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An investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

An investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo.

Master's Research Report

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A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

March 2025

DECLARATION

I, Nakisani Murembiwa, declare that this research report titled "*An investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo"* is my own original work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other institution, and that all sources that were utilised in this research report have been duly acknowledged.



25 March 2025

Nakisani Murembiwa

Date

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my father, Azwindini Murembiwa, whose constant encouragement and drive pushed me to achieve more than I thought possible, and to my mother, Khathutshelo Mutsharini, whose prayers, support, and understanding have been a pillar of my strength throughout this journey. I also dedicate this work to all the children with physical disabilities, whose resilience and potential continue to inspire me. You deserve equal opportunities and access that life has to offer. Keep pushing the boundaries to achieve the success you truly deserve. May this research contribute to a world that is more inclusive and supportive of your needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give all glory and honour to the Almighty God for His unwavering guidance, strength, and wisdom throughout this journey. His grace has sustained me in moments of doubt, and His light has directed my path even in challenging times. I am reminded of His promises in Jeremiah 29:11: "*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"*. Indeed, it is by His plan that I have come this far, and I am forever grateful for His presence in my life.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Peter Aloka, for his invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this journey. Your insights, constructive feedback, and unwavering patience have been instrumental in shaping this work. May God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education (IE) advocates for full inclusion of learners with disabilities (LWD) into mainstream schools, and it emphasises the right of all learners to access equitable quality education within the same learning environment. In South Africa, the 2001 Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (EWP6) reiterates the need for a transformation of the education system to accommodate all learners. However, despite this policy, learners with physical disabilities (LWPD) in the Limpopo Province of South Africa often face significant challenges in mainstream school settings, highlighting a persistent research gap between policy intentions and practical realities.

This study aimed to investigate the teacher related, school related and policy related factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo and to propose strategies to address these hinderances. This study adopted a theoretical framework that combined the Social Model of Disability and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. A qualitative methodology within the interpretivist paradigm was employed, utilising a single-case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select six teacher participants from various grades and subject disciplines. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically. All ethical considerations were upheld, including obtaining ethical clearance to guarantee that the study adhered to rigorous ethical standards.

The findings revealed that the teacher related factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD include lack of training on IE, lack of knowledge, low self-efficacy, and lack of exposure among teachers in teaching LWPD. School related factors include inadequate infrastructure, few sporting opportunities, lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities, discrimination, bullying and isolation of LWPD. Policy related factors include lack of knowledge on IE policies, incorrect knowledge on IE policies, lack of dissemination of IE policies to teachers, mixed up knowledge on IE policies among teachers and curriculum overload. Strategies include provision of physical resources, teacher training on IE, teachers' exposure to IE policies and educating able-bodied learners about disabilities to raise awareness. The study recommends that the Department of Education (DoE) should offer in-service training for teachers and improve this school's infrastructure.

Key Words: *Factors, Inclusive education, Learners, Physical Disabilities, Private mainstream school, Vhembe district*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

DBST:	District Based Support Team
DoE:	Department of Education
EWP6:	Education White Paper 6
IE:	Inclusive Education
ITE:	Initial teacher education
LWD:	Learners with Disabilities
LWPD:	Learners with Physical Disabilities
SGB:	School Governing Body
SIAS:	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SMT:	School Management Team
UDHR:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

1.0: OVERALL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. This includes the background, problem statement, rationale of the study, aim, research questions, definition of operational terms and finally, organisation of the chapters in the research report.

1.2 Background to the study

IE is a global movement that originated as a response to the historical exclusion of learners perceived as different by the education system (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smith, & van Deventer, 2016). Previously, learners who were seen as disabled were excluded from mainstream schools and placed in special educational settings (Mariga, McConkey & Myezwa, 2014). IE stands in opposition to this belief and practice of segregation, promoting the inclusion of LWD into mainstream schools. The field of IE is contested, with various scholars presenting various definitions of the concept. For instance, Slee (2018) states that "inclusive education refers to securing and guaranteeing the rights of all children to access presence, participation and success in their local regular school" (p.8). On the other hand, Engelbrecht et al. (2016) defines it as "the right of every child to be part of mainstream education and focuses on access to, acceptance of participation in the mainstream education" (p.520-521). Finally, Mpu and Adu (2021) defines IE to "describe an education system in which all learners are accepted and fully included, educationally and socially" (p.225).

While the above definitions differ in their specific emphasis and scope, they share fundamental principles centred around advocating for equal rights, fostering inclusion, challenging exclusionary practices and viewing IE as a vital human right. Therefore, IE advocates for equal rights, access and participation of every learner irrespective of their disabilities, race, culture, socio-economic backgrounds or any other differential factor. The concept of inclusion is fundamental to IE and is shaped by how IE is conceptualised. The present study adopts the definition of inclusion put forth by Voltz, Brazil, and Ford as they assert that "inclusion does not refer to a physical space but rather to a condition or state of being. The concept of inclusion implies a sense of belonging and acceptance" (Voltz et al., 2001, p.24). This underscores the significance of meeting the academic and social needs of all learners (Gorannson & Nilholm, 2014). Consequently, inclusion in education goes beyond merely placing LWD in mainstream

educational settings, it necessitates addressing their academic and social needs. It entails creating environments where all learners experience a profound sense of belonging and acceptance.

IE is supported by a variety of policy documents at both the international and national levels. These documents serve as guidelines and frameworks for governments, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to develop and implement IE. At the international level, IE is supported by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1990 World Education Forum's Jomtien Conference on Education for All, the 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action, and the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, among others. In South Africa, the foundation of IE rests upon policies such as the South African Schools Act of 1996, the 1997 White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, the 2001 EWP6, and the 2014 National Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) among other key policies (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Du Plessis, 2013). All these policies, both international and national, aim to promote IE and ensure that all learners have equitable access to quality education within the same learning environment.

Despite the existence of numerous policy documents aimed at promoting IE, LWPD in South Africa continue to encounter various factors that hinder their full inclusion within mainstream schools (Mphanda, 2018; Mpu & Adu, 2021; Makhubela, 2023; Segalo, 2023). These factors can be categorised into three main areas: teacher-related, school-related, and policy-related factors. While there are various definitions and categories of physical disabilities, this study specifically focuses on LWPD that require mobility aids, but who have no intellectual or other barriers to learning. These learners can learn alongside their able-bodied peers as they do not require intensive support, provided that the proper resources or school infrastructure is in place. Therefore, physical disability in this study is defined as "any impairment that limits the physical function of one or more limbs and/or the fine gross motor ability of an individual" (Maotoana, 2014, p.3).

The statistics of LWPD are outdated however, Sekhwela (2022) highlights that "the National disability prevalence rate is 7,5% in South Africa" (p.43). The provided statistics are from SA Stats 2011. Sekhwela (2022) further highlights that "the prevalence of a specific type of disability shows that 11% of persons aged five and older had seeing difficulties, 4,2% had cognitive difficulties, 3,6% had hearing difficulties, and about 2% had communication, self-

care and walking difficulties" (p.24). According to Makhubela (2023) "the department of Statistics South Africa (2020) estimates that in 2021, 3% of 15-year-old and about 9% of 17-year-old learners' dropout out of school due to illness and disability" (p.6). Sekhwela (2022) also argues that the dropout rates of LWD are higher than of non-disabled learners. This presents the urgent need to address the barriers hindering the educational attainment and inclusion of this marginalised group of learners.

The challenges impeding the enactment of IE for LWPD extend beyond national borders, constituting an international problem. Makuya (2021) argues that developing countries often face significant hurdles in successfully implementing IE, which could stem from various factors. Research conducted by Alves, Grenier, Haegele and Duarte (2018) in Brazil, Sukadari, Jandra, Sentono, Huda and Maseleno (2020) in Indonesia; Banks, Hunt, Kalua, Nindi, Zuurmond and Shakespeare (2022) in Malawi; Aldersey, Lartey, Gabriels, Xu, Abrahams, Batorowicz, Abebe, Mamo, Nyoka, and Lorenzo (2024) in South Africa, Ghana and Ethiopia all reiterated and underscore that there is a need to understand and remove the challenges in achieving IE for LWPD, particularly in developing countries.

In Limpopo, previous research indicates that there is a low level of implementation of IE in mainstream schools. For example, Raphadu's (2021) study indicated a low level of implementation of IE for physically challenged persons. Similarly, Sinthumule's (2024) study highlighted that the failure to implement IE is primarily due to the lack of adequate academic training for both principals and teachers. Based on the findings presented in studies by Raphadu (2021) and Sinthumule (2024), there exists a research gap because both agree that there is a relatively low level of implementation of IE for LWPD in mainstream schools in Limpopo Province. The mere placement of LWPD in mainstream schools does not equate to inclusion if their access and participation within the school are not maximised. These studies indicate that despite policy advancements, many LWPD continue to encounter substantial barriers to full inclusion in mainstream schools. Efforts to implement IE for LWPD should not only focus on the enrolment and placement of these learners into mainstream schools, but also on ensuring that they have equal opportunities to participate and succeed in all aspects of school life. It is on this basis that the present study sought to investigate factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo.

1.3 Problem statement

In 2001, the South African DoE published the EWP6 policy to achieve IE. This policy advocates for transforming the education system to accommodate LWD. IE in this policy is characterised as "maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning" (DoE, 2001, p.16). Ideally, LWD should be included into mainstream schools, with the schools actively facilitating their participation. However, research findings by Mphanda (2018); Mpu and Adu (2021); Sekhwela (2022) and Segalo (2023) revealed that IE for LWPD remains elusive. These learners encounter exclusionary practices within mainstream schools, underscoring the gap between IE policies and their implementation. In Limpopo province, studies by both Raphadu (2021) and Sinthumule (2024), indicate that there is relatively low level of implementation of IE for LWPD. An investigation into the factors hindering the implementation of IE for LWPD is essential to address the persistent gap between policy intent and practical realities. Despite clear mandates outlined in policies such as EWP6, LWPD continue to face exclusionary practices within mainstream schools. Understanding the specific barriers they encounter is crucial for developing targeted interventions that promote inclusion. Without such an investigation and intervention, the promise of IE for LWPD remains unrealised, perpetuating systemic inequalities in education.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

As a former Model C high school pupil, I found myself in an unfortunate situation following an accident right outside the school gate. I was bumped by a parent collecting their child after school, leaving me temporarily injured and reliant on crutches for about 3-4 months. Unfortunately, my school lacked accommodations for learners using crutches or any mobility aid, making it challenging for me to navigate the school like my peers.

The size of the school exacerbated my situation, as navigating to different classes became a daily challenge. My Life Orientation class was situated quite a distance from our regular classrooms, approximately 600 meters away. This is because Life orientation classes were next to the hockey field for our physical activity lessons, making getting to it with crutches tiring and time-consuming. The school's immense size extended to its architecture, with the school building spanning three floors of classrooms towering. Every day presented a struggle to manoeuvre from the first floor to the third floor with my crutches and a heavy school bag on my back. Despite my friends offering to carry my bag, climbing multiple flights of stairs

remained a daunting task. I had to wait for the rush of learners to decrease before attempting the climb, fearing being tripped or falling in the chaos. Apart of my efforts, I frequently arrived nearly fifteen minutes late to our forty-five-minute class sessions. Understandably, some teachers grew frustrated with my tardiness, but I had no control over the situation.

This lateness resulted in missing valuable learning time, and my participation in class declined as I often arrived exhausted. Despite teachers providing additional notes for missed work, my performance in subjects like Maths suffered greatly, as it was already a challenging subject for me. I was excluded from participating in any physical education lessons due to the lack of teacher knowledge on how to safely conduct physical activities for learners who use crutches. Consequently, I would sit, and watch others participate. Over time, walking to class alone while my friends rushed ahead and being excluded from physical education intensified my sense of isolation. During break times, I found myself sitting alone, watching my friends playing, which only deepened my feelings of isolation. Feeling frustrated, unsupported, and neglected by my school, I confided in my parents, expressing a desire to be homeschooled until I fully recovered.

My research findings can inform the design of professional development programmes that focusses on IE. District Support Teams (DBST) can utilise these findings to design targeted professional development programmes for teachers in Life Orientation. Teachers can benefit from learning how to effectively and safely include LWPD in lessons, therefore minimising the risk of social and silent exclusion for these learners. At the national level, the DoE can utilise these research findings to advocate for increased funding aimed at addressing infrastructural barriers. This advocacy ensures that all LWPD enjoy equitable access to education. By prioritising these funds, the DoE demonstrates a commitment to fostering accessible learning environments for every learner irrespective of their disabilities, as it is not equitable to admit LWPD into mainstream schools without adequately accommodating their specific needs. This aligns with the principles outlined in EWP6, which advocates for structural changes to support the inclusion of LWD in mainstream schools.

1.5 Aim of the study

The study aimed to investigate the factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo.

1.6 Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were:

i. To establish teacher personal related factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district
ii. To examine school related factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district
iii. To explore policy related factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district
iv. To establish strategies that could be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district

1.7 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

i. Which teacher personal related factors hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district?
ii. Which school related factors hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district?
iii. What policy related factors hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district?
iv. What strategies could be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD in one private selected mainstream school in Vhembe district?

1.8 Definitions of key terms

The following terms have been defined as used in the study:

Physical disabilities: Refers to "any impairment that limits the physical function of one or more limbs and/or the fine gross motor ability of an individual" (Maotoana, 2014, p.3). In the present study, physical disabilities are any health conditions that requires an individual to have mobility aids.

Inclusive education: "The right of every child to be part of mainstream education and focuses on access to, acceptance of participation in the mainstream education" (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smith, & van Deventer, 2016, p.520-521). In the present study, it implies that every individual has the right to be part of a mainstream school environment that ensures their full access and participation, irrespective of their disabilities or any other differentiating factor.

Inclusion: According to Voltz, Brazil and Ford (2001), inclusion "does not refer to a physical space but rather to a condition or state of being. The concept of inclusion implies a sense of belonging and acceptance" (p.24). In the present study, this implies that inclusion is meeting the social and academic needs of all LWPD, not just placement in the mainstream school.

Mainstream school: According to Raphadu (2021) "mainstreaming involves placement of a learner with special needs in a regular education class or into a general curriculum" (p. 12-13). In the present study, this entails LWD and those without disabilities learning the same classroom setting.

Teacher personal factors: In the present study, these factors pertain to the individual characteristics, attitudes, beliefs and skills of teachers that impact their ability to effectively support and include LWPD in the classroom.

School related factors: In the present study, these factors include the organisational and environmental aspects of educational institutions that influence the condition of IE, including infrastructure and social interactions.

