

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG



Teachers' understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South district

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

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Declaration

I, *Bathobile Makama*, hereby declare that the research report titled “*Teachers’ understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South district*” for Masters in Education is my original work done under the guidance of my supervisor. All the data provided is authentic. I have included the necessary acknowledgements and provided the references of all sources that have been used for this research report.



9th September, 2023

Bathobile Makama

Date

Dedication

I dedicate this Masters Research report to my late mother Thelma Makama and sister Claire Ramolahlwane who were the epitome of strength, even against the impossible. To my living sister, the body of positivity and myself for never giving up and continuously pushing to complete this degree. Above all, I stand here by the grace of God and for that I am truly grateful and am in awe of the wonders you continue to do in my life.

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Many blessings to you all.

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education was set to bring about change that has yet to be effective in the field. Many South African policies were created to guide it, but the contradiction has left many confused and teachers at the forefront with no support. This study aimed to investigate teachers' understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South district. To achieve this goal, three research objectives were set to govern the study, namely: to explore teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school; to examine teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school and finally, to explore teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school.

This study used the interpretive research paradigm. The design that was used in this study is a case study because it dealt with contemporary phenomena. The sample size of 7 teachers allocated to the intermediate phase from Grade 4- 7 were obtained by using the purposive sampling method. The research instruments adopted comprised of a semi-structured interview for three teachers and one focus group discussion for the other four teachers. The data was analysed by employing a thematic analysis framework to enable analysis of interview data.

The findings of the study indicated that teachers have multiple understandings of what inclusive education such as; holistic teaching, team teaching, effective communication and understanding, accommodation of diverse learners, creation of special schools for learners with disabilities and dumb down content for support. The findings of the study also reported teachers understanding of advantages of inclusive education as; caters for diverse needs of all learners, enhances intrapersonal understanding of learners with special needs, enhances self-esteem of disabled learners and provides equal opportunities for all learners. The study highlights teachers understanding of implementing inclusive education to include; lack of teacher training, overcrowded classrooms, limited class time, overloaded curriculum, lack of support, lack of resources, incorrect infrastructure, teaching by trial and error amongst others. The study recommends that the Department of Education should provide continuous in-service teacher training on inclusive education.

Key Words: *Teachers’; understanding; advantages; disadvantages; inclusive education; mainstream primary school; Ekurhuleni South district*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

DBST	District-based Support Team
DoE:	Department of Education
EBD	Emotional Behavioral Disorder
NCSNET:	National Committee on Special Needs Education and Training
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SA:	South Africa
SIAS:	Screening Identification, Assessment and Support
UK:	United Kingdom
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WP6	White Paper 6

CHAPTER ONE

1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background of the study

Inclusive education is the implementation of “principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, with the aim of responding to the students regardless of their individual characteristics or needs” (Ariño-Mateo, Pérez-Jorge, Rodríguez-Jiménez & Sosa-Gutiérrez, 2021, p.1). These principles require all learners to be in one classroom and for their individual needs to be accommodated by the teachers. Therefore, it is an approach that promotes unity and respect for each other regardless of differences. We cannot speak about inclusive education without acknowledging the document that plays the significant role in shaping inclusive education as we know it today. The Salamanca statement which was signed in 1994 by 92 countries which many thought was specifically about the inclusion for learners with special needs has made it clear that inclusive education is the inclusion for all. There is a belief in this document that asserts that educational programs should be designed to accommodate the learner diversity we have within our school, and further goes support the notion all learners including those with special needs should be included into mainstream schooling under. (UNESCO, 1994). It values inclusive education as a system that would bring about change not just in education but within the society as well when it states that:

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society, and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994, p.ix)

This passage asserts the worldview of inclusive education and the values that should be encompassed in implementation. There is an element within this policy that IE brings into focus for everyone to follow.

A democratic South Africa highlighted a desperate need for a new form of education that reflected the new era. It intended to eradicate the value and understanding that education was a privilege

and not a basic human right. This law is proclaimed in the Constitution (RSA, 1996b: s29(1)) and provides the core principle of inclusive education when it states that “everyone has a right to basic education including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible”. This is a principle that promotes inclusion for all and wants the elimination of barriers to take effect and it is a goal the society and the education system must strive toward achieving. Education is a very influential tool for change within our society. Therefore, the implementation of inclusive education for all will have a great impact on society and its morale. It is important to contextualise this study to understand the impact that the disparities of the apartheid era before 1994 had on the present education system, where teachers are expected to meet certain requirements under an inclusive approach. When looking at the new norm of education in South Africa, Ubuntu has to be at the forefront as it is the principle of solidarity that fully advocates for inclusive education in its nature. Chowdhury, Abd Wahab, Saad, Roy, Hamidi and Ahmad (2021, p.361) state that “ubuntu is a more appropriate way of establishing a just, harmonized, and rights-based society” where everyone matters. Ubuntu is the philosophy of showing humanity to others and treating each other with value and looking at inclusion as a we problem rather than an individual problem (Chowdhury et al., 2021).

Considering the promotion of inclusive education in South Africa, a Screening Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy document was drafted with the purpose of providing a “policy framework for the standardization of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programs for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school” (DoE, 2014, p.9). With the inequalities that need to be eradicated, a policy that’s based on guidelines that are imbedded in the unique context of SA is crucial. Essential the policy aim to ensure that the same rules apply to all learners with regards to access and receiving quality education with the provision of support where needed.

Inclusive education was initiated in response to bringing change and eliminating the segregation and discriminatory practices within society and education. The apartheid education system brought division and their curriculum and pedagogy was also structured in a manner that promoted the power and interests of the ruling party; this was reflected in the quality and level of teacher training,

resources distribution which ensured that black communities were provided the bare minimum (Naicker, 2000). Furthermore, teachers were trained under a system of control, and oppression, and valued no democracy, which made them less equipped to implement inclusive education.

It has been acknowledged that the implementation of inclusive education is a challenge globally but there is a consensus that teachers need adequate training, support, and a positive attitude to enable the implementation of IE (Bornman & Donahue, 2014). Some have suggested that inclusive pedagogy should start in initial teacher training, but the challenge was that student teachers were quick to adopt the ways of the school and discard those learned at university to be successful in schools (McIntyre, 2009). This would suggest that if teachers received adequate training as mentioned in White paper six there would not be an old pedagogy for the new teachers to conform to. Research in Botswana has found that even though teachers the key element in the execution of IE teachers have inadequate training to prepare them to teach in inclusive settings (Mahlo, 2016). This shows the lack of clarity and direction on how IE is supposed to happen in practice. The fact that inclusive education is mostly associated with special needs education further permeates the confusion about what is regarded as inclusive pedagogy or practice (Mahlo, 2016).

There are many discrepancies and a lack of accountability in the follow-ups on IE in practice as well as the ambiguities in crucial policies. White paper six acknowledges the effects of the apartheid and the inequalities that it created however the lack of clarity on how certain things would happen creates more confusion. The ambiguities throughout are problematic even with funding and how that would happen on point 3.6.3 (DoE, 2001) does not specify how the funding proceeds and who would be held responsible. The lack of follow-through with funding and provision of resources in the implementation still leaves townships schools overcrowded with little resources to fully support learners in need. It is such circumstances that can create a negative perception towards IE from teachers as a lot is expected from them yet the structures in place fail to support and guide them correctly. Some findings showed that “teachers’ perceptions of inclusive education were negatively impacted by their lack of training or lack thereof, in special/inclusive education” (Cambridge Hunter-Johnson & Norrison Newton, 2014, p.332). It is important to know teachers’ perceptions to understand one’s behavior in context and that is why this study is focused

on such. Most of the findings are not within the South African context and we know that perceptions are different based on their reality.

The chosen school is a township school that has large classes and is based in the Ekurhuleni South district. Low levels of IE are seen in practice generally due to lack of resources, large numbers, teacher shortage and lack of knowledge as to how this can be applied. There is very little support from the department given to such schools and it was of interest to know the teachers' understanding of IE and its implementation within such a context.

1.2: Problem Statement

Inclusive education as a new paradigm brought a fresh approach that moved from a form of education where the teacher was solely responsible for teaching, to that in which learners are included in the process. According to Makoelle (2012), IE changes the role of the teacher to play more of a supportive role where learners are included in their learning journey. The new system brought policies and legislations that eliminated the dual system that promoted the medical model where mainstream and special education needs were separated. In 1996 the National Committee on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) argued that the medical model could not promote inclusion and suggested a move to a social model as it eliminates all the learning barriers and exclusion of learners that are considered to have special needs (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2015).

Even with the legislation and attempts made towards ensuring quality education through the implementation of IE, evidence has shown that IE poses many challenges. The paradigm shift even with its good intention shows very little research that demonstrates its success specifically in the classroom (Makoelle, 2012). The government itself ignored the teachers, which play a key role in the implementation of IE, yet a lot of pressure is placed on them to adjust to the new demands and create changes within the classroom (Mahlo, 2016). In South Africa, teachers have not been prepared for these changes, bearing in mind that there were inequalities in training and levels of qualification before IE, once again they did not receive adequate training for an inclusive classroom. Therefore, learners who had barriers were still experiencing exclusion due to the lack of training from teachers and the confusion about how to interpret IE (Mahlo, 2016).

One thing that is evident is that the lack of exploration of teachers' understanding of IE will continue to create challenges in its implementation. Cambridge et al., (2014) highlights the importance of investigating the attitudes of teachers on the inclusion of learners with special needs in a mainstream classroom as it can have an impact on their behavior regarding the inclusion of those learners. As much as adequate training is needed for educators, their understanding of IE is crucial as negative attitudes will hinder inclusive programs and the acceptance of the learners that need it. Investigations done in Malaysia, Israel, and the UK based on teachers' view of four models of inclusion which are the in and out, two teachers, full inclusion, and rejection of inclusion found that a small percentage of teachers were in favor of full inclusion because they believe it would need extra support, assistance, and extra service to make it effective (Ali, Jelas & Mustapha, 2006). Furthermore, we must acknowledge that some teachers did reject inclusion completely out of the belief that learners with special needs need a separate special school; two teacher model was the most popular in Israel than in the UK with the idea that they can teach simultaneously with the teacher with special needs training to assist the learners within the classroom (Ali et al., 2006). Essentially it is evident that even though teachers believe full inclusion would benefit the learners with special needs academically, full inclusion is perceived as a two-man job, suggesting that it is too much work for one educator to deal with.

With these investigations in mind, there is a belief that there is a consensus that South Africa should not have been given the one size fits all approach due to our unique history of extreme segregation and inequalities based on race, which had major effects which are still current now. Bornman and Donahue (2014) reiterate this point when saying our unique history creates more challenges to be dealt with before inclusive education can be fully effective. Research that focuses on teachers' understanding of inclusive education and what is expected from them is very limited in South Africa, particularly in Gauteng primary schools. International research is insightful but the lack of resources and the extreme inequalities in rural and ex-model c schools are factors that most countries cannot relate to, which would have a great impact on the way the teachers may understand inclusive education. This results in the low level to no implementation of IE in the Ekurhuleni South district. We must acknowledge that there has been progress made with regards to inclusive education post 1994. Over the years research has indicated that IE pedagogy is

incorporated within the curriculum of initial teacher education (McIntyre, 2009). The understanding is that teachers will learn to teach and understand the concept of inclusive education as part of their learning process. However, the reality is that, despite this effort teachers still do not feel competent to respond appropriately to diversity and adapt to the medical form of thinking that is dominant within the school. All they learned in universities showed that “the understandings, attitudes and ways of thinking did not help them to do well as teachers in schools, at least in the eyes of the teachers and students in the school” (McIntyre, 2009, p.602). This suggests that they ignore what they learned to fit in to the schooling society, a process of social reconstruction that proves to be challenging.

1.3: Rationale of the Study

This study is important because knowing and understanding how teachers perceive IE in practice can assist in eliminating some of the barriers that hinder its implementation. Teachers play a crucial role in its implementation and to continue to expect changes from them without fully preparing them or allowing their opinions to be heard is detrimental to their morale and the feeling of being valued, which can bring negative feelings towards any changes that the government can bring. Furthermore, the lack of research in this area in Gauteng would influence the further investigation and provide advice for the government to know which steps to take to tackle these barriers so that all educators are on board with IE for the promotion of a democratic society.

As an educator, the researcher understands the history and the importance that IE plays in eliminating the previous inequalities, however there is evidence that has shown that there is different interpretation and confusion on what inclusion is. This form of confusion amongst teachers is problematic because if one does not know what IE is then they are not able to implement it. Therefore, being able to explore these perceptions held on the benefits and disadvantages of the inclusion of special needs would help bring clarity to this research as well offer areas to consider about when teaching within the classroom, and how one can be an agent of change in schools where needed.

1.4: Aims of the study

This study aimed to investigate teachers' understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education at a selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South District

1.5: Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were:

- To explore teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school.
- To examine teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school
- To explore teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school.

1.6: Research Questions

The specific research questions of the study were:

- How do teachers understand inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school?
- What are teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school? What are teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school?

1.7: Operational Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined as used in the study:

Inclusive education: is education that includes everyone, with non-disabled and disabled people learning together in mainstream schools, colleges, and universities. In the present study it means putting learners to learn together in one classroom irrespective of disability, socio-economic status, race and academic ability. Thus, all learners are given the right support and all learning barriers are met so that all learners are accommodated in one class.

Inclusivity: Providing access to all types of children that are usually being marginalised or excluded. In this present study it means the inclusion of all learners in mainstream schooling to eliminate discrimination and marginalisation.

Implementing inclusive education: In this study it means applying IE knowledge and applying its pedagogical practices within the classroom. In the present study, it means giving all learners equal treatment and opportunities in the classroom whilst ensuring all learners diverse academic needs are catered for without grouping or marginalisation.

Inclusive practice: This is defined as attitudes and methods that ensure all learners can access mainstream education. Everyone works to make sure all learners feel welcome and valued, and that they get the right support to help them develop their talents and achieve their goals. In the present study, it means teachers creating class activities that can assist in bridging the learning for those that struggle as well enhance the stronger learners so that all learners academically stimulated. In addition, ensure that learners are treated equally according to their diverse needs and always feel valued.

Mainstream school: In this study it is the general education class where learners with special needs and learning disabilities should be included into. This means the placing of learner with special needs in a general educational class.

1.8: Organization of the Chapters in Research Report

The chapters in Research report are organized as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter presents the general introduction of the study. It contains aspects such as background of the study, problem statement, rationale of the study, research questions and finally definition of key concepts in the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the literature review and theoretical frameworks of the study. It contains literature that is guided by the research questions and the themes that arose from the data. In addition, it also includes the two theories that enable understanding of the concept of IE.

Chapter Three: Research Design & Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodology adopted for this study. This includes research paradigm, research methodology, research design, research site, research sampling, data collection methods, trustworthiness of data, data analysis, ethical considerations and the conclusion of the chapter.

Chapter Four: Findings of the Study

This chapter presents the findings of this study. It contains the participants responses from the interviews and the findings presented are in line with the research questions. In addition, a thorough analysis of the themes that were formulated from the findings is also included in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, discussion, conclusion & Recommendations

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

CHAPTER TWO

2.0: LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1: Introduction

This chapter presents literature review and theoretical framework of the study. The literature reviewed is presented in line with research questions. The theoretical framework adopted in this study include the Social disability model and systems theory, which both assist in examining the teachers' understanding of IE.

2.2: Inclusive education

Internationally, IE is regarded as a basic human right for all learners to be included within mainstream schooling, with no segregation but equal treatment. In addition, policies can offer a guide as to their applications and values, essentially it is about changing our schools to become one (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015). Although many have created their perspectives as to what inclusive education is it is important to have the proper understanding. We must understand that IE is not just about being able to have access to education but also the acceptance and the platform to participate within an inclusive environment and receive quality and sound education for all (Engelbrecht, Nel, et al., 2015). According to Makoelle (2014, p.1259) “the concept is regarded as context-bound and there is confusion about its use and meaning”. This suggests that context is important, and it is because that IE is understood and implemented differently which has led to confusion among teachers who are the implementers of IE.

2.3: Inclusive education in South Africa

The history in South Africa shapes the meaning of inclusion and how it is understood in practice. IE within SA relates to the rebuilding of the society in the name of social justice and righting the wrongs of the past within the country and education (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018). It is because of this understanding of the South African context that WP6 (DoE, 2001) expanded on the concept of IE beyond the focus of disabilities to ensure inclusion on all bases including race, language, or culture. This definition of IE is based on the awareness that multiple barriers can and has led to exclusion.

The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa still faces multiple challenges and policies such as SIAS and White Paper 6 were designed with the SA context in mind to navigate its successful implementation, however, have yet to curb the challenges. The White Paper 6 came as a result to correct the injustices that learners with special needs were faced with in segregated schools and within mainstream schools (DoE, 2001). Moreover, it echoes the principle of Ubuntu by restructuring the injustices to acknowledge people's differences and having an education that caters to diverse needs with the understanding that all children have the ability to learn and are in need of support (DoE, 2001). Like Ubuntu IE "espouses a view of education that is closely intertwined with a moral imperative, which serves as the foundation for an education imbued with morality" (Oviawe, 2016, p.3). Thus, viewing people from humanistic perspective and make education something that we are all responsible for and are part of. The SIAS policy also in line with the guidelines of WP6 and focusing on ways to support and identify learners who are and need to be placed in special schools, with the support of the District-based Support Team (DBST) (DoE, 2014). Even with these policies that guide IE the injustices that were created by apartheid, particularly for the learners with special needs has dented progress for IE, as the barriers to learning continue to exist in schools.

At school level there is 70% of learners with disabilities who are not in school, and the 30% are placed separately in special schools with minimum opportunities (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). In addition, the medical model is still dominant, in the sense that teachers still believe that learners with special needs should be taught in separate school. Moreover, Bornman and Donahue (2014) found that despite teachers supporting the concept of inclusive education, it did not change their belief in the notion of separate school for special needs learners. In the research of the full-service school the same issues occurred in terms of function in the initial phase and second phase of the research. The argument at the forefront is the lack of support or communication from the Department of Education, as a result, teachers were unsure of the responsibilities and how the structure of a full-service school should run (Engelbrecht, Smit, et al., 2015). This meant that teachers were clueless and even though they allowed learners with special needs to enrol, those learners were still placed in separate classes. According to Engelbrecht, Smit, et al. (2015, p.528) a teacher stated that "I feel that those children are expected to cope under normal circumstances, but they are not normal", which indicates a form of othering from the teacher as there is an

insinuation that those with certain conditions are not normal Teachers in the mainstream also share the same sentiment according to the findings. It would be interesting to find out whether the participants in this study share the same view and enquire about their experiences that led them to those perceptions.

