

**EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN POLOKWANE MAINSTREAM
SECONDARY SCHOOLS, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane, Limpopo Province of South Africa. The approach to the study was qualitative, guided by an interpretivist paradigm. A purposefully selected sample of 20 teachers from 10 purposively selected mainstream secondary schools in Polokwane participated in this study. Instruments for data collection comprised in-depth interviews, corroborated by non-participant field observations to verify the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools. Content analysis was employed to analyse the data with the aim of coming up with themes and subthemes. The study revealed that the educators had the passion and willingness to implement Inclusive Education. The educators further perceived Inclusive Education as needful. The implementation of Inclusive Education was perceived as being effective to a lesser extent. The educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being negatively affected by their inadequate training, school environments which were unfit to accommodate learners with disabilities, the lack of facilities and equipment and higher learner enrolments in mainstream classrooms. Gender was seen to affect the educators' confidence in handling learners with disabilities and their ability to identify such learners. The study recommends the continued professional development and training of educators in the area of Inclusive Education, regular support and monitoring of Inclusive Education activities in mainstream schools by the DBE, provision of relevant resources and facilities in mainstream schools for the implementation of Inclusive Education, and additional support to educators to enhance their confidence in handling learners with barriers to learning and development. Finally, a model for the improvement of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools is proposed.

Key terms

Inclusive Education; inclusion; perceptions; mainstream schools; disability; barriers to learning; inclusive policy; educator training; Special Needs Education; South Africa.

DECLARATION

Student number: 08371709

I, Moyagabo Kate Malahlela, declare that **Educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo Province, South Africa** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

MK MALAHLELA

Date

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband, Lesibe James Malahlela, who has been with me in season and out of season.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to establish what educators' perceptions were concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education and to come up with a model to improve such implementation in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane, Limpopo Province. This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, sub-research questions, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the rationale for the study, the theoretical framework, the limitations of the study, the delimitation of the study and the definition of terms.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Across the globe, there are children and adults who live with disabilities or conditions that restrict their abilities and potential to perform daily activities, participate in regular educational setups and in broad social life experiences common to people without disabilities. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2017) defines disability as an umbrella term or a word that covers a comprehensive assortment of concepts, such as impairments or conditions that restrict activity and participation. Whitehead (2004:13) views disability as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a society, which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activity. There is a global estimation that 70 percent of children with disabilities, including those with mild intellectual disabilities, can attend regular schools, on condition that the environment is designed to be accessible, and the institution is willing to accommodate them (UNICEF, 2003). According to a recent report published by the World Health Organisation, 15 percent of the global population (200 million) suffer from some form of disability, and 87 percent of such individuals in developing countries live in rural areas where they do not have access to mainstream education (Khan, 2011:7). Globally, an estimated 93 million children, or 1 in 20 of those aged up to 14 years of age, live with a moderate or severe disability (Walker, Pearce, Abuel-Ealeh & Mowé, 2013:4). The global picture of the prevalence of children with disabilities was further revealed in surveys conducted by the Global Burden of Disease which indicated that the estimated number of children aged 0–14 years who were experiencing “moderate or severe disability” was 93 million (5.1%), with 13 million (0.7%) children

experiencing severe difficulties (Chan & Zoellick, 2011:36). A report from the Global Burden of Disease (Chan & Zoellick, 2011:36) further indicates that, in 2005, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimated the number of children with disabilities under age 18 worldwide at 150 million. Kiyuba and Tukur (2014:1) cite a World Bank report (2012) which states that many children with disabilities do not access special education, do not appear in school registers and are not catered for in government plans, whereas Inclusive Education, on the other hand, has an interest in disadvantaged children, i.e. those with various disabilities and those experiencing absolute poverty.

At present, it is estimated that 65 million primary and lower secondary school-aged children in developing countries have disabilities, half of whom are out of school and are among the most marginalised (Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, Farrel, Frankham, Gallannaugh, Howes & Smith, 2006:1; Liliane Foundation, 2017:6). The above-mentioned marginalised children are those with special educational needs across the globe who are classified as having mild, moderate or even profound learning impairments that appeal for additional intervention strategies in teaching and learning situations. The National Council for Special Education in Ireland (2014:10) defines Special Educational Needs as restrictions in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition. Students around the world, representing more than 185 countries, constitute a very heterogeneous group of individuals who differ remarkably with respect to nationality, race, ethnicity, cultural norms and customs, physical appearance and linguistic background (Hanassab, 2006:158). According to the US Department of Education (2011:30), the number of school-aged (5-17 years old) students who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 4.7 to 11.2 million during the period 1980 to 2009, and 21 percent of the school-aged population were defined as LDS (Linguistically Diverse Students). Research findings from across the globe indicate that schools and teachers are struggling to respond to the wide array of students, which results in teacher education providers putting more effort in their endeavours to ensure that graduates have the necessary attributes, confidence and competence to design and deliver inclusive curricula for a diverse range of learners (McLuskie & Aniftos, 2003:2). Despite the internationalisation of the philosophy of Inclusive Education (IE), for a variety of historical, cultural, social and financial reasons, its implementation has been uneven across the world

(Mitchell, 2010:1).

In sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of the population of primary and secondary school-going age, amounting to 600 million, are, in terms of access to secondary school education, excluded and not enrolled in the region due to the continued downward trend in the economies and rising costs of education which parents are required to meet (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010:8). The Kenyan National Survey for Persons with Disabilities of 2008 found that 4.6 percent of Kenyans experience some form of disability, comparing favourably to the WHO's estimate of 10 percent globally (Williams, 2014:1). In the Zambian education system, Inclusive Education is being regarded as a new phenomenon and some problems have been experienced in its implementation, especially in the Solwezi District of North-Western Province of Zambia (Mbunji, 2013:1).

In South Africa, the prevalence of children living with disabilities was revealed by the Statistics Annual General Household Survey (GHS) of 2009 which used the Washington Group (WG) Short Set of Questions. This was used to reveal the difficulties respondents experienced in seven domains of functioning, i.e., seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, concentrating, self-care and communicating which were found to account for 80 percent of disabilities (UNICEF, 2012:6; ACPF, 2011:4). Following this approach, the GHS (2009) reported to have classified nearly 2.1 million children (11.2% of the total child population in South Africa) as living with disabilities. The prevalence of disability according to the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) appears unusually high for young South African children: 28 percent of children in the age group 0-4 years and 10 percent in the age group 5-9 years were classified as having disabilities (ACPF, 2011:4). Donohue and Bornman (2014:4) confirm that, although school attendance is compulsory for all children between 7 and 15 years of age in South Africa, up to 70 percent of children of school-going age with disabilities are out of school or are still in separate "special" schools for learners with disabilities. Donohue and Bornman (2014:4) maintain that this situation still prevailed in 2013, despite the push for the educational inclusion of learners with disabilities more than a decade ago by the South African policy document, Education White Paper 6.

According to Statistics South Africa (2005), about five percent of children aged 0-19 have a reported disability which makes a total of approximately 496,000 children. The call for a *society for all* (as articulated in the integrated national disability strategy) cannot be made

without a call for equity and social justice, a call to use the country's considerable resources to promote the survival, wellbeing and development of all children (ACPF, 2011:5). A study conducted in the Western Cape Province of South Africa by Barratt (2016:5) revealed that large numbers of South African learners with disabilities, especially 'Black', 'Coloured' and 'Indian' learners, were either 'mainstreamed by default', without support, or excluded from accessing appropriate education altogether. The report of the meeting known as the *'Briefing by Department of Basic Education (DBE) on Progress Report on Inclusive Education and Special Schools'* (PMG, 2015) states that, by February 2015, 791 full service schools had been designated in different provinces of South Africa, from which 137 had been physically upgraded for accessibility and that very little progress had been made in the Northern Cape and Limpopo. It was further reported that 123 418 learners with special needs were enrolled in ordinary schools in 2012 which makes one percent of the total percentage of learners in ordinary schools, and that to strengthen special schools as resource centres and to promote effectiveness of Inclusive Education, 285 schools had been allocated a budget of R1.6 million between 2012 and 2014, of which Kwa-Zulu Natal was allocated the highest; the Western Cape receiving the lowest, and no information was available on Limpopo.

The fundamental principle of Inclusive Education is that all children should learn together, regardless of any difficulties and differences they may have, with the aim of providing them with adequate resources and support according to their needs (Materechera, 2014:167). Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing the eliminating exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2009a:8). Inclusion is allowing regular children and children with special needs to be placed together in mainstream classes; to be taught and instructed by mainstream teachers to create an environment that can give all children access to education (Akinsola & Chireshe, 2016:133; Khan, 2012:106). Inclusion involves creating an environment that allows all students to feel supported emotionally, while being given the appropriate accommodations in order to learn and to be respected and appreciated for all their personal differences (Blackie, 2010:1). In general terms, inclusion means the extent to which a school or community welcomes children with special needs as full members of the group and values them for the contribution which they make (Chireshe, 2011:157). Inclusive Education implies flexible, accessible curriculum and learning support strategies, open schools which welcome a diversity of learners, equal

education for all and that learners are taught to understand and accept the differences between people (Vogel, Dednam, Landsberg & Nel, 2006:3). Inclusive Education can raise the quality bar across education systems by using strategies that cater for naturally diverse learning styles of all students, whilst accommodating the specific learning needs of some students (Walker, et al. 2013:4). The aim of inclusion is to reduce exclusion and discriminatory attitudes, including those in relation to age, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and attainment (Ainscow et al., 2006:2). Inclusive Education is currently a prerequisite for successful teaching and learning strategies, coupled with the need for ‘high quality’ teachers who are equipped to meet the needs of all learners and to provide not only equal opportunities for all, but also education for an inclusive society (Verity, 2010:7). Many teachers, however, are apprehensive or anxious and uncertain about working with students from culturally different backgrounds (Allison & Rehm, 2006:50).