Policy related factors: In the present study, these factors are the legislative frameworks, guidelines, and resource allocations established by the government bodies or educational authorities that shape the implementation of IE for LWPD. These factors encompass laws, policies, and standards designed to support and regulate IE.

1.9 Organisation of the Chapters in the Research Report

The chapters in the research project are presented and organised as follows:

Chapter One: Overall Introduction

This chapter presents the overall introduction of the study. This includes the background, problem statement, rationale of the study, aim, research questions, definition of operational terms and finally organisation of the chapters in the research project.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. It explored existing research related to the factors that hinder the implementation of IE for LWPD. It also explores strategies that can be utilised to address these factors. Additionally, it discussed two theories that provide a foundation for understanding and analysing the identified factors.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed in this study. This includes research paradigm, methodology, research design, research site, research sampling, data collection tools, data analysis, trustworthiness of the data and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Findings of the Study

This chapter presents the findings of the study, highlighting the key factors hindering the implementation of IE for LWPD in the selected mainstream school. The findings are organised into themes identified under teachers personal related factors, school related factors and policy related factors. It also includes the strategies suggested by participants to address these factors, providing valuable insights into practical solutions derived from the participants perspectives.

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents the summary of findings, discussion of findings, recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0: LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. It explored existing research related to the factors that hinder the implementation of IE for LWPD. It also explored strategies that can be utilised to address these factors. Additionally, this chapter discussed two theories that provide a foundation for understanding and analysing the identified factors.

2.2 Inclusive Education from an international perspective

IE is an international movement that surfaced as a critical response to the recognition of education as an important human right for all learners. It aims to address the historical exclusion of LWD and other marginalised groups from the educational system worldwide. Mariga et al. (2014) argue that IE strives to "challenge exclusionary policies and practices" (p.26). It ensures that social justice within educational systems prevails (Du Plessis, 2013). IE is context-specific, meaning that its enactment and effectiveness vary widely depending on the political, cultural, economic, and socio-cultural contexts of a given country. This variability causes definitional problems across different countries. Despite being context-dependent, the underlying principles of IE remain the same. It is underpinned by the core principles of access, participation, diversity, equality, and non-discrimination.

IE is recognised as a fundamental human right, underpinned by the 1948 UDHR. Article 26 of this document explicitly states that "everyone has the right to education" (Kearney, 2011, p.5). This declaration challenges and seeks to eliminate exclusionary practices that prevent children from accessing education. This declaration advocates for an educational system where all learners, regardless of their background or abilities, can attend school and receive a quality education. This commitment by the declaration underscores the global effort to guarantee that education is accessible to everyone, reflecting the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

The Salamanca Statement which was adapted in 1994 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is a pivotal document in the field of IE. "The guiding principle that informs this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and emotional, linguistic or other conditions"

(UNESCO, 1994, p.6). This implies that all learners should be able to access any mainstream school regardless of any differential factors. This framework is against segregation as it asserts that "all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have" (UNESCO, 1994, p.11), a concept known as mainstreaming. It outlines the responsibilities that governments and educational systems must have to ensure that every learner is effectively included in mainstream schools and that IE prevails.

Although advancement has been made in international policies regarding IE, the state of IE varies widely across different countries as IE is contextual. However, Makuya (2023) states that developing countries often face significant hurdles in successfully implementing IE, which could step from various factors. Understandably so, as developing countries are often faced with lack of infrastructure, cultural attitudes and inadequate training for teachers to name a few factors.

2.3 Inclusive Education in South African context

South Africa strongly endorses IE, as it is a signatory to the Salamanca Statement which is a significant international policy document on IE. According to Du Plessis (2013) "inclusive education in the South African context is defined as a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language" (p.78). The key IE policy is the 2001 EWP6, which is about "acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support" (DoE, 2001, p.6). This statement challenges the historical notion that some learners are incapable of learning due to their special needs, and it also acknowledges that every learner has the potential to learn, they just need the necessary support for learning to take place.

Like the Salamanca statement, EWP6 promotes a paradigm shift from segregated education for LWD towards a single educational system where every learner, irrespective of their ability, are educated together in mainstream schools. This policy "outlines how the education and training system must transform itself to contribute to establishing a caring and humane society, how it must change to accommodate the full range of learning needs and the mechanisms that should be put in place" (DoE, 2001, p.11). Engelbrecht et al. (2016) asserts that the EWP6 highlights the need for the educational system to "transform itself to accommodate the full range of learning needs caused by organic/medical causes as well as needs caused by systematic barriers including poverty and poorly trained teachers within mainstream schools" (p. 522). This policy

aims to rectify the historical exclusion of LWD by including them into the mainstream education system. It is important to note that this policy is not only restricted to LWD but applies to every learner in South Africa who experience barriers to learning.

The 2014 SIAS policy is also a crucial IE policy in South Africa. The 2014 SIAS document provides a practical plan to implement the vision laid out in the 2001 EWP6. According to the former Minister of Education, Angelina Matsie Motshekga "the SIAS policy aims to respond to the needs of all learners in our country, particularly those who are vulnerable and most likely to be marginalised and excluded" (DoE, 2014, foreword). The purpose of SIAS is to "provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school" (DoE, 2014, p.10). This implies that this policy aims to identify learners who need support, assess their needs and provide them with the required accommodations and resources to succeed in the school.

According to the DoE (2014), this policy is intended to improve access "to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who experience barriers to learning, including learners in ordinary and special schools who are failing to learn due to whatever barriers of whatever nature (family disruption, language issues, poverty, learning difficulties, disability etc)" (p.10). It outlines "protocols as well as set of official forms to be used by teachers, School-based support teams and District-Based Support Teams in the process of screening, identifying and assessing barriers experienced by learners with a view to planning the support provision according to programmes and monitoring by the district-based Support Team" (DoE, 2014, p.10). In essence, this policy aims to manage and support the teaching and learning process for learners who encounter barriers to learning, ensuring that IE is implemented effectively.

2.4 Learners with Physical Disabilities

Physical disabilities encompass a wide variety of conditions that can affect an individual's day-to-day functioning. These disabilities can be present from birth or develop over time due to medical reasons, injuries, or illnesses. They can be temporary or permanent and drastically affect numerous aspects of an individual's life, including their ability to move, hear, and see. There are various types of physical disabilities that can impact an individual's day to day functioning. For instance, mobility impairment affects the learner's ability to move around (Maotana, 2014). Hearing impairments can result in partial or complete hearing loss, affecting communication (Maotoana, 2014). Visual impairments involve partial or complete loss of

vision (Maotana, 2014), which can hinder daily activities as the learner cannot see. Additionally, physical disabilities include impairments which constrain other aspects of daily living. In this study, physical disability is seen as "any impairment that limits the physical function of one or more limbs and/or the fine gross motor ability of an individual" (Maotoana, 2014, p.3). It refers to any condition that affects a learner's ability to move around, requiring them to use mobility aids such as prosthetics, wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, and so forth.

2.5 Teacher personal factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education among learners with physical disabilities

According to Andrews et al. (2021) teachers play a crucial role in the effective implementation of IE. Thus, the effective implementation of IE within every school is greatly dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the teacher. However, research globally has consistently shown that teachers personal factors significantly impede the successful implementation of IE (Alzemaia, 2019; Adewumi & Mosito, 2019; Banks et al. 2022; Makhuya, 2021; Yeboah, Aloka & Charamba, 2023). These personal factors may include teachers' negative attitudes, lack of teacher training and low teacher self-efficacy. All these factors can negatively impact teachers' ability to successfully implement IE as these factors impact their willingness and ability to adapt inclusive practices in the classroom. IE promotes the enrolment of LWD in mainstream schools. However, research internationally, across Africa and within South Africa indicates that teacher's negative attitudes constitute as one of the factors that hinders the execution of IE of LWPD in mainstream schools. Attitude can be defined as "way of thinking, which determines a person's reaction towards persons, objects, institutions or issues in either a positive or negative way" (Mahlo, 2011, p.47). Attitudes influence how we behave and think about a particular thing.

The impact of teachers' negative attitudes on the successful execution of IE has been documented in various studies around the world. For example, Alzemaia's (2019) qualitative study conducted in Saudi Arabi's mainstream elementary schools revealed that almost teachers expressed negative attitudes about inclusion of LWD. Similarly, Banks et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study in rural Malawi mainstream schools and the study used interviews with children, their caregivers and teachers. The study finding indicated that teachers had negative attitudes towards LWD. Furthermore, Banks et al. (2022) noted that teachers' negative attitudes towards IE led to instances where caregivers were discouraged by teachers from enrolling their children with disabilities in mainstream schools. In South Africa, a qualitative study by Makuya (2021) revealed that teachers hold negative attitudes towards IE, with one participant in the

study stating that “inclusion is simply teacher abuse. The Department should come up with a better approach” (p.79). According to Panda, Mallik, and Sahoo (2023), teachers’ negative attitudes can stem from a lack of training. Without the necessary skills and knowledge to support LWD, teachers may feel overwhelmed or unprepared, which can contribute to their negative attitude of IE.

Unfortunately, various studies around the world have consistently reported lack of training on IE as a significant factor that hampers the execution of IE in mainstream schools. For example, Alves et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study in Brazil, which indicated that LWPD often spent physical education period playing board games rather than participating in sports or physical activities. This was ascribed to teachers’ lack of skills and training to effectively include these learners in lessons. Likewise, in Botswana, a qualitative study by Makonyango (2020) found that teachers considered themselves unskilled to teach LWD due to the inadequate training. In Lesotho, a quantitative study by Mosia and Kotelo (2024) revealed that 66.6% of the teachers in the study believed that they are not adequately trained to teach in mainstream schools, as they do not hold the appropriate knowledge and skills required to teach inclusively.

South Africa is not immune to this predicament, as various qualitative studies illustrate that South African teachers also face challenges to execute IE due to lack of training. In Adewumi and Mosito’s (2019) qualitative study, one of the key findings revealed that teachers do not have the required expertise and training to execute IE successfully. Similarly, in Makuya’s (2021) qualitative study, lack of training was reported as one of the challenges faced by teachers in executing IE. Likewise, Yeboah et al.’s (2023) qualitative study reported lack of training on IE as a factor that hinders the execution of IE. The findings of these studies show that without adequate training, teachers are not equipped to address the diverse needs of LWD.

Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015) argues that lack of training on IE stems from Initial Teacher Training (ITE) programmes being divided into two, where pre-service teachers either attend general education or special education programmes for their training. As a result, pre-service teachers in general education programmes are not adequately trained or exposed to teaching LWD. Consequently, they enter the field inadequately prepared for IE. This is reinforced by Kasikako’s (2021) qualitative study which reported that teachers who trained in general education stated that their training was predominantly theoretical and failed to include the practical components necessary for effective teaching in inclusive settings.

Lack of training on IE can lead to low teacher self-efficacy which plays a substantial role in the successful execution of IE. Self- efficacy can be defined as "an individual's belief of their capability to carry out the behaviours required to achieve specific performance goals." (Yeboah et al., 2023, p.11). It is an individuals' belief or confidence in their capability to perform a given task. According to Aloka, Ooko, and Birech (2024) teachers with high self-efficacy are more prone to execute IE effectively, as they feel confident in their abilities. Conversely, teachers with low self-efficacy hinder the execution of IE because they doubt their capacity to teach inclusively. Studies around the world indicate that teachers have low self-efficacy regarding the execution of IE due to lack of training, skills and knowledge. For instance, a qualitative study by Attwood, MacArthur, and Kearney (2019) conducted in New Zealand found that beginner teachers exhibited low self-efficacy in teaching LWD, as their ITE programme did not equip them with the necessary skills. Equally, Tseeke's (2021) qualitative study in Lesotho revealed that teachers had low self-efficacy in addressing the needs of learners with visual impairments in mainstream schools, this was due to insufficient training. In line with these findings, Yeboah et al.'s (2023) qualitative study highlighted that teachers reported low self-efficacy, which they attributed to inadequate training on IE.

They reviewed studies focused on other areas of disabilities, and the research gap which emerged is that they did not entirely focus on LWPD which is the focus of the present study. Hence, the study aimed to fill in the gaps in literature.

2.6 School related factors influencing implementation of inclusive education among learners with physical disabilities

Adequate infrastructure plays a vital role in the inclusion of LWPD in mainstream schools. Without inclusive infrastructure, these learners cannot access the school environment effectively (Sekhwela, 2022). Research globally, particularly in developing countries indicate that schools often lack the necessary infrastructure to support LWD. For instance, a mixed-methods study conducted in Kenya by Okendo (2018) revealed that while some schools had ramps, pathways, and runways, these facilities were often inadequate and poorly constructed. Similarly, a mixed method study conducted in Indonesia by Sukadari et al. (2020) investigated factors that hinder the accessibility of LWD in their inclusive primary school. The results indicate that architectural hindrances such as stairs without safety railings, slippery floors, narrow doorways and uneven road contributed as one of the factors that hinder accessibility for LWD. Furthermore, a qualitative study in Ghana by Ntseibo (2021) explored the perspectives of children and youth with mobility impairments across four educational settings. The study

findings identified inaccessible school buildings, inadequate toilet facilities, and poor school layouts as significant barriers faced by these learners.

Studies indicate that South Africa also faces significant infrastructural challenges in executing IE. For example, a qualitative study by Mpu and Adu (2021) on the challenges of IE in South Africa revealed poor physical infrastructure as a major barrier. Participants highlighted that school buildings often fail to accommodate the needs of LWPD or other disabilities. Similarly, a study by Mokgwathi, Gram, and de Villiers (2023) on school infrastructure in South Africa emphasised the urgent need to address inadequate and poorly maintained facilities. Most participants reported infrastructural challenges in their schools, noting that these conditions compromised the safety of both staff and learners. Other qualitative studies in South Africa by Mphanda (2018); Adewumi and Mosito (2019); Sekhwela (2022) and Doyi (2023) indicate that some mainstream schools in South Africa lack appropriate physical infrastructure to support IE for LWD.

However, contrasting findings from Segalo's (2023) qualitative research suggest that the situation varies within the South African context. In Segalo's (2023) study, participants unanimously reported that their school was suitable for LWPD with one participant stating, "This school accommodates wheelchair users" (Segalo, 2023, p. 58). This discrepancy indicates that the adequacy of school infrastructure for LWPD in South Africa depends on the specific region being studied.