2.4: Teachers' understanding of inclusive education

There is an understanding of IE as a global agenda, and it is not a new concept yet there are still areas of concern in its implementation, particularly with the role that teachers play. There is a consensus in all studies that view teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards IE as being crucial to its implementation. In New Zealand, a study found that teachers understand IE as being welcoming, values everyone and is inclusionary in the sense that everyone is accepted and respected. However, they are still contradictory in their understanding as they still as they continue to argue that special needs learners should not be mainstreamed, as inclusive practices are seen as challenging and too much work (Clark-Howard, 2019). In contrast, another study found that Scottish teachers have adequate understanding of IE and are therefore focused on developing the pedagogy with the awareness that there are contradictions in their practices that hinder IE (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). In addition, Abdelhameed (2015) reported that the view of inclusion as acceptance is primarily about understanding and respecting diversity. Similarly, Otukile-Mongwaketse (2011) argues that inclusion is seen as "Ubuntu" or "Botho", which is a cultural discourse concerned with respect for humanity and accepting all people as they are. Another perspective that was reported was that some teachers viewed IE as a compromise or trade-off, of the cognitive development of learners for special education needs learners, and their social and emotional development (Lalvani, 2013). It is clear that even though the teachers acknowledge the social and emotional gains of IE particularly for those with special needs, it is still seen as being at the expense of learning academic content. Thus, assuming that in a fully inclusive classroom learners special needs learners are not capable to learn real academic content.

Based on research of multiple studies there is clarity that teachers have different understandings of what IE is, which is reflected in its implementation and the lack of its effectiveness. Some teachers' understanding of inclusive education as holistic teaching has become an area of study in various countries, as it is seen as a tool to tackle the shortcomings within the school.

A study in China has indicated that there are no validated instruments that measure the quality of inclusive education, therefore a teacher's perception is the most effective way of measuring the holistic development of learners with special needs and their performance in inclusive education (Yan, Deng & Ma, 2019). The findings in this study indicated that holistic teaching is understood as being extremely beneficial for learners with special needs and improves a lot of areas that eases inclusion, however the academic performance was still not at the required level which is of the highest priority (Yan et al., 2019). Essentially, the teachers are still of the belief that academic performance is still an area that measures quality education, even though holistic teaching is effective for the well-being of the learners within school, it is not in line with their desired goal. Therefore, it can be concluded that this understanding of IE as holistic teaching would promote inclusive education, but it does not address the need for achieving academic success. Thus, making this understanding not embedded in the values of IE.

Team teaching is also what some teachers understand IE to be. Inclusive education as team teaching has also been understood as collaborative teaching which is a method that can enhance education. According to a study done in Belgium, teachers view team teaching or the collaborative approach amongst peers and students as a method that results in better performance within education, as it eliminates the lack of support and teaching in isolation amongst teachers and student teachers (Simons, Baeten & Vanhese, 2020). Teachers in the study found that collaborative planning, teaching, and learning worked to their advantage on a professional level. Teachers said it eases the workload, they can be more organised, have peer support, and grow on a professional and personal level as educators (Simons et al., 2020). A similar sentiment was shared by the student teachers in a study done by Tsybulsky (2019) which echoed the positive experiences in team teaching not just for social experiences, but they found that they were all able to contribute and learn whilst receiving peer support and guidance from their mentors and peers. There is an understanding that when they work together, they can create an inclusive form of education. It is essential for IE for effective communication and understanding to exist among teachers.

When referring to the curriculum content, many teachers are of the understanding that IE requires teachers to dumb down the content so as to demonstrate inclusive practice. A study in Greece

based on support teachers for secondary schools found that teachers stated that one of their requirements is to simplify the curriculum as a means to curb the challenges for learners who cannot cope with the set curriculum (Vlachou, Didaskalou & Kontofryou, 2015). They further argue that teaching learners who need support their role is more reactive rather than proactive and in the process of teaching, creating individualised learning is rather time consuming (Vlachou et al., 2015). With this understanding, one can question whether learners that are in need of support would ever enhance their academic ability when they are given a differentiated curriculum from the rest.

The creation of special schools for learners with disabilities is an understanding of inclusive education for some teachers, which is to an extent based on deterministic beliefs. A study in the US has indicated that special education works more effectively for learners with disabilities than mainstream schools, which is why teachers find those schools to be necessary (Schwart, Hopkins & Stiefel, 2021). The researchers do highlight that poor performance can say more about the quality of education that special schools provide, rather than about the learners not being able to achieve (Schwart et al., 2021). It is with this understanding that the teachers in the study feel that learners with disabilities need specially trained teachers. A study done in Germany indicated that “students with specific limitations in learning and emotional and behavioral disorders exhibited poorer academic performance and less positive social outcomes in inclusive settings than in segregated settings” (Krämer, Möller & Zimmermann , 2021, p.433). This observation indicates that special schools will remain a necessity and that IE may not be ideal or beneficial for all. Even though some studies have shown that there are teachers who possess positive attitudes towards IE, a study from Finland showed that most of the teachers believe that those with special needs learn better in special schools, under appropriate instruction. The researcher states that “it was evident that a separate special education system was supported by the majority of primary school teachers” (Saloviita, 2020, p.16).

It can be said that there is a general understanding amongst teachers that IE is the accommodation for diverse learners, whether teachers feel they are capable or not. In support Mbuva (2019, p.57) states that “appropriate support systems in teaching and learning are vital in ensuring equal access for students with disabilities”. Thus, implying that the provision of support is a requirement for

the accommodation of all learners. A study done in Kenya Ileri, King'endo, Wangila and Thurania, (2020) found that even with the awareness of what IE requires schools still have inadequate strategies to overcome the barriers that hinder the full accommodation of all the learners, whether it be the physical structure or academics. As a result those needs are not being met, the learners in need of that support are expected to make the adjustments or drop out of school (Ileri et al., 2020). This indicates that teachers and schools have yet to figure out how to accommodate diverse learners.

South Africa

A similar study done in South Africa, Mbuyha (2019) found that the use of the Disability Units (DU) that was established in the school was the only efficient way of support for learners with special needs, and in lectures there was no accommodation. Based on his observation a differentiated curriculum or tutorial for the extra support was non-existent, and the lack of sufficient learning materials was extremely problematic, therefore the accommodation of diverse learners needs improvement (Mbuyha, 2019).

As found in global studies that there will always be a need for special school and special trained teachers, SA teachers seem to hold the same belief. A similar sentiment is shared in a study in SA, which found that teachers believe there is a lack of skill which makes it impossible for them to teach learners with disabilities, thus requiring special educators until further training is provided (Mpu & Adu, 2021). This understanding indicates that teachers feel the need for the continuance of special schools to cater to diverse needs. One element that studies show is that how a child responds to an inclusive classroom is heavily dependent on the limitations that the child has.

IE as holistic teaching is not an understanding only shared by international teachers, but it is also found amongst SA teachers. A study in South Africa focused on using holistic teaching to tackle their biggest concern which is violence and security within schools. There is a belief that for effective teaching and learning to take place for both teachers and learners within an inclusive education environment, they need to eliminate the most president concern which is the amount of violence that takes place within schools (Xaba, 2014). This suggests that violence hinders daily functioning of the school, thus the effectiveness of the full implementation of inclusive education.

The study included that a holistic approach assists in curbing ill behavior and violence as well as addressing the factors that promote the implementation of a more inclusive environment (Xaba, 2014). It is evident that there is understanding holistic teaching is seen as an element that can transform human behavior of all the stakeholders so that education can flourish. Thus highlighting that understanding that teachers hold when it comes to IE is tied to the issue that each country and context is experiencing, which indicates the many complexities that need to be tackled prior effective implementation of IE.

In Africa, a study indicated that the “most critical of all barriers to free universal education for students, particularly those with disabilities is negative attitude” (Agbenyega, 2007, p.43). Thus, further highlighting that the teachers view towards IE hinders its implementation. The teachers from Ghana understood IE to be “the provision of education to students with and without disabilities in regular schools” (Agbenyega, 2007, p.46). However, the results from this study found that in practice these teachers believe the opposite where learners with special needs should be taught separate. Therefore, it must be noted that the way teachers understand IE and what they do in practice does not correlate. In Tanzania what was evident is that most teachers had their own understanding of IE, but the most central understanding was the inclusion of learners with disabilities, which indicates is a very limited understanding that disregards all marginalised children (Tungaraza, 2014). In South Africa, both studies indicate that teachers understand inclusive education and agree that the inclusion of special needs learners is just their first step, but the researcher's concern is with their constant indication of the need for specialists to deal with IE issues indicates that they are still too dependent on experts as they still make use of exclusionary practices (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018). One study indicates that SA teachers view IE within the human rights framework therefore inclusion is a basic human right (Engelbrecht, Nel, et al., 2015). Even if the value is in line with the concept of IE this understanding does show that application of IE in practice shows that teachers do not fully understand what IE entails. From the reviewed studies above, the studies were done in other contexts and very scanty literature was found on South African context. Therefore, there is need to further explore teachers’ understanding of inclusive education.

Research gap

On the bases of the reviewed literature above, it is evident that in as much as policy documents on inclusive education in South Africa are available, but there is still inadequate implementation of inclusive education in schools. Therefore, it can be argued that, even though IE has made progress, there is still a stumbling block in the way teachers still support the need for special schools. Thus, the present research filled in gaps in literature by providing how teachers understand inclusive education from South African context.

2.5: Teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education

The understanding of the advantages of the implementing IE is rather problematic as the studies have indicated very little on this aspect as it appeared that from all studies the teachers are into the philosophy of IE but prefer the application of the medical model in practice where learners with special needs are taught in special schools. In Tanzania the educators did point out that the teaching of all learners in one classroom would get the learners with disabilities to gain in terms of academics and reduce stigmatization and in support they state that:

Inclusive education will help address the problem of stigmatization. If the students learn together, those with disabilities will feel confident and perform well like others. In fact, separating children with disabilities from other students is counterproductive, as it makes them feel unwanted (Tungaraza, 2014, p.121).

This is a positive aspect that shows some understanding of the advantages of IE although its definition is still limited to IE only addressing the needs of learners with disabilities. In contrast teachers from the other studies including Scotland felt that learners with special needs would be better off in special schools.

In Scotland, it has been reported that by focusing on the craft knowledge of the teacher's inclusive pedagogy, positive elements as they found multiple strategies being implemented in life with the needs of IE (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Teachers felt capable of catering to diverse learners without assistance and stigmatizing the learners that need additional support. The positive element found is the flexibility that the teachers can implement within the

classroom to promote inclusion. Finding this form of understanding during data collection would be a positive aspect that should be of focus as opposed to the negatives.

It is important to understand the effects that IE can have on all the learners with or without disabilities. Ideally IE is believed to enhance intrapersonal understanding of learners with special needs, which essentially requires teacher attitudes to be positive for it to be possible. It is with this understanding that Kart and Kart (2021, p.4) concluded from their study in Ohio that “positive effects were more common in classes where general education teachers had positive attitudes toward inclusive practices and used adaptive instruction and cooperative teaching with special education teachers”. This study found that an inclusive classroom benefited the weaker students in class because of the differentiated curricular and additional support (Kart & Kart, 2021). It is because of such situations that those with disabilities do not feel inferior due to needing additional support but indicates that learners can learn together.

Multiple studies have shown that IE enhances self-esteem for learners with disabilities, although the limits of the disability does have impact on its effectiveness. Krämer et al. (2021) found in their study that when referring to just general learning difficulties, those learners perform better in mainstream schools than they do in segregated schools which impacts their psychosocial outcomes. These findings indicate that IE has a positive impact on these learners’ self-esteem, self-concept, and social acceptance all around, which enables learners to have equal standing in society. However, it cannot be ignored that when it comes to special needs learners there are multiple levels of limitations and conditions that can affect the learners negatively in an inclusive school. A study in Malaysia highlighted a concern for learners with disabilities being bullied and not accepted within mainstream school by teachers or students (Zakaria, 2017). However, the findings in their study indicated a positive sign that showed that IE enhances the learner’s self-concept and self-esteem to function effectively in a mainstream school, with the correct sensitivity, support, and encouragement from the teachers (Zakaria, 2017).

In Nigeria despite it having the highest number of out of school children in the study, they found that the policies and teachers are of the understanding that all children should be accommodated under IE, and all learners should be given the freedom to go to a school of their choosing

(Biermann, 2022). Under these findings there is an awareness of the advantage of IE particularly for those that are marginalized from mainstream schools.

South Africa

In South Africa, Dreyer and Mfuthwana (2018) found that teachers agreed that the inclusion of all learners in mainstream schools was an important and fundamental start toward inclusion. This initial thought indicates that SA teachers understand the inclusion of all learners to be a positive step and show that they find value in the process of implementing inclusive education.

The very foundation of inclusive education and its mandate is understood as the strategy to ensure education for all, considering their diverse needs in one classroom. According to Mahlo's (2016, p.3) study done in South Africa, the "IE pedagogy affords everyone in society the chance to actively participate in education" which implies that all learners should be accommodated according to their needs.

Research Gap

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that as much as teachers demonstrate an understanding of the positive impact IE can have on learners that are marginalized, there are still inadequate results that strictly focus on how teachers are enacting upon creating such environments in mainstream schools. In addition, there seems to be more focus on learners' self-esteem and wellbeing and none that states the impact that IE can have on improving the academic ability of all learners, which is central to education. Thus, the present study research filled in gaps in literature by providing how teachers understand the advantages of implementing inclusive education from a South African context.

2.6: Teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education

It is unfortunate that teachers from all the studies were more vocal on the disadvantages of the implementation of IE than the advantages. The study in Scotland by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011, p.826) concluded that the determinist beliefs underpin the lack of understanding towards inclusion as they found that teachers indicated that they are not well prepared to deal with special needs learners yet "little is known about exactly what teachers need to know in order to teach all

students in inclusive schools”. This suggests that teachers are too dismissive of the concept of IE to even get to the thorough understanding of what is required from them. The same understanding was echoed in other studies where teachers felt they were not equipped for such. It was interesting that this was findings because within their Scottish schools’ certain structures were in place and being used effectively by the educators to meet the needs of learners with learning and physical disabilities. One of teachers when questioned about needing support to help child was adamant that she did not need it as the class was organised in a manner that allows her to take the appropriate action in addressing the child’s needs (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

The lack of teacher training is a global concern and is the way most teachers understand IE and is seen as a disadvantage of its implementation. A study based on schools in Finland, found that one of the most requested resources amongst the teachers was teacher training due to them feeling they have a lack of knowledge on how to implement it within mainstream schools (Saloviita, 2020). However, he also concluded that lack of knowledge is more of an excuse that is socially accepted to cover the real issue, which is that teachers are negative towards IE (Saloviita, 2020).

Inclusion for all in mainstream schools requires several changes from teachers, learners as well as the infrastructures, so that wheelchair users can move around and not be limited. Unfortunately, incorrect infrastructure is one the major challenges that mainstream schools are faced with when implementing IE. Findings in Ukraine are in consensus as the researchers found that IE has a great impact and demands on the change of infrastructure to accommodate those with disabilities (Gubareva, Lutsenko, Patrikeev, Savchuk, Sofia & Taranchenko, 2022). Therefore, there is a great focus on the development of such infrastructure and a demand for financial support for those changes to be possible, and without it is impossible for IE to be viable in its implementation (Gubareva et al., 2022).

An inclusive form of education requires more than just a curriculum to match its values. It also requires inclusive practices to be in use, which teachers seem to have limited knowledge of. Florian and Spratt (2013, p.119) best describes inclusive practices to be what teachers use to “respond to individual differences between learners but avoids the marginalisation that can occur when some students are treated differently”. Which suggests that it is a form of teaching that ensures that all

learners are supported and given the same opportunities, without making any learner feel indifferent. These researchers highlight that there is a misconception that inclusive practice means mainstreaming all learners into one classroom, whilst providing a form of special education to some of the learners (Florian & Spratt, 2013). In their study in Scotland, they found that what they observed in practice was contradictory to what inclusion is. They argue that in the teacher's mission to display inclusive practices they used deterministic approaches, where learners are placed and taught according to ability or needs, which is technically another form of special education which promotes labeling within the school itself (Florian & Spratt, 2013). These approaches "limit the learning opportunities of those identified as different, thereby aggravating rather than remedying the situation" (Florian & Spratt, 2013, p.133). The limited knowledge that teachers have in inclusive practices continues to be a barrier in Scotland as well as Ethiopia as the researchers concluded "that the challenges outweigh the opportunity on the full implementation of inclusive education" (Mitiku, Alemu & Mangsitu, 2014, p.118). In their study, they found that learners were stigmatized by students without disabilities because of the teaching methods that are used in class which has shown that those with disabilities are not comfortable with them (Mitiku et al., 2014). This is an indication that the teaching methods that are used do not cater to the needs of all the learners. Teachers need to know how to teach in line with IE. However, the reality shows that even with the progress towards inclusion what happens in class is yet to be addressed which means that teachers will continue to by trial and error.

When it comes to inclusive practices, teachers must always consider that language can be a barrier which hinders teaching and learning in the classroom. Families relocate and the chosen school is not always in line with the desired medium of instruction, which makes IE not implementable. A study on Chinese students in a Canadian school found that language played a role in hindering their learning and classroom participation (Xiao, 2021). Due to the language barrier some of the students struggled with expressing themselves, even those that could speak English were still treated as international students by the other students because their accent was not like theirs (Xiao, 2021). The researchers found that because of the language barrier in the classroom, the students experienced "low confidence, low oral participation, lack of listening and speaking skills, and communicative incompetence, which essentially impact Chinese student engagement" (Xiao,

2021, p.11). This is problematic for students and teachers, because if teachers are unable to communicate and be understood in the classroom, then not all learners are accommodated.

Teachers mostly struggle to accommodate slow learners, which is seen as a disadvantage of IE. Similarly, a study in Canada found that some teachers “believe that students with disabilities included in the classroom detract from the teachers' time with other students, and consequently are less effective in teaching their non-disabled students” (McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Lea Cizman & Lupart, 2013, p.202). This means that the inclusion of disabled learners is taken as a hinderance, that negatively impacts on those learners that do not have disabilities, thus indicating a desire for separate learning. Another teacher stated that “first of all I have no training in this and second of all there’s no way the kid can do the curriculum” (McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013, p.215). Thus, suggesting that those with special needs need to be placed in a different classroom, as they are believed to not be capable of mastering mainstream school’s curriculum content. It can be said that there is a perception that IE increases the need for remedial work for the teachers, therefore being seen as a barrier to the implementation of IE.

IE requires teachers to be flexible in the classroom to ensure that all learners are accommodated in the classroom. Many have raised that however noble the mission might be it is time consuming. A study by Aas (2022) found that Norwegian teachers were positive and had good understanding of the changes they could make to the curriculum; however, they were of the same agreement that it is impossible to execute daily. These teachers struggle to see how they could fit it in the lesson, finding IE to be time-consuming for daily function.

