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Parental Attitudes towards, and their Understanding of, Barriers to Learning and Development

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School of Human and Community Development

Psychology

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Supervisor

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Educational Psychology in the Department of Psychology, School of Human and Community Development, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Date

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education, a system adopted in post-apartheid South Africa, is an education system which seeks to protect the rights of all learners, irrespective of the barriers to learning and development which they may be facing. It is based on the premise that all learners have the right to an education, and that the education system needs to ensure that they have the appropriate systems in place to ensure that this right is protected. Barriers to learning and development impedes the learning process, and they need to be addressed in order for the basic need of education to be met. One of the key stakeholders in overcoming barriers to learning and development, and ensuring the successful implementation of inclusive education, are parents.

This exploratory and descriptive qualitative study aimed to explore the manner in which parents conceptualise barriers to learning and development, and their attitudes towards them. Seven parents participated in individual interviews, and the data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Participants were parents of school-going children, who had placed their child in one specific mainstream school in Lenasia. The analysis of the interviews revealed that parents hold an overall positive view of inclusive education, but that this perception shifts to a more negative one in light of considering the impact it might have on their own children. Parents are also able to identify barriers to learning and development being faced by the general population of learners in South Africa; these included language and cultural barriers, socio-economic deprivation, transport barriers, as well as large classrooms, and a lack of discipline within classrooms. Most of the participants' responses regarding the barriers to learning being faced by their own children related to barriers within the chosen school, such as teacher attitude and teacher competence, as well as a perceived lack of support from the school. Finally, parents regarded parental involvement as a central contributing factor to the successful education of their children.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Barriers to Learning and Development, Attitudes, Perceptions, Parents.*

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PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS, AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF, BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

South Africa is a country rich in history, and many of the policy reforms experienced since 1994 aim to redress the difficulties which exist because of the past. One of the difficulties that emerged was the disparity within the education system resulting in a post-apartheid goal within South Africa to see the successful implementation of inclusive education. The successful implementation of inclusive education would in part require the addressing of barriers to learning and development which learners may face, as outlined in the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education (DoE), 2001). Furthermore, the success of inclusive education is dependent on the continuous effort from all members of society.

According to the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), "everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (p. 14). Because of this basic right, the imperative of education in South Africa is to promote and build an inclusive society. According to the Education White Paper 6 (2001), an inclusive society is one which promotes optimal learning for all learners, and seeks to eradicate any form of discrimination (Department of Education, 2001; Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2016). Therefore, the education system went under transformation in order to promote a fair society, where inclusive education was implemented (Department of Education, 2001).

Inclusive education is an education system which embodies the principle of equity and seeks to ensure that all learners are provided with a quality education (Department of Education, 2001; Engelbrecht et al., 2016). Due to the suggestion made by the Education White Paper 6 (2001), that "learning disabilities arise from the education system rather than the learner" (p. 12), it was imperative that this transformation of the education system took place (Department of Education, 2001). This involved an adaptation of the curriculum, in order to ensure that it meets the requirements of a range of learning needs. In doing so, a key

factor that needs to be addressed is barriers to learning and development (Department of Education, 2001).

Barriers to learning and development can be described as the obstacles which exist in various places such as the education system itself, the place of learning, or difficulties which are a part of the learner themselves. Moreover, these difficulties then become a part of the learning process and development within the learner (Department of Basic Education, 2010). Barriers to learning and development can present themselves in various forms, and some of these are outlined in The Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (Department of Basic Education (DoBE), 2010).

The Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (DoBE, 2010), states that barriers to learning and development include "social issues, negative attitudes, lack of acceptance, unfavourable socio-economic factors, lack of community involvement, lack of parental recognition, and lack of parental participation" (p. 12). In addition to that, the Education White Paper 6 (2001) mentions how barriers to learning and development can emerge from multiple sources. These include "physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psycho-social disturbances, differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation" (p. 10). Therefore, barriers to learning and development go beyond the concept of disability. In addressing barriers to learning in various schooling systems, inclusive education can become more attainable because through diminishing barriers to learning, a much larger number of learners will have an access to education (Department of Education, 2001).

The success of inclusive education lies with a number of stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, the school and learners themselves, amongst others (Department of Education, 2001; Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001). However, this research will focus on the role of the parents, because this role has been highlighted in the policy documents pertaining to inclusive education as one which can be instrumental in successfully implementing inclusive education.

The Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning have identified parents as a major contributor to the implementation of inclusive education. Because of this, they can also be identified as a key stakeholder in the building of an inclusive society (DoBE, 2010). The Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning highlights the imperative of parental

recognition and participation, suggesting that parents have a central role to play in the successful implementation of inclusive education.

This research particularly focuses on parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development as a factor in the successful implementation of inclusive education. It is important to understand parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development because parental attitudes have an influence on the attitudes which will be adopted by their children. Children model the attitudes and behaviours of their parents. Furthermore, understanding parental attitudes towards barriers will help provide information on how parents view barriers and on what their needs are in the education system. It is important to understand this because parents play a role in inclusive education, as well as whether or not it will be a success (DoBE, 2010). The roles which parents play in the education of their children is influenced by their beliefs (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009).

1.2. Rationale

Studies on inclusive education have been conducted by Duhaney and Salend, (2000), Elkins, Kraayenoord, and Jobling, (2003), and Leyser and Kirk (2004), amongst others. While most of these studies have focused on teachers' and parents' attitudes to inclusive education, there is limited data on what parents perceive as a barrier to learning and development. Moreover, studies on inclusive education and parental attitudes most often appear to be surrounding parental attitudes to inclusive education for parents of children with physical barriers to learning and development specifically. However, as mentioned, there is a wide array of barriers to learning and development that learners face, and they extend beyond physical barriers to learning and development.

This leads to a gap in the research pertaining to an insufficient amount of studies which seek to gain information about parental perceptions and attitudes towards those who face a wider range of barriers to learning and development, than just those which are physical in nature. In addition to that, there is also limited research conducted on parents of typically-developing children. Moreover, the focus of existing research conducted on parents surround their understanding of, and perceptions of inclusive education (de Boer, Timmerman, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2012; Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Yssel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff & Swart., 2007). However, research on parental attitudes towards certain barriers to learning and development, as well as what they would consider a barrier to learning and development to

be, is limited and there appears to be no research on this, particularly in the South African context.

The South African schooling system seeks to successfully implement inclusive education, and it is imperative to gather information surrounding the important stakeholders who are needed for inclusive education to be a success, in order to assist in meeting their needs, and to promote active participation. As previously mentioned, one of these stakeholders has been identified as the parents (DoBE, 2010; Srivastava, de Boer & Pijl, 2015). Regarding inclusion, the Education White Paper 6 (2001) posits that an awareness and acceptance of inclusive education by the public is imperative for its success (DoE, 2001). What forms a part of this is promoting a culture of acceptance; one free from harmful stereotypes and beliefs (DoE, 2001). Having said that, in gaining an understanding of parental perceptions of barriers to learning and development, it may provide information on how parents are interacting with various barriers to learning and development, as well as the manner in which they are participating in inclusive education. Additionally, parents have particular rights and responsibilities in the education of their children, especially in addressing barriers to learning and development that their own children are facing, as they are perceived to be a crucial form of support in the education of their children (DoE, 2001; Srivastava et al., 2015).

It is important for us to attempt to fill this gap, especially in a South African context because the implementation of inclusive education has been emphasised as an important goal to be achieved due to education being a right which all citizens of the country have (DoE, 2001). Moreover, the South African Schools' Act explains how important the participation of parents and their services in the school setting is, stating that the role to be played by parents in the education of their children is a crucial one (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Also, the positive attitudes held by a parent towards the education of their child is often suggested to be an important factor in the determinant of how successful their child will be in their schooling careers (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). A positive attitude and active participation may allow for barriers to learning to be addressed within the household. In addition to that, a lack of parental involvement and active participation can be a barrier to learning and development in itself (Marais & Meier, 2010).

According to Marais and Meier (2010), the family is a system which often holds the most significant influence on an individual. This poses itself as an issue when there is a lack

of parental guidance within the family, as well as dysfunctional behaviours observed by an individual, from his/her parents (Marais & Meier, 2010). Children adopt behaviours and attitudes from their parents, and these behaviours and attitudes are frequently emulated by them, within the school environment (Marais & Meier, 2010).

Parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development should be examined in order to attempt to understand the possible behaviour of the parent and the effect this has on the child. The way parents behave when they are raising their children is often, rather than not, determined by their attitudes and belief system. This is because, as stated by Fazio (1990), attitudes influence behaviour. These attitudes which influence their parental behaviours towards their children have an impact on the child's socio-emotional and cognitive development and this impact is direct (Grusec, 2007). A good example of how parental attitudes have an influence on the child could come from a study by Sinclair, Dunn and Lowery (2005), who looked at racial prejudice in particular as an outcome of parental attitudes and perceptions. The authors found that parental racial attitudes had an influence on their children, in so far as children's implicit and explicit attitudes matched those of their parents (Sinclair et al., 2005). Implicit attitudes are the attitudes which exist outside of conscious awareness and are commonly known as 'automatic' attitudes (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). On the contrary, explicit attitudes, known as 'deliberate' attitudes, are those attitudes which individuals are consciously aware of (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

Therefore, it can be said that children learn how to relate to others based on their interactions with their parents (Sinclair et al., 2005) and thus, the attitudes parents hold towards children with barriers to learning are likely to be adopted by their children (Witt, 1997). In addition, the attitudes which children adopt stem from what they witness in the home (Witt, 1997). These attitudes are carried with them to the school environment, where they associate themselves with other children from various different backgrounds (Witt, 1997). Knowing this, it can be suggested that an understanding of the attitudes which parents hold towards specific barriers to learning can assist in gaining more of an understanding of the behaviour of the parent, and then possibly information about how children might interact in an inclusive setting as well, because children can adopt attitudes from their parents (Sinclair et al., 2005).

Additionally, gaining a deeper understanding of the attitudes parents hold towards barriers to learning and development may also provide us with information surrounding the wants and needs of the parents. This insight can be used to implement successful interventions in order to ensure parental participation in inclusive education. In ensuring that parents are active participants in inclusive education, the Education White Paper 6 (2001) suggests that it would improve their ability to address barriers to learning and development, as well as become more active participants in the education their own children, on a frequent basis (DoE, 2001). This increase in participation is important because parental participation has been identified as an important contributing factor towards the success of the learner in an inclusive setting (DoBE, 2010).

1.3. Study Aims

The aims of this research study are:

1. To explore the manner in which barriers to learning and development are understood by parents of school-going children. This can be achieved by obtaining information surrounding what these individuals perceive a barrier to learning and development to be.
2. To identify the attitudes held by parents of school-going children towards barriers to learning and development.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes and perceptions of parents of school going children towards barriers to learning and development?
2. How are barriers to learning and development conceptualised by parents of school-going children?
3. What do parents consider a barrier to learning and development to be?
4. What are the attitudes held by parents of school-going children towards barriers to learning and development?

The following chapter will provide an overview of existing international and South African literature on various topics. It will include definitions of inclusive education, barriers to learning and development, and attitudes. It will provide a brief overview of inclusive education in the South African context, and will highlight the imperative of parental involvement in the education of their children. It will then go on to address literature on parental perceptions of inclusive education, and teacher attitudes towards barriers to learning

and development. Chapter 3 will provide an overview of the theoretical framework used in the study, which is a combination of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Theory of Reasoned Action TRA). Chapter 4 describes the methods used in the particular study, including the research design, the sampling method, the instruments used, the procedure followed, ethical considerations and self-reflexivity. Chapter 5 includes the discussion of the results from the interviews, where thematic analysis was used. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the findings, as well as its strengths, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature review will attempt to provide an overview on the current literature surrounding inclusive education, as well as an understanding of what inclusive education is. Moreover it will present a brief history of inclusive education in South Africa, along with an overview of the current aims and objectives which inclusive education sets out to achieve. This will be followed by information on the role parents have to play in inclusive education before moving on to barriers to learning and development. In looking at barriers to learning, various topics will be discussed. This includes parental perceptions of teacher competence, as well as their perception of the effects of large classroom sizes. In addition to that, parental collaboration with schools and their views on leadership in the education system will be discussed. Thereafter, parental attitudes towards inclusive education from the perspectives of parents of typically developing children, as well as parents of atypically developing children, will be discussed.

2.2. Inclusive Education and Inclusion

Inclusive education refers to an education system which incorporates policies and teaching practices which seek to protect the rights of all learners, inclusive of those learners who may be experiencing barriers to learning and development in conventional classrooms (Potgieter-Groot, Visser, & Lubbe-de Beer, 2012). Moreover, an understanding of inclusive education is that it is a process whereby the education system itself is strengthened in order to enable it to be sufficient to cater for all learners and adults who possess a multitude of needs (Suleymanov, 2015).

The ideal of inclusive education is presented in United Nations Education and Science Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Salamanca declaration, which states that the basic right to education is a right which all learners have (UNESCO, 1994). Moreover, the Salamanca statement states that every child has their own individual set of characteristics and learning needs, and the education system itself should be responsible for having the appropriate systems in place in order to address a range of diverse attributes and requirements of the learner (UNESCO, 1994). Therefore, the Salamanca statement suggests that even children who are faced with barriers to learning should be accommodated within the education system

(UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca statement conceptualises inclusion as part of a moral society which respects the rights of all individuals who are a part of that society (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001).

The aim of inclusion is for the educational system itself to take responsibility for educating all learners in society who are of an appropriate learning age (Murungi, 2015; Suleymanov, 2015). Therefore, it moves away from the individual deficit model, which considers the difficulties the learner experiences as located within them, instead of considering external sources, such as the environment (Collerton, Perry & McKeith, 2005; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2005).

2.3. The History of Inclusive Education in a South African Context

In South Africa, the development of inclusive education was largely driven by the history of Apartheid (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2016). Prior to democracy in 1994, there were separate educational systems, as well as policies which were governed by race (Engelbrecht, 2006). Because of this, the educational system itself was fragmented along the lines of racial policies and discriminatory practices, which applied to society as a whole (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Therefore, the divisions in the education system in South Africa were largely influenced by the legislation under apartheid (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Engelbrecht, 2006). Under the laws of apartheid, Black people were taught in separate learning institutions, under an educational system referred to as 'Bantu education', which only allowed for the most basic maths and science skills in order to equip them for unskilled labour (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Moreover, only White learners with disabilities were given support within the educational setting (Donohue & Bornman, 2006).

Even after democracy was established in 1994, the educational system itself was still split due to the racial divide and racial discrimination which occurred during the apartheid era (Engelbrecht, 2006). This was addressed when the various departments of education were amalgamated into one unified DoE, which was to serve the education needs of all children in South Africa. (Donohue & Bornman, 2006). Just as inclusive education aims to create an educational system which considers the needs of all learners and the barriers they face, it also encompasses the values of democracy in South Africa (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Donohue & Bornman, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2016).

Inclusive education in South Africa goes beyond the educational system towards the overall vision of democracy and fairness, which is reflected in the ideals and goals of the Education White Paper 6 (Donohue & Bornman, 2006; Murungi, 2015). These goals exist in order to redress the injustices which occurred during the apartheid regime (Donohue & Bornman, 2006; Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, & Tlale, 2015). Some of these goals include improving the quality of existing special schools, as well as equipping them as adequate resource centres (DoE, 2001). In addition to that, as part of the resources, it states the imperative of these schools to have adequate support in the form of district-based support teams (DBST). Furthermore, the Education White Paper 6 (2001) emphasises the important role that teachers and parents have to play in identifying and addressing barriers to learning and development, as well as in choosing the correct learning environment for learners (DoE, 2001). It highlights the importance of governing bodies, particularly in mainstream schools, and that these bodies should be equipped to identify the needs of learners, and put appropriate interventions in place for them (DoE, 2001). This is ideally to be done in the foundation phase. The Education White Paper 6 (2001) indicates that it is important to identify the roles of the school, the parents and the wider community (DoE, 2001). It is also vital that continued support is provided to schools, parents and communities (DoE, 2001).

The process of inclusive education has to start with the individuals themselves. Members of a society need to be aware of their commitment to inclusion and where their motivations for that commitment come from, whether it be ethically, ideologically, or even politically driven (Mitchell, De Lange & Thuy, 2008). It is suggested that the only time inclusion will be successful is when the culture of a society is transformed (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009; Srivastava et al., 2015). The education setting in a specific society will serve to reinforce this transformation and it will then lead to the access of the necessary resources for inclusion to be a reality (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009). A lack of these resources can present itself as a barrier to learning and development. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that the disparities between previously disadvantaged schools and 'previously White schools' under the apartheid regime, still exist in post-apartheid South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2006).

An example of this, given by Engelbrecht (2006), is that there is still a lack of resources and adequately trained teachers in previously disadvantaged schools and this comes across even more strongly in rural schools. She goes on to state how, for inclusion to be a success in South Africa, it is important to address the imbalances (Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Mukeredzi, 2013). Therefore, in order for inclusion and inclusive

education to be successfully implemented, contextual and environmental difficulties which form a part of barriers to learning and development, need to be confronted (Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Furthermore, the Education White Paper 6 (2001) suggests that when parents themselves are uninvolved in the process of education for their child, it can present itself as an additional barrier to learning and development (DoE, 2001). Therefore, it becomes important to understand the needs of parents and to advocate for the significant role they can play in the education of their children (DoBE, 2010).

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) specifies the difference between 'mainstreaming' and 'inclusion'. As mentioned in the Education White Paper 6 (2001), where 'mainstreaming' involves the integration of learners with barriers to learning into the education system, inclusion serves to accept the differences these learners present with, and then goes on to attempting to support the learner so that they can overcome the barriers with which they are faced (DoE, 2001). There are three types of schools which exist in the South African context; Full service schools, special schools, and mainstream schools.

Full service schools exist in an inclusive setting. They are described as regular schools which are equipped with resources in order to address a range of the barriers to learning and development that learners may be facing (DoBE, 2010). Special schools are those schools which provide adequate resources for learners who have high-intensive educational and additional support needs (DoBE, 2010). Mainstream schools are those schools which do not make extra provision for learners with barriers to learning, but instead, prefers for learners to fit into an existing schooling environment, which has undergone minimal changes (DoE, 2001).

2.4. The Role of Parental Involvement in Inclusive Education

The role of the parent in the education of the learner is an important one to consider (Yssel et al., 2007; Mitchell, De Lange & Thuy, 2008). Inclusive education began its development in South Africa in the 1990s, and it can be said that a large contributor to its success has been parental involvement, particularly in the decision-making process that underpins the choice a parent makes in selecting the school their child will attend (Engelbrecht et al., 2005; Yssel et al., 2007). Additionally, The South African Schools Act protects the rights of parents, as well as the choices they make, relating to their decisions regarding the placement of their child in a specific learning institution (Engelbrecht et al., 2005; SASA, 1996).

The Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) indicates that parents have an important role to play in the education of their children, as well as in the successful implementation of inclusive education (DoBE, 2014). As indicated in the SIAS (2014), parents need to ensure that they are role players in the decisions being made to identify and accommodate their children, especially relating to addressing barriers to learning in the classroom and it is imperative that they are considered as equal partners throughout the process of their children's schooling (Yssel et al., 2007; DoBE, 2014). Therefore, it is vital that there is open communication between parents, teachers and the school (DoBE, 2014). The information parents get from the school, as well as other support structures, will inform the decisions they make regarding the education of their children, as well as identifying additional support structures, where relevant (DoBE, 2014). It is important for parents to be aware of the barriers to learning that exist, the policies relating to inclusive education, as well as their rights in the education system, as this knowledge will guide the interventions they put in place to meet the needs of their children, to assist their children in being integrated into inclusive classrooms, and to perform optimally (DoBE, 2014).