Lack of resources has also been documented as a factor that hinders the execution of IE. For instance, Zwane and Malale (2018) conducted a study investigating barriers to the realisation of IE in Swaziland. One of the key findings revealed a lack of resources and equipment to accommodate LWD. Similarly, Mgimba and Mwila (2022), in their study utilising both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, found that inadequate resources hinder the academic performance of LWD. Other studies, such as those conducted in Ghana by Nseibo (2021), in Malawi by Banks et al. (2022), and across Ethiopia, Ghana, and South Africa by Aldersey et al. (2024), emphasise that many African countries lack the proper resources needed for the success of IE. Discrimination against LWD also significantly hinders the implementation of IE. Research conducted in Africa highlights the prevalence of such discrimination. For instance, a qualitative study by Banks et al. (2022) found that these learners face discrimination from their able-bodied peers. Likewise, Sekhwela's (2023) qualitative

study on the challenges faced LWPD in South Africa revealed that these learners are subjected to discrimination by both their teachers and peers due to their impairments.

Bullying of LWD in mainstream schools is also a significant barrier to the execution of IE. Research studies worldwide consistently highlight that LWD are particularly vulnerable to bullying in mainstream school settings. For example, a qualitative study conducted by Aljabri, Bagadood, and Sulaiman (2023) in Saudi Arabia revealed that these learners frequently experienced verbal and physical bullying from their able-bodied peers. Similarly, a qualitative study by Banks et al. (2022) in Malawi revealed that learners with intellectual and hearing impairments faced both verbal and physical bullying from their able-bodied classmates. Additionally, a qualitative study by Ntseibo (2021) in Ghana found that learners with mobility impairments were subjected to verbal bullying. In all these studies, verbal bullying included being mocked and teased at due to disability.

The reviewed studies above have inconsistent findings on school related factors that affect the execution of IE among LWD. In addition, most of the reviewed studies focused on IE in general but not on LWPD which constitute the focus of the present study. Thus, the present study filled in the research gap in literature.

2.7 Policy related factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education among learners with physical disabilities

Policies are essential as they provide a framework for guiding the effective execution of IE. However, they can also have a negative impact on the execution of IE. In South Africa, EWP6 is the main policy document underpinning IE. It outlines six broad strategies aimed at establishing an IE system for all learners (DoE, 2001). However, Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue that these strategies lack specificity and detail, providing little guidance on successfully implementing EWP6 in practice, which leads to policy ambiguity. They contend that "when goals are not explicitly stated, there is uncertainty and misunderstanding about the purpose of policy" (p.8). This ambiguity is evident in the qualitative studies by Rapadu (2021) and Masunungure and Maguvhe (2023), where research findings highlight teachers' limited understanding of what inclusion entails. For instance, a participant in Rapadu's (2021) study asserted that "although the policy suggests inclusion, but it does not evidently indicate on how to approach inclusion by setting out activities for learners with special needs." (p.42). This finding suggests that South Africa is grappling with policy ambiguity, which impedes the execution of IE. Likewise, a qualitative study conducted in Botswana by Makonyango (2020)

indicate that the country's IE policy document does not clearly describe how the provision of education for all learners will be ensured, and the role that teachers play in IE, which is important for successful policy implementation Therefore, it is crucial for policies to be detailed and provide clear guidelines regarding inclusion.

Research across the world indicate that teachers do not possess the necessary knowledge regarding IE and are not aware of IE polices in their countries. For example, in a mixed method study by Attwood et al. (2019) conducted in New Zealand, it was revealed that teachers had limited knowledge of IE legislation and policy. 84% of the participants felt that their ITE did little or nothing to enhance their knowledge of local legislation regarding LWD. Also, 64% had minimal or no knowledge of New Zealand's "Success for All" IE policy, and none of the participants have heard of it. In Kenya, a qualitative study by Ireri, King 'endo, Wangila and Thuranira (2020) showed that teachers lack awareness on their national IE policy, which hinders the policy implementation as teachers are not aware of the policies put in place. Similarly, in South Africa, a qualitative study by Govender (2023) revealed that some teachers are not aware of the EWP6 and the SIAS policy, which are the main policy documents in South Africa. This lack of knowledge and awareness can be due to lack of training on IE.

For IE to be realised, teachers and all the relevant school structures must be exposed to IE policy documents. Unfortunately, studies in South Africa showed that teachers do not have copies of any IE policy documents. For instance, in a qualitative study by Bipath, Tebekana and Venketsamy (2021), teachers reported that they do not have copies of IE policy documents. Likewise, teachers in Govender's (2023) qualitative study reported that no policy documents have been received in their school. These findings indicate that IE polices are not being distributed in schools, which hinders the implementation of IE as teachers are not informed about them.

Research findings in other regions of the world revealed that IE policies hinder the implementation of IE themselves. For instance, in McCabe and Jiang's (2024) qualitative study conducted in China, parents reported that while national policies permit LWD to enrol in general schools, these children are required to demonstrate their abilities and qualifications through an interview process. Should they fail to meet the school's standards, they are directed to attend a special school. In cases where they successfully pass the interview and gain admission to general schools, the study highlighted a significant lack of institutional support and resources. As a result, LWD are often required to bring a personal caretaker to school for

assistance, if not, they are advised to attend special schools. A qualitative study by Olalekan-Maxwell (2023) in Nigeria revealed that the government policy on curriculum hinders successful implementation. The findings indicated that the time allocation for each period is too little to accommodate LWD in the lesson. As a result, teachers only focus on learners without disabilities and exclude those with disabilities.

The reviewed studies above focused on IE broadly rather than examining policy impacts specifically on LWPD, which is the central focus of this study. The present study filled the research gap in the existing literature by investigating the policy-related factors affecting the IE of LWPD.

2.8 Strategies that can be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of inclusive education for learners with physical disabilities

To address the factors mentioned above, various strategies need to be adapted. Various studies around the world have suggested strategies on how to address teachers lack of training. For example, a New Zealand study by Attwood et al. (2019) stated that ITE programmes should equip pre-service teachers with the necessary training for IE and expose them to IE policies as they are crucial. A qualitative study by Ntseibo (2021) in Ghana recommends that the curriculum in ITE should correspond with the basic school curriculum to adequately prepare all pre-service teachers to teach inclusively. In Saudi Arabia, a study by Alzemaia (2019) indicated that teachers must be provided with regular training for IE. In Brazil, a study by Alves et al. (2019) stated that physical education teachers should be trained to be able to include learners with various disabilities in their physical lessons safely. Similarly, in Lesotho a study by Makonyango (2020) argues that the government must provide teachers with training regarding IE.

In South Africa, studies also reiterate that teachers be provided with training if IE is to be realised. For instance, a study by Adewumi and Mosito (2019) states that teachers should undergo in-service training for the effective execution of IE. Makuya (2021) states that in-service professional development of teachers is necessary to equip teachers with the training they need to implement IE. Additionally, Sinthumule (2023) recommends for the DoE to provide professional development and training programmes for all teachers, administrative staff, and support personnel.

Research studies around Africa identified provision of physical infrastructure as a vital strategy for the successful execution of IE. For example, Okendo's (2018) mixed methods study

recommends that the District of Education should improve the school's physical infrastructure through construction of ramps, wider classroom doors and appropriate toilets to ensure accessibility. Nseibo's (2021) qualitative study conducted in Ghana recommends that the Ministry of Education should make provision for accessible school buildings and facilities for learners with mobility impairments. A qualitative study conducted in Botswana by Makonyango (2020) contends that school managers must ensure that the school building and facilities are universally accessible for all learners including those with assistive equipment's.

In South Africa, a qualitative study by Govender (2023) indicate that the DoE, SMT, SGB and community must collaborate to build and modify the existing school infrastructure to accommodate LWPD. Sekhwela (2022) suggest that the DoE should renovate schools as schools are outdated and require necessary accommodations to include LWD. Likewise, Mokgwathi et al. (2023) also suggested that the DoE should prioritise improving school infrastructure as the state of schools is concerning. According Sekhwela (2022) awareness programmes in South Africa should be raised to eliminate the discrimination of LWD. Sekhwela (2022) states that the DBST can raise awareness in schools to educate parents, teachers, learners, and the community about LWPD so that these learners can be treated with respect, humanity and Ubuntu as there is nothing wrong with them. Additionally, Sinthumule (2024) states that schools can establish awareness programmes and have disability awareness days where learners and their community gather at school to raise awareness on disability to promote understanding and acceptance of LWD. This would change able-bodied peers' perspectives on disabilities.

According to Donohue and Bornman (2014) and Panda et al. (2023), clear policy mandates and their strict enforcement are essential strategies to address hindrances in IE. Policies shape teacher training and foster positive attitudes, thereby enhancing teachers 'confidence and ability to include LWD in their classes (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). According to Bipath et al. (2021) teachers should be given a copy of the policy documents to assist them in understanding IE.

While the reviewed studies provide strategies that can be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE, they do not focus on LWPD which is the central focus of this study. Thus, the present study filled in this research gaps in the literature.

2.9 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by two theories namely the Social Model of Disability and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

2.9.1 The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability was theorised by Mike Oliver. According to Mantey (2017) "The social model sees disability as the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers" (p.9). This implies that disability is not just about a person's impairment, but also about the way that society is structured. It does not deny the actual reality of the disability but situates it within the society's attitudes and environment (Oliver & Barnes, 2010). This model argues that the way that the society is organised excludes and disadvantages individuals with impairments (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou 2011). Thus, efforts must focus on transforming the society rather than on individual rehabilitations (Yeboah et al., 2023). Society must change its attitudes and environment to enable individuals with disabilities to fully function.

The Social Model of Disability was justifiable for this study as it acknowledges that individuals have disabilities, however, with the right attitudes and environment, these individuals can function properly. This means that LWPD can learn like their non-disabled peers. Their medical condition does not hinder them from learning but rather their surroundings do. This aligns with the research questions and literature review findings, which highlights that factors hindering the implementation of IE for LWPD in mainstream schools are not the learners' impairments but rather teacher personal factors, school factors, and policy factors. These factors are structural and disadvantage LWPD. Thus, the Social Model is useful as a tool for theorising systematic factors.

This study draws on the Social Model of Disability because it sought to transform structural and attitudinal factors to allow full participation and access for people with disabilities in society. IE aims to achieve this by promoting full participation and access for LWD in mainstream schools. According to the Salamanca Statement and EWP6, IE is based on the principle that every learner, irrespective of their abilities, should be educated together in mainstream classroom environments. The Social Model of Disability aligns with this principle by advocating for systemic changes, removing barriers to participation and learning for LWD.

2.9.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

This study was also guided by the Ecological Systems Theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner. This theory states that "every individual is embedded in multiple nested systems, and development is the result of complex interactions between the individual and various systemic factors or components that influence each other (Nembambula, Ooko & Aluko, 2023, p.3). This means that human development is not only shaped by biological factors, but by the various systems within the individual's environment. These systems have a reciprocal relationship as they influence each other. In other words, Ecological Systems Theory explains how the individual development is influenced by various types of environmental systems. This theory identifies five systems that interact to influence development namely microsystems, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and Chronosystem (Lebona, 2013).

The microsystem is the closest layer to the individual and represents their immediate environment in which they directly interact with, such as their family, school, teacher, peers, and so forth (Doyi, 2023). The mesosystem represents the interconnections between different microsystems, such as the relationship between the individual's home environment and their school environment (Doyi, 2023). The exosystem encompasses broader social systems that do not directly involve the individual but still affect them indirectly, such as school policies (Lebona, 2013). The macrosystem is the cultural and societal context in which the individual lives, including cultural norms, values, attitudes, customs, laws, and economic systems (Lebona, 2013). The chronosystem encompasses the changes that happen over time within one of the systems (Doyi, 2023). This study did not utilise the chronosystem.

Using Ecological Systems Theory, in this study was justifiable as it provides a comprehensive framework for examining the factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo. This theory emphasised the complex interactions between individuals and their various environmental systems, which aligns well with the research questions and literature findings that illustrate teacher personal factors, school-related factors, and policy-related factors that hinder implementation. This theory provides a comprehensive lens to examine the multiple, interconnected layers that influence inclusion of LWPD in mainstream schools. These layers range from immediate classroom interactions with the teachers (microsystem) to the overarching South African policies (macrosystem). By its emphasis on the importance of context and the dynamic interactions between an individual and their environment, Bronfenbrenner's model allowed for

a detailed analysis of how teacher personal factors, school related factors and policy related factors impact the implementation of LWPD in one selected private mainstream school.

2.10 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter delved on the literature review and theoretical frameworks that were adopted in the study. The research gaps which emanated from the reviewed literature have been highlighted. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0: RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed by this study. This includes research paradigm, methodology, research design, research site, research sampling, data collection method, data analysis, trustworthiness of the data and ethical considerations

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016) a research paradigm is a "basic belief system and theoretical framework with assumptions about 1) ontology, 2) epistemology, 3) methodology and 4) methods" (p.51). It assists researchers in establishing beliefs and determining "what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted" (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.26). In other words, a research paradigm is a way of comprehending the reality of the world. In this study, an interpretivist research paradigm was utilised. Sekhwela (2022) states that an interpretivist paradigm "is a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way in which people interpret and make sense of their experiences, and the world in which they live" (p.64). It seeks to understand the subjective experiences of individuals being studied. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) assert that interpretivism paradigm "makes an effort to 'get into the head of the subjects being studied' so to speak, and to understand and interpret what the subject is thinking or the meaning s/he is making of the context" (p.33).

The interpretivist paradigm was appropriate because it assisted the researcher in capturing the subjective experiences of teacher participants who were implementing IE for LWPD. Thus, the interpretivist approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of how the unique teacher-related, school-related, and policy-related influenced lack of implementation of IE for LWPD.

3.3 Research Methodology

According to Patel and Patel (2019) research methodology "is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them" (p.48). In other words, it is a systematic way of conducting research to solve a research problem. This study adapted a

qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research methodology aims to gain an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour (Raphadu, 2021). It allows the researcher to uncover insights into participants body language, attitudes, opinions, feelings, and more (Patel & Patel, 2019). Qualitative research methodology recognises that reality is constructed by individuals based on their personal experiences and social contexts, leading to multiple interpretations and meanings (Mahlo, 2017). These meanings are subjective, as they reflect the unique perspectives and contexts of the participants involved. Additionally, qualitative research methodology often involves methods such as interviews and focus groups to collect rich data.

Using a qualitative research methodology was appropriate for this study due to its ability to capture contextualised experiences and viewpoints of teachers. Thus, by adapting a qualitative research methodology, it allowed the researcher to have an in-depth exploration of participants experiences, insights, and challenges in implementing IE as the participants in this study are key role players of IE.

