CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research results from the data gathered from the thirteen educators who took part in the study will be shown. These results will then be discussed in the context of the research questions for this study. This chapter’s outline conforms to the lay out of the questionnaire i.e. biographical information of the sample, demographic of the sample’s work and analysis of statements.

4.2 Interpretation of the Biographical Information of the Sample

4.2.1 Gender

The majority, 69% (9) of the participants were female and 31% (4) were male. As such the responses could be biased towards female educators’ attitudes and beliefs. However, as there are more female than male educators in the school (1:3) the study is reflective of staff demographics. See Figure 1.
4.2.2 Age

Of the 13 participants 61% (8) educators were aged between 30 and 39 years, 23% (3) educators were aged between 40 and 49 years, 8% (1) educator was aged between 20 and 29 years, and 8% (1) educator was 50 or above. This meant that the majority (69%) of educators who took part in the survey started teaching either soon after or just before the new democracy came into power in 1994. See Figure 2. The remaining participants (31%) had started teaching under the apartheid system.
4.2.3 Race

Seven of the participants (54%) classified themselves as African/Black, educators. Two of the participants were White. Three were Coloureds and one was Indian. See Figure 3. Although there was an attempt to find a representative sample, the majority of the participants were Black. This was expected and is in line with South African demographics and government equity policies.

![Racial spread](image)

Figure 3: Racial spread of the participants

4.3 Interpretation of the Work Demographics

4.3.1 Training

The majority of participants, 47% (6) educators, had both a college diploma and a university degree. These were Black and Coloured educators who had qualified prior to 1994 and held an M+3 qualification, meaning matric plus three years of tertiary
qualification. They subsequently have upgraded their diploma status in the field of education. 38% (5) educators had only a college qualification. The remaining participants 15% (2) had university qualification. All participants had 4+ years tertiary qualification, as is expected for educators in South Africa. See Figure 4.

![Pie chart of education qualifications](image)

Figure 4: Education spread of the participants

### 4.3.2 Position Held at School

The majority of the participants, 84% (11), held teaching posts at the school while of the other participants, one held a head of department post and one a deputy principal post. The high number of educators is considered a positive aspect in this study as educators have more contact with learners in the classroom and if they taught immigrant learners and xenophobia prevailed in the classrooms, they would be the ones who experienced it most. See Figure 5.
4.3.3 Experience

Participants’ teaching experience was grouped into various categories: 0-4, 5-10, 11-15, 16-20, 20 and more years. 8% (1) of educators had between 16 to 20 years teaching experience. The other participants 92% (12) were evenly distributed between 0-4, 5-10, 11-15 and 20 years and more with each category having 23% (3) educators. See Figure 6.
4.3.4 Phase of Teaching

The majority of the participants, i.e. 47% (6) educators taught in the intermediate phase of the school, meaning from grades 4 to grades 6. 38% (5) of educators in the foundation phase teaching grades 1 to grades 3. Significance being that educators of grades 1 to 3 teach foundations of language and numeracy while educators in the intermediate and senior phases are expected to build onto the foundation already laid which may suggest that it would be more difficult to integrate immigrant learners in these higher phases. The remaining 15% (2) of educators taught both the intermediate and the senior phases grades 4 to 7. See Figure 7.

![phase of teaching](image)

Figure 7: Respondents according to the phase they teach

The data showed that different educators with different levels of qualifications and different experience teaching were willing to take part in the study.
4.4 Analysis of Statements

Statements from the second section of the questionnaire were divided into categories in order to make the process of analysis easier; these categories were the educators’ perceptions and the educators’ attitudes. These were further divided into positive and negative statements within two categories and participants’ responses were discussed in detail with the educators who took part in the survey to clarify answers and to determine consistency.