Over the years IE has made progress in its entirety, however since a lot of the resources, teacher training, curriculum changes, funding that have been promised have yet to be implemented in most schools, researchers and teachers are left to conclude that IE is theoretical and not realistic. An Estonian study argued that IE is more of an ideology that has failed to consider the reality in schools and society (Leijen, Arcidiacono & Baucal, 2021). The researchers argue that the way that students learn and develop skills is 80% from their abilities and the way they are raised and only 20% from school therefore to include those with special needs in mainstream school is problematic because they were raised on different principals (Leijen et al., 2021). This argument suggests that

those with disabilities are accustomed to different philosophies therefore putting all learners in one classroom puts them at a disadvantage in mainstream school. Their central point is that “Inclusive education is a mirage created by our sense of justice, but its implementation puts young people in a learning environment that is not in line with their home preparation and developmental needs” (Leijen et al., 2021, p.2). Herewith ignoring the benefits, they receive in special schools that align with the way they learn. A study in the US shares the same sentiment “it therefore appears that proponents of inclusion are deluding themselves, and perhaps others, when they argue that greater inclusion will lead to more effective education for children with SEN” (Hornby, 1999, p.156). This argument is based on the reasoning that policies and systems in places have yet to prove their effectiveness or to give teachers the willingness and ability to teach special needs learners. It is suggested that until there is evidence of its effectiveness in practice, idealistic concepts of inclusion should not be considered (Hornby, 1999).

Teachers’ understanding of another disadvantage to IE is the lack of consideration of the impact that full inclusion will have on those without disabilities. There is a view that having to provide individual support to the learners with special needs will disadvantage the rest of the learners. In a Canadian study, both primary and secondary school teachers had the same view of this, as one of the teachers stated that:

Sometimes it is impossible and when you are trying to help one person grasp the concept and your time is devoted to this person, other people may be slipping through the cracks...we just keep taking them in and it has really, really hurt the majority of kids. (McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013, p.216)

Based on the comment above, teachers seem to side with the norm of having mainstream schools and special schools. In addition, they are of the belief that supporting others leaves the mainstream learners unattended as most of the attention will be given to those who need additional support.

Another highlighted issue is one that focuses on the overcrowding in the classroom. There are several countries that have classes that average 60-70 learners. It is because of this that teachers feel that adding additional learners would increase workload, numbers and add to disciplinary

issues. Essentially, they are saying that IE is not workable with large classes, thus making it disadvantageous, as found in a study done in Senegal. The researchers found that one of the issues that makes full access for learners with disabilities is the overcrowding that exists currently (Drame & Kamphoff, 2014). Furthermore, the overcrowding limits those wheelchair users from being able to move freely in the classroom, as well as increase disciplinary challenges that would affect learners with hearing and vision impairments (Drame & Kamphoff, 2014). In another study in Kazakhstan, Makoelle (2020, p.8) found that the teachers were of the belief that “the number of learners in the classroom has an impact on the ability of the teacher to pay individual attention to all the learners”. Therefore, overcrowding in classes is a hindrance and has led teachers to the conclusion that IE is impossible under such circumstances. One of the principals argued that overcrowding is the issue, and they cannot see how teachers can support and cope with an overcrowded classroom, including learners with special needs (Makoelle, 2020).

Parental involvement is crucial particularly with the learners that need additional support, therefore the lack of it leads teachers to see it as a challenge to IE. A study in the USA raises the issue that when schools involve parents it is through policies and non-empathetic way of communicating to the point that it excludes the minority, as she states that “the exclusion and isolation frequently experienced by diverse families in U.S. schools, particularly African American and Latino families, may act as barriers to optimal parental involvement in education and contribute to student issues of equity” (Latunde, 2016, p.1). This highlights the fact that communication needs to consider the psychological aspect of it in its communication between teachers and parents. Which is once again a method that teachers are not necessarily trained in to address parents to discuss the child’s issues.

Teachers have argued that there are certain complexities that come with teaching learners with special needs. Thus, making IE’s demands very unrealistic for some teachers when they must implement it. Essentially, teachers consider this a disadvantage as they feel IE brings complexities in handling special needs learners. This form of thinking was expressed by the teachers in Ohio as they argue that the stakeholders have very unrealistic expectations as they want a large quantity of work to be covered at the best quality, whilst having learners with EBD in the classroom (Cassady, 2011). The argument here is that these learners are unpredictable in behavior and a well-planned

lesson does not necessarily control their responses in the classroom, which could pose a challenge to the completion of the syllabus or functioning in the classroom. They further state that rather than help the situation, they force a situation that eventually negatively impacts on the learners as they state that “the abundance of pressures and difficulties general education teachers face influences their daily encounters with their students” (Cassady, 2011, p.10). The states' intentions with inclusion tend to ignore these complexities in their planning and demand.

Many have argued that a school reflects society. As a result, there are certain levels of conformity that is expected of the learners and according to a study in Australia “students are expected to conform to or to change, to meet the needs of the school...compliance is more important than individuality for an institution to operate efficiently” (Pearce & Forlin, 2005, p.95). IE has its own mandate and expectations, and, to some extent, it has been said that it is unrealistic conformity to expectations of all learners, yet it needs acceptance of diversity to promote inclusion. Hollins (2015, p.XII) states that “culture is such an integral part of human existence that it becomes an invisible script that directs our personal lives”, which means that it becomes a way of life and the way we expect others to behave based on our beliefs or views. Teachers that are of this view will use it in the way they manage the classroom as well and expect the learners to conform to those beliefs (Hollins, 2015). In the study findings, Hollins (2015, p.13) argues that “in the process of assimilation, school practices are grounded in the host culture, which is viewed as the norm, thereby promoting a universalistic perspective on learning”. This suggests that schools set what the norm is and are of the belief that learners should follow it, which creates barriers in diversity.

For IE to be successful in its implementation, teachers need to play an important role and are only able to do that with the correct support that is supposed to train them in how to teach learners with special needs, how to implement inclusive practice and assistance when needed in the process. However, teachers argue that one of the biggest challenges and a disadvantage to this form of education is the lack of support. A study in India found that 87% of its teachers had no access to support or receive any with regards to IE (Das, Kuyini & Desai, 2013). When looking at support, we must examine teacher preparedness for IE implementation and with such high percentages of teachers not getting support, it is an indication that teachers are not equipped for these changes. Based on the research findings, there is an indication “that negative attitudes of teachers and their

lack of skills impede the successful implementation of inclusive education programs” (Das et al., 2013, p.33). Therefore, teachers are left to figure things out on their own at the expense of the learners.

In New Zealand as well as Africa the studies showed that teachers were of the same understanding the demerits of IE which are factors such as increased workload, time, large class sizes as well the restrictive curriculum that has not been adjusted with the IE concept (Clark-Howard, 2019). The pressures to complete the curriculum were echoed in most of the studies, with the argument that the curriculum was not adjusted to be inclusive. Therefore, teachers are then focused on pass rates and the completion of the syllabus at the expense of providing the support that is required for learners who are slower, or struggle with disabilities (Clark-Howard, 2019). There is an understanding that the inclusion of special needs learners would lower the pass rate as well slow them down with the amount of that Ghanaian teachers are able to complete (Agbenyega, 2007). Thus, suggesting that these learners are a disturbance in their teaching flow in the classroom.

South Africa

The main concern or issues within the African countries including South Africa is the lack of resources and poor physical structures. The understanding is that to be successful in the implementation of IE an accessible environment is a requirement not a choice. According to the study in Tanzania their poor physical structure was a hinderance and teacher stated that “many students with disabilities, especially those with visual impairments struggle to move from one point to another within the school premises” (Tungaraza, 2014, p.115). The physical environment is limiting in this instance, and one could question how their government assists with such limitations. In Ghana even though they share similar views of the disadvantages of implementation as Tanzania, the teachers’ negative attitudes and prejudice which are personal and tied to their beliefs interfere with barriers to full inclusion. Some Ghanaians still believe that disabled individuals are cursed by the Gods, and some have referred to new-born babies as non-human because of their disabilities (Agbenyega, 2007). Essentially, these beliefs carry over into the classroom, which poses another challenge to the implementation of IE.

Another disadvantage with the implementation of IE as stated by teachers is that it highlights and increases the demand for school resources. Studies have shown that teachers in mainstream schools have raised complaints about the lack of resources within their schools. A study in Zimbabwe found that the participants mentioned the lack of resources as a challenge and as a result they are forced to use one size fits all approach even for the learners that require alternative resources to learn and move around the school (Hlatywayo & Mapolisa, 2022). These findings are consistent with that of Abdoula-Dhuny (2021) in Mauritius, which found that teachers felt that for IE to be successful a provision of resources is necessary. In addition, they believe that teaching and learning materials would assist in increasing enrollment of learners with special needs, as they would be able to give them the assistance needed in mainstream classrooms (Abdoula-Dhuny, 2021). The argument here is that with respect to barriers teachers are challenged with the creation of inclusive classrooms, as they are of the belief that teaching and specialised equipment is needed for teaching learners with special needs.

The lack of resources and correct infrastructure is extremely problematic in most countries. Even though IE was initiated years ago, in Mauritius IE is still at its developing stages due to such barriers. Abdoula-Dhuny (2021, p.114) states that “lack of proper infrastructure is the second topmost barrier to IE is explained by the fact that most secondary schools are not compatible with various forms of special needs in terms of infrastructure”. Essentially, all learners need to be accommodated but if some are not able to make it to class it defeats the purpose of inclusion, therefore it is vital for the infrastructure to change to meet the demands of mainstreaming.

African teachers are no different and are still of the belief that full inclusion negatively impacts the learners that can cope in mainstream classrooms. The same understanding is shared by the Ghanaian teachers, as the researcher found that:

The teachers also believed that if students with disabilities were included in regular classes it would affect the academic performance of their peers without disabilities: We must not only be thinking about the placement of students with disabilities into regular schools, we also must think about how their placement is going to disturb the emotions and academic performance of the other students without disabilities (Agbenyega, 2007, p. 51)

These teachers go further with the assumption that mainstreaming would slow down the pace in class, thus hindering the good performance of the learners that do not need additional help. What is evident is that teachers feel mainstreaming would require too much change in the classroom, to the point that others will not be able to perform at a high academic level.

In South Africa teachers argued that “equating teacher effectiveness with learner academic outcome stands in conflict with a policy on IE” (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018, p.5). This points out that the requirement of inclusive education does not correlate with the realities and pass rate requirement from the department. Thus, suggesting that the current curriculum poses a challenge. Another barrier to the implementation of IE is the large class sizes which vary from 45-50 learners, which make it impossible for the teachers to support the learners as expected under IE (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018). Furthermore, even though IE is forced upon by the department, it is also that same department that fails to understand these barriers when they need certain pass rates and high levels of support. An important barrier that has been echoed by other studies is that SA teachers feel to be a challenge is the lack of support in training as well as within the class, in support a teacher states that “the IET must come to my class and sit here. They must observe me half of the period, and next half they can show me how to do it” (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018, p.6). This indicates that teachers feel unequipped to function effectively in an inclusive classroom, and they seek direction as to how it should be done.

There have been multiple studies that focused on the challenges that teachers experience when it comes to inclusive education. One of the issues at the forefront is that IE increases the demand for training as teachers feel unprepared for these changes. A study done in South Africa found that the teachers “were of the opinion that they do not possess adequate knowledge or skills to address diversity or to teach learners with special educational needs” (Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2002, p.183). This statement indicates that teachers do not see themselves as having the skills required to be fully functional in an inclusive classroom. Therefore, to fulfil its mandate teachers need training. A study in Ekurhuleni found that even though the teachers were implementing supportive strategies in the classroom they were failing to make them specific to the learners that are mostly considered LSEN, which meant that the teachers are not trained the

teachers are not fully aware on how to apply these strategies to be inclusive for the individual needs (Ngcezulla, 2018). Thus, resulting in poor understanding of how to implement IE in practice.

An ideal form of education that is in line with IE is one that should provide a flexible curriculum that accommodates the different paces that different learners work at. A study in SA reported that teachers are not able to implement IE effectively due to an overloaded curriculum, which did not allow them to follow the guidelines of the SIAS policy (Matolo & Rambuda, 2021). They argue that a full timetable makes schools place their focus on meeting the pass rate targets set by the department, as they will be held accountable should they not meet the set targets (Matolo & Rambuda, 2021). This suggests that the teachers are unable to slow the pace and give the support that some learners need, to ensure that they complete the set curriculum and maintain a good pass rate. Another study indicates that this is a barrier to IE because the

curriculum is not adapted to needs of students with special education needs, and lack of time to devote to them may be related to the deep-rooted tradition of an elite and competitive education system with a strong emphasis on academic performance (Abdouladhuny, 2021, p.114).

It can be said that both studies show that teachers have an awareness of the type of curriculum that is needed for IE, but unfortunately that is not the curriculum they are given to work with. There is too much content to cover and there are targets set and they are compelled to focus on the performance rather than the accommodation of all learners.

The inclusion of all also means learners that those that speak languages that do not align with the medium of instruction in the school create certain difficulties for teachers that aren't multilingual. In a South African study 50-70% of the students in a rural school were not meeting the passing standards, because of the language barrier as the learners appear struggle with oral as well as writing in the medium of instruction (Navsaria, Pascoe & Kathrand, 2011). This difficulty not only affects their ability to communicate but also to read. One of the teachers in the study stated that in an ideal IE classroom “a Xhosa-speaking child is supposed to be taught and assessed in their mother tongue and that is not happening in our school, that child is disadvantaged” (Navsaria et

al., 2011, p.98). This is evidence that language is a barrier to IE and learners are not accommodated in the education system that is supposed to be inclusive for all learners, which results in poor performance.

Even with multiple studies showing that teachers are positive towards the concept of IE, some teachers seem to struggle with the accommodation of learners that cannot keep up with the rest of the class, thus IE being seen as a disadvantage. A South African teacher stated that “there are really weak learners in my classroom who need separate assistance all the time...these weak learners should attend separate remedial classes” (Engelbrecht, Nel, et al., 2015, p.6). Such statements are an indication that teachers have yet to internalize what IE is and to put it into practice. It is evident that some teachers are of the belief that remedial classes and separation of those with special needs makes teaching in the classroom easier.

IE is understood as time consuming by many teachers. In a study in SA from the interviews teachers agreed that individual support would assist the learners that need it to learn, but in the classroom, this was a challenge for the teachers (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018). One of the teachers explained that she

takes those learners that are struggling and try to work with them individually. I don't do that more often, I must say. You see, I am in the intermediate Phase, and we change periods. I don't see the time in 40 minutes to accommodate these learners (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018, p.6).

These teachers share the same perception as those in Norway, that in the time they have for the lesson they are not able to individually support and teach the lesson as planned for it is time consuming. This indicates that these teachers are not fully practicing IE practices.

Parental involvement is problematic in most schools as it can hinder the learner from receiving the right support to move forward. In support, Hornby (2015, p.119) states that “a collaborative working relationship between teachers and parents is a key factor in providing the optimum education for all children, whether or not they have SEN”. Teachers have stated that IE increases

demand for parental participation, which most teachers complain about, particularly in township schools. Therefore, it is considered a disadvantage as it creates more stumbling blocks. One study done in SA East London showed that parental involvement is due to them being in denial or wanting to avoid stigmatization of their children. One teacher even stated that “we once had one parent who, after we had written a letter to invite her to school to discuss the condition of her child, responded by saying “my child is not stupid, she is clever at home.” (Abongdia, 2015 p.499). When this happens, it makes it difficult for parents to know how to support the child in class so they can also continue the progress at home. In normal circumstances, teachers would refer the child to LSEN. However, IE requires them to teach diverse learners regardless of the situation.

As previously stated there many complexities that need to be considered in a post-apartheid country, that negatively impacts on IE. Teachers understand IE as a disadvantage because of its many complexities, thus viewing it as unrealistic in practice. A study based on a rural school in SA brings forth the complexities that are attached to ideas of IE in a democratic society. The researcher found that the effect of apartheid is still deeply rooted in the learners, teachers and their reaction and treatment of those that are considered different (Engelbrecht, 2006) Even with the inclusion of learners with disabilities, there is still the system of pulling them from class for separate learning as well as low morale amongst the staff that they have yet to internalize what is expected of them within an IE system (Engelbrecht, 2006). The complexities are that the overall community has yet to transition to a place where they can recognize that their attitudes themselves do not serve inclusion. Therefore, the teachers and learners will continue to practice exclusionary practices.

Teachers argue that mainstreaming all learners creates pressure for conformity and ignore that so learners are different and would prefer different schools that specifically caters for their needs. From a different angle, a study in SA based on a learner who left a mainstream school and went to a special school found that even though IE pushes for the provision of education for all, the country itself, with the lack of resources and facilities, is not in a space where it can cater to the needs of all learners (Pillay & Terlizzi, 2009). This expresses the reality that learners are faced with an IE that is not in a state to be inclusive. Here we are forced to deal with the reality that we need to acknowledge special schools might be what is needed for some learners, and placing all learners

in mainstream schools and asking them to conform causes more harm than good for some. The researcher found that in the mainstream school the learner felt very low and could not cope with the workload or curriculum content and was in constant need of support, whereas in the special school he flourished, found confidence in himself and his abilities and could work independently in the special school (Pillay & Terlizzi, 2009). We have shown that an IE needs to be realistic about the limitations that mainstream schools have and, until the funding, resources and training have been provided, such learners will flourish better in separate schooling.

Globally teachers complain about the lack of support from the department. The same sentiment is shared in a study in KZN which found similar results and the researcher argues that even though the policies state the type of support schools will receive as part of the IE initiative, to ensure preparedness was not executed. In support, the researcher states that “although the policy statement is clear about which development and skills teachers will need to implement inclusion, findings from this pilot study indicated that this is not yet being reflected in the experiences of school- and support-service personnel (Ntombela, 2006, p.143). These findings reflect how ineffective IE is in its implementation in practice due to the lack of support from the government and districts, which has made little to no effort to prepare its teachers in mainstream schools.

Research gap

Based on the reviewed literature above, there is evidence that indicates that all the planning and policies that were put in place have yet to be executed, thus leaving its implementation in practice unsuccessful. Even with some understanding from teachers of what is expected under IE, it can be argued that teachers are faced with multiple challenges that make inclusive education impossible in practice. Therefore, the present research filled in gaps in literature by providing how teachers understand the disadvantages of inclusive education from a South African context.

2.7: Theoretical framework

This study was informed by two theories, namely, systems theory and social disability model.

2.7.1: System theory

The systems theory by Niklas Luhmann's investigates how a mixture of systems construct their meaning and the impact that those meanings can have in the process of inclusion and exclusion. According to Luhmann society "consists of several socially inclusive and exclusive sub-systems such as politics, economics, religion, education...these sub-systems can be described as different communities in relation to educational inclusion" (Corral-Granados & Rapp, 2021, p.6). This means that inclusion and exclusion must be understood in relation to the sub-systems as the content that is produced from its communications is reflected in the classroom.

Inclusion and exclusion are seen as being linked to communication that connects and define the functioning of the systems (Corral-Granados & Rapp, 2021). Furthermore, we cannot think of inclusion without exclusion since inclusion is born from rectifying exclusion. The systems theory views all aspects in binary code where the negative and positives are acknowledged to fully understand concepts (Šubrt, 2019). As communication is considered both linguistic and physical by Luhmann he points out that the actors within the system choose which information should be included and excluded and these choices can risk the maintenance of those systems., thus making it based on contingency (Corral-Granados & Rapp, 2021). This suggests that exclusion would still exist together in inclusive education as the communications are legitimised through policies by these sub systems in education.