3.4 Research Design

Makhuya (2021) defines research design as a "guide that directs the research process and offers the protocol for an investigation" (p.47). Thus, a research design outlines the how, when and where the research will be conducted (Maotano, 2014). This study adopted a single case study research design. According to Raphadu (2021), a case study refers to an "inquiry that includes an experimental study of modern occurrences and it relies on the compilation of substantial knowledge regarding what participants perceive as impacting the phenomenon under study" (p. 24). A single case study research design was appropriate for this research because it allowed for a full, in-depth exploration of the complex phenomenon and it provided rich, deep insights essential for understanding complex issues that might not be captured through quantitative methods. Thus, a single case study assisted the researcher with answering the research questions as the study investigated factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in a single mainstream school in Vhembe district. These factors are best understood within their specific context, making a single case study an ideal approach.

3.5 Research Site

The study was conducted in one combined school in Makhado, Limpopo. The selected school is a private mainstream school in the Vhembe West district in the Limpopo province. It is a private combined school catering to learners from grade R to 12, with a total of 621 learners

and 30 teachers. This site was chosen for the study because of a 2024 online newspaper article from the Limpopo Mirror which highlighted the school's efforts in accommodating learners with prosthetics who do not have mental challenges.

3.6 Research Sampling

According to Segalo (2023) sampling refers to the "process of selecting participants for the study from a particular population to be included in a sample-the sample must represent the population" (p.11). For this study, purposive sampling was utilised to obtain teacher participants. Sekhwela (2022) defines purposive sampling as "a sampling technique in which the researcher selects samples based on the subjective judgment of the researcher rather than random selection" (p.74). Researchers using purposive sampling choose participants based on their judgment of who would be most informative for answering their research question (Segalo, 2023).

Purposive sampling was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to target participants with specific experiences related to the research topic. For instance, selecting teacher participants who teach LWPD ensured that the data collected was rich and relevant because these teachers interact with such learners daily and have first-hand experience with the challenges involved. The sample size of this study was 6 teachers from a total of 30. Thus, the small sample size of 6 teachers is typically used in qualitative studies, where the goal is to gather in-depth, detailed information from participants rather than to generalise findings to a larger population (Segalo, 2023). The selection of this sample size was also justified by the purposive sampling method, which focuses on depth and richness of data. By carefully choosing teachers with relevant experience, the study aimed to uncover insights into the factors that hinder the implementation of IE for LWPD in one mainstream school.

3.7 Data Collection Tools

Data collection can be defined as "the process of gathering data about the phenomenon under investigation" (Sekhwela, 2022, p.77). This study used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Interviews are tools to collect information orally for research purposes and they can be unstructured, semi-structured or structured. A semi-structured interview "is more open and allows the researcher or the participants to divert, if an idea is to pursue in more detail. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher proceeds with a general outline of themes, which can be further expanded when needed" (Sekhwela, 2022, p. 84).

Semi-structured interview was appropriate in this study because they allowed participants, in this case teachers to express their opinions and experiences within their specific context. This was crucial for this study as teachers are the key role players of implementing IE, therefore their opinions and perspectives are vital. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews permitted for follow-up questions, assisting the researcher to gather rich data on the factor's teachers believe hinder IE. Semi-structured interviews also facilitated the identification of common themes and patterns across different interviews, which is essential for thematic analysis. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes to 1 hour and each interview was audio taped.

3.8 Data Analysis

According to Raphadu (2021) data analysis is "the process of bringing structure, order and meaning to the mass of data collected" (p.28). This study used thematic analysis to analyse the data collected. Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017) define a thematic analysis as a "method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (p.2). Thematic analysis is often used in a qualitative research approach and consists of six key steps. The first step was familiarisation with the data, which involves immersing oneself in the breadth and depth of the data to search for meanings and patterns repeatedly (Nowell et al., 2017). The second step was generating initial codes, where interesting features of the data are identified and systematically coded (Nowell et al., 2017). The third step, searching for themes "involves sorting and collating all the potentially relevant coded data extracts into themes" (Nowell et al., 2017, p.8). The fourth step was reviewing themes which involved examining the coded data for each theme to evaluate whether they form a coherent pattern and to ensure that the themes accurately represent the data collected (Nowell et al., 2017). The fifth step was defining and naming themes. According to Nowell et al. (2017), in this step, researchers "determine what aspect of the data each theme captures and identify what is of interest about them and why" (p. 10), providing detailed descriptions and names for each theme. The final step was producing the report, which occurs after the researcher has successfully established themes from the collected data and is ready to write up the findings. According to Nowell et al. (2017), "the write-up of a thematic analysis should provide a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the data within and across themes" (p. 10).

Thematic analysis was chosen for this study because it provided rich and detailed analysis of the data collected. It allowed for an in-depth examination of the qualitative data gathered from teachers which are the participants in this study. Moreover, this method assisted the researcher

in identifying and analysing patterns and themes related to the context specific factors that participants perceive are hindering the execution of IE for LWPD in their school. Nowell et al. (2017) state that thematic analysis is "a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insight" (p.2) which is valuable for this research. By systematically coding the responses and developing themes, thematic analysis revealed shared concerns, recurrent issues, and common factors that hinder IE, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties faced. Additionally, it's flexibility and emphasis on subjectivity ensured that the analysis remains grounded in the teacher's perspectives, making it an ideal approach.

3.9 Trustworthiness of qualitative data

According to Segalo (2023) trustworthiness means that "the study findings are accurate or true not only from the researchers' perspective but also from that of the participants and the readers of the study" (p.20). It is used in qualitative research to guarantee that findings are accurate representations of the participants' perspectives and experiences. In addition, this helps to guarantee that research is conducted in a rigorous, ethical and transparent manner. Lincoln and Guba (1985) mention four criteria to evaluate trustworthiness, these criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is defined as "an assessment of whether or not the research findings represent a "credible" conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data in terms of quality and credibility" (Sekhwela, 2022, p.89). In this study, credibility of data was guaranteed by spending more time with participants to build rapport and understand their perspectives deeply. In addition, the researcher also shared their findings and interpretations with the teachers to verify their accuracy and ensured that they resonate with their experiences and perceptions.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers "to the generalizability of inquiry. In qualitative research, this concerns only to case-to-case transfer" (Nowell et al., 2017, p.3). It is the ability to transfer findings to other contexts. This study ensured transferability of the data by providing a description of the research context, including the school environment, and the specific challenges faced in one school in the Vhembe district. Thus, the detailed description of the research context allows others to judge the applicability of the study's findings to other settings.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is when research findings can remain consistent over time, such that if another researcher were to conduct a similar study, they would arrive at comparable findings (Sekhwela, 2022). In this study, dependability was ensured by keeping records of all research procedures, including data collection and analysis processes. Thus, the researcher documented decisions made throughout the research process, from designing the interview guide to coding and theme development.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the "degree to which the outcomes could be confirmed or corroborated by other people" (Sekhwela, 2022, p.90). In this study, the researcher ensured confirmability by continuously reflecting on own biases, assumptions, and how they can influence the research process. The researcher used an audit trail, in which the supervisor continuously reviewed the data collection and analysis process. Thus, the use of audit trail helped to ensure that the interview transcripts from data collected, coding decisions and theme development findings are grounded in the data and not the researchers own bias. In addition, the researcher also used direct quotations to support the findings, as they provide supportive evidence that the themes and patterns identified are rooted in the participants actual responses.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations ensure that the dignity, rights and well-being of participants are protected. Before conducting the data collection process, the researcher applied for an ethical clearance from the Wits School of Education Research Ethics committee at the University of Witwatersrand. The researcher attended the necessary ethics training which is required to gain an ethics certificate. In addition, the researcher obtained a permission letter from the principal of the selected private mainstream school to collect data.

3.10.1 Informed consent

According to Nseibo (2021) informed consent implies that "participants are made adequately aware of the type of information the researcher wants from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it would be used for, how they are expected to participate in the study, and how it will directly or indirectly affect them" (p.106). Before interviewing the participants, the researcher had an introduction to the study which highlighted the study aims and objectives and informed the participants how the gathered data is utilised. Participants signed an informed consent form should they wish to participate. The informed consent form ensured that

participation in the study was voluntary. The consent form was made clear and detailed, and that signing it did not bind them to continue to participate in the research if they do not wish to participate anymore. In addition, the participants were notified that withdrawal from the study would not have any penalties or negative consequences.

3.10.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the ethical and legal duty to protect individuals' private information from unauthorised access or disclosure. Before they agreed to participate in the study, participants were assured that the data collected would be held confidentially. Participants received assurance that their information was kept private and confidential. After the study completion, the researcher stored data securely, by using password-protected files. The findings did not reveal or give a hint to the participants identity or sensitive information.

3.10.3 Anonymity

Anonymity refers to the state of individuals not being identifiable within a given context. To ensure anonymity, no real names or identifying details were used in this research. The researcher used pseudonyms or codes to anonymise participants' identities in all documentation and reports.

3.11 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter outlined the research methodology used to investigate factors hindering IE for LWPD in the selected mainstream school. It detailed the research design, data collection, and analysis processes, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study from the thematic analysis of data collected through interviews. This study aimed to explore the factors that impede the implementation of IE for LWPD in a selected private mainstream school in the Vhembe District, Limpopo. The findings are presented in line with aspects such as teacher personal related factors, school related factors and policy related factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD. The findings also presented strategies that could be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD. The findings are presented and discussed as indicated below.

4.2 Findings on Teacher personal related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

In the present study, teacher personal related factors pertain to the individual characteristics, attitudes, beliefs and skills of teachers that impact their ability to effectively support and include LWPD in the classroom. These factors can either hinder or facilitate the inclusion of LWPD in mainstream classrooms. From the thematic analysis of the data collected through interviews, the following themes emerged as teacher personal related factors: teachers lack of training on IE, teachers lack of knowledge, teachers' low self-efficacy, and teachers lack of exposure in teaching LWPD. The themes are discussed below.

4.2.1 Theme 1: *Teachers' lack of training on inclusive education*

Data collected through interviews indicated that most teachers lack training on IE, which hinders the execution of IE for LWPD in this mainstream school. Lack of training on IE refers to when teachers do not possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities to effectively teach LWD and implement inclusive practices in the classroom. The findings indicated that teachers without training lack the understanding and skills needed to effectively include diverse learners in their classrooms, as they are not exposed to various teaching strategies that are designed to accommodate different learning needs and abilities. Some participants reported that they did not receive adequate training for IE at their respective Higher Education Institutions while other participants believe that their lack of training impairs their ability to fully support and handle LWPD. One participant reported that: "*I am not trained to be teaching*

these types of learners, so I do not know how to handle them" (Participant 1). In addition, three other participants (3, 4 and 5) reiterate on lack of training as a personal factor that impedes the execution of IE in this school, as they reported that:

> "*I'm not trained to deal with learners with disabilities because I believe that learners with disabilities need special attention and as a result, they should be training for teachers so that they can be able to deal with learners with special needs*" (Participant 3).
>
> "*Okay as a teacher my biggest challenge with the disabled learners is misunderstanding them because I am not adequately trained for disabled learners. All my training modules were focussed on able bodied learners. So when you encounter a disabled learner, it's like a driver who has been trained to drive during the day and now driving at night. You have not been told what to do at night and you have to learn by experience*." (Participant 4).
>
> "*I did my PGCE, I did not go to full education like most people, I did not do the BEd, I went to a university to do my PGCE so with that we had a module on inclusive education, and it showed us how to focus on it and how to work with them. It did not literally put everything in practise for me because I was just doing a one-year course.*" (Participant 5).

From the findings above, it is evident that teachers lack adequate training, which is a critical factor that hinders the execution of LWPD in this school. This deficiency in teachers not only impairs the teacher's ability to support LWPD but also undermines the broader goal of IE as teachers are not fully equipped to teach these learners. Addressing this training gap is essential for equipping teachers with the skills and confidence needed to adapt their teaching practices and ensure that every learner effectively receive the support they need to succeed.

4.2.2 Theme 2: *Teachers lack of knowledge*

A significant theme that emerged from the interviews was teachers lack of knowledge as a factor that hinders the execution of IE for LWPD in this mainstream school. Teacher lack of knowledge refers to the absence or limited understanding regarding a particular subject matter. It is when a teacher does not possess the necessary information or skill to know how to execute and facilitate teaching and learning processes effectively. When teachers lack knowledge, learners get marginalised or excluded from the learning process. Some participants in the

interview (1,3,6) indicated that they lacked the appropriate knowledge when it came to handling LWPD, both academically and emotionally. This lack of knowledge hinders teachers' ability to successfully implement inclusive practices for these learners in the classroom. One participant stated that: "*My personal related factor is lack of knowledge on how to deal with learners with disabilities*." (Participant 1). Another participant reported that: "*I don't have any knowledge of how I'm supposed to go about any of the difficulties concerning their disability that I might encounter as I am dealing with those children*." (Participant 3*)*. In addition, another participant echoed that: "*I am an educator yes I try but I am not a therapist, so it is very challenging, but I try*." (Participant 6).

From the above interview responses, it is evident that lack of knowledge among teachers hinders the execution of IE for LWPD in this school. The findings reflect a substantial gap in teachers' knowledge that undermines teachers' ability to create an inclusive and safe environment for LWPD. Without adequate knowledge, teachers are unable to provide necessary academic support to these learners. Not only does this factor hinder academic achievement but also limits teachers' ability to be emotionally present for these learners. As a result, these learners may feel neglected both academically and emotionally, leading to their unintentional exclusion from full participation in the classroom. Thus, addressing this gap is essential for the full inclusion of LWPD in this school.

4.2.3 Theme 3: *Teacher low self-efficacy*

The results from the interviews identified teacher low self- efficacy as a personal related factor that hinders the execution of IE for LWPD in this school. According to Yeboah et al. (2023), self-efficacy can be defined as "an individual's belief of their capability to carry out the behaviours required to achieve specific performance goals." (p.11). In other words, it is an individuals' belief or confidence in their capability to perform a given task. In contrast, low self-efficacy is the individuals lack of confidence in their own ability to successfully implement a task. Therefore, teacher low self -efficacy is when the teacher lacks confidence in themselves, and they do not believe that they are capable of teaching inclusively.