Parental support is suggested to yield the most positive outcomes in a learner, such as higher grades, positive attitudes and positive behavioural patterns (Du Plessis, 2013; Yssel et al., 2007; Driessen, Smit & Sleegers, 2005 ;Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green,Wilkins & Closson, 2005) In the United States of America, parents have had an impact on the education system for many years because of the rights and legislation in their constitution which places importance on parental advocacy (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Yssel et al., 2007; Benner, Boyle & Sadler, 2016). However, even with these rights protecting the parents, it has not always led to successful inclusive education practice (Yssel et al., 2007). In South Africa, prior to democracy, parents felt powerless (Yssel et al., 2007). However, after 1994, a great emphasis has been placed on the role of the parent in the educational setting (Yssel et al., 2007). In studies done in the United States of America, parents did not feel like they were a part of the process, instead they felt disempowered and alienated (Yssel et al., 2007). The same feelings of disempowerment and alienation were reflected in studies done on parents in South Africa (Yssel et al., 2007). Therefore, in understanding parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development, information surrounding the needs of parents can be obtained, and more so, which of these needs are not being met.

A study done in the United Kingdom on parental involvement indicated that parental support in the education of their children, which occurs in the household, is likely to produce the most progressive outcomes in academic achievement (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Therefore, parental involvement should go beyond communication with the school (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Furthermore, parental involvement was suggested to reduce behavioural concerns at school and in the household (Harris & Goodall, 2008). This was similar to results of a study conducted in Spain (2015) which highlighted that parental involvement in the household is linked to high academic achievement (Castro, Expósito-Casas, López-Martín, Lizasoain, Navarro-Asencio, & Gaviria, 2015).

In addition to getting involved in the learning process of their children at home, parental collaboration with their child's school is imperative to learning (Driessen et al., 2005; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Michael, Wolhuter & van Wyk, 2018). Therefore, of significance, is a good working relationship between teachers, parents and learners, as well as positive attitudes from the wider community (Tlale & Romm, 2018). Factors considered important to harness this includes open communication of crucial information between parents and the school, as well as meetings to discuss issues or areas of concern, including barriers to learning that the child may be facing (Michael et al., 2018). In addition to that, parents should consider getting involved in school activities, and this can be done through volunteer work. The school should allow for this as well (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Michael et al., 2018). This will allow for their own educational development, as they can learn from the school how to address certain barriers to learning that their children may be facing, as well as providing that information to the school to better assist their children in their learning (Michael et al., 2018).

This open collaboration between parents and the school will allow for parents to feel heard and understood and this plays a role in the choices parents make, as well as the manner in which parents work with their children in order for them to overcome the barriers to learning which they may be facing (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Not only does parental involvement and collaboration have a positive influence on children's learning, but it also contributes to the success of inclusive education (DoBE, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2006).

However, barriers to parental involvement exist, and some of these indicated in the study relate to parental level of education, parental values relating to high academic achievement, socio-economic deprivation, as well as unavailability due to parents working

for extended hours (Driessen et al., 2005; Harris & Goodall, 2008). Similarly, parents in the South African context are faced with the same constraints (Michael et al., 2018; Msila, 2009). In addition to that, research on parents in South Africa suggests that, aside from buying school uniforms and paying school fees, some parents are not aware that they have a role to play in the education of their children (Michael et al., 2018).

Parental involvement is influenced by parental literacy and research suggests that parental illiteracy makes it challenging for parents to get involved in the education of their children (Driessen et al., 2005; Nel et al., 2016). A lack of parental involvement is suggested to be a contributor to disruptive behaviour of learners in the classroom, as well as an overall disrespect towards learners (Marais & Meier, 2010). Not only does a lack of parental involvement affect the learner's education directly, but it also has an influence on the manner in which teacher's perceive and interact with learners (Nel et al., 2016). A lack in parental involvement poses itself as a challenge to teachers in providing support to these learners. Teachers express concern by explaining how parents are difficult to contact, and learners thus do not have support away from school, and thus there is no one to assist them with their learning in the home (Nel et al., 2016). Additionally, parental collaboration with the school is stated to play a role in decreasing disruptions and behavioural difficulties in the classroom (Sezer, 2017). Parental involvement is also said to have a positive impact on the psychological well-being of learners, as it is said to boost their self-esteem and sense of control, thereby contributing to improved academic performance (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Benner et al., 2016). Parental involvement is thus considered a tool for overcoming and addressing barriers to learning and development, especially if parents are able to acknowledge and identify the barriers that their children are facing. The ability to do this is, in turn, enhanced by their involvement and collaboration with the school (DoBE, 2014).

2.5. School Choice

Historically, school choice in South Africa was dependent on the emotional climate of segregation during apartheid. As previously mentioned, prior to 1994, schools were segregated according to race, and the roles schools played served to strengthen the racial divide within the country (Msila, 2009). Post-apartheid South Africa saw a redistribution of power, and choice was given to Non-White parents as they were able to explore other options outside of their townships, as schools for their children (Msila, 2009).

Parents in South Africa now have the freedom to choose which school they prefer their child attend and there are policies in place that aim to prevent discrimination from occurring (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009; Msila, 2009). An example of this occurrence would be parents from disadvantaged, rural communities seeking better educational environments for their children by choosing to send them to schools in urban areas with the hope that their children will receive a better quality of education. This choice is based on the view that these schools are more effective. (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009; Maile, 2004; Msila, 2009). Taking this further, language seems to be an important factor considered by South African parents, where they prefer moving their children to schools where the medium of instruction is English (De Klerk, 2002; Maile, 2004; Msila, 2009; Soudien, 2004).

It should be noted that the freedom of choice parents now have in terms of schools would differ vastly depending on the background from which the parent comes, and moreover, it would depend on the resources which they have (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009; Msila, 2009). Often, the constraints faced by parents in township communities are related to socio-economic deprivation, as the cost of transport and higher school fees are not affordable for them (de Kadt, Norris, Fleisch, Richter, & Alvanides, 2014; Msila, 2009). This poses itself as a barrier to parents in making a choice, and in turn, can present itself as a barrier to learning and development for children (Engelbrecht, 2006; Msila, 2009). This is because children are forced to travel significant distances, only to attend schools with learners who come from different socio-economic backgrounds, and who may also be afforded with more resources (de Kadt et al., 2014). In addition to that, the decisions parents make in terms of school choice, as well as how involved they are in the education of their child can sometimes be a reflection of their beliefs and values (Du Toit and Forlan, 2009; Msila, 2009).

Taking cognisance of the trend towards choosing a school based on language, it should be noted that there is a movement towards the dominant language, which is English (De Klerk, 2002; Msila, 2009; Soudien, 2004). Parents in South Africa appear to be putting emphasis on placing their children in schools where English is the language of instruction (De Klerk, 2004) and on the perception that these schools are outperforming schools with a different medium of instruction (Van der Berg, 2008). However, the factors behind choosing an ‘English-speaking’ school extends beyond this and parents appear to be motivated by an overall shift towards a westernized culture (De Klerk, 2004; Msila, 2009). These beliefs are further linked to a perception of privilege and power, which is what parents want for their children (De Klerk, 2004; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2017). It is imperative to obtain an

understanding of the needs of parents, as these needs play a role in the choices they make regarding the school in which they place their children. In the South African context, parents consider factors such as language and location as crucial to consider for school choice (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009; Msila, 2009). These choices are made because of the attitudes they hold (de Boer, Timmerman, Pijl & Minnaert, 2012).

Literature has highlighted the significance of studying parental attitudes in order for inclusive education to be a success (de Boer et al., 2012; Elkins et al., 2003). A part of this includes the importance of parents, and the wider community, to believe in the education system and trust that it is able to meet the needs of all children (Elkins et al., 2003). This belief extends to the choice parents make regarding the school in which they place their children. Research has found that parents of children with barriers to learning and development often perceived schools as not having adequate resources to meet the needs of their children (Elkins et al., 2003; Gasteiger-Klicpera, Klicpera, Gebhardt & Schwab, 2013). What forms a part of this is their belief that teachers do not have the adequate knowledge and training, or sufficient time, to meet the needs of their children (Elkins et al., 2003). Parents of learners with typically developing children expressed apprehension towards the inclusion of learners with behavioural concerns, as they worried that their children would adopt similar behavioural problems (Elkins et al., 2003).

2.6. Barriers to Learning

Barriers to learning, as described by Prinsloo (2001), can present in various forms. He refers to four umbrella terms: "permanent shortcomings, developmental problems, learning problems and circumstantial problems" (p. 345).

Permanent shortcomings refer to "sensory, physical, intellectual and multiple disabilities" (Prinsloo, 2001, p. 345). Developmental problems refer to those aspects which cause a delay in developmental areas such as "motor, perceptual, language or intellectual development", or when a child is not ready for school at the accepted age (Prinsloo, 2001, p. 345). Learning problems are difficulties experienced in "all school subjects, only certain school subjects or certain aspects of a school subject" (Prinsloo, 2001, p. 345). These issues may exist due to "social, economic or political circumstances" (Prinsloo, 2001, p. 345). Finally, circumstantial problems hinder the child from having an equal opportunity to making their schooling career a successful one (Prinsloo, 2001, p. 345). These issues are manifested in "low socio-economic status, culturally deprived learners, and marginalised,

underprivileged and low-achieving learners" (Prinsloo, 2001, p. 345). In addition to that, circumstantial barriers can also refer to stereotyping or prejudice based on the gender of the learner, their race or ethnicity, the learner's sexual orientation, his/her socio-economic status, and culture from which the learner comes (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001; Mitchell, et al., 2008). Barriers to learning and development in the South African context originates from our history of apartheid (Donohue & Bornman, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001).

Negative attitudes towards individuals with special education needs presents itself as a barrier to learning and development, and they exist in the form of stereotyping and prejudice (Wong et al., 2015). These factors impact on the child's emotional development (Wong et al., 2015).Children with barriers to learning and development are at risk of facing negative attitudes towards them within the classroom, and the wider society (Wong et al., 2015; Prinsloo, 2001). Negative attitudes towards individuals with special education needs presents itself as a barrier to learning and development, and they exist in the form of stereotyping and prejudice, due to the manner in which these factors impact on the child's emotional development (Wong et al., 2015, Prinsloo, 2001). Prinsloo (2001) indicates that the labelling of learners who face barriers to learning and development, can have an impact on their emotional and academic development, and these children often perceive their environments as inaccessible and unsafe.

Initially, inclusive education involved advocating for the rights of children with disabilities, which was very much a medical conversation. However, over the years, the issue has shifted from a medical discourse, to one which speaks to the basic human rights of all the citizens of South Africa (Hay & Beyers, 2011). Therefore, inclusive education incorporates the medical discourse, along with the acknowledgement of other barriers, such as the influence of the environment and the individuals with which the learner communicates (Hay & Beyers, 2011). It is important to consider more than just the environmental factors, but the social factors as well, because they play a role in the behaviour of the learner (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012). Moreover, just as environmental factors and social factors have an effect on the learner's behaviour, so too do the attitudes of their parents (Sinclair, et al., 2005). In noting that there is a multitude of factors which influence whether or not the learner will face a barrier to learning and development, it is interesting to look at it from a perspective of social justice.

As previously mentioned, the true essence of inclusive education is the transformation of society as a whole, including a shift in individual values and beliefs, as well as policies that maintain and perpetuate practices of exclusion (Carrim, 2003). In the South African context, these factors cannot be considered without looking at the influence of the apartheid situation, which perpetuated White supremacy and Black oppression (Carrim, 2003).

Hay and Beyers (2011) refer to the need for social justice in South Africa, mentioning how in its essence, it is to ensure that there is an equitable access to resources; as well as equal rights and the fair treatment of disadvantaged individuals. Social justice informs the education system, and this has been an ongoing battle in South Africa, particularly during the conversations surrounding the need to address the disparities which exist because of the apartheid regime (Hay & Beyers, 2011). With the contextual issues that arose from apartheid, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning and development is prominent in South Africa, and further impacts on the teaching and learning in schools (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012).

Emotional and behavioural barriers to learning and development are defined as factors which adversely impacts on the child's academic development and performance, which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012). In addition to that, emotional and behavioural barriers are characterised by a difficulty with building and maintaining interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, as well as inappropriate behaviour and/or feelings, as well as low mood and anxiety (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012). These concerns further stem from societal issues in the wider community (Visser & Chamberlain, 2004; Visser, 2004). These issues include poverty, violence, crime, substance abuse, and health concerns (Visser, 2004).

Individuals from disadvantaged communities are at risk of having cognitive deficiencies, due to not having adequate stimulation (Visser & Chamberlain, 2004). Research suggests that in working with individuals who face emotional and behavioural barriers to learning and development, teachers needed to be equipped with specific knowledge and skills in order to manage behaviour in the classrooms, as well as meeting the specific needs of these learners (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012; Visser & Chamberlain, 2004; Chamberlain, 2004).

2.7. Language Barriers in education

Language barriers are a reality in various contexts in South Africa, and they occur within the classroom and outside of the classroom (Plüddemann, 2015). South Africa, being a nation with eleven official languages, means that English is not the first language for many

South Africans (Plüddemann, 2015). Plüddemann (2015) proposes that in order for optimal learning to occur, especially at a foundational level, children should be taught in their own language and for many South Africans, this language is not English. Due to the barriers to learning that exist because of multilingualism, as well as overall learning difficulties due to their struggles with the English Language, students are frequently inappropriately referred to Speech and Language Therapists (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009).

In addition to that, language barriers are experienced by parents of learners, whose first language may not be English. Parents in the South African context hold the perception that placing their children in schools where English is the medium of instruction will benefit their children's overall academic development (De Klerk, 2002; Maile, 2004; Msila, 2009; Soudien, 2004). Thus, language has an influence on school choice. Moreover, the choices parents make regarding schools to place their children in, can lead to barriers in parental participation. Research in South Africa suggests that parents sometimes have difficulty in communicating with their children's schools due to language barrier. This serves to decrease parental involvement, and at times, leads to the development of negative attitudes about the school their children are in, thereby enhancing feelings of disempowerment in the education of their children (Michael et al., 2018).

A study by O'Connor and Geiger (2009) on the challenges faced by English second language teachers indicated that teachers expressed a need for increased support from the school, Department of Education, parents, as well as additional training. Nel and Müller (2010) suggest that when English language development in teachers were inadequate, it negatively affects the acquisition of English for learners, as well as their overall learning. O'Conner and Geiger (2009) propose that learner's home language should be used as a base to teach English.

2.8. Lack of Discipline in the Classroom and Large Classrooms

Large classrooms are, in themselves, a barrier to learning and development and this is due to the burden it places on teachers (de Jager, 2013; Nel & Müller, 2010). Research indicates that there is a strong relationship between discipline and academic achievement (Pasrernak, 2013, Lewis, Romi, Qui & Katz, 2005, Agbenyega, 2006). In addition to that, it affects the transfer of knowledge from teachers to learners (Nel & Müller, 2010). As previously mentioned, a lack of parental involvement is suggested to increase disruptive behaviour in the classroom (Marais & Meier, 2010). In addition to that, overcrowded

classrooms are a significant area of concern in township schools, and as much as parents would like to send their children to schools outside of the township, they are frequently unable to meet the cost of being able to do so (Du Toit & Forlan, 2009). Research by Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002) indicates that parents perceive overcrowded classrooms to be a barrier to learning and that they have a significant impact on lowering the grades of learners. These parents expressed concern that overcrowding leads to a shortage of resources and increased levels of teacher stress, thereby influencing the quality of education learners are receiving (Legotlo et al., 2002). A study in the USA posited that large classroom sizes had the greatest disadvantage on students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as students with intellectual barriers to learning and development (Gershenson & Langbein, 2015).

Educators in South Africa are under a substantial amount of stress, and some of the factors which significantly increase their stress levels include inclusive education, lack of discipline and motivation by students, as well as large student to teacher ratios (Steyn & Kamper, 2006). Student behaviour is dependent on various factors, some which occur outside of the school setting, within the wider community, and this relates to their circumstances at home, as well as well as the values, beliefs and norms they are exposed to (Steyn & Kamper, 2006). In addition, teachers in the South African context are currently experiencing feelings of disempowerment and despair, and that this is largely related to behavioural difficulties with learners in their classroom, and they feel as though they have lost control and authority of learners in their classroom (Marais & Meier, 2010; Naong, 2007).

According to Marais and Meier (2010), in addition to disruptions within the classroom and a general disrespect towards teachers, there are other behavioural concerns occurring amongst the learners, such as fighting, bullying, theft and vandalism. These behavioural concerns occur in the classroom, as well as in the playground (Marais & Meier, 2010). These concerns have been noted to begin from the foundation phase of development (Marais & Meier, 2010), and extend into adolescence (Sezer, 2017).

The Guidelines for inclusive teaching and learning posit that there is a need to address all the barriers to learning and development within the classroom, and they go on to state some of the causes of barriers to learning and development. The causes stated in the document are “disability, language and communication, lack of parental recognition and involvement, socio-economic factors, and attitudes” (DoBE, 2010, p. 12). The factors

outlined in this research paper are attitudes, particularly parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development as a factor of parental recognition and involvement.

Research done in Israel identified that a lack of discipline resulted in lowered academic achievement, and has an impact on the learning environment and those within it, overall (Pasternak, 2013). This was consistent with research in China and Austraila (Lewis et al., 2005).

Punishment in the classroom is also a factor to be considered, as it impacts on behaviour, as well as influences the learning environment (Agbenyega, 2006). Studies indicate that Chinese teachers are less punitive and aggressive than those in Israel and Australia (Lewis et al., 2006). Therefore. They appear to be more supportive of learner needs. In addition to that, student misbehaviour appears to directly influence the aggression of punishment in the classroom (Lewis et al., 2005).

A study conducted in Ghana postulated that corporal punishment is the main method of punishment in Ghanaian schools (Agbenyega, 2006). Educators indicated that discipline was the most common problem they were faced with (Agbenyega, 2006). However, the use of corporal punishment has not improved academic achievement, nor has it been proven to improve misbehaviour in the classroom. However, teachers indicate feeling overwhelmed and unable to do their jobs due to low levels of discipline (Agbenyega, 2006). Despite the attempt by Ghana to stop corporal punishment in their schools recent research indicates that it is still prominently used not just within schools, but also within the wider society (Antwi, Reeves, Ferris & Aziato, 2019).

2.9. Parental Perceptions Related to Quality of Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms

Research on inclusive education suggests that parents of children with, and without, barriers to learning and development, have a positive attitude towards inclusion. However, it is important to note that there these parents do have concerns surrounding inclusive classrooms, and that these concerns increase depending on the severity of the disability these students have (Blazer, 2017).

Research by Peck, Staub, Gallucci and Swartz (2004), has demonstrated that parents of typically-developing children have mixed feelings regarding the inclusion of children who experience barriers to learning and development in the mainstream classroom. They suggest that whilst parents view inclusion positively, they still display apprehension surrounding the behavioural concerns and the loss of teaching time that could result due to the inclusion of

learners with barriers to learning and development, in the mainstream classroom (Peck et al., 2004). International research on inclusive education indicates that typically developing children are more likely to be accepted by their peers than atypically developing children (de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2010). De Boer and colleagues (2010) state that the reason for this is unclear, but they postulate that the attitudes held by children will play a role in the manner in which they relate to their peers with barriers to learning, and that these attitudes are adopted from their parents. International research on parent's perceptions of inclusive education strongly suggest that parents of children with and without barriers to learning hold the concern that teachers in mainstream schools are not adequately trained to work in inclusive classrooms (Blazer, 2017; Elkins et al., 2003; Leyser & Kirk, 2004). In addition to that, parents express concern that teachers will be overworked and overwhelmed (Blazer, 2017; Leyser & Kirk, 2011). Studies further suggest that teachers themselves believe that their training is not adequate to manage inclusive classrooms, particularly when working with students with disabilities (Alothman, 2014; Blazer, 2017; Sezer, 2017). This belief in teacher ability has implications for parental involvement since Šukys and colleagues propose that parental involvement is likely to increase if parents perceive their children's teacher positively (Šukys, Dumčienė, & Lapėnienė, 2015).