Studies conducted in Northern Ireland (north-west of Europe), reveal that, while many student teachers claim to support inclusive policies, they believe that lack of appropriate preparation, concerns about class size, resources, managing other adults and coping with increasing numbers of pupils with diverse special educational needs are the key issues to be addressed within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in advance of the radical changes planned (Lambe & Bones, 2006:167). Children with disabilities are mostly disadvantaged concerning educational achievements, live in poorer health conditions, are generally poverty-stricken, stigmatised and excluded from education due to a mixture of fear, shame and ignorance, and have less chances of future economic participation than those without disabilities (Williams, 2014:1). This shows that children with disabilities are significantly less likely to attend school than their ordinary peers (Lehohla, 2005:35; UNICEF, 2012:32).

While Inclusive Education (IE) has been implemented successfully in a number of countries such as the Canada and the European Union, some countries, including South Africa, are still seeking to achieve this goal (Geldenhuis & Wevers, 2013:2). Many nations around the globe that have an understanding of the human rights and social justice discourses underpinning Inclusive Education, have found it imperative to adapt the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action to their local contexts, and have released policy documents which have been implemented or are in the process of implementation (Materechera, 2014:167). The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2013:2) progress report

states that, in South Africa, the high failure rate and high drop-out rate in both primary and secondary schools in the years 2012 and 2013 were due to not implementing Inclusive Education.

Despite the reports about a high prevalence of children with disabilities in South Africa and the world over, curricula delivery in many of South Africa's special schools is substandard for learners with disabilities (Equal Education Law Centre, 2016:11). The Equal Education Law Centre (EELC) further reported that the South African Department of Basic Education recently found that some special schools are simply day care centres where little attention is being given to ensure that learners with disabilities have access to the National Curriculum Statement on an equal basis with all the other learners in the system. It was reported that in one of the provinces of South Africa, Kwa-Zulu Natal, there are three special schools which cater only for children with severe intellectual disabilities and that, although these three special schools in KZN also cater for learners with multiple and physical disabilities, they drastically limit access to education for all the other children with varying disabilities in the district (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:41). Special education researchers contend that a lot of work needs to be done in terms of understanding and transforming the perceptions of educators towards inclusion (Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso, 2007:126).

Since Inclusive Education has been newly introduced in South Africa (Mashiya, 2003:4; Stofile & Green, 2007:60; Nel, Müller, Hugo, Helldin, Bäckmann, Dwyer & Skarlind, 2011:75), very few or only a limited number of studies have been conducted on the attitudes or perceptions of educators towards its implementation (Pottas, 2005:64; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:2). Examples of the few related studies are, namely, a comprehensive study conducted by Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001) which focused on teacher preparedness in Inclusive Education, a study conducted by Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2002) which was on implementing Inclusive Education in South Africa with reference to teachers' attitudes and experiences, and a study conducted by Du Plessis (2013) which looked at changing educators' attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.

The present study was prompted, not only by the adaptation of the Salamanca IE principles, but also by the current state of affairs in the education system of South Africa which is based on the principles of human rights, social justice for all learners, social integration and redress,

as well as equal and equitable access to education. Section 12 of the South African Schools Act (Act 79 of 1996) requires that Education must be provided for learners with special educational needs (SEN) in ordinary public schools by providing adequate and relevant support services for such learners and taking all reasonable measures in ensuring that physical facilities in public schools are accessible to them. The present study aimed to establish whether learners with SEN at ordinary or mainstream schools were provided with such relevant support services and physical facilities or not. The lack of research on teacher perceptions on this aspect in South Africa, and especially in Limpopo Province, further prompted the researcher to investigate the educators' perceptions on the implementation of Inclusive Education and to embark on bringing up a model to improve its implementation in mainstream secondary schools.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The background to the study has revealed that there is a high prevalence of children with disabilities the world over, as well as in South Africa (ACPF, 2011:4; Donohue & Bornman, 2014:4; UNICEF, 2012:6; Chan & Zoellick, 2011:36;). An estimated 65 million primary and lower secondary school aged children in developing countries have disabilities, half of whom are out of school and are among the most marginalised (Ainscow et al., 2006:1; Liliane Foundation, 2017:6). As revealed in the background to this study, special schools around the country (South Africa), and in many other countries of the world, are unable to cater for or accommodate large numbers of children with disabilities (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:41; Donohue & Bornman, 2014:4). In addition, curriculum delivery in many of South Africa's special schools is substandard (Equal Education Law Centre, 2016:11), and the highest number of learners with special educational needs (123 418) were enrolled in ordinary schools in 2012, which makes one percent of the total percentage of learners in ordinary schools (DBE Progress Report, 23 June 201; Barratt, 2016:5). It can also be noted from this background that South Africa remains a newcomer or a new role player in the implementation of Inclusive Education, and as such, there is a need to instigate changes in mainstream education (Education White Paper 6, 2001:24; Nel et al., 2011:75). Since the background to this study also revealed that a limited number of studies on the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education have been conducted (Pottas, 2005:64; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:2), this study attempted to establish educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools around

Polokwane in Limpopo Province of South Africa.

1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

The study sought to answer the following main research question:

What are the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Polokwane mainstream secondary schools?

1.4.1 Sub-research questions

The study was set to answer the following sub research questions:

1.4.1.1 To what extent do the educators in Polokwane secondary schools perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as needful?

1.4.1.2 To what extent do the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive Inclusive Education as being effectively implemented?

1.4.1.3 What do the educators perceive as the challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education?

1.4.1.4 What are the gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were to:

1.5.1 examine the extent to which the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education.

1.5.2 establish the extent to which the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the effectiveness of implementing Inclusive Education in their schools.

1.5.3 establish the challenges that the educators in mainstream secondary schools are faced with in their attempt to implement Inclusive Education.

1.5.4 establish the gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in their schools.

1.5.5 produce a model to improve the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of Limpopo Province.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The outcomes of this study may, to a larger extent, benefit the learners with various barriers to learning, the educators in mainstream primary and secondary schools, the parents of learners who experience various barriers to learning, the HEIs (Higher Education Institutions), the Department of Education and researchers. The educators may be equipped with the knowledge and the strategies on how to deal with and approach the diverse learner needs in their classroom situations and the school environment. The HEIs in Limpopo Province are providing study opportunities for various students regardless of their differences in all aspects of their lives. These institutions may benefit from the outcomes of this study because their students would be the products of practical Inclusive Education strategies from the secondary schools they will have attended. The Department of Education may also benefit from the results of this study, especially with regard to the general perceptions of the educators about the implementation of Inclusive Education in their schools as one of the requirements of the new education policy, the CAPS (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement). The policy designers may have an insight into the educators' perceptions about the implementation of Inclusive Education and their ideologies about considering learner diversity as a prerequisite in the new CAPS for the academic achievement of learners. Parents in the communities whose children experience barriers to learning may benefit from the results of this study because the stigmatisation and discrimination of their children at school may be dealt with or done away with. The attitudes of educators towards such challenged learners may be enhanced to ensure quality delivery of the curriculum as designed in the CAPS and assessment processes that may accommodate all learners. Future researchers may use the outcomes of this study as a baseline study for their future studies.

1.7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Several factors prompted the execution of the current study. The researcher is interested in the present study because of her experience in the teaching fraternity and her professional qualification in Special Needs Education. The researcher has taught in various public secondary schools around Limpopo Province, has worked as a lecturer at one of the universities in Limpopo Province, and is currently a lecturer in the Department of Inclusive

Education at one of the universities in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. This exposure has given her insight into the predicaments and frustrations faced by the teachers and educators in their attempts to handle learner diversity, coupled with the pressures put on them by the Department of Education which made it mandatory for all schools to implement Inclusive Education following the endorsement of the Education White Paper 6 in 2001 and other Inclusive Education policies. Due to the limited number of studies on the issue pertaining to the implementation of Inclusive Education, specifically in Limpopo Province, the researcher in this study deemed it necessary to embark on this kind of study, persuaded by her zeal and determination to discover if educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive Inclusive Education as worthwhile to be implemented or not. The researcher found it vitally important to embark on a study about the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education because the present education system of South Africa requires full inclusion of learner diversity in mainstream classrooms, and a radical change of mindset from a medical to a social perspective of learners with disabilities.

The challenge that is brought about by the present education system and new education policies to the vast majority of educators, prompted the researcher to indulge in an enquiry about the perceptions of educators on the implementation of Inclusive Education. The present South African education system requires the restructuring and transformation of the teaching fraternity, as well as the changing of attitudes of educators to positively embrace and accommodate the diverse learner population in their ordinary or mainstream schools. The exclusion and segregation of learners with disabilities is no longer acceptable in South Africa, and all groups of learners are entitled to the same rights as everyone else, including education. This study is worth undertaking in order to bring to the surface the educators' perceptions on the implementation of Inclusive Education and to assist the Department of Education (DoE) in applying proper intervention strategies, planning for the future and coming up with teacher-training programmes for the betterment of curriculum delivery.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws its theoretical framework from Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1994) which will be used as a tool to understand the various aspects that influence the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools. The model suggests that there are levels of interacting systems that directly or indirectly have an influence on a

child's life (a person or learner's development), and it describes the development of a learner as revolving around complex, causal processes which are involved in many kinds of change, for example, changing from an exclusive to an Inclusive Education system (Landsberg, Krüger & Nel, 2005:10).