Several participants in the interview doubted their capabilities in implementing IE for LWPD. They reported a lack of confidence in handling LWPD and voiced concerns about feeling sympathetic and overprotective. These feelings may stem from lack of confidence in teachers own teaching capabilities on how to best support these learners. One participant stated that: "*I do not know how to handle this learner, because the teaching for me is okay, but his handwriting*

and also, I don't want to be seen as showing favoritism." (Participant 3). Another reported that: "*I feel sorry for them I think that's my problem, I feel sorry, and I feel like I do not know how to handle them fully.*" (Participant 6). Additionally, another participant shared the following:

> "*You tend to be overprotective of them. It becomes a challenge and sometimes you are not even sure if you are not over doing it now that you think they can do this and probably putting too much pressure on them, there's a lot information that I really lack about disabled learners which makes teaching of them not so good or not even sure whether I am doing the best I should be doing for them."* (Participant 4).

The above interview responses indicate that some teachers in this school have low self- efficacy which is a factor that hinders the execution of IE for LWPD in this school. When teachers have low self-efficacy, they may feel less confident in their teaching skills, leading them to set lower expectations for LWPD. This can hinder the academic success of these learners in the long-term run, resulting in achievement gaps between LWPD and their able-bodied peers, contributing to an increased inequality gap as these learners do not receive the support necessary to reach their full potential. Addressing this teacher factor is essential to promote academic achievement to all learners regardless of their ability.

4.2.4 Theme 4: *Lack of exposure in teaching learners with physical disabilities*

Another significant theme that emerged as a teacher personal related factor that hinders the execution of IE of LWPD in this school is lack of exposure to teaching these learners. Lack of exposure in teaching LWPD can be defined as the teacher's insufficient experience, familiarity or interaction with LWPD. One participant revealed that they could have been more effective in teaching LWPD if they had received exposure to teaching these learners when they were completing their educational training. This participant expressed that: "I *realise I could have been more effective if I had a lot of exposure in how to handle people with disabilities in my training*." (Participant 4).

From the above response, lack of exposure in teaching LWPD is a factor that hampers the execution of IE of LWPD in this school. When a teacher is not familiar with or trained to meet the needs of LWPD, it can result in a less inclusive classroom environment where LWPD are not fully included in the learning process. Thus, addressing this factor is essential to promote IE for all learners in the classroom.

4.3 Findings on School related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

From the thematic analysis of the data collected through interviews, the following themes emerged as school related factors: inadequate infrastructure, few sporting opportunities for LWPD, lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities, discrimination of LWPD, bullying of learners with LWPD and isolation of LWPD. The themes are presented and discussed below.

4.3.1 Theme 1: *Inadequate infrastructure*

Inadequate infrastructure emerged as a crucial school related factor that hinders the implementation of IE of LWPD in this school. Inadequate infrastructure in schools refers to insufficient or poorly maintained physical buildings and resources, which ultimately hinder the delivery of quality education. According to Panda et al. (2023) and Mokgwathi et al (2023), school infrastructure includes various components such as school architectural design, classrooms, water and electricity, ramps, toilets, playground and so forth. When a school has inadequate infrastructure, it restricts learners' participation and access to the school. All participants concurred that inadequate infrastructure serves as a significant factor that hinders the execution of IE for LWPD. From the data collected from the interview, inadequate infrastructure can be divided into four sub-themes namely: lack of accessible ramps, inaccessible toilets, small classroom spaces and lack of inclusive playgrounds. These sub-themes are discussed below.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: *Lack of accessible ramps*

The research findings indicated that five participants perceived ramps as a school related factor that hinders the execution of IE for LWPD. Accessible ramps provide easy access to school buildings and facilities for LWPD. The lack of accessible ramps denotes to the absence of ramps or the presence of poorly designed ramps that fail to provide easy access to buildings. In schools, the absence or poorly designed ramps makes it difficult for LWPD to access and navigate the school buildings and facilitates effectively, hindering IE. Some participants reported that the available ramps in the school are poorly designed with some being too steep or generally inappropriate for LWPD. Moreover, others expressed that the ramps in the school are insufficient, emphasising the need for more ramps. One participant reported that: "*The school ramps is something that they should improve on. Maybe get at least one or two to cater*

for learners with wheelchairs because the ramps are few." (Participant 5). Other participants reported the following:

> "*Uhh the ramps in our school are not appropriate, there are ramps in our school but learners who use wheelchairs cannot use them while they are alone. Learners take turns to take the learner on a wheelchair to class because they are not appropriate.*" (Participant 1).
>
> "*I think they need to put some ramps for those learners who are using wheelchairs. The ramps are few, I think there is one ramp…The ramps in the door entrance of the class are not for learners with physical disabilities. It is not for them. The children with wheelchairs, they can't enter the classroom properly because they are no ramps to enter the classroom and also to come out. Some learners have to help them to enter the classroom and also go out.*" (Participant 2).
>
> "*At this school we've got one or two ramps but all around here, there isn't any ramp that I know of, so a child for instance who is in a wheelchair might find it very difficult to maneuver around the school because of that*." (Participant 3).
>
> "*The ramp if ever it is there, it is too steep it doesn't have the support…Where we have a ramp, the ramp has no support rails. Like if you can notice outside this room, it doesn't have a support rail, so it means if there is a learner on wheelchair, they don't have somewhere to support on, they can go through that slope, but they don't have any support, so that is inadequate infrastructure in the school*." (Participant 4).

From the above findings, it is evident that lack of accessible ramps hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. Lack of ramps and poorly designed ramps limits the autonomy of LWPD. This factor not only prevents these learners' mobility but also so undermines their sense of belonging and inclusion within the school community. The presence of ramps which are functional and well-designed is crucial for ensuring that LWPD can fully and autonomously participate effectively in school activities, fostering an inclusive school environment where all learners have equal opportunities.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: *Inaccessible toilets*

Participants reported inaccessible toilets as one of the school related factors that hinder the execution of IE of LWPD in this school. Inaccessible toilets refer to toilet facilities that are not built to accommodate people with disabilities. These toilets lack essential features such as grab

bars, wider doorways, adequate floor space, accessible toilets and sinks etc. Inaccessible toilets act as a significant barrier for people with physical disabilities, hindering them from performing personal tasks comfortably and independently, which in turn affects their dignity. Participants in the study stated that their schools' toilets are built for able-bodied learners, lacking appropriate amenities such specially designed toilets and grab rails, which are vital for LWPD. This is evidenced by three participants responses, reporting that:

> "*Learners with wheelchairs use normal toilets because there are no provisions made for them. The toilets were designed for able-bodied people, so it is challenging for these learners when it comes to using the toilets. When I say provisions, I mean like toilet rails that the learners with wheelchairs can use the toilet properly*." (Participant 1).

> "*There are no bathrooms in our school which can accommodate people on wheelchair when they go to the bathrooms, where they need rails, where they can support themselves and be able to move out of the wheelchair onto the toilet seat and so on, so we don't have those facilities, so definitely lack of them means discomfort for the disabled*." (Participant 4).

> "*We don't have toilets for disabled but for able-bodied learners. We have normal toilets for every person so that can be a problem for wheelchair learners because they require toilets with rails and things which they can use to balance themselves*." (Participant 5).

From the interview excerpts above, inaccessible toilets act as a school factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. Inaccessible toilets may cause physical pain, discomfort or embarrassment for LWPD. This factor also affects the learner psychologically, leading to feelings of isolation and exclusion which hinders their overall educational experience. Addressing this factor is crucial because accessible toilets are fundamental to enabling LWPD to fully participate in school life, ensuring that they maintain their dignity and feel included within mainstream schools which is what IE strives to archive.

4.3.1.3 Sub-theme 1.3: *Small classroom spaces*

Small classroom space serves as a school related factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this mainstream school. Small classroom space refers to a physical learning environment that is characterised by having limited room or space, that does not allow learners and teachers to manoeuvre around the classroom effectively. Small classroom spaces obstruct the movement of LWPD in the classroom, as they require adequate spaces that carter for their

mobility aids. From the data collected, two participants reported that their school is characterised as having small classroom spaces which hinders the movement of LWPD. The two participants stated that:

> "*The classrooms are not spacious enough…Sometimes learners with prosthetics blades they kick people's bags on the passages in the classroom because the bags of learners are put in the passage, and when they want to go to the toilet, they have to be kicking people's items along the way and that makes life for the disabled learner a lot of uncomfortable*." (Participant 4).

> "*We have a challenge of space, enough space in the classroom for learners with physical disabilities to move. There is no overcrowding, they are 25 in a classroom maximum, but the class itself is just too small and obviously when you have small classes, learners with prosthetics and wheelchairs cannot move around freely*." (Participant 6).

From the above data collected through interviews, small classroom spaces hinder the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. Small classroom spaces can make it difficult for LWPD to manoeuvre around the classroom. This does not only restrict their ability to move but can also cause further injuries to the disabled learner. It can also cause accidents such as bumping into desks, chairs or other learners, leading to more injuries. Addressing this challenge is essential for the overall well-being of LWPD and able-bodied learners.

4.3.1.4. Sub-theme 1.4: *Lack of inclusive playgrounds*

Participants in the interview identified lack of inclusive playgrounds as a school related factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. Lack of inclusive playgrounds refer to playgrounds that are not designed to carter for children with disabilities. According to Wagner (2023), these playgrounds do not enable LWD to participate and be included in the social aspects of play due to the way that they are designed. Three participants stated that the playgrounds in their school are not designed for LWPD as they do not include them in the social aspects of play and some also stated that the playgrounds are uneven. One of the participants expressed that: "*The playgrounds are also not okay for learners with physical disabilities. It does not include them because everything in there is just for the able-bodied*." (Participant 2). Participant 3 reported that: "*The playgrounds are not even they're not very even. They need to be evened out, that is one of the things at the school that prevents these learners*." While participant 4 reiterated that: "*Playgrounds are not accommodative I think for disabled learners*

because for a start, we do not even know under which conditions are they able to run or to play. We just use the other grounds that everyone else is using."

The data collected through interviews firmly indicate that lack of inclusive playgrounds serves as a school factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. Play is a crucial aspect of school life. Lack of inclusive playgrounds in schools create a physical and social barrier for LWPD, preventing them from participating in this aspect of school life. This leads to exclusion of LWPD, impacting their development of social skills which are all critical components of a well-rounded education. This also reinforces feelings of marginalisation and isolation. Addressing this factor is vital for creating an environment where every learner feels valued and included.

4.3.2 Theme 2: *Few sporting opportunities for learners with physical disabilities*

Two participants in the interview expressed that few sporting opportunities for LWPD is a school related factor that hinders the implementation of IE of LWPD in this school. Few sporting opportunities refer to a limited number of extracurricular activities for learners within a school setting. In this school, LWPD have limited sporting opportunities available to them, which limits access to some activities that they would like to participate in, leading to inequalities in sporting opportunities. A participant reported that LWPD do not have their own sports that are suitable for them, while the other participant highlighted the lack of inclusion in sports for LWPD. Participant 3 reported that: "*These learners don't have their own sporting activities that carter for them and that are suitable for them.*" While participant 4 pointed that:

> "The *school have all their programmes which are focused on the able-bodied when they talk of athletics, it's athletics for the able-bodied, soccer is for the able-bodied even in the physical education there are no accommodation of the disabled learner*."

The data collected through interviews indicate that few sporting opportunities for LWPD is a factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. This factor points out to inequality, as able-bodied learners have a variety of sporting activities that they can choose from, whereases LWPD have limited options. This inequality undermines the goals of IE. Addressing this issue is crucial to creating a truly inclusive school environment

4.3.3 Theme 3: *Lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities*

Another significant theme that appeared from the interviews is lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities. Lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities can be defined as a situation where able-bodied learners have insufficient knowledge and understanding about the nature of physical disabilities. This lack of knowledge can lead to able-bodied learners being misinformed about LWPD which can have negative consequences such as fear and exclusion. Four participants (1,2,3 and 6) in the interview disclosed that able-bodied learners lack awareness of physical disabilities in this school. These participants revealed that able-bodied learners are not informed about LWPD which often results in emotional turmoil. According to these four participants, this lack of awareness leads to reactions of fear, crying, shock and state of being terrified upon the arrival of LWPD in their class. The participants reported that:

> "*Able-bodied learners are not informed about learners with physical disabilities. They seem to have a negative attitude to them. When learners first see the physically disabled, they get scared and sometimes scream because they have never seen a person like that*." (Participant 1).

> "*The first time the learner with a physical disability entered my class, it was like a shock to all these able-bodied children. They were like shocked because I think it was their first time to see someone who is disabled coming to learn with us*." (Participant 2).

> "*When a disabled boy with blades joined us, other children screamed, they cried, and they went home and told their parents that they no longer want to go to this school because there's somebody who is a freak. This is because they didn't have exposure of such people*." (Participant 3).

> "*The learners are also a problem. The first time a boy with physical disability came to the school, this other girl broke down and cried… Other learners are also like this when different types of learners with physical disabilities come. When a new learner with physical disability comes, kids go home crying and telling their parents that there is an such and such learners in our school*." (Participant 6).

From the data collected, it is apparent that lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities contributes as a factor that hinders the implementation of IE for

LWPD in this mainstream school. When able-bodied learners are not educated about disabilities, their reactions can be unsettling for LWPD, leading to feelings of rejection, embarrassment, and isolation. This reaction also reinforces negative stereotypes and stigma, making it more difficult for LWPD to feel comfortable and valued within the school setting. Thus, addressing this factor is crucial to promote IE for these learners.

4.3.4 Theme 4: *Discrimination of learners with physical disabilities*

The findings from the data collected through interviews indicated that discrimination serves as a school related factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD. Zayed (2023) defines discrimination as the "unfair treatment of various groups of people based on their race, age, sex, or handicap" (p.1). In other words, it is treating people unfairly because of their physical appearances. Discrimination of LWPD refers to the unfair treatment of these learners due to their natural attributes, rather than their abilities. Participants in the interview indicated that LWPD in this school face discrimination because these participants observed that able-bodied learners do not want to include LWPD in their group for group work activities, sit next to them or even play with them. Participant 1 reported that: "*They are sidelined in certain things. Uhh certain things like when able-bodied have to form groups, they do not accept learners with physical disabilities in their group. It is like they face discrimination because they are physically disabled*." While another one echoed that: "*They did not want to even sit, walk or even to play with the disabled child*." (Participant 2).

From the above data collected through interviews, it is evident that discrimination hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. When discriminatory attitudes exist in a school, it creates an environment where these learners are marginalised, and their needs are overlooked. This not only affects their academic performance but also their overall well-being and sense of belonging within the school community. Addressing this factor is vital to create an environment where every learner is valued, fulfilling the aim of IE.

