

**Investigating the Experiences of Grade 10-12 Deaf learners in Mainstream
Secondary Schools in Namibia**



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DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the study **Investigating the Experiences of Grade 10-12 Deaf learners in Mainstream Secondary Schools in Namibia** presented in this thesis is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. This work has not been submitted in any other previous requirements for a degree. This thesis acknowledges all sources of information, materials, and data.

I, thus, testify that this thesis does not, as to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyrights nor violate proprietary rights and that any ideas, technical, quotation or any other material from the work of other people included in my thesis, published or others are fully acknowledged per the standards preference.

Signature.  _____ L.P Nanyeni Date: 2025.02.12

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following individuals:

To my late parents, Thomas and Loide, who lacked formal education themselves, yet prioritised our schooling.

I also dedicate this to my late brother Johannes, whose unwavering belief in me and constant encouragement, inspired me to reach for more.

Finally, I dedicate this to the Namibian Deaf child, whose educational aspirations continue to be overlooked. May this study bring about the much-needed change that will positively impact your future.

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"When the time is right, I, the LORD, will make it happen." - Isaiah 60:22

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on investigating the experiences of Deaf learners in three mainstream secondary schools in Namibia. Three mainstream secondary schools formed the research sites for this study. The study investigated the experiences of Deaf learners, socially and academically, and the policy implications on the inclusive education policy implementation in Namibia. The study employed a qualitative research method to explore deeply the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools. This method also encourages discussion, as it allowed participants ample time and openness to express themselves. A structured interview guide with open-ended questions was used for data collection. Interviews were conducted in Namibian Sign Language and recorded into videotapes. Following this, I transcribed the verbatim interviews and analysed them, applying thematic analysis. The study reveals the inclusion of Deaf learners in the mainstream has negatively impacted their social and academic progress. Further, participants felt that mainstreaming them in schools for hearing learners has limited their participation as teachers relied on interpreters. The study found that Deaf learners preferred schools for the Deaf rather than mainstream schools. However, few participants believe that inclusion in mainstream settings helps with improved self-confidence and improved vocabulary. The study concluded that Deaf learners must be enrolled in schools for the Deaf where they will be taught by signing teachers. Furthermore, the study recommends policy review and adequate policy monitoring and evaluation of implementations.

KEY WORDS: Deaf learners, mainstream schools, inclusive education, education policy, Namibian Sign Language.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASL- American Sign Language

CCDS- Centre for Communication and Deaf Studies

CLaSH- Association of Children with Language, Speech and Hearing Impairment of Namibia

DATs- Deaf Assistant Teachers

DAW- Deaf Awareness Week

ECD- Early Childhood Development

ICEIDA- Icelandic International Development Agency

IEP- Individualised Education Plan

LSEN-Learners with Special Education Needs

NNAD-Namibian National Association of the Deaf

NSL- Namibian Sign Language

SASL- South African Sign Language

SEN- Special Educational Need

SEO- Senior Education Officer

SPIE- Sector Policy on Inclusive Education

MoEAC- Ministry of Education Arts and Culture

NIED- National Institute for Education Development

NISE- National Institute for Special Education

WFD-World Federation of the Deaf

UNCRC- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNCRPD- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ZSL- Zimbabwean Sign Language

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Inclusive Education:** means all children in the same classroom, in the same school. It means equal learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded- not only children with disabilities but the speaker of minority languages too UNICEF, (2000).
2. **Mainstreaming:** In the context of education, is the practice of placing students with special education needs in a general education classroom during specific period based on the skills. This means students who are a part of the special education classroom will join the regular education classroom at certain times which are fitting for special education students, Paul and Stanley (1978).
3. **Mainstream Schools:** is referenced in the context of inclusive education and support for learners with special education needs (LSEN), (South Africa, 1995)
4. **Special Schools:** schools equipped to deliver specialised education programme to learners requiring access to high-intensive educational and other support either on a fulltime or part time basis, Mokala (2021).
5. **Special Education:** Special education refers to educational programs designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who require additional support due to physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional or social challenges These programs may follow a similar curriculum to regular education but are adapted to meet the specific needs of the students, Sinclair, Luke and Daniel. (2025).

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 General Background to the Study

Inclusive education strives to guarantee that all learners can access and participate in education, particularly in contexts where certain groups have historically been marginalized (Magongwa, 2019). Despite the widespread adoption of inclusive policies, their practical application remains fraught with challenges, as learners with diverse needs, including cognitive impairments, hearing, and visual disabilities, continue to encounter substantial obstacles (Mokaleng & Möwes, 2020; Brown & Garcia, 2018; Bock, 2019).

In Namibia, the commitment to inclusive education is constitutionally anchored. Article 20(a) asserts the right of every learner to education, and the National Policy on Disability (1997) reinforces this by mandating equal educational rights for individuals with disabilities. Moreover, the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013) emphasizes access, equity, and quality, with particular attention to those most at risk of educational marginalization such as learners with disabilities or learning difficulties.

Namibia aligns its inclusion efforts with international frameworks like the 1994 Salamanca Statement, which urges education systems to address diverse learning styles and paces through tailored curricula, pedagogical approaches, and community partnerships (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006). Nonetheless, translating these ideals into practice remains problematic. Key barriers include insufficient resources, inadequate teacher training, and prevailing negative attitudes among educators (Mokaleng & Möwes, 2020; Shiimi, 2018; Hausiku, 2017; Chitiyo et al., 2019).

Hearing impairment, ranging from partial to total loss, is among the most prevalent disabilities impacting educational inclusion (Swanepoel et al., 2019). In Namibia, Deaf learners are primarily served up to Grade 10 in three specialized schools delivering instruction in Namibian Sign Language and English. With the phasing out of Grade 10 under the Basic Prevocational Curriculum, Deaf students now transition to mainstream schools from Grade 10 through 12. This integration enables them to learn alongside hearing peers, fostering social interaction and inclusion (Bock, 2019; Green, 2019).

However, the move into mainstream environments brings its own challenges. Studies have highlighted a chronic shortage of qualified sign language interpreters and limited

understanding of Deaf culture among educators, which significantly impede Deaf learners' academic success and well-being (Hrastinski & Sällström, 2020; NNAD, n.d.; Marschark, Sapere & Convertino, 2018). Moreover, communication barriers, such as ineffective interpreter use and limited peer interaction, further marginalize Deaf students. While some research notes these learners may remain socially isolated, others indicate that when provided with appropriate supports, they can thrive academically (Sheeya, 2018; Samuel, 2017; Magongwa, 2007).

Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires both systemic and classroom-level interventions. Institutional policies must be complemented by efforts to strengthen resources, enhance teacher capacities in inclusive and Deaf-specific pedagogy, and ensure robust interpretation and cultural support within mainstream settings.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although previous research has addressed Deaf education in Namibia (Óladóttir et al., 2009; Samuel, 2017; Tobias, 2016), the lived experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream schools remain underexplored. Tobias (2016) found that these learners often struggle to engage with their hearing peers, a challenge also noted by the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (2011), who reported infrequent interaction both inside and outside the classroom. Green (2019) further emphasizes that limited interaction hinders opportunities for mutual respect, support, and knowledge exchange, largely owing to communication constraints, including restricted use or understanding of sign language (McIlroy, 2008; Samuel, 2017; Marucha & Ngigi, 2018).

Despite the existence of the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education, implementation gaps persist, particularly regarding support for Deaf learners. Compared to South Africa, where Deaf education has advanced significantly, Namibian standards lag behind (Bock, 2019). The motivations behind Namibia's exclusive emphasis on inclusive education, especially in the face of limited resources, remain unclear and have sparked debate among stakeholders like the Namibian National Association of the Deaf (NNAD) and Association of Children with Language, Speech and Hearing Impairment of Namibia (CLaSH). Some of the reasons Namibia has cited include following international framework such as the signatory to the UNCPRD and the Salamanca Statement. However, despite following these, the understand and

compliance are not adhered to. This has been raised by world Federation of the Deaf (WFD), where emphasise were put on ensuring that the inclusion of the Deaf learner should mean all learners in the school and teachers are able to sign, without this, there is no inclusion, WFD, (2023).

In Namibia, Namibian Sign Language (NSL) lacks the official recognition afforded to South African Sign Language (Du Plessis, 2022), and remains under-researched. As NSL is a principal medium in Deaf education, this study will assess policy effectiveness and explore strategies for enhancing its use in both specialized and mainstream educational settings. Although Namibia has embraced a Sign Bilingual–Bicultural (Bi-Bi) approach (Bruwer, 2021), findings are mixed: Sheeya (2018) suggests Deaf learners seek interaction with hearing peers and benefit socially, while Samuel (2017) reports isolation and limited interaction among such learners. These contrasting insights underscore the need for a more comprehensive investigation into their mainstream school experiences.

Qualitative quotes underscore this divide: some learners express a preference for Deaf schools, where cultural and communicative alignment is stronger, and teachers recommend such environments for Deaf children (Prior, 2023; Samuel, 2017). Molala (2023) argues that Deaf learners' unique communication needs necessitate specialized educational settings to support their learning effectively.

It is well established that Deaf pupils achieve better educational outcomes when taught by educators proficient in Sign Language (Sibanda, 2015; Bock, 2019). Observations within mainstream contexts suggest that both peer acceptance and teacher competence influence Deaf learners' classroom engagement. However, there remains no dedicated research addressing the experiences of Deaf learners in Namibian secondary mainstream schools.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by examining the experiences of Deaf learners in these environments, assessing how communication, policy, cultural, and pedagogical factors shape their educational and social integration.

1.3 Summary of Key Issues

- ***Interaction barriers:*** Deaf learners encounter limited opportunities for meaningful engagement with hearing peers due to communication constraints (Tobias, 2016; Ministry, 2011; Green, 2019).

- ***Policy-practice disjunction:*** Inclusive education policies exist, but their implementation—amid resource limitations and lack of NSL recognition—remains problematic (Bock, 2019; (Du Plessis, 2022).
- ***Divergent social experiences:*** Studies present conflicting findings—some describe social integration, others isolation—highlighting the need for further research (Sheeya, 2018; Samuel, 2017).
- ***Cultural and communicative congruence:*** Deaf learners may gravitate toward Deaf schools where language and culture align more closely (Prior, 2024).
- ***Pedagogical support:*** The effectiveness of inclusive mainstream education is hampered by lack of NSL proficiency among teachers and limited interpretive resources (Sibanda, 2015; Bock, 2019).
- ***Research void:*** There is a clear gap in understanding the experiences of Deaf learners in Namibian secondary mainstream schools.

1.4 Researcher's Own Experience in Mainstream School

My personal journey as a Deaf student navigating the mainstream school system reflects many of the challenges highlighted in prior research (Sheeya, 2018; Magongwa, 2010; Samuel, 2017). The consistent absence of a qualified Sign Language interpreter meant that I had to rely solely on sporadic support from teachers, typically limited to handwritten summaries from classroom discussions. This lack of communication support and general awareness of Deaf learners' needs hampered both my social inclusion and academic engagement, causing me to sometimes withdraw from activities where participation felt inaccessible.

Despite such obstacles, my academic performance exceeded that of many hearing peers. The instructional environment, albeit restrictive in some ways, allowed me to concentrate deeply on coursework without curricular distractions, an advantage I acknowledge, albeit with complexity.

My linguistic background played a crucial role in facilitating peer interaction: I became Deaf after learning Oshiwambo, which enabled me to lip-read and communicate more effectively with peers compared to English-speaking teachers. However, my transition to university presented new difficulties. The shift to English, and a more diverse

student body, exposed a greater gap in institutional accommodation. Lecturers often did not provide lecture notes in advance, and suggested solutions such as using tape recorders were ineffective for me. A visually impaired classmate could benefit from recorded lectures, a reminder that disabilities require tailored supports rather than one-size-fits-all strategies.

This experience is aligned with pedagogical research underscoring the value of differentiated instruction and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in supporting learners with special educational needs (Damyanov, 2024). Differentiated instruction allows educators to customize content, process, and delivery to align with students' strengths, deficits, interests, and communication modes, fostering deeper engagement and academic success. Meanwhile, IEPs provide a structured and personalized roadmap, defining learning objectives, support mechanisms, and monitoring student progress, thus ensuring that interventions are appropriately tailored and tracked. These frameworks reaffirm the imperative for educators to not only identify barriers but also leverage a student's assets, such as language proficiency and learning preferences, to cultivate academic confidence and inclusion.

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main objective guiding the study was to investigate the experience of Grade 10-12 Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia. The study further aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- a. To understand the challenges hearing teachers encounter in meeting the diverse needs of both Deaf and hearing learners in mixed-ability classrooms.
- b. To understand teachers' pedagogic practices that impact on experiences of Deaf learners in Mainstream schools in Namibia

1.6 Research Objectives

To address this overarching aim, the study tried to:

- I. Identify and analyse the challenges faced by hearing teachers when accommodating the diverse needs of both Deaf and hearing learners in mixed-ability classrooms.

- II. Examine the pedagogical strategies hearing teachers employ and evaluate how these practices influence the learning experiences of Deaf students in mainstream settings.

1.7 Research Questions

To guide the investigation, the study addressed the following questions:

- A. What are the lived experiences of Deaf learners (Grades 10–12) in Namibian mainstream secondary schools?
- B. What obstacles do hearing teachers encounter in meeting the diverse needs of both Deaf and hearing learners in mixed-ability classes?
- C. Which pedagogical approaches do teachers use, and how do these methods affect the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary contexts?

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study addresses a critical gap by illuminating the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream classrooms, a perspective often overlooked in Namibian educational research. By doing so, the study seeks to inform efforts to enhance inclusive education practices and create learning environments that genuinely accommodate the needs of all learners.

The findings are intended to support policymakers and educators in:

- Designing targeted support systems, such as integrating Sign Language interpreters, assistive technologies, and pedagogical adaptations, to effectively meet the needs of Deaf students in mainstream schools.
- Crafting inclusive policies and teaching frameworks that strengthen the educational rights and welfare of Deaf learners within Namibia's broader push toward equitable education.

Moreover, by centring the voices and experiences of Deaf learners, the study promotes awareness and empathy among educators, learners, and the broader community. This heightened understanding can reduce stigma, foster more respectful interactions, and build a more inclusive school culture.

Academically, the research contributes to the existing scholarly discourse on Deaf education in Namibia, offering new data and insights that can serve as a foundation for future studies exploring the needs, outcomes, and pedagogical experiences of Deaf students in inclusive settings.

Finally, the findings are expected to guide educational stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and community advocates, in refining support structures and fostering positive peer relationships, ultimately enhancing both social integration and learning outcomes for Deaf learners.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

This research is intentionally confined to three mainstream secondary schools in Namibia, selected for the presence of Deaf learners in Grades 10–12. Due to the small number of Deaf students in these schools, the sample size was inherently limited. Additionally, the geographical distance between my residence and these schools constrained available time and resources.

An unforeseen factor, namely Namibia's 2024 national elections, led to early school closures, disrupting data collection. While I initially aimed to recruit 12 participants, the circumstances resulted in a reduced sample of nine. Although the smaller sample has a limited effect on the general findings, it did constrain the range and richness of perspectives collected.