4.4.1 Educators’ Perceptions

The analysis concentrated on elaborating on statements, which the researcher felt were significant to the study. The statements reflecting educators’ perceptions and attitudes towards teaching immigrant learners looked at how the educators saw themselves in their profession and what they think their impact on the immigrant learners in their classrooms is. Table 1, below shows the statements as they related to the educators’ perceptions as respondents in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% Never</th>
<th>% Hardly ever</th>
<th>% Sometimes</th>
<th>% Often</th>
<th>% Always</th>
<th>% Nil response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The high learner /educator ratio in my classes affect the quality of my teaching</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I see myself as an approachable teacher.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Statements related to the educators’ perceptions.
It is interesting that the majority, 62% of respondents see themselves as approachable teachers, (Statement four). None of the respondents see themselves as unapproachable, and only 8%, said they sometimes are approachable and sometimes not. The majority of the educators, 54% responded by saying ‘sometimes’ for the knowledge of language of instruction affecting their quality of teaching (Statement five). This was very significant in that the rest of the responses were evenly distributed. This might mean that the majority of educators found that the knowledge of the language of instruction has an impact in the quality of their teaching. However, the educators did not commit themselves or were indecisive about how this impacted on their teaching or the fact that language can be a barrier to learning.

For statements ten and twenty-four, 1 of the respondents chose not to respond as this particular educator does not give homework and therefore could not respond to a statement of homework. The educator who chose not to respond to Statement twenty-four found it difficult to separate his/her social life from his/her work and reclined to answer as he/she was uncertain of the effectiveness of the answer. The rest of the responses for these two items were evenly distributed indicating that 50% of the remaining sample believed the work situation to impact on their social lives, which 50% believed it did not.

The majority of respondents, 77% of the sample, indicated that they are sometimes able to support learners in their classrooms who experience barriers to learning, (Statement fourteen). This unusually high response in the sample could be contributed to the fact that most educators in the sample were not fully aware of the term barriers to learning, but
they nevertheless felt that they did support their learners. Statement nineteen supported
the idea that the majority of the respondents, (54%) enhanced and developed their
learners’ self esteem.

Generally most of the statements (Statements 1, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13) were responded to
evenly, meaning that there were no significantly high or significantly low responses. The
researcher also looked at the negative and the positive statements, which depicted
educators’ perceptions.

Statements 1, 5, 6, 7, and 24 were negative statements and the data indicates that the
majority of the respondents would not commit to these statements. They preferred to
select the mean or ‘sometimes’ responses.

Statements 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 19 were positive statements regarding educators’
perceptions, respondents were more inclined to select the positive choices of ‘often’.
‘always’ and sometimes.

In general the responses were disappointing as the participants tended to settle for the
middle option on the 5-point Likert Scale without taking time to reflect or willingly
appraise themselves either positively or negatively. However, where it was mainly Black
educators who took the mean road it appears as though they may be historical
socio/political and cultural influences impacting on these responses. It is culturally not
easy for a Black person to voice out their feelings, this could be based on the fact that they were never given a chance to do so and they were never listened to prior 1994.

### 4.4.2 Educators’ Attitudes

According to The Collins Compact Dictionary of the English Language edited by McLeod (1984: 32), attitude is defined as “the mental view, an opinion, disposition or behaviour”. Based on the above definition the analysis below looked at statements, which defined aspects of educators’ attitudes and included elements of how educators felt towards their work and their learners. The data for these is outlined in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% Never</th>
<th>% Hardly ever</th>
<th>% Sometimes</th>
<th>% Often</th>
<th>% Always</th>
<th>% Nil response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I find it difficult to deal with children who have learning difficulties.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I find it difficult to deal with children who have reading difficulties.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I attend workshops / seminars / meetings on inclusion.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Administrative activities affect the quality of my teaching.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I help learners from different language backgrounds to expand their use of English.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Statements related to the educators’ attitudes

The majority, (92%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes found it difficult to deal with children who have learning difficulties, Statement two. Only one educator, (8%) indicated his / her difficulty in dealing with learners who have learning difficulties. This was a white, male educator whose home language is Afrikaans. He was between the ages of 30 – 39 years old. This educator had been teaching for 11 – 15 years and he taught in the intermediate phase. The educator stated that by this phase all learners, even immigrant learners are expected to have mastered the basics.
The rest, i.e. 92% did not commit. This was a significant finding as it could be regarded as an indicator that the majority of respondents had little or no understanding of how important language was and the fact that it could present as a barrier to learning. This could be that some educators did not know that the lack of language in instruction constitutes towards a learning difficulty. Some educators expressed that they thought that learning difficulties were physical challenges and that language was not a barrier to learning.