4.3.5 Theme 5: *Bullying of learners with physical disabilities*

A participant in the interview identified bullying as a school related factor that hinders the implementation of IE of LWPD in this school. According to Smith (2013), bullying is "aggressive behaviour which intentionally hurts or harms another person; together with repetition-it happens more than once and power imbalance such that it is difficult for the victim to defend him-or herself" (p.81). Bullying intentionally aims to cause harm to the victim. It takes place in various forms such as physical bullying, emotional bullying, cyberbullying and

so forth (Smith, 2013). Bullying of LWPD is the targeted intimidation, mistreatment of LWPD due to their physical impairment. One participant stated that LWPD in this school are subjected to emotional bullying by able-bodied learners through means of mocking, undermining and belittling these learners. The participant (4) stated that: "*Generally, the other learners who are able-bodied and because these are children, they tend to mock, they tend to undermine, they tend to belittle and that gives the disabled learners a lot of discomfort*." Participant 4 further stated that:

> "*Sometimes the learners will say, hey, you have kicked my bag with your blades and that embarrasses them as well because the classroom is not specious enough for them. The school itself sometimes it also gives discomfort on the learner because they are not accommodative of them."*

The above interview responses indicate that bullying acts as a school factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. Bullying creates a hostile school environment that is contrary with the principles of inclusion. The psychological and emotional toll of bullying can lead to disengagement from school, reduced academic performance and can have long-term negative outcomes for LWPD.

4.3.6 Theme 6: *Isolation of learners with physical disabilities*

From the data collected, isolation of LWPD serves as a school related factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this mainstream school. Isolation of LWPD refers to the social exclusion of these learners, leading to feelings such as loneliness and unwantedness. Participant 4 reported on the isolation of LWPD as they are sometimes ignored, left alone with no one befriending them during break time. The participant stated that: "*Sometimes they are ignored, they are left to eat on their own and no one wants to befriend them, which makes it difficult to really go along with the rest of the learners*." (Participant 4).

From the above data, it is evident that isolation of LWPD hinders the implementation IE in this school. Isolation undermines the principles of IE for LWPD. When these learners are isolated, either physically or socially, it limits their opportunities to participate fully in the educational experience. The sense of being excluded can have a great impact on their mental health, resulting to decreased motivation, engagement, and academic success. Addressing this issue is important to realise the full potential of IE for these learners.

4.4 Findings on policy related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

In the present study, policy related factors pertain to the legislative frameworks, guidelines, and resource allocations established by the government bodies or educational authorities that shape the implementation of IE for LWPD. These factors encompass laws, policies, and standards designed to support and regulate IE. These factors can either hinder or facilitate the inclusion of LWPD in mainstream classrooms. From the thematic analysis of the data collected through interviews, the following themes emerged as policy related factors: lack of knowledge on inclusive policies, incorrect knowledge of IE policies, lack of dissemination of IE policies, mixed up knowledge on IE policies among teachers and curriculum overload.

4.4.1 Theme 1: *Lack of knowledge on inclusive education policies*

The findings from the data collected through interviews indicated that most teachers lack knowledge of IE policies which hinders the effective implementation of IE in this school. Lack of knowledge on IE policies refers to the absence of information regarding IE polices. From the study findings, most participants had no idea of policies in IE and others were not exposed to them, thus lacking knowledge regarding IE policies.

For example, all participants agreed that they lacked knowledge of IE policies in this school. Participant 1 stated that: "*I have never heard of any inclusive education policies being explained, so I do not know any*." Participant 2 reported, "*I don't know any policies, so I can't explain anything about them*." Participant 3 noted, "*The problem is I am not aware of the policies.*" Participant 4 added, "*I have not been exposed to any inclusive education policies… I'm not familiar with any policie*s." Participant 5 confirmed this trend, stating, "*I do not know any inclusive education policies.*" Participant 6 echoed this sentiment reporting that, "*I do not know any inclusive education policies*."

From the above findings, it is evident that teachers lack knowledge on IE policies. This factor may impede on the effective implementation of IE for LWPD as teachers who are not informed about IE policies are less likely to apply them in their classrooms leading to the exclusion and marginalisation of these learners. Addressing this knowledge deficit is crucial for increasing IE implementation and ensuring that LWPD have equitable educational opportunities.

4.4.2 Theme 2: *Incorrect knowledge on inclusive education policies*

From the interview findings, incorrect knowledge of IE policies emerged as a theme. Incorrect knowledge is information that is factually false or inaccurate. One participant presented incorrect knowledge on IE policies by highlighting that LWD are not permitted to attend a mainstream school. This information is incorrect as EWP6 of 2001 states that learners with mild disabilities such as physical disabilities are supposed to be educated in mainstream schools. The participant reported that:

> "*When the school started bringing these kids here, I was told that the policy says learners with disabilities must go to special schools and not this kind of school. I was told that they are not supposed to be here, but we are accepting them*." (Participant 6).

From the above response, the participant has incorrect knowledge of IE policies which can hinder the successful implementation of IE for LWPD. No policy explicitly excludes LWPD from mainstream schools. Incorrect knowledge of IE policies can lead to exclusion for LWPD and negative attitudes as teachers are not aware of what the policy says about them. Thus, it is significant to address this factor for IE to be realised.

4.3.3 Theme 3: *Lack of dissemination of inclusive education policies*

The results from the interviews identified lack of dissemination of IE policies as a policy related factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD. Lack of dissemination of IE policies refers to the inadequacy or failure in distributing and sharing IE policies. Numerous participants in the interview expressed that they are not exposed to IE policies because the school has not distributed these policies to them. Participant 1 stated that: "*Here at school, I have not been uhh exposed to any inclusive education policies at all*." Participant 2 mentioned that: "*Here at school they never mention any policies but only that we want to integrate the able-bodied and the physical challenged so that they learn together*." Participant 3 echoed this sentiment, stating that: "*The school has never mentioned any inclusive education policies*." In the same vein participant 4 added that "*The school does not have workshops and school developmental training, nothing to tell us about the policies*." Likewise, participant 5 reported that: "*Here at school, they do not expose you or give you inclusive education policies*."

From the above findings, it is evident that there is a lack of dissemination of IE policies to teachers in this school. The failure to disseminate IE policies hinders the implementation of IE for all learners. When teachers are not informed, they cannot effectively support LWPD as they are ill equipped. This affects the overall learning environment, leading to the marginalisation

of these learners. Addressing this factor is important in creating an inclusive learning environment which is supportive to LWPD.

4.4.4 Theme 4: *Mixed up knowledge on inclusive education policies among teachers*

Mixed up knowledge on IE policy emerged as a theme from the data collected through interviews. Mixed up knowledge on IE policies refers to misinterpreted knowledge of IE policies which can lead to misunderstanding a policy. One participant seems to have misinterpreted an IE policy as they provided incorrect information regarding IE policy. The participants stated that: "*The policy that I can think of is about the government grants and it is connected to some of the points that I have mentioned. The government grants is too little for the school to cater for disabled people*." (Participant 3).

From the above findings, it is evident that mixed up knowledge on IE polices may hinder the successful implementation of IE. When teachers have mixed up knowledge on IE policies, they might interpret them incorrectly leading to more inequalities within the system. It also weakens their ability to advocate for change as they cannot point out which policy addresses which aspects. While the participant acknowledge that the available funding is insufficient to fully support the needs of LWPD, they have not referenced the policy. The participant seems to be confusing government grants with IE policies. EWP6 outlines a funding strategy, however, it is different from government grants.

4.4.5 Theme 5: *Curriculum overload*

The results from the interviews also identified curriculum overload as a policy related factor that hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. Curriculum overload is when there is too much content for teachers to cover in a short period of time. A participant reported that they do not have time to educate themselves about IE policies due to the demands of preparing for the next lesson. The participant stated that:

> "*I get so busy that reading other literature either than what I teach the kids is secondary because uh we need preparation of lessons and everything so that tomorrow we can teach. So, the time that we have is so limited that you might not be able to read for your own benefit for, your own information and so on.*" (Participant 3).

From the findings above, it is evident that curriculum overload hinders the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. When the curriculum is overloaded, teachers often focus on completing the curriculum on time rather than incorporating inclusive practices mentioned in

core IE policies in their lessons. IE policies mention that LWD must have individualised educational plans to enable their epistemological access. However, when the curriculum is overloaded, teachers may lack the time to create and implement individual personalised plans for LWPD, further marginalising and excluding these learners as their learning needs are not met. This can lead to policies being treated as secondary, rather than as vital to their teaching practice. Thus, it is important to address curriculum overload to ensure that IE policies are adopted and put into reality for the successful implementation of IE for LWPD.

4.5 Findings on strategies that could be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of inclusive education for learners with physical disabilities

In the present study, teachers played a significant role in providing insight into factors that hinder the implementation of IE for LWPD in this school. This section presents the findings on strategies recommended by teachers to address the factors impeding the execution of IE for LWPD. Teachers are the forefront of any educational practice. Their recommendations are crucial in creating inclusive and supportive environment for every learner. From the thematic analysis of the data collected through interviews, the following themes emerged: provision of physical resources, teacher training on IE, teacher's exposure to IE policies and educating able-bodied learners about disability to raise awareness.

4.5.1 Theme 1: *Provision of physical resources*

Provision of physical resources emerged as a significant strategy that can be adapted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD. Five participants highlighted the need for provision of physical resources to be accessible for LWPD. One participant stated that: "*We need provision of resources, resources are supposed to be provided, resources to establish the infrastructure needed for learners with physical disabilities.*" (Participant 3). While the other reported that: "*The school definitely need to be accommodative of disability in their classroom layout and buildings layout*." (Participant 4). Similarly, another participant highlighted that: "*We need proper infrastructure for learners with physical disabilities*." (Participant 6). Other participants shared the same sentiments, noting that:

> "*The school must provide necessary resources for these learners. If we saying we are accepting learners with wheelchairs or other physical disability in the school, let's have appropriate ramps and equip the bathrooms*." (Participant 1).
>
> "*The school must put more ramps and also on the sports they are supposed to put some activities suitable for these learners. The playgrounds must also carter for learners with*

physical disabilities, play time is important for all learners, not only for the able-bodied." (Participant 2).

From the responses above, it clear that provision of physical resources is recommended as an effective strategy that can be adapted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD. Providing appropriate physical resources is critical for creating an environment where LWPD can participate fully in the school environment. This recommendation by the participants is crucial because the success of IE relies on the full inclusion of all learners, in this case, LWPD.

4.5.2 Theme 2: *Teacher training on inclusive education*

From the interview findings, participants stated that teacher training on IE can be a strategy that can be adapted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD in their school. Three participants highlighted the significance of teacher training on IE. One participant stated that: "*Equipping teachers with knowledge and training is necessary to making the school environment good for these learners*." (Participant 1). While the other reported that: "*I think training the teachers will help in a big way in making inclusive education practical*." (Participant 4). In the same vein, another participant stated that:

> "*If we have training and probably continuous training or maybe workshops or some things like that, I think that would be a very good strategy and it will put educators on a good footing in as far as dealing with the disabled children, so we need that*." (Participant 3).

The findings above indicate that teacher training on IE is considered as an advantageous strategy that can be adopted to address the hinderances to the execution of IE for LWPD in this school. When teachers are not well equipped, IE is not realised. Providing training for teachers is fundamental for equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support and include LWPD. Thus, it is crucial that teachers are provided with the necessary training for the effective implementation of IE.

4.5.3 Theme 3: *Teacher's exposure to inclusive education policies*

From the data collected from the interview, teachers' exposure to IE policies emerged as a strategy that can be adapted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD. Four participants expressed their desires to be exposed to IE policies so that they can be able to carter for these learners. Participant 1 reported that: "*Information must be shared to teachers*

about inclusive education policies and how to help these learners." Participant 2 stated that: "*Teachers should be given these polices. Workshopping teachers about the policies of inclusive education is very important because we are an inclusive school with learners with physical disabilities*." Participant 4 highlighted that: "*We obviously need to know government policy which are related to disabled learners. Any information so that this will be readily available to teachers*." Participant 5 indorsed this sentiment, stating that: "*Give us the policy to read and how to teach them.*"

From the above interview findings, it is evident that exposing teachers to IE policies is recommended as an effective strategy to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD. When teachers are well-informed about these policies, they can efficiently apply inclusive practices, thereby fostering a supportive and accessible learning environment for all learners which is important for IE.

4.5.4 Theme 4: *Educating able-bodied learners about disability to raise awareness*

Educating able-bodied learners about disability awareness emerged as a strategy that can be adapted to address the hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD. Four participants commented on educating able-bodied learners about disability to raise awareness. Participant 1 stressed that: "*The school must educate other learners on accepting disability. The school must encourage other learners to treat disabled learners fairly.*" Participant 2 reported that "*Discussing how disabilities come to people and raising awareness*.". Participant 4 stated that: "*Able-bodied also need to have teaching on how to accommodate learners with physical disabilities*." Participant 6 shared the same sentiment, stating that "*I think we should educate more able-bodied children about people with physical disabilities*."

From the responses above, it is evident that educating able-bodied learners about disabilities to raise awareness is recommended as a vital strategy to address hinderances to the implementation of IE for LWPD. By raising awareness and understanding among all learners, the school can foster an environment where disability is celebrated and valued, promoting IE for LWPD.

4.6 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter presented the study's findings based on the data gathered, in accordance with the research questions. The findings highlighted key factors hindering the implementation of IE for LWPD, providing insights of the challenges faced. It also highlighted strategies that could

be adapted to address these factors. The next chapter presents a summary of findings, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations for future study. The aim of this study was to investigate the factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in a selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo province. This study gathered data through individual semi-structured interviews with teachers, allowing them to share their personal experiences and perspectives on the issues under investigation.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Teachers personal related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

The study explored teachers' personal related factors that hinder the execution of IE of LWPD. The study findings indicated that teacher personal related factors that hinder IE include teachers lack of training on IE, in which they could not accommodate learners in their lessons effectively. The study findings also highlighted that teachers lack knowledge on how to handle LWPD both academically and emotionally. Findings further indicated that teachers have low self-efficacy, with teachers expressing low confidence in their ability to successfully teach LWPD. The last finding indicated that some teachers have lack of exposure in teaching LWPD, which makes them less experienced in handling LWPD.

5.2.2 School related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

This study identified numerous school related factors that hinder the execution of IE for LWPD. The study findings indicated that there is inadequate infrastructure which included lack of accessible ramps, inaccessible toilets, small classrooms space and lack of inclusive playgrounds. The study findings also reported that there were few sporting opportunities for LWPD, lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities, discrimination of LWPD, bullying of LWPD and isolation of LWPD. Moreover, the findings

highlighted the crucial role that the school plays in either promoting or hindering IE for LWPD. The findings suggest that granting LWPD formal access to mainstream schools does not automatically ensure true inclusion within the school environment. Thus, it is evident that for genuine inclusion to occur, various structural, cultural, and resource-related barriers must be addressed to create an environment where all learners can thrive equally.