Falkmer, Anderson, Joosten, and Falkmer (2015) suggest that teacher attitude, knowledge, and understanding of inclusive education plays a significant role in whether or not it will be a success, and that it is important for parents and teachers to work collaboratively. A study by McKinney and Swartz (2016), on the successful implementation of the Education White Paper 6, posits that there is a gap in the training of educators, and that there needs to be a shift in their mind sets and attitudes, especially with regards to the integration of learners with various barriers to learning and development in inclusive classrooms (McKinney & Swartz, 2016). In addition to that, the parent's positive perceptions of their child's teachers improved their child's overall experience within the school, especially when parents perceived that their child's learning needs were understood by their teachers (Falkmer et al., 2015). Furthermore, parents working with teachers may lead to the teacher's understanding of the needs of their children (Falkmer et al., 2015).

When parents perceive their child's school system positively, they tend to have an overall high level of trust in the teachers (Stoner, Bock, Thompson, Angell, Heyl, & Crowley, 2005). Their trust was further enhanced when communication was open, and when they perceived that the teachers were working towards similar goals with their children (Stoner et

al., 2005). This was particularly so for parents with children with barriers to learning, especially on research done with children on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (Falkmer et al., 2015).

2.10. Collaboration between Parents and the School

The education system seeks to ensure that all learners have access to a quality education (Du Plessis, 2013). Inclusive education, as mentioned, seeks to ensure that the basic human rights of all individuals are respected, and seeks to demolish discriminatory and exclusionary practices (DoBE, 2010; Du Plessis, 2013; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Potgieter et al., 2012). There are various policies and acts in support of inclusive education, reflecting that the South African government is committed to the successful implementation of inclusive education (Du Plessis, 2013). However, the implementation of inclusive education in the South African context is not met without challenges, and what forms a part of these challenges is the capacity to implement what policy documents stipulate (Du Plessis, 2013). This capacity extends from the school level, to the district level, as well as the national level (Du Plessis, 2013).

Du Plessis (2013) proposes that a significant barrier to the implementation of inclusive education, is the lack of support given to schools, specifically in relation to ensuring that they have the capacity to accommodate learners with a range of learning needs. Therefore, policy documents currently state what needs to be addressed in order for inclusive education to be successful, but they do not speak to how these needs will be fulfilled (Du Plessis, 2013).

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) states that parental involvement, as well as the involvement of the wider community, is crucial support needed in the implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2001; Donohue & Bornman, 2006; Du Plessis, 2013). Parental involvement depends on the capacity parents have to get involved, as well as their attitudes towards inclusive education (Du Plessis, 2013). The significance of attitudes and commitment extend beyond the parental level, towards the teachers and principal of the school (Du Plessis, 2013). This is emphasised by acknowledging that the manner in which inclusivity is conceptualised by these stakeholders will influence the way they behave to ensure that it is successfully implemented (Du Plessis, 2013). Having said that Du Plessis (2013) proposes that the importance of the principals having good leadership skills is significant, as these skills will assist in getting other stakeholders on board with the goals

they seek to reach. Therefore, the attitudes towards inclusive education held by the principal is central to whether or not it will be a success (Du Plessis, 2013).

Research in the USA further suggests that when the school setting is welcoming and positive, parental involvement is likely to increase, and this then contributes to the manner in which students will overcome barriers to learning and development (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2006). Furthermore, the climate of the school is dependent on the role of the principal of the school and the atmosphere they seek to create for parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2006). Bush (2007) posits that the quality of leadership is directly linked to school outcomes, as well as student outcomes. Furthermore, as much as the school's principal has a significant role to play in invoking change, so do the other leadership structures and managers within the school, in order to ensure that the change is maintained (Bush, 2007).

Research done in Australia indicated that parental involvement is directly related to high academic achievement, as well as other socio-emotional benefits (Daniel, Wang & Berthelson, 2016). However, there is a significant difference between parental involvements in the education of their children from outside of the school, to direct involvement with the school (Daniel et al., 2016). This type of involvement includes volunteering at the school, as well as involvement in decision-making processes within the school, thereby requiring the parent to make direct contact with the school (Daniel et al., 2016).

2.11. Parental attitudes towards Inclusive Education

2.11.1. A Definition of Attitudes

An attitude refers to the mind-set which an individual possesses which influences how they 'perform' or interact with the world (Pickens, 2005). Moreover, this mind-set comes from their experiences and it goes on to influence how the individual will react when faced with similar situations and circumstances than they were in the past (Pickens, 2005). Additionally, attitudes are often used as a way of gaining understanding about how a person will behave in a specific setting, and therefore, their behaviour becomes a reflection of their attitudes (Fazio, 1990).

Parental attitudes towards inclusive education has been studied due to the assumption that children can adopt the attitudes of their parents relating to inclusive education, as well as affect their behaviour towards their peers in an inclusive classroom (De Boer et al., 2010). Moreover, positive attitudes towards inclusive education held by parents lead to better parental support in the education of their children (De Boer et al., 2010). Additionally, their

attitudes towards inclusion can sometimes be a reflection of their attitudes towards those individuals who face certain difficulties (De Boer et al., 2010). Therefore, looking at parental attitudes towards inclusive education may enable us to gain information on how parents feel about barriers to learning and development.

2.11.2. Parental Attitudes towards Inclusive Education

Parental attitudes of typically-developing children, as well as those of parents of children experiencing barriers to learning, have a significant impact on the development of attitudes in their children (De Boer et al., 2010). This is because the attitudes children develop can come from those which they are exposed to from their parents, and they maintain these attitudes later in life (De Boer, et al., 2010) Therefore, negative attitudes towards inclusion from parents will lead to negative attitudes towards inclusion in the child (De Boer, et al., 2010). Therefore, in understanding parental attitudes, the creation of successful interventions to increase parental involvement can occur.

a. Parents of Children with Barriers to Learning and Development

South African research on parental attitudes towards inclusive education indicates that parents of children with barriers to learning had both positive and negative attitudes towards inclusive education, with the majority of them viewing it positively (De Boer et al., 2010; Duhaney & Salend, 2000). In addition to that, parents hold the belief that their children are being welcomed and accepted by their peers, which in turn produced positive social, emotional and academic outcomes (Yssel et al., 2007). They also indicate that their children have a more optimistic view of themselves and are happier and more confident due to being able to make friends with their classmates. Therefore, they believe that an inclusive setting is a good form of preparation for life outside of the classroom (Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Yssel et al., 2007). Additionally, parents feel pride when thinking about their children being integrated into an inclusive classroom (Elkins, Kraayenoord, & Jobling, 2003).

In some cases, parents of children with barriers to learning do not hold the belief that an inclusive education environment is a conducive one for their child's academic development (De Boer, et al., 2010). Some concerns which were highlighted in the De Boer (2010) study were those relating to whether or not the teachers and staff were qualified enough, and whether or not they were capable of teaching in an inclusive environment without neglecting their child (De Boer, et al., 2010). This was supported in a study by Mithimunye, Roman and Pedro (2018), where parents indicated the need that teachers needed

to undergo further training to support the needs of their children, as well as managing other children's interactions with their children, within the classroom. Moreover, some parents were concerned that their children experienced unfair treatment and were excluded from friendship groups of typically-developing children (Duhaney & Salend, 2000, Yssel et al., 2007).

Parents of children who face barriers to learning and development were also aware that it was a challenge for their child to be integrated into an inclusive setting (Leyser & Kirk, 2004). These parents perceived their children as being more difficult to assist, and this was distressing for them (Leyser & Kirk, 2004). In addition, Leyser and Kirk (2004) give examples of other concerns which may be experienced by these parents, such as the safety of the child, the attitudes of other students, the quality of the staff in the specific school, as well as the quality of the program, and the potential for failure. Fifty percent of parents had reservations surrounding inclusive education and believed that their children were better off in a special-needs school, because they thought that their children required the additional assistance that they would not get in an inclusive classroom (Elkins, et al., 2003).

The above is consistent with international literature on inclusive education, which indicate that parents of children with barriers to learning and development, hold positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Daniela & Natasha, 2014). They perceive these schools as being an environment that will improve their children's independence, and self-esteem (Daniela & Natasha, 2014). However, despite parents indicating that these children should be included in regular schools, they hold the belief that the staff in these schools need further training (Daniela & Natasha, 2014). This is also similar to a study conducted on parents of atypically developing children in Zimbabwe, who indicate favourable views on inclusive education, particularly because they believe that it improved their children's social development and improves their self-esteem (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011).This further aligned with the results of a study conducted in Singapore, where parents expressed that inclusive education allowed for their atypically developing children to have positive interactions and form friendships with their typically developing peers, enhancing their social skills (Wong, Poon, Kaur & Ng, 2015). Parents of atypically developing children in this study, who were not in favour of inclusive education, indicated that they held concerns about the practical aspects of inclusive education, such as the classroom environment not being stimulating enough for their children with

b. Parents of Typically Developing Children

Parents of typically-developing children, just like the parents of children with barriers to learning, had both positive and negative attitudes towards inclusion (De Boer et al., 2010; Duhaney & Salend, 2000). However, just like those parents of children who face barriers to learning and development, the majority of their attitudes towards inclusive education were positive and they believed that the inclusion of children with barriers to learning in the mainstream classroom benefitted their typically-developing child (De Boer et al., 2010; Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Yssel et al., 2007). The aspects which were highlighted were that they believed that it gave their child an experience of how things were in the real world, outside of school (Duhaney & Salend, 2000) which was synonymous with the views that parents of children with barriers to learning had. Additionally, their study reflected that parents of typically-developing children believed that it promoted the pro-social characteristics in their child and had a positive impact on how they interacted with individuals who were different from them, thus decreasing negative attitudes and prejudice (De Boer et al., 2010; Duhaney & Salend, 2000). They also identified that their children were more aware of the needs of others and that they had a more positive world view of diversity (Bhargava & Narumanchi, 2011). These parents stated that their children benefitted socio-emotionally and did not suffer with behavioural problems (De Boer et al., 2010; Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Narumanchi & Bhargava, 2011).

Some apprehension was reflected as well, specifically when referring to how much more time the teacher would need to spend on giving instructions to children with barriers to learning, making them believe that it is a less effective learning environment (Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Yssel et al., 2007). Furthermore, they stated that they were concerned that their children would emulate the behaviours which they witnessed in the children with barriers to learning (Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Narumanchi & Bhargava, 2011). Additionally, a major concern was that teachers were not trained sufficiently and therefore, they believed that the teachers may have been underqualified to teach in an inclusive setting (Duhaney & Salend, 2000). International research on parents of typically developing children indicates that, despite them having a positive view of inclusive education, they express concern that their children will not be challenged enough in an inclusive environment, and that their children will have less one-on-one attention from their teachers (Daniela & Natasha, 2014).

2.12. Teachers attitudes towards barriers to learning and development

The SIAS (2014) indicates that inclusive education, and the addressing of barriers to learning and development, can only be successful when there is a collaborative effort between parents, teachers and the school (DoBE, 2014). Moreover, teachers have been identified as instrumental to the success of inclusive practice, as they are the ones who practice policy in the classroom setting (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; de Jager, 2013; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). In addition to that, it is important for teachers to have a positive attitude towards inclusive education, as this plays a noteworthy role in its success (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). It is also imperative that parents have a high level of trust in their child's school and teacher, as this serves to enhance collaboration, and increase parental involvement (Elkins et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to look at the attitudes of teachers, as it has implications of parental involvement, the identification and addressing of barriers to learning and development, as well as the overall success of inclusive education (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

Even though inclusive education as a model has been accepted in South Africa, in practice it has not been successfully implemented in many mainstream classrooms (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Despite policies put in place for inclusive practice, there are obstacles that are preventing it from becoming a reality and some of these obstacles include a lack of adequate resources, as well as teacher attitudes (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) emphasised that in order for the implementation for inclusive education to be a success, one of the factors that needs to be addressed is continual professional development for teachers (DoE, 2001; Engelbrecht et al., 2015). The reason that this was identified as imperative, was because teacher training programs do not provide them with an adequate understanding of inclusive education or barriers to learning and development. In addition to that, much of their training does not provide them with exposure to learners with barriers to learning development in their classroom, particularly those with physical barriers (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016).

Teachers in the South African context appear to have a positive attitude towards inclusive education (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). However, due to contextual factors, such as a lack of resources and funding, the ideal of inclusive education is often never realised in the South African classroom (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Research indicates that teachers are often

left with feelings of ambiguity regarding inclusion due to their positive attitude towards it being countered by curriculum constraints, a lack of social support as well as a lack of resources funding (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Nel et al., 2016; Srivastava et al., 2015). More than that, teachers hold the belief that they are not adequately trained and lack the competence to teach in an inclusive classroom (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Nel et al., 2011).

The abovementioned attitudes and beliefs about inclusive education play a role in the manner and quality of teaching in the classroom (de Jager, 2013; Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Difficulties in their ability to teach, as identified by these teachers, included a lack of funding and resources at school level, large classrooms, as well as the belief that their training was inadequate (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Teacher's concerns relating to inclusive education and barriers to learning and development move beyond the level of the learner, towards concerns relating to the school, the environment, and the wider society (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Nel et al., 2016). This, in turn, plays a role in the manner in which they perceive barriers to learning and development, as well as learners with certain barriers in their classroom (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). De Jager (2013) states that when teachers hold negative attitudes towards barriers to learning, it is a barrier to learning in itself.

As previously mentioned, despite their positive view of inclusion in theory, when faced with barriers to learning and development in practice, teachers express the need for separate classrooms and additional learning support for learners who are struggling within their own classrooms (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Srivastava et al., 2015). In addition to that, teachers went on to express the belief that separate classrooms for learners with barriers to learning and development have led to positive outcomes and enabled the learners to cope better (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). They perceive themselves as being unable to identify the needs of these learners, due to being overwhelmed with large classrooms, and a need to complete the curriculum (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Srivastava, et al., 2015). Therefore, they appear to still subscribe to the individual deficit model of understanding (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Nel et al., 2016).

It is important for teachers to be adequately trained to work in inclusive classrooms, and part of this training is ensuring that they have an in-depth understanding of barriers to learning and development, how they can be identified, and how they can be addressed (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). It is also imperative for teachers to have a positive attitude towards

inclusion and barriers to learning and development (Nel et al., 2011; Nel et al., 2016). This will ensure sustainable development in inclusive education practice (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Nel et al., 2011). Additionally, teachers who were trained extensively on inclusion and barriers to learning and development have a more positive attitude towards it (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Research indicates that teachers prefer to teach learners with barriers to learning such as mild learning delays, language delays, or even physical barriers and development in a mainstream classroom (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). Teachers have a less positive attitude towards the inclusion of learners with behavioural difficulties, such as Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or learners with neurological or sensory impairments (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). A negative attitude held by teachers towards these barriers to learning and development will impact the manner in which they interact with these learners, as well as influence the learner's socio-emotional functioning (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). Negative attitudes, and in turn, negative interactions with learners who face barriers to learning and development, has an impact on their sense of belonging, as well as their academic performance (Bornman & Donohue, 2013).

A study by Donohue and Bornman (2014) provides an example of how teacher's attitudes toward certain barriers to learning and development influences their teaching practice in the classroom. Teachers expressed the belief that including learners with physical barriers to learning in their classroom would have a more positive impact on their social development, instead of their intellectual development. Therefore, teachers did not have high expectations for these learner's academic development. These low expectations played a role in their teaching styles, and thus, the learner's performances were affected (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). A study by Nel and colleagues revealed teachers' concerns regarding physical barriers and that the extra support learners need require the teacher to take extra time, which they may not have, such as assisting a learner in a wheelchair (Nel et al., 2016). Teachers also expressed concern regarding learners who are struggling academically (with reading and counting in particular), recommending they attend remedial classes to get them on par with other learners. One strategy they have identified to assist them, is the grouping of learners who are having difficulty, with those learners who are adequately able to read and write. This is an example of how teacher's strategies in the classroom stem from their attitudes and beliefs about the barriers (Nel et al., 2016). They went on to explain that they

did not feel as though they were adequately trained to work with learners with emotional concerns, especially when they stem from a history of trauma and abuse (Nel et al., 2016).

2.13. Conclusion

In summary, barriers to learning need to be addressed in order for inclusive education to be a success. Additionally, inclusive education is a process which requires ongoing efforts from the entire society. Moreover, at every level in society, there are factors which influence how successful inclusive education will be. An important level to consider is the role of the parent, and this understanding needs to be continually reinforced. This can be achieved in part through an understanding of parents' attitudes towards barriers to learning and development. The best outcome would be the parents having an awareness of existing barriers to learning and development and a positive attitude towards addressing them. There are two reasons why looking at parental attitudes is important. The first reason is to understand what their wants and needs are, which will be influenced by their values and beliefs. An understanding of this will enable the gathering of information which will be the driving force behind the creation of more effective interventions. Moreover, it may lead to an increase in parental involvement in the education of the child. A second reason is because parents model behaviours and attitudes, which are then adopted by their children. These children take these attitudes and re-enact them in an inclusive setting. Therefore, the way they relate to their peers will be influenced by their attitudes. Parental attitudes towards inclusive education have been studied, however there is limited information on their attitudes towards barriers to learning and development. Barriers to learning and development present themselves in different forms in the context of South Africa and they are also influenced by the history of the country. Therefore there should be a better understanding of attitudes towards these barriers. Finally, society as a whole needs to attain ideological coherence in order for inclusive education to be accomplished.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given that this study aims to understand the attitude of parents towards various barriers to learning and development it is pertinent to provide a theoretical understanding of attitudes. The central theories adopted for this study is the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The Theory of Planned Behaviour stems from the Theory of Reasoned Action, making it important to reflect on both. These theories will be presented in the following section, along with their application, after outlining an understanding of attitudes.

3.1.1. The Study of Attitudes

The concept of attitudes is deeply rooted in social psychology. Many would argue that social psychology is based on the study of attitudes, as an attempt to understand behavioural patterns of human beings. Therefore social psychology is said to be the study of attitudes in order to understand and predict behaviour in human beings (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) state that an attitude is the way in which an individual relates to and evaluates the world, including other people, objects, behaviour and policies. Fishbein and Ajzen (1972) take the stance that an attitude consists of multiple beliefs and that these beliefs are usually directed at specific objects, leading to the formation of beliefs of that object. Furthermore, the beliefs held about the object will direct the way an individual associates themselves with the object, whether it be in a favourable or unfavourable manner. Therefore, the intention or behaviour an individual has relating to an object, as well as an individual's beliefs about the object, makes up their attitude towards it (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1972). In addition to that, attitudes inform behaviour. It is suggested by Ajzen and Fishbein (2005), that behaviour is influenced by two types of individual attitudes; "general attitudes towards physical objects, and attitudes towards performing specific behaviours" (p. 173-174).

This conceptual understanding of attitudes points to the varied beliefs, perceptions and attitudes which parents hold towards barriers to learning, which forms a part of inclusive education. According to Mokeira (2006), whilst parents do have negative attitudes towards inclusive education, for the most part, their attitudes towards it are beginning to shift towards a more positive outlook.

3.1.2. TPB and TRA

According to the TRA, the intention or motivation which an individual has to perform a certain behaviour is dependent on how the individual evaluates the specific behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). When an individual evaluates the specific behaviour as a positive one, it leads to them having a positive attitude towards the behaviour. Additionally, if the individual had the perception that others want them to perform the behaviour, it would also influence their attitudes towards the behaviour leading to a more positive attitude (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This is known as a subjective norm (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). A subjective norm refers to the attitudes an individual has which stems from the groups they belong to in society, such as the family (Kautonen, Gelderen, & Fink, 2015). Therefore, subjective norms are based on an individual's normative beliefs (Glanz, 2008).

