PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN INDIVIDUALISED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN SELECTED SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT

By

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I, **Maureen Chisembe,** hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is typically as a result of my own individual efforts and that all the work from other researchers has been acknowledged. I further declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or any other University.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Maureen Chisembe is approved as partial fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of a Master of Education in Special Education the University of Zambia.

Examiner 1

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated parental awareness in individualized educational programmes and the extent of parental involvement in the Individualised Educational Programmes for children with intellectual disabilities with particular attention to selected Special Schools in Lusaka district., In addition the study further investigated factors that affect parental involvement in Individualised Educational Programmes in special schools of Lusaka and established the benefits of Individualised Educational Programmes in special schools in Lusaka.

A descriptive research design was used which involved Qualitative methods. A sample of fifty (50) participants was drawn from two (2) selected special schools and three (3) units in the mainstream. The sample comprised of 50 respondents of which thirty (30) were parents. five (5) senior teacher selected one from each selected school five (5) head teachers and ten (10) specialist teachers, from each of the two(2) selected special and three (3) units. Head teachers, specialist teachers and parents of children with intellectual disabilities were selected purposively. Data was collected using a self-administered semi-questionnaires, interview guides and Focus Group Discussions. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. This involved qualitative coding and categorizing of data to generate to themes which were presented descriptively. The findings of the study revealed that parents were not fully involved in the Individualised Educational Programmes in special schools. Eleven parents registered ignorance of the programmes. The factors that affected parental involvement in individualised Educational Programmes were communication barriers between school administrators and parents, parents busy work schedules not being invited to Individualised Educational meetings, school administrators imposed on parents In addition, language barriers by some parents, level of education background of parents, belief by some parents not to interfere with teachers' work and lack of collaboration between parents and specialist teachers. The Benefits of Individualised Educational Programmes established in the study included, parents easily following the progress of the children in school, teachers easily getting help from parents and children reaching educational goals more easily, a tailor made programmes that suited the needs of children and allowing parents to incorporate other needed therapies such as speech therapy as part of the students' school programme.

Based on the findings these recommendations made were (1) Ministry of General Education should come up with a national policy in IEP (2)Sensitize specialist teachers not to use terms that are ambiguous during the meetings (3) Special schools administrators should ensure meeting days are held on days or times that are convenient to parents (5)The Ministry of General Education should come up with more policies to provide frame works for monitoring IEP Head teachers, specialist teachers and parents should be sensitized on IEP so that the levels of awareness in IEP increase.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father Mr. Ben Chisembe and my late husband Mr. Wilson Luyele although they have passed on they will remain my great inspiration and the Almighty God who made it possible for me to go through my studies.

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ACRONYMS

FGD   Focus Group Discussions

GRZ   Government of the Republic of Zambia.

IDEA   Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP   Individualised Educational Programmes

MoE   Ministry Of Education

SEN   Special Educational Needs

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter focuses on the background, which provides an insight on parental involvement in Individualised Educational Programmes (IEP) for children with intellectual disabilities.It outlines the statement of the problem, the purpose of study, the objectives and research questions and the significance of the study. It also includes the limitations, delimitations of the study, operational definitions of the study and ethical considerations.

1.2 Background

The Government of Zambia, Ministry of Education Policy (MOE) (1996) upholds the principle that every individual has an equal right to education opportunity. This means that every individual, regardless of personal circumstance or capacity, has the right to access and participate in the education system. This will ensure full equality of access, participation and benefit of all pupils and will necessitate interventions at all levels to support children at risk.

The MOE policy has included a number of significant statements about the involvement of parents in the education system. The 1996 Education Policy (Educating Our Future) states that involvement of parents in their children's education lies with parents. In the education of children with disabilities in Zambia, parents are the key stakeholders and have found themselves involved in schools in meeting the learning needs of children through Individual Educational Programmes.

The establishment of the education policies to guide the provision of education in Zambia is more associated with *Education Reforms of 1977, Focus on learning of 1992* and the latest being 1996 education policy- *Educating Our Future*. All these policies made an attempt and other aspects to change the way children with disabilities received their education. The MOE

(1996) Educating our Future ensures equality of educational opportunity for children with Special Educational and Needs (SEN). The Ministry of Education is committed to providing education particularly good quality to pupils and students with SEN (Educating our Future, 1996). It attaches the highest priority to the attainments of this goal. The importance of these regulations lies in managing education process enhancing the level of services provided, determining the responsibilities and roles to be designed to individual members of school staff and engaging the IEP team members. Despite the policy directives put in place such as educating our future, it appears, many parents have limited or no involvement in IEP in Lusaka, Zambia.

Martin, (2007) defines an IEP as one that states the goals the team has set for the child for the school year, as well as any special supports that are needed to help the child achieve those goals. Each IEP must be designed for one learner and must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities (Martin, 2007). At the IEP meeting, there must be the specialist teacher, general education teacher, counsellor, an administrator, and the parents.

The IEP provides an opportunity for parents and professions to join together in developing and delivering specially designed instruction to meet students' needs. The IEP is a document that is developed for each public school for a child who is eligible for special education. The IEP is created through a team and is reviewed periodically (Kamens, 2004).

During the IEP meeting, the IEP team will discuss the students' educational needs and discuss their present performance in the classroom. At the time of the meeting measurable goals, long, short terms goals for the following year are discussed. (Martin, 2007).

Aleada, (2006) has described the IEP as a 'roadmap' for the instruction of teachers and parents which gives focus to the actions and procedures, employed during the education process and ensures that they are appropriate to local needs.

International research on, IEP has emphasized the importance of involving parents in planning and Implementing Educational Programmes for children with intellectual disabilities (Landmark, Edge & Feldman, 2009; Hobbs &Silla, 2008).

There is high level of literature that IEP provision is key for careful and accountable educational needs (Tennant, 2007). For instance, in the United States, active parent participation in all aspect of educational programming for students receiving special education has been legally mandated. The 1997 Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997), IEP has continued to direct students educational goals and objectives. Placement and evaluation criteria as well as standards for educational performance and duration of programming modifications for special education services. (Drasgow, Yell; Robinson 2001). The IDEA gives parents rights to participate in the development of IEP but also in placement decisions for their children. Normally, a multidisciplinary team design the IEP and must have full understanding of planning to ensure the essential elements are included and that students are enabled to reach optimum independence and success in their adult lives.

Intellectual disability refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by significantly sub average intellectual functioning existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skills areas: communication, self-care, and home living social skills, community use self-direction, health functional academics leisure and work. This disability originates before age 18 (American Association on intellectual Developmental and disabilities, 2000). Due to the nature of the

disabilities, the students are unable to cope with demands of the classroom, teachers have to modify the work with help of the IEP. As members of the IEP team, parents play an important role in decision making process and contribute information about the child's and the family's expectation and dreams for the future (Turnbull & Turnbull 1986). In this regard, parent school linkages can be enhanced through an IEP.

Parental involvement came to be viewed as an additional means of ensuring the quality of educational services being provided to students (Coots, 2007). Parental involvement is critical in supporting the two main goals of IEP. The first is to facilitate the learning of children with disabilities in terms of providing written goals and objectives, resources and for their success in schools. The second is to serve as a means of communication among teachers, parents and other educationally focused professionals (Goldstein 1993). Therefore, increased parental involvement in IEP may provide an avenue to address the problems of children with intellectual disabilities. Previous research findings have confirmed that the academic results and the social well-being of students with disabilities improved when parents were involved in the IEP process (Englund, 2009; Whitbread, Bruder, Fleming, & Park, 2007).

However, the participation and involvement of parents in the IEP process continues to be a challenge for many schools. The problem is that involvement of parents may result in programmes being less responsive to the unique needs of students with disabilities (Feldman, 2009; Kroth& Edge, 2007; Landmark Zhang & Montoya, 2007; Omoteso, 2010). The specific problem is that poor involvement of parents in the IEP process may inhibit the development of effective IEPs for students with severe disabilities and the inclusion of these students in the community.

Earlier studies have specified that even if parents attend their child's IEP meetings, they often have no involvement in developing objectives, interventions or methods evaluation. (Yoshida, Fenton, Kaufman, Maxwell, 1978) This study attempts to investigate parental involvement in IEP of children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka province, Zambia.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The IEP is recognized as a crucial milestone in the provision of special education particularly as it constitutes the basis of educational teaching activities for students with disabilities (Al-Otaibi, 2012). Parents play a pivotal role in IEP as far as equalization of educational opportunities is concerned. This based on the premise that parents are the key stakeholders in schools in meeting the learning needs of children. Although parents are to be involved in IEP, it appears their effort is not noticed in Lusaka Zambia. Previous studies done Musonda, 2011); Bwalya (2014) and Mwanza (2014) mainly focused on Parental involvement practices in Special education institutions in Zambia ,Why majority of the specialist teachers do not prepare and use IEP in teaching prevocational skills and Parents' views on the inclusion of learners with disabilities. However, little is known from the Zambian context on the extent to which parents with children with Intellectual disabilities are involved in the IEP is not known, hence this study that sought to fill the knowledge gap through an investigation on parental involvement in IEP in selected special schools of Lusaka District.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate parental involvement in IEP in selected Special Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

i.   To investigate parental awareness of IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka

ii.   To determine the extent of parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka

iii.   To ascertain the benefits of IEP in selected special schools in Lusaka

iv.   To establish factors that affect parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka.

1.6 Research questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

i.   What is the level of parental awareness of IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka?

ii.   To what extent are parents involved in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka?

iii.   What factors affect parental involvement in IEPs for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka?

iv.   What are the benefits of IEPs for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka?