This model emphasises the interaction between the individual's development and the systems within the broader social context (the environment), and the systems within it, namely, the microsystem (the family, the school or peer group), the mesosystem (the relationships that develop and exist between the microsystems), the exosystem (an environment in which the learner is not a direct and active participant, but has an influence on the learner's life and interrelationships with others), and the macrosystem (the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies inherent in the system of a particular society and culture which may have an impact or be influenced by any of the afore-mentioned systems). According to Landsberg et al. (2005:11-12), all of these systems interact with the chronosystem (the developmental timeframes), which include the individual or the child. The various aspects or levels of development of a learner, as the central focus of attention, outlined by Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, is vital for data analysis and for scrutiny into the findings of this study for the purpose of elucidating the issues and recommendations regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) at secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province.

The following diagram, Figure 1.1, illustrates various layers or levels of development as outlined in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

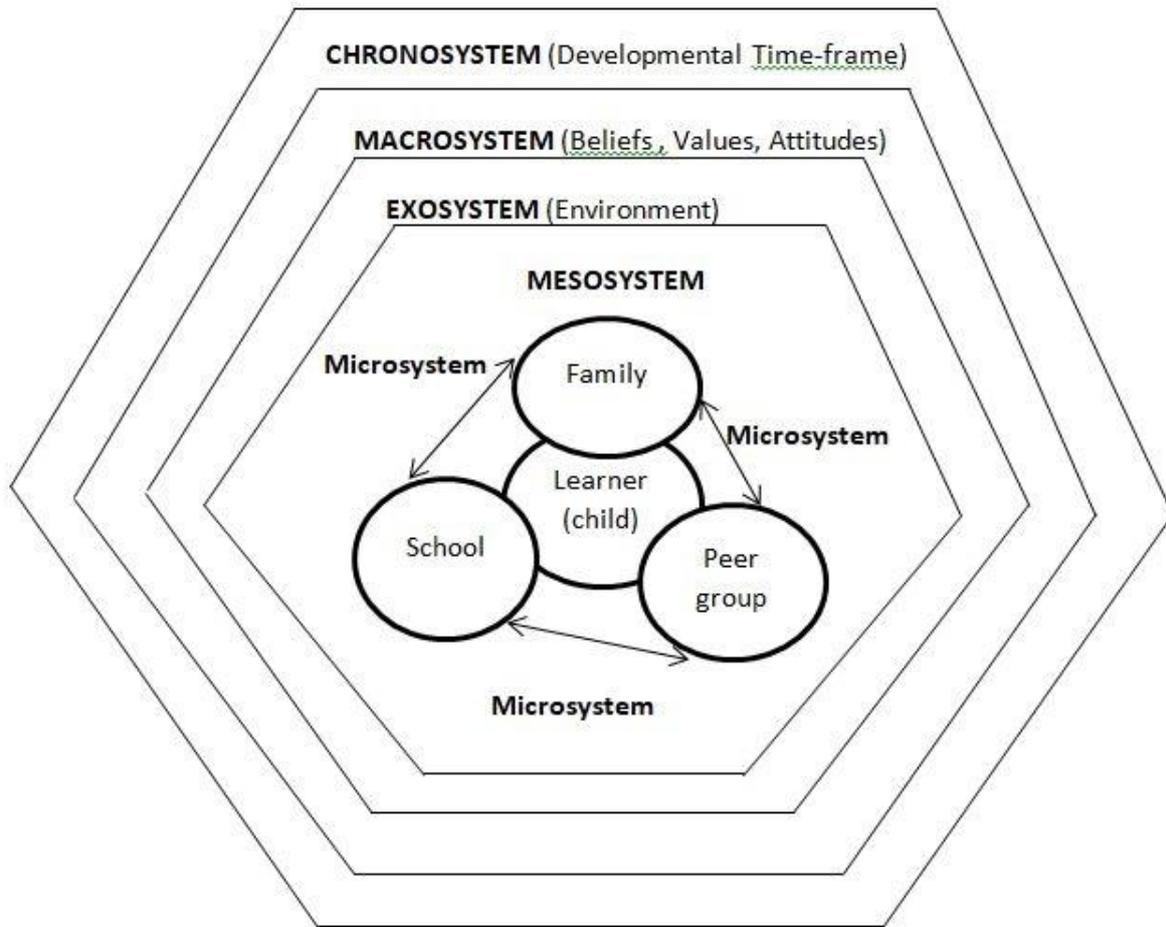


Figure 1.1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological model

(Adapted from Landsberg et al., 2005)

The model, Figure 1.1, has been adopted as a tool to provide the basis for research accounts and findings of the current study with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools in Polokwane in Limpopo Province of South Africa. The model suggests that there are levels of interacting systems that directly or indirectly have an influence on a child's life which entail the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Bronfenbrenner's framework allows the researcher to explore Inclusive Education broadly, as it is about the development of interrelated systems. Instead of examining the environmental factors impacting development alone, Bronfenbrenner views the child as a dynamic tool with diverse characteristics such as personality, temperament and motivation (Tlale, Ntsangase & Chireshe, 2016:34). The interactions and interrelationships between the individual learner and various levels of environment or contexts that directly or

indirectly influence a person's development are discussed below.

1.8.1 The Microsystem

This is the immediate environment where proximal processes (particular forms of interaction between the organism and the environment) are played out or the relationship between a developing person and the immediate environment, such as the school, peers and family (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:37). It is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by a developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features, and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief (Härkönen, 2007:7). This involves the family, the school or the peer group (Duerden & Witt, 2010; Landsberg et al., 2005:10). This study sought to find the extent to which the educators perceive the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education, particularly in their immediate mainstream school environments where they interact with the diverse learners on a daily basis.

1.8.2 The Mesosystem

This refers to the relationships that develop and exist between the microsystems (the family, the school and peer group) which interact with one another or it comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person, e.g. the relations between home and school, school and workplace, which denote that a mesosystem is a system of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40). A learner from an unsupportive family or home may be vulnerable to developing barriers to learning, and the teacher at school who is attentive and caring (thus having a positive attitude towards implementing Inclusive Education), can provide a positive environment which, over a sustained period of time, boosts the learner's self-esteem and sense of security (Landsberg et al., 2005:11). This level of development informed the present study in finding out various ways in which the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive Inclusive Education as being effectively implemented, especially in establishing good relationships between themselves as educators and the diverse learner population, collaborating with the parents of learners who experience barriers to learning, and giving the necessary support to such learners.

1.8.3 The Exosystem

This involves an environment in which the learner is not a direct and active participant, but has an influence on the learner's life and interrelationships with others (Landsberg et al., 2005:11). In other words, it encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate settings that do contain that person (Härkönen, 2007:11), for example, the education system, health services, the media, local community organisation, parent's place of work (which can affect the quality of parent-child relationship and other proximal relationships, such as peer group). In the case of poor health services, a chronically ill child, who is frequently absent from school, will be negatively affected with regard to his relationship with parents, peers, school and teachers (Landsberg et al., 2005:11-12). The exosystem informed this study in establishing the educators' perceptions of various challenges that may, in one way or another, influence or affect the teaching and learning processes.

1.8.4 The Macrosystem

This refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies inherent in the system of a particular society and culture which may have an impact or be influenced by any of the above-mentioned systems (Landsberg et al., 2005:12). Bronfenbrenner (1994:37) states that the macrosystem refers to the institutional pattern of culture, such as the economy, customs, and bodies of knowledge. According to Härkönen (2007:12), the definition of the concept 'macrosystem' has been changed to consist of the overarching pattern of the micro-, meso-, and exosystems' characteristics of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally-institutive belief systems, resources, hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems. The present study was informed by this layer of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to establish whether male and female educators perceive the implementation of IE the same way, based on their gender differences, beliefs, values and ideologies about the implementation of IE.

1.8.5 The Chronosystem

This refers to the developmental time frame which crosses through the interactions between the other systems and their influences on an individual, which, in turn, interacts with a child's

progressive stages of development (Landsberg et al., 2005:12). The educator must understand that, whilst they are busy interacting with the various learners in the classroom and school environment, these learners are also active participants in their own development and have their own perceptions of the environment in which they live. “The way they perceive their circumstances influences the way they respond to their human and physical contexts” (Landsberg et al., 2005:12). The present study sought to establish the educators’ perceptions of the present era in which Inclusive Education is a prerequisite and highly preferred for implementation in their mainstream secondary schools for the complete development of the diverse learners.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study could be limited by the constraints described below which might also have ultimately influenced the acquisition of knowledge gained about learner diversity and the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The time that was available to spend consulting with the participants (educators) after working hours posed a challenge to the researcher because everyone was in the mood to go home or attend to other obligations. This might have influenced the educators to be dishonest in their responses to the interview questions.

Participants’ ailments showed up in two of the purposively sampled educators from different schools. One reported ill-health just before the commencement of the interview session and another one had just been discharged from hospital on the day of his interview. Nevertheless, the participants were interviewed because of circumstances related to the researcher’s pressure of carrying dual responsibilities as both a scholar and an employee in an institution of higher learning, and because of the fear of losing targeted information-rich participants. This might have jeopardised the genuine responses of such participants to the interview questions.

1.9.1 Overcoming the limitations

Time management was vital for the study to proceed smoothly. The proposed time to meet the participants needed to be honoured to avoid unnecessary panic or anxiety for both the researcher and the participants because this could have jeopardised the outcomes of the study.

The researcher postponed the interview sessions of the participant-educators who were challenged by ill-health to other days when they were completely recuperated to allow them to air their views with “*mens sana in corpore sano*” (sound minds that operate in healthy bodies).

1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted within the following parameters: schools around Polokwane (Pietersburg) circuit that fall under the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. These comprised secondary schools in the suburban areas of Polokwane such as Flora Park, Fauna Park, Nirvana, Benina Park, Greenside and nearby residential areas, such as Madiba Park and Seshego. The main focus of the study was on the educators’ perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools.