A person's normative belief relates to the degree of importance of the behaviour according to the specific individual (Glanz, 2008). If an individual perceives a behaviour to be important, they will engage in it (Glanz, 2008). This is known as a positive subjective norm (Glanz, 2008). On the other hand, the belief that the behaviour should not be engaged in is referred to as a negative subjective norm (Glanz, 2008). However, where the cognitive capacity to engage in controlling certain behaviours is reduced, the TRA is not a sufficient predictor of behaviour, and this is where the TPB comes in.

The TPB stems from the theory of reasoned action by contending that behaviour which people partake in lies on a continuum which has total control on one end and a complete lack of control on the other end (Ajzen, 1989). The degree of control an individual has depends on both internal and external factors (Ajzen 1989). Internal factors include the individual's cognitive skills, knowledge and emotions, whereas external factors refer to the situation the individual is in, as well as his/her environment (Ajzen, 1989). These factors determine how much control an individual has (Ajzen, 1991).

The TPB refers to the connection between the individual's attitude and their consequent behaviours, and these factors are guided by the beliefs an individual has and the cognitive outcomes related to the belief (Ajzen, 1991). According to Ajzen (1989), there are three kinds of beliefs.

The first is behavioural beliefs, which are the beliefs an individual has relating to the outcome they expect from the behaviour which to them produces either a positive or favourable outcome, or an uncomfortable outcome (Ajzen, 1989). The second is an

individual's normative beliefs which are those beliefs that relate to what an individual believes others expect or desire from them, thus the individual may perceive certain behaviours as expected or highly favoured by others (Ajzen, 1989). This belief may lead to a perceived increase in pressure from society experienced by the individual, and this pressure leads to the individual feeling compelled to comply with the perceived subjective norm (Ajzen, 1989). The final belief is control beliefs and these relate to how easy or difficult the person considers it to perform the behaviour. Therefore, control beliefs are the perceptions individuals hold about certain behaviours and these perceptions often allow for them to predict certain outcomes (Ajzen, 1989). Perceived behavioural control, related to control beliefs, is an individual's assumption of the amount of control they have over performing a behavioural action, based on an examination of available environmental components such as opportunities and resources (Ajzen, 1991).

Therefore, the intention an individual has to behave is influenced by his/her attitudes towards the behaviour, his/her subjective norm, as well as his/her perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1989). Attitudes towards an object are influenced by the beliefs held by an individual about the object. In addition to that, behaviour is influenced by the beliefs one has about the specific behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000).

Ajzen (2011) stated that the TPB is not able to identify where the beliefs which an individual has comes from, however, it is able to explore the factors which influence the individual's beliefs. These factors include personal, social and informational (Ajzen, 2011). Personal factors are the personality traits of the individual, his/her intelligence, their values, and their emotions (Ajzen, 2011). Social factors refer to gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, education background and income (Ajzen, 2011). Informational factors are those factors that refer to the individual's knowledge, their experiences and their exposure to the media (Ajzen, 2011).

Ajzen and Fishbein (2000) then go on to explore the distinction between attitude and affect due to the different roles the two concepts play in directing behaviour. Often, rather than not, attitudes are described by the affect that lies behind them. (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000).

Affect, unlike attitudes, is physiologically based. Therefore, when referring to affect, one may speak about the evaluation of feelings and emotions, whereas with attitudes, one refers to an evaluation of an object, concept, or behaviour. Moreover, the degree to which this object, concept, or behaviour relates to the individual, depends on how much they like or

dislike it. Also, it is possible that emotions have an influence on attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). Attitudes towards an object are influenced by the beliefs held by an individual about the object. In addition to that, behaviour is influenced by the beliefs one has about the specific behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000).

Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) suggest that in order to understand how behaviour is affected by the attitudes which an individual possesses, one needs to consider that there are two types of attitudes. The first being "general attitudes towards physical objects; racial, ethnic or other groups; institutions; policies; or other general targets" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, p. 173). And, the second one being "attitudes toward performing specific behaviours with respect to an object or target, known as attitudes towards behaviour" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, p. 174). The MODE model attempts to explain the shift from attitudes, to attitudes towards objects and behaviour.

The MODE model, created by Russell Fazio is one of the most simplified methods of understanding the processes whereby attitudes have an influence on behaviour. MODE means that "motivation and opportunity act as determinants of spontaneous versus deliberative attitude-to-behaviour processes" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, p.184). The model attempts to explain that an attitude can influence or bias the way something is perceived by an individual, and in turn, it has an impact on the judgements which one has formed about a particular object. What must be noted, however, is that the only time the specific bias can occur, is after it has been 'activated' (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

There are two ways in which an attitude can be activated. One being where the individual is in control, and aware of the attitude, thus making the activation process a deliberate action, and the other being when the individual is unaware of the attitude, making it either automatic or spontaneous. The way in which attitudes are activated is dependent on the individual's cognitive capacity, as well as their motivation (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Fazio states that in order for an individual to engage in an attitude, the individual must be motivated to do so. Their motivation would stem from how important they perceive the behaviour to be for themselves (Fazio, 1990).

With enough effort put into the process, individuals are able to retrieve and construct their attitudes, provided that they have the cognitive capacity and that they are motivated to do so (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Additionally, there needs to be more than just the motivation to engage with the specific attitude. Instead, there needs to be an opportunity to engage

(Fazio & Towles-Schwen, 1999). Moreover, in order for an individual to engage with their attitudes, the individual needs to have the cognitive capacity to interact with their attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). If the individual does not have the cognitive capacity to retrieve and construct their attitudes, the attitude formation in an individual will be automatic (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The MODE model suggests that automatic activation exists for the strongest attitudes which an individual acquires. This means that when the link between the attitude and its evaluation; and memory is strong, that is when the attitude activation is automatic (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Moreover, according to the MODE model, the attitudes which are the least likely to change are those which are the strongest. Therefore the weaker the attitude, the more likely it would be able to change (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Once an attitude is acknowledged, it brings attention to the perceptions an individual has. Thereafter, behaviour towards the object takes place (Fazio, 1990).

3.2. Application of TRA and TPB

Due to the lack of research on parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development, included in this section are examples of studies which have used TRA and TPB as a theoretical framework to assess teachers' and children's attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, as disabilities are a barrier to learning and development.

Attitudes influence behaviour, and behaviour can be either positive or negative. This includes behaviour towards others. Seeing that attitudes are determined by experiences and exposure, it could be posited that parental awareness of inclusive education and barriers to learning will influence their attitudes, and subsequently, their behaviour towards it. These attitudes are likely to extend to their children.

Roberts and Smith (1999) examined the attitudes and consequent behaviours of children towards children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The attributes they analysed were the children's attitudes, their perceived behavioural control (PBC), and their behavioural intentions (Roberts & Smith, 1999). It was found that children's attitudes and their PBC were significant predictors of their interactions with children with disabilities, whereas their behavioural intentions influenced their interactions to a lesser extent (Roberts & Smith, 1999). Because of these findings, the research suggested that the interventions which need to be put into place in order to increase the positive interactions between children with disabilities and children without disabilities in the classroom, should be targeted towards changing the student's attitudes, and consequently, their behaviours (Roberts & Smith, 1999).

These results were synonymous with the results of a study done by Verderber, Rizzo, and Sherrill (2003) who looked at students' intentions to work and play with students with disabilities in order to examine their intention to participate in an inclusive education setting (Verderber et al., 2003). The study showed that their intentions were influenced by their attitudes, as well as their subjective norms (Verderber et al., 2003). Subjective norms in this study were defined as the individual's opinion of significant others in his/her life (Verderber et al., 2003).

In a study by Freitag and Dunsmuir (2015), it was suggested that TPB is a valuable framework to use in order to study children's attitudes towards peers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the classroom in relation to the links between perceived behavioural control and behavioural intention. Additionally, this study posited that the children's behavioural intention was influenced by their parents' and teachers' attitudes towards children with disabilities (Freitag & Dunsmuir, 2015).

Looking at the above examples, it can be suggested that in gaining information about parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development, we can be provided with information on their intentions to behave. Having said that, this information can enable us to predict, based on the attitudes parents hold, how likely parents are to engage in inclusive education, the schools they will choose to place their children in and the attitudes their children will have. An inference on their children's attitudes based on their attitudes can provide to us information on how children will behave towards learners who face certain barriers to learning and development in an inclusive classroom. This will be discussed in more detail in the paragraphs which follow.

TRA and TPB are both concerned with what motivates individuals to carry out certain behaviours (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). Additionally, both TRA and TPB assume that intention, which is influenced by attitudes and normative beliefs, is a predictor of behaviour, along with perceived behavioural control (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015).

The Theory of Reasoned Action emphasises that a person must have an intention to perform a certain behaviour, therefore the individual must be sufficiently motivated to engage in that behaviour (Glanz, 2008). In line with this, it can be suggested that parents need to be motivated in order for them to engage and interact in an inclusive environment. Literature has stated that parents have an important role to play in addressing barriers to learning and development as well as in the overall education of their children (DoBE, 2014; Du Plessis,

2013; Yssel et al., 2007). This begins with the decision made by the parent regarding the type of school they want to place their child in.

Additionally, in order for parents to engage in a specific behaviour, their attitudes and their evaluation of the behaviour needs to be positive (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Thus, when parental attitudes along with their evaluation of inclusive education are positive, they may be more likely to engage in an inclusive environment. This is influenced by their normative beliefs about the behaviour. A goal would be for parents to have positive subjective norms towards inclusive education, and therefore towards barriers to learning and development because in order for the implementation of inclusive education to be successful, it is imperative to address barriers to learning and development.

In gaining a deeper understanding of parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development, insight can be provided surrounding the wants and needs of parents in order to encourage them to willingly participate in an inclusive society. This is important because as stated by Sinclair et al. (2005), children can adopt attitudes from their parents, and moreover, the way they interact with other individuals are similar to the interactions they witness from their parents. Consequently, an understanding of parental attitudes and perceptions and their subsequent behaviours can provide information on how the children of these parents may behave in the inclusive classroom amongst other learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

The TPB takes into consideration that behaviour is frequently influenced by both general attitudes towards physical objects, as well as attitudes towards performing specific behaviours. Examples of physical objects include factors such as race, religion, ethnicity and language, amongst others (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The abovementioned factors can be regarded as barriers to learning and development. In addition to that, attitudes and normative beliefs are not only adopted by individuals from their parents or immediate family, but also from the wider community (Ahsan, 2015). In addition to that, attitude towards behaviour refers to the perception about performing a specific behaviour toward a specified object or target (Azjen & Fishbein, 2005). Therefore, the manner in which parents address barriers to learning and development will be determined by their attitudes towards the specified barriers to learning and development, as well as whether or not they acknowledge certain aspects as a barrier to learning and development.

The use of the TPB will emphasise the importance of the information obtained surrounding the relationship between the attitudes a parent has towards barriers to learning and development and the behaviour which will follow. The way the parent perceives barriers to learning and development and inclusive education could be a predictor of specific behaviours, such the type of school they select for their child. This is because attitudes influence how individuals interact in the world. Their interactions form a part of their behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Furthermore, it becomes important to understand how the TPB relates to the attitudes parents have towards barriers to learning and development because often, rather than not, attitudes are expressed through behaviour (Fazio, 1990). Attitudes are reflected through an individual's behaviour, specifically when the individual has chosen the behaviour based on the costs and benefits it may have for them (Fazio, 1990). Therefore, individuals are more likely to choose a certain behaviour if it has a low cost, and serves to benefit them in some manner (Fazio, 1990). Fazio (1990) identifies one of the factors that may influence behaviour, such as the importance of the behaviour for the individual. Therefore, the individual needs to perceive the behaviour as both important, and rewarding. The idea that attitudes, and subsequently, behaviours, are adopted, leads to the assumption that parents may exhibit certain behaviours based on their belief system, and these behaviours form a part of the examples which they set for their children.

What's more, parents model certain behaviours for their children, leading to the acquisition of similar attitudes and behaviours within the child. (Sinclair et al., 2005). A study done by Sinclair and colleagues (2005) reflected an example of how parental attitudes had an influence on the attitudes of their children by examining racial prejudice in parents, which were reflected in the attitudes of their children, who held similar attitudes to that of their parents. Therefore parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development can provide information to us surrounding the attitudes children of these parents have towards barriers to learning and development, and consequently how their attitudes will affect their behaviour (Ahsan, 2015). This is supported by the TPB, which indicates that subjective norms are the attitudes individuals adopt from their parents and wider communities, and they are then used as a motivation for behaviour. The behaviour in this instance would relate to social stereotyping and prejudices held against certain groups of people.

The TPB posits that in order for a behaviour to occur the individual must have a positive attitude towards the specific behaviour as well as an attitude which they have adopted from their society (Ahsan, 2015). Therefore if parents have positive attitudes towards barriers to learning, they may behave in accordance to ideals outlined in the policies of inclusive education and they will want to form a part of an inclusive society.

As stated in the TPB, attitudes are often not formed consciously, but instead they are formed through variables such as their age, gender, religion, ethnicity and race (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). In addition to that, attitudes are also formed through the individual's environment, thus looking at what the person is exposed to and what is considered normal in their environment (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). Therefore, just as the parent has been socialised in their particular environment, so too are their children. This would mean that children adopt the attitudes they have from both the society they grow up in, as well as their parents. Various environments in South Africa have different views regarding barriers to learning (Duney & Salend, 2000). Because of this, parental attitudes will differ across contexts. Additionally, attitudes are influenced by affect. Therefore if an individual has positive feelings towards the attitude, a normative belief being congruent with the attitude, as well as a sense of control over behaviours relating to the attitudes, then certain behaviours will occur (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). It is important to look at this in conjunction with the context of inclusive education in South Africa.

Because attitudes are adopted by society, and subsequently influences behaviour (Ahsan, 2015), it can be postulated that the attitudes children encounter from their parents will influence their behaviours with their peers, therefore these attitudes affect how inclusion plays out in the classroom. Additionally, Engelbrecht, Oswald and Forlin, (2006) believe that a barrier to inclusive education itself can be parents not recognising or being involved in the school. (Engelbrecht et al., 2006). In addition, when parents are not recognised or involved in the education of their children, it becomes a barrier to learning and development (DoBE, 2010).

As previously mentioned, behaviour is influenced by both general attitudes towards physical objects and attitudes towards performing specific behaviours (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). It is important to consider these influences on the formation of parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development, specifically in the multicultural context of South Africa. South Africa is home to a diverse cultural and ethnic population (Scheepers,

2010). Thus, individual ideologies and viewpoints will differ, and because of this, there will be a variance in their general attitudes towards barriers to learning and development. Moreover, in order for a behaviour towards a specific barrier to learning and development to occur, there would need to be a coherence between the attitudes towards the barriers to learning, as well as how parents conceptualise the behaviour, as well as towards the individuals who may be experiencing these barriers. Therefore, even if the attitudes that parents have towards barriers to learning and development is not a negative one, they may still not be willing to engage in any behaviours towards disadvantaged groups in society.

The MODE model takes this further by stating that attitudes which are strongly held, are less likely to change. It can be suggested that apartheid played a significant role in the formation of attitudes towards inclusive education and barriers to learning and development (Mitchell, De Lange & Thuy, 2008). Therefore, the manner in which barriers to learning are understood by parents, could stem from the normative beliefs held by society. The system of apartheid would have played a significant role on the normative beliefs being held by individuals. Therefore, despite multiple legislation and policy documents emphasising the importance of equality and non-discrimination, it may be that normative beliefs being held by individuals are strong, and difficult to change. In addition to that, the parents in this study would have lived during the apartheid era, meaning that they have had personal experiences related to racial discrimination, which further relates to the formation of attitudes and beliefs. It can therefore be suggested that race would be a prominent factor being considered by participants as a barrier to learning and development.

The MODE model further suggests that not all attitudes are conscious. Research on inclusive education has revealed that parents generally hold a positive attitude towards inclusive education, until they consider the impact it may have on their own children. Therefore, parents in this study may also not be consciously aware of all of their attitudes and the dialogue may lead to them acknowledging attitudes that they may have not consciously been aware of.

With reference to the activation of attitudes, as stated by the MODE model, because parents are not always consciously aware of the attitudes which they possess, they do not always give much thought as to whether or not they hold a specific attitude, due to there not being enough motivation to consider how they may feel (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Fazio, 1990). In line with the idea that attitudes have an influence on behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein,

2000), it can be suggested that some behaviours which parents display can be controlled, whereas others cannot as it would depend on their awareness of the attitudes they possess.

It is important to look at parental attitudes because, as stated by the TPB, attitudes and behaviour influence one another. Therefore understanding the attitudes held by parents towards barriers to learning and development will provide insight into their behaviours. These behaviours are the ones their children observe and attempt to emulate outside of the home. Therefore, parental attitudes inform how inclusion will play out in the classroom.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

The following section provides information about the methods that were used in the study. It will commence with a discussion of the context of the study followed by a discussion of the research design. An explanation of the population sample and sampling technique which was used will then be presented. This will be followed by an outline of the instruments and data collection for the study. Additionally, information surrounding the procedure and data collection will be discussed before moving on to ethical considerations for the study and self-reflexivity.

4.1. Context

This study was conducted in Lenasia, which is located in the South of Johannesburg. Lenasia emerged during the apartheid era, and policies during apartheid resulted in a fragmented health, housing and education system (Fonn et al., 1991). Lenasia is a former Indian suburb in Johannesburg, with an approximate population of 90 000 people, living in both formal and informal settlements, with varying access to resources and opportunities (Otwombe et al., 2015).

A public, mainstream high school in Lenasia was accessed for this study. The school consisted of grades 8-12, with a mixture of male and female learners of varying races. The medium of instruction at the school is English. Whilst the school is located in Lenasia, learners from surrounding areas also attend the school.

4.2. Research Design

This study employed an exploratory, descriptive research design. An exploratory research design is a method which seeks to gain new knowledge on a particular subject through placing oneself in a position which makes discovering aspects of interests possible (Stebbins, 2001). In having said that, exploratory research is often said to be a preliminary stage in research due to its goal of reporting new information, which has not often been looked at and has been learned through the research process (Stebbins, 2001). Therefore, exploratory research aims to analyse a considerable amount of variables through the research process in order to find out how well they relate to a specific problem, or whether they relate to that problem at all, thereby emphasising how relevant, or not, the variables may be (Grove & Andreasen, 1982).

Descriptive research design seeks to provide an in-depth description of occurrences in a general, everyday sense by asking questions of who, what and where (Sandelowski, 2000). The aims of descriptive research is to analyse and seek out the key factors of specific phenomena (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013). After the key factors of phenomena are identified, they will be turned into typologies (Ritchie et al., 2013). Typologies are data which has been classified before a description and explanation of the classification are given (Ritchie et al., 2013). These explanations are provided by the research participants (Ritchie et al., 2013). The data is analysed in order to give it meaning in the real world (Ritchie et al., 2013). When the researcher selects the data that he/she wants to describe, it goes under a process of transformation and in a sense, a minimal amount of interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000). Additionally, the most common uses of a descriptive design is to provide answers to unique but relevant questions, specifically to professionals and policy makers. It seeks to understand the concerns individuals have; why they may or may not be using a particular service; who is actually using a service; when it is being used and the aspects related to the recovery of an event (Sandelowski, 2000).

This design was chosen in order to attempt to gain a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes which parents have towards barriers to learning and development, as well as what they consider a barrier to learning and development to be. A qualitative research approach was chosen in order to provide the researcher with information surrounding the realities of the participants in their world (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). Therefore, it aimed to give a rich understanding of how barriers to learning and development are viewed by parents in the South African society.