1.7 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the findings may be of value to Zambian educational policy makers and assist in the development of IEPs and improve the level of educational services provided for children with intellectual disabilities. It is hoped that the study has provided insights to both the parent and the special needs educator on how they can collaborate effectively and enhance parental participation in IEPs. It is hoped that the study contributes to the body of knowledge about Parental involvement in IEP in the delivery of Special education from the Zambian point of view.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

This study was conducted in three government special schools and two units in the mainstream in Lusaka District in Zambia.

1.9 Limitation of the study

The limitations related to this study were that the scope of the study was limited to Lusaka District in Zambia. The other limitation was to persuade some parents, majority were busy and not aware of the importance of the study. The researcher had to explain the importance of the study before conducting the study. .Finally as often with educational research, there was a risk of eliciting false information from IEP team members because they might have been reluctant to reveal their true opinion.

1.10 Theoretical framework

An ecological deportment theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner1979, was used as a base for the present study. It identifies four environmental systems which are (Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem).This study concentrated on microsystem and mesosystem only. Bronfenbrenner (1979) looks at an individual as an inseparable part of a

small social system comprising of four these interrelated ecological system with which an individual interacts the family. The ecological system theory model holds the view that human development reflects the influence of several environmental systems. According to this ecological model individual's development, is significantly affected and influenced by the interactions that occur among a number of overlapping eco systems (Bronfenbrenner 1979).

The central thesis of the Model used in the study has been the idea of a shared responsibility among parents of children with intellectual disabilities and specialist teachers in the learning of children with intellectual disabilities. When parents feel involved, wanted and appreciated in their roles and responsibilities in IEP there are more willing to participate meaningfully. Participation of parents in the ecological system theory which sees families and schools and their relationship as interface of systems necessary in the learning of children.

Microsystems

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem is the child's closest layer. The microsystem is the immediate environment in which the child lives in. All immediate interaction with the child who has a disability form part of this ecosystem. It consists of the activities and the interactions in the person's immediate surroundings. Structure inside this system includes family, neighbourhood and day care or child care environments at school and with peers.

The relationships inside the Microsystem have bi-directional influences, which impact in two directions, toward and away from the child. This can be illustrated by parents who have a child with a disability (Paquet and Ryan, 2001). In this situation, a child with a disability exerts an influence on the parents and the parents have an influence on a child's development and quality of life.

In line with Bronfenbrenner's theory, microsystem in the ecological systems model, described the relationship between an active child and people, objects symbols in the immediate bio- ecological environment of the child with an intellectual disability includes: parents; home family; neighbourhood, peers; peers; community and school. It is worth noting however, the attitudes and actions towards the relationship among parents and educators often are sensitive and can greatly influence the learning of a child with an intellectual disability

Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines the mesosystem as follows:

> *"A mesosystem comprises the interrelations among two or more settings*
> *in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child,*
> *the relations among home, school, and neighborhood peer group; for an*
> *adult, among family, work, and social life)''.*

The mesosystem for a child with Intellectual Disability for whom an IEP has been created is that which results from the interaction between two systems in his or her fairly close environment, such as the family and the school. The relationship between these two groups/ organizations affects the IEP and the students' life and micro-interactions within the school. For example, if the family has an understanding of the child's emotional or social needs which is not incorporated into the plan due to bad relationships between school and family, this will have important consequences.

Therefore, the mesosystem describes the interrelations between multiple settings, which affect the developing individual as an active participant, as do the linkages between the child's school and home (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Supporting this view, Karila and Alasuutari (2012) assert the importance of the relationship between parent and teacher, among the most

important mesosystems that affect child development. In the current research, mesosystems are all settings which impact on an individual's immediate context. Thus, this research aims to identify challenges and barriers that may limit the impact of mesosystem relationships on the implementation of IEPs, such as a lack of coordination between the specialist teachers and the parents.

AL-Kahtani (2012) analyzing this theory in relationship to the IEP, observes that in the Bronfenbrenner theory, the ecological systems can be viewed as mutually interacting to influence the development and implementation of the IEP. This theory provides an analytical framework to explore the involvement and reflections of IEP team members, especially the parent, on the development and implementation of the IEP and also provides an analytical frame work for establishing challenges the IEP team faces and strategies used to overcome the challenges. The theory provides a framework on which the connections and interactions between and among homes, families, communities and schools directed at supporting the learning of the child.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that child development does not take place in a space, but that it is significantly, influenced by external factors such as child's family life, education, the community to -which he/she belongs and the society in which he/she is brought up. The family is the closest, most intense, most durable, and influential part of the Mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979). It is from this family, in the mesosystem, that the parent of a child with Special Education Needs gets involved in the implementation of the multi -disciplinary team. It is in this context that the study draws on ecological systems theory in its attempt to investigate parental involvement in the Individual educational programmes for students with intellectual disabilities in selected Special Schools in Lusaka and to determine parental awareness of the IEP, establish factors that affect their involvement, and benefits of parental

involvement in IEP. The theory has a direct implication on the researcher's study as it stresses the role of parent starting from home surroundings to school.

1.11 Definition of terms

Intellectual Disability– This is a significant subnormal general intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficiencies in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period. For this study this term covers learners in selected special schools and Units. (American Association on intellectual Developmental and disabilities, 2000).

Individualised Educational Programmes (IEP) – This is the basic special education document developed for a learner with a disability by the IEP team, which consists of school personnel, parents and learner. The IEP addresses students' strengths and needs and outlines goals and objectives for the next calendar year. Prior to the end of that year, the team must meet again to develop a new IEP placement and evaluation criteria.

Parent – This term refers to the child's birth parent, foster parent, or legal guardian. It can also refer to anyone with whom the child resides that may be granted custodial rights (such as a grandparent). It can also refer to an appointed surrogate parent.

Parental involvement – This is the requirement that a parent is included in all aspects of the special education process. In this paper, the term is used interchangeably with parent/family participation. It is also the assistance with homework and time spent in home activities with the child doing school work, communicating with teachers, participating with in school events educational discussions with the child and the time volunteered in school.

Special Education – This is the practice of educating children with special education needs in a way that addresses their individual procedures education, adapted equipment and materials and accessible settings.

Specialist teacher – an individual who has undergone a formal training in teaching pupils with disabilities and those with specific learning difficulties

Special Schools-Schools equipped to deliver education to students requiring high intensive educational and other support either on full or part time basis.

IEP /Multidisciplinary team: It comprises professionals who regularly work with specialist teachers, parents' school counsellors, community specialists and children with disabilities. IEP team members in the school work together to improve main elements of the IEP content, including functional performances, aims and targets, special educational services and annual goals. (Drasgow, 2001).

1.12 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has covered the introduction of the study. The chapter also shed light on the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The chapter further covered objectives of the study and the research questions which guided the study. Significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and the theoretical framework of the study were also covered. The researcher ended the chapter with operational definitions of terms used in the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents the literature related to the study. As explained by Kombo and Tromp (2006), literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by other scholars and researchers. The literature was thematically reviewed under the following research questions: (1) What is the level of parental awareness of IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka? (2) To what extent are parents involved in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka?(3) What factors affect parental involvement in IEPs for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka? (4)What are the benefits of IEPs for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka?

2.2 Parental awareness of IEPs

In several studies, parents shared the relationship between feelings of empowerment and knowledge about procedures and special education practices (Beth, 2008; Ingler and Dromi, 2010). For example Jivanjee et al., (2007) conducted a mixed method study with 133 family members of children with intellectual disabilities, the parents were asked to rate their perceptions of their participation in educational planning participants responded that to a Likert –type scale about participation in planning and evaluating educational programmes. The study revealed that parents who gave themselves high rates of participation in the IEP process also rated themselves as more empowered in the areas of family, child services system, and special education laws. The findings supported the assumption that parents familiar with legal procedures know how to access special education services. (Jivanjee et al, 2007).

Rouleau (2007) conducted an explanatory grounded theory study and described a frame work for training parents before they attended IEP meetings .A sample of 12 Hispanic parents from a Southern urban area in the United States responded to open and semi-structured individual interviews, completed journal entries after training session and participated in focus groups. The results revealed participating in the workshop increased parents' knowledge on IEP. Parents reported more self-confidence about participating in IEP meetings after gaining more information on legal procedures and special education instruction.

Chiarello, et al., (2010) work focused on the need for a family centred-approach in setting educational goals for students with severe disabilities to acquire knowledge on IEP the parents of students who are mentally challenged or with motor disabilities believed IEPs included also include daily activities and particularly self-care goals. The parents wanted to share valuable information about children's performance at home and help teachers develop self-care goals in the IEP.

Rudiger (2007) in a study involving 92 parents from 18 different schools, found significant variation in parents' perceptions of schools' engagement efforts. These perceptions were highly related to parents' perceptions of their child's progress and of the support their child was receiving in their IEP program. Within schools, parents' experiences were fairly consistent, suggesting that the school context may play an important role in parent-school relations. At the same time, parents also noted the importance of the contribution, either positive or negative, of individual professionals to their experience or to their child's. Parents also perceived that transitions were difficult and rarely facilitated adequately, especially the transition from elementary school to middle school. They also perceived that the transitions between varying school settings within the school were difficult, such as when the child's placement setting changed. Finally, parents discussed their perception that although services

and accommodations may have been noted in the IEP, parents were not always sure if they were being fully implemented, suggesting an effort by schools to comply with the law on paper while falling short of providing students with disabilities with all the services and accommodations needed for success.

Fish (2008) conducted a survey of 51 parents of students receiving special education services. Results showed that the majority of participants reported their overall IEP experiences as positive. They believed educators valued their input treated them with respect and considered them to be equal decision makers. In another related study, Wade (2010) investigated parental perceptions of the individualized education program (IEP) meeting among 51 parents of students who were receiving special education services from one family support service agency. Survey questions pertained to the following areas knowledge level of special education laws and IEP meeting outcomes. The majority of parents responded favorably that their overall IEP meeting experiences had been positive. Most parents agreed that they had a clear understanding of the IEP process and special education law.