Under the systems theory, the educational system views the surrounding systems and students as a potential resource as well as a formulation of a structural relationship between the environment and the systems (Qvortrup, 2005). Therefore, the world and the surrounding environment can be viewed as a threat to the interference of other systems as well as problem-free preservation of its own systems students that are considered poorly socialized (Qvortrup, 2005). This suggests that

learners that do not comply with certain expectations can be seen as problematic to the education system, which would suggest that they could be excluded.

Relevance of the Systems theory to the present study

The systems theory was relevant to this study because it initially acknowledges that all aspects exist in binary code, thus not being ignorant to the idea that when there are positives there are also negatives attached. So, its relevance is based on the study exploring both the merits and demerits of the implementation according to the teacher's understanding. Understanding this theory provides an important view of how students within the education system are either seen as teachable therefore being a resource or seen as a risk, therefore, being a threat to the system (Qvortrup, 2005). Exploring teachers' understanding in this study would provide information on their view of all students, informing us on whether there are learners they consider unteachable. Their view would essentially influence the way they communicate with those learners which can be inclusionary or exclusionary. Since teaching is seen as a process of communication that results in change, it would be of interest to explore which goals the teachers want to reach in light of inclusive education.

2.7.2: Social disability model

The Social Model of disability is recognised as “the key to understanding and explaining the economic, political and social barriers encountered by disabled people” (Barnes & Oliver, 2010, p.552). This suggests that the limitation that disabled people encounter are constructed by other systems rather than the individuals themselves. Therefore, if society was constructed in a manner that allows those with disabilities to have access, then they would be able to fully participate in society without any limitations. The argument presented by the social model is that the individuals that are impaired are disabled by society, and the attitudes that are imposed on them by society limits them from achieving their full potential (Barnes & Oliver, 2010). These limitations cause exclusion for those with disabilities within society and in schools, and this model pushes for inclusion for all and seeks for all learners to be in mainstream schooling. Samaha (2007) emphasises that the social model is a source of inspiration for change in practice and in out form

of thinking, in the sense that it eliminates uncritical assumptions of disadvantages appearing normal.

Exclusionary approaches are the ones promoted by the medical model, which forces segregation and promotes the need for special education for learners with disabilities. The social model of disability was structured in contrasts to this model (Alves, Bampi & Gulhem, 2010). The social model is imperative to the concept of inclusive education, as it seeks to identify and eliminate the social barriers for disabled. There are four approaches that govern the social model which are: the disability approach, school reform approach, critical theory approach and emancipatory/transformational approach. As a unit these approaches take a critical stance against the structures in schools, for the purpose of inclusion of all and in support Barnes and Oliver (2010, p.556) state that “an inclusive education system is a necessary prerequisite for an inclusive society”. Therefore, highlights the point that what happens in school reflects what happens in society. To ensure change the transformational approach is at the forefront as it places emphasis on the need for transformation, rather than just being critical of the power structures that marginalise the minority (Mertens, 2009). The social model seeks for all the marginalised to be included in mainstream schools and be given the same opportunities in the classroom.

Relevance of Social Model of disability to this study

The social model is relevant to this study as it promotes inclusivity which is also highlighted within the study. This study aimed to explore teachers' understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of inclusive education, and it would assist in getting insight into the perceptions that teachers have. The teacher's understanding would indicate if their view of inclusion has the same views as the social model and does not marginalise learners that are considered different or need additional academic and physical support, or are they viewed as different and not dealing with the same realities as assumed under the medical model. Getting data on the disadvantages of inclusive education as viewed by the teachers will provide a true reflection on whether these learners with special needs are seen as a hindrance to the completion of the curriculum, as voiced by the teachers in previous studies.

2.8: Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter presented a review of literature on teachers' understanding of inclusive education. It also explored multiple studies in literature that are in line with the research questions as well as the theoretical framework that is relevant to this study. Moreover, at the end of each sub-section of literature, summary of research gaps are highlighted. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology adopted for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0: RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

3.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology adopted for this study. This includes research paradigm, research methodology, research design, research site, research sampling, data collection methods, trustworthiness of data, data analysis, ethical considerations, and the conclusion of the chapter.

3.2: Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a belief system that responds to ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). By answering these questions, the research paradigm can be a tool that is used to solve and address issues, as well as bring the elements of methodology to achieve that resolution (Okesina, 2020). It is clear from this understanding that there is a connection between paradigm and methodology, therefore research must start by identifying the paradigm as its starting point. The choice of paradigm according to Okesina (2020, p. 58) “sets down the intent, motivation, and expectations for the research”, which means that it provides direction for the researcher. This study used the interpretive research paradigm. This paradigm adapted the relativist ontology, as it acknowledged that one concept can be interpreted in multiple ways, therefore the methods applied to understand knowledge about humans in the social world cannot be measured (Pham, 2018). This approach was essential for this research as it did not generalise, and it allowed the researcher to get the true understanding that teachers have of the advantage and disadvantages of implementing IE in mainstream schools. Goldkuhl (2012, p.4) clearly states that “the aim of understanding the subjective meanings of persons in studied domains is essential in the interpretive paradigm” and applying a form of research that allowed that to happen provided a deeper understanding of teacher’s understanding, as they play a crucial role in the implementation of IE and its effectiveness. The key idea of interpretive paradigm is that it focuses on the individuals who are part of society and essentially the decisions that they make influence education in practice. With this understanding in mind the chosen research design

enabled the researcher to get the participants' understanding of IE and how that influenced their actions in its implementation in the classroom. If the researcher is to make recommendations, a firsthand account of the teachers' understanding was needed as they have great influence in the classroom, thus the interpretive paradigm is ideal for this research.

3.3: Research methodology

In terms of methodology, this study falls under qualitative research methodology, as it was interpretive. According to Noor (2008, p.1602) the qualitative research methodology places emphasis on meaning where “researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing”. This core principle suggests that the participant's view is understood and reflected in its true nature and within context. The qualitative methodology allows the use of methods that enable researchers “to gain insider insights of research objects to provide more authentic information to the object of research” (Pham, 2018, p.4). Therefore, the qualitative research methodology was appropriate for this study because its approach enabled the researcher to understand the in-depth meaning that the teachers hold concerning the implementation of IE without distorting it. Due to the interpretative nature of this study, qualitative data that is subjective was preferred for this study as the teachers’ individual opinions were needed to fully comprehend the way they understand IE.

3.4: Research design

Research design can be best described as the plan that informs us “how the research is set up, what happens to the subject, and what methods of data are used” (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p.28). Qualitative research design focuses on a more naturally occurring phenomenon that is mostly reported in words as appose to numbers (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The design that was used in this study is a case study. A case study assisted with tackling this matter as it dealt with “contemporary phenomena in their real-world context” (Yin 2014, p.2). Essentially diversifying views to investigate this phenomenon was crucial and using a case study enabled the researcher to understand the teachers in their social context. With the understanding of the interpretative paradigm being typically obligated to understand the world from a subjective point

of view to get the explanation within context, the use of a case study aligns with that principle and requires participants to not be studied outside their natural setting, therefore making it suitable for this study. Qualitative case studies are exploratory in nature, which allowed the researcher to engage in conversations with the participants to be able to answer the how and why questions from their perspective.

3.5: Research site

In this study, the school that was of focus is a public township primary school in Spruit view Ekurhuleni South District. This government school is categorized as a mainstream school. There are multiple schools in the nearby areas but only one school is based in Spruit view, which means the classes are large. Although it does not have access to technology and extra resources for teaching purposes, the school does have basic resources to function on a day-to-day basis. The school does not have facilities for sports or disability access, therefore exploring this area of research brought light to the teachers' perspectives and understanding concerning the implementation of inclusive education.

This school was chosen by the researcher because from experience during teaching experience, certain barriers within the school echo some of the issues that teachers in previous studies were experiencing. It was interesting to explore how the teachers in the chosen school would respond as to how they understand IE, as well as their merits and demerits of it in mainstream schools.

3.6: Research sampling

Sampling played an important role in attaining research data. According to Huberman, Miles and Saldana (2014, p.30) "sampling involves decisions not only about which people to observe and/or interview but also about the setting, events, and social processes". This reiterated its importance, and it provided a direction as to how research data was gathered. In qualitative research sampling is purposive rather than random, furthermore, it works with small samples of people (Huberman, et al., 2014). Essentially one of the characteristics of qualitative research is that it works to discover meaning, therefore using small samples makes that possible. MacMillan and Schumacher (2014) further argue that the sample chosen in qualitative research makes use of knowledgeable individuals in the field that is being researched. It is with this understanding that the researcher

obtained a sample size of 7 teachers, all were allocated in the intermediate phase from Grade 4- 7. The 7 teachers were obtained by using purposive sampling method.

3.7: Data collection method

Qualitative research entails data collection methods such as observation, interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and document review (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014). MacMillan & Schumacher, (2014) reiterate that the method of choice used in research is dependent on the research questions. Therefore, considering this study's research questions, the best method that was employed in this study was a semi-structured interview for 3 teachers and one focus group discussion for the other four teachers. As cited in Derrick, Mukherjee, Nyuma and Wilson et al., (2018, p.2) Berkes states that "the link between people's perceptions and their socio-cultural situation is critical to decision-making on natural resources since most people derive their notions, mental constructions, and interpretations from their immediate surrounding and develop these from experiential knowledge". This understanding of the focus group discussion described the form of research that was undertaken. This tool is relevant because it allowed the researcher to gain insight into the teachers view and understanding of inclusive education, as well as the ideas they hold about it as a school.

A semi-structured interview is conversational and allows the use of close-ended and open-ended questions, in addition, follow-up questions are possible (Adams, 2015). This method of data collection was ideal for this research as it did not limit the questions and it allowed the researcher to ask unscripted questions based on the responses given. Therefore, the use of semi-structured interviews was appropriate in the present study because it enabled the teachers' views to be fully understood and provide them with room to elaborate their answers, to get their points across.

3.8: Trustworthiness of qualitative data

The data that was collected brought valuable knowledge that is shared; therefore, it was important to ensure that it was valid in all areas. Trustworthiness according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) is about the researcher being able to convince all the relevant stakeholders that their research is worthy of recognition. In the same light, Lincoln and Guba (1985) went further to identify the four

criteria that ensure trustworthiness within qualitative research, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These are discussed as follows:

3.8.1: Credibility

Credibility brings into question the truth value of the research, questioning the authenticity of the participants of the study as well as readers (Huberman et al., 2014). This is ensuring that the participant's view was correctly communicated and understood by the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested 5 techniques that would ensure that credibility in findings is produced, however the most crucial is member check, as it allows the researcher to test the findings and interpretations made with the participant. Thus, ensuring credibility would require full disclosure of the findings to the participants, and ensure that they can check that what they shared is understood in the intended way.

3.8.2: Transferability

According to Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017) transferability is about the generalizability of inquiry, although within qualitative research it would be from one case to another. In the process of establishing whether the study can be transferred to other contexts, it is worth noting that the researcher is only required to “provide the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). This means to ensure transferability the researcher needed to have detailed information about the study that took place in the mainstream school.

3.8.3: Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency within the research over time and Huberman et al. (2014) highlight that in this criteria issues of integrity and quality are being addressed. Essentially the argument for dependability is that when readers can follow the research process, they can make judgments. Therefore, using techniques such as inquiry audit assist with dependability, as it is believed that an auditor with the same research data would be able to reach the same conclusion as the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure dependability the researcher had to ensure that the process used is logical and well documented so that readers could follow the process. Also,

the process was audited by the school supervisor throughout the process before it is accessible to others.

3.8.4: Confirmability

Confirmability is a follow-up on the audit trail, where there needs to be an establishment to ensure that the conclusions formed from the study derive from the data, therefore the researcher must indicate how these conclusions were formed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Nowell et al. (2017, p.3) “confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved”, which means that the criteria that was employed by the concept of trustworthiness were interlinked, and all four need to be achieved to truly deem the research data as trustworthy. To ensure confirmability the researcher needed to be clear and provided reasons for methodology, research design, and data technique choices that allowed readers to be able to understand and follow the direction the study has taken.

3.9: Data analysis

This study employed thematic analysis framework to enable analysis of interview data. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020) thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data by cross referencing data to identify patterns that arise. Due to its flexibility, it makes it a useful method for collecting data as it can work in line with multiple orientation (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). When working under the qualitative design and searching for understanding and teachers’ interpretations, this data analysis method was flexible in working with the responses that arose from the teachers. It is vital to acknowledge that that patterns that are constructed during the data collection process are strictly taken from data that address the research question (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Thematic analysis entails a 6-step process. Step one is familiarizing yourself with the data. This initial step requires the researcher to fully engage with the data, by reading all the notes, listen to recordings with detail in its entirety. Step two is generating initial codes, which helps with the organisation of the material. Kiger and Varpio (2020, p.5) define a code as “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” therefore we are not forming themes yet. Step three is searching for

themes, which require researchers to examine the coded data to identify important themes on a broader scale in relation to the research. Step four is reviewing themes which is a two-step process, as one is required to thoroughly examine the coded data as well as the themes formed (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This process is to ensure that the themes formed are correct and relevant and interpreted correctly. Step five is defining and naming themes. This step requires the researcher to use the data to formulate definitions for the themes formed and establish why it is relevant to the research questions (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Step six is producing the report or manuscript, which “involves writing up the final analysis and description of finding”. Thus, making it the final step in the writing process that began during the data collection process.

The reason for using this method is that it was easy to work with and it accommodated big and small sampling groups. Its flexibility works with different responses and enabled one to engage with all the raw data, and slowly brought it together under formulated themes so that the write-up could be easily broken down.

3.10: Ethical considerations

In the process of carrying out the research, Huberman et al., (2014, p.56) asserts that all researchers must be guided by the classic principle of humane conduct: “first do no harm”. This statement highlights the ethical considerations that needed to be considered so researchers could do right by their participants and all other parties involved. Therefore, ethical considerations were considered, and the correct protocols were followed during this study. The study obtained ethical clearance from the Wits School of Education Ethics Research committee. For the research to commence permission from the ethics committee and the principal of the selected school will be obtained.

Prior to data collection, there was full disclosure with each participant concerning the purpose of the research and how the data was collected. This was to ensure that they were fully informed on the procedures of the research so that they could give written consent for taking part in the study. Essentially participants felt comfortable all throughout and they were notified that they did not have to answer questions they did not want to answer. They also were notified that they could stop the interview at any time. To further protect the participants and the school anonymity took precedents especially for the individual interviews and no names were mentioned throughout the

study for all participants. Consent letters were given to each participant. This is essential as it made the participants be more authentic in their response without fear of negative repercussions. It was only the researcher and the supervisor with access to the real names of the individuals. In the process of ensuring confidentiality, the participants were notified that all the data collected was kept safe and password protected, that was only known to the researcher and supervisor.

3.11: Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology adopted for the study. This study adopted a qualitative methodology, and a case study for its research design. The next chapter presents the results and analysis of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study. The study aimed to examine teachers' understanding of inclusive education at a selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South District. The findings are presented in line with the research questions of the study including teachers' understanding of inclusive education, teachers' understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education. The findings of the study with the themes are presented as follows.

4.2 Findings on teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school

The study explored teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school. From the thematic analysis used, six themes emerged including inclusive education as holistic teaching, inclusive education as team teaching, inclusive education as effective communication and understanding, inclusive education as accommodation of diverse learners, creation of special schools for learners with disabilities and inclusive education as dumb down content for support. The themes are discussed as follows.

Theme 1: *Inclusive education as holistic teaching*

Holistic teaching refers to fostering “multilateral development of a human and ensure preparation for a creative and independent life in the changing world” (Nowak-Lojewska et.al. 2019, p.153). This means a form of teaching that develops the minds of learners whilst assisting them with social and communicative skills, so they are able to adapt and function in the society. The findings of the study indicated that one teacher participant understood inclusive education as holistic teaching. The response from the participant indicates that inclusive education is understood from a holistic teaching perspective, which requires a learner to be taught in totality, and that, teaching must go

beyond what is happening in the classroom. The interview excerpt from teacher participant A stated:

TEACHER A: *“Now you are putting me into school, I have forgotten all these things. Then in short, I will say it’s like you teaching a child in totality. When you are teaching the child in totality, you are not just focusing on the education side or system and things like that, but you are also focusing on building the child in case if the child is now out of the classroom so that the child can be able to build up on his life with regard to where he wants to see himself going and that in short the child can carry on forward beyond school so that he does not just focus on one thing as to say if I’m teaching the learner Maths, he must not know only Maths but look at what opportunities Maths can open and also consider the things that have to do with their beliefs and religion and things like that. I think yeah... just building the child as a whole”.*

From the result above, it is clear that the participant’s view is one of a holistic inclusive education in which it is argued that it “is limited in taking into account each student life-wide and life-long circumstance” (Teschers, 2020, p.77). Thus, suggesting that by considering all aspects of the learner as a whole assist them in furthering themselves outside of the school. However, in as much as understanding inclusive education as holistic teaching is important, it does not address taking care of diverse learners in an inclusive classroom. In addition, the researcher argues that holistic teaching focuses on all aspects of life but does not address how specific disabilities are catered for in inclusive classrooms.

Theme 2: *Inclusive education is team teaching*

Team teaching is seen as a tool that enables changes to take place within the schools, through teachers talking and assisting one another as a means to eliminate teacher isolation and revitalize their teaching which would result in having an impact on curriculum changes (Stewart & Perry, 2005). The findings of the study indicated that some teachers understood inclusive education as team teaching in classrooms. One participant opined that inclusive education is understood as one that not only builds the child as whole but also requires all teachers to work together as whole to

achieve it. The interview excerpt from one teacher on the theme of team teaching is presented as follows:

TEACHER A: *“ehhh...it would depends upon the individual as to say... but I’ll say it’s the responsibility of all the teachers because the child is not only built by one person but the child is groomed by the entire, I’ll say team or group I mean if I can put it in that matter because of, if you are going to focus on one teacher it’s like you are just focusing on one subject and there is these other subjects and they are not important obviously with regard to performance. That child is going to perform in just one subject but these other ones the performance is not going to be good, but if the entire team or the entire school we come together we will make it a point to whatever we are producing with regard to our learners it’s like we are balancing the equation and then the learners we are going to produce they will be very good.”*

From the above result, it is evident that team teaching is understood to be a requirement to make the child succeed in all areas of education, thus making the learner the responsibility of the whole team of teachers rather than just one. Therefore, IE is understood by this participant as a form of education that builds the child beyond the classroom and only possible if all teachers work together to do so. However, the researcher argues that this understanding is generalized, and does not acknowledge the aspect of the concept that requires the removal of barriers and a differentiated form of education, to accommodate all learners.