Moreover, qualitative research was chosen because of the goal it sets out to achieve, and this goal relates to gaining an understanding of phenomena which people in the world present with, as well as the meanings these individuals attach to the phenomena (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). In doing so, the researcher did not just gain information on the attitudes parents have towards barriers to learning and development, but instead, the researcher set out to understand the meanings attached to the attitudes. Additionally, through qualitative research, information surrounding specific perspectives of various participants may be obtained, giving a richer and more in-depth understanding of the issues at hand (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). Qualitative research moved beyond providing facts to the researcher, towards providing an explanation of these facts (Flick, 2009).

4.3. Population Sample and Sampling

Participant	Age	Gender	Race
1	35	Female	Coloured
2	42	Female	Indian
3	38	Female	Indian
4	39	Female	Indian
5	43	Male	Coloured
6	54	Male	Indian
7	54	Male	Indian

The participants of this study were parents of high school-going children, since the study focused on parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development. A principal of one mainstream school in Lenasia was approached in order to obtain participants for the study. Permission from the principal was received before contact with the participants was made. Initially, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling is an intentional choice of choosing a participant based on the qualities the participant possesses which may be applicable to the study (Tongco, 2007). Some participants were approached face-to-face, whilst contact was made with others via email and over the phone. Once these avenues were exhausted, the researcher approached some of the participants who had already taken part in the study, in order to obtain new participants. This was due to an experienced difficulty in obtaining participants. The contact details of these participants were provided to the researcher. This is snowball sampling. Snowball sampling involves the referral of participants from other participants in a study (Noy, 2008). Seven participants took part in the study. The inclusion criteria for this study was parents of any age, as long as they were parents of school-going children, who had placed their children in the chosen mainstream school.

Snowball sampling has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages of snowball sampling includes it being a way to find individuals who adequately meet the criteria for, and are willing to participate in, a research study, especially when other methods of sampling did not lead to the acquisition of enough participants (Ungvarsky, 2017). It is also particularly useful to use when the study is based on a sensitive or private issue (Noy, 2008).

It is thus considered effective in accessing "hidden populations" (Noy, 2008). In addition to that, accessing participants in this manner may enable easier rapport building, because it comes recommended to them from previous participants (Ungvarsky, 2017). Therefore, it can lead to the saving of both time and money (Ungvarsky, 2017). However, there are also disadvantages of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is considered an 'informal' method of sampling (Noy, 2008) and it therefore raises questions about how well it represents the wider population (Ungvarsky, 2017). In addition to that, it is considered to have a low level of reflexive consideration (Noy, 2008).

4.4. Instruments and Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data for the study. These interviews were face-to-face. All interviews were audio recorded in order to ensure validity during transcription. Semi-structured interviews make use of questions which were outlined prior to the study, see Appendix G (Low, 2012). However, it leaves room for the researcher to ask questions and probe in order to gain an understanding of what is being discussed and to ensure clarity is maintained (Low, 2012). Therefore, it would be like having a conversation (Low, 2012). The disadvantages of semi-structured interviews is that if the researcher lacks experience, they may not have the required level of skill to probe and therefore, the risk of relevant data not being acknowledged arises (Kajornboon, 2005).

The interviews ranged from 20 to 70 minutes. The interview schedule was created based on information obtained from previous literature. The interview questions aimed to obtain information surrounding the attitudes parents have towards barriers to learning and development, as well as what participants perceive a barrier to learning to be. Furthermore, questions relating to the perceptions held by parents surrounding barriers to learning was included in the interview schedule. These questions provided information on the attitudes parents have towards inclusive education, which is important to consider because South Africa is in the process of implementing inclusive education (DoE, 2001).

4.5. Procedure

Before the commencement of the research, ethical clearance was obtained from the School of Human and Community Development in the University of the Witwatersrand (MEDP/17/001 1H). Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Gauteng DoE. The principal of a mainstream high school in Lenasia was approached and he provided consent in writing for participants from the school to be a part of the research.

The researcher then handed out participant information sheets at the school's Parents Day. The participant information sheet contained information relating to the study. The researcher was contacted by some of the participants who were interested in being a part of the study. A date and time which was suitable for the interview was then arranged with the various participants. Due to the limited number of parents who contacted the researcher to participate in the study, the parents who agreed to participate were asked to refer the researcher to other parents who may have been interested.

Information about the research was provided to the participants and it was communicated to them that there were no risks or benefits in participating in the study. The participants who agreed to be a part of the study were then required to sign a consent form for participation in the study, as well as a consent form for audio recording during the interview. The participants were guaranteed that their information would be kept confidential and that they would remain anonymous in the research report, through the use of pseudonyms. Moreover, it was communicated to them that they had an opportunity to withdraw from the research, if at any time they were unhappy with participating. Furthermore, notes were taken during the interview process. Participants were also provided with an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions at the end of the interview. Also, all participants were provided with the researcher's contact details, should any questions arise after the interview was conducted. Once all the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

4.6. Data analysis

Once the interviews were conducted, the recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Notes were taken in the interview. These notes included information of non-verbal communication, such as body language. The notes were taken into consideration when analysing the responses provided during the interviews. This was done in order to enhance the credibility of the themes identified and discussed in the research report. The enhancement of the credibility of the data was further achieved by the reviewing of the transcripts by the researcher (Heppner & Heppner, 2004).

The transcriptions were analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis identifies and analyses patterns in the data from the interviews before reporting them. Moreover, thematic analysis involves the organisation, description and interpretation of the data in accordance to the research topic. The patterns which are identified present themselves as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Six phases of data analysis are identified by Clarke & Braun (2013). The six phases they refer to are "familiarisation of the data; coding; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and writing up" (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 121).

Familiarisation of data was done by the researcher through the use of transcripts, which were read more than once, and notes were taken whilst reading through the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This assisted in gaining a deep understanding of the data. The researcher read the transcripts first, without making any notes. Thereafter, the researcher began making notes when reading the transcripts again, identifying important information. This information was identified looking at research questions, research aims, as well as what was commonly being said by participants, and which of the responses stood out as different or unique. This assisted with the coding of the data. Coding involved identifying important and relevant aspects of the data and labelling them to assist in the analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher then searched for themes in the data. Searching for themes refers to attempting to identify meaningful patterns in the data. This was done by combining the various codes which related to one another, and creating meaning out of them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thereafter, the themes needed to be reviewed in order to ensure that they fit well into the topic, and analysed further (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the themes were reviewed, the researcher defined and labelled the themes, and thereafter, wrote up the themes and their meaning. Writing up the data and themes are imperative to the research process. It involves an in-depth analysis of the theme, the meaning behind it, as well as how it relates to the research questions, and the existing literature and theory (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Thematic analyses relating to the study enabled the researcher to identify the themes which emerged from the data relating to the attitudes parents have towards barriers to learning and development; how these barriers are perceived by the participants; what their attitudes are; why these attitudes and perspectives exist, and where they come from. Therefore, through the use of thematic analysis, the researcher could identify the most common perspectives and attitudes towards specific barriers to learning and development, as well as provide a description of these themes and various interpretations of them. In doing so, a richer understanding of the data was obtained in order to answer the research questions.

4.7. Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research and Ethics Committee (non-medical) in the University of Witwatersrand. The Gauteng Department of Education was contacted in order to obtain permission to approach the mainstream schools in Lenasia. The principal of the school was issued with a participant information sheet (Appendix C) and thereafter, provided written permission to the researcher in the form of a formal letter for the research to be conducted at the school. A consent form was drawn up for the principal, as well as the participants, which they were required to sign. The principal was required to sign the principal's consent form (Appendix E) while the parents were required to sign the participant consent form (Appendix F).

The participants were provided, in writing, by means of a participant information sheet, the purpose and aims of the research, its uses, the contact details of the researcher and the research supervisor, as well as how data the will be collected. Anonymity could not be guaranteed during the interview process because the interviews were face-to-face. However, anonymity was maintained in the research report through the use of pseudonyms, particularly when direct quotes were used. Furthermore, participants were assured that in order to maintain confidentiality, transcription of the data would be done in private, that all recordings would be listened to through the use of headphones and that all recordings and transcribed data would be kept on a password protected computer.

Participation in the study was voluntary and the researcher offered no incentives to the participants. Additionally, participants were informed that there were no advantages or disadvantages in participation, but that they were contributing to the body of knowledge within the particular field of study. The right to withdraw at any time from the research study was provided to the participants. Participants were also informed that they would be notified when the final report is uploaded on the Wits online repository, where the general public with access to internet will be able to retrieve them. Moreover, the report will be available to students on the library system online and there is a possibility that it could be published as journal articles or conference presentations. Participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions at any time. They were provided with the researcher's contact details, as well as the supervisor's contact details. This was for further correspondence, were anything to arise.

4.8. Self-reflexivity

Self-reflexivity enhances sincerity in a study because it identifies the "values, biases and inclinations of the researcher" (Tracy, 2010, p. 840). Moreover, self-reflexivity enables the researcher to be more authentic and genuine (Tracy, 2010). Therefore, transparency is one of the goals of self-reflexivity, along with showing where the researcher has been vulnerable and how the researcher attempts to remain honest (Tracy, 2010).

With regards to this research, the researcher holds the view that inclusion is a goal every society should seek to attain, and therefore inclusive education is a necessary practice for inclusion. More than that, the researcher believes that all individuals should be respected, irrespective of the background they come from, even when the said background presents itself as a barrier to learning and development. This, according to the researcher, is a necessary attitude which individuals in a society should hold in order to ensure the success of inclusive education. The researcher remained cognisant of the fact that these attitudes may lead to them being inclined to focus on the positive aspects of what the participants are saying, or conversely, to be overly critical of the data they have obtained.

The researcher at all times ensured that they did not cast their own personal feelings and attitudes towards inclusion onto the participant, especially when reacting to something they disagreed with. There was continuous effort made by the researcher to avoid this through constant reflection of their own beliefs and attitudes relating to the phenomena and analysing how they could be projecting their own beliefs onto the data provided by the participant. The researcher further ensured that they critically analysed the responses by thinking about alternative answers and meanings attached to the responses. In addition to that, the researcher took things that they were uncomfortable with into a therapeutic space.

The researcher remained aware that they were possibly viewed as a professional educational psychologist by some of the participants and that this may have led to a change in the dynamics of power as they would be viewed as having professional power. Besides that, the researcher was aware that due to the history of the country, their race may also contribute to the dynamics of power between themselves and the participants because the community from which the research will be conducted is a diverse one in terms of culture and religion. Therefore, the data received may have been influenced by the backgrounds of the participants, and moreover, the analysis and interpretation of the data by the researcher may have also been influenced by the background of the researcher. The researcher was thus

persistent in their efforts to ensure that their biases are not reflected in the research report, and this was done by talking to their colleagues and other relevant professionals. However, in doing so, anonymity was maintained and no identifying information relating to the participant was revealed.

The researcher ensured that they remained cognisant of their role as the researcher, especially when relating to the participants. It was noted that at times, participants perceived them as someone who is in a position of power, and because of this, some of the participants held the belief that the research will lead to changes within the current school setting that their children are in. It was, at times, observed by the researcher that participants perceived the interview space as a space for them to air their grievances about the school, with the possible hope that the researcher would act as a mediator between themselves and the school, in order for change to occur. The researcher had to continue to remain aware of her role in the study.

The researcher was also aware of themselves as the researcher in the context of the community in which the research was being conducted. One of these areas is familiarity, such as being the same race as some of the participants, as well as residing within their community. The researcher noted that this may have played a role in the manner in which the participants engaged with them, as well as the manner in which the space was perceived by the participants. It appeared as though this familiarity may have led to a more open dialogue. However, by the same token, participants appeared to expect the researcher to hold similar judgements, beliefs, stereotypes, and sometimes even prejudices, such as theirs. The researcher, once again, had to be aware of their role in the project, and communicate neutrally to the participants at all times.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will report on the findings of the study. These findings are based on the thematic analysis done on the interview transcripts. Five themes emerged after coding the data, and an inductive approach was used.

As a reminder, the research questions of the study are as follows:

1. How are barriers to learning and development conceptualised by parents of school-going children?
2. What do parents consider a barrier to learning and development to be?
3. What are the attitudes held by parents of school-going children towards barriers to learning and development?

The themes identified after the coding of the data, are as follows:

Main Themes	**Sub-themes**
Theme 1: Parental understanding of inclusive education	a. Parental perceptions of inclusive education b. Parental attitudes towards inclusive education
Theme 2: Aspects that informed parental decision-making in choosing a school	
Theme 3: Parental perception of barriers to learning and development	a. Cultural factors as a barrier to learning and development b. Language as barrier to learning and development c. Transport constraints as a barrier to learning and development d. Socio-economic deprivation as a barrier to learning and development

	e. Lack of discipline and large classrooms as a barrier to learning and development
Theme 4: Barriers to learning and development being faced by their children	a. Concerns relating to teachers b. Lack of support c. Cultural intolerance
Theme 5: Parental Involvement	

The identified themes begin with an explanation of the understanding parents have, of inclusive education, and move towards their perceptions of barriers to learning and development.

5.1 Parental understanding of inclusive education

Due to the imperative of addressing barriers to learning and development in order for inclusive education to be a success (DoBE, 2010), parents were asked to engage with their understanding of inclusive education.

The aforementioned takes into consideration recommendations made by Fishbein & Ajzen (1972), who state that the attitudes which individuals hold are influenced by the manner in which phenomena are understood by them. With this understanding, it can be suggested that an understanding of inclusive education, will inform the attitudes parents hold. This understanding of inclusive education presented by the parents allowed for them to engage with the topic of inclusion further, which extended towards their understanding of barriers to learning and development. This is discussed further below.

a. Parental perceptions of inclusive education

Regarding inclusive education, it is clear that parents lacked an understanding of what it actually is, as indicated in the responses of four of the participants.

> *"Inclusive … Can you elaborate a little on that one?"* (Participant 1)

> *"Inclusive education, the rights to kids having education? And a stable environment, I would say, uh, emotionally, physically, well structured."* (Participant 3)

> *"Inclusive education is uh, ensuring the kids' rights are met and they in a safe environment in school and stuff like that."* (Participant 5)

"I'd like to if I have any knowledge on inclusive education." (Participant 7).

Participant 1 needed more clarification regarding the use of the word 'inclusive'. It is possible that the term 'inclusive education' was one which she had never encountered or engaged with before. Only once it was briefly elaborated on was she able to engage with the topic further. Participant 3 and 5 provided their understanding of inclusive education. However, their responses indicated that they were doubtful about whether or not their responses were adequate and this was reflected in the manner in which their responses were conveyed. Participant 3 appeared to be asking for clarification when answering. Her use of language also appeared to indicate that perhaps, she was not confident about her response ("*I would say").* Participant 5 indicated uncertainty in his response (*"and stuff like that").* Participant 7 stated that he did not have any knowledge on inclusive education

This finding is echoed by a study done in Saudi Arabia, by Alothman (2014) which found that in some cases, parents appear to have a general unawareness around what inclusive education actually is (Alothman, 2014). Whilst parents were able to identify the necessity of the school ensuring that the rights of learners are protected, they did not consider the possibility that some of these learners may be faced with various types of barriers to learning and development. In addition to that, their tentative language and clarification questions indicated that they were unfamiliar with the concept of inclusive education.

Despite initial uncertainty relating to an understanding of inclusive education, some participants were able to convey their understanding of inclusive education, and this is depicted in the quotes below.

> *"Well I mean that the disadvantaged people will get an education much easier. I mean, access to this education."* (Participant 1)
>
> *"My understanding would be the changes since 1994, with people of all races coming to all government schools now, and they could be people with disabilities and so forth and we need to cater for all of them. And associate with all of them so we can have a broader understand of their experiences, their difficulties, their obstacles in life, so to speak."* (Participant 7).

Participant 1 speaks to the ability to access education. An access to education is fundamental to inclusive education, as it speaks to the basic right to receiving education. UNESCO states that all learners have the right to an education, and this is regarded as a fundamental and basic

right (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca statement takes this into consideration and states that this right should be protected, despite learners having their own individual needs, and facing a range of barriers to learning and development (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; UNESCO, 1994). In addition to that, it is evident that parental perceptions of inclusive education stem from the knowledge that much of the shifts in the education system occurred during post-apartheid South Africa and serves to ensure that the injustices of the past are addressed. Research on inclusive education in the South African context emphasises that inclusive education in South Africa is largely driven by the history of apartheid (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2016). Participant 5's response also alludes to the importance of protecting the rights of learners, despite the tentative language used. This view is supported by international and South African literature on inclusive education, which states that the basic premise of inclusive education is to ensure that the rights of all learners are protected, regardless of the barriers to learning and development they may be facing (Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012; Suleymanov, 2015; UNESCO, 1994). This view is further emphasised by participant 3, as shown below.

> *"Inclusive education, the rights to kids having education? And a stable environment, I would say, uh, emotionally, physically, well structured."* (Participant 3)

It is important to look at this parental understanding of inclusive education, because this will play a role in the formation of their attitudes relating to it, and in turn, their behaviour towards it. This is supported by the TPB.

According to the TPB, attitudes refer to the manner in which an individual perceives an object, and it is important for them to perceive it positively in order to motivate behaviour relating to it (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000). In order for there to be a positive perception towards an object, there needs to be an understanding of what that object is. Therefore, with the initial lack in understanding of inclusive education, questions arise relating to how parents are engaging with it.

The importance of obtaining this information is to establish whether or not parents are actively engaging in inclusive education, and this is because they play a role in whether or not it will be successfully implemented (DoBE, 2010; Du Toit & Forlan, 2009). Therefore, if parents lack an understanding of what inclusive education is, it can be suggested that their engagement in an education system of inclusivity, is constrained. In addition to that, Alothman (2014) suggests that parents with the knowledge on inclusive education, are more

likely to be instruments in the success of inclusive education, as well as improving their child's overall education (Alothman, 2014). Having said that, it could be suggested that the lack of understanding of parents in this study may present itself as a barrier to the successful implementation and practice of inclusive education.

However, despite an initial lack in understanding of inclusive education, parents appeared to be able to express what they thought it was as the interview progressed. Therefore, there was an ambiguity in their understanding of inclusive education. It also appeared as though much of their uncertainty surrounding their ideas around inclusive education could be attributed to them not being confident in their responses, and perhaps this was due to the term "inclusive education" being used. However, despite the possible low level in confidence, participants displayed that they had knowledge about what inclusive education may be referring to, and much of this was related to their perceptions and attitude towards protecting the basic rights of learners in the country. Apartheid South Africa was a system which served to enhance vast inequalities, and is frequently considered to be a system which violated the basic human rights of people of colour. These issues are frequently spoken about in post-apartheid South Africa. (Donohue & Bornman, 2006, Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2006). Therefore, it can be suggested that the frequent exposure to this information would have contributed to the participants' ideas and perceptions of inclusive education and furthermore, their attitudes towards it. The TPB indicates that perceptions towards something are influenced by an understanding of it, which comes from the exposure to it. Without prior exposure, there will not be an awareness and thus, there will not be a perception or attitude (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000).

The MODE model refers to the activation of attitudes, and states that sometimes this activation is not deliberate, thus the person is not in control of it (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The MODE model suggests that automatic activation exists for the strongest attitudes which an individual acquires. This means that when the link between the attitude and its evaluation; and memory is strong, that is when the attitude activation is automatic (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Parents in this study appear to have been extensively exposed to issues emanating from apartheid, and their responses frequently referred to issues of basic human rights. Therefore, despite them not being able to confidently express their understanding of inclusive education, their responses still shed light on their beliefs, and how it may stem from beliefs held by the wider society.

b. Parental attitudes towards inclusive education

Parental attitudes towards inclusive education is significant to consider, and this is because parents play an essential role in the successful implementation of inclusive education (DoBE, 2010). In addition to that, attitudes also inform beliefs or judgements towards an object (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005). In the discussion of this theme, the object being referred to is inclusive education itself.