2.3 Parental involvement in IEP

In her study Mwanza (2014) reports of parents' views on the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstreams using a qualitative approach in Lusaka, Zambia. The study used a case design. A qualitative approach was employed to collect and analyze data. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, Target population were 34 parents of which 17 were males and 17 were females. The findings revealed that there was lack of collaboration between the school and parents with more females than males registering ignorance of the programmes and a lot of females indicating that that they did not participate in school activities in inclusive education.

Musonda (2011) examined parental involvement practices in the education of students with special educational needs in Lusaka .The research used a descriptive research design The sample consisted of 42 respondents comprising 31 parents and 11 teachers Purposive sampling was used to arrive at the sample. The findings revealed the school had no policy on IEP contributing to low rate of parental involvement.

Hebel (2014) works focused on parental involvement in IEP for Israeli students with disabilities. The purpose of the qualitative study was to understand perceptions and experiences of Israeli parents of students with disabilities. The findings were that family centred vision in education support involvement of parents, and that knowledgeable parents valued the power of awareness.

Yoshida, Fenton, and Kaufman (1978) studied non-involvement of parents in decision making programmes involving the education of their children. Yoshida Fenton, and Kauffman (1978) established that non-involvement of parents in decision making programmes involving the education of their children was evidenced by the significant number of programmes that lack parental signatures. They further established that parents often did not seem to remember what happened at an IEP Conference.

Fish (2006) investigated the perceptions of seven parents of children with autism spectrum disorder about the IEP process .Most indicated that they had been treated badly at one time or the other. They observed that the educators were more likely to carefully observe IEP protocol when an advocate is present.

Research revealed that in the United States of America, parents were by law equal partners on their child's IEP team and they believed that intimate knowledge of their child's strengths, struggles and development was valuable. They also believe that the school could not develop, change or implement the IEP without the parents' consent (Goodman 1993).

On the contrary, Lo (2008) investigated the level of participation and experiences of 5 Chinese parents of children with disabilities in IEP meetings through observations and interviews. Results of the study suggested that the Chinese parents were dissatisfied with 12 of 15 observed IEP meetings. Their level of parental participation in IEP meetings was minimal. Participants indicated numerous challenges preventing them from taking a more active role in meetings, such as the language barrier, poor interpretation of services, and disrespect by professionals. These results were in line with those investigated by Coots (2007) who revealed that parents expected IEP team members to support the special needs of their children but in different educational settings, parents differed in their level of satisfaction with the process.

Vaughn, et.al. (1988) explored parents participation in initial IEP meetings showed that school staff's interaction with parents was minimal and that few parents asked questions during the IEP meetings. Findings showed that, parents played a passive role in the meetings. The researchers explained that parent participation may be low due to their satisfaction with the existing services and a lack of knowledge about the IEP process and the terms used during IEP meetings

Ruskus, (2006) used Participatory Action Research to explore parental involvement in education for children with intellectual disabilities through IEP in Lithuania. The research result showed that IEP enabled all participants to create common understanding of the objectives, develop mutual cognition, actualize internal resources, create new institutional culture, legitimate parental expectations, and open up parents and educators to new challenges.

2.4 Benefits of IEP

Douglas et al, (2012) pointed out that IEPs can assist students with special educational needs to gain access to an appropriate education. In addition, they consider that IEPS are a useful way for 'accessing outcomes across a range of areas relevant to each child's needs. In their view, student engagement and progress in schools can most appropriately be measured as part of classroom assessment, which was accessible, appropriate and relevant to all students in the classroom, including those with special educational needs. Although parents attended IEP meetings they generally did not meaningfully participate (Childre& Chambers, 2005, Esquivel, Ryan &Booner, 2008; Fish, 2006)

Kamens (2004), explored another benefit of preparing and using an IEP in the teaching of children with intellectual disabilities was that it was result-oriented and time-sensitive by affirming the short-term objectives and measurable yearly goals as well as reporting the students' improvement at regular, pre-determined interludes.

Weishaar (2001), in a study planned at defining the outcome of the individualized education programmes course reported that, developing and implementing individualized education plans for children with intellectual disabilities that were written conferring to the requirements of each child shaped the desired outcomes for each student that was proportionate to his or her ability. This resulted in the achievement of stated learning goals.

Weishaar (2001) established another benefit of using an IEP in the teaching of children with intellectual disabilities. It provided a focus for students' knowledge and a specified timeframe. For instance, it showed the teaching and learning strategies that reinforced the pupil's wants as well as identified resources, additional support and services the pupil needed for success.

Katsiyannis and Ennis (2013), in a study aimed at establishing educational methodologies to prevent school failure, further reported IEP for children with intellectual disabilities aided the institute and parents to work as a team and to work together. The individualized education programmes unwrapped an opportunity for all members in the multidisciplinary team comprising teachers, parents, school administrators and related-services personnel to put their efforts together to increase learning outcomes for the children. This was possible because all the team members were conversant of their specific responsibilities in the child's IEP. This included the specific accommodations, modifications, and support that the child must receive according to the individualized education plan. This results in good planning and intervention by the multidisciplinary team.

Chen (2009) conducted a study in China and noted that another benefit for a child with an intellectual disability to have an IEP. The study indicated that IEP is a roadmap between parents and the school district that's specifically designed to help educate a child with an intellectual disability based on their unique needs. It is important to note that with only one student in mind the teacher targets specific weakness in any area no just academics decides on an attainable goal or goals in each area and list how the attainment of that goal will be measured.

Kamens (2004) noted in a study in South Africa on benefits of IEP It was result oriented and time sensitive by clearly stating the short terms objectives and measurable annual goals as well as report the pupil's. In exploring what IEPs are for children with intellectual disabilities, programmes are customized for individuals with special needs designed by a team of experts consisting of general and specialist teachers, professionals offering special services. Such as occupational therapists, psychologists, speech pathologists and the parents of the child.

The IEP occupies an important place in the field of special education in general and in that of intellectual disability in particular, because it is viewed as the cornerstone of special educational provision appropriate for students with special needs and their learning (Stoner and Shelden, 2009).

Hence, the IEP comes at the forefront of a number of successful strategies and is able to meet the personal needs of students with special needs. This has increased the significance of its use while working to create suitable conditions to increase its effectiveness. The IEP provides the opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators and service providers in addition to the students themselves when appropriate to work as a team with the purpose of designing IEPs according to the needs of individual students in order to improve their educational outcomes. The IEP shows that students can achieve long-term and short-term goals, as set out in the programmes (Mc Laughlin, 1991).

2.5 Factors affecting parental involvement in the IEP

Goldstein, (1993) conducted a study to provide a situational analysis of involvement in IEP meetings. In this study parents of children with severe disabilities were selected by convenient sampling method .In- depth interviews with them were conducted for collecting data The data was analyzed qualitatively The study revealed that many parents felt un-equipped to address their educational needs of their children as they are unable to understand special education jargon and terminology. Parents who felt ill equipped in making educational decisions regarding their children allowed educators to easily convince parents that decision-making should be left to them. The study by Goldstein, (1993) is similar to the current study because it focused on parents of children with disabilities in IEP meetings. Rock, (2000) parents believed that some educators failed to understand the significance of

parental participation as many have seen unsuccessful in positive collaboration and facilitating successful parental involvement.

Simon, (2006) explored effective communication among the IEP team members that it is essential in providing best possible programs for students receiving special education service. However Goldstein, (1993) state that factors which attribute to communication problems between teachers and parents of children receiving special education services include having insufficient opportunities to communicate, differences in attitudes and expectations, and lack of teacher knowledge pertaining to students receiving special education services. Munk et al (2001) works on parents' complaints that teachers do not initiate enough communication and they failed to communicate with parents until problems worsened.

Parents should possess equitable role during IEP meetings as the essential insights they possess concerning their children facilitate the success of the IEP process. (Pruitt et al; 1998). Parental involvement and the collaboration of parents and teachers in IEPs present barriers to creating a common perspective for a child's educational goals (Kroth & Edge, 2007; Landmark et al., 2007; Rudiger, 2007). Barriers included minimal communication of parents with school staff, insufficient knowledge of parents about special education practices, and passive participation of parents in IEP meetings (Fish, 2008; Gershwin- Mueller et al., 2008; Sanders, 2008; whit by, Marx, McIntire & Wienke, 2013). The obstacles affected the ability of parents to influence decisions regarding the IEP process and collaborate with staff in implementation of programs in class.

Fish (2006) states that parents can become knowledgeable about special education by being persistent in requesting needed services for their children. He further argues that parents should speak up during the IEP meetings. Another study by Simon (2006) suggested that educators should provide parents with IEP forms to advance issues to be discussed at the

meetings. This can enhance parent's sense of ownership of the process as team members and foster good communication with them during and after the IEP meetings. Soliciting parents feedback on their child's progress toward reaching his or her goals and welcoming their past meeting feedback can help to identify points of weakness in the implementation of the IEP which can be addressed through professional development or in service opportunities as needed. It is essential that lines of communication between teachers and parents are kept open to help improve the perception between the IEP team (Ambrosetti & Cho 2005).

Parental feelings of inadequacy constitute a tremendous obstacle to facilitating parent school collaboration. Schools viewed parents peripheral and in some cases as hindrances. Many parents also face such logistical issues as finding transportation or child care to attend IEP meetings (Friesen & Huff, 1990). Parents who work may have difficulty attending which are usually scheduled during school days or working hours. Feelings of being intimidated by the school and feelings that parents are inadequate or lack the legitimacy of an expert (Kalyanpur, Harry, &Skrtic, 2000)

2.6 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter an attempt has been made to review the related literature on Parental involvement in IEP. The review focused on Parental involvement in IEP, Parental awareness of IEP, Factors affecting Parental involvement in IEP and benefits of IEP. Little attention has been paid to parents in IEP in special schools following the studies done in Zambia. From the literature reviewed, it appears, there is a gap on parental involvement in IEP in Zambia. This is the gap that this study sought to address.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. It describes the research design that was employed, the location of the study, target population, the sample size, sampling procedure and the description of the sample. It further describes research instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures that were used in the study.