1.10 Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the topic, the problem of the study, aims and objectives, and established research questions guiding the study. The Significance of the Study emphasised the research's potential impact and the delimitation of the study set clear boundaries and limitations. The definition of terms ensured a shared understanding of key concepts. The next chapter by is a literature review and establishes the theoretical framework for a more in-depth research topic.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a comprehensive review of the literature and presents the theoretical framework for understanding the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream schools. The literature review delves into the concepts of the experiences of Deaf learners and hearing learners, as well as the Deaf culture within an educational context. The chapter begins by outlining the theoretical foundation upon which this study will be built. Additionally, the results of related studies that comprise this study's literature are presented. These studies explore the experiences and challenges faced by Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Social Model of Disability, which shifts attention from individual impairments to the societal and institutional barriers that hinder participation (Twala et al., 2015; Linda, 2022). Within education, challenges such as communication difficulties, limited accommodations, and teacher attitudes are framed as systemic rather than inherent to Deafness (Bock, 2019). In the context of Deaf learners in mainstream schools, the social model underscores that communication gaps, inaccessible pedagogical methods, and exclusionary practices, not deafness itself, are the primary obstacles to full participation. This theoretical lens enables a critical examination of how educational environments and societal attitudes either impede or support Deaf learners' academic and social inclusion.

2.3 Why the Social Model Best Suits This Study

Focus on environmental and attitudinal barriers, rather than pathologizing Deaf learners, the social model emphasizes modifying school practices, such as ensuring sign language interpretation and accessible instruction, to eliminate exclusion. This framework advocates for inclusive environments that dismantle barriers and promote equity over mere equality (Adam & Koutsoklenis, 2023). In this study, it serves as a lens for analysing how mainstreaming impacts Deaf learners' academic and social experiences, emphasizing the need for systemic transformation rather than individual adjustment (Frontier, 2023; Times Higher Education, 2023).

Alignment with inclusive education goals: This model promotes systemic adaptation and inclusive pedagogy, resonating with the study's objective to evaluate and enhance

mainstream school environments for Deaf learners (Adam & Koutsoklenis, 2023). Consistent with rights-based frameworks: It reflects international standards like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which mandates reasonable accommodations and full participation in education for persons with disabilities

Analytical clarity through the impairment, disability distinction: By distinguishing impairment (a physical or sensory condition) from disability (socially imposed limitations), the model provides a powerful analytical tool for identifying how schooling practices disable Deaf learners. Overall, the social model provides both a normative and practical framework that supports the study's aim: to identify and challenge the disabling practices within mainstream schools, advancing policies and practices that foster equitable education for Deaf learners.

2.4 Deaf Education in an African Context

2.4.1 Overview and Regional Leadership

Across Africa, Deaf education varies widely. South Africa has advanced by recognising South African Sign Language as the 12th official language, a milestone that strengthens its role in education and culture. However, teacher proficiency in SASL remains a barrier (Druchen, 2010; Madisha, 2023). In some African countries, successful Deaf education initiatives largely depend on the presence of schools for the Deaf, where sign language is central to effective instruction (Madisha, 2023). Countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and Ghana have taken prominent roles in this domain, offering valuable contextual comparisons for Namibia (Kiyaga & Moores, 2017).

2.4.2 South Africa: Policy and Pedagogical Advances

South Africa demonstrates strong institutional support for Deaf education. The constitution values linguistic and cultural diversity, including Deaf identity, and in 2023, South African Sign Language (SASL) gained recognition as an official language (Madisha, 2023). This legal milestone enhances Deaf education and awareness. Yet, teachers' limited proficiency in SASL continues to pose challenges in mainstream classrooms (Druchen, 2010; Madisha, 2023).

2.4.3 Kenya: Inclusive Efforts and Persistent Gaps

Kenya has expanded the number of schools for the Deaf and emphasized promoting Deaf culture. Still, Deaf learners in mainstream settings confront entrenched negative social attitudes and insufficient access to sign language resources and trained personnel

(Mayingle, 2022; Bock, 2019). Qualified teachers and interpreters are more commonly found in special schools, suggesting that mainstream settings may offer less effective support.

2.4.4 Nigeria and Ghana: Cultural and Structural Barriers

In Nigeria, Deaf education is often constrained by limited early intervention, low social awareness, financial hardship, and poor funding (Asonye et al., 2018; Ademokoya, 2019). Ghana's Deaf education sector benefited historically from missionary initiatives in West Africa (Oppong & Fobi, 2019), yet today still grapples with widespread stigma, limited exposure to sign language, and inadequate policy support.

2.4.5 Uganda and Zimbabwe: Partial Integration with Insufficient Support

Uganda has made strides toward inclusive education by integrating Deaf students into mainstream classrooms, but teachers often lack sufficient sign language proficiency, a barrier to full inclusion and academic success (Miles, Wapling & Beart, 2011). Zimbabwe similarly admits Deaf learners into mainstream schools but provides minimal support, leading to marginalization, mislabelling, and emotional stress (Mukuna & Maizere, 2022). Misguided oral-only support often fails to meet their communicative needs (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012).

2.4.6 Broader Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa

UNICEF's regional assessment highlights uneven progress in disability-inclusive education across Eastern and Southern Africa. While countries are taking steps toward inclusive practices, challenges persist insufficient consistent funding, lack of disability-inclusive curricula, and insufficient teacher capacity inhibit scale and sustainability (Grimes et al., 2023). In Senegal, recent efforts have enabled Deaf and hard-of-hearing students to learn alongside hearing peers, with sign language-capable assistants bridging communication gaps, though such pilots remain limited in scope. Table 1 present the comparative summaries of some African countries on inclusive policy.

Table 1: Comparative Insights: A Summary

Country / Region	Strengths	Challenges
South Africa	Official recognition of SASL; strong Deaf education base	Teacher proficiency in SASL remains limited
Kenya	Expanded Deaf schools; cultural promotion	Stigma, few interpreters in mainstream settings
Nigeria/Ghana	Historical mission-led education	Poverty, stigma, lack of policy recognition, late intervention
Uganda/Zimbabwe	Mainstream inclusion efforts	Poor support infrastructure, lack of sign language resources
Senegal & Others	Innovative inclusive classrooms piloted	Scaling remains limited; widespread systemic gaps persist

2.5 Deaf Education in Namibia

Namibia's Deaf education began with missionary schools such as Eluwa Special School (1973) and later the National Institute for Special Education (NISE) ((Ministry of Education, 1995), which catered for learners with Deafness, Visual impairment, and intellectual disabilities (Bruwer & February, 2019; Bock, 2019). Subsequent expansions included Usko Nghaamwa Special School and integration of Deaf learners into mainstream institutions like Cosmos High School and Mweshipandeka Senior Secondary School (Bjarnason et al., 2012). Bruwer, & February, (2019).

Despite these efforts, access beyond Grade 10 was historically limited, and support remains inadequate. While special schools provide a foundation, mainstream schools now admit increasing numbers of Deaf learners, highlighting the importance of examining their experiences.

Until 2000, all these schools had no Grade 11, and learners mostly from Eluwa, after completing Grade 10 are deemed at the end of academic years. Consequently, Deaf learners were mostly sent to Ehafo, where they engaged in vocational training and other

trade skills. It is noteworthy to mention that National Institute for Special Education (NISE) only has Grades 0-10 as of 2008. Learners from NISE, School for Hearing Impaired were first sent to Cosmos High School in 2009, for Grade 11.

Since the introduction of basic pre-vocation curriculum, school for the Deaf have phased out grade 10 and learners are sent to mainstream schools after their grade 9 examinations.

Below is a table presenting the schools as discussed.

Name of school	Region	History
Eluwa Special school	Oshana region	Established in 1973, the school was led by missionaries and currently comprises three distinct sections: Deaf, Visually Impaired, and Intellectually Impaired.
National Institute for Special Education (NISE) Hearing Impaired	Khomas region	Established in 1995, the premises houses three schools: the School for the Deaf, the School for the Visually Impaired, and the School for the Intellectually Impaired.
Usko Nghaamwa Special School	Ohangwena region	Opened doors in 2006, First was a CLaSH supported Deaf unity and later handed over to the government.

In Namibia, inclusive education is becoming more widespread, therefore learners with learning disabilities have greater access to education in regular schools. Since the arrival of Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA). (ICEIDA sought to develop Deaf education in Namibia. The project's primary goals were to empower Deaf individuals by strengthening government capacity in Deaf education, developing Namibian Sign Language, and promoting the participation of Deaf people in society. This initiative highlighted the need to share expertise and resources for Deaf education in developing

countries and supported the development of resources like SignWiki and capacitate the sign language interpreter through trainings. (Bjarnason et al., 2012). The number of Deaf learners entering mainstream schools has increased. Cosmos High School in Khomas and Mweshipandeka Senior Secondary School in Oshana were the first two schools to offer such programs. The number of schools admitting Deaf learners has since grown, with Haimbili Haufiku in the Ohangwena region now admitting Deaf learners to grade 11 and beyond, and Maria Mwengere in Kavango East (Bjarnason et al., 2012). The next section unpacks inclusive policy and practice in Namibia.

2.6 Inclusive Education Policy and Practice in Namibia

Namibia has historically accommodated children with disabilities in special schools, leading to feelings of worthlessness and discouragement (February & Bruwer, 2014). A study by Minou (2011) demonstrates that children with disabilities or impairments and other learning difficulties for the longest time, have been marginalized and excluded from education. In response to this issue, Namibia has established an inclusive education system that follows national legislation and policies.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MoEAC) implemented the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (SPIE) in response to international agreements and legal frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Children 1994, Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, and The Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education 1994. These policies are designed to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate fully in society by providing them with access to essential services, employment, education, and vocational training.

The National Disability Policy of Namibia (2004) is focused on equalizing opportunities for persons with disabilities. It aims to create a "Society for All" based on the principles of the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The policy's mission is to improve the quality of life by enhancing the dignity, well-being, and empowerment of persons with disabilities. The policy aims to achieve full social integration of persons with disabilities in society by enabling them to take charge of their lives and removing barriers to full participation in all areas.

Namibia is committed to inclusive schools through the practical and strategic implementation of the Salamanca statement of 1994. The country provides access to regular schools for all children, young people, and adults within the regular education system and ensuring that children with special needs are accommodated in mainstream schools. The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013) aims to ensure that all learners are fully educated in the least restrictive education settings and to provide schools in their neighbourhoods. One of the policy's objectives is to support learners with a wide range of individual abilities and needs in compulsory education at Early Childhood Development (ECD), Pre-Primary, Primary, and Secondary levels.

The MoEAC has prioritized the education of children with disabilities through the Basic Education Act (Act No. 3 of 2020) and focuses on ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities are given opportunities to learn and develop into responsible future citizens. The MoEAC, in collaboration with the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), has provided the Curriculum Framework for Inclusive Education (CFIE, 2014), which adapts the national curriculum to the learning needs of all learners through accommodation and modifications.

By expanding access to and the provision of quality education, especially for educationally marginalized learners, Namibia's commitment is noted through the policies. The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (SPIE) has guiding principles, one of which is the expansion of access to Education at all levels. To achieve this objective, the ministry chose Cosmos High School in Khomas Region in 2008, followed by Mweshipandeka High School in Oshana Region in 2010, to pilot inclusive education.

Currently, Namibia has nine schools that use inclusive education principles, focusing on Deaf Education. Deaf schools in Namibia are Cosmos High School in Khomas region, Mweshipandeka in Oshana, Haimbili Haufiku Senior Secondary School in Ohangwena region, Maria Mwengere, Andreas Kandjiimi Haingura in Kavango East, Coastal High, Swakopmund Primary School in Erongo region, Katima Mulilo Combined School in Zambezi and Kameru Eco Primary School in Kunene region.

While Inclusive education in Namibia, seems championed due to the introduction of Sector policy on inclusive education, signing and ratification of the UNCRPD and the references widely made about Salamanca statement and the UN convention on the Rights of the Children, there are a few misinterpretations that hinder the full benefit of Deaf learners in

mainstream schools. Recently, the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) highlighted those challenges regarding Inclusive Education.

“Inclusion is the learner’s right to participate and reach their potential in public institutions such as schools. In other words, inclusion is an experience, not a placement. About Deaf learners, educators must pay special attention to the need to support language and social development as outlined in Articles 24(3) and (4) and must have awareness of sign language milestones and assessments. Moreover, educators must pay special attention to Deaf learners’ socio-emotional development needs that are often met by opportunities to participate with a peer group and teachers with a shared sign language and cultural identity”. World Federation of the Deaf (2018:n.p).

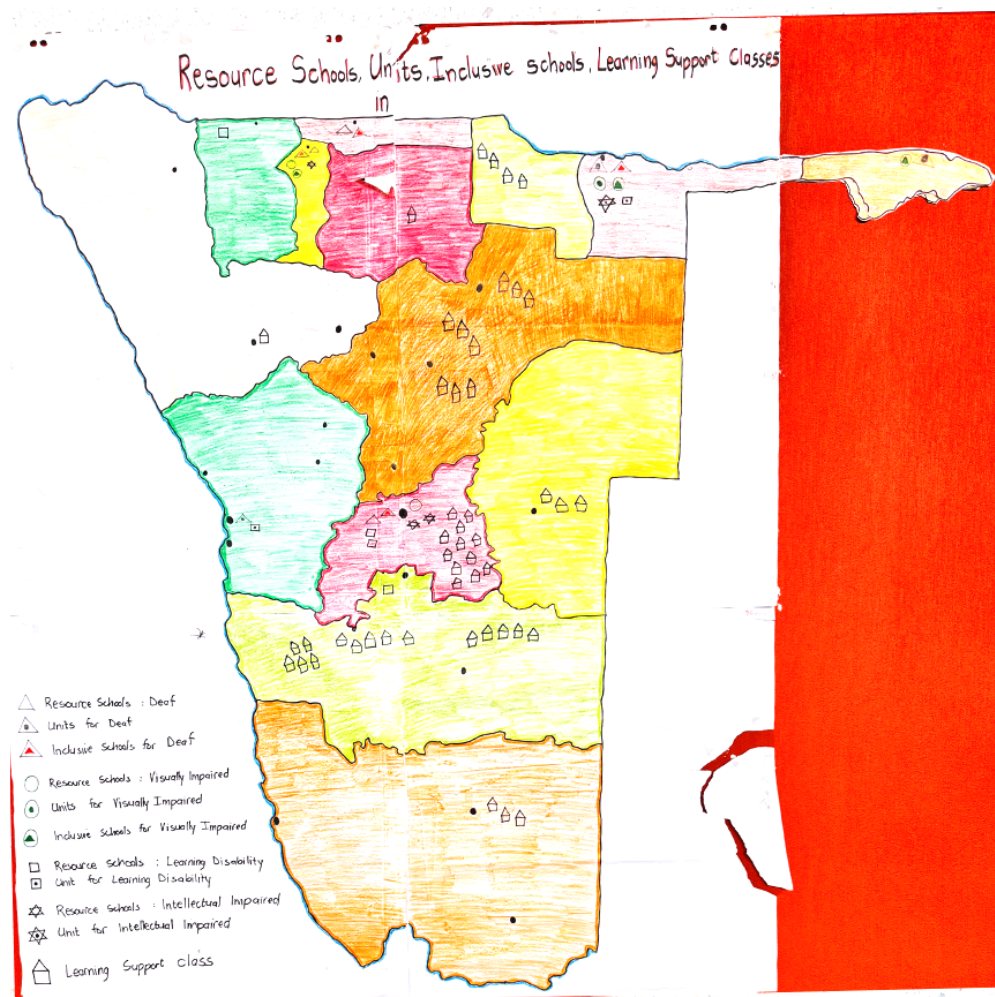


FIGURE 1SCHOOLS, UNITS, INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS AND RESOURCE SCHOOLS IN NAMIBIA-SOURCES CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION AND DEAF STUDIES (CCDS).

The figure above shows the distribution of inclusive schools within Namibia, relating to inclusive education practice.

Furthermore, the WFD advocates for inclusive education that provides direct instruction in sign language, access to Deaf teachers, and interaction with Deaf peers who use sign language.