Theme 3: *Inclusive education as effective communication and understanding*

Effective communication and understanding are about a transmission of a message which results in a shared understanding of all involved and for teachers it is a process of delivery to learners (A. Khan, S. Khan, Zia-Ul-Islam & M. Khan , 2017). The findings of the study also indicated that some teacher participants understood inclusive education to be as effective communication and understanding between teachers, teachers and parents and learners and teachers. This understanding would in turn result is respect and discipline in the classroom with diverse learners. The interview excerpt from two teachers stated:

TEACHER A: *“Yes, your communication must not only be one sided and your communication must not be limited. Your communication must go right around, whereby you are communicating with the teachers that you are with, you are communicating with the learner, and you are also communicating with the parents. And then in return you must also expect another communication from the parents, yeah. Secondly it goes to respect if you respect others and your learners then they in return they will respect, if you communicate with your learners in return, they are also going to communicate with you, if you are open to your learners they are also going to be open to you, because remember here you are not only just teaching them to pass and go but you want that in the long run they must be productive. I mean they must offer resources, which right now are getting them from different people. For instance, right now I’m a teacher and I’m working there are times that I need to go to the bank so I’m getting the services from another person, so the very same learners that I’m teaching I’m expecting them to be the ones that are offering me these services.”*

TEACHER B: *“In most cases I normally say to the parents, parents who’ve got such learners they need to communicate with the teacher right at the beginning of the year. You’ve got your child with hearing disability or their eyesight is a little bit poor, go and communicate that with the teacher so that as I a teacher I know that when I’m allocating my learners with regard to where they must sit, I know that in most cases I need to consider such learners with regard to ...instead of having this learner sitting at the back I’ll always consider this child right at the front or in the second row.”*

From the result above, it is evident that communication is placed at the heart of education, with the need for all stakeholders to be involved. Although communication is essential for the education system to function within inclusive education, it can be concluded that the participants has a surface level understanding of inclusive education. Based on the response there is a lack of understanding or knowledge of inclusive education, and he rather discusses elements that ensure teaching takes place without fully acknowledging that not all learners will communicate or understand in the same way. Haug (2017, p.208) argues that “different meanings create tensions” which suggests in this instance, that if teachers have different meaning of IE the way they

communicate with everyone will be different. The researcher does acknowledge that communication could be a starting point to educate all teachers on what inclusive education is.

Theme 4: *Inclusive education as accommodation of diverse learners*

According to Schumm (1994) [as cited in Gould & Vaughn, 2000, p.364] accommodation of diverse learners is defined and understood as “when teachers incorporate various levels of instruction for many different students into unit or lesson planning, students can work toward individual objectives within the context of large group instruction”. Thus, suggesting that teachers are supposed to teach in way that gives all learners the opportunity to learn. From the interview with the teachers, it is reported that most of the teachers had a clear understanding of inclusive education to be accommodation learners with diverse needs in classrooms. The teachers understood it to be the accommodation of diverse learners for effective learning, thus ensuring that all learners are catered for, and no learner is left behind. The interview excerpts from four teacher participants are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: “My understanding of inclusive education I think it umm, I associate the concept with diversity and trying to include and accommodate all learners’ needs in class to make sure that effective learning takes place. So, it’s just a way of ensuring that no learner is left behind in the classroom and that their needs are catered for or accommodated in the classroom. I think it is important because right now like I said we are sitting with 49 or 48 learners in a classroom and some learners are not performing well. It takes time also for you as a teacher to go to that learner and find out and find ways to help that learner. You know it could be the problem or there could be a learning barrier in how you teach is just there hindering the learner’s ability to excel or perform really well, and it’s all through the teaching methods that we use. So, maybe if we had maybe different ways of teaching and the resources for those then I think most learner would definitely be on board and feel accommodated in the classroom.”

TEACHER C: “According to me inclusive education is having to create an environment in the schooling system that can cater for different needs of the learners despite their prior knowledge and their background, which we can make sure that all the learners are

accommodated in the school environment and even during the lessons when you are teaching, I feel like you need to use a variety resources such as their background is specially more important. To come up with different background histories is that we allow learners to at least be familiar with what is taught in the classroom and to create an environment at the school where one feels good for being who they are without any fear of thinking otherwise or to say their differences will be considered somehow. That is how I feel about inclusive education.”

TEACHER C: *“Yes, it is important because it caters for diversity especially in our country which is a rainbow nation with lots of cultures and religions and those things. Our customs and beliefs, even our cultures so inclusive education is there to make sure that no one is excluded in the mainstream education, and everyone feels valued, that’s why I think it is very important.”*

TEACHER D, FGD: *“Inclusive education caters for all the needs of the learners, it does not discriminate whether its religion, its sexuality or learning abilities.”*

TEACHER E, FGD: *mmm I think I think of inclusive education more in a academic context, in a what can I say...in terms of content as in pedagogy must be inclusive, it must be writing, it must be visual to accommodate all types of learners. That’s how I think of it.”*

It is evident from the qualitative results above that there is an awareness among teachers that learners are diverse, and they learn in different ways. Thus, the researcher argues that inclusive classroom requires the use of multiple teaching methodology to cater to their differences. There is even a South African perspective highlighted with the acknowledgement of different cultures and language being included in the factors that need to be under consideration within an inclusive education classroom.

Theme 5: *Creation of special schools for learners with disabilities*

Teachers’ beliefs despite their knowledge on inclusive education is still one that believes that remedial classes and the creation of separate schooling for those with special needs are necessary

for effective learning to take place. Despite numerous policies on inclusive education and efforts by department of education to facilitate implementation of inclusive education, some teachers reported that there is need for special schools to cater for learners with diverse needs. The interview excerpts from three teacher participants are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“I think they do need remedial support separate, it’s just a matter of the school setting or notifying the parents because you as a teacher can only do so much.” I think it must be separate. “Yeah, separate curriculum, also teachers that well qualified for that. I’m trying to think of it.”*

TEACHER E, FGD: *“That means that would work even here. Like if they really thought about it, they could have a separate class. I know they say no its inclusive so you can’t separate them, but they learn nothing by sitting with other kids that are moving. I have a learner that is just bored because you still repeating the same thing over and over again, they already understand so they are just bored that you still repeating the same thing.”*

TEACHER F, FGD: *“No, it’s a mainstream school so it’s not catering for... I don’t know because inclusive is where I think according to me, my understanding. Inclusive is where you find one school a full service yes, the way I can describe it. In one school you find like a 2 school for those learners who encounter problems, they don’t transfer, and they don’t write SNA form and they can just think of a parent and the parents comes to sign here that a parent doesn’t qualify to be in a mainstream school.”*

From the result above, one teacher understands inclusive education as being only associated with special schools and not expected to be within mainstream schooling. From this opinion, there is a suggestion that inclusive education is not implemented within the selected mainstream school because it is believed to not be for mainstream schools. This perspective shows a lack of understanding as opposed to the other responses that echo the medical model approach, which believes that teachers in mainstreams schools cannot provide the support for special needs learners. Based on the responses teachers are of the mindset that there is only so much that can be done, but special schooling and separate remedial classes can ensure that all learners move at their own pace. Therefore, this understanding of inclusive education is one that excludes some learners.

Theme 6: Inclusive education as dumb down content for support

The dumbing down of content is seen as a consequence of inclusive education according to some teachers. Graham and Harwood (2011) argue that support is for those that do not get it and as a result content is oversimplified to meet the curriculum demands. The findings also indicated that some teachers understood and believe that full inclusion is regarded as a dumbing down of content, since those with special needs cannot cope with academic demands and function better with practical activities. The interview excerpt from teacher participant E, FGD stated that:

TEACHER E, FGD: “Yes, he is speaking Zulu, he can speak Zulu he doesn't have a problem in speaking Zulu orally but when it comes to reading it's a challenge and he can't read a e i o u all the vowels and I start from Grade 1 with that Masambisane book and photocopy for him every day do something even if I'm not putting focus on him. But learners who are in an inclusive class they enjoy more practical than academic from my observation. When you give them to let's do something let's create something they become so excited they want to participate but when it comes to learning now hey open your books, they feel like they done like that part.”

The result above indicates that in the effort to support, learners are still given a different form of education with the use of content that is grades below. Further supporting the argument that the learners that need support cannot handle academic demands but would function more with development of skills. Therefore, this understanding of inclusive education is one that indicates that exclusionary practices are still being applied in the name of support, further building the gap and promoting othering within the classrooms.

4.3: Findings on teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school

The study also examined teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school. From thematic analysis of interview data, the results indicated that themes on the advantages of inclusive education reported include, caters for diverse needs of all learners, enhances intrapersonal understanding of learners with special

needs, enhances self-esteem of disabled learners and provides equal opportunities for all learners. The themes are discussed as indicated below:

Theme 1: *Caters for diverse needs of all learners*

Teachers agree with the understanding that an advantage of the implementation of inclusive education within mainstream schools, is that it caters for the diverse needs of all learners. This indicates that teachers acknowledge that learners are diverse in their learning, and that one size fits all approach is a hinderance for the learners. The findings of the study indicated that some teachers reported that inclusive education was regarded as important because it caters for diverse needs of all learners in the classroom. The interview excerpts from three teacher participants on this theme are reported below:

TEACHER A: *“Advantages, what can I say?... I don’t know whether I must say the advantages they’d be everyone will feel involved in the class being part and taking part in almost everything.”*

TEACHER C: *“Inclusive education what are the advantages of it...its that’s it will make sure that no one is left behind and everyone will be assisted according to their special needs, and everyone will be accommodated, and everyone will feel valuable in the school environment, and everyone will be able to try their best without feeling like they are less of a student over the other learners. I feel like that what it would do.”*

TEACHER D, FGD: *“So that each learner can feel involved in the learning process.”*

From the results above, it is evident that teachers understand the importance of learners feeling involved in the classroom regardless of their difficulties. Furthermore, when their diverse needs are catered for in the classroom learners work better and it eliminates segregation and othering amongst learners. Therefore, it can be concluded that, when put in practice catering for learners diverse needs can solidify their place within the school and in the community, which bring the social change that inclusive education seeks to do.

Theme 2: *Enhances intrapersonal understanding of learners with special needs*

The findings of the study also indicated that, enhancement of intrapersonal understanding of learners with special needs, is one that the teacher understood as being an advantage to the implementation of inclusive education. The qualitative results from one teacher participant indicated that the ability for learners to understand their abilities and what they are capable of is seen as being of importance to find a place in society and in the job market. The interview excerpt from one teacher stated:

TEACHER B: *“I think the advantages of implementing inclusive education is that learners go out of the school knowing what they can do and what they cannot do in order to contribute and become active member of society, so it also gives them that ability to excel in other parts as well not only strictly go to varsity, but there are also technical schools. If a child knows that my strength is handwork and I’ve been taught handwork, not only theory I’ve been taught practical’s I know how to do this. It sort of gives them an advantage also into the job market because now they have that experience, they know it’s not only theory based.”*

From the result above, it is evident that understanding one’s place within society and being aware of one’s capabilities is an important skill and value to instill in learners. The finding can be understood that a form of education that brings such is one that could bring about social change that is needed to eliminate the us and them mentality. Therefore, it can be argued that if all teachers had this similar view, it could have a positive impact on the teachers attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education. The understanding that is expressed here is that there needs to be options available for learners that are not necessarily strong academically so they can find their strengths in more skills-based work to be able to compete in the job market.

Theme 3: *Enhances self-esteem of disabled learners*

The finding of the study also reported that teachers understand the advantage of the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools, as being a form of education that enhances the self-esteem for all learners. The interview results from teachers indicate that it is all possible with the understanding that inclusive education enables the creation of a positive and

conducive learning environment that makes learners feel safe and free from criticism for being different in any way. The interview excerpt from one teacher participant is reported as follows:

TEACHER C: "I feel like I think it has to do with making every learner feel valuable and creating a positive environment where one is free to explore, where one will feel emancipated, feel free to explore things without fear of criticism because of their background that lives in cultures."

On the basis of the interview result above, it is evident that the awareness of the discriminatory attitudes that certain learners face not just based on disabilities, but on their beliefs and culture. From the result, it can be argued that which is a more of a central issue in South Africa and urban areas, therefore inclusive education is to an extent understood as a corrective tool, in line with the social model principles. This understanding is important to strive towards if teachers are to be effective in the implementation of inclusive education.

Theme 4: *Provides equal opportunities for all learners*

The provision of equal opportunities for learners refers to ensuring that all learners receive the same quality education, support, and access to schooling. This is based on the belief "that education is essential to individual well-being and national development" (Dreyer, 2017, p.386). Thus, striving for an education for all. In the aim to explain the advantage of mainstreaming, this teacher briefly expresses that it is the provision of equal opportunities for all learners. The findings from some teachers indicated that inclusive education is regarded to provide equal opportunities for all learners in inclusive classrooms. Then followed by the overall observation that in reality teachers were not following suit, one teacher responded:

TEACHER 2: "You are giving equal opportunity to all the learners, even though we are not doing it gives equal opportunities. Of which you know you not giving equal opportunities others you ignore because you are frustrated that you have to be on their case all the time like you can just take them and put them on your desk and explain to them but you don't have time for that because you are trying to check on other learners who are the level they are supposed to be to see if they are okay but now you supposed to sit do with this one and tell them let's start."

From the result above, it can be argued that is one that acknowledges what inclusive education should be doing and what it is not in reality. The reasons stated are concerning as it indicates the participant is challenged by the realities within the classroom, that makes them feel frustrated and have a defeatist attitude in the effort of implementing inclusive education. It is evident that there is more of a focus on what is not happening rather than the impact inclusive education can do and should be doing.

4.4: Findings on teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school

The study also examined teachers understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education. From the thematic interview data, the results identified themes of the disadvantages of inclusive education which are: limits teacher participation in allocation of subjects, increases demand for infrastructure to accommodate learners with disabilities, IE not implementable with language barriers in classes, IE increases demand for training, IE not workable with large classes, IE restricts teaching methods, implementing inclusive education is time consuming, IE not practical with overloaded school curriculum, implementing IE reinforces teaching by trial and error, IE increases demand for parental participation, teachers limited knowledge of inclusive practices, implementing IE increases demand for school resources, no support for teachers from the school, individual support disadvantages the rest of the learners, IE brings complexities in handling learners with special needs, unrealistic conformity expectations on all learners, increased need for remedial work by teachers and IE is theoretical and not realistic. The themes are discussed as follows.

Theme 1: *Limits teacher participation in allocation of subjects*

The findings of the study also indicated one disadvantage of implementing inclusive education is that it limits teacher participation in subjects' allocation. From the qualitative results, most of the participants highlighted their lack of power in choosing the subjects they specialize in being a barrier in how effective they are in the classroom. The autocratic approach to choosing subjects for teachers that they do not specialize in puts the teachers at a disadvantage as they are not allowed

to work from their strengths to support learners accordingly. Even though the school is aware of the subjects' teachers specialize in, they distribute subjects based on shortage and the needs of the school, which means often teachers are not teaching in their area of expertise. The interview excerpts from teacher participants are reported as indicated:

TEACHER A: *“Ummm... no, according to me I don't see our school being inclusive you see, even if we are striving to get there... no. The reason why I say so is because of come to the allocation of subjects that's where we are making a mistake. In the past yes, we used to go and ask, Thobi which subject do you feel comfortable with regard to your teaching and learning? You see, then one would say I in each subject and after 3 years you switch.:*

TEACHER D, FGD: *“It is also important to make sure that the teacher loves that subject.”*

Got Maths, I'm very good and it is my specialized and then NS and I've got English, okay but bear in mind Thobi as to say as much as you've listed these 3 we cannot cater I mean for all that 3, its either you are going have 2 or maybe in case we even got a shortage there and there we can give you one just one subject which is just an addition.”

TEACHER B: *“I don't think you are fully equipped, were not the same. For some of us it takes a while to adjust to teaching a subject so if I'm gonna teach English for 3 years, year 1 I'm still adjusting year 2 just a little because you get different learners every year so it's a different type of adjustment every year so when I'm starting to get comfortable and you find then you have to go elsewhere, teach another subject. Now it's back again to where you.”*

From the results above, it can be argued that if teachers do not enjoy or are not confident in the subjects that they are teaching, they will not be able to support learners in an area that they are trying to master themselves. Furthermore, the constant switching of subjects does not give the teachers enough time to build a solid foundation and develop inclusive pedagogy that is suitable for learners. Essentially most teachers find the autocratic school system of choosing for them based on a need rather than a teacher's specialization, has found most of the teachers teaching out subjects that they have little knowledge in. This impacts the way they engage with learners, as a teacher cannot provide support in a subject, they lack knowledge in thus hindering inclusion.

Theme 2: *Increases demand for infrastructure to accommodate learners with disabilities.*

The findings of this study also reported that schools have increased need for infrastructure which is already limited to accommodate learners with physical disability. The teacher participants reported that the current school's infrastructure and facilities cannot cater for wheelchair users, whether it be a teacher or a learner. Therefore, learners using wheelchairs would struggle to move around the school or get to classes as there is no wheelchair access in the school. The interview excerpts from teacher participants are reported as follows:

TEACHER A: *“Some of the parents they are in denial, but others they are not but then I'll also say that the physical structure of the school also does affect that because of right now I will say we are fortunate enough that not even a staff member or any learner that is using wheelchair. If we are to have a staff member here at school using a wheelchair, I mean it would be a task because of moving around as well as the bathrooms for even the kids themselves because we don't have something that would cater the movement, the smooth movement of the wheelchair.”*

TEACHER G, FGD: *“Also, the setting that we have it doesn't cater for everyone. Yeah, because I think if we had a learner that uses a wheelchair for some classrooms that learner wouldn't be able to get to them.”*

From the results above, it is evident that the available infrastructure in the school does not cater for all learners, thus limiting the inclusion of all learners. Therefore, the researcher argues that if the infrastructure is only suitable for able bodied individuals, it makes mainstreaming impossible and a disadvantage for the implementation of inclusive education.