3.2 Research design

A descriptive research design was used in this study because the study relied more on the qualitative research methods. Kombo and Tromp (2006), posit that a descriptive approach is a method of collecting data by either administering a questionnaire or by interviewing subjects of a given sample of the target population to gain holistic data on the subject under study. The research design used to conduct this study was qualitative in nature. (Creswell) 2005 describes the qualitative approach as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores social or human problem. Here the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) a descriptive research design can be used when collecting people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues. According to Creswell (2005), researchers use qualitative methods for a variety of reasons and situations including giving individuals an opportunity to share their stories, obtaining a detailed understanding of complex issues to address a problem. The qualitative data was used because it allowed the researcher to interact more freely with the participants for a clearer understanding of teacher-parent relationship towards IEP in special schools in Lusaka , Zambia

3.3 Location of the study

The study was conducted in Special Education Schools and Units in the mainstream in Lusaka District. Two special schools and three units in the mainstream level were selected. These schools and units were selected to participate in the study because they offered special education and the IEPs were being written down..

3.4. Target population

Creswell (2005) states that population consists of a group of elements which could be individuals, objects or even elements that pertain to what the researcher embarks to generate the results for the research. The target population of the study was all special Head teachers, Specialist teachers and parents of children with disabilities enrolled in selected special schools and units in the mainstream schools in Lusaka District. This population was targeted because it had the characteristics and the knowledge that was relevant to the study.

3.5 Sample size

According Kombo and Tromp (2006) a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. A subset of respondents selected from a larger population. The study sample consisted of fifty (50) respondents of which thirty (30) were parents, five (5) senior teachers one from each selected schools and five (5) head teachers one from each of the five (5) selected special schools of which three (3) where Units in the mainstream and ten specialist teachers, two (2) from each of the five (5) selected schools.

Table 3.1 Experiences of specialist teachers and school administrators

Years of Experience	Specialist Teachers	School Administrators
16 – 20	10	10
Total	10	10

Table 3.1 shows the total number of 10 specialist teachers and 10 school administrators who participated in the study. All the head teachers and specialist teachers had their experiences ranging from 16 to 20 years. All the participants had sufficient experiences to contribute views on parental involvement in IEP.

Table 3.2: Qualifications of school administrators and specialist teachers

Qualifications	Specialist Teachers	School Administrators
Diploma	7	-
University Degree	3	10
Total	10	10

Table 3.2 above shows qualifications of specialist teachers and school administrators.

All the ten school administrators who participated in the study were degree holders while three of the ten specialist teachers were those with University degrees. The other seven were diploma holders.

Table 3:3 Gender of Participants

Gender	Parents	Specialist teachers	School administrators	Total
Males	6	3	3	13
Females	24	7	7	37
Total	30	10	10	50

Table 3.3 shows participants according to gender in which 6 parents were males while 24 were females. This implies that the majority were females. For specialist teachers 3 were males while 7 were females. 4 female school administrators participated in the study were males while 6 were females. This implies that the majority were female partipants.The total number of participants were 50.

3.6 Sampling procedure

The sampling technique used in the study was purposive in the selection of participants. In Purposive sampling, researchers choose the sample cases they deem to be typical by criteria they consider appropriate to create a sample which meets their particular research requirements. (Cohen and Marion, 1998) This technique was chosen because while it accords the elements of the target population an equal probability to participate in the study, it also eliminates biasness in the study as the population constituted of elements from several schools at varied levels. It also allows the sample to be representative of the target population (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The sample consisted of Head teachers, Specialist teachers and Parents of children with intellectual disabilities from two selected Special Schools and two Units in the mainstream in Lusaka District. From each of the two selected participating special schools and three units from the mainstream, the researcher selected thirty parents of children with intellectual disabilities using the purposive sampling procedure. Administrators and two specialist teachers were selected using purposive sampling procedure.

3.7 Research instruments

The researcher used Semi-structured questionnaires, interview guides and Focus Group Discussions to gather data for the study. Semi-structured questionnaires were used for Head

teachers and interview schedules on Specialist teachers because they are flexible and allows the researcher to ask a respondent a follow up question if need arises Questionnaires were used because of the ability to be presented to the respondents in the same format, way and content, the researcher found questionnaires to be more ideal in the collection of data.

Interviews were used because the respondents felt part of the team and freely participated in the study. An interview can be described in terms of individuals' directing their intention towards each other with the purpose of opening up the possibility of gaining an insight into the experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values and knowledge of the respondents (Schostok, 2010). The Focus Group Discussions were used to gather data from parents of children with disabilities enrolled in the selected special schools and units. The researcher used focus group discussions as a way of listening to parents. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are forms of interviews in which more than one person is involved (Bryman,2008).Wellington (2000) recommends a small group of six to ten session per session, this study considered a reasonably smaller group of six parents of children with intellectual disabilities for the purpose of capturing responses. The focus group discussions were more flexible as parents were freer to express themselves though the focus group discussions resulted in certain participants not sharing their opinions or filtering what they share because of presence of others. A group facilitator keep the discussion on truck by asking a series of open ended questions meant to stimulate discussions and also creates a thoughtful, permissive atmosphere, provides ground rules and sets a tone of discussion (Schostok, 2010).

3.7.1 Piloting research instruments

The research instrument was piloted in Lusaka at one special school. Tuckman (1994) and Jack and Norman (2003), posit that the purpose of pilot testing research instruments, is to

reveal any defects in the research instrument so as to revise the items based on the results of the pilot test. In line with what Tuckman, Jack and Norman, cited above, the self-administered semi structured questionnaires for both administrators and specialist teachers were distributed to administrators and specialist teachers in the selected schools to those who were not part of the final study. The testing of instruments before actual research was directed at establishing the internal consistency in the questions. (Cohen and Marion, 1998).

3.7.2 Observations from the field on the research instruments

The findings from the field piloting of the instruments revealed some aspects that had been overlooked which needed to be included in the final instruments of research. Some changes were made to the final research instruments

3.7.3 Reliability and trustworthiness

Reliability and trustworthiness relates to the researcher not to misrepresent the views of respondents. Reliability and trustworthiness is demonstrated when participants recognize the report findings as their own experiences. (Maxwell, 2005).To ensure reliability and trustworthiness, the researcher employed the following measures: The Focus Group Discussions were tape recorded. The researcher had to get back to some of the participants, to confirm as to whether the transcribed data was a truthful version of their discussions. A few parents were visited again to prove if data provided to the researcher was the same.

3.7. 4 Reliability and validity of data

According to Patton (1990) reliability is a measure of the degree to which a data collection instrument is able to provide consistent results after repeated trials with the same or similar respondents and in a controlled environment .The author sees it as a measure of whether or not an instrument is doing what it is supposed to measure in the process of collecting data needed in addressing a particular research problem. To ensure reliability, in this study, the

instruments used were piloted in one special school offering special education with the aim of strengthening the before the actual collection of data. In case of validity, it is a measure of the degree to which various items in the instrument cover the Materials needed to be collected from the field work. (Cohen and Marion 1998).

3.8 Data collection procedure

Data collection took place during third term which was from October to December. After permission was granted in schools, the researcher worked with a contact person to select the respondents, administer and collect the data.

Most parents were met after picking their children during school days. Thirty five to forty minutes were spent with a group of five parents. Self-administered questionnaires were administered to head teachers and interview guides to specialist teachers during school time. These were collected later for data analysis.

3.9 Data analysis

The first phase involved obtaining data through interviews, Focus Group Discussions and questionnaires were analysed thematically put in themes and categories as they emerged. Questions employed in the interviews formed the central theme on which the analysis was based.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.

The second phase involved grouping according to the emerging themes relevant to each code. In this assignment, initial codes was done manually by going through the entire data set. The process was repeated until all responses were grouped according to the themes or sub-themes that emerged from the study. The salient opinions provided by the respondents

on various items on each question asked during focus group discussion were identified, interpreted and summarized in order to establish facts. The interpretation of views, feelings and opinions arising from the collected data was based on the objectives of the study.

The researcher organized ideas and concepts and this involved various responses for one particular question and identifying ideas that kept coming from participants' responses. In this case, a list of different responses and ideas were arrived at. Ideas, concepts and phrases were found then the researcher organized these themes into codes or categories. It was time to build up over-arching themes in the data. Each of the response categories had more one than associated theme that gave a deeper meaning of data .Further different categories collapsed under one main over-arching theme .This allowed the researcher to test findings as themes and patterns from the data. The final phase was to write a report. A summary of the findings basing on the themes was made. The findings were compared with literature and also these were tied to get a better idea of the results found.

In conclusion, qualitative data was analysed thematically involving coding and categorizing of data to generate themes that were descriptively presented.

The codes were given to the participants for confidentiality purposes. The schools were presented a school A, B, C, D E .FGD1for parents was indicated as FP1, FP2, M P3 MP4, and P5. Teachers were indicated as TR1, TR2, TR 3, TR4 6.Head teachers were shown as HT1, HT2.