When discussing mainstreaming Deaf learners in mainstream schools, we should consider factors like teachers' sign language proficiency and hearing learners' ability to interact with Deaf learners. Effective sign language interpreters will eventually lead to inclusion. This discussion delves into Deaf culture.

2.7 Deaf Culture

Deaf communities often frame themselves as members of a linguistic and cultural minority, not as disabled individuals (Hole, 2007; Chapman, 2021). Practices such as oralism and cochlear implantation are often resisted as assimilationist (Samuel, 2017). In Namibia, Deaf identity is further shaped by advocacy for recognition of Namibian Sign Language and resistance to deficit-based terminology (McQuigg, 2003; UNICEF, n.d.).

2.8. Peer Interaction

Interaction could be between two or more children and/ or adults or between a person and an object. Interaction is when people exchange information or cooperate in carrying out a task (Mlaya, 2010; Wang et al.,2011).

Through peer interaction, Deaf and hearing learners can develop the ability to share ideas and acquire skills essential for collaborating in everyday activities. An exchange made possible through language and communication, Skjørten (2001). It's further maintained that an obvious advantage of educating hearing learners with Deaf learners in regular schools is that children are exposed to differences in individuals, not to feel sorry for another individual but to gain respect for and appreciate the differences in each other, Heart and Weismann(2001).

Social interaction is a vital prerequisite for children in the learning set-up (Awori,2004). Through social interaction, children learn to respect and encourage one another, share experiences and knowledge about one another, and, above all, discover one another's interests, abilities, and difficulties. This enables them to care for each other's needs in an interactive environment because there is a likelihood of influencing the development of positive attitudes towards one another.

Interaction is a two-way process; both Deaf learners and hearing learners influence each other (Green, 2019). Teachers influence learners by giving them instructions, directions, and allowing them to express their ideas through various learning activities. Consequently, the inclusion of Deaf learners in mainstream schools is good for their socialisation. It will also help them to have the confidence to communicate with hearing people outside the school environment. It can be argued that it is a grooming process to make the Deaf learner a functional member of society (Marshcrk, Tang & Knoor, 2011). Deaf learners benefit from exposure to a diverse range of social interactions, which allows them to develop the social competencies necessary for building relationships and participating in group activities. These experiences enhance their adaptability and social understanding, making them more confident in interacting with the hearing world (Antia, Stinson, & Gaustad, 2012). Similarly, it is argued that the inclusion of Deaf learners in mainstream settings encourages the development of linguistic and cognitive skills, which are essential for their academic and social success (Marschark et al., 2011).

In an inclusive school, the interaction between Deaf learners and hearing learners can happen in classrooms, during group work activities or in their private conversations. Any interaction in the school environment can contribute to learners' development and learning. It becomes part of the extracurricular activities whereby learners learn things passively (Rao, 2022). When Deaf learners engage in activities with their hearing peers, they learn social interaction skills and improve their cognitive abilities (Alasim, 2018). The social skills include empathy, cooperation and respect while cognitive skills include critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making. New roles can be practised, and they learn to share, cooperate and collaborate.

Peer interaction is accomplished using language and communication. Bock (2019) states that communication is the exchange of ideas, interests, feelings, thoughts, opinions, or information by sets of codes formed as signals or symbols which all partners can understand and handle. Therefore, in communication, each person is expected to be alert to the needs of the other to ensure that the message is effectively conveyed and understood. Various studies show that Deaf learners benefit from the social interaction of learning in an inclusive classroom (Sheeya, 2018, Vibulphol et al., 2015; Andersson & Adams, 2022). Furthermore, Sheeya (2018) states that hearing learners love to have social interactions with Deaf learners in mainstream Schools. However, Samuel (2017) brings a new angle by indicating

that the interactions happen at the convenience of hearing learners when they want a favour from Deaf learners or want to learn Sign Language as well as doing it out of pity for the Deaf learners. Tobias & Mukhopadhyay (2017).

A deaf child emerging from a restrictive home environment may exhibit interactive behaviour that differs from that of their peers. Limitation in interpersonal communication between Deaf children and their parents can negatively impact the child's social development, Tobias and Mukhopadhyay (2017). They note that restrictions in interpersonal interactions between children with Deaf child and their parents are likely to have a negative influence on the child's socialization. In addition, Lederberg (1993) in Mlay (2010) stated that Deafness can cause a child to be less interested in interacting with peers whose communication is primarily through speech. This correlates with research by Samuel (2017) who states that Deaf learners prefer to communicate among themselves in Sign Language as compared to communicating with hearing learners mainly through writing notes. In the following section, I discuss factors affecting Deaf education in Namibia.

2.9 Factors Affecting Deaf Education in Namibia

2.9.1. Policy Implementation

Despite progressive policies, implementation is weak due to resource shortages and lack of leadership support (Mokaleng & Möwes, 2020).

2.9.2. Teacher Training and Attitudes

Most teachers lack sign language proficiency and specialised training, undermining inclusive education. Negative attitudes also deter effective integration (Mokaleng, 2019).

2.9.3. Social and Environmental Challenges

Deaf learners often experience stigma, late school entry, and delayed language acquisition due to being born into hearing families (Kritzer, 2009; Ugwanga, 2023).

Lack of early exposure to sign language as many hearing parents are unfamiliar with sign language and may delay introducing it, hoping their child will develop speech through hearing aids or cochlear implants. This delay can result in language deprivation, especially

during the critical period of language development before age 4. Limited incidental learning leads to Deaf children often missing out on overhearing conversations at home, which is a key way hearing children pick up vocabulary and social cues. Delayed diagnosis and intervention due to delayed early screening or awareness, some Deaf children are not diagnosed until much later, postponing their entry into specialized educational settings.

Uncertainty about educational pathways due to lack of awareness about Deaf schools as Hearing parents may struggle to choose between mainstream schools, schools for the Deaf, or oralist programs, leading to indecision and late enrollment.

Negative perceptions of Deafness may occur as hearing parents, influenced by societal views that frame Deafness as a disability to be "fixed," may unintentionally pass on stigmatizing attitudes. This can affect the child's self-esteem and identity formation which in most cases lead to isolation from Deaf role models. Without access to Deaf adults or peers, children may internalize the idea that being Deaf is abnormal, which hinders their integration into the Deaf community

2.9.4. Resource Constraints

Limited resources and inadequate support for teachers can hamper the implementation of inclusive Education. Financial shortage and limited supplies of assistive technologies, including teaching aids, contribute to the poor implementation of inclusive Education for the Deaf. Mokaleng (2019), and Mokaleng and Mowës, (2020). These factors significantly impact the implementation of quality education that is responsive to the needs of Deaf learners. While some may have a direct impact, others may be secondary contributors, such as a lack of proper training of the teachers of the Deaf, who are likely to struggle to impart skills to the learners due to communication barriers.

Many Deaf learners are from hearing families, which means delayed school starting age and language acquisition delays, leading to a lag in educational attainment (Kritzer, 2009). Therefore, many learners will not attain adequate language acquisition or a strong culture, let alone a strong academic foundation. This lack is likely to impact them, especially when they transition to mainstream school. Transitioning to mainstream schools can pose challenges and opportunities for Deaf learners from hearing families, as they may have experienced delayed language acquisition. This affects Deaf learners and poses challenges

such as communication challenges, academic struggles, social integration, education attainment, access to support services, and Deaf identity (Sheeya, 2018).

The impact of transitioning to mainstream schools for Deaf learners from hearing families varies greatly depending on the level of support and resources available to them. With appropriate accommodations, understanding, and inclusive practices, mainstream schools can provide valuable educational experiences for Deaf learners and facilitate their overall academic and social development (Padden, & Humphries, 2015).

Deaf education is also influenced by many other factors as posted by (Ellis, 2011). Many authors (Sheeya, 2018); Ademokoya, 2019; Mukuna & Maizere, 2022), believe that the skills of teachers are fundamental in ensuring that Deaf learners are educated effectively. Evidence has shown that Namibian teachers are lacking in essential knowledge to teach, and that lack of knowledge impacts negatively on their learners' learning (Hill et al., 2015). Further, support the notion that teachers' subject knowledge for teaching positively predicts their gains in educational achievement Hill et al. (2015). This suggests that knowledgeable teachers may provide better pedagogical explanations, construct better representations, and have a richer understanding of the system essential to learning and how they relate (Johnson, 2014). It is unknown exactly how many teachers are trained to teach Deaf learners without appropriate qualifications (Ashmore, 2019). Therefore, Deaf learners in mainstream schools may be affected by one or more factors above (Johnson, 2014).

With teachers lacking in Sign Language fluency, Deaf learners mostly rely on Sign Language interpreters; however, these interpreters are limited in number as well as possess limited subject knowledge and skills. Many requests have been launched by NNAD, asking the Ministry of Education to provide schools with adequate and well-trained interpreters where Deaf learners are enrolled. Although there are interpreters in some mainstream schools, not all schools with Deaf learners have adequate support staff, such as teachers who are conversant in Namibian Sign Language.

During a study by the ICEIDA in Namibia 2007-2009, conclusions were made that the status of NSL has been given recognition status as a medium of instruction for Deaf learners (*Supplementary Pilot Curriculum, 2011*).

Furthermore, Ellis (2011) identified a need for capacity development of the NGOs (NNAD and CLaSH) that have, for years, been the only local organisations to engage and influence

when and where possible policies on Education for the Deaf. The report further indicates that between the two, only CLaSH has much recognition in Namibia, as opposed to NNAD. The organisation is for the Deaf which is expected to enjoy full support, recognition and play a meaningful and consistent role in Education for Deaf people. CLaSH's key areas are early Identification, early intervention and early Education of children who are Deaf and hard of Hearing. The organisation also carries out parental support programs for parents of Deaf children as well as Sign Language classes for the parents of the Deaf. This program aims to make communication between Deaf children and parents easier and facilitate better education and language development (CLaSH,2016; February & Bruwer, 2019).

NNAD is important as a component to ensure Deaf learners in mainstream schools and the Education of the Deaf receive adequate support (Erting & Kuntze, 2017; Musengi et al., 2012) attribute this notion to the fact that it is led by Deaf people means that it has people who are aware of the practical challenges that Deaf people face and can therefore be more effective in advocating for their rights in schools. They are more knowledgeable about the fundamental limitations that Deaf people face, and their views can be used for a holistic approach to addressing the challenges that Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners potentially face in mainstream schools (Andersson & Lyngäck, 2022).

The association has also highlighted challenges such as a lack of trained teachers, physical facilities and even application of teaching methodologies. Further, NNAD highlights the use of Namibian Sign Language as the mode of instruction as challenging for most teachers to convey the message to the learners. Some of the issues pointed out here are alluded to by Lehloa, (2019) that lack of language fluency affects learners' academics.

Therefore, NNAD and CLaSH's efforts are based on the experience they have working with Deaf children and advocating for the rights, access and quality education for the Deaf. Despite being knowledgeable about the educational needs of the Deaf, much advocacy and attempts to influence policy and decisions have not been taken into consideration. NNAD's effort to train many teachers into sign language interpreters to saturate the mainstreaming of Deaf learners has not received full support. Such shortcomings have effects on the policy and practice as well as the implementation of inclusive education policy. The two institutions have also openly discouraged the inclusion of Deaf learners in mainstream schools, citing a lack of adequacy support for the learners in mainstreams and a lack of political will to support the interpreters' training as well as a considered lack of preparedness for the schools to

accommodate Deaf learners adequately (*The Namibia*, 2009). In what follows, I discuss experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream schools.

2.10 Experiences of Deaf learners in Mainstream Schools

Integration of deaf learners into mainstream schools is promoted as part of inclusive education policies. While mainstream schools offer socialisation and access to the same curriculum as hearing peers, research consistently shows that deaf learners face unique academic, linguistic, and social experiences in these settings. Challenges include communication barriers, limited teacher preparedness, poorly trained sign language interpreters, and the absence of Deaf cultural representations.

Mainstreaming can provide valuable socialisation opportunities but often leaves Deaf learners isolated when communication barriers are not addressed (Moloney, 2018; Brennan, 2003). Discrimination, inadequate support, and lack of recognition undermine learners' confidence and educational progress (Sheeya, 2018; Samuel, 2017; Magongwa, 2008). These mixed experiences underscore the importance of inclusive practices that prioritise accessibility and cultural recognition.

2.10.1 Experiences in the United States

In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has promoted the placement of Deaf students in mainstream classrooms. However, studies reveal that many still face language deprivation due to late exposure to American Sign Language (ASL) and over-reliance on oral methods (Wong, 2023). Deaf students in mainstream schools often lag behind their hearing peers in literacy by several years, with reading and writing skills significantly impacted by limited access to fully accessible language environments (Garberoglio et al., 2019). Research also shows that physical classroom factors—such as poor lighting and acoustics—can further hinder participation, while the absence of Deaf role models limits cultural identity development (Start ASL, 2021). In the United States, research consistently demonstrates that deaf students in mainstream school experiences exhibit significant delays in literacy development compared to their hearing peers. These delays are primarily attributed to limited access to fully accessible language environments during the early childhood and throughout schooling (Garberoglio et al., (2019).

Historically, Deaf learners have graduated from high school with a median reading level equivalent to that of a fourth-grade hearing student, a trend that has remained remarkably consistent over decades Trezek & Mayer, (2019). Writing skills also lag significantly, with many Deaf youths producing written work comparable to hearing children aged 8 to 10 years Mayer & Trezek, (2023). Language deprivation, insufficient exposure to natural sign language, and reliance on oralists or interpreters-mediated instructions in mainstream settings were the reasons given by the (National Deaf Centre, 2019) for these persistent gaps. Consequently, literacy challenges among deaf learners underscore the need for a bilingual-bicultural educational model and early language access to mitigate long-term academic disparities.

2.10.2 Experiences in Europe

In Europe, similar patterns emerge. In the UK, Prior (2023) found that Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools often encounter low teacher awareness of Deaf needs, leading to inconsistent support and reduced participation in class discussions. In Ireland, O'Connell (2024) documented systemic ableism in education, including denial of opportunities to learn through Irish Sign Language (ISL) and low expectations from educators. These barriers not only affect academic achievement but also restrict social integration, as Deaf students are often excluded from informal peer interactions where incidental learning occurs. European research emphasises the importance of co-produced support plans, Deaf awareness training for all staff, and opportunities for Deaf learners to connect with Deaf peers and adult role models.

2.10.3 Experiences in Africa

In African contexts, challenges are compounded by resource constraints and limited policy implementation. In South Africa, Skrebneva & Fordham (2024) found that Deaf learners in mainstream schools often lack adapted teaching materials and accessible assessments, leading to unequal opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. Further research in South Africa highlights the tension between inclusive education policies and the lived realities of Deaf learners in mainstream schools. While the country has adopted inclusive education frameworks aligned with the Salamanca Statement and the UN Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), implementation remains uneven, particularly for Deaf learners (Mcillroy & Storbeck, 2011).

Guy Mcillroy's ethnographic study provides critical insights into these dynamics. Drawing on his own experience as an oral Deaf learner and interviews with nine Deaf adults, Mcillroy (2008) found that mainstream environments often prioritize assimilation into hearing norms, with minimal sign language access or cultural affirmation. This lack of linguistic and cultural support fosters ambiguous or "*helpless victim*" identities, marked by isolation and limited belonging. Conversely, Deaf schools and bilingual-bicultural contexts were associated with empowerment and the development of stable bicultural "DeaF" identities (Mcillroy & Storbeck, 2011). In a study conducted by Mokala (2021), teachers demonstrated a positive perception of inclusive education.