Based on an analysis of the data from the interviews, it appeared as though parents had mixed feelings towards inclusive education, as conveyed in their responses in the interviews. Initially positive attitudes towards inclusive education were expressed, as seen when participant 7 stated,

> *"It's good for people to be able to interact with people of all races, religions, backgrounds, slightly disadvantaged people in terms of disabilities and so forth. If there's anything it teaches us more to be tolerant, and teaches us to be understanding."* (Participant 7)

Additional positive sentiments were expressed by Participant 5 who said,

> *"But I think if the inclusive when they learning from each other and they learning to respect each other and just get along, they will have less, there's no barrier from them learning together, so it becomes easier for them to participate in school activities, it gets easier for them to call out answers in school in the class and teaches to be more focused in their learning, you know."* (Participant 5)

This finding is similar to other literature on inclusive education, which found that parents of typically developing children appear to have a positive attitude towards inclusive education, especially due to the belief that it would benefit their typically developing child in being able to become more aware of the needs of others, as well as enhancing a positive outlook on the social integration of individuals from an array of different backgrounds (Bhargava & Narumanchi, 2011; Duhaney & Salend, 2000). In addition to that, when looking further at the beliefs of parents of typically developing children, their positive outlook on inclusive education stems from the belief that inclusive education will assist in promoting their child's socio-emotional maturity, as well as enhance a culture of acceptance. Similarly, studies on inclusive education support this idea by proposing that the inclusion of learners

with barriers to learning into a classroom with typically-developing children might enhance their pro-social characteristics (De Boer et al., 2010; Duhaney & Salend, 2000).

Despite being able to identify the positive outcomes of inclusive education for their children, parents also expressed concerns. Most of these concerns surrounded the impact it may have on their own children. This theme is supported by literature on parents' attitudes towards inclusive education (Bhargava & Narumanchi, 2011; De Boer et al., 2010; Duhaney & Salend, 2000). Reviews on literature on inclusive education also suggest that most parents' concerns increase based on when the severity of the barriers to learning that learners experience have worsened (Blazer, 2017). This was expressed by Participant 5 and 6 respectively who state,

> "*Okay. I know if the child comes from a situation of having a barrier for learning, and that barrier becomes uh impediment for my daughters learning in that institution then I won't be happy about it."* (Participant 5)

> *"Uh, okay as I said before right, uh, I might be called a selfish parent, but my, I'm just worried about my child, I tell my child be amicable with everyone, right. You don't have to what everyone is doing cause you get situations of the noise disruptive children in the class, I said 'you don't have to be like them', the whole purpose of going to school is to get an education."* (Participant 6)

It is interesting to note that while parents relate to the idea of inclusive education positively, when it comes to the actual implementation and day to day effect on their own child, they are not as positive. This is similar to findings on teachers' attitudes where they are found to be positive regarding the inclusive education ideal, but are sceptical regarding the implementation (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Nel et al., 2016; Srivastava et al., 2015).

The majority of the parents' concerns surrounded the completion of the curriculum, as well as a lack of resources. Duhaney and Salend (2000) suggest that parents express apprehension surrounding the time it would take teachers to give instructions to children who face barriers to learning and development, indicating that parents believe that it would hold their children back, or slow them down. This is further presented in the quotes below:

> "*That's a, uh, it's a difficult one as trying to mainstream uh kids with barriers to learning is quite difficult and like I said previously you know, uhm, certain educators*

do not have that patience, and that can make it worse for a child that we're trying to integrate´(Participant 3)

"But let's be realistic the aim of the teacher is to complete the syllabus and to move on with the syllabus, I mean I've got a syllabus copy lying right here. They've got to finish the allotted work in a certain time frame and we could have that hindrance" (Participant 6)

The MODE Model suggests that parents are not always actively aware of their attitudes, and this is because in some instances, they have not given adequate thought to a specific attitude, due to not being motivated to consider what their attitude in relation to a specific idea is (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). This may be the reason their attitudes began shifting as the interview progressed, as they may have initially perceived it positively, until they began thinking about their attitudes further.

As previously mentioned, according to the TPB, attitudes towards an object informs the behaviour relating to the object. Therefore, in using this theory, it is important to look at the behaviour parents are engaging in, in relation to the education of their children. This forms a part of the next theme, which relate to the aspects (attitudes) that inform parents' decisions in choosing (behaviour) schools in which to place their children. Grove and Fisher (1999) believe that parents play an active role in the manner in which inclusive education is shaped and defined and this stems from the meaning they have attached to it.

5.2. Aspects that informed parental decision-making in choosing a school

In choosing a school in which to place their child, all of the participants indicated that it was an informed decision. However, it should be noted that most participants live near the area that the school is located, adding to the convenience of choosing the school. Whilst there appears to be limited research on school choice in the South African context, the literature that does exist, refers to a clear movement of children from rural schools into urban schools (Maile, 2004). In addition to that, English-medium schools appear to be a popular choice among South African parents (De Klerk, 2002; Soudien, 2004; Van der Berg, 2008).

The quotes below reflect that choosing the school was an informed decision. Participants appeared to do research beforehand and this led to an awareness about the context which the school was within, and highlighted that this awareness assisted them in making the decision.

"*I did a bit of background checks on the school it was a fairly stable school… A lot of thought behind that, she was previously in another school and we had to change schools and it was a tough decision."* (Participant 3)

"*We did our research and we found out that it was one of the better schools in Lenasia."* (Participant 5)

"It was a situation of better the devil you know than the devil you don't, right?" (Participant 6)

For these participants, high levels of discipline and security meant stability for their children. This is shown in the quotes below.

"Not a lot of issues disciplinary wise. But I've checked and what have you it was controlled very well, but there wasn't very many issues. I know all schools have issues but it seemed to be a bit more contained than the other schools." (Participant 3)

"Discipline is I think top on the agenda, if I can say that, it's not as bad as the other schools that we hear about. People complain everyday about incidents at school, XXX High hasn't been that bad according to what we see around." (Participant 7)

Participant's 3 and 7 indicate that the issue of discipline is an important one at the chosen school. According to these participants, because discipline is considered important within the school, the number of discipline-related incidents they have heard of in their wider community is lessened. They build onto this argument by mentioning that they have compared the levels of discipline to other schools in the area, and this appears to be done through listening to the experiences of other parents who have placed their children in different schools in the area. Quotes relating to the importance of the teachers at the school, are provided.

"*As long as the teachers were good and I know she's going to get the best education, basically."* (Participant 1)

"The requirements was the educators were still okay, they still had a number of good educators that were still in the system. And uh, the research also showed that the other schools there were more younger educators that were there. And we'd always be happier with more mature teachers." (Participant 5)

Participants indicated that school choice was related to familiarity with the teachers working within the school. In addition to that, they stated a preference towards teachers that were older and more experienced and they indicated that they believed that the teachers in the chosen school met this criteria. Along with that, two of the participants mentioned that the school had teachers that were there when they were in the school, suggesting that part of why they chose to put their child in the school, was because of personal experience with the school and its teachers. In addition to personal experience, these parents seemed to have higher levels of trust in these teachers. Participant 6 mentioned that he knew some of the teachers personally, and this personal connection led to higher levels of trust in the school.

This is reinforced by the MODE model (Ahsan, 2015), which states that behaviour is motivated by three factors. Firstly, there is the attitudes which are held about the behaviour (Ahsan, 2015). For these parents, their attitudes towards the school were positive. They held the belief that it was a good school, with high levels of discipline and good teachers and this led to them placing their children in the school. Looking at research which indicates that parents prefer schools where English is the medium of instruction (Soudien, 2004), it can be suggested that the chosen school, being an English school, played a role in their positive attitude towards it. In addition to that, all the parents spoke English as a first language. The decision to place their children in the school was a behaviour, and this behaviour was informed by the positive attitude towards the school.

A second factor that motivates an intention to behave, is the normative beliefs based on the attitudes of others they are in contact with (Ahsan, 2015). It appears as though, within the community, the chosen school is perceived to be one of the 'better' schools in the area, and this belief has been passed along from parent to parent. Participants decided to place their children in the school based on hearing good things about the school from other parents of learners in the school. In addition to that, for some of the participants, their knowledge of the school is gained from personal experience, as they indicated that they had attended the school.

The third factor is the perception individuals hold about the control they have relating to the specific behaviour (Ahsan, 2015). For all of the participants interviewed, they lived close by, and within the community in which the school was situated. Therefore, what formed a part of their decision, was convenience and accessibility to the school.

5.3. Parental perception of the barriers to learning and development

It is important to discuss the parental perceptions of the barriers to learning and development, as it serves to answer research questions relating to the manner in which barriers to learning and development are conceptualised and understood by the participants of this study.

The participants spoke about various barriers to learning and development. Some of these barriers were discussed generally, whilst others were identified as barriers they perceived within the school, which may be impacting on their own children, as well as other learners within the school. These aspects will be divided into five sub-themes, and will be discussed below. These sub-themes are as follows:

a. Cultural factors as a barrier to learning and development

b. Language as a barrier to learning and development

c. Transport constraints as a barrier to learning and development

d. Socio-economic deprivation as a barrier to learning and development

e. Lack of discipline and large classrooms as a barrier to learning and development

a. Cultural factors as a barrier to learning and development

In discussing parental perceptions, and their understanding of inclusive education, some insight was gained in terms of the factors parents consider as important for inclusive education. The participants in this study emphasised the importance of the integration of learners from various cultural backgrounds, in order for a school to be inclusive.

> *"At the same time our kids are encouraged to make friends with all races, uhm, because tomorrow when they in the outside world we not going to hold their hand. They need to be well conversed, you know, and they need to understand different peoples cultures in order to appreciate their own."* (Participant 4)

> *"You including different uh children from different races, from different backgrounds and things, and they all get taught together and I would always hope that children learn from each other."* (Participant 5)

> *"It's good for people to be able to interact with people of all races, religions, backgrounds, slightly disadvantaged people in terms of disabilities and so forth. If*

there's anything it teaches us more to be tolerant, and teaches us to be understanding ...it's about the same thing because it brings out your ability to associate and accept." (Participant 5)

Looking at the quotes above, it can be suggested that cultural and religious intolerance is perceived to be a barrier to learning and development by the participants in this study. An international study suggests that in order for academic institutions to be inclusive, diversity issues need to be addressed, and if they are not, they can hamper the learning of individuals within the institution, therefore presenting itself as a barrier to learning and development (Elliott et al., 2013). In the South African context, the issue of apartheid plays a role in the perception of cultural factors, such as language and religion, and if they are not addressed, they can be regarded as a barrier to learning and development (Donohue and Bornman, 2014; Nel et al., 2016).

As previously mentioned, the injustices of apartheid have played a significant role in shaping the current system of education (DoBE, 2010). Apartheid was a system which led to the experience of injustices for groups of people. Inclusive education seeks to ensure that discrimination and exclusion is eradicated in the education system (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Suleymanov, 2015) by seeking to ensure that all people have access to the basic human right of education (UNESCO, 1994).

However, it can be suggested that the current values and beliefs held by citizens of South Africa is directly related to the overall existence of apartheid (Engelbrecht, 2006). In addition to that, the injustices of apartheid are still prevalent in communities across Southern Africa, and this is highlighted in the current lack of resources and adequately trained teachers in previously disadvantaged schools (Engelbrecht, 2006).

The quotes below indicate that most of the participants' understanding of inclusive education and barriers to learning and development were related to ideas and beliefs around race, religion, and language.

"And there is no barriers in terms of whether, uhm, they are bombarded with religious intolerance in the school or they are not given fair opportunities because of the type of colour or religion, they actually from. Or should the child have disability that should not stop them from having exactly the same education as any other child." (Participant 4)

"Inclusive education, my understanding of it might be a little bit different in the sense that you would have vernacular studies included in the school curriculum that was my understanding of inclusive education. Uh, inclusive education from a political perspective could also be looked upon as people of differing races going to the same school, as opposed to exclusive, you know. Uh, ja, is there another meaning I guess for inclusive education." (Participant 6)

"My understanding would be the changes since 1994, with people of all races coming to all government schools now, and they could be people with disabilities and so forth and we need to cater for all of them. And associate with all of them so we can have a broader understand of their experiences, their difficulties, their obstacles in life, so to speak." (Participant 7)

The participants in this study all grew up during the apartheid era. Perhaps, part of their belief system has been adopted from their own parents' attitudes towards issues such as race, religion and language. This is in support of the MODE Model in TPB (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), as these parents were active participants and recipients of the laws of apartheid. TPB suggests that there are two types of attitudes, one being general attitudes towards objects such as race and ethnic groups, and the other being general attitudes towards behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). This is extended to the MODE Model which indicates that attitudes influence the judgements formed towards particular objects, and that individuals are active participants in the formation and construction of their attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

b. Language as a barrier to learning and development

According to the Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, language and communication barriers can have a negative impact on learning in the classroom (DoBE, 2010). Due to there being eleven official languages in South Africa, many learners are multilingual, and therefore, English may not be the home language for many South African learners (Plüddemann, 2015). The participants in this study regarded language as a barrier to learning and development. They took into consideration that English may not be the home language for many learners at XXX High, and that this can impact on their overall learning.

"I think, uh, positives it will be very important children need to be taught in their languages, I think that's important especially in South Africa having eleven official languages. I think a lot of Black children, especially Blacks, are very disadvantaged

at the moment that they are being taught in English, which becomes the second or sometimes third language. So that's why it's such a barrier for them, that's why they not doing as well as they should be doing in school… and you still teaching them in English, that is a massive disadvantage, that is very, very unfair." (Participant 5)

Participant 5 indicated that because of English not being the home language for many learners in the South African context, it puts them at a disadvantage in their learning. This finding is consistent with research in the South African context, where language is regarded as a barrier to learning and development (DoBE, 2010; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; O'Conner & Geiger, 2009; Plüddemann, 2015).

Participant 6 specified that from his cultural background, there are more languages than those which fall under the eleven official languages of South Africa. He indicated that language is deeply rooted in culture and that perhaps an inclusive education system would lead to the enmeshment of various cultures into one "cultureless society", as he calls it. He perceives this as a risk to individual cultures, and for him, this loss would lead to a loss in identity. He suggested that this could be solved by making English a compulsory language, but giving students the ability to choose what their additional language would be. It should be mentioned that at XXX High, Afrikaans is a compulsory additional language. Studies on multilingualism suggests that learning is most effective when subjects are taught to learners in their home language, and it is especially recommended that this is done at a foundational level (O'Conner & Geiger, 2009). This, however, is not the reality for many learners in the South African context (O'Conner & Geiger, 2009).

"Uh, let's start off with the negatives, right. Uh, we Indians generally are very deep rooted cultural people, right, uh I would say have English as a compulsory language and you can have Hindi, Gujarati, Telegu, Tamil, as an additional language, which would keep you in touch with your culture, your roots, your customs, etcetera, all right. When we have inclusive education, we are learning about basically a cultureless society driven by the norms and the faces of the media, and uh, we tend to lose our identity as an Indian people, I would say that's a disadvantage. I don't mind having a Black child in my class, I would learn a little bit more about his culture, and I would teach him a little bit about mine, right. But inclusive my definition of inclusive would be, you've got to have something cultural in there, academic. At the moment English, I would make English compulsory and you choose a second additional

language. The Jewish guys can choose Hebrew, the Muslim guys can choose Arabic or Guajarati or Hindi, whatever they choose, the people of the Zulu culture can choose Zulu, Xhosa, you know so you have that intact. Uh, I think it's very important to have some sort of identity, some sort of culture, I think once you lose your culture, you tend to lose yourself as a human, and you don't have anything to identify with." (Participant 6)

It should be stated that aside from language being a barrier to learning and development experienced by learners, it is also a barrier experienced by parents. In addition to that, despite the literature stating that this barrier can come in the way of parental participation in the education of their children (Michael et al., 2018), parents are still choosing to send their children to English schools, due to the belief that it will benefit their children's overall development (De Klerk, 2002; Maile, 2004; Msila, 2009). These decisions being made can be linked to parental attitudes relating to English as a language. Parents are choosing English schools because of their positive attitudes towards them. This is supported by the TPB which states that there are three factors that influence behaviour, and those include attitude towards the behaviour, normative beliefs, and their control over the behaviour (Ahsan, 2015). Therefore, it can be suggested that contributing to parental beliefs on language are the normative beliefs held by others. In addition to that, post-apartheid South Africa has allowed for parents to choose the schools they want to send their children to (Msila, 2009), which allows for control over the behaviour.

It is also evident that parents in this study perceive English as a dominant language, and hold the belief that parents outside of Lenasia are choosing to send their children to schools in Lenasia, and part of this is related to schools in the area teaching in English. Participant 6 emphasises that English should be the compulsory language, despite the belief that XXX high has not made certain languages an option for pupils. This is supported by literature which mentions that parents perceive English positively, and are choosing to send their children to English schools (De Klerk, 2002; Maile, 2004; Msila, 2009; Soudien, 2004).

c. Transport constraints as a barrier to learning and development

Socio-economic deprivation is a barrier to learning and development, which can lead to a number of other specific barriers to learning, and one of them is the issue of transport (de Kadt et al., 2014; Msila, 2009). Many children are forced to travel long distances to school in pursuit of better academic opportunities. With travelling long distances comes the high costs

of transport, as well as stressful conditions related to travelling long distances, as well as the time spent travelling (de Kadt et al., 2014). Transport issues and travelling long distances to get to school was identified as a barrier to learning and development by participants in the study. This is indicated in the quotes below.

> *"A barrier becomes the transport, where they got to travel from far to come to school in Lenasia. So it means they've got to leave half past five/six o'clock in the morning to attend school, and the transport only leaves half past three/four o'clock in the afternoon. These children get home tired, long day, and they still got homework to do, and you look at the results at the end of the year and you understand that that's a very big barrier for them as well."* (Participant 1)

> *"They want to learn English in Soweto, take away that barrier of them travelling and get English teachers, get good English teachers to teach them in Soweto. Then you know the child can walk across the road and go home, doesn't have to jump into a taxi and come here, so there's, I tell you something if I can speak to one of these ministers [silence] but they won't like me."* (Participant 5)

The quote above takes into consideration the factor that learners attend schools outside of their communities, in search of a better education. This coincides with sub theme (b), which indicates that parents in the South African context are sending their children to schools outside of their community, particularly to English schools, as they believe that his will have a positive impact on their learning.

d. Socio-economic deprivation as a barrier to learning and development

Socio-economic deprivation is regarded as a barrier to learning and development, as it prevents learners from having equal access to education (DoBE, 2010; Prinsloo, 2001). Many learners in the South African context are marginalised and do not have an equitable access to resources (Mitchell et al., 2008). Literature on barriers to learning in the South African context suggests that these socio-economic disparities exist largely due to the apartheid regime (Hay & Beyers, 2011). Three of the participants identified socio-economic deprivation as a barrier to learning and development. This is indicated in the quotes below.