3.10 Ethical consideration

Jack and Norman (2003) states that planning in a study researchers have the responsibility properly and ethically the concerns of the study. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee to conduct the study. Letters of introduction from University of Zambia Assistant Dean Post-Graduate and the Lusaka

District Education Board Secretary were given to the Head teachers for authority to conduct the research, this helped create awareness of what the research was about. The study was conducted in an ethical way protecting anonymity, participants' rights, confidentiality and autonomy. This was ensured by not allowing respondents to write their names on questionnaires unless where respondents wilfully considered to using such information in order to illustrate a point during discussion .This helped to minimize fears of victimization and promoted honesty among respondents in the way participants responded to questions. As a result, the respondents felt more secure with this kind of approach in the collection of data. The respondents were also informed in advance that the questionnaires and interviews were intended to collect information for a specific academic purpose and for other purposes which were likely to infringe on the rights of individuals of participating in the study. This helped to ensure confidentiality during data collection and reporting of the findings. Confidentiality was assured by not recording the names of the participants .The researcher obtained consent for recording the discussions with participants using a tape recorder.

3.11 Summary of the chapter

This chapter covered the methodology used in the study. The chapter described the location of the study, which were two Special schools three units from the mainstream in Lusaka District in Zambia.

Participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The chapter further described the research instruments used which were self-administered semi structured questionnaire for Head teachers, interview guides were used by specialist teachers and focus group discussions were held with parents of children with disabilities. This chapter also covered Data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations of the study. The aspects concerning reliability, validity and research ethics for the study were also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study which sought to investigate the parental involvement in IEP for students with intellectual disabilities. The findings of the study were presented based on study questions which were; (1) what is the level of parental awareness in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools in Lusaka?; (2) To what extent are parents involved in the Individualised Educational Programmes in selected special schools in Lusaka?, (3) What factors that affect parental involvement in Individualised Educational Programmes in selected special schools in Lusaka?(4) What are the benefits of Individualised Educational Programmes in special schools in Lusaka?

4.2 What is the level parental awareness of IEP?

The first question was to investigate the level of parental awareness of IEP. The responses were shown below.

Table 4.1 Parental Awareness of IEP

	Yes	Not Sure	No	Total
Parental Awareness of IEP out of 30 parents	09	10	11	30

The above table shows that out of thirty respondents, a small proportion of nine indicated that they are aware of IEP. Ten parents indicated that they are not sure while the majority eleven of respondents indicated that were not aware of IEP.

The following were some of the responses:

A FP 1 said the following:

> *I am ready and quite interested in participating with the school regarding the IEP, but I do not have experience in the process. This is because the school administration has not explained the importance of the IEP [...]. Neither the parents nor the IEP team have enough knowledge about the available opportunities for IEP.*

Additionally another FP2 said following;

There is no communication of the parents with SEN teachers towards the implementation of IEPs. The main reason for this may be due to the teachers' lack of confidence in the parents' ability to participate in a positive way.

Furthermore a FP 3 indicated the following;

> *It is very frustrating to me because I have not had clarification on what is expected of me…how can I contribute when communication to me is virtually non-existent?*

A M P4 indicated the following:

> *The mothers of intellectually disabled children are more involved than the fathers in implementing IEPs in this specials school*

In addition FP5 said the following;

> *It was the responsibility of parents to assist specialist teachers both at home and at school in the education of children with intellectual disabilities.*

4.2.2 Findings from the Head teachers and specialist teachers

The findings from head teachers and Specialist Teachers on Parental awareness on IEP showed that head teachers believed it was the responsibility of specialist teachers to teach children without bothering parents.

One male HT1 from school A pointed out that;

> *Parents here believe that the school is directly responsible for the education of their children and knowledge of the individual education programmes is not there.*

A female T1 from school B said that:

> *The key challenge to parent involvement is high levels of illiteracy…. I have attempted to go through IEP   objectives of their child with parents in face to face meetings, but in my experience they are often unable to read the objectives and plan I have put before them.*

A female HT2 from school C commented;

> *I believe that the parents do not like to be involved. Parents ignored dealing with the school concerning IEPs. These Parents are not fully aware of the benefits of the IEPs on the students.*

The findings revealed that most parents had insufficient knowledge on IEP, while others registered ignorance of IEP due to lack of communication between school administrators and parents The other factor was differences in attitudes by parents who had low self-esteem to have a child with a disability and would not attend IEP meetings.

4.3 To what extent are parents involved in IEP?

The second question was to determine the extent of parental involvement in the IEP for children with intellectual disabilities. The responses were shown below.

Table 4.2: Parental Involvement in IEP

	Yes	Not Sure	No	Total
Parental Involvement in IEP	7	10	13	30

The above table shows that out of thirty respondents, a small proportion of seven respondents indicated that they are fully involved, while the majority (thirteen) respondents said that they were not involved. On the other hand, ten respondents said that they were sometimes involved.

Contributing on the same issue of extent of parental involvement in IEP, a FP1 noted the following*:*

> *The school appears not to be aware that there is a need for the participation of parents in the IEPs. The main reason for this may be due to the teacher's lack of confidence in the parent's ability to participate in a positive way. They keep using terms from books they have studied*

Another M P 3 commented;

> *I have never attended any meeting organized by the school because there has been no formal invitation.*

Another FP4 indicated the following;

> *I did not have any role because I had not been informed or invited by the school administration to participate, in the preparation of the objectives of individualised educational programmes for my son, or even in the observation of how my son is getting on with IEP.*

Additionally, another FP5 further indicated the following;

> *I blame the school because the specialist teachers are not very co-operative*

On the other hand ten of the respondents reported that they were involved .This was evidenced in the observation made by a MP1who said:

I play an active and important role in the individualised educational programmes. I actually follow whatever IEP team members ask me to do in the school. I help my child at home, such as in Activities for Daily Living homework, and I am very supportive.

Additionally a FP2 indicated the following;

I appreciate the work of the specialist teachers. I offer to help, the specialist teacher they are doing a wonderful job. I dialogue with them much during the IEP meetings. Am luck because my daughter's specialist teachers listen attentively to my opinions.

From the findings, it was revealed that (seven) parents were involved in IEP while thirteen were not involved it was revealed that the school made programmes most of the time without informing them, and that they did not recall being invited for the implementation of any programmes. The findings further revealed that majority (thirteen) of the parents were not involved was because of not understanding special educational jargon and terminologies which discouraged parents from attending IEP meetings. It was also pointed out that more mothers were involved in implementing IEPs than fathers and that most parents were not satisfied with services in schools. It was again pointed out that most parents believed that they should not to interfere with work of the specialist teachers

4.3.2 Findings from head teachers and specialist teachers

The schools used records of their meetings and out of two special schools and three special Units in the mainstream. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they involved parents in IEP of the children with intellectual disabilities. The findings showed that five head teachers, five senior teachers and ten specialist teachers who took party in the study indicated the following:

A male TR 1 from school E pointed out the following:

> *The Ministry of Education has as yet not given insufficient attention to the training programmes of head teachers in the implementation of IEPs in special schools.*

Furthermore, another male TR 2 from school A said that:

> *It was the duty of the specialized teachers to make sure that the children are taught and plan IEPs according to the way the teachers were trained at colleges without bothering the parents.*

This implied that although parents wanted to be involved in IEPs the specialist teachers did not see their involvement as essential.

A female HT 3from school B indicated the following:

> *In reality, I have a basic role with regard to the supervision of the teachers and overseeing the individualised education programme. A month after the start of the new academic year, I have to assess the IEPs in terms of their appropriateness for each child with intellectual disabilities I see very few parents in attendance though.*

Additionally, another female HT1 from school C indicated the following:

> *I am solely implementing the IEP in my school. This is a positive trend because these individualised educational plans help children with intellectual disabilities to integrate with ordinary children in their respective schools, and to change the negative attitudes towards students with SEN to be more accommodating and positive.*

Another female HT2 from schools D said the following:

> *From my experience of dealing with parents, some are unaware of the importance of the IEPs for children with intellectual disabilities in special schools and this limit their participation.*

In addition, one HT3 from school D indicated the following;

> *There are no administrative procedures that make the application of IEPs legally binding from Ministry of Education in charge of the programmes, nothing can be found in the school.*

A female TR 3 from school E indicated the following;

> *There has been an absence of the role of the school in the activation of parent participation in the application of the individual education programmes at school.*

Additionally another female TR1 from school A indicated the following;

> *There is no cohesion between the parents when it comes to the IEPs in the school, which is also regarded as just a waste of time for those parents*

A male TR 1from school B said*;*

> *The interaction between teachers and parents towards the writing of IEPs at school is weak.*

Additionally another maleTR1 from school C indicated the following:

> *It was the duty of the specialized teachers to teach the children with intellectual disabilities without bothering parents.*

The findings showed that generally head teachers and specialist teachers believed that it was their duty to teach and do all planning without involving parents in IEPs and that IEPs have no legal binding supporting that.

4.4 What are benefits of IEP in special schools?

The third question was to ascertain benefits of IEP. In this regard, it was found out that parents who were involved in IEP were appreciated by specialist teachers. Furthermore, intended goals in IEP were achieved by specialist teachers.

A FP 1 indicated the following;

> *I remember the moment I felt that teachers appreciated our effort to help…This was so rewarding. That's the moment I knew that the goals prescribed in the IEP would be implemented in class.*

 A female TR 1 from school C said:

I was solely organizing IEPs in my school. This is a positive trend because these individualised educational programmes help children with intellectual disabilities to integrate with ordinary children in their respective schools, and to change the negative attitudes towards students with SEN to be more accommodating and positive

A female TR 1 from school D said:

> *So what I believe now is that parental involvement in the application of individualised educational plans tended to impede the desired results for the benefit of those students.*

Furthermore, one other male TR 4 from school E said:

> *Usually interventions can be put into place that will most benefit children, ensuring that the mothers and fathers of the children are participating alongside school representatives in IEP.*

In addition one other FP 3 indicated the following*:*

> *It's critical that I'm part of the process to make sure they're doing what my son needs. I can't sit back and expect these people …aha….If I don't keep [an eye] on them or let them I'm paying attention, they*

are not going to do it because they' re being malicious but because
they have many things to do.