In Zimbabwe, studies reveal that mainstreaming Deaf learners frequently results in social inclusion but academic exclusion. Chimhenga and Sibanda (2014) report that Deaf students in Bulawayo secondary schools face curriculum inaccessibility, inadequate visual resources, and teacher unpreparedness. Teachers often lack proficiency in Zimbabwe Sign Language (ZSL), and interpreting services are either intermittent or provided by untrained individuals, leading to significant academic underachievement. Musengi (2019) further argues that misinterpretations of CRPD guidelines and deficit-based views of disability perpetuate systemic barriers. Without access to a critical mass of signers and qualified staff, inclusive education risks reinforcing marginalization rather than dismantling it. These findings highlight the need for structural reforms, including teacher training in ZSL, deployment of qualified interpreters, and curriculum adaptation for visual learning. Collectively, these international studies highlight a predominantly positive mindset among teachers toward inclusion, which can be further developed.

In Namibia, the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013) recognizes Namibian Sign Language (NSL) as the mother tongue of Deaf learners and commits to equitable access in mainstream schools (Ministry of Education, 2013). However, evidence suggests a persistent gap between policy and practice. A rapid assessment done by UNCEF (2018) identified resource shortages, insufficient teacher training, and lack of assistive technologies as major obstacles. Similarly, Munyayi (2021) documented the experiences of Deaf learners in a Zambezi Region mainstream school, where students were confined to a single multigrade classroom taught by a teacher without Deaf education training. Hearing peers and teachers expressed willingness to communicate but lacked NSL skills, resulting in linguistic isolation

and limited social interaction, (Samuel, 2017, Munyayi, 2021). These findings indicate that while Namibia has progressive policies, implementation capacity remains weak, sustaining systemic exclusion.

The absence of qualified interpreters—reported as a widespread issue across Southern Africa—further compounds these challenges (UNICEF, 2018; Munyayi, 2021). Samuel (2017) observed that when no interpreter is present, Deaf learners and hearing peers resort to improvised communication methods—such as writing notes or using gestures—which limits the depth of interaction. In some cases, as Karamichael (2008) reported in South Africa, being the only Deaf learner in a school can lead to profound social isolation and minimal exposure to Deaf culture.

2.11 Why This Matters for Namibia?

These diverse national experiences offer both cautionary tales and aspirational models for Namibia. Countries that secure institutional recognition for sign language and invest in teacher training (e.g., South Africa) demonstrate meaningful progress. In contrast, nations where inclusion is poorly supported often see Deaf learners falling behind academically or socially.

For Namibia, learning from these varied contexts provides insights into how inclusive policies (such as the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education) might better be implemented. Understanding regional best practices, and common pitfalls, can inform targeted improvements in policy, pedagogy, and support structures for Deaf learners.

2.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored a comprehensive literature review that provides an in-depth analysis and theoretical framework for the concept of experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream schools. The literature review primarily focused on exploring the experiences of both Deaf and hearing learners, as well as the Deaf culture within an educational context.

The first section of this chapter went beyond the surface level and outlined the theoretical foundation that serves as the basis for this study. It also presented the results of related studies that constituted the literature for this research. This study delves into the experiences, challenges, and difficulties that Deaf learners face in mainstream secondary schools. This literature review shed light on the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream

educational settings, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the Deaf culture. By doing so, I hope to contribute to the discussion on how to create more inclusive and accessible educational environments for Deaf learners. The next chapter, presentation on how the study was carried out will be discussed under methodology.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in conducting the study. It begins by describing the research approach and the paradigm that guided the study. Next, it explains the sampling process and participant selection. Subsequently, it delves into the methods of data collection and analysis. Finally, the chapter addresses the ethical considerations of the study.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach refers to the systematic plan and underlying assumptions that guide a researcher's conduct of a study, particularly in terms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It includes the philosophical foundations, methodological strategies, and specific procedures that shape how a researcher addresses a research problem (Chinnathambi, 2013). Therefore, this study employed a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative method provides flexibility and rich, detailed data from the participants. It also allows for a participant-centred approach, gathering personal and insightful information (Creswell 2014). The study gathered data qualitatively and the analysis and presentation were also done qualitatively.

3.3 Research paradigm

The interpretivism paradigm was used in the study. Kaushik and Walsh (2019), the use of the pragmatism paradigm indicates that the study helps qualitative data. The research paradigm is the philosophical assumptions of the researcher about the study. It indicates the basic understanding of the researcher about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Interpretivism is a paradigm useful for gaining intended results in the best possible way. The paradigm was chosen for the study because it enabled me to interpret qualitative data effectively. Interpretivism offers a distinctive approach to understanding experiences and justification. Interpretivism primarily relies on qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and focus groups. These methods are well-suited for capturing the subjective experiences and behaviours of Deaf learners, which cannot be easily quantified. Interpretivism permits researchers to get a heightened and nuanced understanding of the

experience of Deaf learners in Mainstream schools because this focuses on the meaning and perspectives of learners themselves in the mainstream schools. This also allows researchers to focus on the meanings and perspectives of the learners, whereby the researcher delves into the complexity of their educational and social interactions.

3.4 Population

This study's population comprised nine Deaf learners in grades 10 and 11 from three selected mainstream secondary schools in three selected regions: Khomas, Ohangwena and Oshana regions. The table below indicates the population used in the study.

By Gender	2 females	7 males
By age range	20-21	20-24
By regions	Khomas 4, Ohangwena 2, Oshana 3	
By grades	Grade 10: 5	Grade 11:4
Deaf by birth or acquired	3 indicated were born hearing, 6 indicated born deaf	
By areas	Urban areas: 3 stays in towns areas	Rural areas; 6 reported to live in villages.

Furthermore, three of the research participants indicated that they were born hearing and acquired hearing impairment later in life. Of the three, one acquired Deaf at age of 6 (male), another acquired Deaf at age 3 (female), while the remaining one (male) indicated that he cannot remember exactly at what age did he get deaf. However, he thinks he acquired deafness at a very young age. The one that acquired Deaf at the age of 16 still can speak but has difficulty with all syllables in a sentence.

All my research participants have sign language interpreters at the school; however, those interpreters are not all well qualified or conversant in Sign Language. (Reason why the interpreter challenges feature dominantly among the responses).

All participants have other Deaf fellow learners in schools, unlike me who was a sole Deaf student at the high school and at UNAM neither did I have an interpreter. No other disabilities recorded among the participants, except for the one who lost hearing at 16 who has problem with speaking.

Six participants are from *Ovambo*¹ ethnic group that speak Oshiwambo. Oshiwambo is the most widely spoken language in Namibia, with 48.9% of the population using it as their mother tongue. It is a Bantu language consisting of several mutually intelligible dialects, the most prominent being Kwanyama (Ohangwena and part of Oshikoto and Oshana regions, and Ndonga mostly in Oshikoto, Oshana and part of Ohangwena and other small dialects such as *oshingandjera*, *Kolokadhi* and *Kwaluludhi* spoken by some of the Omusati region. Predominantly spoken in the north-central and northern regions of Namibia, especially in Oshana, Omusati, Ohangwena, and parts of Zambezi. Ethnic Group: The Ovambo people, who speak Oshiwambo, are the largest ethnic group in Namibia, making up about 50% of the population.

One participant is from Zambezi belong to the *Mafwe* that speak *Fwe or Chifwe*² language. The Mafwe are a Bantu-speaking ethnic group native to Southern Africa, with significant populations in Namibia and Zambia. In Namibia, they are primarily located in the Zambezi Region (formerly Caprivi). The Mafwe speak Chifwe, a language closely related to Lozi.

While the last participant's first language is Afrikaans. Afrikaans is spoken by approximately 10.3% of Namibian households, making it one of the top five most spoken languages in the country. Geographic Distribution: Afrikaans is widely spoken in urban areas, especially in Windhoek, and in the southern regions such as Hardap and Karas.

Ethnic Groups: Afrikaans is primarily spoken by White, Coloured, and Baster communities. It also serves as a lingua franca among diverse groups in informal and business settings and most *eembwiti*³.

Herero (Otjiherero) is a Bantu language spoken by the Herero and Mbanderu people in Namibia and Botswana. As well as a small community of people in southwestern Angola.

The population under study, hence, was dominated by the Ovambo participants from different dialects, with three participants each belonging to a different language group: Afrikaans, Otjiherero, and Mafwe.

¹ <https://namibiatoday.com/namibias-language-diversity-how-48-9-speak-oshiwambo/>

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mafwe>

³ Someone who has lived in the urban areas for decades, sometimes, they do not return to their native rural areas anymore.

3.5 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

Sampling is selecting a group (subgroup) from a much larger population that is similar in its traits (Creswell, 2014). The study used purposive sampling. This technique was used because of its ability to identify and select groups of individuals who are knowledgeable with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Clark, 2011). I used a purposive sampling method to select a sample of Grade 10 and 11 Deaf learners from the three selected mainstream secondary schools where Deaf learners are enrolled. 12 Deaf learners were initially needed to form part of the population. However, because of the time limit and school calendar changing due to national elections, I could not reach all participants and ended up having 9 out of the intended 12 participants. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon; this is done so because I believe that participants are information rich.

3.6 Research Instruments

This research employed one research instrument, namely interviews. The study used an interview guide with open-ended questions. (*See Appendix I*) The type of interview used in this study is a one-on-one interview. A one-on-one interview is a qualitative research method where the researcher conducts a face-to-face or virtual conversation (Creswell & Poth, 2018) with a single participant. It allows interviewers to gather in-depth personal insights on the topic. I used this to allow me time to concentrate on one individual at a time to get their full attention on the subject. Interviews were conducted in Namibian Sign Language. Interviewees were video recorded. I had to record them because, being a Deaf researcher, I could not take notes while interviewing the participants. Recording allowed me time to concentrate on asking questions. I transcribed the recorded interview. The interview schedule occurred at different points, and I agreed with the participants. I used the interview schedule as a guide when I conducted the interview. However, I asked additional questions whenever the response necessitated if those were recorded as probing questions or follow-up questions.

3.7 Research procedures

The study followed the below channel. The procedure followed in data collection was as follows: I applied for research clearance from the Ethics Committee of Wits School of

Education, which I obtained. (See *Appendix II*). The regional education offices (See *Appendix III*) and the three sites were also notified through letters. During the interview, I explained the aim of the study. First, participants were given the information sheets and consent forms. I ensured that I explained all the documents in sign language and asked each participant to confirm their understanding. Once they indicated that they understood, they signed the consent form (see *Appendix IV*). I used a recording camera when carrying out the interview. All participants and I were recorded in our conversations.

All participants were interviewed separately and at the place agreed by them. I went to them and interviewed them, while some indicated a place to meet. I transcribed the data directly from Namibian Sign Language to English. I used two computers, one for playing back the recorded interview while I typed the answers on another. Having completed the transcriptions, I verified the data with the participants. However, the level of literacy among the participants was limited, this is also one of the reasons why I have decided on interviews, as it would help me gather relevant information needed for the research compared to questionnaires. Two participants agreed to review their scripts and returned them with minimal changes. I have one participant that I did a video call with and explained all the answers given during the interview. There were little changes made to the responses transcribed. After this, I was satisfied that the responses transcribed were a true reflection of the raw data. The raw data is kept locked in a password protected laptop, pending the successful completion of the study, then I will destroy them after 5 years.

3.8 Data analysis

The data were analysed using the thematic identification methods. Thematic analysis is methodologically finding, examining, and summarising patterns (themes) within the data, which was used specifically to analyse the data. I also found the Copilot tool incorporated in the Microsoft word, useful for aiding the analysis of data and coming up with themes and emerging themes from the responses. Copilot excels at assisting with qualitative research data analysis by automating time-consuming tasks such as transcription and summarization, identifying themes and topics within large text datasets, and generating visualisations or reports to quickly summarise findings. It can also generate large volumes of text, such as interview transcripts, to identify and categorise topics, which helps in organising and focusing further analysis. This is even more helpful in the way that it populates themes based on the questions. Participants' data in qualitative research is

usually richly expressive and non-numerical. I compiled replies from different participants and then used themes organisation to look for trends and connections in the data. Thematic analysis was well-suited because it makes it possible to identify recurrent themes or ideas that surface in the experiences of many individuals, it is especially well-suited for qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach is deemed perfect for research that aims to investigate social, emotional, or experiential data since it provides flexibility in understanding the intricate, subjective nature of participants' experiences (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). The thematic analysis made sense for the current research since it helped me grasp the social experiences of Deaf learners in regular classrooms. The emerging themes and categories were classified using this strategy and then examined each one considering its settings.

3.9 Ethical consideration

The study involved humans in investigating their experiences in mainstream schools. As a researcher, I made sure to protect their welfare as well as their rights. To do this, I had to clearly explain to them before conducting data collection to ensure that they were well-informed about the study's purpose. I explained to them about the purpose, anonymity and confidentiality. I further reassured the participants of their safety from physical, psychological, or emotional harm during the study. Participants were asked to sign a consent form before participating in the study. In my study, all participants were over 18 years old, and therefore, there was no parental/ guardian consent needed to have them sign the assent forms to comply with ethical standards for research involving children (Graham et al., 2015). Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethics committee of Wits School of Education. McLeod (2024) explains that ethical clearance is needed to address the following: protection of participants, informed consent, confidentiality and privacy and integrity and trustworthiness. For these reasons, I followed this principle and applied for the ethical research clearance that I obtained from the university. My research clearance number is H24/06/30 (*See Appendix V*). Creswell (2018) posits the importance of ethical clearance by underscoring the necessity of protecting research participants from harm. This includes physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Ethical clearance ensures that researchers have considered and mitigated potential risks to participants.

3.10 Trustworthiness

I ensured trustworthiness in carrying out the research. According to Stahl (2020), the trustworthiness of research refers to how credible the research report is. It is a way of ensuring that the collected qualitative data is authentic. It focuses on four key aspects of research, which are dependability, transferability, credibility and confirmability (Stahl, 2020). Dependability of research refers to the consistency of study findings under different conditions, while transferability is the assumption that the process can be repeated and get the same results (Bogdan, 2018). The confirmability of research is about how the findings are close to objective reality and credibility is the confidence that can be bestowed on research findings (Stahl, 2020). The trustworthiness of research is done by having clearly outlined, research objectives and methodology (Creswell, 2014).

3.11 Conclusion

Chapter 3 details the research methodologies employed in this study. Data collection employed mixed research strategies, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. An interpretivism paradigm was useful in interpreting the qualitative data, providing a more nuanced view of the experiences of the Deaf learners in mainstream classroom. The study population comprised nine Deaf learners, purposefully selected. The study selected participants from three different mainstream schools. A one-on-one interview conducted in Namibian sign language formed the research tool. Researchers used thematic identification methods to analyse the data, revealing recurring themes and patterns. The next chapter presents the research findings.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the mixed research undertaken to explore the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia. It examines the key themes that emerged from the interviews, including the academic experiences of Deaf learners, the quality of support provided by schools, the social interactions between Deaf and hearing learners, and the overall impact of current educational policies on the inclusion of Deaf learners. By exploring these themes, this chapter seeks to furnish a comprehensive understanding of the current state of inclusive education for Deaf learners in Namibia and offer recommendations for enhancing their educational experiences.

Academic experiences, including pedagogy, and social and policy settings, were explored as main themes. The study incorporated sub-emerging themes, resulting in a rich blend of findings that address both the literature and the guiding research questions.