5.2.3 Policy related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

The study findings indicated various policy related factors that hinder the execution of IE of LWPD. The study findings indicated that there is lack of knowledge on IE policies, which is an indication that most teachers have no knowledge of IE policies which can affect their ability to create an inclusive learning environment. The findings revealed that there is incorrect knowledge on IE policies which meant that although some teachers were aware of IE policies, they had incorrect knowledge about the contents of the policy. The study findings reported a lack of dissemination of IE policies, an indication that teachers were not being exposed or given policy documents to enhance their knowledge on IE, leaving them in the dark regarding issues of IE. The findings also reported mixed up knowledge on IE policies among teachers, an indication that teachers who know something about policies tend to mix up the contents of various policy documents. The last finding indicated that there was curriculum overload, an indication that teachers were too busy rushing to complete the curriculum, with little time to research on IE policies which can enhance their understanding of IE and its policies better.

5.2.4 Strategies that could be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of inclusive education for LWPD

The findings of the study revealed that the strategies that could be adopted to address hinderances to implementation of IE include provision of physical resources which was suggested by teachers as an effective strategy for creating an inclusive school environment. These resources would enable LWPD to participate in school activities and move freely within the school environment. The findings indicated that teacher training on IE was suggested, with teachers recognising that for them to teach inclusively, they must be provided with the necessary training, knowledge and skills to ensure that every learner benefits from their lessons. The study findings reported that teachers' exposure to IE policies, emerged as a strategy that can assist teachers to know IE policies which can promote the effective implementation of IE as teachers are aware of what the policy entails. The study findings also reported that educating

able-bodied learners about disabilities to raise awareness is a crucial strategy to counter the bullying and discrimination that LWPD experience in this school.

5.3 Discussion of findings

The study aimed to investigate the factors that hinder the implementation of IE of LWPD in a selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo. These factors are categorised into three main groups: (1) teachers personal-related factors, (2) school-related factors, and (3) policy-related factors, each of which encompass various themes. The study also explored strategies to address these factors, which also forms part of the research questions. In this section, the findings are discussed in relation to these categories and themes, including how these factors can be addressed.

5.3.1 Teachers personal related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

The study explored teachers' personal related factors that hinder the execution of IE of LWPD. Based on the study findings, teacher personal related factors included lack of training on IE, teachers lack of knowledge, teachers' low self-efficacy, and teachers lack of exposure in teaching LWPD. The study findings indicated that there was lack of teacher training on IE. This finding aligns with existing research by Alves et al. (2018); Adewumi and Mosito (2019); Makonganyo (2020); Makuya (2021) and Yeboah et al. (2023) which all reported lack of training as a barrier to successful execution of IE. When teachers lack training on IE, LWPD are more prone to be excluded and marginalised from lessons as teachers do not possess the necessary training on how to successfully include them in their lessons for epistemological access. This finding also agrees with the Ecological Systems Theory, particularly the microsystem as teachers are primary agents who influence the learning environment and learner outcomes. When they are not adequately trained, the learning outcomes of LWPD are negatively impacted. Without training, teachers cannot acquire knowledge and skills on how to teach inclusively, therefore lack of training on IE leads to lack of knowledge and skills on how to implement IE. The study's findings revealed that some teachers lack knowledge of handling LWPD, as they do not have the necessary knowledge to handle these learners academically and to relate to them. This finding agrees with research by Mosia and Katelo (2024) which highlighted that 66% of teachers in the research believe that do not have the necessary knowledge to implement IE.

Moreover, the study findings also indicated that some teachers had low self-efficacy. The low self-efficacy demonstrated by the participants reveals a lack of confidence in their ability to successfully support and include LWPD in their lessons. It can be noted that the factor contributing to teacher low self-efficacy is lack of knowledge on how to handle, teach and treat these learners in an inclusive way which ensures that they receive the support, and the independence needed to thrive alongside their peers. Lack of knowledge regarding teaching LWPD may lead to feelings of sympathy and overprotectiveness that teachers expressed. When teachers lack confidence in their ability to provide the appropriate support, they may adopt protective approach that restricts opportunities and sets low expectations towards these learners, limiting their opportunity to grow. This finding agrees with that of Tseeke's (2021) and Yeboah et al.'s (2023) studies, which reported that teacher low self-efficacy acts a barrier to the implementation of IE. This finding also agrees with Ecological Systems Theory framework, particularly the microsystem and mesosystem. In the microsystem, their confidence is affected by direct interactions with learners and classroom challenges. In the mesosystem, inadequate support from schools and ITE programmes further impacts their ability to implement IE effectively. When teachers do not have the necessary training, knowledge and skills they were supposed to acquire in various environments systems, they do not feel confident to implement IE.

Additionally, the study findings also indicated that lack of exposure in teaching LWPD serves as a teacher personal related factor that hinder the execution of IE. The finding showed that without practical teaching experiences involving LWPD during ITE programmes, teachers feel unprepared and less confident in their ability to support these learners effectively, as they are not adequately exposed or trained to meet their specific needs. These findings agree with Kasikako's (2021) study which highlighted that ITE programmes focus more on theoretical components rather than practical components necessary for teaching in inclusive settings. These findings also support Engelbrecht et al.'s (2015) study which argues for the reconceptualisation of ITE programmes to expose pre-service teachers in general education with the necessary training and knowledge to teach LWD. Similarly, the findings agree with Banks et al.'s (2022) study which reported that teachers' negative attitudes towards IE led to instances where caregivers were discouraged by teachers from enrolling their children with disabilities in mainstream schools, because the teachers feel ill equipped to teach them. Moreover, the findings agree with Panda et al.'s (2023) study which argued that lack of training in mainstream schools leads to both formal and epistemological exclusion of LWD from IE.

The implication of this finding is that the DoE should prioritise training teachers on inclusive practices as the findings indicated that teacher personal related factors stemmed from lack of training on IE. Without training, teachers lack knowledge which contributes to low self-efficacy as they do not view themselves as capable to deal with LWPD. Therefore, Higher Education Institution should also offer ITE programmes that equips pre-service teachers with the necessary practical training and knowledge on teaching learners with diverse needs.

5.3.2 School related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

The study also explored school related factors hindering the execution of IE of LWPD. Based on the study findings, inadequate infrastructure, few sporting opportunities for LWPD, lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities, discrimination of LWPD, bullying of LWPD and isolation of LWPD were found as school factors that impede the execution of IE of LWPD.

The study finding indicated that inadequate infrastructure significantly contributes to school-related factors, as all participants unanimously agreed. This finding agrees with Mokgwathi et al.'s (2023) study, which highlighted that South African schools are faced with issues of inadequate infrastructure. This finding also agrees with Mpu and Adu's (2021) study that reported that poor physical infrastructure hinders the implementation of IE in schools. However, this finding contradicts with Sekhwela's (2022) study which indicated that the school in this study had appropriate infrastructure and resources to accommodate LWPD. This discrepancy could be an indication that the adequacy of school infrastructure depends on the specific context being studied. This finding agrees with the Social Model of Disability framework assertation that the way society is organised excludes and disadvantages individuals with impairments (Oliver & Barnes, 2010). In the educational context, school resources and buildings disadvantage LWPD as they are not built to accommodate them. The study findings also reported few sporting opportunities for LWPD as the school does not have sports that carter for LWPD. IE aims to include learners with diverse needs in every aspect of school function, not just academics. Few sporting opportunities denies learners the chance to develop social skills and build relationships with their peers, which is part of social exclusion which defeats the purpose of IE as it aims to eliminate all aspects of exclusion.

The study findings revealed that lack of awareness among able-bodied learners regarding physical disabilities contributes as a school factor that hinders the implementation of LWPD.

This finding agrees with Sekhwela's (2022) study that reported that able-bodied learners lack awareness of learners with mobility impairment. Able-bodied learners in this study displayed various negatives emotions such as negative attitude, crying and feeling scared when they saw these learners, and this can be due to the lack of awareness about disabilities. This leads to situations where LWPD feel rejected and most likely embarrassed. This makes life for these learners uncomfortable as they may feel unwanted, impacting their sense of belonging within the school and might cause low self-esteem issues (Sekhwela, 2022; Sinthumule, 2024). This finding aligns with the Social Model of Disability as it frames disability as a societal failure to promote understanding and inclusion, perpetuating attitudinal barriers. This finding also aligns agrees with the Ecological Systems Theory as it can examine how interactions between microsystems (family) and mesosystems (community) may influence this lack of awareness.

The study findings also reported discrimination of LWPD. This finding agrees with Banks et al.'s (2022) and Sekhwela's (2022) studies, which highlighted the discrimination that LWD are subjected to in mainstream schools. It can be argued that due to lack of awareness, able-bodied learners discriminated against LWPD by refusing them in their groups, not wanting to sit or play with them and overall, just sideling them due to their disability. Although this discrimination can be attributed to lack of awareness, it ultimately affects their emotional and social development, it also limits their opportunities for collaboration and learning within a classroom environment, which is a crucial step in learning (Sekhwela, 2022). This finding aligns with the Social Model of Disability since it critiques discriminatory attitudes as a societal construct that disables individuals with disabilities. This finding also agrees with the Ecological Systems Theory as discrimination can be influenced by macrosystems factors such as cultural norms and societal values which manifests in the microsystem such as school environment and peer interaction.

Bullying of LWPD emerged as theme in this study's findings, reflecting similar findings by Ntseibo (2021); Banks et al. (2022) and Aljabri et al. (2023) studies which noted that LWD are frequently subjected to bullying. Bullying takes forms in various ways, but the type of bullying LWPD faced in this school can be categorised as verbal and emotional bullying as these learners were mocked, undermined and belittled by their able-bodied peers. Such bullying damages these learners' self-esteem and creates a hostile school environment that impedes their sense of belonging. The psychological impact of ongoing bullying not only affects their social and emotional well-being but can also hinder their academic progress (Aljabri et al., 2023). This finding aligns with the Social Model of Disability as bullying reflects negative societal

attitudes and the failure to create a supportive, inclusive school culture, which the Social Model seeks to challenge. This finding also aligns with the Ecological Systems Theory that can explain bullying as a product of interactions across systems. While LWPD are primarily bullied within the school environment (microsystem), this behaviour can be influenced by factors in the exosystem, such as inadequate anti-bullying policies, and the macrosystem, including societal attitudes toward disabilities. Isolation of LWPD also contributed, as a school factor that hinders the execution of IE for LWPD. School is supposed to be a place where learners develop both socially and academically, however when LWPD are isolated, it affects their sense of belonging and emotional development as discussed previously. Social exclusion undermines the goals of IE, as IE aims to include all learners both at an academic level and social level.

The implication of these findings is that the school governing body (SGB) should prioritise improving the school infrastructure to make it accessible to LWPD. Additionally, the school should establish collaborative networks in which the principal works together with parents and the community to educate their learners about disabilities to promote awareness about LWPD as it can address the social exclusion faced by LWPD in this school.

5.3.3 Policy related factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities

The study also examined policy related factors hindering the execution of IE of LWPD. The study findings reported that there was lack of knowledge on IE policies, incorrect knowledge on IE policies, lack of dissemination of IE policies to teachers, mixed up knowledge on IE policies among teachers and curriculum overload.

Surprisingly, all teachers lacked knowledge on IE policies. This finding is consistent with Attwood et al.'s (2019); Ireri et al.'s (2020) and Govender's (2023) studies which illustrate that teachers lack knowledge on IE policies. When teachers do not know IE polices, their ability to support LWPD is severely impacted as they are not aware of how to support them. This finding aligns with the Ecological Systems Theory particularly within the microsystem and exosystem. In the microsystem, teachers lack of knowledge of IE policies directly impact their ability to create inclusive learning environments. At the exosystem level, lack of professional development training contributes to this knowledge gap. This shows that interactions within different systems influence each other, affecting teachers' ability to implement IE.

The findings of the study also indicated incorrect knowledge of IE policies as a participant reported that the policy stipulates that LWD must attend special schools, which is inaccurate.

The EWP6 actually allocates learners to schools based on the level of support they require. Learners with low support needs such as those with physical disabilities can be accommodated in mainstream schools. This finding agrees with Donahue and Bornman (2014) study which reported that incorrect knowledge can be due to the policy ambiguity regarding IE policies which leads to confusion about the proper placement and support of LWD.

Surprisingly, the study findings also indicated that lack of dissemination of IE policies to teachers was reported as a policy factor that hinders IE. This finding is consistent with Bipath et al.'s (2021) and Govender's (2023) findings which all indicated that schools have not received copies of the main IE policies. This not only results in the gap between policy intentions and practical reality, but it also results in exclusionary practices as teachers might not be aware of inclusive teaching strategies that can be utilised to maximise epistemological access for all learners. If the government wants to promote IE, they should disseminate policy documents to schools. This finding aligns with the Ecological Systems Theory, in that poor communication from national or DBST which is situated within the exosystem hinders schools from implementing policies effectively as they do not have IE policy documents. This reflects how decisions made at national, or district level indirectly affects schools, particularly teachers. This also displays how different systems affect each other.

The study findings also reported that there was mixed up knowledge on IE policies among teachers. Although EWP6 outlines funding strategy, this is distinct from government grants. This finding also agrees with Donahue and Bornman (2014) study that policy ambiguity leads to the unsuccessful implementation of IE as it leads to confusion. Additionally, curriculum overload the study findings reported curriculum overload. This leads to teachers focusing on completing the curriculum rather than inclusive practices as they are not consulting IE policies. The implication of this finding is that any ITE programmes should educate teachers about IE policies. The DoE should disseminate copies of IE policies to all schools so that teachers can have access to them.

5.3.4 Strategies that could be adopted to address the hinderances to the implementation of inclusive education for learners with physical disabilities

The study also examined strategies that could be adopted to address the hinderances to the execution of IE for LWPD. Based on the study's findings, teachers identified various strategies that can be implemented to address the above-mentioned factors that hinder the execution of IE. These strategies are categorised into four themes: provision of physical resources, teacher

training on IE, teachers' exposure to IE policies and educating able-bodied learners about disability to raise awareness.