A FP 7 said the following:

You know what…usually, at the IEP meeting especially in early levels
almost everyone would come, so I felt like we had a good
understanding….great. IEP brings everybody together, so they can
hear what a child has done in the last year and things we're to work
on

A MP 8 said*:*

Al right….IEP meeting ……once a year or you can have it more than
once. We basically all go over, what his goals will be in the next year,
both short and long term goals. It's basically a goal setting process.
I've always contributed. ….I brought up certain things that I thought
are important to him. Teachers were very open to my suggestions.

The parents easily follow the progress of the children Teachers easily get help from parents and children reach educational goals more easily. A tailor made programme that suits the needs of a child. Allows parents to incorporate other needed therapies as part of the students school programme.

4.5 What factors affect parental involvement in Individualised Educational Programmes?

The fourth and last question was establish factors affecting parental in IEP one of the finding revealed was that parents who participated in the study reported to have faced challenges in obtaining permission from their places of work. Even those in self-employment like marketeers and business could not leave their work stations as they have to work all day as remarked by a male 1 parent who said:

> It is difficult to obtain permission from my shift boss to leave the station in order to attend the IEP meetings.

Additionally, the other FM 2 indicated the following:

> I am busy all day. I've failed to follow up the individualised educational programmes of my son I don't have time

Furthermore, one FP3 said:

> I did not really pay attention to telephone calls from the school administration to participate in the preparation the individual educational programmes or even in observing the schooling of even in other areas. There may be some shortcomings in this respect but my reason was a lack of time.

Furthermore, another FP 4 said the following;

> Teachers just impose on us what we are supposed to do, there is no dialogue. For instance one teacher said sir, just go ahead and turn to the next page. Your son's first goal we have right here is that he will improve his reading skills by when level2 and may be reading at least 12 words a minute in level 3. So we not saying that he will be reading in level 3, but we at least want to give him words and expose him to things that are in level 3.

Most of the parents indicated that they lacked knowledge on IEP issues A FP said the following:

> I do not contribute anything in the IEP meetings as I feel my input is not taken. The teachers expect very little from my son.

Additionally one of the FM 6 said:

> I just attended the formal IEP meeting, I don't believe I can affect my child's IEP. I participated but am not sure it made any difference.

Furthermore one FP 7 said the following:

The specialist teachers during the IEP meetings use terms when describing children,' performance which I do not understand. The IEP meetings are loaded with words that I don't understand and familiar with. It made to be anxious as I wanted the meanings of the words.

4. 5.1 Findings from head teachers and specialist teachers

Respondents were asked to indicate how parents were involved in IEP of children with intellectual disabilities. The following were some of the concerns:

One female HT1from school A said the following:

In reality, I have a basic role with regard to the supervision of the teachers and overseeing the individualised education programmes [...]. A month after the start of the new academic year, I have to assess the IEPs in terms of their appropriateness for each child with intellectual disabilities I see very few parents in attendance though.

Another female HT2 from school B indicated that

I was solely implementing the IEP in my school [...]. This is a positive trend because these individualised educational plans help children with intellectual disabilities to integrate with ordinary children in their respective schools, and to change the negative attitudes towards students with SEN to be more accommodating and positive.

Furthermore one male HT3 from school C indicted the following:

The Ministry of Education has as yet not given insufficient attention to the training programmes of head teachers in the implementation of IEPs in special schools.

A female HT4 from school D pointed out the following:

There are no administrative procedures that make the application of IEPs legally binding from Ministry of Education in charge of the programmes, nothing can be found in the school. The head teacher has only limited powers to decide disciplinary action against Specialist teachers in special schools.

Furthermore the other HT5 from School D noted the following

It's' because of low educational level of parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

One female TR1from school E indicated the following;

There has been an absence of the role of the school in the activation of parent participation in the application of the individual education programmes at school.

Additionally a female TR 1 from school A indicated the following;

There is no cohesion between the parents when it comes to the IEPs in the school, which is also regarded as just a waste of time for those parents

Another male from school B TR2 said*;*

The interaction between teachers and parents towards the writing of IEPs at school is weak.

Additionally another male TR 3 from school A indicated *that;*

It was the duty of the specialized teachers to teach the children with intellectual disabilities without bothering parents.

Furthermore, another male TR3 from school B said *that;*

It was the duty of the specialized teachers to make sure that the children are taught according to the way the teachers were trained at colleges without bothering the parents.

Female TR 4 from school C indicated that*:*

I believe that the parents do not like to be involved. Parents ignored dealing with the school concerning the application of the IEPs. These Parents are not fully aware of the impact of the IEPs on our students.

A male TR5 from school D said*;*

I think that the percentage of parental participation in the IEP represents a very low percentage. Most parents do not have sufficient and clear understanding of the purpose behind the individual educational programmes. There is a lack of interest on the part of the parents when it comes to involving them in IEPs.

One of the female TR6 from school E indicated the following:

There was a lack of parents' communication with the specialist teachers on IEPs. The parents usually miss out on the appointments.

Additionally another female TR7 from school A said**;**

I believe that the parents do not like to be involved. [...]. Some parents ignored dealing with the school authorities concerning their involvement the IEPs, [...]. Some of these parents are not fully aware of the benefits of the IEPs on the pupils.

A female TR8 from school B reacted by saying that

Work commitments make it extremely difficult for the Parents of intellectually challenged children to monitor their progress with the IEPs.

The findings revealed the following factors that affect parental involvement IEP; not being invited to IEP meetings, lack of knowledge on IEP issues by parents, lack of communication between school administrators and parents, busy work schedules, school administrators just imposed and lack of collaboration between school administrators and specialist teachers. Furthermore educational level of parents was another factor affecting parental involvement in IEP.

4.6 Summary of chapter four

The chapter covered presentations of findings. This chapter focused on the participants responses in schools. The presentations of findings indicated that majority of parents were not fully involved in IEP. The findings revealed that although parents attend meetings, they were usually passive and did not contribute to decision making processes. The findings further revealed that educators use terminologies that need to be interpreted for parents. The presentations indicated that most parents registered ignorance of IEP due to lack of communication between school administrators and teachers and communication barriers between school administrators and parents. It was revealed that parents were busy most of the times. It was revealed that school administrators imposed on parents and that most meetings called had different agendas. The benefits revealed parents followed the progress of children's work, performance in class improved, led to higher educational expectations and help was sought from parents.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

The objective of this chapter was to integrate findings of the research study, parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities. The chapter discusses findings in accordance with the four objectives of the study which were; To investigate parental awareness in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities, To investigate parental involvement of IEP selected special schools; and to establish the benefits of IEP in special schools in Lusaka and to establish factors that affect parental involvement in IEP in special schools in Lusaka Zambia.

5.2 Parental awareness of IEP

With regard to parental awareness of IEP, it was evident from the findings that most parents were not aware of IEP while other parents indicated that they had little knowledge about IEP meetings due to lack of communication by school administrators.

The findings were generally similar to Landmark et al. (2007) who revealed that lack of knowledge, informal employment and emotional difference makes parents not to be involved in IEP meetings. This was in agreement with the study done by Rock (2000)who found out that many parents possessed insufficient knowledge about special education. Their argument was that lack of knowledge or insufficient knowledge made parents to absent themselves from IEP meetings.

The study further revealed that parents were not aware of IEP meetings because they were not invited for IEP meetings though they would want to be part of the school meetings that pertain to the education of their children. They blamed the specialist teachers for poor communication. This was in line with Harnis, Epstein, Bursic, Nelson, (2001) and Munk et al (2001) who pointed out that parents complained that teachers do not initiate enough communication and they fail to communicate with parents until problems worse.

Furthermore Munk et al (2001) pointed out the factors which attribute to communication problems between teachers and parents of children receiving special education services include having insufficient opportunities to communicate, differences in attitudes and expectations, and lack of teacher knowledge pertaining to students receiving special education services.

The researcher observed that parents were not invited for IEP meetings and even if they were invited they did not know their roles. The study revealed that parents were not aware of IEP. The researcher established similar responses from head teachers and specialist teachers. Low levels of education among parents made them not to be comfortable to speak out and ask questions or rather interact easily with other parents during IEP meetings. Some parents had limited formal education or were not exposed to school. Parents expressed that the school administration had not explained the importance of IEP and that it was the responsibility of the teachers to educate children.

In several studies, parents shared the relationship between feelings of empowerment and knowledge about procedures and special education practices (Beth, 2008). For example, parents who gave themselves high rates of participation in the IEP process also rated themselves as more empowered in the areas of family, the child services system, and special education laws (Jivanjee et al., 2007).

One FP pointed out the following;

> *I am ready and quite interested in participating in IEP, but I do not have experience in the process. This is because the school administration has not explained the importance of the IEP. Neither the parents nor the IEP team have enough knowledge about the available opportunities for IEP.*

5.3 Parental Involvement in IEP

The participants were asked to establish the extent of parental involvement in IEP. In this study, the data was obtained through discussions revealed that parents were not involved in

IEP. The study revealed that parents were not fully involved in IEP because they believed they should not interfere with the work of the specialist teachers who were experts in teaching students. This was contrary with findings done by Goodman (1993) who found out that in the United States of America's parents were by law equal partners on their child's IEP team and they believed that intimate knowledge of their child's strengths, struggles and development is valuable. They also believed that the school cannot develop, change or implement the IEP without the parents' consent.

A female TR1 from school 1 had this to say:

> *Parents here believe that the school is directly responsible for the education*
>
> *of their children and knowledge of the individual education programmes is*
>
> *not there.*

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the parents did not fully participate fully in IEP meetings because they did not understand the technical terms used in IEP meetings to describe their children. The study further more revealed that parents withheld their questions as lacked the knowledge about the educational jargon or the technical terms used during the IEP meeting and they did not interfere with work of the teachers.