1.11 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The following concepts are defined in this study: Inclusion; Inclusive Education; attitudes; perceptions; mainstream school; inclusive learning environment; barriers to learning; and inclusive policy.

1.11.1 Inclusion

Inclusion is defined by the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI, 2010:3) as a system that responds to the diversity of needs among all learners, through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from and within education. It involves changes in content, approaches, structures and strategies, driven by a common vision that covers all children and the conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all of them. Inclusion in education refers to a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society (Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler & Sharma, 2013:7). Inclusion is about being proactive in identifying the barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as in removing those barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion. It is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners (UNESCO, 2017:13). In the current study, inclusion refers to accommodating and embracing learner diversity in mainstream secondary schools for the purpose of the implementation of Inclusive Education.

1.11.2 Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education is a process of increasing the participation of all students in schools, including those with disabilities, and it is about restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality (Ras, 2008:8). It is a means of extending educational opportunities to a diverse range of potentially marginalised students worldwide who are still unable to attend school (Stofile, 2008:55). Inclusive Education can, as such, be understood as the presence, participation and achievement of all learners in mainstream schools (MIPIE, 2011:2). In this study, Inclusive Education means the process of giving the learners in mainstream secondary schools equal learning opportunities, flexible or changeable teaching methodologies, and a way of responding to the diverse needs of learners with barriers to learning. Inclusive Education entails education that accommodates all learners, regardless of their differences. The attitudes and perceptions of educators concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education are to be the focal point of the present study.

1.11.3 Attitudes

The dictionary meaning of the concept 'attitude' (Hornby, 2010:80) is the way that one thinks and feels about someone or something; the way a person behaves towards something or someone that shows how they think or feel. Chaiklin (2011:32) defines the concept 'attitude' in a psychological perspective as identifying a verbal expression as behaviour and, in a sociological perspective, as a mental position with regard to a fact or state or a feeling or emotion towards a fact or state. Attitudes can also be explicit and implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and that clearly influence our behaviours and beliefs, whereas implicit attitudes are unconscious, but still have an effect on our beliefs and behaviours (Cherry, 2014:1). In this study, attitudes mean mental adjustments towards positive progressive changes in ones' view of the teaching and learning milieu as appealing for inclusion instead of exclusion. Attitudes in this study also mean a paradigm shift which entails looking at learners who experience barriers to learning as being educationally subnormal but not abnormal.

1.11.4 Perceptions

Perception is psychologically defined as the act or process of becoming aware of internal or external sensory stimuli or events, involving the meaningful organisation and interpretation

of those stimuli, and the evaluations of one's own and others' internal states and beliefs, as well as sensory stimuli (Livingstone, 2008:1). According to Segen (2012), perceptions refer to the constellation of mental processes by which a person recognises, organises and interprets intellectual, sensory and emotional data in a logical or meaningful fashion. Perceptions are closely related to attitudes in that 'perception' is how people look and interpret what they see or hear, whereas 'attitude' is the way one acts towards something – often expressed through words or behaviour. Perceptions represent subjective experiences and not always reality (Blackie, 2010:24). In this study, perceptions mean how the educators see or view the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools.

1.11.5 Mainstream school

A mainstream school is any school that is not a special school or an independent school (Department for Education and Skills, 2001:8). Mainstreaming is about getting learners to 'fit into' a particular kind of system or integrating them into this existing system – it is about giving some learners extra support so that they can 'fit in' or be integrated into the 'normal' classroom routine (Education White Paper 6, 2001:17; Landsberg et al., 2005:7, Sapon-Shevin, Ayres, & Duncan, 2002:37). Mainstreaming is the educational equivalent of the normalisation principle, which suggests that people with disabilities (particularly those with mild disabilities) have a right to life experiences that are the same as, or similar to, those of others in society, and to learn alongside normally developing peers (Landsberg et al. 2005:7). Mainstreaming also involves the placement of a special education student into a general curriculum or in one or more "regular" education classes (Cipkin & Rizza, 2011:1). Mainstreamed students are expected to meet the same academic standards as the general education students (Chopra, 2008:1). Mainstream school, in this study, refers to mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province of South Africa.

1.11.6 Inclusive learning environment

An inclusive learning environment refers to a learning environment that regards and respects all pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability, socio-economic background or special educational needs (Shevlin, Kearns, Ranaghan, Twomey, Smith & Winter, 2009:4). It does not refer only to a physical classroom but also includes the characteristics of setting, the two key dimensions, namely, the psychosocial learning environment which covers psychological

and social factors, and the physical learning environment which includes factors, such as the classroom space, classroom infrastructure, arrangement of furniture, class size, classroom display and resources (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:6-7). An inclusive learning environment is a learning environment that is equally beneficial to all students (Ruggs & Hebl, 2012:1). This involves a multi-dimensional response that acknowledges the complexity of need, and recognises that changes will be required in school organisation, support services, classroom teaching and external support (Shevlin et al., 2009:7). In this study, the inclusive learning environment entails the classroom setups, interactions between the educators and learners, as well as the school surroundings which uphold the requirements for the implementation of Inclusive Education.

1.11.7 Barriers to learning

A “barrier to learning” is anything that prohibits learning or something that hinders learning from progressing (Department of Education, 2006: 24). Barriers to learning may be understood to fall into three broad but intersecting categories, namely, it entails the external influences on the students due to the educational environment, the behaviours and actions the students demonstrate in a learning situation, as well as both the internal and external attributes that the individual students bring to their learning (Boles, 2007:3). Barriers to learning are the challenges in the learning process that are a result of a broad range of experiences in the classroom, at school, at home, in the community, and/or as a result of health conditions or disability (Department of Basic Education, 2014:5). In this study, the barriers to learning refer to the challenges that educators encountered, either systemic, pedagogic, or barriers to learning and development within the learners themselves.

1.11.8 Inclusive policy

An inclusive policy can be defined as an obligatory tool designed to be implemented as part of a wider struggle against the violation of human rights, and unfair discrimination, ensuring that social justice in education prevails (Du Plessis, 2013:76). Inclusive policies contain provisions and guidelines that support the full integration of all employees, including those with disabilities, into an equitably functioning workplace and it helps to generate a work environment in which no employees are excluded, marginalised, treated unfairly, or prevented from accessing any resources, responsibilities, opportunities or benefits of employment (BBI Briefs, 2013:1). In this study, inclusive policies refer to the legal

framework that brought about the obligations for all educators in mainstream schools of South Africa to implement Inclusive Education as a way to accommodate learner diversity.

1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINES

The Study is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 1 : Orientation to the Study

This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, sub-research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, and definition of terms.

Chapter 2 : Review of related literature

This chapter reviews literature under the following subheadings derived from the objectives of the study: the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education; perceptions of the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education; challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools; and educators' gender differences in perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research paradigm, approach, sample, instrumentation, procedure, data analysis, and ethical issues such as permission, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Chapter 4 : Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents and analyses data derived from the participants of the study. The findings are also discussed. The data presentation, analysis and discussion are guided by the objectives of the study.

Chapter 5 : Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter summarises all the findings and discussions that took place, and gives conclusions about the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education. A model to improve the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary

schools is proposed as part of the recommendations.

1.13 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the background to the study, statement of the problem, sub-research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, rationale of the study, theoretical framework, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, and definitions of terms or concepts such as Inclusive Education, attitudes, perceptions, mainstream school, inclusive learning environment, barriers to learning, and inclusive policies. Issues pertaining to the gaps in the implementation of Inclusive Education that needed to be filled the world over and in mainstream schools of South Africa were discussed in this chapter. The importance of implementation of Inclusive Education by the educators in mainstream schools was highlighted in this chapter as an obligation to be carried out in accordance with various Inclusive Education policies including the UNICEF, EDW6, CAPS, and others. The following chapter discusses a review of related literature.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to establish educators' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane, Limpopo Province of South Africa. The review of literature was aimed at helping the researcher discover relevant information pertaining to the context of the study and to prompt further inquiries into the same issues being investigated. This chapter reviews literature under the following subheadings derived from the objectives of the study: the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education; perceptions of the educators on the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education; challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools; and the educators' gender differences and perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education. Gaps to be filled by the study are highlighted.

2.2 THE NEED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Globally, there is a need for good quality Inclusive Education to remove learning barriers for every child, reduce out of school populations, improve the transition between education levels, and generally confront discrimination (Liliane Foundation, 2017:7). National policies worldwide and practices in education need to be based on a commitment to the global human rights' principles so that children with disabilities should have the same right to education as all other children and the right to be educated in regular, inclusive schools – not in separate segregated systems (Muwana, 2012:1; Liliane Foundation, 2017:25). Inclusive Education is globally perceived as reflecting the values and principles that counteract the ways in which educational systems reproduce and perpetuate social inequalities regarding marginalised and excluded groups of students across a range of abilities, characteristics, developmental trajectories, and socioeconomic circumstances (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014:25).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) maintains that the development of Inclusive Education requires a massive programme of change to develop every country's education system at all levels and to ensure that the process benefits not only disabled children and young people, but all children (Rieser, 2012:13). The UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations,

2006), signed by the European Union and ratified by virtually all its Member States, explicitly supports the need for Inclusive Education, specifying that it is important for the full development of human potential, the sense of dignity and self-worth, the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the acknowledgement of human diversity (Calero & Benasco, 2015:4). Concomitantly, Myers and Bagree (2011:6) attest that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) which was the most widely ratified international human rights treaty, highlights the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education so that governments ensure access to education for learners with disabilities. Experience in other countries around the world showed that teachers and all the role players in the education system need to understand and implement a new policy of Inclusive Education to provide quality education for all learners, regardless of their abilities and disabilities, and to ensure that Inclusive Education is successfully implemented (Department of Education, 2002b:13).

Research on professional attitudes towards mainstreaming and inclusion (Pottas, 2005:62) revealed that, in foreign countries, such as the USA, Canada and Australia, the majority of teachers support the idea of inclusion, but foresee problems in its practical implementation. However, the study conducted in Australia by Aniftos and McLuskie (2003:2) revealed that there is a need for the implementation of Inclusive Education at school level to address the learning needs of all learners with a special focus on those who are vulnerable and marginalised. A study, which investigated the perceptions of mainstream teachers toward Inclusive Education in Victoria, Australia, revealed that, while teachers appeared accepting and were positive about inclusionary programmes, there remained some concern about implementing inclusive education in the mainstream classroom (Subban & Sharma, 2006:51).

The need for the implementation of Inclusive Education and the reasons behind its implementation were revealed in the study conducted in Germany by Ahmad (2015:73) who argues that Inclusive Education provides access to information, awareness of diversity, flexible mainstream educational curricula, learning materials, assistive devices and the necessary support services that can help students with disabilities to learn on a par with their peers without disabilities in the common classroom, breaking down all barriers which prevent them from having equal access to quality education. According to the French Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (UNESCO, 2009b:7), there is a need to implement Inclusive Education which entails encouraging positive attitudes, improving educational and

social frameworks to cope with new demands in education structures and governance, improving inputs, processes and environments to foster learning both at the level of the learner in his/her learning environment, and at the system level to support the entire learning experience.

Akinsola and Chireshe (2016:137) assert that including learners with disabilities in general education could provide them with the opportunity to learn in natural, stimulating settings, and to acquire basic communication and motor skills through interactions with peers without disabilities, which may, in turn, lead to an increased acceptance and appreciation of differences. This further implies that educators need to consider the application of Inclusive Education policies in their classroom situations as a way of enhancing the implementation of Inclusive Education. A study conducted by Prakash (2012:91) in Andhra Pradesh, India, revealed that the basic premise of the integration/inclusion movement is that principles of anti-discrimination, equity, social justice, and basic human rights make it imperative that students with disabilities and special needs should enjoy the same access as all other students in a regular school environment and to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It is assumed in the findings of the study conducted by Prakash (2012:104) that the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education does not only apply to those learners with special needs, but to all learners in mainstream schools. The present study sought to establish whether what is happening in the USA, Canada, Germany, Australia and India also applies in South Africa.

There is a need for the implementation of Inclusive Education, not only in Western and European countries, but also in African countries. In Botswana, there is a noticeable move towards a model of education derived from the 1977 Botswana government's policy which called for the education system of Botswana to be based on the principle of '*Kagisano*' (social harmony) – an expression of mutual respect and inclusivity, regardless of people's differences (Dart, 2007:13). The above-mentioned policy in Botswana, according to Dart (2007:13), sets goals that include, among others, preparing children with special educational needs for social inclusion by integrating them as far as possible with peers in ordinary schools. In Namibia, there is a need for the development of effective schools for all, and the need to refrain from violating the right to education by paying attention to "*children who should be in school, and are not, and children who are in school, but are unable to succeed there*" – referring to children with disabilities who should be included in regular schools

(Zimba, Möwes & Naanda, 2007:40). Other African countries, such as Zimbabwe, are also ensuring that Inclusive Education is upheld by education stakeholders. Mpofu, Kasayira, Mhaka, Chireshe and Maunganidze (2007:70) revealed the need to implement Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe when they attested that Zimbabwean educationists are moving towards a broader view of Inclusive Education which will make education professionals more aware of barriers to the education of individuals at risk for marginalisation or disenfranchisement and to enhance their chances of being able to identify and utilise resources to circumvent the barriers. On the contrary, the study on teacher perceptions in Zambia found that ordinary teachers, specialist teachers and teacher trainees were not all in favour of including pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools (Mbunji, 2013:1). In Kenya, many teachers at regular schools and other stakeholders doubt the workability of the Inclusive Education strategy and resist the idea of having children with special needs in regular classrooms (Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014:91). The present study sought to discover if what is happening in the above-mentioned African countries concerning the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education, also applies in South Africa.

In December 2012, the South African Minister of Basic Education declared 2013, the year of Inclusive Education; the year of consolidating and instituting all systems for the implementation of Inclusive Education on a full-scale because, over the years, implementation had been only in selected districts and schools progressively (NEEDU, 2013:1). The segregated and fragmented education system that existed in South Africa during apartheid needed to be addressed to bring education practice in line with international trends, which focus on the inclusion of learners with special education needs in mainstream classes (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:2). All schools have a responsibility and a need to be inclusive in their policies and practice (Doran, Byrne, Gallagher, Goss, Greene, Horan, Monghan, O'Leary, O'Reilly, & Walsh, 2011:17). South Africa is presently in a state of transformation and a paradigm shift, which entails replacing the old education system with one that highly recommends the implementation of Inclusive Education. Diversity awareness is critical in creating an inclusive culture within schools and promoting equality of educational access and participation of pupils with special educational needs (Doran et al., 2011:30). The Ministerial Report (NEEDU, 2013:1) is mainly focused on addressing issues around ways in which educators can respond to the needs of the diversity of learners within the system, and how to accommodate these learners in terms of responding to their learning and developmental

needs. The need for the implementation of inclusive education is emphasised by the Department of Basic Education through the introduction of the new policy called “Education white paper 6” of 2001. In this policy, the Department of Education committed itself to:

[p]romote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society (National Department of Education, 2002:8).

In order to stay in parity with other countries of the world, Stofile and Green (2007:54) maintain that South African Inclusive Education activists argued for an education system that could accommodate the learning needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities, in mainstream classrooms. The present study explored whether the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being essential and as the standard of education set internationally.

The outcomes of the study carried out by Maguvhe (2014:1762) with educators in residential secondary schools in South Africa exposed the fact that educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful because they believed that there are few specialist educators in South Africa for students with disabilities, who are now concentrated in special schools instead of being given adequate support from knowledgeable personnel in full-service and mainstream schools. Ruggs and Hebl (2012:1) maintain that, as diversity continues to grow in education, creating learning environments that are equally beneficial to all students is imperative. The need for ‘high quality’ teachers, equipped to meet the needs of all learners, becomes evident to provide not only equal opportunities for all, but also education for an inclusive society (Donelley, 2010:7). The above-cited study was mainly qualitative in nature, with focus group interviews as a point of departure. Since group discussions might not be suitable for participants to freely express their feelings and feel comfortable sharing their opinions or experiences, the focus group interview could possibly be unreliable. The present study used in-depth interviews to establish whether the educators believe Inclusive Education is necessary in the South African education system, as well as field observations to gather natural or first-hand information by observing educators as they interacted with learners at research sites, to corroborate the data that was obtained from in-depth interviews.

The need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa is revealed in a study conducted by Williams (2007:40) who stated that education has to be meaningful to the lives of all learners and that there should also be community involvement to provide support and ensure that all the educational needs of learners at all levels are addressed. Inclusive Education should be made operational and not only be a matter of making ordinary schools available to those who find it easily accessible. It should be about being proactive in identifying and removing the obstacles, which learners encounter while attempting to access Inclusive Educational opportunities (Hunter-Johnson, Newton & Cambridge-Johnson, 2014:1). Despite the fact that there is an eagerness for the DBE (Department of Basic Education) to ensure that districts and schools fully embark on the implementation of Inclusive Education, Ainscow et al. (2006:5) argue that inclusion still remains a complex and controversial issue and the development of inclusive practices in schools is not yet well understood. Landsberg et al. (2005:10) describe the development of a learner in terms of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as revolving around complex, causal processes, which are involved in many kinds of change, for example, changing from an exclusive to an inclusive education system. Mahlo (2011:22) maintains that, in the South African context, the macro system can refer to the level at which policy decisions about education can be made and that it provides the provinces with guidelines to implement a particular policy according to their needs, including that of Inclusive Education. The above literature resonates with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that informed this study considering the macrosystem which stipulates that the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies inherent in the education system, for example, of South Africa in the current study, have an influence on how Inclusive Education should be implemented. This is dependent on the extent to which the entire government system attaches value or worth to the system of inclusion. The macrosystem has a direct influence on low-level systems, such as the mesosystem with its microsystems, where the educators, learners, their peers and parents serve as direct role players in the current study for the implementation of Inclusive Education. The present study delved into the educators' perceptions regarding the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools, as embedded in the education policy of the Department of Basic Education of South Africa.

Joint research between academics from South Africa and Sweden comparing the influence of South African and Swedish teachers' attitudes towards the practical application of Inclusive

Education (IE) in the classroom, revealed that the need for Inclusive Education in South Africa originated from a rights' perspective that was informed by liberal, critical and progressively democratic thinking, and as part of the process of transforming the educational system in South Africa to be more democratic and inclusive (Mashiya, 2003:4; Nel et al., 2011:75). However, the above joint research that was conducted in Sweden and South Africa, used the completion of questionnaires for data collection and exploratory factor analysis methodology. The disadvantage of using questionnaires in data collection is that the participants may read different meanings into each question and, therefore, respond according to their own interpretation of the questions. The present study employed qualitative in-depth interviews to delve into the perceptions and feelings of educators concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools, corroborated by field observations to allow the researcher to triangulate the findings and to establish their trustworthiness.

The new constitution of South Africa highlights the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools by emphasising a respect for the rights of all, with particular emphasis on recognition of diversity, stating that all learners are entitled to appropriate education in an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Prinsloo, 2001:344). Tyobeka (2006:2) emphasises the need for inclusion in South African schools by stating that inclusion is fundamentally about assuring access, permanence, quality learning and full participation and integration of all children and adolescents, particularly for members of disadvantaged and poor societies, those with disabilities, those who are homeless, those who are workers, those living with HIV and Aids, and other vulnerable children. Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011:380), in their study about Inclusive Education in South Africa, posit that South Africa has just come out of an education system characterised by discrimination along lines of gender, race, colour, creed, location, and disability, and that there is a need for teacher education to invest reasonable time and resources on programmes aimed at addressing the negative attitudes of the trainees (towards implementation of Inclusive Education). The present study attempted to establish if the educators in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful.

The current status of the South African government is reported to have a very strong and unwavering need for the implementation of Inclusive Education since there is an emphasis on

inclusion as one of the more important principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa's Bill of Rights, section 29 no. 1 (a), which states that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:150). This need by the government to promote the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools is also evidenced in the adoption and provision of the Inclusive Policy documents. They include, amongst others, Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS), according to the DBE (2014:12), which is the policy framework to ensure that teachers and schools understand the support needs of all learners, enhance the delivery of the National Curriculum Statement, outline a process of identifying individual learner needs in relation to the home and school context, and establish the level and extent of the additional support that is needed. The above literature is in tandem with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that informed this study that the provincial Departments of Education (the macrosystems), in collaboration with their districts (exosystems), are responsible for inculcation of the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in the thought processes of all stakeholders in mainstream schools, and to ensure an equitable, quality education for all learners. The present study sought to reveal whether the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education is perceived by educators as being a prerequisite in their schools.

The Draft Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DoE, 2005:12) shows the DBE's need for implementation of Inclusive Education by postulating that learners with barriers to learning, especially because of disability, should be welcomed in ordinary school environments, so that teachers and other professionals could establish the nature and extent of support needed by such learners. South Africa needs to adopt an Inclusive Education policy in order to address the barriers to learning in the education system, but the implementation of this policy is hampered by the lack of teachers' skills and knowledge in differentiating the curricula to address a wide range of learning needs (Johnson & Green, 2007:163; Brand, Favazza & Dalton, 2012:134). The above literature resonates with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that informed this study that the mesosystem, which is a system of microsystems, highlights the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education which calls for the educator at school to be attentive and caring (thus having a positive attitude towards implementing Inclusive Education). The educator, in this regard, is expected to provide a positive environment (a good relationship between the learners and the school) which, over a

sustained period of time (the chronosystem), boosts the learner's self-esteem and sense of security (Landsberg et al., 2005:11). The mesosystem and microsystems of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory in the present study serve to gauge the extent to which Inclusive Education in mainstream schools of Limpopo Province is being perceived as needful, specifically considering the interrelationships between the educators and the diverse learners, and how the schools' immediate learning environments respond to the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in such mainstream secondary schools. The present study, as informed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, was prompted by the time-frames (chronosystems) which uphold inclusivity, rather than former discriminatory education practices, and to delve into the perceptions of educators in mainstream secondary schools regarding the expected implementation of Inclusive Education. Educators are expected to accommodate all children, including the exceptional ones, by giving them love, security and approval, treating them with respect as people of worth and dignity (Mwamwenda, 2004:339). Educators in mainstream classes need to become part of the education support network by accepting that learners who experience barriers to learning are no longer referred for expert help out of the school environment. Similarly, Dalton, Mckenzie and Kahonde (2012:2) state that learners want and need to learn in ways that are accessible to them, and to have varied choices for demonstrating what they have learned through the process of implementing Inclusive Education. The present study attempted to discover if educators value the need for implementing the Inclusive Education policies and procedures in their teaching and learning situations.

The study conducted in South Africa by Prinsloo (2001:345) revealed that educators perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful because educators fully supported the *Seven Points of the Charter* (Social Development, 1999:10-11) which was signed in Redland, Bristol in November 1999, by political parties, local education authorities and others, which states that "*We fully support an end to all segregated education on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty...*". Similarly, the outcomes of the workshop on UDL (Universal Design for Learning) conducted at the University of Cape Town with teachers and therapists in Inclusive Education revealed that there is a dire need for the implementation of Inclusive Education by teachers. According to Nsameng and Tchombe (2011:374), it becomes imperative for teacher education in South Africa, in its initial and in-service programmes, to inculcate understandings of Inclusive Education which will take into

consideration its people's lifestyles and thinking. If this does not happen, we might find ourselves repeating the exclusionary practices of the past. The implementation of Inclusive Education is perceived by educators as being needful and appropriate in the South African context as a strategy for curriculum differentiation in inclusive classrooms (Dalton et al., 2012:7). On the contrary, the study conducted in Malaysia by Manisah, Ramlee and Zalizan (2006:39) indicates that some of the mainstream teachers perceive Inclusive Education as being not needful because they had chosen to teach a specific discipline and not Special Education, and the inclusion policy forced them to enter areas they were unsure about or not interested in. The above study, which was carried out in Malaysia, employed a set of questionnaires which sought the responses of mainstream primary and secondary school educators regarding their attitudes and knowledge towards the implementation of Inclusive Education. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages. The disadvantage of this method of data analysis is that it does not make any statements about the underlying population, but simply describes the data as it is. For example, some readers may find it difficult to interpret numerical data tabulated in frequencies and percentages, especially if it is without additional or substantiated data analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis of data using graphical presentations, such as histograms, pie-charts or box plots, may also mislead the readers' perceptual systems. The present study employed in-depth interviews to establish real feelings, opinions and perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education. The findings from this instrument of data collection in the present study were substantiated by observations of the natural phenomena (mainstream school set-ups). The present study endeavoured to discover if the educators in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful and appropriate for all learners in their classrooms.

Since there is a need for the implementation of Inclusive Education by the present education system of South Africa and worldwide, the following subsection highlights the perceptions of the educators on the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools.

2.3 PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The implementation of Inclusive Education has been reported to be effective in some

countries of the world. According to the US Department of Education (2010), over 80 percent of all students with disabilities receive most of their education in general education classes, far more than was the case only a decade ago. It was further reported in a study conducted by Daren (2017:1) that today, students throughout the United States take advantage of full or partial inclusion in multiple school systems and that such schools offer partial inclusion and allow students with disabilities to participate in classrooms with students without disabilities. Avramidis and Norwich (2002:130) point out in their study conducted in the United Kingdom that teachers' beliefs or opinions and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusive practices and also have practical implications for policy-makers endeavouring to promote inclusion. The global perspective of the implementation of Inclusive Education, as revealed in a study conducted by Materechera (2014:170), was found to be effective as the practical inclusion of learners with barriers to learning or disabilities into mainstream classrooms in recent years, was found to have gained ground internationally. Muskens' (2009:2) national reports on Italy, Spain and Scotland reveal that the ideal implementation of Inclusive Education is feasible and effective in these European countries for (almost) all pupils with special needs, disabilities and physical or mental handicaps and that it showed good educational results 'for all'. Similar findings were revealed by the project known as the European Association of Service Providers (EASPD, 2003:18) which revealed that, in all European countries, statutory legislation and prescriptions on the implementation of Inclusive Education were perceived as being effective since they provided a framework for the successful practice and development of Inclusive Education which gave guidelines for the allocation of resources, the environment under which schools and other educational facilities work, their conceptual orientation, teacher training, and many other institutional preconditions that were favourable for the effective implementation of Inclusive Education. The above literature resonates with Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework, which guided the present study in the feasibility and effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education, which brought good educational results for all learners and, in turn, revealed the effectiveness of the broader umbrella (the macrosystem) that supports and encourages the implementation of Inclusive Education in European countries. The present study delved into the perceptions of educators to establish whether the implementation of Inclusive Education in Limpopo Province of South Africa is effective as shown by studies done in the USA, the United Kingdom and European countries.

The implementation of Inclusive Education in African countries, such as Uganda, has also been reported as being effective. Manandu (2011:16) attests that Uganda is leading the way in its commitment to integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schooling as a step in the process towards inclusion. A study conducted by Mpofu et al. (2007:75) in Zimbabwe, focusing on attitudinal aspects of school personnel towards students with disabilities, reveals the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education. It was posited that interventions involving role salience were effective in raising the students' perceived social status, and that the disability stigma in adolescents, both with and without disabilities, was reduced over the intervention period. At the same time, Chireshe (2013:227), in his study conducted in Zimbabwe, attested that the positive gains of Inclusive Education have been observed in Zimbabwe and the implementation of Inclusive Education in the country is viewed as having improved, meaning that it was effective. In South Africa, the implementation of Inclusive Education has been reported to be effective in most schools, especially primary schools. Stofile and Green (2007:56) assert that since the publication of the Education White Paper 6 in 2001, there have been several initiatives to facilitate the effective implementation of an Inclusive Education system in most primary schools through the establishment of institution-level support teams, which usually include representatives of teachers across the various phases of education, teachers with expertise and interest in addressing barriers to learning, principals and heads of departments of which some are reported to be functioning effectively towards the implementation of Inclusive Education. The present study sought to establish the extent to which the educators in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province of South Africa perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being as effective as is the case with Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Conversely, the study conducted in Zambia by Kaoma (2007:20) revealed that the implementation of Inclusive Education was less effective because even though it was practiced in schools, not all educators could identify difficulties and issues related to learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in ordinary schools, and that there was the lack of inclusive legislation, coupled with inadequate professional support to effectively educate learners with disabilities. At the same time, the study conducted in the Yatta Division, Machakos County (Kenya) by Mutungi and Nderitu (2014:95) indicated that Inclusive Education is still perceived as being ineffective due to a shortage of inclusive teacher training

programmes. A study conducted in the Mwea East District, Kirinya County in Kenya by Wangari (2015:35) revealed many problems, which included, among others, inappropriate curricula, poor stakeholders' attitudes, stress and the lack of parent and community involvement that made the implementation of Inclusive Education in Kenya ineffective. Concurrently, another study undertaken by Eunice et al. (2015:44) in Rongo sub-County, Kenya, revealed negative attitudes and behaviour, particularly on the part of both educators and parents, the lack of funding, and a serious shortage of educational resources, which also contributed to the implementation of Inclusive Education being ineffective. The study conducted in Ghana (Kwaku, 2012:21) revealed that the implementation of Inclusive Education was ineffective due to the inadequate number of teachers, coupled with poor working conditions and low remuneration which hampered the campaign of effective inclusive education. However, some of the above-cited literature employed a mixed approach of interpretation and narrative analysis of data. Narrative analysis of data is questionable due to its difficulty in coding text descriptions systematically and reliably, and the text is, by its own nature, linguistically subjective. In addition, the disadvantage of using a mixed approach to data analysis is that, if more attention is given to a particular research methodology, the research could suffer from bias. The present study made use of thematic qualitative content analysis, which allowed an easier process of coding, categorising and grouping themes and subthemes that spontaneously emerged from the collected and transcribed data. Similar conditions about the implementation of Inclusive Education were discovered in Ghana by Materechera (2014:174) who attested that, despite educators' exposure to the policy of Inclusive Education in the Hohoe District of Ghana, its implementation was ineffective since the Ghana Education service and other stakeholders in education pay mere lip-service to the provision of services to inclusive school environments. The present study sought to explore whether the educators perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as not being effective as is the case with Zambia, Kenya and Ghana.

In many developing countries of the Southern Africa, the implementation of Inclusive Education is presently perceived as ineffective. While the physical placement of learners with disabilities and other learning barriers in general education classes is often emphasised, other aspects of effectively managing the Inclusive Education classroom are being inadequately implemented and still require attention (Tchatchoueng, 2016:91). Implementation of Inclusive Education in Botswana was perceived in a study conducted by Dart (2007:17), as

being less effective as much of classroom practices assumed teacher-centred and whole-class teaching, student listening and doing silent deskwork, little time being spent by teachers working with individuals or groups, and teachers ignoring incorrect student responses and not offering additional support. In Lesotho, the implementation of Inclusive Education was perceived as being ineffective by Johnstone (2007:29), who established that there was no provision in national law that requires that students with disabilities receive their education in regular schools or that these students be provided with appropriate services. Similar findings were revealed by Mosia (2014:298), who posited that the implementation of Inclusive Education in Lesotho was perceived as ineffective since the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) could not successfully provide quality education for all learners. In Namibia, although several children with disabilities are included in regular schools by default, many teachers and their schools are perceived to be neither prepared for learners with disabilities nor provided with support to effectively teach them (Zimba et al., 2007:42), which implies that the implementation of Inclusive Education is ineffective. In Zimbabwe, the shortage of resources, the high teacher-pupil ratio which left teachers with no room to cater for children with disabilities, the negative attitudes towards children with disabilities, and insufficient funding were revealed as contributory factors towards the implementation of Inclusive Education being ineffective (Chireshe, 2013:226). The present study attempted to establish if the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education is the same in South African schools as compared to the Lesotho, Namibian and Zimbabwean scenarios above.

The study conducted by Pottas (2005:65) about inclusion in South Africa brought to the surface the idea that teachers perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools as being not effective because their mind-sets are still on the previous education system, based on the separation between special schools and ordinary schools. It was also reported that teachers feel they lack the necessary knowledge and personal efficacy to develop appropriate curricula and plan effectively for Inclusive Education (Pottas, 2005:67). The above literature resonates with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory which guided this study in that the education system at the exosystem level is the one responsible for the effective training of educators around Inclusive Education and to design and put in place the education policies that have an indirect influence on the learner's life and interrelationships with others at the microsystem level. This has a direct influence on the

learner's educational development and the obligations of the current education status (chronosystem) which requires the effective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream or ordinary schools. The present study sought to explore whether the educators perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being effective and practical in their schools or not.

The ineffectiveness of Inclusive Education was also revealed in the Western Cape Province of South Africa by Oswald (2007:143), who established that in-service teacher training for the implementation of Inclusive Education was less effective. It was reported that many of the in-service development programmes, which were intended to promote Inclusive Education, have proven both inadequate and inappropriate, resulting in negative feelings towards the implementation of Inclusive Education, which also indicated its ineffectiveness. Oswald (2007:143) further states that, although many of South Africa's higher education institutions have already made the necessary changes towards the implementation of Inclusive Education, and have incorporated inclusive theory and practice into their curricula for preservice training programmes for teachers, the said programmes have been perceived as being less effective because of serious impediments that came along with both policy developers and practitioners in their endeavours to foster schools as inclusive school communities.

The following Map of South Africa, Figure 2.1 shows the nine provinces, of which Limpopo is the focus of the present study.



Figure 2.1: Provincial Map of South Africa

(Adapted from South Africa Happenings, 2010).

With regard to the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education, the map of South Africa provided in Figure 2.1, illustrates the position of Limpopo Province in relation to other provinces, and the literature reports about the ineffectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Limpopo Province as compared to other provinces of South Africa. Paterson (2016:1) reports that there has been no effective implementation of Inclusive Education in Limpopo Province. She attests that, although there has been an obvious effort to improve schools for hearing and visually impaired learners in Limpopo Province, there is no real clarity around these programmes, and that the implementation of Inclusive Education appears to be unsuccessful since the programmes for full-service schools are also not being taken care of. `

The above Provincial Map of South Africa is substantiated by the following statistical data illustrated in Tables 2.1, which serves as evidence of ineffective implementation of Inclusive Education in Limpopo Province.

Table 2.1: Number of educators and officials trained in Curriculum Differentiation in 2013 – 2014 per Province in South Africa (N = 9)

Province	Total number of teachers per Province in 2013/14	Number of Teachers Trained in Curriculum Differentiation in 2013/14
Eastern Cape	63 137	55
Free State	23 721	766
Gauteng	59 357	6803
Kwa Zulu-Natal	91 285	4176
Limpopo	54 708	102
Mpumalanga	33 380	1450
Northern Cape	8 725	3783
North West	25 169	1200
Western Cape	32 347 1	405
Total	391 829	17540

Source: Data provided by provinces in March 2015 (Adapted from Department of Basic Education, 2015a:4; Department of Basic Education, 2015b:38)

Table 2.1 above illustrates that the implementation of Inclusive Education in most provinces of South Africa may have not been effective during the years 2013 and 2014 because a few teachers has been trained in the area of curriculum differentiation. Gauteng Province is shown to have trained the highest number of educators and officials (6803) for implementation of Inclusive Education in Curriculum Differentiation, and Limpopo Province is reported to have been the second lowest with only 102 educators, including District officials trained.

A pilot study conducted in schools around Mpumalanga and Northern Cape Province in South Africa (Da Costa, 2003:89) revealed that, in terms of the implementation of Inclusive Education, many educators perceived the whole curriculum process as ineffective, very distant to them and that the five-day training that they received regarding outcomes-based education did not provide them with confidence for the work. However, classroom teachers

are expected to support students with diverse abilities and needs, cultural backgrounds, experiences and learning styles and they are also required to make use of strategies and resources that engage, motivate and encourage active participation and learning by all students (Smith, Grad & McCullech, 2012:1). Despite the DBE in South Africa (Department of Education, 2008) adopting many strategies that can be applied to promote the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools, for example, the '*National Strategy on Screening, Identifying, Assessment and Support*' (SIAS), in addition to the Education White Paper 6, the implementation of Inclusive Education remains slow and only partial (Dalton et al., 2012:8). At the same time, a study conducted by Engelbrecht and Green (2007:56) revealed the implementation of Education White Paper 6 (2001) as being less effective. According to Engelbrecht and Green (2007:56), support teams (e.g. School-based Support Teams) are not yet well established in most South African schools because the Department of Education sectors have not yet internalised a cultural ethos of collaboration and, as such, the implementation of Inclusive Education is perceived as being less effective. On this notion, Maguvhe (2014:1759) further reveals the ineffectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa when he attests that, from the right-based context, there are substantial delays in implementing Inclusive Education which are tantamount to the subjugation of the rights of all students who could have had Inclusive Education, and that the co-ordination of providing for and supporting students who experience barriers to learning within the context of mainstream schools has been perceived as problematic and ineffective. The present study endeavoured to reveal if educators in Limpopo Province perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as effective or not.

Teachers are expected to design and present the curriculum in ways that can meet the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms, but the same teachers perceive the whole process of inclusion as being ineffective because teacher training programmes in South Africa do not appear to be adequately addressing the inclusive issues (Dalton et al., 2012:8; Oswald, 2007:146). Inclusive Education is not effectively implemented in South Africa (Mahlo & Condy, 2016:174; Dakada, Abongdia & Foncha, 2014:406). The above-cited literature revealed that teachers and schools in South Africa do not view the assistance of learners who experience barriers to learning as their responsibility, and that their duty was only to identify and refer the learners to more specialised people, rather than taking initiatives to meet the needs of those learners. However, some of the above-cited literature embarked on a focus

group and action research methodologies, which may sometimes yield unreliable outcomes of the research project. A focus group compared to individual in-depth interviews (which are used in this study), are not as efficient in covering maximum depth on a particular issue (Alexis Writing, Demand Media, 2015), whereas with action research or participatory research, the project is time-consuming, and the participants may experience task exhaustion which can also affect the composition of the research group(s) such that they may fluctuate over time (Bennet, 2004:26). The present study engaged in in-depth interviews to delve into educators' perceptions about the effectiveness of Inclusive Education in their schools, as well as field observations to derive information from live inclusive setups in mainstream secondary schools.