4.2 Demographical Data:

This study involved 9 Deaf learners. (7 males and 2 females). Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by changing names and using learner one to learner nine, coded as L1 to L9. The following is the description of the participants from L1 to L9. The coding of learners was done according to the interviews and recorded as such; hence, L1 to L9 represents the first interview to the last of the nine cohorts.

participants	Sex	Age	Years in Mainstream schools	born Deaf/ Hearing ?	Region of birth	Access to SL interpreter	First language
Learner 1	Male	21	2	Deaf	Omusati	yes	<i>oshiwambo</i>
Learner 2	Male	24	2	Deaf	Ohangwena	yes	<i>oshiwambo</i>
Learner 3	Female	21	1	Hearing	Zambezi	yes	<i>Few/Chifwe</i>
Learner 4	Male	21	1	Deaf	Ohangwena	yes	<i>oshiwambo</i>
Learner 5	Male	22	1	Deaf	Khomas	yes	<i>Herero</i>
Learner 6	Male	20	1	Hearing	#Kharas	yes	Afrikaans

Learner 7	Male	22	2	Deaf	Ohangwen a	yes	<i>oshiwambo</i>
Learner 8	Male	23	3	Hearing	Oshana	yes	<i>oshiwambo</i>
Learner 9	Femal e	20	1	Deaf	Oshana	yes	<i>oshiwambo</i>

Learner One (L1) is 21-year-old male. Born in a village in northern Namibia, attended Grades 1-6 at a hearing school. He then moved to Swakopmund to the school for the Deaf at the age of 11. Mixed support from family, some discrimination based on perceived intelligence. He further stated that he has been at the mainstream school for two academic years. L1 has other Deaf peer at the mainstream school her enrolled. He started school well on time and does not consider himself being late for school. Information about the age of becoming Deaf was not captured on learner 1.

L1 receives support at home, although it is not consistent or fully accessible due to the family's limited use of sign language. Despite occasional communication challenges and some discrimination based on perceived intelligence, the learner benefits from a supportive environment that contributes to his educational progress.

Learner Two (L2), a 24-year-old male, born in the Ohangwena region, was born Deaf. His parents sought educational opportunities for him and initially enrolled him at school A of the Deaf. He later transferred to school B of the Deaf where he completed Grade 10, before moving to a mainstream school. He describes the support at home as modest. Although his parents cannot sign, they understand his gestures, which are like those used by Deaf individuals who have never attended formal schooling, also refer to homeSign. Learner 2 has been attending the mainstream school for two consecutive years, and this is his final year. He has other Deaf peers that mainstream school. He is considered well-literate and has mastered various competencies through his primary education at the School for the Deaf. He describes his social life within the mainstream school as positive and enjoys participating in sports.

Learner Three (L3) is a 21-year-old female from Zambezi region, who was born hearing but lost her hearing at the age of three. Her family sought a suitable school for the Deaf and eventually enrolled her in one. She describes her school starting age as late, as she began Grade 1 at the age of nine. There is minimal support from her family, and they are unable to sign. Therefore, she prefers life in the hostel over being at home. Her family is typically

illiterate, with only one cousin having attended university. At the time of the interview, she was in her first year at a mainstream school. She has other Deaf fellow at the mainstream school. Her social life with hearing learners is satisfactory, although they are generally unwilling to learn sign language. However, a few are interested, and she takes the initiative to teach them.

Learner Four (L4) is a 21-year-old male who was born Deaf and began his education at a school for the Deaf. He attended this school until he graduated from Grade 10, after which he transitioned to a mainstream school. His parents are not proficient in sign language, but they communicate with his sister, who has learned the language and is continuously enhancing her skills with his assistance. L4 describes his social life in the mainstream school as predominantly negative, citing instances of bullying and gossip from hearing learners. However, he also notes positive academic as a result of interactions with female hearing learners who were accommodative and supportive. These learners often helped him with English grammar and shared their notes and books. At the time of the interview, L4 was in his second and hopefully final year at the mainstream school.

Learner Five (L5) is a 22-year-old male who was born Deaf. Until he was one year old, his family believed he was hearing. However, when his speech development failed to progress, they took him to the hospital, where they were shocked to learn that he was Deaf. His mother was deeply distressed upon receiving the diagnosis. The family support for L5 is generally good, especially from his aunt, who always tries her best to assist him, particularly with his school requirements. Although she's not proficient in Sign Language, she tries to communicate with him, and he's pleased with the progress they've made. L5 started his education at centre A for pre-primary school and later attended a school for the Deaf before transitioning to a mainstream school. He is currently in his first year at the mainstream school. He has other Deaf peers at the school. He describes his interactions with hearing learners as negative, noting that many of them often encourage him to engage in undesirable activities, such a substances abuse or suggest consuming alcohols. As a result, he sometimes prefers not to interact with them at all.

Learner Six (L6) is a 20-years-old male who was born hearing, but his hearing gradually declined over time. He initially used hearing aids, but his residual hearing continued to deteriorate until he became profoundly Deaf. He began his education at the age of five at a school for the Deaf, where he felt positive about being among other Deaf learners . Upon transitioning to a mainstream school, L6 encountered significant social challenges. He

observed that many hearing learners often engaged in inappropriate behaviours, such as mocking him when he seeks for help, which led him to avoid interacting with them and instead socialize primarily with his Deaf peers. Family support for L6 is minimal. At the time of the interview, he was in his first year at the mainstream school. There are other Deaf peers at the same school he is attending.

Learner Seven (L7) is a 22-year-old who was born Deaf. His family, particularly his mother and sister, are proficient in sign language, which makes him feel included whenever they are around. He began his education at a school for the Deaf, where he completed his primary schooling, and then transitioned to a mainstream school. He has been attending the mainstream school for two academic years. L7 describes his social life at the mainstream school as generally positive, especially with female learners. However, there have been incidents where hearing learners laughed at him and his Deaf peers due to their broken English, which has made him somewhat shy and reluctant to engage. Consequently, he often prefers to socialize with his Deaf peers rather than with hearing learners.

Learner Eight (L8), a 23-year-old who was born hearing but began experiencing hearing difficulties at the age of six while attending a mainstream school. Consequently, his parents transferred him to a school for the Deaf, where he re-started Grade 1 at the age of eight. He continued his education there until Grade 10, after which he moved to a mainstream school for his Grade 11 and 12 studies. L8 described a lack of support at home, which caused him significant distress. However, the teachers at the school for the Deaf recognized his struggles and went out of their way to support him until he left the school. Socially, he had positive interactions with female hearing learners, but he faced challenges with male hearing learners who either attempted to bully or tease him. This negative experience led him to avoid friendships with male hearing learners. Instead, he chose to socialize with other Deaf learners, and female hearing learners. He and the Deaf peer feel that they were isolated from the hearing learners. Although this situation was not ideal, he felt more at ease as it reduced the stress of potential bullying or teasing from male hearing learners. At the time of the interview, L8 was in his second and final year at a mainstream school.

Learner 9 (L9) is a 20-year-old female who was born Deaf. She hails from Ondangwa and began her education at a school for the Deaf during pre-primary. She considers her school years to have started on time and does not feel that she began late. L9 describes her family as supportive; her grandmother, who is ageing but still signs well, is a good communicator in sign language. Her mother is also proficient. The encouragement she has received from

her family has been invaluable. Currently, she is completing her final year in a mainstream school. L9 describes her experiences socializing with hearing peers as generally positive. Although she tends to be somewhat introverted, she readily establishes friendships. However, despite her desire to befriend hearing learners, not all are receptive to learning Sign Language, which could potentially enhance their friendship bonds.

These nine Deaf learners have similarities and differences in their transition journeys to mainstream school. Some transitioned earlier than others, while others transitioned late. The years of the nine Deaf learners ranged between 20 and 24. Males dominated the participant list, with only two female participants. Similarities and differences characterised the participants, such as the onset of deafness varying from being born Deaf to gradually losing hearing. Several learners faced challenges in mainstream schools, including bullying and isolation from peers. Many others preferred to socialise with Deaf peers compared to their hearing peers. Family support varied, with some learners reporting a good family support base, including those who try to sign and those who barely try, while others indicated that they feel isolated. The learners attended different schools, which may have other resources and communities with different attitudes.

4.3 Themes:

4.3.0 Introduction

The research questions served as a framework for the development of the research instrument, which facilitated the identification of key themes. These themes guided the subsequent data presentation. Based on the participants' responses, the following presentation delineated the identified themes and sub-theme

Main themes	Subthemes
1. Academic Experience	• Support in classroom • School support • Interaction with Interpreters
2. Social Experience	• Interaction with Hearing Learners • Impacts on social development
3. Pedagogy	• Teachers' accommodation • Teaching methods • Teachers' preparedness

TABLE 1: THEMES AND SUB-THEMES DISCOVERED FROM THE STUDY

4.3.1 Theme 1: Academic Experience:

Based on the question (Can you describe your experience in the classroom?)

This research sought to understand the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia. One of the research questions guiding the study was to ask the participants to describe their experiences in mainstream schools. The participants' experiences were outlined under the subthemes that emerged. While conducting interviews, I was more interested in understanding their experiences in the school and the support they received from teachers and interpreters.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme: Support in Classroom.

Participants provided different academic experiences.

“In class, I feel good. Sometimes, there are situations when hearing learners disturb me but I choose just to ignore them so there is not much of a big deal” L1.

“In the classroom, there is a teacher and a Sign Language interpreter. Our group was seated at the front. Therefore, the experience was that we were always together in class with an interpreter” L8.

While L1 and L8 seem to feel positive and comfortable, others have different views about their experiences in the classroom.

“It’s difficult, sometimes, our fellow hearing learners, gossip about us, and because we are Deaf, we don’t understand what they are saying. Sometimes, the interpreters come late, and we must wait a long time for them. Sometimes, we are unfortunate, and they don’t show up, and we miss out a lot” L5.

“Deaf and hearing in the same class is not a good combination. Sometimes it can get chaotic. It’s difficult to learn because some hearing learners don’t respect others, and they continuously disrupt the class. Others are on their phones while others are trying to pay attention, making it difficult to learn in peace” L6.

Other participants posted differently about their experiences in the classroom.

"In the classroom, I did not feel much of an issue, but the hearing learners were distracting us, and the teacher also sometimes started teaching while the interpreter was not there. Those were some of the challenges we experienced" L4.

"The whole process feels confusing. I look at the teacher, then look at the interpreter, and then the hearing learners, all are talking or so, I get confused and can't focus on interpreters as there are a lot of movements and disturbances. Sometimes, the interpreter signs just a few signs and says she is tired" L3.

Another participant put out their experience as:

"On my first day in the mainstream class, I was scared; I could not ask or say anything. Sometimes, I could say that I understand the contents, but deep down, I do not understand yet I cannot say that for fear of being asked too many questions. Another issue is the gossip from the hearing learners laughing at us due to our broken English" L2.

"My first time entering the mainstream school was a bit of a challenge. I was scared, and the hearing learners made fun of us and disturbed us a lot" L9.

The last participant has this to say about their experience.

"Most relied on readings and notes from friends, I avoided interpreters, knowing that the interpreters were not doing justice to us. The skills they possessed were limited, so I chose to ask hearing friends to take notes while I tried to see what the teacher was doing. I can say I am gifted with reading body language" L2.

Experiences of Deaf learners in the classroom in mainstream school ranged from good to fearful, being on their own as other coping mechanisms, destruction and confusion, to emotional and social challenges. I deduced from the above quotations that there are varying factors that impact the experiences of the Deaf learners in mainstream schools. This points to limited support that make the learning environment welcoming to the Deaf learners. The other issue that came up is the fact that interpreters are not reliable as they come late at school. This means that Deaf learners are marginalised as they do not get equal opportunities as opposed to hearing learners. Therefore, I conclude that each learner has

unique experiences, which require different multifaceted support, in the next section, I highlight the findings on the support that Deaf learners receive in school.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme: School Support.

This subtheme sought to address learners' experiences of support provided in mainstream schools. Below are responses from the participants about the support received in subjects in mainstream secondary schools.

"The school informed the teachers to always speak slowly and communicate clearly with interpreters" L9.

"The school provided an interpreter and made efforts for us to sit at the front. Additionally, Deaf learners were placed in one class; however, this resulted in a shortage of interpreters if we were scattered across different classes. This situation deprived us of our subject choices" L8.

"The school supported this by offering a mixture of subjects, not Physical Science, but the proven light and easier ones" L4.

"The school has identified about 4 hearing learners that used to help us with editing our schoolwork, in return, we taught them the Sign alphabet and some basic signs." L7.

"We have some sort of support, and sometimes we stay in the afternoon for afternoon classes" L5.

"We have support. We can engage and share ideas and be guided and helped. When we have questions, we get the answers, and this is made possible by our interpreters." L6.

"The school provided three sign language interpreters but all of them, I felt they were not well trained. We must endure a lack of understanding" L2.

"There is little support from the school. The teachers and interpreters are on their own. We feel sidelined sometimes when the interpreter is late or absent" L3.

"Teachers have afternoon classes. Sometimes, there are no interpreters. That's the challenge" L1.

Deducing on the above response, learners postulated that the support received was perceived as insufficient. Although there were initiatives aimed at supporting Deaf learners, the effectiveness and consistency of these measures were inconsistent. Key issues identified include the availability and training of interpreters, the selection of subject and the social dynamic within the classroom. In as much as there is support in the form of interpreters, the findings revealed that Deaf learners feel that it is not enough as they are not well trained as well. These insights underscore the necessity for more comprehensive and consistent support strategies to ensure Deaf learners can fully engage and succeed in mainstream education. The next presentation is on the interaction of the nine Deaf learners with the Sign Language interpreters.

4.3.1.3 Sub-theme: Interaction with Interpreters.

This subtheme responds to the question of Deaf learners' experiences, addressing their interactions with interpreters. The participants responded below, expressing their feelings about the interactions with interpreters.

"The interpreter is okay. I had known them for a long time before I came to a mainstream school, so their interaction with me was good, the challenges we had were just in the class when the teachers were fast" L9.

While L9 indicates that the interpreter was okay, another respondent differed by stating that: *"The interpreters were there like I said, I chose not to develop a dependency. Whenever we tried to engage them, like after a lesson, they always said they didn't know. It was a bit hard for us to appreciate their service to us"* L2.

However, one respondent who has experience of over one year alludes to the following:

"Last year, in 2023, the interpreter we had was good, and I only experienced a few challenges. However, in 2024, many other Deaf individuals attended, and we had to share the interpreter. It has become difficult for me to access the best interpreter" L1.

There are times when Deaf learners feel negatively about the services provided against services they expected. These are highlighted below.

“Some support us, some do not. Sometimes, they go home instead of staying behind in the afternoons with us. I feel bad, although it is hard to accept. Mostly I don’t have a choice but just to accept it” L5.

“Interpreters were not always available or sometimes left earlier, and in the afternoon, there was no support for us” L4.

“Interpreters were not available most of the time after normal school hours. Teachers could come to the class in the afternoon mostly to help us catch up, but the interpreters are not available and always would say that they were sorry and have other business to attend to” L8.

Another participant shared their interaction and quoted below.

“Most often, but they are not always willing to help. Like afternoon classes, they are not always in, and we attend without one. The support is not up to standard. We expect the support that makes us feel part of the school and our education to improve on par with the hearing learners” L3.

Many learners have expressed that the support from interpreters is often inadequate. They prefer teachers who are fluent in sign language, allowing for direct engagement rather than relying on facilitating communication. This highlights the critical need for teachers who understand and can sign to Deaf learners, emphasising the importance of fully fledged schools specifically designed for the Deaf, compared to having interpreters in the mainstream.

The verbatim extracts below demonstrate a positive interaction between the learners and the interpreter. However, it depicts the mismatch of the process, the teaching and interpreting paces not matching, which made the support less effective. This means the interpreter is not being on the same pace as the teachers and the Deaf learners feel that the interpreter lags, leading to them missing out on the teaching.

“Interaction with the SL interpreter was okay. However, the teaching pace and interpreting were not always matching; we were either behind or, when later asked for clarity, the teacher had left, and the interpreter had forgotten. Also, they were only available in the classroom, not everywhere, this has made our experience a bit isolated” L7.