The findings of the study were also in line with Goldstein, (1993) who pointed out that many parents feel un-equipped to address their educational needs of their children as they are unable to understand special education jargon and terminology .The study further more revealed that parents withheld their questions as lacked the knowledge about the IEP process The researcher observed that parent participation may be low due to educational jargon or the technical terms used during the formation of the objectives. The findings were in support with those of Defur (2003) who found out that Parents often feel unwelcome and their roles minimized, especially when educators use jargon to describe their children. Furthermore, the

findings of the study were also in line with Vaughn, Bos, Harrell, and Lasky's (1988) observational study of parents' participation in initial IEP meetings that showed that school staff's interaction with parents was minimal and that few parents asked questions during the IEP meetings. Overall, parents played a passive role in the meetings.

The researcher observed that parent participation might have been low due to their not being satisfied with the existing services and lack of knowledge about the IEP process and the terms used during IEP meetings. As a result very few parents participated actively during the formation of objectives for their children. This was in line with Rock (2000) who pointed out that parents feel ill equipped in making educational decisions regarding their children
One FP noted the following:

> *Iyeee, the school appears not to be aware that there is a need for the participation of parents in the IEPs. The main reason for this may be due to the teachers" lack of confidence in the parents ability to participate in a positive way… they keep using terms from books they have studied.*

Parents who fully participated in the IEP reported that school personnel had a positive attitude towards their children and family, a few parents stated that teachers spoke down on them. The parents who were fully involved indicated that they had the support from school personnel to invite friends or relatives to their child's IEP meetings and that the school personnel paid attention to their opinions about their children's needs. The parents received suggestions from teachers about how to help their children at home, and some of the parents who were not fully involved thought that teachers understood their family's culture or lifestyle.

Although, some studies showed positive findings of parents being valued during IEP meetings, Defur, (2003) observed that Parents often felt unwelcome and other roles

minimized, especially when educators use jargon to describe their children. The current research revealed that some IEP meetings did not encourage parental participation.

5.4 Benefits of IEP

With regard to benefits of IEP in special schools, it was revealed that IEP provided a tailor made program that suited the needs of a child furthermore IEP allowed parents to incorporate other needed therapies such as speech therapy part of the students school programme and lead to higher educational expectance.

A MP1 said:

> *I remember the moment I felt that teachers appreciated our effort to help…This was so rewarding! That's the moment I knew that the goals prescribed in the IEP would be implemented in class.*

The research findings were similar with (Englund 2009) who found that the academic results and the social well-being of students improved when parents were involved in the IEP process.

The researcher observed that IEPs guided teachers in their teaching in that they were able to teach the work planned for each pupil by task analysing and raising pupil's performance in that each pupil was taught according to his or her potential. Specialist teachers taught with a free mind knowing that parents had agreed on objectives their children had to attain in a specified timeframe.

The results are similar with (Stoner and Shelden2009) who found that as parents become more involved and empowered in the IEP process outcomes for students improve. Kamens (2004 found similar results states that one benefit of IEP was that it was result oriented and time sensitive by clearly stating the short terms objectives and measurable annual goals as well as report the pupils.

In exploring what IEPs are for children with intellectual disability, programmes are customized for Education teachers, professionals offering special services. Such as occupational therapists, psychologists, speech pathologists and the parents of the child. The IEP occupies an important place in the field of special education in general and in that of intellectual disability in particular, because it is viewed as the cornerstone of special educational provision appropriate for students with special needs and their learning (Stoner and Shelden, 2009).

Furthermore, the findings were consistent with those of McLaughlin et al. (1991), in a study in Ohio that was aimed at establishing individualized education programs for pupils with intellectual disabilities, which indicated that IEP prepared and used with an input from members of the IEP team especially parents enabled teachers to recognize pupils' abilities and skills and tailor the education program to pupils' individual needs. This in turn enabled pupils to achieve challenging education goals.

Ingber (2010) state that a sustained mutual collaboration, support and participation of school staff and families are required for a successful school-family partnership and children's learning. Although the success of this partnership is difficult to reach, it is important to note that the benefits to students and their educational success depends on all parties in order to sustain the school-family partnerships.

From this study it is evident that, the children were able perform activities for daily living, acquire prevocational skills read, add, subtract, divide and multiply with little help from the parents. They also indicated that the children were able to perform various household chores such as cooking a variety of food stuff, making things using the skills they acquired at school. It would therefore be argued that when parents are involved in Individualized Educational Programmes of their children with intellectual disabilities it enables children with intellectual

disabilities to acquire skills needed in their everyday life. This is in line with the ecological theory which emphasizes the importance of parental participation in the education of their children to ensure that children are provided with necessary support both at home and school. Although the benefits of involving parents in IEP are well documented however, majority of the parents in the sampled schools in Lusaka District did not take advantage of the opportunities to participate in the IEP meetings. This trend disadvantaged a lot of children with intellectual disabilities in that they were not exposed to acceptable levels of education to meet their individual needs which led to limited ability to acquire appropriate skills necessary for self-reliance and independent living.

5.5 Factors that Affect Parental Involvement in IEP

The participants were asked to indicate the factors surrounding parental involvement in IEP. The majority of the parents indicated that they were not invited for any meetings involving IEP. They also said that the school administrators just imposed things on parents. Lack of collaboration between school administrators and specialist teachers, parents or guardians were busy, parents not were invited for IEP meetings, parents said that the only meetings they are invited were those concerning Parents Teachers Association meetings (PTA) with a different agenda. The other points raised by parents was that the meetings came at wrong times when they were busy.

The school administrators just imposed

From the findings it was revealed that the parents said that the school administrators just imposed.

One FP said;

> *Teachers just impose on us what we are supposed to do, there is no*
> *dialogue. For instance one teacher said sir, just go ahead and turn to*

the next page. Your son's first goal we have right here is that he will improve his reading skills by when level2 and may be reading at least 12 words a minute in level 3. So we not saying that he will be reading in level 3, but we at least want to give him words and expose him to things that are in level 3….okay?

Work schedules

The study revealed that parents indicated that the meetings came at wrong times when they were busy. This is consistent with a study done by Friesen et.al (1990) that parents who work may have difficulty which are usually scheduled during working hours.

A female TR1 from school B said the following:

Work commitments make it extremely difficult for the Parents of intellectually challenged children to monitor their progress with the IEPs. Most of the parents have challenge to be so committed with IEP meetings during the week….You know work schedules.

The researcher observed that time permission was a factor. For instance Most of the parents indicated that permission is not easily granted where they work even those that are in self-employment like marketeers and businesspersons could not leave their work stations as they have to work all day. Parents of children with disabilities often have labour –intensive work schedules which limited their ability to attend IEP meetings.

Educational Jargon

From the findings of the study it was revealed parents of children with intellectual disabilities do not understand educational jargon. One male parent said:

The specialist teachers during the IEP meetings use terms when describing children,' performance which I do not understand. The IE P meetings are loaded with words that I don't and they fond of. It made to be anxious as I wanted the meanings of the words.

Goldstein (1993) noted many parents feel un-equipped to address their educational needs of their children as they were unable to understand special education jargon and terminology. On the whole, the findings showed that parent benefited little and would not participate because of the educational terms used by teachers. For instance, a male parent observed that parents did not easily get to understand the meaning of the words that used during IEP meetings in relation to the issue from the parent this is similar to the findings of The findings of the study were also in line with Goldstein, (1993) who pointed out that many parents feel un-equipped to address their educational needs of their children as they were unable to understand special education jargon and terminology and Defur (2003) who stated that Parents often felt unwelcome and their roles minimized, especially when educators use jargon to describe their children. These two explanations were likely to discourage parents from becoming actively involved in their children's education. The school personnel believed that educational jargon limits parent's ability to understand their children's educational development.

Collaboration between specialist teachers and parents

From the findings of the study revealed that there was lack of collaboration between the parents and specialist teachers.

One parent indicated the following:

> *I blame the school because the specialist teachers are not very co-operative*
>
> *mm...*

These findings were generally in agreement with Kroth& Edge, (2007), Rudiger, (2007) Stoner et al., (2005) and Landmark et al. (2007) who conducted studies on the importance of collaboration between parents and educators. Their argument was that parents believed that some educators failed to understand the significance of parental

participation as many have seen unsuccessful in positive collaboration and facilitating successful parental involvement to creating a common perspective for a child's educational. The researcher observed that parent-teacher collaboration was a problem to parents to participate actively in IEP meetings. The school had been unsuccessful in building quality relationships with parents.

Lack of English proficiency

With regard to the use of English, during IEP meetings, minority of parents indicated that they were not able to express themselves well in English which is used as an official language. One female parent expressed that she feels embarrassed to speak in IEP meetings using vernacular when others are speaking in English. Most parents among those who were fully involved used English language to communicate directly with their children's teachers and those in peri-urban schools teachers used local language or used an interpreter to communicate with school staff during IEP meetings. A few of those parents who used local language to communicate with school staff during IEP meetings felt uncomfortable asking questions because of their limited English skills. Lack of English proficiency was one of the most salient barriers to parental involvement in IEP.

These findings were in consistent with Kent (2013) who revealed that Hispanic parents in the United States did not participate in school activities and did not attend IEP meetings because of their cultural backgrounds and lack of English proficiency.

However, it was clear from the findings that parents had mixed feelings on whether or not they should be addressed in the official language.

Lack of communication between school administrators and parents of children with intellectual disabilities

With regard to effective communication during IEP meetings, parents hold the view communication is essential in providing best possible programs for students receiving special education service. The data collected revealed that communication between school administrators and parents was poor.

The researcher observed that parents had less opportunities to communicate with their child's teachers during IEP meetings, and that parents never received invitations to visit the child's school for different events, not just for the IEP meetings. Parents indicated that the only time they were invited was during PTA meetings when they are asked to contribute some money towards the running of the schools.