Theme 3: *Inclusive education not implementable with language barriers in classes*

Another finding reported by teacher participants of this study as one of the biggest disadvantages of implementing inclusive education it is not implementable where there is language barriers in classrooms. The findings indicated that the school experiences an intake of learners from different provinces and other foreign countries, which brings learners that do not speak the language that

they use as medium of instruction. The language barrier makes it difficult for teachers to teach, for learners to understand or be able to communicate in the classroom. In some instances, other learners who are familiar with the language served as translators in the classroom, thus being the ones that relay instructions. The interview excerpts from teacher participants are reported as follows:

TEACHER A: *“The issue of this is the language barrier, with regard to inclusive education. The disadvantage would be the language barrier if I may indicate ever since South Africa got its independence I would it opened its doors for foreign nationals and then the foreign nationals, you have got learners that when you talk to them, they don’t even understand even a single word. I remember I even right now we’ve got a learner who originally was born in Mozambique, and they arrive here speaking Portuguese so it’s a challenge when it gets to that. I mean the language because the children don’t understand anything. So, you have to get at least somebody that at least knows the language to come and translate.”*

TEACHER B: *“I’m thinking of...if we have different types or kinds of learners that experience challenges, now I’m thinking of the learners that are okay. Learners that are not academically challenged my worry is the fear I that feel that they might also feel excluded since most the attention will be based on...you know focusing on learners that experience learning disabilities, and also the element of them teasing each other, them making fun of each other; you can’t write, you can’t see, you can’t hear those challenges.”*

TEACHER C: *“Not really, because language is usually the most barrier because even the ones that come from Natal, Durban line in Kwa Zulu Natal and Lesotho they also have the same problem of having to fit in with what is actually done. Another thing religion as well also became a problem, so me learners believe that when they pray, they need to kneel down some they even refuse to close their eyes and some learners another thing is the beliefs. We tell them to cut their hair and they tell you it’s against their religion.”*

TEACHER G, FGD: *“Our main problem is learners from other countries, so you will that leaner come to Grade 4 from Maputo to do IsiZulu and English whereas in Maputo*

they do Portuguese then now he is here not and you would find that you cannot explain or give an instruction to him because he doesn't understand anything you say so you still have to teach him the basics (come, you know me teacher, you Sibongile) cause honestly in Grade is where you will find that film where he is here but he not here and when its after school you see him chat to his friends and speaks his own language because he just didn't hear you as a teacher."

From the results above, it is evident that the teachers have yet to find a solution or method that they can use to eliminate the language barrier they face. Therefore, the researcher argues that using other learners is practical, but it prevents all learners from having full access to knowledge directly from the teacher, especially the ones that need translation. Therefore, the language barrier will continue to be one of the disadvantages to the implementation of inclusive education in this school.

Theme 4: *Inclusive education increases demand for training*

The findings also indicated that teachers identified the disadvantage to inclusive education is the fact that they lack training on inclusion, as they feel that they are not fully equipped to deal with different types of learners, particularly those with special needs. Therefore, teachers appear to feel inadequate when it comes to supporting all learners' needs. The interview excerpts from teachers stated:

TEACHER A: *"No, I won't. Maybe with training with regard to those ones who are very intelligent, those ones who are average and those ones who are very slow. I won't know about those people who are at varsity because during our training we just went to a college."*

TEACHER B: *"I'm thinking of the psychological part of it and being able to deal with that. I don't think I'm well equipped for that, I don't. Even being here I'm still unsure."*

TEACHER D, FGD: *"And also, as teachers we lack training in inclusive education."*

TEACHER C: *"It could be only if the educators themselves are being equipped."*

From the results presented above, it is evident that teachers mostly are trained to deal with learners generally in mainstream school which are the strong, average, and weak learners but not those with

disabilities. This implies an awareness that teacher training now is different from before. This view does highlight a gap in the field of inclusive education that there needs to be a tool to upgrade the teachers that have been in the profession for years. The other teacher indicates the assumption that certain specialists might be more equipped to address the needs of learners with additional needs. Teachers feeling inadequate or assuming the need for alternative specialist negatively impacts their effort in the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, how teachers feel is crucial to their effectiveness in the field and training on inclusive education can be a good starting point.

Theme 5: *Inclusive education not workable with large classes*

The findings also indicated that one disadvantage of implementing inclusive education is large classes which limits this practice. The reality that the teachers are dealing with in the school in which they understand to be a disadvantage to the implementation of inclusive education, is dealing with large numbers in their classes. This was identified as a disadvantage with the understanding that it is difficult to give individual support to all the learners during lesson time, therefore making it difficult to implement inclusive practices. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme stated:

TEACHER B: *“Ummm looking at how the classrooms are set up and the number of learners that we have in the classroom, I think it makes it difficult for to be inclusive in our teaching practices or teaching methods because were sitting with 49 learners in the classroom and what are the chances of you specifically catering for every need of every child.”*

TEACHER G, FGD: *“Inclusive you know when there is 20, it would be able to work but when there are many learners in one class, then it is very difficult to implement and cater for all learners.”*

TEACHER E, FGD: *“At least now you can put in effort because you know you know the 20 well, you can divide them into 5s or so because these ones are more this. But for now, no. But I think in inclusive there would be a smaller classroom, small size with less learners because we can’t have inclusive guys for us with like 50 learners, it just doesn’t work. I mean it’s difficult to make an education that’s inclusive in a classroom of 4*

something 50 learners because like they say every learner is individual and we have special cases already in class, so it just makes things go to another level of difficulty. We do have resources, you can't say you want to be visual, because if you want to be you have to plan ahead. You have to ask for the projector, you have to ask for something, it's not convenient. So, it's a lot of things working against inclusive education."

From the results presented above, the researcher finds that teachers cannot see how they can give the attention that all the learners need and support them accordingly, when they have so many others to assist. There is an understanding here that acknowledges that learners are individuals and having those who need additional support is a challenge for them, as they associate giving individual support with being a requirement of inclusive education. They feel they are not able to achieve it because of the large numbers in the classroom. Inclusive education is understood and defined by factors that make it a challenge for it to work, rather than making it work within the context and reality we have in classes. Even though teachers are in favor of having 20 learners as an ideal number that would make it easy for inclusive education to work, there is still an idea that separation according to abilities is ideal. Thus, indicating that there is confusion on what constitutes as inclusive or exclusionary practices.

Theme 6: *Inclusive Education restricts teaching methods*

The study findings also indicated that another disadvantage of implementing inclusive education is that it restricts teaching methods in inclusive classrooms. This theme was reported by two teacher participants who reported that there is generally only one teaching method used for all the learners in this phase, which is problematic because it gives the assumption that all the learners learn the same. Therefore, the researcher argues that teachers recognize a need for the exploration of other teaching methods as inclusive education restricts teaching methods that can be adopted in classrooms. The interview excerpts from teacher participants on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *"Also looking at our methods of teaching, I don't think they show inclusivity in the sense that I think most of us use either one method or style of teaching if not 2. Which is specifically writing down on the board, if it's not writing down on the board for listening and speaking, we either read those umm texts for them, if we don't*

read them, we use speakers for them. But then I feel like there could be other methods we could explore to make sure that all learners in the classroom are fully on board.”

TEACHER C: “Definitely. We don’t have systems in place that would accommodate LSEN learners. We don’t, it just one way one method of teaching and if that learner is experiencing difficulties, they either repeat the grade and if they’ve repeated the grade for a number or certain amount of time then they are progressed to the next grade.”

TEACHER D, FGD: “I think it is important because right now like I said we are sitting with 49 or 48 learners in a classroom and some learners are not performing well. It takes time also for you as a teacher to go to that learner and find out and find ways to help that learner. You know it could be the problem or there could be a learning barrier in how you teach is just there hindering the learner’s ability to excel or perform really well, and it’s all through the teaching methods that we use. So, maybe if we had maybe different ways of teaching and the resources for those then I think most learner would definitely be on board and feel accommodated in the classroom.”

TEACHER D, FGD: “No because usually when we prepare for a lesson , usually we just prepare one lesson for the whole class and usually whatever is done, it is only done for the whole class and it fails to cater for individual needs because at the end of the day you find that some learners are struggling to cope because even at the end of the day they only using this method of teaching, nothing else. To other learners as we know Gardner once said there is multiple intelligence and we learn differently, some learn by doing and some learn by listening, some learn by viewing and we don’t have enough resources that can cater for such. I think some teachers especially those that have been around for a while now, including myself I won’t call out other people. We get used to a certain way of teaching and that’s it, and we get to fail to understand that learners require different kinds of lessons, different kind of teaching pedagogies in order for them to understand the content cause the moment you teach learners, sometimes you even fail to understand their background which is what they know already, and we fail to take them to that zone of proximal development”

Based on the results presented above, the teachers are very clear with the concept of inclusion and the importance of using differentiated methodology to accommodate all the learners in the

classroom. One of the teachers draws from the theoretical approaches such as Gardner's theory that have been used in inclusive education training policies for teachers, to help them understand that learners are different. The school itself does not employ alternative teaching methods nor make use of any systems that accommodate or support learners that need support or considered Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN). Therefore, the teachers consider the use of one teaching methodology a disadvantage towards the implementation of inclusive education in this school.

Theme 7: *Implementing inclusive education is time consuming*

According to the findings of the study, most teachers find having limited time to do intervention during class as problematic for them to fully implement inclusive education. They argue that with the large number of learners they have in class, they do not have enough time to do intervention for the learners that need it. When referring to mainstreaming of all learners' teachers believe that inclusive education is time consuming and will create chaos in the classroom. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *"I think it is important because right now like I said we are sitting with 49 or 48 learners in a classroom and some learners are not performing well. It takes time also for you as a teacher to go to that learner and find out and find ways to help that learner. You know it could be the problem or there could be a learning barrier in how you teach is just there hindering the learner's ability to excel or perform really well, and it's all through the teaching methods that we use. So, maybe if we had maybe different ways of teaching and the resources for those then I think most learner would definitely be on board and feel accommodated in the classroom."*

TEACHER A: *"I think we could come up with a way of having those extra lessons given the fact that our time is also limited during the day to include those maybe interventions that 30min could do something for that child because it makes it difficult during the day."*

TEACHER DE, FGD: *"No time at all."*

TEACHER C : *“I mean not really; I think it’s more a conscious thing that now you feel bad cause you know that I could be doing... but I don’t have time.”*

TEACHER C: *“The disadvantages are it’s going to be time consuming; it’s going to be very time consuming and somehow it will create chaos.”*

TEACHER F, FGD: *“Because I don’t have time to focus on him alone, it’s just that do this then I jump and go to another row because he is not the only one.”*

On the bases of the results above, it is evident that teachers’ lessons are limited and it is not enough time to assist and support learners according to their needs, because they have content to cover and large classes and cannot get to all those that need in that stipulated time. As reported by one of the teacher participant, there is a need for additional support outside of class time to assist in the form of extra lessons. This is because the struggling learners in the class need that additional time which they do not have during class. In addition, the researcher finds that teachers are reluctant towards full inclusion. Although time and large classes are a concern within the school with the learners that they do have currently, there is an assumption that with other learners with special needs or learning difficulties in one class would create chaos. Which suggests that in their current context they do not consider their students chaotic. One could conclude that the preconceptions that the teachers have towards the learners from special schools is problematic.

Theme 8: *Inclusive education not practical with overloaded school Curriculum*

The findings of the study also reported that the overloaded school curriculum is understood as a disadvantage by the teachers in implementing inclusive education in classrooms. Teachers argue that the curriculum has too much content for them to cover, so they find themselves not having time to support learners as they supposed to be. Therefore, even though teachers would do other activities to bridge the gap for learners to understand better, they find they do not complete the number of activities that is expected according to the curriculum. Therefore, it comes to a point where the teachers are all about content coverage and moving according to that pace. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“So, if you gonna cover a concept; I’m caught up between do I cover the concepts that are in the CAPS document to make sure that the learner also covers what*

he/she needs to cover, or do I stop everything and just focus on the intervention and if I start that intervention, it's a matter of where do I start? How do I begin?"

TEACHER A: *"Because when I got here my learners, I used to make them write notes and when I had my first district visit those notes didn't even count as activities. We were told that you do not make learners write notes, you specifically focus on the activity and after activity its homework so its two activities per day. You move like that because in a week they need to have a total of 6 activities, so how do I then go back to ensuring that he/she understands the first two concepts of the activities we have covered so I think it puts us at a disadvantage as well."*

TEACHER C: *"Ummm it's a 50/50. I think sometimes I do try and implement and find other ways of teaching and strategies but for most parts you just come here, and you forget because the conversation that we have to be quite honest I don't remember sitting in the staffroom and having a conversation about inclusivity and diversity and how do we help the learners that are really struggling. So that's why I say we forget because there's constantly the pressure of we need to cover this, we need to push this so that we can submit this on time."*

From the results presented above, the teachers are struggling with the workload that forces them to focus on completion of content rather than moving at the pace of the learners. As presented by one teacher, there are no discussions as to how they can find a balance between getting work done and accommodating learners in school. Teachers share the same sentiment that for inclusive education to work in practice the content needs to be reduced. Therefore, the researcher argues that curriculum pressures forces teachers to ignore the learners that move at a slower pace, they are pressured to complete the curriculum. A differentiated form of curriculum is needed to align with the expectations of inclusive education, for teachers to be inclusive in practice.

Theme 9: *Implementing inclusive education reinforces teaching by trial and error*

The study findings also reported that implementing inclusive education reinforces teaching by trial and error among teachers. The findings further indicate that teachers know what inclusive education is as a concept, but are unsure of what is expected of them in the context they are in.

This is understood as a disadvantage as they feel unprepared for the reality of teaching, therefore they find themselves teaching by trial and error. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“So, with my experience like I said it’s been almost 2 years that I’m here I didn’t have induction. I was fresh out of varsity, and everything that I learnt was based on overhearing teachers and staff members having conversations in the staffroom saying “we need to do this we need to implement this” and then you take whatever they’re are saying and you work your way around so it’s based on a trial and error basis, no one sits you down and says these are the systems that are put in to place, these are the methods that we use in our classroom.”*

TEACHER B: *“I’m still finding my feet I just don’t know if I really am doing a great job, am I well equipped to be here and deal with most of the learners that I deal with cause when you look at the context of our school, there’s a lot that’s going on and there are a lot of learners that are at a disadvantage and I think with me I feel as if the varsity university we didn’t get taught these things and they didn’t prepare us for these things and challenges we might face.”*

TEACHER C: *“Yes, and somewhere somehow, we even fail to understand how can I do that with such limited time? And with so much work that is expected on us and, you understand it becomes so frustrating about how I go about doing this. If someone could come and say, Thobile lets sit down this is how you are gonna do it, we do it like this we do it like this brilliant. Then I get to know what is expected of me. And sometimes you don’t even know what is expected of you if these people can come and help us. Let it not be a workshop, let it be you are teaching Maths can we please sit down and talk about this; this is how Maths should be taught. You see when you are having a lesson plan, these are the things that need to be there, and this is how you go about doing it you are not evaluating you are monitoring the progress.”*

TEACHER G, FGD: *“The age group and their behavior is not the same so I think content wise you understand what you should teach because you did the course, but the problem is the methodology. The age of the kids is challenging.”*

From the results presented above, it is evident that teachers are unclear of what is expected of them, with no one to show them how. This is echoed from the teachers who are new into the profession as well the teacher that has been teaching for many years which indicates a reoccurring issue that has yet to be addressed by the school, management, and district. Therefore, the researcher argues that, if teachers are teaching by trial and error, then it means the learners that need additional support do not have epistemological access.

Theme 10: *Inclusive education increases demand for parental participation*

The findings also indicated that implementing inclusive education has resulted into an increased demand for parental participation in school activities. However, teachers understand the missing communication within the school, to parents, amongst teachers, in the phase and from department to disadvantage the implementation of inclusive education. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“But we never have conversations of okay these are the results, and these are the learners that did really well, these are the learners are borderline, these are the learners that we could help, how do we find ways as a phase or as a grade to help them. So, we never have those conversations, it’s sort of like you quickly have to disregard everything that you know or that you learnt just so you meet the expectations and the standards of the school that you in.”*

TEACHER C: *“That is just a rhetorical question, like it does not even matter. It does not matter... exactly. And this is introduced by our department, still yet it has not reached most of our colleagues. So, if it has to be done, they must come back to the ground where the work is done.”*

TEACHER E, FGD: *“mmm foundation phase does have a communication book, and you write your comments about the day and even then, only about those learners that are critical. You write your comments, and the parents can see that you have the book but this side no I’m defeated.”*

On the bases of the results above, it is evident that more parental participation is needed for those with learners with special needs. There needs to be a way for teachers to better communicate with parents in the phase and with each other's to work collaboratively to figure out ways to support the weaker learners that are failing. If communication is not carried out accordingly, all the stakeholders will continue to function separately and there will be no consistency across grades, especially in the implementation of inclusive education.

Theme 11: *Teachers limited knowledge of inclusive practices*

The findings also indicated that teachers identified their limited knowledge on inclusive practices as being a factor as to why they are not fully able to implement inclusive education. It is the not having the knowledge on what systems should be in place and how to execute the inclusive practices with diverse learners. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“Yeah, we don't know how. It puts us at a disadvantage because I think the systems that are put in place, we don't know those systems you just come up with your ways of teaching that you think might work and might try and be diverse for most of the learners in the classroom if not all of them.”*

TEACHER C: *“I feel like I've not taken time, as time goes on you actually get to understand fully the foundation phase of willing to teach the actual writing and the actual learning of reading. I think I got used to the learners who get to intermediate phase where you have to come in already knowing to do it. I always thought it is the work of the foundation phase but unfortunately it continues on, and you find that like myself I don't even know where to start. I don't even know where to start.”*

TEACHER D, FGD: *“Having enough knowledge and expertise of how to deal with certain learners especially in certain states of being the way they are cause at the end of the day as a teacher when you deal with these kids, you're the one that must understand them first because they can even expect the others to understand them. So, the problem I feel like is with us the teachers we have to be taught and be aware about everything and whenever we are having the workshops let's not generalize, when we get there, we just*

generalize. We need to be inclusive; you need to make sure that all the learners feel valuable, what does it mean to make learners feel valuable? How do you do it, how do you go about doing that? Nothing is explained about it, they just generalize and some of us we even get out of the meeting not actually understanding of what this workshop was all about but if we can try to be as elaborative as possible to say when you do this you are being excluding, you are excluding other learners in the classroom. When you do this, this is what it means by taking this and doing 1 2 3 then by so doing it will actually be an eye opener to all of us. Most of the time the problem is the trainings are just general, they are just general nothing it unpacked. They just bring things to say you need to be inclusive that's it. So how do you go about doing that, what is it that you must do because I was so surprised the other time when my deputy principal said whenever you go to the classroom, you have a lesson for the A plus learner, you have a lesson for those average learners. For me it was the first time in 7 years experiencing that.”

On the bases of the results presented above, teachers seem to have limited knowledge of inclusive practices that could be used in mainstream classrooms. To an extent based on the responses teachers appear to be flying blind, in the sense that they are not sure what they should be doing. In addition, there is the assumption that it was the previous teacher's job to do certain things. It is also clear that they are also taking responsibility that in some areas they can make more effort in equipping themselves with previous knowledge of the learners to build them. However, the departed can play a crucial role in showing them how to put these practices in the classroom. It is a challenge that generalizing creates, but there needs to be specificity in the training of teachers when it comes to inclusive education practices.