Taking from the above excerpts, it shows that although interaction yielded some positive interaction, the real pictures depict that the interpreter did not provide adequate support. The responses indicate that Deaf learners are faced with inconsistent support, mixed support and quality as well as availability issues.

Overall, while some participants have positive interactions with interpreters, many face challenges related to the availability, consistency, and quality of interpreter support. These issues highlight the need for better-trained interpreters, consistent support throughout the school day, and more inclusive teaching practices to ensure Deaf learners can fully participate in their education. Having dealt with the responses on the interaction of learners with interpreters now, the following narration will address the Second theme: Social Experience

4.3.1.4. Sub-theme: Interpreters Availability ,language skills and attitude.

This sub-theme discusses Interpreters about their availability, language skills and attitude toward their subject and work ethic.

a) Availability

"Most afternoons we are alone with teachers, and they are nowhere to be found. Sometimes left earlier". L4.

"Not available in the afternoon. As I said sometimes makes me sad, why suffer with limited support". L5

"I mostly find it difficult to study in the afternoon, when we have teacher helping as there mostly no one available". L6.

L4, L5 and L6 indicate that afternoons the interpreters were not available. This leaves them with no support but to rely on their hearing peers. The peer in most cases mock them or are not willing to support them, which may contribute further to distresses among the Deaf learners in mainstream schools.

"Interpreters were not available most of the time after normal school hours". L8

"Normally I don't rely mostly on them as I do not want to depend on them, it's pointless, they are not always willing to support". L2.

L8 indicate that after school hours they are left with no interpreters. This add to what L4, 5 and 6 indicated that they are not catered for after school and this force them to seek help from the hearing peers that are either unwilling or will mock them rather.

"Not available every, only in the classroom so sometimes we do not have interpreters". L7

“Availability is not an issue; it’s the service we get. Sometimes they are doing perfectly and next they are not willing to accompany us anywhere”.L9.

“They are there during school but then they are not willing to try and stay behind if we have an event in the afternoon”. L3

L 9 and L3 add to the concern of others about availability of interpreters. This shows that Deaf learners lacked support from the interpreters when the school knock off.

“Not the best one I wanted as they must be at other classes than the previous year”. L1.

The data gathered from multiple learners (L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7, L8, L9) consistently reveals that interpreter availability is a major concern, particularly after regular school hours. While interpreters are generally present during formal class time, their absence in the afternoons when learners often need additional academic support leaves Deaf learners without access to communication. This forces them to rely on hearing peers, who are often unwilling to help or may mock them, further contributing to feelings of exclusion, frustration, and emotional distress.

Some learners also noted that even when interpreters are present, they are not always willing to extend their support beyond the minimum required, such as staying for school events or extra lessons. This inconsistency undermines the learners’ trust and reliance on interpreter services.

In conclusion, the findings clearly indicate that interpreter support in mainstream schools is insufficient and inconsistent, especially during critical after-school periods. This lack of availability not only limits Deaf learners’ access to academic content but also isolates them socially and emotionally, as they are left to navigate communication barriers alone or with unsupportive peers.

b) Language skills

This section looks at the skill of interpreters in interpreting for the Deaf learners in mainstream schools. The section asked learners to share their own lived experiences of interpreters in their schools.

“Sometimes it’s difficult understanding interpreters, that’s better to be in the schools for the deaf and taught by teachers who are fluent in sign language. Sometimes interpreters are not serious only there for money”. L6.

Learner 6 felt the interpreters lacked the skills to interpret in the school settings and preferred being taught by a teacher that is fluent signer without relying on an interpreter.

"Support is not up to standard. They simply are not good for the program. We are failing". L3

"Not well trained to interpret maybe in the classroom, they lag behind and can't real help".L7

"I don't even bother to follow in most case, I try to read on chalkboard and copy notes from hearing peer, it's better to get more information that way, interpreters always struggle even with simple terms".L2

L3, L2, and L7 indicated that they have also experienced the same challenge of interpreters not providing adequate information in the classroom. This means that they lack skills.

The findings reveal a consistent concern among Deaf learners regarding the insufficient skills and professionalism of interpreters in mainstream school settings. Learners expressed that interpreters often struggle to convey classroom content accurately, lag behind in interpreting, and lack the ability to handle even basic academic terms. This results in learners resorting to alternative strategies such as reading from the chalkboard or relying on hearing peers who may not always be supportive.

c) Attitudes towards Deaf and their profession

The sub-section looks at interpreter profession and attitude towards the Deaf as the direct clients. Interpreting profession requires on to exercise high standard of professionalism and follow sets of ethical standards that guides the profession and how to execute the work with due diligent.

"Sometimes they show respect, sometimes they don't care. Like mood swing or I don't know, can't be reliable at all".L2.

"Hardly show respect to the Deaf, imagine one can say I am just working as u are studying, so we both need each other." L5

"Most of the old interpreters tr and also show respect for deaf culture and adhere to profession, but many of the times new ones don't care much." L6

"Lack profession and always disregard our rights." L9

"I find them rude and don't respect Deaf culture and their profession. One is chewing bubble-gum, have long hair or lashes, nails and colours that make one hard to concentrate, those new ones especially are so unprofessional." L7

These learners indicated newer interpreters lack respect for the Deaf culture and do not uphold professional standard constantly. Older interpreters are seen as more respectful and culturally aware.

"Sometimes they dress in too many colours." L1

"Nails, jewellerys, make up etc, and dress show off too much... how must I concentrate?"
L4

"I find them rude and don't respect Deaf culture and their profession. One is chewing bubble-gum, have long hair or lashes, nails and colours that make one hard to concentrate, those new ones especially are so unprofessional." L7

"Only one looks well presentable, and adhere to the codes, while other dress whatever they want event nails are coloured and long." L8

These learners have indicated distraction appearance such as bright colours , long nails, excessive make ups which are seen as unprofessional and disruptive to communication. Thus, there is a call for interpreters to dress modestly and in line with professional standards.

L3 has indicated concerns about the quality of interpreters training, specifically from specific institutions, suggesting a need for better standard and accountability in interpreter training.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Social Experience:

The social experience theme yielded two subthemes that were derived from the interview schedule on the social interaction between hearing learners in mainstream schools and the impact of socialization on their social development.

Based on the responses and quotes, the social interaction provided varied and complex responses with mixed reactions dominated by the responses. Below, different responses provide these quotes.

4.3.2.1 Sub-theme: Interaction with hearing learners.

Socialising with hearing people depends on the situation. Hearing learners are not always interested in the Deaf. Below are quotations from the responses of the participants about interaction with hearing learners.

"We, however, want to make friends, but only a few hearings are interested" L1.

"The socialising with hearing learners was okay. I mostly tried to teach them sign language. I like friends who can sign with me, but some of them are not interested" L9.

"Interaction with hearing peers is okay. But they are not willing to learn Sign Language. A few are interested and I teach them the alphabet" L3.

"I interact well with some. I do not interact well with others because they encourage me to do bad things like offering me alcohol or condoms, but I always decline, and I choose not to associate with them" L5.

"Deaf and hearing in the same class is not a good combination. Sometimes it can get chaotic. It's difficult to learn because some hearing learners don't respect others, and they continuously disrupt the class. Others are on their phones while others are trying to pay attention making it difficult to learn in peace" L6.

Despite the above responses indicating negative experiences, there are other responses that go against them. The below verbatim excerpts show that there are some positive interactions within mainstream schools.

"It was very good! It was positive. We played soccer and socialised outside, and on weekends, I always had a few friends, 3-5, teaching them Sign Language. But a few incidents here and there are noted where I wanted to fight the hearing learners because they wanted to bully or mock us for using Sign Language. In one incident, their parents were summoned to the office, and they were reprimanded" L2.

"Social interaction with girls was good. Boys were always trying to bully or gossip. Deaf themselves made few friends with hearing learners" L8.

L2 and L8 portrayed a positive interaction with the hearing learners. As the quotations above show, the mixed responses have outweighed both positive and negative, with only one response disagreeing with any positive rewards from social interaction with the Hearing learners.

“It was negative. I feel the hearing liked to gossip a lot and did not want to interact with us in most cases. We, however, wanted to make friends with the hearing, but it was not easy” L4.

To conclude, this highlighted subtheme interaction of Deaf learners with hearing learners; the predominance of mixed social interactions among Deaf learners suggests that while there are opportunities for positive engagement and support, significant challenges remain. These mixed feelings indicate a need for more inclusive and supportive social environments in mainstream schools. Efforts to educate hearing learners about Deaf culture and sign language, along with fostering a more inclusive school culture, could help mitigate negative attitudes and enhance the overall social experience for Deaf learners .

4.3.2.2 Sub-theme: Impact on Social Development & self-development.

Several factors characteristic of educational environments significantly affect the social progress of learners, particularly those requiring specialised communication support. This analysis examines the impact of these factors on the social development of nine respondents, highlighting mixed, positive and negative experiences. The experiences are delivered for the social interaction question.

The Deaf learners put forth their social development in the mainstream schools as illustrated below.

“It helped me to develop self-confidence, but also, helped me to see challenges as strength. Before I would rely more on people but when I went to the mainstream school, I would try to cope on my own” L7.

“I have learned a lot in the mainstream school, and my vocabulary has expanded. Hearing learners also have helped me gain self-confidence. But in most cases, they also gossip and make fun of us when we are signing” L9.

Another response showed other positive developments derived from mainstreaming.

"It helped me a lot. For example, when I was at the Deaf school, I had limited vocabulary and did not know many things, but I'm learning more in the mainstream school. The challenge is the environment and communication. Socially, it's okay" L1.

Social Development and self-development for Deaf learners in mainstream schools appear to be well experienced, another response quoted as:

"It has helped me to improve and participate a bit more freely by asking questions and my confidence has increased as a result" L6.

Mainstreaming Deaf learners presents noted impediments, as quoted below.

"I feel my academic results are decreasing, my parents also are concerned that I was doing well at the school for the Deaf than now in the mainstream. My concentration is limited now. I juggle between the teacher and the interpreters as well as the hearing learners in the class. It is a new environment which is challenging in terms of concentration. I also feel I need a study mate as we used before in the Deaf school" L3.

"It has hindered my progress. I prefer being in a school for the Deaf. In the mainstream, we are struggling to keep up with communication as it is done by the interpreters, and the teacher cannot communicate directly with us" L4.

"We could excel but the problem was the interpreters we had. Being taught by a hearing teacher and interpreter is not an easy process. So, if we had teachers who could communicate with us directly, we could excel well" L8.

"When I was at the school for the Deaf, I had a lot of awareness and learned a lot. I even got rewarded with certificates for doing well. But since I moved to mainstream school, I feel like my development has been hindered. Deaf school is better. It is very challenging being at a mainstream school. Hearing learners are progressing, and the Deaf are failing. I feel interpreters and the system of mainstreaming are the problem" L5.

While L4,5, 6 and 8 projected hindrances in their social development, L-2 was neutral about the social development, as cited below, indicating the neutrality of the respondent.

“The interpreters were there like I said, I chose not to develop a dependency. Whenever we tried to engage them, like after a lesson, they always said I don’t know. It was a bit hard for us to appreciate their service to us” L2.

In conclusion, while mainstreaming Deaf learners can foster growth in self-confidence and social skills, it also presents significant challenges in communication and academic performance. The mixed experiences highlight the need for better support systems, including more effective interpreters and teachers who are fluent in sign language. The effectiveness of interpreters has been highlighted as a hindrance in mainstream schools where Deaf learners rely solely on the interpreters to pass on the information.

Social integration in mainstream school is short of the desired and thus impacts the Deaf learners socially. These measures will ensure that learners can thrive both socially and academically in mainstream schools. However, the most suitable recommendation would be to place Deaf learners in schools for the Deaf, where fluent signing teachers can employ a direct teacher-to-learner approach.

4.3.3 Theme 3. Pedagogy.

The third theme is Pedagogy, which highlights the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream schools. The findings emphasize the following subthemes:

1. **Teacher Preparedness & Accommodation:** This subtheme examines the teaching approaches of teachers and how they accommodate Deaf learners .
2. **Teaching Methods:** This subtheme explores the methods teachers use to instruct and whether these methods are responsive to the learning needs of Deaf learners .

Across these subthemes, the findings present a concerning picture of the lack of preparedness among teachers. This underscores the need for specialized training and ongoing professional development to better support the mainstreaming process.

4.3.3.1 Sub-theme: Teacher Preparedness & Accommodation.

Varying factors create many challenges for Deaf learners in mainstream schools; this section closely examines one such factor and its impact on them. The following are extracts from the responses of participants. These findings allow us to conclude how best to address the implications.

“No special accommodation for us. Like in English, when we are doing English exams, no extra marks are given despite having only written English and essays. For listening and oral, we don’t get anything” L1.

Another participant posted that:

“The teacher does nothing special for us. It’s a normal way of teaching every day. The interpreters make sure to be there from the start of the lesson” L3.

Furthermore, another participant also disagreed with the support from teachers by saying:

“The teacher prepared lessons as usual and never made special arrangements for us. We only relied on the interpreters. However, in most cases, teachers were willing to write on the chalkboard for us and explain more while the interpreter was helping us” L4.

While learner-4 seems to have received some support from the teachers, this support I deemed insufficient to supplement the needs of the Deaf learners in mainstream schools. This is alluded to below.

“It’s difficult being taught by teachers who don’t know Sign Language as we rely solely on the interpreter and at times confusing. Interpreters struggle at times” L6.

“There was no special arrangement for us. Teachers taught the way they teach, and interpreters helped us” L7.

“It is never fair! Teachers used oral communication, even trying to talk to us, hardly trying to sign. How do we understand? They do not understand the Deaf culture nor know our needs. It was plain bad” L2.

From the quotations above responses L1,2,3,4,6 and 7 all claim that there are no special ways teachers employ to accommodate them in their teaching and learning. Because they face these challenges, Deaf learners in mainstream schools are likely to lose out on quality education and have their pursuit of excellence impaired.

However, there are some efforts that need to be encouraged along with additional approaches to assist Deaf learners in mainstream schools to excel.

The below narration exposes the positive strides some teachers made in ensuring their Deaf learners are accommodated.

“Teachers for Biology tried better to make sure we understood. The teacher always prepared large drawings and showed us. Others did nothing out of their way to help us at all” L8.

“The classroom was interesting sometimes only when agriculture was taught. The teacher was energetic and made sure he had something to say to make the class atmosphere change to good. However, the interpreter we had was also slow and always complained that she could not hear well” L9.

The quotes from L8 and L9 illustrate the effort and engagement of some teachers. However, there is still a visible inconsistency in the support provided, which underscores the need for more uniform training, professional development and resource distribution. Effective education for Deaf learners in mainstream requires adequately equipping teachers to support the learners in pursuit of their academic goals.

While the above seems to be in the positive stride, L5 seems undecided and thus could not say whether there was accommodation from teachers' teaching or not. Below is an extract of the response.

“Interpreters are not consistent. They don't always come to classes to interpret, and we miss out a lot” L5.

L5 suggests that the inconsistent availability of interpreters has affected their participation, despite efforts from teachers' efforts, if there are no interpreters, Deaf learners are likely to be left out. This is a clarion call to ensure adequate provision of well-skilled interpreters.

Below are quotations about teachers' preparedness as elicited from the respondents.

“Teachers know how to teach, but they have challenges with how best to help us or how to engage us. In most cases, the interpreters, also feel like they are struggling to pass on the information to us. In most cases, this makes us a bit frustrated. The teachers seem not ready or keen to help us” L4.

The above quotation shows that teachers possess teaching skills, however, they lack practical experience in how to help Deaf learners in their daily teachings. Another respondent is quoted in the same fashion below.

“No, teachers were not skilled to teach us, they do not know Sign Language, they did not understand Deaf Culture, and they also were not practically trained to teach the Deaf. Despite giving some signs and teaching them the alphabet, they will still forget or not use them at all” L7.

Other respondents have this to say about teacher preparedness.

"A few teachers can see that there are Deaf learners in their classes. In most cases, teachers start teaching without worrying if an interpreter is there or if we are included. They teach the way they teach, especially planning without considering our needs or without trying to accommodate us" L1.

"Teachers were not ready, were not skilled, and they did not know how to teach the Deaf. I blame the government for this plan. It was a bad idea to take us to hearing school because we want skilled teachers like you teaching us and signing directly to us, not through an interpreter! For example? No, we want a school for the Deaf, a fully-fledged school for the Deaf with the same teachers teaching and interpreting learners, not through interpreters, at least this can be considered at the university level, not at the secondary level. Whenever we fail a test, interpreters and teachers blame us for not being serious or for not learning, but the reality is that we do not understand" L2.

"Teachers have teaching skills, but teachers cannot teach us without an interpreter. Teachers only depend on interpreters to help us understand them. In most cases, teachers do not make efforts to engage us alone without an interpreter at all. We feel that is disadvantaging us because even with spelling, they do not know" L3.

"They are not equipped at all. They don't even know basic Sign Language; they mainly use gestures" L5.

"Not equipped at all" L6.

"I don't think the teachers were equipped well because they did not provide much support needed. Most of them would speak with their back to us, if a Deaf can see the speaker's face, it's better. When they speak with their back on us, interpreters also feel discouraged and start complaining I missed this, I missed that, I couldn't hear. So, we then also just feel discouraged" L8.

"I cannot say they are adequately prepared; communication is always through an interpreter, but if the interpreter is somehow struggling, I felt the teacher was not doing well enough" L9.

The quoted responses highlight significant challenges in the preparedness of teachers to effectively teach Deaf learners in mainstream schools:

Lack of Awareness and Inclusion: Many teachers start teaching without ensuring that Deaf learners are included or that an interpreter is present, leading to feelings of exclusion among Deaf learners .

Insufficient Training: Teachers often lack the necessary skills and training to teach Deaf learners . They rely heavily on interpreters and do not make efforts to engage directly with Deaf learners .

Dependence on Interpreters: The reliance on interpreters is a major issue. When interpreters are unavailable or struggling, Deaf learners are left without adequate support.

Inadequate Communication: Teachers frequently use oral communication without considering the needs of Deaf learners , such as facing the learners while speaking or using basic sign language.

Need for Specialised Schools: Some responses suggest that mainstream schools may not be the best environment for Deaf learners , advocating instead for specialised schools with teachers skilled in Sign Language and Deaf culture. Only two respondents cited some support however, seven of the respondents cited that the teachers were not prepared and needed a school for the Deaf compared to mainstreaming them in school for the Hearings. The responses reveal a significant need to better train teachers and raise awareness to effectively support Deaf learners in mainstream classrooms, despite some existing efforts. In the next step, I will present the response on the policy on Inclusive Education, what the respondents feel about the Policy and what their responses call for.

4.3.3.2 Sub-theme: Teaching Methods

Teachers in the classroom employ varying teaching methods to accommodate learners with different learning needs. The use of learner centred approach and inquiry-based learning where teacher use a clear line of sight, written handouts and visual aids, interpreted videos where possible and flexible seating arrangements. This section looked at the possible teaching methods that Deaf learners experienced in their learning process in the mainstream school. The following responses showed that some teachers made efforts, although they may not be the best possible efforts to support fully the learners' comprehension in the classroom.

“The mathematics teacher helped us a lot in the afternoon. However, there was no interpreter to support the process” L4.

“Some teachers used one or a few Deafen-one-teacher and then explained in detail with help from the interpreter. This was only from a few teachers. It was helpful because we were a bit relaxed and could ask questions compared to the whole class” L7.

“Only the teacher of Biology seemed to understand that we needed visual material. The teacher made large pictures and brought them to the class” L8.

“There are those teachers who try! The mathematics teacher and Agriculture teacher try to make sure we are involved. The mathematics teacher can ask us to solve a problem on the chalkboard, and he will be there supporting us, trying to show us his simple signing skills. It felt more relaxing and accommodating” L9.

These quotations above indicated that there were efforts from the teachers in accommodating the Deaf learners .

While other respondents stated that.

“There is minimum effort when teachers have afternoon classes. Sometimes, there are no interpreters. That’s the challenge” L1.

“We have support. We can engage and share ideas and be guided and helped. When we have questions, we get the answers, and this is made possible by our interpreters” L6.

The schools employed learner-centred approach; however, Deaf learners were left behind due to lack of teachers who are fluent in sign language. Interpreters aided the teaching methods used to bridge communication gap.

The below response showed that teachers lacked the skill to accommodate Deaf learners , and their teaching never varied to note the fact that there are Deaf learners in the classroom.

“Nothing” L2.

“Teachers don’t care about us. They don’t see whether we have an interpreter or not. They just continue teaching. I feel Deaf kids should be taught by the Deaf, then we will progress more easily. It is never fair! Teachers used oral communication, even trying to talk to us,

hardly trying to sign. How do we understand? They do not understand the Deaf culture nor know their needs. It was plain bad” L-5.

“There is little support from the school. The teachers and interpreters are on their own. We feel sidelined sometimes when the interpreter is late or absent” L-3.

This section showed that lack of consistent support coupled with limited teacher training and inconsistency efforts, such as late coming or absence of the interpreters, as one of the dependable means, was echoed by many respondents. Overall, while there were notable efforts from some teachers and the provision of interpreters in certain cases, the support for Deaf learners was inconsistent and often inadequate. The lack of training for teachers and the dependency on interpreters highlighted significant gaps in accommodating Deaf learners effectively in mainstream classrooms.

4.4 Summary

The sections highlight the policy adequacy which depicted high disagreements in its adequacy and advocated for improved policy development to address the unique educational needs of everyone. Further, I looked at the Implementation section, which is a significant concern with many responses indicating that the implementation is lacking and needs effective practical implementation to gauge the needs of Deaf learners and improve implementation across the sector. Equal access to education denotes a significant concern for improvement. This will bring about true equity in the education of Deaf learners. In addition, I presented the responses on the policy support and outcome, signifying the gap between policy and actual support provided, indicating a need for better alignment and more consistent support. To achieve genuine and unequivocal equity in the education of Deaf learners, comprehensive measures that address the systemic challenges in policy development, implementation, and resource allocation are imperative. This includes enhanced teacher training programs and ensuring adequate support systems are put in place. Such initiatives are vital for fostering an inclusive educational environment that meets the diverse needs of all learners, particularly those with special educational needs.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented findings from the research questions as outlined above under different themes and subthemes that emerged from the analysis of data. In the next chapter, I will present a detailed discussion of the research findings.

In addressing the primary research question, the discussion will culminate in presenting a conclusion and offering recommendations for actions, further research, or significant questions for policymakers to consider.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions and the reviewed literature. The discussion highlights the educational and social experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia, the challenges faced by teachers, and the adequacy of inclusive education policies. The themes are organised around four broad areas: academic and social experiences, pedagogical practices, and policy implementation.

5.2 Educational and Social Experiences of Deaf learners

5.2.1 Lack of Trained Interpreters and Inadequate Resources

The study revealed that insufficient interpreter provision remains a persistent obstacle. Deaf learners reported inconsistent access to interpreters, some of whom lacked adequate skills, resulting in miscommunication and educational exclusion. This finding aligns with Akay (2023) and Prior (2021), who emphasise that undertrained interpreters and inadequate resources hinder effective inclusion. Similarly, Richardson et al. (2010) observed that communication breakdowns often contribute to isolation and frustration among Deaf learners.

5.2.2 Communication Barriers

Communication challenges were central to learners' negative experiences. Without sign-fluent teachers or reliable interpreters, learners struggled to participate meaningfully in classroom interactions. These findings echo Damyanov, (2024), who argue that communication barriers undermine interaction and inclusion. As the World Federation of the Deaf(2006) notes, successful inclusion requires that peers, teachers, and staff use sign language rather than relying solely on interpreters.

5.2.3 Social Experiences and Peer Interaction

Social experiences varied across learners. While some reported positive interactions with peers, the majority experienced exclusion, mockery, or indifference from hearing classmates. This is consistent with Beatty (2019) and Samuel (2017), who underscore the role of cultural awareness in fostering inclusive peer relationships. When awareness of Deaf culture was lacking, learners were more vulnerable to marginalisation. Conversely, opportunities for sports or informal sign language learning encouraged positive interaction.

The impact on social development was mixed. Some learners gained confidence and expanded their vocabulary, while others experienced loneliness and isolation. Studies by

Kennedy et al. (2020) and Ariastuti and Wahyudin (2022) confirm that mainstreaming can foster resilience but also risks alienation without targeted support and structured peer engagement programs.

5.3 Pedagogical Practices

5.3.1 Teacher Preparedness and Accommodation

The findings show that most teachers lacked specialised training and relied heavily on interpreters. Many failed to adjust teaching methods, leading to systemic exclusion of Deaf learners from classroom processes. Similar patterns are reported by Ackah-Jnr (2020) and Kumatongo and Muzata (2021), who found that teachers' limited preparation constrains inclusive practices. Mdikana (2021) also noted reluctance among teachers to embrace inclusive education due to inadequate skills in sign language.

Although some teachers employed visual aids and practical activities, these efforts were insufficient to overcome communication barriers. As Storbeck et al. (2009) highlight, the absence of sign-proficient teachers remains a critical barrier to equitable learning. Moreover, the lack of assessment accommodations, such as compensating for missed oral components in English exams, illustrates systemic shortcomings in addressing Deaf learners' needs.

5.3.2 Preference for Specialised Schools

Several participants expressed a preference for schools for the Deaf, citing greater teacher engagement and direct communication. This resonates with findings by Sheeya (2018) and Damyanov (2024), who highlight that mainstream environments often fail to provide the linguistic and cultural support essential for Deaf learners. Moreover, the presence of Deaf educators and signing teachers has been shown to improve learner confidence and participation (Mdikana, 2022).

5.4 Policy Implementation

5.4.1 Adequacy of Inclusive Education Policies

Despite Namibia's inclusive education frameworks, implementation remains weak. Respondents perceived a gap between policy intent and classroom practice, confirming earlier observations by Mokaleng and Möwes (2020). While policies exist on paper, practical support mechanisms are inconsistent, leadership is weak, and monitoring is minimal. Storbeck et al. (2009) similarly argue that inappropriate communication methods and inadequate training of educators undermine policy effectiveness.

5.4.2 Equal Access and Policy Gaps

Learners' reports of isolation highlight the failure of policies to guarantee equitable access. Recognition of Namibian Sign Language as a national language is still absent, leaving a major barrier unaddressed. The WFD (2006) and Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasise that education must be delivered in appropriate languages and modes of communication. Without systemic recognition of NSL, Deaf learners remain disadvantaged in mainstream classrooms.

5.4.3 Policy Support and Outcomes

The lack of support for teachers and insufficient interpreter training perpetuate exclusion. As noted by Damyanov, K. (2024). limited teacher preparation and inflexible curricula compound challenges. Similarly, Haitembu (2014, cited in Mowes et al., 2020) shows that teacher training often lacks practical components. Effective policy implementation requires leadership, resources, and evaluation mechanisms to bridge the gap between rhetoric and practice.

5.5. Summary

5.6 Conclusion

The discussion demonstrates that while Namibia has made strides in policy development, Deaf learners in mainstream schools face systemic barriers that compromise their academic and social inclusion. Core challenges include communication barriers, untrained teachers and interpreters, resource constraints, and policy-practice gaps. To move towards genuine inclusivity, Namibia must prioritise recognition of Namibian Sign Language, strengthen interpreter and teacher training, and establish robust policy monitoring. Without these measures, the social model of disability remains undermined by practices rooted in the medical model, perpetuating exclusion.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study's findings, outlines its potential contribution to knowledge, and provides recommendations for policy, practice, and future research. It also discusses the study's limitations before drawing final conclusions. The chapter emphasises how the findings advance debates on inclusive education for Deaf learners in Namibia and highlight areas requiring urgent intervention.

6.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Grade 10–12 Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia. The central research question asked: *What are the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream schools?* Two supporting questions examined (a) the challenges hearing teachers encounter in addressing the needs of both Deaf and hearing learners, and (b) the pedagogical practices that shape Deaf learners' experiences.

The study employed a qualitative research approach, drawing on data from nine Deaf learners in three mainstream schools across different regions. Semi-structured interviews provided insights into learners' academic and social experiences, their interaction with teachers and interpreters, and the influence of policy on their education.

The findings revealed four critical themes: (1) educational and social experiences, (2) pedagogical practices, (3) communication barriers and resource constraints, and (4) the implementation of inclusive education policies. Central to these findings was the observation that while Namibia has developed inclusive education policies, systemic shortcomings, particularly inadequate teacher preparation, inconsistent provision of interpreters, and lack of recognition of Namibian Sign Language, continue to limit meaningful participation for Deaf learners.

6.3 Contribution of the Study

This study makes several contributions. First, it enriches understanding of how Deaf learners navigate mainstream schools in Namibia, an area under-researched in the national context. Second, it underscores the tension between policy rhetoric and practical realities, particularly the disjuncture between inclusive education principles and their implementation. Third, it adds weight to calls for specialised educational provision, such as schools for the Deaf staffed with teachers proficient in sign language, while also pointing to reforms needed in mainstream schools. Finally, the study provides evidence that can inform future

policymaking, resource allocation, and teacher education reforms aimed at strengthening inclusive education.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Recommendations for Research

- Future studies should expand the focus beyond learners to include hearing teachers, school management, and education officials.
- Comparative research would illuminate how challenges such as communication barriers, inadequate teacher training, and reliance on interpreters affect both teaching and learning.
- Employing mixed-methods designs could also generate richer insights into systemic barriers and possible solutions.

6.4.2 Recommendations for Policy

- **Strengthen inclusive policy implementation:** Inclusive education frameworks should be revised to ensure equitable access to quality education for Deaf learners . Policies must move beyond theory to practical strategies supported by monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- **Recognition of Namibian Sign Language (NSL):** NSL should be formally recognised as a national language to legitimise its use in education, strengthen training and research, and foster communication between the Deaf and hearing communities.
- **Specialised schools for the Deaf:** Establishing fully resourced schools for the Deaf, particularly for learners in Grades 10–12, would address current systemic inadequacies. Such institutions should serve as centres of excellence, staffed by Deaf educators and sign-fluent teachers, while complementing inclusive education efforts in mainstream schools.

6.4.3 Recommendations for Practice

- **Teacher training:** Pre-service and in-service teacher education should include compulsory modules on Deaf education and sign language proficiency. Continuous professional development should be prioritised to enhance inclusive pedagogical practices.
- **Interpreter training and provision:** Interpreter training programmes should be intensified, and certification standards strengthened to ensure competence and consistency. Adequate allocation of interpreters across schools is critical.

- **Resource allocation:** Schools must be equipped with teaching aids, assistive technologies, and financial resources to reduce communication and learning barriers.
- **Cultural awareness:** Schools should promote Deaf cultural awareness through structured programmes such as Deaf Awareness Week and peer sensitisation initiatives, fostering greater interaction and inclusion between Deaf and hearing learners.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to nine Deaf learners from three mainstream schools, restricting the generalisability of its findings. The exclusive use of semi-structured interviews may have constrained the breadth of data; a mixed-methods approach might have provided a more comprehensive perspective. Furthermore, the focus on learners' voices excluded teachers' and policymakers' perspectives, which are essential to understanding the broader dynamics of policy implementation. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the lived realities of Deaf learners in Namibian mainstream schools.