Invitations for IEP meetings

From the study parents, it was revealed that most parents attended meetings but would not say or contribute anything. They preferred being passive throughout the sessions to being put in the spot light for saying that are not related to IEP. Goldstein, et al (1993) pointed out that although, parents attended IEP meetings, but they had no involvement in developing objectives or interventions. One parent said that;

> *I did not have any role to play because I had not been informed or invited by the school to participate in the IEP process. I can't say I was that active...we had a phone conference, but it was mostly the two* specialist teache*rs telling me what they observed about boy and what additional help he would need and asked me where I would like to see him in the future and I told them, if that's what you mean.*

Most specialist teachers indicated that not all the parents were involved fully. They said that when a child was being enrolled all parents are given a programmes for that particular academic calendar showing all the details which parents should follow. Teachers were also

encouraged to exchange mobile phone numbers with parents at a personal level. Reminders are also sent to parents for any IEP meetings through the children.

However, both the head teachers and specialized teachers mentioned that the majority of parents did not show up for any activities such as IEP meetings and workshops organized by the school.

5.6 Summary of the chapter

The findings focused on the discussions of findings regarding parental involvement in IEP .The findings were that majority of parents were not fully involved. The presentations of findings indicated that majority of parents were not fully involved in IEP. The findings revealed that although parents attended the IEP meetings they were usually passive and did not contribute to decision making process. The findings further revealed that educators use terminologies that need to be interpreted for parents. The presentations indicated that most parents registered ignorance of IEP due to lack of communication between school administrators and teachers. It was revealed that parents are busy most of the times. It was revealed that school administrators impose on parents and that most meeting called had different agendas. The benefits revealed that the benefits of IEP included parents following the progress of children's work, performance in class improved and help was sought from parents.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion on both the literature reviewed in the study and the study conducted. The recommendations based on the findings with guidelines for future research.

6.2 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to investigate parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka. The following were the other objectives: to investigate parental awareness of IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka; to establish the extent of parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka; to ascertain the benefits of IEP in special schools in Lusaka; to establish factors that affect parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities in selected special schools of Lusaka.

With regard to parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities, the findings of the study revealed that parents were not fully involved in the Individualised Educational Programmes in special schools. Eleven out of thirty parents registered ignorance of Individualised Educational Programmes. The factors that affect parental involvement in individualised Educational Programmes were communication barriers between school administrators and parents, parents busy work schedules not being invited to Individualised Educational meetings, School administrators impose on parents what should be about their children ,language barrier by some parents, level education background of parents, belief by parents not to interfere with teachers' work and lack of collaboration between parents and specialist teachers. The Benefits of Individualised Educational Programmes established in the study included, parents easily following the progress of the children in school, teachers easily

getting help from parents and children reaching educational goals more easily, a tailor made programme that suits the needs of a child allowing parents to incorporate other needed therapies as part of the students school programme.

It was evident that the majority of parents/guardians with children with intellectual disabilities are not involved in the IEP in Lusaka. Parents brought out many factors that attributed to them not being involved in the IEP. These include:

6.3 Recommendations

1. MOGE should constantly send Special Education Standards Officers to monitor whether school administrators together with specialist teachers organize IEP meetings with the parents and monitor if parents are involved in the education of their children with intellectual disabilities.

2. The uniform IEP should also be prepared and applied to cover all intellectual education institutes.

3. The IEP team to review the document on regular basis and make changes, accommodate progress,

4. MOGE should engage interpreters to interpret into languages parents would understand during the IEP meetings.

5. Specialist teachers should not use terms that are ambiguous during the meetings.

6. School systems should ensure meeting days are held on days or times that are convenient to parents.

6.4 Future Research

This study was aimed at investigating parental involvement in the IEP in selected Special Schools in Lusaka province.

Future studies in relation to this study should be conducted in all provinces to ascertain the extent to which school administrators and specialist teachers involved the parents/guardians in the education of children with intellectual disabilities.

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APPENDIX: A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SOCIOLOGY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dear respondent,

This is an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your participation are explained below .You are asked to sign this form to indicate that you have agreed to participate in this exercise.

Thank you in advance.

Description

The exercise is an educational research; the researcher is a student at the University of Zambia pursuing masters of education in special Education. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete her programme. This purely academic.

Purpose

The study seeks to investigate Parental Involvement IEP for children with intellectual disabilities. The researcher is interested in Parental awareness of IEP factors affecting parental involvement for children with intellectual disabilities and benefits of IEP

Consent

Participation in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise.

Confidentiality

All data collected from this research is treated with utmost confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

Rights of Respondents

All effort will be taken to ensure that the rights of participants are protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform they researcher if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

Declaration of consent

I have read and fully understood this document .I therefore agree to participate in this exercise

Signature…………………………………………Date…………………………………………………

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire for School administrators.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SOCIOLOGY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dear Respondent,

You have been selected to participating in providing information for research. Parental Involvement Individualised education plans in Special School in Lusaka The information collected will help to establish the reasons for not preparing and using individualised education plans by majority

The information obtained from this study shall be treated with high confidentiality and your

name will not be published in the document. Kindly provide honest answers by being truthfully. Do not consult your friends but you are free to consult the researcher on questions

which you feel are not clear.

Instructions:

(a) Tick in the appropriate box for your response to the questions or statements with boxes in the questionnaire.

(b) Write brief responses to questions that are in this questionnaire in the spaces provided.

Introduction

I am student conducting a research study entitled Parental Involvement Individualized Education Programme in for children with intellectual disabilities special schools.

Your School has been selected to participate in providing information. Be informed that all the information that you shall give shall be treated with strict confidentiality.

Instructions

- Do not write your name on this questionnaire.
- Put the answer in the space provided
- Respond to all questions
- You are free to participate in this study or not

SECTION A: BIO DATA

(1) Gender -male [   ] female [   ]

(2) Years of experience of teaching. [ ] Below 5 years   [ ] 6-10 [ ] 10-15 [ ] 16+

(3) What is your qualification? [ ] Diploma [ ] Bachelors Degree [ ] Masters Degree [ ] Doctorate

(4) What is your age range? [ ] below 25 [ ] 26 -30 [ ] 31-35 [ ] 35 -40 [ ] 40+

SECTION B

Extent of parental involvement IEP

1. What is the level of parental involvement in IEP?

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Awareness on IEP

2. What is the level of parental awareness on IEP?

SECTION C:

Factors that hinder parental involvement in Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) for Children with intellectual disabilities in Lusaka district.

(1) Does the school have policy on IEP? yes [   ] no [   ]
(2) Does the school involve parents in preparing an IEP ?yes [   ] no [   ]

2 (a) If your answer to question 3 is "**yes"**, please explain how parents are involved

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2(b) If your answer to question 3 is "**No"** , please explain why parents are not involved

(3) Using the boxes below, Rate the level of parental involvement in IEP

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very poor	Not sure

(4) What has been the response of parents from their participation in the IEP

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(5) What are the factors that have affected parental participation in the IEP?

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(6) Based on your own experience in teaching children with intellectual disabilities, what is your personal opinion regarding the implementation of IEP?

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(7) What hinders parental involvement in IEP?

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(8) Do parents have difficulty understanding their role in children's education?...
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(9) What measures have been put in place to ensure parental participation in IEP?

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10) Do parents feel ill equipped to address the educational needs of their children as they are unable to understand special education terminologies?

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SECTION D: Benefits of parental Involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities.

7) What are the benefits of IEP for parents with intellectual disabilities?

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 (9) How can parents and teachers work together to improve IEP?

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(10) Should educators provide parents with IEP forms in advance to think about issues to be discussed at the meetings?

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12) What measures has the school in put in place or can put in place to see it that parents formulate objectives and goals in IEP?

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(13) Does training parents in the procedures of the IEP enhance participation in the IEP process?

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THE END

Thank you for participating in this study.

APPENDIX C: Interview guide for specialist teachers

1. What is the level of parental involvement?

2. What is the level of parental awareness on IEP? What hinders parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities?

3. Does language barrier result in lower levels of parental knowledge of special education?

4. Do you feel educators dominate the decisions making process regarding IEP?

5. Does knowledge with parents about special education procedures have any effect on IEP?

6. Does the implementation of IEP have any benefits on pupils with intellectual disabilities?

7. What factors that may improve mutual communication between the parents of children with intellectual disabilities?

8. Can participation of parents in special education practices workshops increase knowledge on terms used during IEP meetings?

9. Should educators treat parents as equal partners during IEP meetings?

10. What is the purpose of the IEP?

11. Can positive relations between parents and teachers benefit children with intellectual disabilities?

12. Do you have any comment/suggestions you would like to make on IEP ?

THE END

Thank you for participating in the study

APPENDIX D: Focus group discussion for parents of children with intellectual disabilities

Introduction

I am a student carrying out a study on Parental Involvement in Individualized Education Programme (IEP) in special schools for a Master's Degree at the University of Zambia. In this interview, I would like to learn about how your awareness and involvement in parental involvement in IEP of your child .There are no right or wrong answers as I am only interested in your opinions I would like to assure that your answers to my .

(1)What knowledge do you know about IEP?

(2) What hinders parental involvement in IEP for children with intellectual disabilities?

(3) Does knowledge with parents about special education procedures have any effect on IEP?

(4) What are the benefits of IEP for parents of children with intellectual disabilities?

(5) Can participation of parents in special education practices workshops increase knowledge on terms used during IEP meetings?

(6) Should educators treat parents as equal partners during IEP meetings?

(7) Can positive relations between parents and teachers benefit children with intellectual disabilities?

(8) How can parents and teachers work to improve IEP?

(9) Should parents consider themselves as equal partners in IEP?

(10) What changes would you desire in the IEP meetings?

(11) What are the benefits of parental involvement in IEP?

(12) Do you have any comments /suggestions you would like to make on parental involvement in IEP?

THE END

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY