep on chancing us day-in-day- out for their monies.*

To sum it up what the interviewees said in relation to delay in funding, the head teacher from school H concisely said:

*Our challenges are mostly financial. The children don't pay fees and as a result, we depend on government grants to run everything. The feeding grant which we use to feed the children is almost always in arrears. Presently, we have only received about 20% of the feeding grant for the term. So as a head, you always have to go round begging people to come and supply you with food and also you have to look for donations to supplement the children's feeding.*

The conclusion that may be drawn from the above analysis is that most of the head teachers are confronted with greater financial burdens and this may impact on their ability to provide for their teachers the necessary resources that will enhance their job performance. The influence of resources on special needs educators' level of job satisfaction and retention appears to be a problem in Africa in general. For instance in Kenya, Mutua (2011) reported that head teachers in Kenya faced numerous challenges including delayed in release of government bursaries and inadequate teaching and learning materials. Also, the findings again collaborated with the findings by Oduro (2006) who explored challenges facing new principals in Africa reported that the principals are faced with daunting challenges including inadequate resources and these challenges affect the morale and job satisfaction of employees of school establishments.

In response to challenges facing head teachers in special schools, three of the head teachers also mentioned lack of recognition and appreciation as contributing factors to special education teacher's job dissatisfaction. For instance, the head teacher from school A who identified lack of recognition and appreciation reported that:

*The fact is that recognition is an important, it appears that teachers in special education are not given the recognition they deserve.*

The head teacher from school E also indicated that:

*The work of the special educators is very stressful yet they are not recognised for the work they do.*

The head teacher from school H summarized the views of his colleagues and concisely reported that:

*I think that the problem facing special education teachers is the lack of recognition for the work that they are doing. Other teachers in the mainstream get rewarded occasionally, they get brief rewards from the parents of the children but for special education, it is like only poor people have special children and those who are well to do don't recognise them but I believe if government as our employer recognises the importance of these people, then may be a premium can be placed on those who are teaching in special education. This is because technically, teaching special children is twice as difficult as teaching ordinary children so anybody who decides to teach in special school must be appreciated by the government and even the other people that they work with.*

The comments showed that, recognising the good effort of the teachers was one of the ways the school could make the special needs education teacher be retained in the special needs school. This implies that recognition which is an intrinsic motivation factor is believed to be an influencing factor. Therefore, it is clear from the above comments that one cannot negate the importance of recognising the special education teacher. The finding that, teachers in the special education sector were not well recognised was an issue that can influence the teachers' job satisfaction and retention. This finding was in consonance with the findings made by Maniram (2007) who reported that job satisfaction was the result of intrinsic motivating factors such as recognition. This was further supported by Appiah-Agyekum, Suapin and Pepra (2013) who investigated the determinants of job satisfaction among Ghanaian teachers and found declining respect for the profession as key issues on teacher satisfaction that often influenced teacher retention.

This confirmed the fact that, lack of recognition and declining respect for the teaching profession were key issues that often influenced teacher retention. From the analysis of the above responses, the findings revealed that almost all the head teachers were not comfortable managing the special schools due to the existing problems within the special education sector and that may affect the job satisfaction and retention of the teachers.

## 5. Main Findings

Analysis of the data revealed that the head teachers in the special schools in Ghana are confronted with several administrative and managerial challenges that affected teachers' job satisfaction and retention in the special schools. Keys among them were:

- i. The study found that the head teachers were working with special education teachers who were not adequately motivated. The present study revealed that special needs education teachers did not earn any allowance or extra income as compared to their counterparts in the mainstream sector who were able to make extra income through activities such as extra classes for their students. Thus, the study found that low level of teacher job satisfaction remains one of the major challenges confronting heads of special schools in Ghana.
- ii. The study also found that despite the low level of job satisfaction of the teachers, attrition rates among the teachers was very low due to combination of factors such as the high level of unemployment in the country and the assertion that majority of the teachers were intrinsically motivated by their job.
- iii. The study again revealed that inadequate supply of teaching- learning resources and delays in release of funds by the central government to the special schools were another block of challenges confronting head teachers of special schools in Ghana.

iv. The study also found that the negative attitudes usually portrayed by the general public towards learners with disabilities and people who worked in the special needs schools affected the morale of the teachers that consequently translates into job dissatisfaction of the special needs educators.

### 5.1. Conclusions and Recommendations

From the findings, it was evident that head teachers in special schools in Ghana encounter several challenges in the management of their schools. Problems such as teacher's job dissatisfaction, inadequate teaching and learning resources and delay in release of funds emerged as major challenges confronting the head teachers. The study therefore concludes that if stakeholders particularly the Ministry of Education do not commit themselves to issues affecting the special education sector and address the management sources of the challenges, it would result into poor quality of education provided to learners with disabilities in the special schools.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that Special incentive packages should be instituted for teachers handling children with special needs in the schools. The Ministry of Education should make a deliberate effort to increase funding to the special education sector. The study recommends that funding be released on time to the special schools to enable the school management acquire the resources needed for effective teaching and learning in the special schools. The study further recommends that the school management should be encouraged to be innovative enough to source for funds from the community, NGOs and business organization to procure needed materials required by teachers. That the head teachers' promotion be tied to his or her ability to attract funding for the school.

### 5.2 Limitations

The study was limited to only nine head teachers of public basic special schools in Ghana excluding head teachers of private and second cycle special schools. Therefore, care was taken in attempt to generalize the results to all head teachers in Ghana. Another limitation on the part of the participants was the fact that because the interview session was being tape recorded, some of them were hesitant in providing information that reflects the actual situation in the schools.

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