Theme 12: *Implementing inclusive education increases demand for school resources*

Most teachers argued the limited resources within the school that would allow them to be inclusion are a huge disadvantage to inclusion. This limitation forces them to use one form of teaching methodology for all the learners or outsources from friends in other schools. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“First of all, I’m looking at the resources that we have in the classroom, we don’t have a lot of remedial books. Most of the books that we have we outsource from either you know someone that is teaching in another schools that person gives you the book. The issue of visual aids in our classroom is that we don’t have those, we physically have to create our own and make them from scratch. The issue of the speaker for listening and speaking, which is audio there is only one speaker that we have that we use, we don’t have an overhead projector, so we always use the board.”*

TEACHER C: *“By context I mean, first I think of the resources that we have, I think we are at a disadvantage cause also it’s a non-fee-paying school right.”*

TEACHER D, FGD: *“It’s just academics, they try they put it there and there but it’s not like white people schools. I remember like every day when there is PE every other day twice a week there’s sports. Today you are helping out with soccer the other day you are helping out with cricket, that’s your duty you there until 3 o clock, its constantly there. Here ahh you will have that one teacher that will help because he likes soccer and that’s it. So, and then in the classrooms when you think about it it’s also not really accommodating a lot, at least I we had smartboards and things like that, access or at least easy access.”*

TEACHER E, FGD: *“Reading corners we don’t have. “Reading corners, they are asking you what resources you need, and you write the books, and they don’t bring it so there’s no point.”*

From the results above, the increased demand for resources affects all subjects as well as the availability of extra-curricular activities and physical education within the school. At most the school has one projector and one speaker for the whole school to use. The use of multiple resources to cater to the visual, auditory, kinesthetic learners is important because learners are different in the way that learn. Therefore, the lack of resources will continue to be disadvantage for the educatory to implement inclusion.

Theme 13: *No support for teachers from the school*

The findings also indicated that most of the educators except one had the same complaint, that they do not receive the right support to be fully effective in the classroom. Teachers are experiencing a lack of support from school management in the sense that teachers are not given the opportunity or encouragement to take part in school activities or on how to set exam papers as new teachers in the profession. Secondly, from department they are not shown how to be inclusive in the classroom; and parents are not fully involved at home or making effort to work with teachers to help improve the learners in the completion of work at home. The factors that disadvantage inclusive education according to the teachers are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“Ummm I don’t think I have the right amount of support.”*

TEACHER C: *“And it is not only what teachers can do, there is so much that teachers can do but I feel we are limited by our management. Cause I think it is the work of the management to go through each and every staff member and ask you mam like I was asked in the interview sir what is it that you know, what is it that you can offer the school except 1+1? And it is the responsibility of the management to do it, there are many young ladies who have arrived in our school.”*

TEACHER D, FGD: *“There’s a lot, and do you know that I’m the only one that has ever went to some of them to ask them can you do this can you do public speaking can you do a debate team an guess what when you speak with those ladies, they know this they have done it before but there’s no one whose providing them with a platform to say Thobile since you know English and you teach English and you so passionate with this language, how about you do 1 2 3. There’s no such so they end up doing what? That’s why most of the teachers end up being redundant.”*

TEACHER F, FGD: *“Because even from the district I think there’s a problem in terms of when we have to transfer a learner who encounters learning difficulties, we have that SNA form so it’s a delay, a long process. You may find that you identify a learner from Grade 1 up until a learner can reach Grade 7theres nothing, you find that the learner he/she doesn’t grab any information like I don’t know because there is nothing the school can do without a go ahead from district.”*

TEACHER G, FGD: *“Sometimes we don’t get a response. So, you have a learner that starts from Grade 1 till Grade 7 that’s when you meet the parent of the child that has had a problem from Grade 1- Grade 7 when they need the transfer card for high school. It’s more school, because I think if we had an SGB that was active the rails, the ramps. I don’t think the department is not aware that we have learners who have learning problems, they are aware of that. Because we...”*

From the results above, all the factors mentioned in the responses put teachers at a disadvantage as to how to teach and give support that is appropriate for the learners individually. What is highlighted here is that teachers are expected to carry out certain duties, but the parties that should be supporting them to ensure that these duties are carried out accordingly and that teachers are clued up on how to do them are failing to do their part. The teachers are of the knowledge that the department is aware of the difficulties that teachers are having with learners but their assistants on the matter is limited.

Theme 14: *Individual support disadvantages the rest of the learners*

The study findings also reported that by providing individual support to learners with disabilities, other learners are disadvantaged. There is an expectation for learners to receive individualized support for it to be an inclusive classroom. Based on their experiences teachers conclude that giving individualized support disadvantages the learners that are coping in class, which according to the demands of inclusive education this is an disadvantage. The interview excerpts from teachers on this theme are reported as follows:

TEACHER B: *“No, I’m being realistic no cause with my learners I have 20 of them that identified and see that these learners are struggling in English. They cannot read, they cannot write, there’s no reading for understanding so the level that they’re in is of a grade 3 if not lower. So, if I’m gonna say let me explain the content quickly and then while the other are working let us do the intervention, still there are gonna be learners that come to you with questions based on the work they have to do, and you still have to focus on that 20. Where do we sit? How do we work our way in the space that we have without distracting others as well.”*

TEACHER C: *“Yes, it makes it difficult for the rest and remember in that moment the learners are not attended, its chaos.”*

Based on the results above, teachers find individualized support a challenge and to an extent they are reluctant to align with the expectations of inclusive education based on the claim that it is not fair for other learners. This insinuates that those that need support are a burden and interrupt the flow of the classroom. Therefore, what is apparent is that teachers would need to change their attitudes alone to fully be ambassadors of inclusive education, because they play a crucial role in its implementation.

Theme 15: *Inclusive education brings complexities in handling learners with special needs*

The findings of the study also indicated one disadvantage of implementing inclusive education is the complexity and difficulty in handling learners with disability in inclusive classrooms. As a result, teachers feel defeated and emotionally drained in the classroom because they feel there is only so much, they can do, as they do not see alternative options to deal with learners who are struggling and are not able to get better despite the effort the teachers are making. In the process of trying to move to the learner’s pace and repeat content for the weaker learners or dumbing it down for those that show no understanding teachers feel drained. When teachers implement inclusive education, they find that with the challenges that they are constantly dealing with when it comes to learners, inclusion becomes emotionally draining. Teachers discussed their issues with full mainstreaming, thus being inclusive education. The overall belief amongst numerous teachers is that learners with special needs are too difficult to handle, and the following statements were made:

TEACHER B: *“Definitely. We don’t have systems in place that would accommodate LSEN learners. We don’t, it just one way one method of teaching and if that learner is experiencing difficulties, they either repeat the grade and if they’ve repeated the grade for a number or certain amount of time then they are progressed to the next grade.”*

TEACHER C: *“In this case that every learner will behave in the way they will be behaving, differently from everyone cause obviously they are different from each and every one and in that case somewhere somehow it will be difficult to exercise tolerance*

to...Yes, it will test you patients, they behave different unlike now we expect them to behave a certain way because that what life is but right now if you have those who have epilepsy, the blind ones, the deaf ones how do you go about accommodating them all at once? yeah that would become chaotic because the moment you start I know with my class there are learners who from Lesotho I can speak Sotho and all those things, the moment I start speaking Sotho that this learner can understand the whole class I interrupted because some of them find the words very amusing.”

TEACHER F, FGD: *“So, the number, as you are concerned about the number, was round about 20 kids. In these 20 kids one child is equal to like 10 kids according to my own experience.”*

TEACHER E, FGD: *“But in class I think there’s hardly anything that you can really, because you can see that no matter what you try it’s kind of like a waste of your effort. Because the child is at a level that they are not even there where they are supposed to be so what are you supposed to do with that child? Whatever means you are trying to make, it’s kind of useless because cognitively they are not there. I personally even gave up. All the time when I started teaching, I used to be like Thando are you writing, I would check and be like no you are on the wrong line start here but no guys I can’t. This side you only complain when it gets a bit too much, and you see that now you are failing to come nice. I used to do thing with homework and if you missed it 3 times then I’d write it down and then call the parents. After some time, you just get tired because they don’t do the homework. You do it until you get tired but then again with parents you call only when its critical but not for everyone. Some parents actually want to come to you, some are supportive others are act like they are interested and say they didn’t know they will speak to the child but when the call ends you can see they have forgotten about you.”*

TEACHER D, FGD: *“YAH so I can’t mm I know what this child has because I don’t, so how can I help when I don’t know what the child has. You are giving equal opportunity to all the learners, even though we are not doing it gives equal opportunities. Of which you know you not giving equal opportunities others you ignore because you are frustrated that you have to be on their case all the time like you can just take them and put them on your desk and explain to them but you don’t have time for that because you are trying to*

check on other learners who are the level they are supposed to be to see if they are okay but now you supposed to sit do with this one and tell them let's start.”

TEACHER G, FGD: “And emotionally its draining because you are thinking every day you are talking about the 1 learner out of 45 learners commenting about behavior commenting about the work that is not done and sometimes you yourself as a human being you thinking to yourself you can keep calling Phumuzile's name every day. Sometimes you ignore that child just to give them peace and you think let me just do my 30 minutes and then leave and I will see that child next week. Then next week you go back on their case again and give them a break.”

Based on the results above, it is overwhelmingly clear from the teachers' responses that special needs learners would not be accommodated. The preconceived ideas about the form of chaos they can create in the class or the type of behaviors to expect has boxed the learners into a category, without fully understanding who they are and how they learn. Teachers view special needs learners as people that they must build a tolerance for, therefore can be concluded that these teachers are not in support of mainstreaming. Thus, putting inclusive education at a disadvantage, because learners that are different will continue to be treated as such. It is essential for teachers to feel motivated and not give up on learners, for inclusive education to be effective. Their struggle is one that many teachers are facing, which is knowing what they are supposed to do with the extremely weak learners. There is a strong indication that training is essential for the teachers to know how to individually support learners, because when you are not making a difference in a learner, you feel like you have failed. The problematic element here is one that impacts the learner negatively, as they can see that they are now experiencing silent exclusion in the classroom when they no longer get assistance from the teacher. It is concerning that a teacher who has only been in the profession for a year is at a point where they can say they have given up. It is evident that these teachers have yet to master how to find a way of supporting learners whilst dealing with the rest of the learners. It is a struggle for them emotionally to have to teach at an extremely low level for a few learners when the majority can keep up in class. Teachers expect learners to understand previous concepts and get frustrated when they must teach work from the previous years, which affects their ability to complete the activities needed for that lesson. Even with those demands the

challenges are more to do with teacher attitudes as they come with certain expectations for learners which are not always realistic.

Theme 16: *Unrealistic conformity expectations on all learners*

The findings also indicated that there are unrealistic conformity expectations on learners in mainstream schools. For example, one teacher participant pointed out the expectation for learners to conform to the Christian beliefs of the teachers at this schools hinders inclusive education within the school. This is because the teachers label learners as evil for practicing alternative beliefs. The Christian beliefs that teachers withhold and expect learners to conform become a disadvantage to the implementation of inclusive education. The teacher states:

TEACHER C: "Because we have a certain Christian way of viewing things and most of the teachers here, they are not as accommodative to other religions and custom practices as they are expecting their Christianity to be respected as well. In my class right now, I have a learner who when he was in Grade 4, he was struggling very much and then he went to these traditional people then they gave him a piece of cloth to say he is going to be a traditional healer. When it's time yeah, but for now he just has to keep the cloth, that piece of cloth with him and he is having that, and I have some teachers who came to me, and they were against that. They say that is an evil you know bad spirit practice, but with me I could not say that because as I am before I can say I'm a Christian I'm a black man as I'm saying I'm a black which means culture first. I do understand the cultural practices and I do understand that we live in a very diverse country where we come with a lot of things which we can use as weapons not against other people but as equipment and allow us to be able open up our minds and hearts about the kind of world we are living in and that will help us to be able to be more tolerant and more understanding towards other people practices cause in my school once you are not following the Christianity way , most especially the elder ladies they only that the right way is the Christian way."

From the results above, it can be argued that the labelling of learners are practices that are exclusionary towards learners. The researcher argues that schools have diverse learners in culture

and beliefs and to suggest that being different makes one not accepted is discrimination based in which inclusive education does not align with.

Theme 17: *Increased need for remedial work by teachers*

The teachers in the focus group participants were in consensus with not wanting to go beyond what is asked of them. The idea of giving extra lessons as a means of additional support appears to be a chore and as it is not compulsory within the school, they believe it should only be done if you are paid extra or if you love the job. There is also a strong feeling of inadequateness on the teacher's behalf and a belief in a need for specialists to be the ones that handle those that need additional assistance in the classroom. In addition, teaching them in separate setting is highly favored on the bases that they would get the right support from the right person who is capable of meeting their needs. The interview excerpts from three teacher participants on this theme are reported below:

TEACHER G, FGD: *“Yes, because you don't get paid for them. Time says 3 until 2:45 anything beyond that you do because you love it.”*

TEACHER B: *“I'm thinking of the psychological part of it and being able to deal with that. I don't think I'm well equipped for that.”*

TEACHER E, FGD: *“Yes time, because if there was a class where you know you gonna cover this much and not more than that. Even then, you can cover it all but the basics of that concept then you can cover it. So, if they put them together the problem is that it will be like it's the dumb kids' class so other learners then will laugh at them. But if they are sitting in a class with the right person, they won't need anything.”*

From the responses above it is evident that the teachers show no interest in providing extra lessons and would only do it they were paid to do so. The lack of interests poses a barrier and makes one question as to how much effort is being made in class to support the learners that are struggling. Teacher attitudes have been identified to have a huge impact in effective inclusive education within school. The teacher's alignment with separate forms of education for those that are struggling and need additional support is of concern in an inclusive classroom. There is no point section of the interview data where any of teachers refer to themselves as being appropriate for teaching or

dealing with special needs learners. They mention that job for being only from “the right person”, thus distancing themselves from the concept of inclusion.

Theme 18: *Inclusive Education is theoretical and not realistic*

This theme is one that argues that inclusive education is understood to be just a theory, because it is impossible to implement. The inclusion of inclusive education in the curriculum for teachers in training, has enabled the understanding of the concept from a theoretical perspective. However, the systems that are implemented within the school are not in line with what is learnt, therefore keeping it as just a theory because it does not match with the reality in schools. As it stands according to teachers it remains a theory as it is not realistic, and they state:

TEACHER C: *“Nope, it’s just a theory that we got.”*

TEACHER A: *“It’s never equal though.”*

From the responses above, there is knowledge and an understanding of what inclusive education is. However, its expectations from teachers are not what the participants consider realistic. The understanding is that even when support is applied it can never be equal thus making it a theory that they know and cannot be applied in practice to make it a reality.

4.5: Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter presents the findings of the study in detail. The next chapter will provide a thorough discussion of the results, conclusions and the recommendations that arise from those findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations of the study. This study aimed to investigate teachers' understanding of inclusive education at a selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South District. In addition, this chapter presents the suggestions for further research and limitation of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Teachers' understanding of inclusive education at a selected mainstream primary school

The study explored teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school. The findings indicated that teachers understand inclusive education in the following way: inclusive education as holistic teaching, inclusive education as team teaching, inclusive education as effective communication and understanding, inclusive education as accommodation of diverse learners, creation of special schools for learners with disabilities and inclusive education as dumb down content for support. The way teachers understand IE is a reflection of what they do in practice. Furthermore, it assists in measuring how far or how effective IE is in its implementation.

5.2.2 Teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school

The study also examined the advantages of teachers' understanding of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school. The findings indicated that the teachers understood the advantages of inclusive education in the following ways: that it caters for diverse needs of all learners, enhances intrapersonal understanding of learners with special needs, enhances self-esteem of disabled learners and provides equal opportunities for all learners.

5.2.3 Teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school

The study also examined the disadvantages of teachers' understanding in implementing inclusive education at a selected mainstream primary school. The findings indicated that the teachers understood the disadvantages of inclusive education in the following ways: it limits teacher participation in allocation of subjects, increases demand for infrastructure to accommodate learners with disabilities, IE not implementable with language barriers in classes, IE increases demand for training, IE not workable with large classes, IE restricts teaching methods, implementing inclusive education is time consuming, IE not practical with overloaded school curriculum, implementing IE reinforces teaching by trial and error, IE increases demand for parental participation, teachers limited knowledge of inclusive practices, implementing IE increases demand for school resources, no support for teachers from the school, individual support disadvantages the rest of the learners, IE brings complexities in handling learners with special needs, unrealistic conformity expectations on all learners, increased need for remedial work by teachers and IE is theoretical and not realistic. The findings from the above themes suggest that teacher attitudes towards IE are at a critical standpoint and are yet to align with the demands of IE for various reasons. Furthermore, according to the teachers the disadvantages of IE seem to outweigh the advantages, which highlights how IE has little to no impact in the current education system.

5.3 Discussion of Findings

5.3.1 Teachers' understanding of inclusive education at a selected mainstream primary school.

The study explored teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school. The findings of the study indicated that teachers have different understandings of what IE is, which essentially impacts the way they teach and engage with different learners. From the literature reviewed in this study, researchers found that teachers that were mindful of IE had a very limited understanding of it to just being the inclusion of those with disabilities, thus forgetting those that are marginalised in regular classrooms. In agreement with Tungaraza (2014) and UNESCO (2004), IE is not limited to the inclusion of those with disabilities, but it is about meeting the diverse needs of all learners, particularly those that are easily marginalised or excluded. In

addition, Tungaraza (2014) further argued that there is a possibility that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and those that are vulnerable are not catered for within the inclusive classrooms. Based on these findings, it can be said that if teachers fail to understand this concept they are likely to continue to engage in exclusionary practices. The implication of this finding is that the Department of Education should provide in-service training for teachers on inclusive practices and their implementation.

The findings on teachers understanding of IE to be holistic is found to be a challenging approach towards inclusion, because teachers understand IE to focus on building the learner so that they can function in society and not just focus on academics. Contrary to this understanding a study done in China found that in practice the holistic approach only assists with the social aspects of inclusion of those with special needs in mainstream schools, as it helps learners to be more confident and independent, however it fails to have any impact on the academic ability of those learners in mainstream classrooms (Yan et.al, 2019). Most schools place their focus on learners' academic performance and a form of education that does not assist in achieving that is one that will not be favourable for teachers. In agreement with Xaba (2014) holistic inclusive education can only be used merely to tackle the issue of violence in South African schools, as there is an awareness that it is just a tool and cannot be used as a method to impact learners' academic performance.

The teachers also understood IE to be one that should be collaborative in teaching so that learners can be strong in all subjects with the understanding that the whole team plays a role in building that child. Similarly, a Belgian study by Simons et al. (2020) and an Israelian study by Tsybulsky (2019) both reported that IE is a collaborative approach to teaching that works to the advantage of both teachers and learners. Teachers found that it helps with peer support, planning, easing the workload as well as their professional development (Simons et al., 2020). Any education initiative that is taken, support is necessary and a collaboration on all levels can have a positive impact on inclusiveness in all classrooms. The findings further state that teachers are also of the understanding that IE is the accommodation of diverse learners, despite them feeling they are incapable of managing in such a classroom. If teachers are to accommodate all learners, the provision of appropriate support systems is a requirement for all learners to function in an inclusive classroom as found by Mbuva (2019) in a study in South Africa. Similarly, a Kenyan study by

Ileri et al., (2020) that despite teachers being aware what is required under IE, schools have yet to have the equipment or correct infrastructure to enable the teachers to meet the learners needs. The studies indicate the many complexities and dilemmas that teachers encounter daily to be able to effectively implement IE as reported by the participants.