Some educators (38%) indicated that they were not equipped to deal with these learners because they are not remedial specialists. These educators, not understanding that language constitutes a learning barrier, thought that such learners should be sent to a remedial class or a remedial school. This is the case with statement three, which was about reading difficulties that learners might have. 77% of the respondents would not commit themselves to revealing their opinions.

Most respondents to Statement seventeen, (54%) indicated that they used different teaching and learning techniques to help their learners to learn and think creatively. This means that the majority of educators try to accommodate different learners through their teaching styles. This could be a reflection of a positive attitude on the side of educators towards learners with differences. This could also be said about statement twenty-two, where the majority of educators (54%), stated that they always consider themselves lucky to be able to help learners. As teaching is considered one of the ‘helping professions’, such a response was expected to some extent.
Generally with regards the statements depicting educators’ attitudes, responses for Statements twelve, fifteen, sixteen, eighteen, twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-three were evenly distributed. As in the previous analysis on perceptions there was a noted trend towards the middle, primarily towards the negative Statements 2, 3, 15, 21, 23, and 25.

Educators found it easier to commit to positive statements. Such as in Statements 12, which was about attending workshops on inclusion; Statement 16, which was about helping learners from different language backgrounds to expand their use of English; Statement 17, which was about using different teaching techniques to help learners learn creatively; Statement 18, which was about using different approaches to improve the language and learning skills of the learners; Statement 20, which was about being able to adjust their teaching to different styles to accommodate all their learners; and Statement 22, which was about considering themselves lucky to be able to help their learners. Respondents could respond by using ‘always’ for some statements. Basically the data confirmed the fact that educators found it easier to commit themselves to the positive statements of the questionnaire as opposed to the negative statements attitudes.

In the following section the elicited themes from the semi-structured interviews were grouped and discussed and where relevant the data from the questionnaires was integrated.
4.5 Overall Description of Research Results

Based on the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews certain themes were identified. These included: i) language having an impact in the learning and teaching process; ii) parents not being fully supportive of learners’ education; educators not being supported by the authorities; iii) educators not being adequately trained to deal with the challenges they face in multilingual/multicultural classrooms they are put in; and iv) educators not being aware of the availability of policies in place in their school regarding inclusion and immigrant children.

This study indicates that educators in public schools have negative perceptions and attitudes towards immigrant learners. Educators across gender, age and teaching experience felt that they were not completely adequately equipped to deal with immigrant learners in their classroom. Educators also felt that there was a lack of communication between them at grass roots level and the authorities at the Department of Education. This was said by one of the respondents to the researcher, “...the Department does not understand what we have to deal with here in the classroom, maybe they should try and come sit in the classroom for a week and experience what we go through with these children from Africa” (Anonymous Participant). The semi-structured interviews also revealed that educators felt unsupported and had been inadequately trained to deal with inclusion practises at a classroom level.

Some educators (31%) felt that immigrant learners were the troublemakers in their classrooms. “They tend to be stirrers, talkative, restless and bored. It seems like they
come to school because they have to come” (Participant). These educators felt that immigrant learners behaved better before they could speak the language and as soon as they have a better understanding of the language of instruction they “become arrogant and stirrers in the classrooms”.

In general, 77% of the educators who took part in the study had negative attitudes towards immigrant learners. Educators also felt that the parents of immigrant learners needed to be seen in order to discuss their children’s progress. This was apparently not happening in probability due to the fact that many of the parents themselves cannot speak or understand English the language of instruction in the school where the study took place. These are mainly immigrant learner and parents from the DRC and/or Angola who speak French and/or Portuguese. “When we call parents in, they either do not come or if they do the same child who is a trouble maker or who battles with the language has to try and translate to the parents while you talk to them” (Participant). The educators who participated in the study also felt that it could be helpful for the school’s authorities to discuss immigrant policies with them and not just keep them in the offices. Educators who participated in the study also felt that if the school had its own immigrant policy, such a policy would be of benefit to both educators and immigrant learners.

In the concluding chapter the shortcomings and limitations of the study are provided. The researcher will also provide limited recommendations for further study and give a brief conclusion of the current study.