> *"Maybe their background if they come from a poor home, people look at that, they don't want to teach the child, they don't want to walk with the child, they don't want the child in that school, they feel it will affect other kids. Which I don't think it will, it*

doesn't make a difference, because we all one … when you see kids out there that are deprived because they can't afford schooling, and because maybe they coming from a poor background they uh, they can't catch up as fast as the other learners. So they being pushed aside." (Participant 2)

"No, and I think another barrier is just poverty, poverty is a very big barrier for this kids, especially kids from poorer homes, not only Black people, there's poor Indian people as well in schools that are just having it so hard at home, not even having electricity at home, they are not having a warm plate of food at night, they are not having a warm bed, then you can't expect the child to still be able to live or do well at school…And I also think, I mean uh, the basic needs of hunger, I think hunger is a very big role, that's why I see in South Africa now in some schools, it's a few schools in Lenasia now that's got a feeding scheme going as well, which is uhm, YYY School has it going at the moment, a feeding scheme." (Participant 5)

"*You've got to look at the learner's socio-economic condition"* (Participant 6)

Participant 2 identifies social exclusion as a barrier to learning and development, and relates this to a low socio-economic status. This is supported by literature on barriers to learning and development, and attitudes. The Guidelines to Inclusive Teaching and Learning (2010) specifies that negative attitudes, prejudices and stereotyping are considered to be barriers to learning and development (DoBE, 2010). The TPB further extends on this by indicating that attitudes and beliefs influence behaviour (Ahsan, 2015). Therefore, when participant 2 speaks about social exclusion, she is referring to a behaviour that is performed because of a prior-held belief and attitude about a certain group of individuals.

Participant 5 refers to factors such as learners not having access to food, electricity and warmth due to a low socio-economic status. This belief is supported by literature on barriers to learning by various authors which indicates that these factors impact on the learner's environment where studying takes place, as well as general life experiences where learning takes place (DoBE, 2010; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Lessing & Mahabeer, 2007). Many learners in the South African context are trying to meet their basic needs, and at times, education falls lower down on the list of needs that must be met (Nel et al., 2016).

e. Lack of discipline and large classrooms as a barrier to learning and development

According to studies done on inclusive education, behavioural concerns and a lack of learner discipline are considered to be a barrier to learning and development (Naong, 2007; Steyn & Kamper, 2006). The above is posited to affect the manner in which educators are able to manage the classroom, and this, together with large teacher-to-learner ratios, serves to increase the stress teachers in the South African context are under (Marais & Meier, 2010; Naong, 2007; Steyn & Kamper, 2006). Participants in this study indicated that learner discipline is an area of concern, and that it presents itself as a barrier to learning and development.

Participating parents proposed that behavioural and disciplinary concerns are exacerbated by teachers who are unable to manage the behaviour of their students. Within the context of the chosen school, the sizes of classrooms are large, and this has been identified by the participants as a factor influencing the increase in disciplinary concerns. This also links to concerns regarding teacher competence, as parents expressed concern that teachers were not adequately trained to manage large classrooms. Four participants spoke of concerns with discipline and four mentioned large classrooms as a barrier to learning and development.

Participant 1 reported that one of the most prominent concerns related to learner discipline is an increase in violent behaviour within the school context. She mentioned the possibility of teachers being fearful of learners, particularly because they may be armed with weapons. She goes on to state that this could be playing a role in the heightened levels of stress that educators are under. Participant 1 earlier indicated concerns relating to teachers, and mentions here that the stress experienced by teachers is exacerbated by behavioural concerns from learners. This is indicated in the quote below.

> *"Because today, students are taking weapons to school, they want to beat the teacher up. So I mean, it's a lot of things that are involved in this whole thing so I can't exactly blame the teachers completely for everything."* (Participant 1)

This idea was echoed by participant 6, who mentioned that perhaps, some teachers struggle to do their job due to higher levels of stress related to children who are disobedient, and he appears to speak to accountability falling on the parents.

> *"Because my, my last talk with a teacher at the school, at XXX High, was ill-disciplined kids, and uh when they try to address the issue, then you find out that the parents are just as ill-disciplined as the child, you know. So, uh what does the teacher do, we can't blame the teacher.*" (Participant 6)

Participant 3 speaks to substance use, as well as student attitudes, and participant 6 expresses concern relating to peer pressure and the idea that this behaviour would have an impact on his own child.

> *"And those are the kids that end up bunking school, they end up drinking and smoking and taking drugs and the rest of their life is history. And you know that's not what you want from your youth … And most of the time the reason is blatant naughtiness, laziness, or just this don't care attitude."* (Participant 3)

> *"Uh, then you also looking at teenagers who are easily influenced by their peers, their schoolmates, etcetera. Uh, and then that's important."* (Participant 6)

The data demonstrated that parents are able to perceive that these factors are impacting on teachers, as well as playing a role in their overall levels of control in the classroom. As well as that, the effects extend beyond the stress levels of the teachers, as they begin having an effect on learners in the classroom (Marais & Meier, 2010). This was therefore commonly identified as a barrier to learning and development experienced by these parents. In addition to that, parents expressed concern that teachers in an inclusive classroom may struggle when it comes to managing large classrooms and disobedience, as they believe that these teachers are currently struggling within their current contexts. This is supported by literature which identifies that large classrooms and behavioural concerns in learners presents itself as a barrier to learning and development (Marais and Meier, 2010; Naong, 2007; Steyn & Kamper, 2006). The parents then go on to link large classrooms and teacher competence to disobedience and discipline, and this is shown in the quotes,

> *"But with the classes being so big, it's very hard to, to control that, because there's always someone disrupting or doing something."* (Participant 3)

> *"So I've dealt with the teachers side they've also had legitimate grievances they've also had kids that don't behave, they've got a forty to one ratio, they've got a syllabus to complete, in their allotted time, they've got to meet deadlines and schedules and submit it to the districts office."* (Participant 6)

and

> *"The other things is the number of learners per class, per educator. The ratios are far too big, I mean at the end of the day the educators are human as well, they can only do so much"* (Participant 7)

This can be further understood with TPB. It can be proposed that parental attitudes would extend to their children, because children adopt the attitudes of those around them, their parents in particular (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000; Engelbrecht et al., 2006). Research further suggests that as much as attitudes are adopted by the wider society, so too are the behavioural concerns which exist in the school context, as these are often formed by experiences children undergo outside of the classroom and school setting (Marais & Meier, 2010). Students being surrounded by other students with behavioural difficulties may adopt some of these concerns, as behaviour is directly influenced by attitudes and normative beliefs, which are the beliefs formed by being in contact with the wider society (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). This is in support of the MODE model, which forms a part of the TPB (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Fazio, 1990). The MODE model allows for an understanding of how attitudes influence behaviour. Attitudes and beliefs surrounding what is acceptable is adopted by individuals from their exposure to, and their experiences with the wider community. Therefore, to a certain extent, the attitudes adopted by children stem from their peers. This supports the concerns identified by parents surrounding peer pressure.

5.4. Barriers to learning and development being faced by their children

The participants identified the barriers to learning and development they perceive their children to be facing, and the barriers identified by them appeared to be embedded in the school.

a. Concerns relating to teachers

b. Cultural intolerance

c. Lack of support

a. Concerns relating to teachers

Research on mainstream and inclusive schools suggest that whilst parents view inclusion positively, they express particular concern relating to teacher competence and attitudes in inclusive classrooms (Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Šukys et al., 2015). In addition to that, parents commonly express concerns surrounding the adequacy of the training that teachers undergo, and this concern is highlighted even more when the topic of inclusive education arises (Blazer, 2017; Elkins et al., 2003; Leyser & Kirk, 2011).

Parents considered teacher attitude to be a barrier to learning and development. Four of the participants relayed that they held the belief that teachers lacked commitment and were

unwilling to exceed the minimum of what was expected from them. According to these parents, teachers may be demotivated and powerless, and because of this, they believe that these teachers deliver the minimum of what is expected of them. This attitude affects the quality of teaching that is presented to learners. Some quotes displaying their concerns are shown below:

> *"A lot of our teachers today, and schools in general, are just fed up, and tired of the kids, and their attitudes and stuff. So they don't really go the extra mile anymore. They go to school and teach the student whatever they need to do and they go home. And the rest of it, it's like your problem, it's your business, you know?"* (Participant 1)

> *"The teachers have a few priorities, to go in the class, deliver the lesson where the learners are interested or not, they couldn't be bothered. Uh, they basically have to teach the lesson, do the test, pass the schedule to the department … As far as I'm concerned there's just a "don't care" attitude."* (Participant 6)

Another area of concern related teacher competence. Their perspective was that teachers are not adequately trained to teach. Parents went on to indicate concern surrounding their age, alluding to their age being related to their level of competence. This idea that teachers lack competence is demonstrated in the following quote:

> "*And then obviously educators that just don't know how to present a lesson, and just God alone knows how they became educators, let me put it to you that way*." (Participant 7)

Participant 6 indicates that he believes that teachers are not competent in the knowledge of their subjects, and he gives an example of his son's science teacher in the quote below.

> "*Uh possible barriers at the moment, teachers not knowledgeable about subject matter, right. I've now got a son who disbelieves his science teacher."* (Participant 6)

South Africa, being a nation with eleven official languages, means that English is not the first language for many South Africans (Plüddemann, 2015). Plüddemann (2015) proposes that in order for optimal learning to occur, especially at a foundational level, children should be taught in their own language, and for many South Africans, this language is not English. Due to the barriers that exist because of multilingualism, as well as overall learning difficulties as a result of their struggles with the English Language, students are

frequently, inappropriately, referred to Speech and Language Therapists (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Participants in this study echoed these concerns. Three of the participants suggested that their children were unable to grasp the content of the lessons given by teachers, due to being unable to understand their accent. This is illustrated in the quote below:

> *"You know, the accent. So the explanation and those types of things it wasn't exactly 100 percent."* (Participant 1)

Regarding concerns related to language, studies suggest that the language and accents of teachers can impact on learning, especially when learners are not English first language speakers (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). This supports the concerns noted by participant 3, who discussed how teacher language and accent can affect learning in the classroom. In addition to that, it should be noted that participant 3's home language is English. It may be that the teacher's first language is not English, and because of this, it is being perceived as a barrier to learning. O'Conner and Geiger (2009) indicate that teachers who teach in English, but are not English first language speakers, also require support.

Participant 3 identified a concern relating to children not adequately grasping the content of subjects presented to them, due to not being able to understand the teacher because of the teacher's accent.

> *"And that becomes a barrier to the kids in understanding. It's pronunciation of words sometimes, like what can actually, if you not sharp, uh, or if you don't know the actual work that you're doing and you have no clue of the subject, you interpret what the teacher is saying , from the way you hear it wrong,"* (Participant 3)

Participant 7 takes it a step further and mentions that teachers are perhaps not adequately able to understand the languages and accents of learners from various different cultural backgrounds.

> *"Our educators are not equipped to deal with children that speak different languages, particularly from the Black communities. So there is a, that is one of the problems. I could understand educators being held back because some of the learners haven't caught up, simply because they don't understand, so that is a problem."* (Participant 7)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), as well as the South African Schools Act (1996), emphasises the imperative of protecting the language rights of all

individuals in South Africa (DoE, 1996). Therefore, South African language policy (Language in Education Policy) allows for learners to choose the language they want to be taught in, and multilingualism is thus encouraged (Heugh, 2015; Jantjies & Joy, 2008; Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo, 2002). However, English and Afrikaans remain the dominant languages in the classroom and teachers in the South African context are usually bilingual only, and are most likely to be teaching in schools where these two languages are the languages of learning (Jantjies & Joy, 2016; Setati, 2001; Setati et al., 2002). However, learners in these schools come from various communities where English is not the home language, and they attend these schools in search of, what their parents perceive to be, a better education (Maile, 2009; Msila, 2009). It is in this context that language becomes a barrier to learning and development (DoBE, 2010; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; O'Conner & Geiger, 2009; Plüddemann, 2015). In addition to that, not only are learners being disadvantaged by learning in a different language, but their communication is also inhibited, because teachers are more likely to only understand two languages, and are frequently only able to teach in one (Setati et al., 2002). Setati and colleagues suggest that in order for the language needs of learners to be supported, teachers would be required to go for further training (Heugh, 2015; Moletsane, Hemson & Muthukrishna, 2004; Setati et al., 2002).

From the quotes above, it can be seen that parents hold the belief that the teachers within the chosen school have difficulty with communication, and that this difficulty arose due to an identified barrier to learning and development, which is related to the languages and accents of both teachers and learners. This understanding can be expanded on, by inferring how these attitudes can influence their behaviour. Because attitudes are expressed through behaviour (Fazio, 1990), if parents have a negative attitude towards their child's school and teachers, there may be a decrease in their engagement with them. With a decrease in engagement with their teachers, it can be suggested that this, in itself, can be identified as a barrier to parental participation and engagement in the education of their children, possibly making them passive participants in inclusive education. Not only will this negatively impact on the successful implementation of inclusive education, but it may also hamper their child's educational development, as parental involvement is suggested to yield the most positive outcomes in both inclusive education, as well as the overall education of learners (DoBE, 2001; Yssel et al., 2007). Having said that, parental attitudes towards the necessity of their involvement in the education of their children remains a positive one, and this will be further discussed in the third sub-theme.

b. Cultural intolerance

Social disadvantages faced by individuals are considered to be barriers to learning and development (Mallick & Sheesh, 2013). These include learners who face negative attitudes towards them because of their culture (Prinsloo, 2001). These factors affect the learner's ability to learn, as their learning environment is not comfortable enough for effective learning to take place (Mallick & Sheesh, 2013). Circumstantial barriers are barriers which include the gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and culture from which the learner comes (Mitchell et al., 2008). Therefore, these are regarded as social factors which affect the learner's behaviour, attitudes and their ability to learn (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012). Social barriers to learning and development speaks to social justice, and a lot of it exists due to the apartheid regime (Hay & Beyers, 2011). Participants in this study expressed belief that their children are facing social barriers to learning and development, and linked these to cultural and religious intolerance, as seen in the quotes below:

> *"Absolutely, then you have the intolerance of, uhm, okay well because you're not Muslim, you not going to win the awards, you might not be marked the same way as a Muslim child hence you don't get to the academic place you want to get to. But your work might be exactly the same but you not recognised so it kills your child's moral."* (Participant 3)

> *"Well we have first-hand experience, uh, in XXX High, like I mentioned you have 90% Indian. From that 90%, 95% of those Indians are Muslims, and the rest is broken up between Hindu, Tamil, and the Christian. So with us being Christian, we are the minority, our kids are treated as minority… was victimised by the teachers themselves, and told listen, tuck your rosary in, and that just shows how immature and the level of education they have round other people's religions."* (Participant 4)

The significance of studying parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development is based on the premise that their attitudes will be adopted by their children (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000), and these adopted attitudes will in turn, influence their behaviour in the classroom (Ahsan, 2005). However, participants in this study regarded the school environment itself as intolerant. The Guidelines for inclusive teaching and learning (2010) and the SIAS (2014), posit that in order for barriers to learning and development to be addressed, there needs to be a collaborative effort amongst parents, teachers and the school. In addition to that, the SIAS (2014) indicates that attitudes are significant to consider, and

this should go beyond the school and family level and extend to the wider community. Therefore, it can be posited that the negative attitudes participants perceive within the school, may be based on the normative beliefs of the community. Normative beliefs influence attitudes, and thus behaviour (Ahsan, 2015). Just as the school exists within a community and adopts their beliefs as a system, teachers also adopt certain normative beliefs and attitudes from their community. According to the participants in this study, these attitudes are being played out in the form of religious and cultural intolerance.

c. Lack of support

In order for inclusive education to be a success, barriers to learning need to be addressed on multiple levels. One of the most crucial factors to consider is the importance of the school and parents working together in order to address barriers to learning and development that the child may be facing, and this is stated in the SIAS (Department of Education, 2004). A lack of parental involvement and communication between the parents and the school can in itself be regarded as a barrier to learning and development (DoE, 2004; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Michael et al., 2018).

The access to quality education is an obligation to achieve, that has been set out by the government of South Africa (DoE, 2001). This is indicated in various policy documents, which outline the goal of the implementation of inclusive education. However, there is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education, and part of this is related to schools not having the capacity to accommodate learners with a diverse range of needs (Du Plessis, 2013). The participants in this study hold the view that inclusive education is an unrealistic ideal, and this is reflected in their belief that the school itself does not have adequate access to resources and funding, which to them, is the responsibility of the Department of Education. Furthermore, they hold the belief that the school is not being adequately supported by the department, therefore leading to an increase in stress.

It emerged that parents encountered a lack of support, and this was identified by participants as a barrier to learning and development, as experienced by their children within the chosen school. The lack of support they referred to related to a deficiency of funding at the government level, as well as a perceived limited support from the department of education. This is demonstrated in the quotes below:

> "*Mhm, I'm just hoping that somehow, uhm, especially with our government schools you know, that they can put more in place for our kids, uhm, even textbook wise, the*

learning materials, sometimes that's also an issue, there isn't enough funding for, uh, for a good quality textbook, or if kids do need notes as well." (Participant 3)

"I think the school itself is under a lot of pressure. They know that the challenges they face but the government is not there to assist them, I think the government is, the government is not there to assist them, the government is spending money on other stuff that just doesn't make sense." (Participant 5)

From the above quotes, it is evident that parents perceive the lack of support and funding as detrimental to the overall quality of education being received by their children, and therefore, a barrier to learning and development. Participant 3 and 5 both state that there is a deficit in learning material, such as textbooks and notes, and that this is a need of the school, which is not being met at a governmental level. Parents also expressed frustration regarding leadership structures within the school, stating that the principal was frequently unavailable, and that the members of the School Governing Body (SGB) were not supportive of their needs.

"Uh we've tried in the past to approach the principal and the SGB. SGB was a waste of time, you know the SGB don't really have any powers, they are basically cheerleaders of the principal." (Participant 6)

Du Plessis (2013) states that a positive attitude and commitment needs to exist on various levels, ranging from the parents, to the teachers, to the management in the school, as well as the wider community. The principal's attitude contributes to the overall climate of the school, and a positive climate, created by the principal, will create an open and welcoming environment, which will subsequently increase parental involvement (Du Plessis, 2013; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The role of other managers within the school, such as the SGB, would ensure that the change the principal seeks to create, is maintained (Bush, 2007). The below quotes indicate that participants are experiencing a lack of support from the principal of the school:

"*You know you've got the principal with her issues and then you've got to keep everyone happy, you have the parents who sometimes hit a brick wall with complaints about the school."* (Participant 6)

"You can never walk into the principal's office. She's never around, never available, always hiding behind the deputy principal and the administrators. I have an issue with that, and it needs to be, I will sort it out very soon." (Participant 7)

According to the TPB, negative attitudes towards a behaviour, will not inspire individuals to behave accordingly (Azjen & Fishbein, 2005). Therefore, it can be posited that, perhaps, these parents are experiencing a sense of disempowerment and a loss of hope, leading to a decrease in parental involvement overall. These feelings may be exacerbated by the belief that the principal is absent, as the parents expressed feeling as though their concerns are not being heard by the principal or SGB of the school. At a school level, a good leadership structure is suggested to have a range of positive outcomes, such as improved academic performance of learners, as well as an increase in parental involvement (Du Plessis, 2013).

5.5 Parental involvement

For all of the parents interviewed, overcoming these barriers meant that they had to be involved in the education of their children. All seven participants rated parental involvement in the education of learners as fundamental to their children performing well in school, and they perceived a lack of parental involvement as a barrier to learning and development. This is reflected in the quote below:

"No they aren't meeting need. No, because of these shortcomings, I would say it's the parent's duty to try to fill in the shortfalls of the system if you love your child, and you want your child to succeed." (Participant 5)

Research and policy documents emphasise the significance of parental involvement in education. This is particularly important when looking at the context of inclusive education, as well as working towards overcoming barriers to learning and development (Engelbrecht et al., 2005; Mitchel et al., 2008). Additionally, a lack of parental involvement in itself, is proposed to be a barrier to learning and development. Furthermore, Marais and Meier (2010) posit that parental involvement can decrease disobedience and behavioural concerns.

It emerged from the interviews that all of the parents perceive parental involvement as crucial in the education of learners. They went on to discuss the manner in which they get involved in the education of their own children. The below quotes indicate that parents have a positive attitude towards parental involvement.