6.6 Conclusions

The study concludes that Namibia's current approach to inclusive education for Deaf learners remains insufficient. Communication barriers, untrained teachers and interpreters, resource constraints, and weak policy implementation undermine the effectiveness of mainstreaming. While inclusive education policies exist, their impact is compromised by inadequate leadership, insufficient resource allocation, and lack of accountability.

There is an urgent need for systemic reforms, including recognition of Namibian Sign Language, investment in teacher and interpreter training, and the establishment of specialised schools for the Deaf. These measures, combined with stronger policy monitoring and a commitment to Deaf cultural inclusion, will ensure that Deaf learners access equitable, meaningful education. Without such interventions, the aspirations of inclusive education in Namibia risk remaining aspirational rather than transformative.

6.7 Final Remarks

This research journey has been both academically and personally transformative. It underscores the pressing need to move beyond trial-and-error approaches in Namibia's education system and to centre the voices and experiences of Deaf learners in shaping policy and practice. The findings call for a rethinking of mainstreaming strategies to ensure

that inclusion is not symbolic but genuinely responsive to the needs of Deaf learners . The knowledge and skills gained through this study will guide future contributions to education and policy development in Namibia, with the aim of fostering a more inclusive and equitable system for all learners.

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List of Appendix:

a. Appendix I Interview Guide- Questionnaire

Interview Guide for Deaf learners :

Investigating the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia:

1. Demographic Questions

- 1.1. Can you describe your background, including where you were born and where you grew up? (*other probing Questions*)
- 1.2. How long have you been attending a mainstream secondary school?
- 1.3. How would you describe your school starting age and where? (*other probing Questions*) Access to pre-primary schools?)
- 1.4. How would you describe the level of support you receive from your family regarding your education? (Deaf family, Signing family extra classes?)

2. Academic Experiences Questions

- 2.1. Can you describe your experience in the classroom?
- 2.2. How does your school provide support in subjects where you need help?
- 2.3. How often do you interact with a sign language interpreter in class?

How effective is their support?

3. Social Experiences Questions

- 3.1. How do you interact socially with hearing classmates? Can you describe a positive or negative experience?
- 3.2. In what ways do you think being in a mainstream school has helped or hindered your social development?

4. Pedagogy

- 4.1. How do teachers accommodate your learning needs in class and what teaching methods do you find most effective?
- 4.2. What methods do teachers use to make lessons accessible to you, and how effective are these methods?
- 4.3. How adequate are the teachers equipped to teach Deaf learners ? Can you give examples?

5. Policy

- 5.1. The current educational policies adequately meet my unique needs as a Deaf learner.

Probing question

Can you explain your response? Because we can go to mainstream school
In what ways do you feel the policies either support or fail to support you?

5.2. I believe that my school effectively implements the policies designed for Learners with special educational needs

Probing question

How does your school put these policies into practice? Can you provide examples where the policies have either helped or not helped?

5.3. I find that the policies make learning accessible for me in the same way it is for hearing learners.

Probing question

Based on your experience, what specific aspects of your education are either accessible or inaccessible due to these policies?

5.4. The support I receive in school aligns with what is outlined in the policies for Deaf learners .

Probing question

How would you describe the support you receive?

Can you provide examples of policies that were either followed or ignored?

5.5. The current policies empower me to achieve the same educational outcomes as my hearing classmates.

Probing question

Do you feel that you are achieving the same outcomes? Why or why not? What improvements could be made to the policies to help you succeed?

5.6. Teachers in my school are well-prepared to teach Deaf learners .

Follow-up question/ probing Question

Can you provide specific examples of instances when teachers either met or failed to meet your learning needs? Additionally, what further training or support do you believe educators require to better accommodate Deaf learners ?

5.7. The school I attend complies with the educational policies regarding Deaf learners .

Probing Question

Can you provide specific examples of how the school has adhered to or deviated from these policies? How does the school's compliance (or lack thereof) impact your learning experience?

5.8. The policies in place ensure equal access to education for Deaf learners in mainstream schools.

Follow-up Question:

In your experience, what specific aspects of your education are either accessible or inaccessible due to these policies?

5.9. I believe the current policies related to Deaf education are sufficient to meet my learning needs.

How would you describe the support you receive? Can you provide examples where the policies were followed or ignored?

5.10. The inclusive education policies in Namibia allow me to access quality education alongside hearing learners.

Probing Question

Do you feel you're achieving the same outcomes? Why or why not?

Thank you for your participation

b. Appendix II- ETHIC CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Nanyeni

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: H24/06/30

PROJECT TITLE

Investigating the experiences of grade 10-12 deaf learners
in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Mr L Nanyeni

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Wits School of Education/

DATE CONSIDERED

21 June 2024

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved
Risk Level: Minimal

EXPIRY DATE

28 October 2027

DATE

29 October 2024

CHAIRPERSON

(Professor J Watermeyer)

cc: Supervisor : Dr G McIlroy

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **A SIGNED COPY** returned to the Secretary electronically. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. I/we agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low Risk studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.

Signature

30 / 10 / 2024

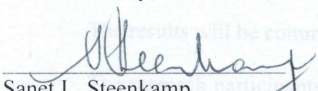
Date

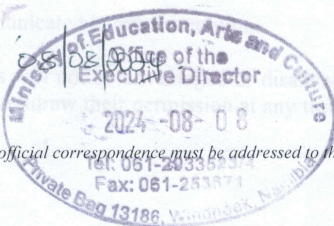
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

c. Appendix III- MINISTRY OF EDUCATION


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Enquiries: Mr. J. Bantam Tel: +264 61 -293 3202 Fax: +264 61- 293 3922 Email: johannesbantam@gmail.com File no: 13/2/9/1 Linekela Paul Nanyeni Cellphone Nr: 0812846018 Email: 1615510@students.wits.ac.za Dear Mr Nanyeni, SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS IN NAMIBIA The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 17 April 2024 seeking for permission to do academic research for your Masters degree in Education. The research which is titled: ' <i>Investigating the Experiences of Grade 10-12 Deaf Learners Academic Experiences in the Mainstream Secondary Schools in Namibia</i> '. Permission has been granted to you. However, you have to seek for further approval from the Regional Directors of Education, Arts and Culture of the regions you have chosen to conduct your research, as per the Basic Education Act (3 of 2023), Section 37, to ensure that the following conditions are met: • Participation is voluntary, • Permission is sought from the principals of the schools, • Minimum interruption during school lessons, as well as learners studying time, • Staff members' normal work is not disrupted during your interviews. • Parental consent should be granted by the parents / guardians of all participants below the age of 16 years. Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr N. Eiman on the above provided contacts at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of your research findings at the above indicated details. We wish you the best in conducting your research and workshops and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your studies. Yours sincerely,  Sanct L. Steenkamp EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Luther Street, Govt. Office Park Private Bag 13186 Windhoek Namibia
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All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director

Tel: 061-2933523/4
Fax: 061-251671
Private Bag 13186, Windhoek, Namibia

Page 1 of 1

d. APPENDIX IV- CONSENT FORM-LEARNERS' ASSENT FORM

Investigating the experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools in Namibia.
Linekela Paul Nanyeni.

I agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

Please circle the relevant option below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.

YES-NO

I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study.

YES NO

I agree that the interviewed and activities may be video-recorded.

YES NO

I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their

research reports/manuscripts/ book chapters.

YES

NO

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data

will not be used by the researcher in their research reports/ manuscript/book chapters. YES

NO

I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and my personal information will not be used or passed on.

YES NO

.....**Signature)**

.....**Name of Participant**

.....**Date**

.....Signature)

.....Name of researcher

.....Date

e. APPENDI V- PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet (PIS)



University of the Witwatersrand
Wits School of Education

Dear learners

My name is Linekela Paul Nanyeni I am a master's student in Deaf Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisors are Dr. Guy Mcilroy and Dr. Ntsoaki Mokala. I am conducting a research study about the experiences of Deaf students in the mainstream Secondary schools in Namibia. The study title is **Investigating the Experiences of Grade 10-12 Deaf Learners in Mainstream Secondary Schools in Namibia**

I am inviting you to take part in an interview/focus group. If you decide to participate, your participation in this research study will last about 45 Minutes. The interview will take place at your school at a time suitable to you.

With your permission, I would like to video-record the interview. This data will be stored in a locked Safer for five years and deleted after five years. Only I will have access to the data.

During the research activity, I will need to ask for some personal information about you, including demographical data and your contact details.

The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you.

If you decide to take part in this research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study. There are no data, or travel costs to be incurred, I will come to you.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life / some of the questions asked may make you sad or upset. If this happens, I will stop the interview immediately and continue another time. If you need some support or counselling services following the interview, these are available free of charge at any Lifeline/Childline. The contact details for the counselling service are 061-226 889, or 166 toll-free.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me at the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), by telephone at +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Linekela Paul Nanyeni

Researcher:

Linekela Paul Nanyeni, 1615510@student.wits.ac.za +264812846018

Supervisors:

Dr. Guy Mcilroy guy.mcilroy@wits.ac.za T +27 11 717 3750

Dr. Ntsoaki Mokala ntsoaki.mokala@wits.ac.za T +27 11 717 3204

f. APPENDIX VI- REGIONAL EDUCATION LETTERS- KHOMAS



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 4356

Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251

Private Bag 13236
Windhoek

27 August 2024

University of Witwatersrand
Wits –School of Education

For Attention: Mr. Linekela P. Nanyeni

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KHOMAS DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE

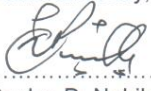
Your letter dated 27 August 2024 on the above topic is hereby acknowledged.

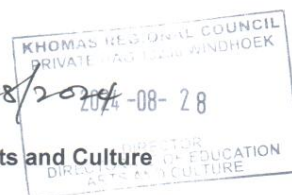
Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research "*Investigating the Experiences of Grade 10 – 12 Deaf Learners in Mainstream Secondary Schools*" in Windhoek, Khomas Region under the following conditions:

- ❖ The Principal of the selected schools to be visited must be contacted in advance and agreement should be reached between you and the Principal.
- ❖ The school programme should not be interrupted.
- ❖ The teachers and learners participating in this exercise will do so voluntarily.
- ❖ The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your thesis/ findings.

We wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely,


Paulus D. Nghikembua
Director of Education, Arts and Culture



g. APPENDIX VI- REGIONAL EDUCATION LETTERS- Oshana



University of Witwatersrand
Wits -School of Education
23 August 2024

Ms. Pauline Shapumba
Director of Education
Oshana Regional Council-Directorate of Education
P.Bag 5518 Oshakat.
pauline.eita@gmail.com

Dear Ms., Shapumba,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ACCESS SCHOOLS FOR RESEARCH STUDY

I trust this letter finds you well. I am conducting a research study titled, ***Investigating the Experiences of Grade 10-12 Deaf learners in Mainstream Secondary Schools in Namibia.*** This study focuses on three selected mainstream secondary schools in Khomas, Oshana and Ohangwena regions, and is part of my ongoing academic research.

I have already obtained the necessary permission from the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture to conduct this research (*see attached*). As per the ministry's directive, I am writing to request your kind approval to grant me access to the Mweshipandeka Senior Secondary School. I will interview the Deaf learners at the school.

The research aims to explore and document the social and educational experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools, which we believe will contribute valuable insights towards enhancing inclusive education practices in Namibia. I will ensure that the research is

conducted in full compliance with ethical standards and will treat all participants with utmost respect and confidentiality.

Upon receiving your approval, I would be more than happy to provide any additional information, including the specific dates I will be visiting the school to recruit the Deaf learners . I will also ensure that all logistical arrangements are made in close coordination with the school to minimize any disruption to their normal operations.

Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to your positive response. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further clarification or details regarding this research.

Yours sincerely,

Linekela Paul

Studentnumber:1615510

Email: 1615510@learners.wits.ac.za



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
ASPIRING TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOR ALL

Tel: 065 - 229800/25
Enquiries: Pauline Shapumba
Ref: 13/2/9/1

Private Bag 5518
Oshakati

Linekela Paul Nanyeni
Cell: 0812846018

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN OSHANA REGION

Your letter dated 23 August 2024 on the above caption bears reference.

Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted to conduct research study at Mweshipandeka Secondary School, in Ompundja Circuit, Oshana Region.

Research Topic: *Investigating the experiences of Grade 10 -12 Deaf learners in mainstream Secondary Schools in Namibia.*

Both Parties should understand that this permission could be revoked without explanation at any time.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture, Oshana Region. You may contact Ms. Hilma Nuunyango-George, the Deputy Director; Programs and Quality Assurance (PQA) for the provision of summary of your research findings.

We wish you the best in conducting your study.

Yours sincerely,


PAULINE SHAPUMBA
REGIONAL DIRECTOR



Cc: Inspector of Education: Ompundja Circuit

All Official correspondence should be addressed to the Regional Director

h. APPENDIX VI- REGIONAL EDUCATION LETTERS- Ohangwena



University of Witwatersrand
Wits -School of Education
23 August 2024

Mr. Isak Hamatwi
P O Box 88005
Eenhana
Tel: 065-290200
Cell: 0811286633
Email: ihamatwi@yahoo.com

Dear Mr. Hamatwi

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ACCESS SCHOOLS FOR RESEARCH STUDY

I trust this letter finds you well. I am conducting a research study titled, ***Investigating the Experiences of Grade 10-12 Deaf Learners in Mainstream Secondary Schools in Namibia.*** This study focuses on three selected mainstream secondary schools in Khomas, Oshana and Ohangwena regions, and is part of my ongoing academic research.

I have already obtained the necessary permission from the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture to conduct this research (*see attached*). As per the ministry's directive, I am writing to request your kind approval to grant me access to the Haimbili Haufiku Secondary School. I will interview the Deaf learners at the school.

The research aims to explore and document the social and educational experiences of Deaf learners in mainstream secondary schools, which we believe will contribute valuable insights towards enhancing inclusive education practices in Namibia. I will ensure that the research is conducted in full compliance with ethical standards and will treat all participants with utmost respect and confidentiality.

Upon receiving your approval, I would be more than happy to provide any additional information, including the specific dates I will be visiting the school to recruit the Deaf learners. I will also ensure that all logistical arrangements are made in close coordination with the school to minimize any disruption to their normal operations.



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
OHANGWENA REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

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Email: Ohangwenaedu.privatesecretary@gmail.com
Our Ref: 13/2/9/1

Private Bag 88005
EENHANA

28 August 2024

Linekela Paul
Cell No: 081 284 6018
Student No.: 1615510
E-mail: 1615510@students.wits.ac.za

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ACCESS HAIMBILI HAUFIKU SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Receipt of your letter received on 28 August 2024 is hereby acknowledged.

Kindly note that permission has been granted for you to conduct a research at Haimbili Haufiku Secondary School, Eenhana Circuit.

The permission is subjected to the following conditions and specifications:

1. The data collected is to be exclusively utilized for research purposes.
2. Prior arrangements with the concerned principal/school must be made before the scheduled date of the research.
3. The research process should not disrupt the regular teaching and learning activities at the school.
4. Data collection is confined strictly to the parameters outlined in your initial request.
5. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and decisions to partake are based on individual choices.
6. Minors may participate with the prerequisite of obtaining parental consent.
7. Consider sharing the final report of your study with the directorate, as it would contribute to our collective understanding and improvement of educational practices in the region.

It is expected that you will diligently adhere to these stipulations responsibly, and conduct your research with the utmost professionalism and ethics. Furthermore, please ensure that the rights and privacy of the participants are respected throughout the process.

The directorate extends its best wishes for the success of your studies.

Sincerely yours,

Isak Hamatwi 28/08/2024
DIRECTOR