Unsurprisingly, the provision of physical resources emerged as a strategy. This finding agrees with Okendo's (2018); Ntseibo's (2021) and Mokgwathi et al.'s (2024) research, which indicates that schools must be provided with the necessary resources and infrastructure to accommodate LWD. Similarly, the findings agree with Sekhwela's (2022) study which reiterates that physical adequate infrastructure is important when including LWD in mainstream schools. This is crucial as it promotes a sense of belonging in the school and it makes their lives easier as they can move around freely. Expectedly, training on IE emerged as a strategy that can address lack of teacher training. This finding agrees with Adewumi and Mosito's (2019); Makonyango's (2020); Makuya's (2021) and Sinthumule's (2024) studies, which all concur with and emphasise the significance of teacher training in IE. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in promoting IE as they are the ones who have direct interactions with all learners, thus equipping them with the necessary training is important if we want IE to be realised.

The study also reported that another prevalent strategy is teachers' exposure to IE policies. This finding agrees with Bipath et al.'s (2021) study, that indicated that teachers must be given copies of IE policies. Teachers indicated that they need to be exposed to IE policies and these policies should offer valuable insights on how to teach LWPD. Exposure to these policies is a great strategy as it can lead to teachers creating an inclusive learning environment as they are exposed the principles of IE and practices. Unsurprisingly, educating able-bodied learners about disability to raise awareness also emerged as a strategy. This finding agrees with Sekhwela's (2022) and Sinthumule's (2024) studies, which states that to eliminate discrimination, the DBST, schools, parents and communities should have disability awareness programmes to educate people about disabilities. Educating learners can help reduce or eliminate social exclusion, discrimination, and bullying of LWPD as their peers are aware that disability is part of difference, and it does not make those who are disabled less human.

The implication of this finding is that the SGB should provide the necessary resources and infrastructure for LWPD. In addition, teachers should be equipped with training to handle LWPD properly and disability awareness should be promoted by the school and parents.

5.4 Recommendations for practice

From the study findings and conclusions, this section presents recommendations to address the factors that hinder the implementation of IE for LWPD for this school. The following recommendations for practice can be utilised:

- The DoE should provide in-service training for teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to support and include LWPD in their lessons. This is because most of the teacher related factors identified in the study stemmed from lack of training on IE. Without adequate teacher training on IE, teachers lack knowledge which contributes to teacher low-self efficacy as indicated in the discussion section. By addressing this gap, teachers can feel empowered to use inclusive strategies to create accessible and meaningful learning environments that benefit all learners, thereby supporting the successful execution of IE.
- The DoE should actively disseminate copies of IE policies to schools to ensure that teachers know these policies, as the study findings indicated all teachers lack knowledge on IE policies. This can equip teachers with the knowledge of relevant policies and practical skills needed to implement inclusive practices effectively. Additionally, in-service training should also ensure that teachers have epistemological accesses to these policies.
- The study recommends that Higher Education Institutions that offers ITE programmes should increase opportunities for novices' teachers to gain exposure in teaching LWD. Based on the study's findings, exposure to teaching LWD is essential, as it equips notice teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to support all learners effectively. This exposure can be facilitated through practical placements in mainstream and full-service schools, which are becoming increasingly common in South Africa. Such exposure can better prepare novice teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners and build their confidence in creating inclusive learning environments. Therefore, ITE programmes must ensure that future teachers have adequate exposure to these teaching contexts.
- The study recommends that the SBG should prioritise improving and building infrastructure that is accessible for LWPD, as study findings indicate that the school has inadequate infrastructure. This includes ensuring that facilities such as ramps, restrooms, classrooms, and playgrounds are available and adequately designed to fully accommodate LWPD. By doing so, LWPD can develop a sense of belonging within the

school, as it accommodates their needs and allows them to participate fully in all aspects of school life, eliminating any sort of exclusion and marginalisation.

- The SGB should implement awareness programmes aimed at educating learners about disabilities starting as early as grade 1. The SGB can also have disability awareness days and events to educate learners about disabilities. Evidence from this study suggests that social exclusion, bullying, and discrimination often stem from a lack of awareness about LWPD. Therefore, raising awareness about these issues can help eliminate various forms of social exclusion against LWPD.
- The study recommends that parents should educate their able-bodied children about disabilities to promote understanding and acceptance from a young age. This can be achieved by discussing disability-related topics at home, encouraging empathy, and exposing children to diverse disabilities. Instead of feeling shocked when encountering LWPD, able-bodied learners can learn to view these differences as a normal part of life. This shift in perspective can help LWPD feel more comfortable and accepted in their environment. By raising children in an environment that fosters awareness and acceptance, parents can help their children develop respectful attitudes towards their peers with disabilities, thereby contributing to a more inclusive school environment and society.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The study had the following limitations:

- This study was conducted in a single mainstream school within the Vhembe district, which limits the extent to which findings can be generalised to other schools in Limpopo province. These results may not be applicable to other schools, district or province as transferability is compromised. However, the study objectives were achieved within the context of the selected school because data saturation was realised from the data collected from teachers.
- The interpretation of data in qualitative research can be influenced by the researcher's own perspectives. However, it was mitigated by continuously reflecting on own biases, assumptions, and how they can have an influence on the research process.

5.6 Suggestions for future research

Based on the study findings, conclusion and recommendations, the following areas are suggested for further research

- Learners with physical disabilities perspective on the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools.
- A comparative study across different schools in the Vhembe District on the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education for learners with physical disabilities.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Interview Questions:

1. Which personal related factors hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in your school?
    - As an individual, how does your attitude hinder you from implementing inclusive education for learners with physical disabilities? Please, explain more about this?
    - Do you see yourself not capable of handling learners with physical disabilities in certain aspects? Please, explain more about this?
2. Which school related factors hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in your school?
    - Can you provide specific examples and tell me more about this?
    - What other school factors hinders implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities?
3. What policy related factors hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in your school?
    - From your knowledge of policies on inclusive education, what aspects hinder the implementation of inclusive education? Please, explain more about this?
4. What strategies do you think should be adopted to address the hindrances to the implementation of inclusive education for learners with physical disabilities in your school?

APPENDIX II: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET-TEACHERS INTERVIEW



Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Information letter regarding participation in a research study

My name is Nakisani Murembiwa, and I am a registered Masters student in the school of education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am conducting research titled an investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo. I am under the supervision of Dr Peter Aloka. The research will entail me collecting data from 6 teachers. I would like to invite you to take part in an individual interview. The interview will take around 45 minutes to 1 hour. With your permission, I would like to record the interview using an audio recording device.

There will be no costs to you if you participate in this study. Furthermore, no teacher will receive any benefits from participation and there are no disadvantages or penalties of any kind should you choose not to participate or withdraw from this study. The interview entails questions about which teacher personal related factors, school related factors and policy related factors hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in your school. The response is based on your own experience which is subjective. The interview will be semi-structured, with a lot of probing or follow-up questions. Please note that you may withdraw at any time or not answer any questions if you do not wish to. The interviews will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for any names or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. All the interviews will be held in a selected classroom or in an office away from public audible range, your response will not be shared with anyone outside of the interview room and the interview will be conducted in English to assist with the data collection process. A pseudonym (false name) or codes will be used when discussing each teacher's participation in the final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point during this process, I will stop the interview, and we can resume another time.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. This study will be written as a research report. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). The data collected from this study will be stored in a password protected files in a password protected personal computer. The data will be kept for 5 years after which it will be destroyed. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Nakisani Murembiwa
2281453@students.wits.ac.za
0747865359

Supervisor: Dr Peter Aloka
peter.aloka@wits.ac.za
011 717 3098

APPENDIX III: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER'S INTERVIEWS

An investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo.

(Please circle the relevant options below).

Permission to be interviewed

I agree that I may be interviewed	YES/NO
I agree that I may be audiotaped during the interview	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO
I know that I can withdraw from the interview at any time	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe, and my name and the name of the school will not be revealed. YES/NO
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time. YES/NO
- I can withdrawal from the study without any penalties or negative consequences. YES/NO
- I can ask not to be audiotaped. YES/NO
- The data collected from this study will be stored in password protected files in a password protected personal computer. YES/NO
- The data will be kept for 5 years after which it will be destroyed. YES/NO
- I agree that the researcher may use my direct quotes that are anonymized in the research report/publication. YES/NO

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact me, Nakisani Murembiwa, email: nakiimurembiwa@gmail.com

…… (Signature)
…… (Date)

…… (Signature)
Nakisani Murembiwa (Name of person seeking consent)
…… (Date)

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

Dr VERON AKINYI OGADA (PhD Linguistics, KIU)
Tel. +254-057-2501812
Email: veragada@gmail.com

16th December 2024

To Nakisani Murembiwa

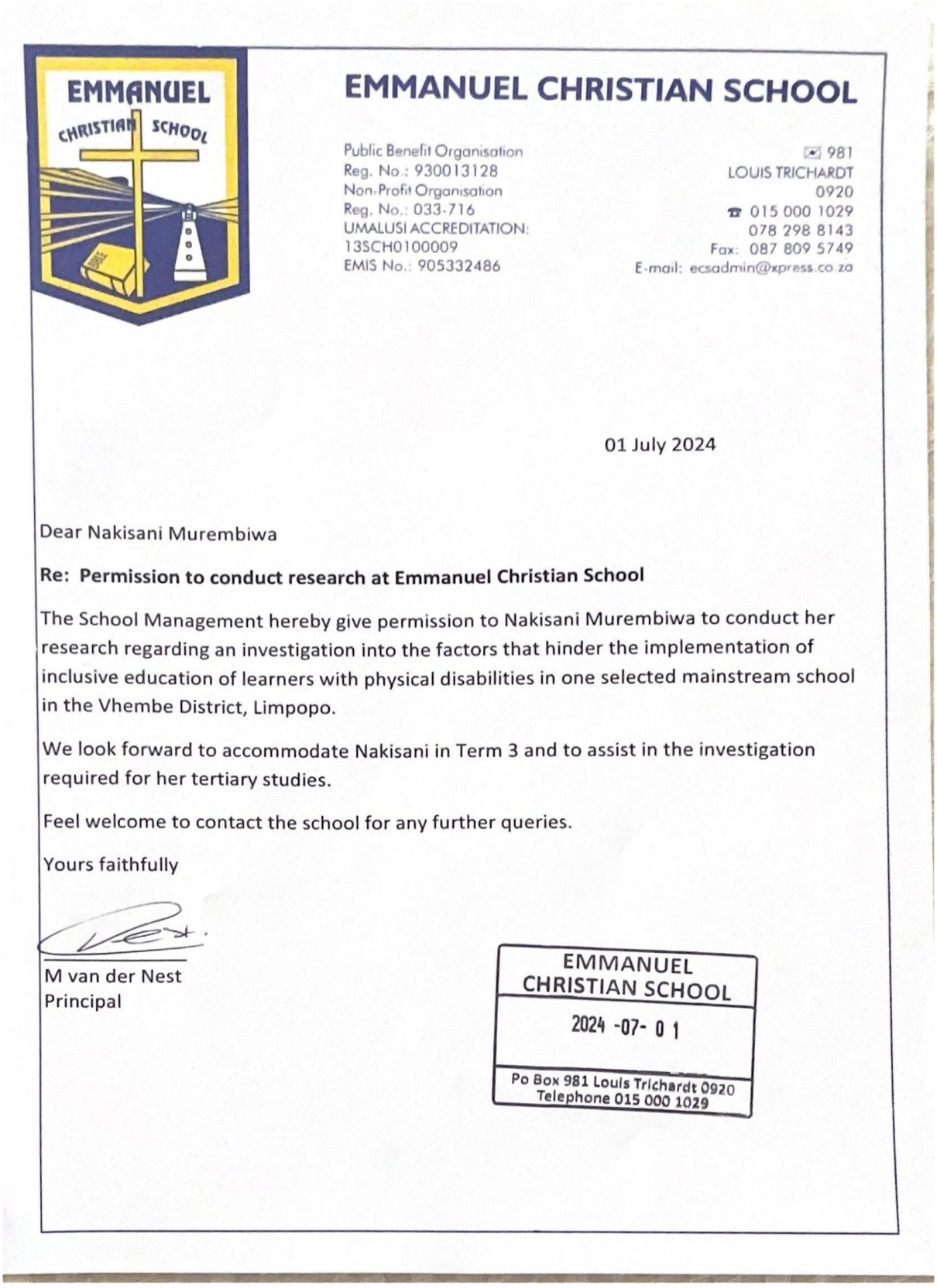
Dear Madam,
REF: CERTIFICATE OF EDITING
This document certifies that the master's Research report titled "*An investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected private mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo*" was proofread and edited by Dr Veron Akinyi Ogada. The editor endeavored to ensure that the authors' intended meaning was not altered during the review. All amendments were tracked with the Microsoft Word 'Track Changes' feature. Therefore, the author has the option to reject or accept each change individually.

Thank you



Dr VERON AKINYI OGADA (PhD Linguistics, KIU)

APPENDIX IV: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE SCHOOL



EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Public Benefit Organisation
Reg. No.: 930013128
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Reg. No.: 033-716
UMALUSI ACCREDITATION:
13SCH0100009
EMIS No.: 905332486

981
LOUIS TRICHARDT
0920
☎ 015 000 1029
078 298 8143
Fax: 087 809 5749
E-mail: ecsadmin@xpress.co.za

01 July 2024

Dear Nakisani Murembiwa

Re: Permission to conduct research at Emmanuel Christian School

The School Management hereby give permission to Nakisani Murembiwa to conduct her research regarding an investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected mainstream school in the Vhembe District, Limpopo.

We look forward to accommodate Nakisani in Term 3 and to assist in the investigation required for her tertiary studies.

Feel welcome to contact the school for any further queries.

Yours faithfully

M van der Nest
Principal

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
2024 -07- 01
Po Box 981 Louis Trichardt 0920
Telephone 015 000 1029

APPENDIX V: ETHICS TRAINING CERTIFICATE



Certificate

June 19, 2024

This is to certify that Ms. Nakisani Murembiwa has successfully completed the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Online Training Module for the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Macquarie University

APPENDIX VI: CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | WSoE Wits School of Education

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2024ECE047M**

PROJECT TITLE

An investigation into the factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education of learners with physical disabilities in one selected mainstream school in Vhembe district, Limpopo.

INVESTIGATOR	Nakisani Murembiwa.
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	Wits School of Education.
DATE CONSIDERED	25 July 2024.
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally.
RISK LEVEL	No Risk.
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the Research Report.
ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE	25 July 2024.
CHAIRPERSON	Dr. Lawan Abdulhamid

cc: Dr. Peter Aloka.

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

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

Signature **Date** 21/ 08 /2024

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