"I think parents should liaise with educators, try and find out, if their views are different rather have a meeting, address the issues and sort of work on a common ground." (Participant 3)

"I think the parents have to be very much involved in the children's learning; they have to make sure the children are doing homework; they've got to make sure the children go to bed on time, got to make sure that you know projects are being done." (Participant 5)

"So, my thing is straightforward, you have parental involvement, that's your most important asset, right, not your car or your house, you child is your most important asset." (Participant 6)

The participants refer to getting involved in the education of their children on both a personal and wider level. Participant 3 states that he has had meetings with the school, whereas participant 5 mentions that it is important to get involved in the personal learning of his child. He does this through checking up on whether or not his child is doing his homework, and completing the work required for him to perform optimally. Sub-theme (a), however, identifies that even with parents having a positive attitude toward parental involvement, there appears to be a distrust in the quality of education they perceive their children getting access to, and this is because of the concerns they had identified relating to teacher attitude and competence, within the chosen school. This negative perception may contribute to lowered involvement, particularly extending to the wider context of the school. This view is further supported by the perception of a lack of support held by parents, where parents' feelings of disempowerment relating to leadership within the education system is identified.

Yssel and colleagues (2007) suggest that parental support has the greatest impact on producing positive outcomes in a learner, and that these outcomes extend beyond higher grades, to improved attitudes and behaviour. This idea is supported by the TPB, which, as mentioned, suggests that attitudes and behaviour are directly influenced by normative beliefs (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Therefore, looking at TPB, it can be proposed that learners observing their parents as being invested in their education, will develop the beliefs and attitudes that their education is something worth being invested in, thereby impacting on the behaviour related to getting an education, where students will engage with it as something that is valuable and important to them (Ahsan, 2015; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, Fazio, 1990).

Du Toit and Forlan (2009) support this in their research, which indicates that parental involvement and decision-making is influenced by their values and beliefs, which extends to their children.

Using the MODE model to understand the influence attitudes have on behaviour, it can be suggested that the parents in this study held the belief that their children were faced with certain barriers to learning and development. All participants identified parental involvement as central to the academic success of their children, and it can be suggested that this was a strong attitude, that is not likely to change. Because attitudes influence behaviour, it can be posited that their lack of trust in the school system to assist their children would have led to the strong formation of the held attitude relating to the importance of parental involvement, as well as an increase in parental involvement as a behaviour.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

The following chapter will discuss the key findings of the study, based on the information provided in chapter 5. It will also provide an overview of the strengths and limitations of the study. Thereafter, recommendations for future research will be provided.

6.2. Summary of the findings

Parents were asked to provide an understanding of inclusive education and it emerged that whilst they seemed to have low confidence in the adequacy of their responses, they were able to engage with the questions and express their understanding and attitudes towards it. Most of the responses provided surrounded the right to education being an imperative, which aligns with the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement. Parents also expressed an initial positive attitude towards inclusive education in general, but a shift was noted when discussing the impact it may have on the learning of their own children, where they began expressing concerns.

It was important to consider parental attitudes as it allowed for inferences to be made about their behaviour towards both inclusive education, and barriers to learning and development. In addition to that, it also emerged that parents take specific factors into consideration before choosing the school to place their children in, and these factors are related to discipline, security, and the teachers within the school.

Parents provided their perceptions of barriers to learning and development, and through this, they conveyed an understanding of what they considered as a barrier to learning and development. In this study, the most commonly identified barriers were related to language and culture, socio-economic deprivation, transport constraints, and the lack of discipline amongst students and large classrooms. It was also clear that their understanding was shaped by their knowledge and experience of the apartheid era, where society was segregated according to race.

Parents were then asked to identify possible barriers to learning and development that their own children were facing and most of the participants identified factors within the school. Some of these included a belief that teachers were not competent, and held a negative attitude towards the teachers and quality of teaching, as well as the experience of cultural intolerance, and a perceived lack of support within the school. The participants expressed

concerns surrounding a difficulty in communication with the principal, as well as inadequate funding provided by the government. Through this, it emerged that parents view inclusive education as an unrealistic ideal, which the government would be unable to implement.

The participants in this study regarded parental involvement as essential to overcoming barriers to learning and development. They displayed how this attitude played a role in their behaviour and provided examples in terms of the measures they take in order to that ensure that they are supporting their children. This included meetings with teachers, as well as assisting with, and making sure that their children are completing their homework.

6.3. Strengths and Limitations of the study

Strengths

One strength of this study includes the chosen method of data collection and analysis. Information obtained in the interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the beliefs and attitudes parents hold towards inclusive education and barriers to learning and development. Furthermore, there were no time-limits for the interviews, and parents were encouraged to engage with their understanding in the manner in which they were comfortable, thus providing a deeper understanding of their concerns, beliefs, attitudes, and in some cases, their behaviour.

Another strength relates to the fact that the researcher found that there was limited to no research on this topic, and this was both in the international, and South African context. Therefore, this study contributes to the overall existing body of knowledge on inclusive education, and it does this by focusing on parents and their understanding of barriers to learning and development in particular. In building on this knowledge, it can assist in identifying parental needs and concerns, in order to ensure that parents are working towards overcoming the barriers to learning and development their children may be facing, as well as identify how they can be supported by the education system in order to enhance their overall involvement in the education of their children.

Limitations

One limitation relates to a limited number of participants being used in the study. Seven participants were interviewed, and the researcher experienced difficulty with getting parents to volunteer to participate. However, data saturation was reached.

A second limitation included that participants were parents from the same school. Therefore, the sample was homogenous. The specific school was located in Lenasia, in the south of Johannesburg. Thus, it cannot be generalised to all parents in South Africa, or internationally. Parents provided a subjective viewpoint and understanding, which may differ from the wider society. Because parents lived within the same community, it can be suggested that they hold similar normative beliefs and have had similar experiences within their community. This influences the data related to their understandings, the beliefs they hold, their attitudes and even their behaviour.

Another limitation relates to the method of data collection. The interviews conducted were all face-to-face. Face-to-face interviews are suggested to increase the possibility of participants feeling as though their responses need to be socially desirable (Duffy, Smith, Terhanian & Bremer, 2005).

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

It was identified by the researcher that this is an understudied topic within the body of knowledge of inclusive education and therefore, it is suggested that further research is done on it. In addition to that, the research should be done on a larger, more heterogeneous sample. The sample should include parents from different communities, with varying socio-economic backgrounds, who reside in different areas of South Africa.

It is recommended that this area is studied more, as many of the barriers to learning and development being experienced by children, are also being experienced by their parents, and emerge within the household. In addition to that, schools need to be better equipped to identify the needs of parents in order to consider what could be constraining parental involvement, and in particular, what is preventing parents from assisting in overcoming barriers to learning and development as being experienced by their children.

Whilst there is existing research on what impacts parental involvement in the education of their children, there is limited research on their perceptions of barriers to learning and development. This leads to questions surrounding whether or not parents are able to identify the barriers to learning and development being faced by their children, as well as questions surrounding whether or not they have the knowledge and capacity to address them, were they to be identified and acknowledged.

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APPENDIX A: HREC ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MEDP/17/011 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Parental Attitudes towards, and their Understanding of, Barriers to Learning and Development
INVESTIGATORS **DEPARTMENT**	Singh Reshmika Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	05/06/17
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 10 May 2017

CHAIRPERSON
(Prof. Joseph Seabi)

cc Supervisor:

Ms Anwynne Kern
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2019

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES PROPOSAL APPROVAL LETTER

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Faculty of Humanities – Postgraduate Office

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa • **Tel:** +27 11 717 4007• **Fax:** +27 11 717 4037• **Email:** madile.moeketsi@wits.ac.za

Student Number: 536633

Miss Reshmika Singh
12138 Dimple Road
Extension 13 Lenasia
Johannesburg 1827
Gauteng South Africa

14 June 2017

Dear Miss Singh

APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

I am pleased to be able to advise you that the readers of the Graduate Studies Committee have approved your proposal entitled "***Parental attitudes towards, and their understanding of, barriers to learning and development***". I confirm that Mrs Anwynne Kern has been appointed as your supervisor in the SHCD.

The research report is normally submitted to the Faculty Office by 15 February, if you have started the beginning of the year, and for mid-year the deadline is 31 July. All students are required to RE-REGISTER at the beginning of each year.

You are required to submit 2 bound copies and one unbound copy plus 1 CD in pdf (Adobe) format of your research report to the Faculty Office. The 2 bound copies go to the examiners and are retained by them and the unbound copy is retained by the Faculty Office as back up.

Please note that should you miss the deadline of 15 February or 31 July you will be required to submit an application for extension of time and register for the research report extension. Any candidate who misses the deadline of 15 February will be charged fees for the research report extension.

Kindly keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Note: All MA and PhD candidates who intend graduating shortly must meet your ETD requirements at least 6 weeks after your supervisor has received the examiners reports. **A student must remain registered at the Faculty Office until graduation.**

Yours Sincerely

MM Moeketsi

Madile Moeketsi (Ms)
Postgraduate Division
Faculty of Humanities
Private Bag X 3
Wits, 2050

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
14 JUN 2017
11
JOHANNESBURG

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPALS

To whom it may concern

My name is Reshmika Singh. I am a Masters in Educational Psychology student at the University of Witwatersrand. Part of the course requirements is that I complete a research project. The focus of my study is parental attitudes towards barriers to learning. My study aims to gain an understanding of the attitudes parents of school-going children have towards barriers to learning, as well as what they consider a barrier to learning to be. This is because barriers to learning is a difficulty which needs to be addressed in order to contribute to the success of inclusive education in South Africa. I would like to invite parents of learners who attend your school to be a part of my research study.

Participation in the study would require parents to participate in an individual semi-structured interview, and possibly a focus group thereafter, if they are willing. This interview will occur at a time and place that is convenient for them. Participants will be asked questions regarding their conceptualisation of barriers to learning and development. The interview would be approximately 45 minutes long. With the informed consent of the participants, these interviews will be audio recorded. Participation in the study is voluntary and participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way if they choose not to participate. There are no expected risks or benefits that would result from participation in the study. Participants may choose to leave out any questions that they are uncomfortable with answering. While anonymity cannot be guaranteed within the individual interviews, within transcribing and reporting the data confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed in the writing up of the research, as recordings will be transcribed in a private setting or with the use of headphones and participants will be coded so that no names will be included in the transcriptions or report. If direct quotes are used in the report, pseudonyms will be ascribed to all participants, with all identifying information removed. All gathered data will be securely stored on a password protected computer and will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor. A copy of the final report will be made available on the Wits online library

If you choose to allow me to contact your parent body to discuss the possibility of participation in this study, please complete the consent form attached. Once completed please return the form to me.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact me or my supervisor. Details are as follows:

Researcher

Reshmika Singh

Contact number: 0795221038

Email address: Reshmika.singh@yahoo.com

Supervisor

Anwynne Kern

Email address: anwynne.kern@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

To whom it may concern

My name is Reshmika Singh. I am a Masters in Educational Psychology student at the University of Witwatersrand. Part of the course requirements is that I complete a research project. My study aims to gain an understanding of the attitudes parents of school-going children have towards barriers to learning and development, as well as what they consider a barrier to learning to be. This is because barriers to learning is a difficulty which needs to be addressed in order to contribute to the success of inclusive education in South Africa. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study.

Participation in the study would require you to participate in an individual semi-structured interview. This interview will occur at a time and place that is convenient for you. You will be asked questions regarding your conceptualisation of barriers to learning. The interview would be approximately 45 minutes long. With your informed consent, these interviews will be audio recorded. Participation in the study is voluntary and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in anyway if you choose not to participate. There are no expected risks or benefits that would result from participation in the study. You may choose to leave out any questions that you are uncomfortable with answering. While anonymity cannot be guaranteed within the individual interviews, within transcribing and reporting the data confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed in the write up of the research, as recordings will be transcribed in a private setting or with the use of headphones and participants will be coded so that no names will be included in the transcriptions or report. If direct quotes are used in the report, pseudonyms will be ascribed to all participants, with all identifying information removed. All gathered data will be securely stored on a password protected computer and will only be accessed by myself, and my supervisor. A copy of the final report will be made available on the Wits online library. Moreover, direct quotes may be used in the research report and these may be reflected in published journal articles and conference presentations in the future.

If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the consent form attached.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact me or my supervisor. Details are as follows:

Researcher

Reshmika Singh

Contact number: 0795221038

Email address: Reshmika.singh@yahoo.com

Supervisor

Anwynne Kern

Email address: anwynne.kern@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX E: PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

I, _____ consent to Reshmika Singh contacting parents of learners who attend this school for the purpose of her Masters research study on the attitudes of these participants towards barriers to learning and development.

I understand that:

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- No participant will be advantaged or disadvantaged for choosing to participate in this study or not.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions that they do not feel comfortable with.
- There are no foreseeable risks or benefits for partaking in this study.
- Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed in the final research report and any publications or conference presentations that might arise from it.

Signed: Date:

_____ _____

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION

I, _____ consent to participating in the study of Reshmika Singh which is for the purpose of her masters research study on parental attitudes towards barriers to learning and development.

I understand that:

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- No participant will be advantaged or disadvantaged for choosing to participate in this study or not.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions that they do not feel comfortable with.
- There are no foreseeable risks or benefits for partaking in this study.
- Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed in the final research report and any presentations that might arise from it.

Signed: Date:

_____ _____

APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO RECORDING

I _____ consent to having my responses audio recorded in the interview. I understand that

- My name and identity will not be linked to any recordings.
- The recordings will be transcribed and used for the research
- Secure copies of the audio-recordings and transcriptions will be kept on a password protected computer.
- Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the recordings.

Signed: Date:

_____ _____

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

My name is Reshmika Singh and I am a student at The University of Witwatersrand. This interview will form part of my research module in order to obtain my Master's degree in Educational psychology.

My study aims to gain an understanding of the attitudes parents of school-going children, such as yourself, have towards barriers to learning and development, as well as what they consider a barrier to learning to be. This is because barriers to learning is a difficulty which needs to be addressed in order to contribute to the success of inclusive education in South Africa.

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Where are you from?

2. How old are you?

Interview Schedule

1. What type of school does your child attend, and what made you choose this school to place your child in?

2. Can you tell me what you know about inclusive education?

a) What do you think some of the positive and negative outcomes of inclusive education are?

3. Can you identify and describe some of the barriers to learning which you believe learners in South Africa may face?

4. In your opinion, how can parental involvement, and their attitudes towards inclusive education, have an influence on whether or not inclusive education will be successfully implemented?

a) Can you tell me about how you view parental involvement in the education of a learner?

5. Inclusion aims to accept children for who they are, whereas mainstreaming is an attempt to integrate children with special needs into the schooling system. Can you tell me about which one of the two you believe will be more beneficial to both learners who do, and do not experience barriers to learning and development?

6. How do you feel about the inclusion of children with a range of barriers to learning and development in a mainstream school?

a) Can you tell me more about why you feel this way?

7. How do you think mainstream schools meet the needs of children who face certain barriers to learning and development?

8. Can you mention and describe some of the concerns which you may have regarding your child being in the same classroom as a child with certain barriers to learning and development?

9. Can you tell me about possible barriers to learning your child may be facing?

10. Do you have any further comments?

APPENDIX I: GDE APPROVAL LETTER



GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**11 November 2017**
Validity of Research Approval:	**04 February 2018 – 30 September 2018** **2017/320**
Name of Researcher:	**Singh R**
Address of Researcher:	**12138 Dimple Road**
	Extension 13
	Lenasia
	1827
Telephone Number:	**079 522 1038**
Email address:	**Reshmika.singh@yahoo.com**
Research Topic:	**Parental Attitudes towards and their Understanding of Barriers to Learning and Development**
Type of qualification	**Masters**
Number and type of schools:	**One Secondary School**
District/s/HO	**Johannesburg South**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

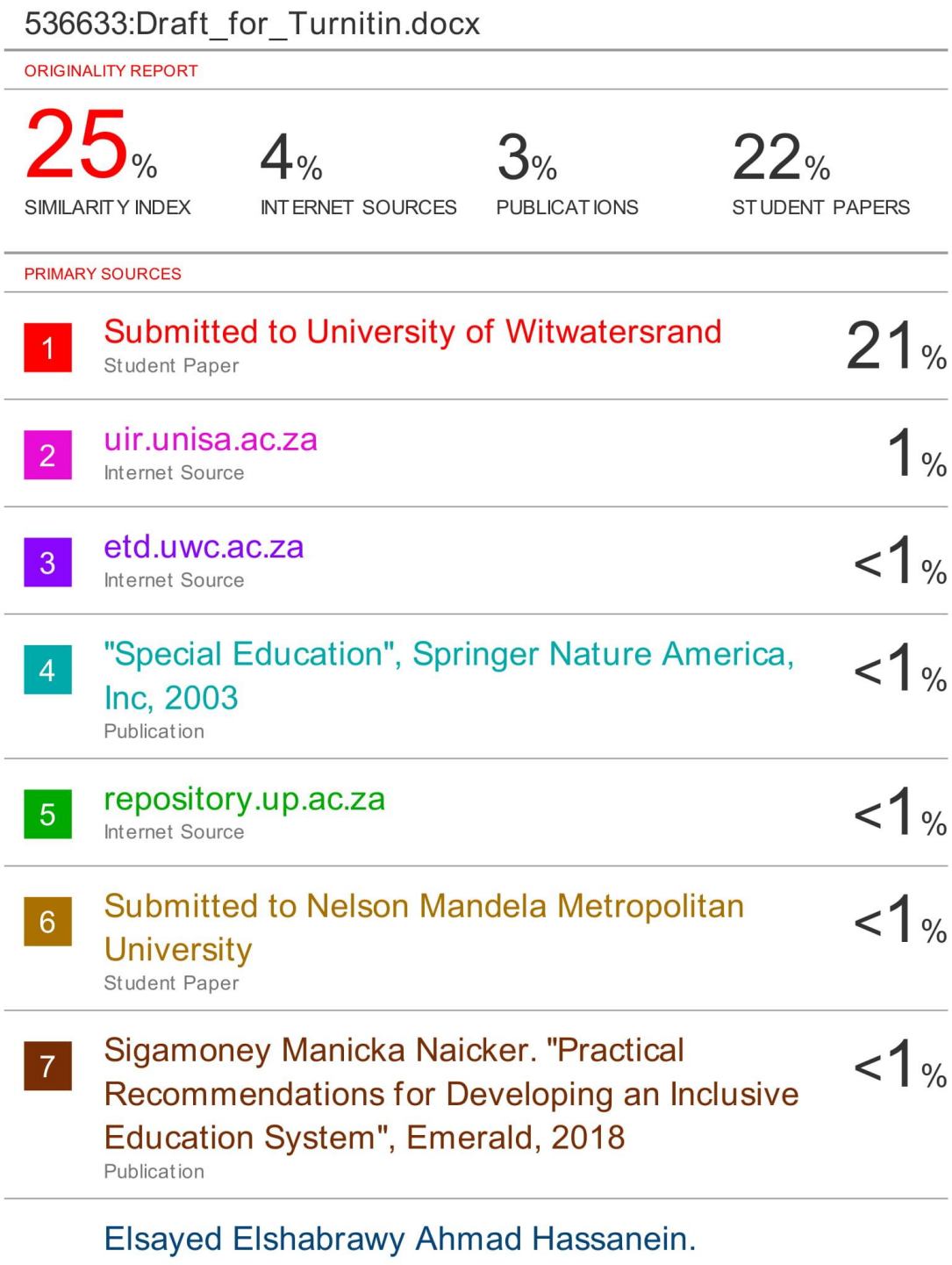
M/11/2017

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX J: TURNITIN REPORT

Please take note that 21% of the similarity index is the proposal for this research study, which was submitted to the University of Witwatersrand.



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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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