The study also indicated that regardless of teachers being positive about IE, they still find the need for special schools to be necessary for learners with special needs. In agreement with this finding, Mpu and Adu (2021), Kremer et al. (2021) and Saloviita (2020) asserted that teachers are still of the belief that learners with certain limitation and disabilities would find segregated settings more fruitful for their learning. These very ideas stand in contrast to the social disability model theory, which argues that those with disabilities are disabled by the society itself and the attitudes and ideas that are imposed on them (Barnes & Oliver, 2010). Therefore, according to the understanding of this theory one can conclude that teachers are in fact creating further limitations on the learners with the assumptions that they can only learn in special schools. It is clear from these findings that teachers are yet to embody IE as a concept, as a way of teaching and thinking which highlights the crisis that learners are faced with on the field, which prohibits them from fully participating in society. The implication of this finding is that the Department of Education should continuously monitor the implementation of inclusive education and provide support to teachers in this regard.

5.3.2 Teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school.

The study also examined teachers' understanding of the advantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school. IE was initiated decades ago, yet the findings of this study highlighted the little progress in practice as teachers stated more disadvantages than advantages of its implementation. According to the findings teachers believe the advantage of IE is full inclusion of all learners, which would assist in decreasing othering amongst students and teachers and making all learners feel valued and involved in their own learning. In agreement a Tanzanian study by Tungaraza (2014) reported that a teacher highlighted that IE would eliminate stigmatization and instil confidence in those with disabilities so they can perform well academically and socially if they learn together in one classroom. Thus, suggesting that it would create a new norm where all the learners feel valued. The implication of this finding is that The

Department of Education should make a more concerted effort to ensure that mainstreaming normalised amongst schools to enrich all learners and eliminate stigmatization.

In addition, multiple studies by Kart and Kart (2021), Kramer et al. (2021) and Zakaria (2017) all found that the benefit of IE is that it enhances intrapersonal understanding and the self-esteem of those that are marginalised, which would lead to better academic performance in mainstream school than in special schools. However, if these learners are not well received by the learners and teachers these positive results would be difficult to achieve. The findings indicated that teachers believe under IE learners will leave school knowing they are capable of greatness and are able to find a place in society. However, they also state that certain learners should remain open to the fact that the academic route to university is not for everyone so they should take interest in more hand work or technical schools. The concern with the latter is the deterministic approach, and a slight lack of belief in the ability of those with special needs. This is problematic because these ideas can influence learners to marginalize others and result in bullying based on the assumption that other have inability to perform like the rest. In agreement a study in Malaysia highlights that bullying is a concern for those with disabilities, therefore it requires the correct level of sensitivity and support from teachers to ensure that the self-esteem and self-concept of all the learners is not affected negatively (Zakaria, 2017). At the forefront of this study, is that teacher attitudes are detrimental to the success of IE in the field, as they can either make or break the learners in mainstream schools.

When applying the Systems theory, it can be said that they actors (teachers) within the education system choose what is communicated to the learners, thus ensuring the maintenance of the current system. This theory states how important it is to understand the systems that exist and how learners are seen as a resource in the formulation of the relationships within the school and its environment (Qvortrup, 2005). Essentially, the stated advantages need to be viewed in a positive way by the teachers because if these learners are seen as a threat to a well-functioning system the learners with special needs will continue to be excluded (Qvortrup, 2005). If we are to apply this understanding it is evident that teachers decide the level of inclusion and exclusion in the classroom. Even if teachers communicate the advantages of IE as being the catering of diverse needs, if they are not willing to cater to those needs and continue to abide by the medical model, exclusionary practices

will continue. In agreement a study in Scotland by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) echoes the same sentiment in their findings which stated that the teachers still felt that learners with special needs would benefit more in special schools, even though those teachers felt capable to support those learners without assistants in their classrooms. The implication of this finding is that all schools and its educators need to be fully initiated into IE and its practices through regular training and workshops and familiarisation with policies to ensure that all stakeholders take part in the process of change to full inclusion of all learners. If teachers feel part of the process, they will find it easier to implement IE in practice and eliminate exclusionary practices.

5.3.3 Teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school?

The researcher also explored teachers' understanding of the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream primary school. From the findings of the study, when analysing the disadvantages stated by the teachers, they far outweigh the positives, which can either reflect teacher negative attitudes towards IE or be an indication of the gaps that still need to be addressed so IE can be successfully implemented. Essentially the findings of the disadvantages state the challenges that prohibit the teachers from implementing IE successfully. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers feel inadequate to teach learners who need support and do not know how to teach in an inclusive classroom against the time constraints, curriculum pressures and the targets they are expected to achieve as given by the department. In support, a South African study by Swart et al., (2002) and Finish study by Saloviita (2020) found that teachers feel underprepared and need training to get more knowledge and be taught how they can be more inclusive in classroom with learners with diverse needs. Furthermore, teachers feel they do not have the skills required to be able to teach those with disabilities or in need of additional support (Saloviita, 2020). The implication of this finding is that the Department of Education should consider re-training all teachers on inclusive practices and their implementation in schools.

The findings also indicated that other factors that impede IE and its implementation is the lack of resources and appropriate infrastructure, to enable the teachers to accommodate all learners in mainstream schools. The reality that most African countries are faced with is that they have a shortage of resources for regular classrooms, without the addition of extra resources for support

for learners that need them to learn. A study in Zimbabwe stated that due to the lack of resources that the schools are experiencing, it forces the teacher to apply a one-size fits all approach when teaching all the learners (Hlatywayo & Mapolisa, 2022). A similar challenge was found in a study from Mauritius which indicated that the lack of resources prohibiting full enrolment of learners with special needs as they are unable to cater to their needs (Abdoula-Dhuny, 2021). Teachers have argued that IE makes a great demand for financial support so that the physical infrastructure in schools changes so all the learners with disabilities are able to move around in classrooms and around the school, which has yet to be done in multiple schools in Ukraine (Gubareva et al., 2022, p.25). These studies echo the findings the teachers repeatedly stated as one of the issues in their schools.

When it comes to full inclusion, we need to understand that it goes beyond the impaired but also the learners that are struggling to cope with the pace of the class and are marginalized. Teachers have raised the concern that they struggle to support learners due to large class numbers and sometimes their schools are forced to take learners that are not able to speak or understand in the medium of instruction. Similarly, researchers found that in SA more than 50% of the learners in rural areas are unable to pass because of the language barrier. As a result, the school became an underperforming school (Navsaria et al., 2011). In addition, a teacher asserts that children ideally should be placed in schools that use the learners' native language as a medium of instruction so they can be able to learn (Navsaria et al., 2011). This is a further indication that full inclusion poses more challenges for teachers, especially when they are not multilingual to be able to assist the children. Teachers are in a constant state of defeat when it comes to IE. There is a consensus in the findings in a study in SA by Engelbrecht, Nel, et al. (2015) and one in Canada by McGhie-Richmond et al., (2013) that found that teachers believe that learners with special needs are not able to complete the set curriculum and are in constant need of support that would better be met in remedial classes or special school. The findings also indicated that the inclusion of slow learners is problematic for the teachers because those learners require dumbed down content, as they cannot keep up with the current curriculum. This form of thinking is one that continues to stand in contrast to the social model and asserts the medical model and its need for separate teaching. It further indicates the battle that IE still needs to conquer when referring to teachers' understanding and views towards IE. The implication of this finding is that the Department of education needs to

create a curriculum that is in line with IE demands so that teachers can work with the right amount of content so that no learner is left behind. In addition, the department also needs to rethink their enrolment strategies particularly when placing learners that can only speak a language that is not used in the school to prevent learning barriers in class.

Even though IE has made some progress and there has been some acknowledgement and inclusion of it in Universities, there is still a reality that should be addressed with regards to the government not doing its part with the provision of resources, funding, support and training for teachers and at times failing to acknowledge that there are learners who prefer to be in special schools where they can flourish and move at a pace that they can cope with. A study in Estonia argues that IE is created with the sense of justice but fails to acknowledge that those with disabilities are being forced into a learning environment that puts them at a disadvantage and does not cater to their needs (Leijen et al., 2021). It is important to be cognisant of such, because placing learners in environments that cannot cater to their needs in and outside the classroom will do more damage than good. The implication of this finding is that the Department of Education needs to further consider giving learners a choice when it comes to moving to mainstream school to allow those that choose to be in special schools to remain so. This is because until they are able to meet the financial demands when it comes to the provision of resources, training, correct infrastructure they need to acknowledge that mainstreaming might cause more harm than good for all learners.

5.4 Conclusion

This study concludes that, the way teachers understand inclusive education needs to be a place of focus because the findings themselves show that despite the many policies on IE, teachers' understanding still varies and, in many cases, is limited to just learners with disabilities. Teachers fail to understand that the traditional approach to teaching is not inclusive in nature and there are learners without disabilities in mainstream schools that are being marginalised daily. There is need for understanding of communication, understanding and collaboration amongst the teachers and learners. However, teachers need to understand how to understand diverse needs and how to accommodate them within the classroom. Thus, the study further concludes that, until educators are empowered with the correct knowledge and skills to be able to implement IE with the learners

they have now, they will always struggle to understand how to teach learners with severe behavioural, learning, and physical disabilities.

The study also concludes that teachers' responses indicated a great understanding of the advantages of implementing IE. There is a clear indication that teachers are aware of the impact that it can have but have yet to find the need to apply it in their teaching. All stakeholders should be concerned with the fact that even though teachers are aware of how learners can be benefited, they make no effort to put it in to practice. Which can make one wonder if the issue is the understanding of what is being said or is it a reluctant nature and negative attitude towards IE.

Moreover, the study concludes that despite the fact that there are existing inclusive policies in South Africa, there are many challenges that impede the successful implementation of inclusive education. Although there is evidence of IE being included in the university curriculum for new teachers going into the field to make changes. The findings indicated that there is a big variance between existing inclusive policies and the practice in classrooms. Until the department discovers a way to train teachers that are already on the field, the new teachers will continue to have little to no impact in their new schools because their focus is on learning the ways of the school and not on how to implement IE. If the existing educators are not equipped and trained in IE, the exclusionary practices that seem to dominate our schools will continue to flourish. Based on the findings, we can conclude that IE has a lot of barriers to make it successful, and even though it has made progress over the years, the SA township schools do not know how to implement it and appear reluctant to engage with it in practice. There is too much negativity attached to IE for the teachers that are knowledgeable about it. Teachers associate it with more work, impossible demands, dealing with difficult learners, the need for extra resources, funding and engagement with difficult parents and lack of support, rather than coming up with strategies on how they could better support the learners. Teachers associate IE with the impossible, and due to the workload and overcrowded classes, they seem to prefer what they believe works; special schools and segregated learning. One of the biggest issues is the fact that the department set the standards of IE, yet they have failed to produce a curriculum that accommodates these changes as well as put pressure on schools to produce high academic results. Teachers play an important role in the implementation of IE and their attitude determines how successful it is. Therefore, those in power need to fulfil their promises so that teachers are not in a state of feeling inadequate. It can be said that teachers

understanding of IE is limited and not understood in the best way that it could be to be fully implemented.

5.5 Recommendations

While IE is a great concept that has the potential to bring about equality in schools and in society, it does appear to not be very successful in its implementation. In order to eliminate challenges that impede its existence in practice multiple changes need to be done and these are the recommendations:

- The Department of Education should provide continuous in-service teacher training on inclusive education. Teacher training as indicated in the policies must be carried out for all the teachers as well as student teachers. This is because the study findings indicated that teachers still feel inadequate and lack the skill to teach learners with special needs and those with learning disabilities. Moreover, the findings indicated that most teachers have not been trained on inclusive education. This explains why the teachers state that IE is just a theory that they learned at school, and they work on following the ways that the school functions which are not in line with IE.
- The Department of Education should consider employing curriculum specialists that will strictly deal with creating a curriculum that all learners can cope with, which also gives room for teachers to be able to change the pace and not rush for completion. Thus, a new curriculum is necessary as the findings indicated that teachers felt that the curriculum is too overloaded, and they are in constant rush to complete it, as a result they are not able to make time for support or to change the pace so that all learners can be accommodated.
- The Department of Education should revise policies to increase funding from the government to make all the schools accessible for all learners and to allow the provision of needed resources to teach and support the learners. This is because the findings indicated that the lack of resources, incorrect infrastructure is a global crisis that most teachers complain about. In the study it goes further to state that due to these shortcomings SA is in no position to implement IE successfully, as most of the schools are currently not in any state to accommodate all the learners with diverse needs.

5.6 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations is that the data and conclusions drawn are obtained from one selected school, therefore it cannot be used to generalise for all the schools in South Africa. However, the findings are in-depth because they are qualitative in nature, so the aim of the study has still been achieved. It must be noted that the information put forward in the study was limited by time constraints as the interviews could only be done during admin or after school, which at times clashed with staff meetings and meetings with parents. However, other participants were able to step in place of their colleagues, therefore the intended interviews were carried out accordingly.

5.7 Suggestions for future research

Based on this study for future research the suggestions formed would be to look at the strategies of addressing the challenges of implementing inclusive education. It should be noted that a collaboration with the DoE, on carrying out the strategies that were stated in the policies to train teachers, provide funding for resources, as well as support for the school and teachers.

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APPENDIX I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

INSTRUCTIONS:

I. Kindly respond to all questions

What is your gender?

What is your age?

How many years of experience do you have?

II. All information gathered will be kept confidential.

1. What is your understanding of inclusive education?

2. Do you consider your school inclusive? Why “yes” or “no”?

3. What is the most important thing about creating an inclusive school environment?

4. How would you describe an inclusive classroom based on your experience and knowledge?

5. In your view, what are the advantages of implementing inclusive education in a classroom?

6. For each response in 6 above, please, justify and elaborate on your answer

7. In your view, what are the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in a classroom?

8. For each response in 8 above, please, justify and elaborate on your answer

**APPENDIX II: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR
TEACHERS**

1. What is your understanding of inclusive education?

2. Do you consider your school inclusive? Why “yes” or “no”?

3. What is the most important thing about creating an inclusive school environment?

4. How would you describe an inclusive classroom based on your experience and knowledge?

5. In your view, what are the advantages of implementing inclusive education in a classroom?

6. For each response in 6 above, please, justify and elaborate on your answer

7. In your view, what are the disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in a classroom?

8. For each response in 8 above, please, justify and elaborate on your answer

APPENDIX III: PERMISSION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



Title of Study: Teachers understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South district

Institution: University of Witwatersrand, School of Education.
27 St Andrews Rd, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193.

August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at Igagasi Primary School

My name is Bathobile Makama. I am studying for a Master's Degree in Education in the Education Campus at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at Igagasi Primary school.

I am conducting research on the way teachers understand inclusive education as a concept and in practice in a mainstream school. The study aims to examine teachers understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South District.

The research will entail collecting data from 8 teachers, specifically grade 4-7 teachers (2 each grade). I will invite individuals from your organisation to participate in this study through

interview and a focus group discussion. Participants will be asked to be as open as possible and share their opinions in relation to the topic. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The results will be communicated in terms of a research project.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

All research data will be stored on a password protected computer.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Bathobile Makama (681029)

0735122416

681029@wits.ac.za

Supervisor:

Dr Peter Aloka

01171773065

peter.aloka@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX IV: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Sir/Madam

20- 08-2022

Re: Information letter regarding participation in a research study

My name is Bathobile Makama, and I am a registered Maters student in the school of education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am conducting research on the way teachers understand inclusive education as a concept and in practice in a mainstream school. I am under the supervision of Dr Peter Aloka. The research project aims to examine teachers understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South District.

The research will entail me collecting data from 8 teachers. Only 4 teachers will participate in individual interviews and the other 4 will be required to participate in a focus group discussion. I would like to invite you to take part in an individual interview and focus group discussion. The interviews will take around 30 to 45 minutes. With your permission, I would like to record the interview using an audio recording device.

There will be no costs to you if you participate in this study. Furthermore, no teacher will receive any benefits from participation and there are no disadvantages or penalties of any kind should you choose not to participate or withdraw from this study. Please note that you may withdraw at any time or not answer any questions if you do not want to. The interviews will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for any names or any identifying information, and the information s/he gives to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. All the interviews will be held afterschool in a secluded classroom or in an office away from public audible range, your response will not be shared with anyone outside of the interview room and the interview will be conducted in English to assist with the data collection process. A pseudonym (false name) will be used when discussing each teacher's participation in the final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point during this process, I will stop the interview and we can resume another time.

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

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Bathobile Makama
681029@students.wits.ac.za
0735122416

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

APPENDIX V: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER INTERVIEW

Teachers understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South district.

Bathobile Makama

(Please circle the relevant options below).

Permission to be interviewed

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

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of the school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project.
- I agree that the researcher may use my direct quotes that are anonymised in the research report/publications

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

..... (Signature)
..... (Name of participant)
..... (Date)

..... (Signature)
..... (Name of person seeking consent)
..... (Date)

APPENDIX VI: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE SELECTED SCHOOL



Igagasi Primary School

Enquiries: B.S. Msibi (Principal)
Tel: (011) 866-8612
e-mail address:
igagasiprimaryschool@outlook.com

No.1 Dr. P.D. Sekete Avenue
Spruitview
P.O.Box 16023
Leondale
1424

23rd August 2022

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

This letter serves as a confirmation that permission has been granted by Igagasi Primary School to allow Ms Bathobile Makama to conduct her research.

She will be interviewing teachers based on the title of study: teachers understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South District.

Hoping that granting her permission will assist her endeavours.

Yours in management.



Mr. B. S. Msibi
Principal



APPENDIX VII: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM GDE



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	31 August 2022
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2022– 30 September 2022 2022/401
Name of Researcher:	MAKAMA B
Address of Researcher:	16126 IBINDA STREET EASTFIELD EXT 16 VOSLOORUS
Telephone Number:	0735122416
Email address:	681029@students.wits.ac.za
Research Topic:	TEACHERS UNDERSTANDING OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE SELECTED MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT.
Type of qualification	MED
Number and type of schools:	1 PRIMARY SCHOOL
District/s/HO	EKURHULENI SOUTH

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

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

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below are met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Makama B 31/08/2022

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX VIII: CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



WSoE
Wits School of Education

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

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

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2022ECE057M

PROJECT TITLE

Teachers understanding of advantages and disadvantages of implementing inclusive education in one selected mainstream primary school in Ekurhuleni South district.

INVESTIGATOR

Makama Bathobile

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR

WSoE

DATE CONSIDERED

16 September 2022

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved unconditionally

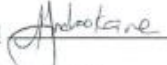
RISK LEVEL

No Risk

EXPIRY DATE

Date of submission of the Research Report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE

CHAIRPERSON 

Dr. Batseba Mofolo-Mbokane

cc: Dr. Emmanuel Mushayikwa

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

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

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


Signature

Date 22/09/22