The NEEDU (2013:6) reported that inclusion must be mandatory, "prioritised and adequately resourced, both through funding and human resource provisioning across levels, up to the classroom." In spite of the fact that a number of attempts have been made by the DBE to support and train teachers in the critical phase of the implementation of Inclusive Education, they still feel it is ineffective and are threatened by new demands, experience a sense of powerlessness, and of not being in control of the situation (Prinsloo, 2001:345). With regard to the school administrators (school Principals, in particular), Manisah et al. (2006:42) maintain that their active involvement and support in the implementation of Inclusive Education programmes is not effective. Some of the above-cited literature embarked on survey methods of collecting data which may be disadvantageous because they are expensive, time-consuming, and the responses may be typically low. Open-ended questions may be limited and the researcher may experience a lack of cooperation. The randomly sampled population in a survey cannot be interviewed to delve into their perceptions. Since the survey involves limited open-ended questions, the findings may have a lower validity rate than other question types (Wyse, 2012:1). The participants in the present study were purposively sampled so that the researcher could engage information-rich informants in the in-depth interviews. The present study endeavoured to establish the educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of implementing inclusive education amidst learner diversity in their mainstream secondary schools.

The views of educators on the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education may be affected by their perceived challenges in the process of implementation. The challenges are highlighted in the following subheading.

2.4 CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Globally, the issue of including learners with barriers to learning or disabilities into mainstream classrooms has recently been fully accepted by the educational communities. However, the literature reveals several challenges faced during the implementation of Inclusive Education. The prevalence of children and young people who are marginalised by current arrangements, and the development of more inclusive schools remains one of the biggest challenges facing education systems throughout the world. Myers and Bagree (2011:10) revealed that other significant challenges in implementing Inclusive Education in West Sussex (United Kingdom) relate to organisational structure and leadership. For example, they highlighted a challenge or a problem related to the lack of collateral thinking and practice within the Ministry of Education, where there would often be a dysfunctional Special Educational Needs (SEN) desk or department that was not connected with the rest of the Ministry's work. Similar challenges were revealed in the findings of the study conducted in Israel by Avissar, Reiter and Leyser (2003:355) and in Belfast, Northern Ireland by Shevlin et al. (2009:2) who revealed educators' lack of confidence relating to personal instruction, educators' inadequate professional development and the ability to deal with a variety of disabilities and/or special educational needs. In addition to the above-cited challenges, Dakada et al. (2014:407) revealed that terminology is one area in Inclusive Education that poses difficulties to educators and related practitioners, not only in South Africa, but also world-wide. For example, the controversy around Inclusive Education in this regard springs from the operational meanings of the terminologies, such as learning disabilities or learning difficulties or specific learning disabilities. The present study sought to establish whether the challenges experienced in the United Kingdom, Israel and Northern Ireland were the same as those experienced in South Africa.

The implementation of Inclusive Education has been seen to be negatively affected by the lack of material and human resources in a number of countries. For example, in the United Kingdom (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:142), in Botswana (Dart, 2007:11), in Lesotho (Johnstone, 2007:32), in Zimbabwe (Mpfu et al., 2007:74; Chireshe, 2011:159) and in South Africa (Stofile & Green, 2007:61; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:11; Materechera, 2014:176; Subban & Sharma, 2005:6; Maher, 2009:19). The lack of resources identified in mainstream

schools is revealed by a study conducted in Botswana (Dart, 2007:11) which indicated that the country is facing some challenging issues related to overcrowded classrooms and the implementation of Inclusive Education. These include, among others, a shortage of classrooms at primary and secondary school levels; low levels of pupil achievement identified in both literacy and numeracy at primary and secondary levels; higher repetition rates in Standards 1 and 4; and a shortage of educators in some subjects. In Zimbabwe (Mpfungu et al., 2007:74; Chireshe, 2011:159), it was revealed that the schools lacked physical support systems which were required for the successful inclusion of children with physical disabilities (e.g. adapted desks, classroom entrances, toilets, transport, etc.). In South Africa, literature (Stofile & Green, 2007:61; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:11; Materechera, 2014:176; Subban & Sharma, 2005:6; Maher, 2009:19) points to a large number of schools which still have overcrowded classes and, in some instances, this includes a significant number of learners who experience barriers to learning, a lack of physical space for learner discussions, the lack of equipment to enable learner investigations, and insufficient materials to make learning interesting, relevant and thought-provoking. The above literature further pointed out that these conditions prevent access to schools, create conditions that are not conducive to learning, and affect the effective implementation of Curriculum 2005, where they also have to teach multi-graded classes, which makes the implementation of Inclusive Education even more challenging. Large classes may be viewed as an obstacle to the successful implementation of Inclusive Education as they place additional demands on the regular educator, while reinforcing concern that all students may not receive proper time or attention. This is a challenge on the part of educators because it also contradicts the present system of education, whereby the practice of Inclusive Education is widely embraced as an ideal model for education, both in South Africa and internationally.

Challenges regarding the lack of material and human resources in Lesotho (Johnstone, 2007:32) were revealed, and these include insufficient pre-prepared materials (differentiated packages), insufficient time to plan with a learning support team, the lack of a modified/flexible timetable, and inadequately available support from external specialists. In Lesotho, schools do not have the materials that would adequately help educators implement Inclusive Education and the same educators have no experience with such material (Johnstone, 2007:32). Major challenges to Inclusive Education in the Republic of Kenya (Mwangi, 2014:121; Odhiambo, 2014:1; Njoki, 2013:46; Wangari, 2015:35) include: the lack

of funding for specialist educators and additional classrooms to support student needs; the lack of funding for coordinating services and offering individual support to children; a serious shortage of educational resources; the lack of schools; inadequate facilities; the lack of educators and a shortage of professionally trained qualified staff; the lack of modern learning/instructional materials; a shortage of resources which include classrooms, desks, and textbooks, such as talking books for the blind, Braille machines for the blind, and classrooms constructed using ramps to facilitate the movements of students with physical disabilities; the failure to embrace assistive technology and the inability in most schools to afford computer-based assistive technology for their students with special educational needs, such as large prints, on-screen reading, compact discs, and also talking calculators. These challenges are evident in the dilapidated structures used as classrooms, which cannot cater for the lame students, and the poor construction strategies used by the designers of certain facilities in some schools, which include a library, laboratory, classrooms and toilets (Eunice et al. 2015:44).

Implementation of Inclusive Education policies have been seen to be negatively affected in some African countries, for example, in Nigeria (Akinsola & Chireshe, 2016:134), in Kenya (Mwangi, 2014:121; Odhiambo, 2014:1; Njoki, 2013:46; Wangari, 2015:35), in Zimbabwe (Mpofuet al., 2007:69; Materechera, 2014:174), in Namibia (Mitiku, Alemu & Mengsitu, 2014:123) and in South Africa (Mashiya, 2003:4; Nel, et al., 2011:75; Stofile & Green, 2007:63). Studies conducted in Nigeria revealed that the country is still yet to initiate inclusion fully in theory and practice and that, despite intervention which involved providing inclusion policy and spearheading its implementation in public schools, the practice of inclusion in Nigerian schools has been very slow (Akinsola & Chireshe, 2016:134). Mitiku et al. (2014:123) revealed that the challenge of implementation of Inclusive Education in Ethiopia could emanate from different directions, such as resistance to change, rigid school systems and learning environments, the lack of clear educational strategies and policies, the lack of instructional and learning materials, and inadequate budgets. Challenges with the implementation of inclusive policies in Kenya (Mwangi, 2014:121; Odhiambo, 2014:1) are shown by policy makers, who do not understand the concept of Inclusive Education, and the lack of powerful policy to support the implementation of Inclusive Education. Other countries in Africa, such as Namibia, are also reported to be facing many challenges regarding the transformation of education from the old discriminatory system to an Inclusive

Education system. These challenges include identification and assessment of special needs, curriculum adjustment and adaptation to meet special needs, classroom management, support services and specialised content on daily living skills. Studies conducted in Zimbabwe revealed that the country is currently without legislation for inclusion (Mpofu et al., 2007:69; Materechera, 2014:174) and that inclusive education is associated with disability and the school (Chireshe, 2011:157). The present study endeavoured to establish if educators in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province of South Africa perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as a challenge, specifically when they should apply Inclusive Education policies and accommodate learners with special educational needs.

In South Africa, the new system of Inclusive Education and the implementation of inclusion policy seems to be a serious challenge for educators. While Inclusive Education is considered to be the most appropriate strategy for addressing the diverse needs of all learners in South Africa, the implementation of this policy is said to be the real challenge, especially in terms of the time frame and the resources needed for implementing changes (Mashiya, 2003:4; Nel, et al., 2011:75; Stofile & Green, 2007:63). No government (or other providers, such as NGOs) can realistically expect to switch overnight from special or integrated approaches to education, to inclusive ones (Myers & Bagree, 2011:10). South Africa's educational past makes it consequently ideal for current policy-makers to focus on social justice teaching and improving the life chances of all children, teaching of diversity, multicultural education, anti-oppressive education, and addressing generic issues influenced by privilege and power, which pose a challenge with regard to implementation (Philpott & Dagenais, 2012:85). The emergence of progressive and ground-breaking policies to introduce radical education transformation in South Africa, faces challenges and opposition due to the fact that deep change in the embedded practices of educators (as have been informed by the harsh realities of the post-apartheid era) will take time (Tyobeka, 2006:4). A further challenge to the successful implementation of Inclusive Education is located in the seeming inability of education policy makers to recognise that what is written and said are not necessarily being put into effect, not even by educators (Oswald, 2007:147). The present study sought to establish if the same challenges are also experienced in the mainstream schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province, with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The Draft Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DoE, 2005:27) states that the duration and complexity of a learning programme should depend on the level of support

required by the learner, hence, a challenge to the educator who is not well equipped with the knowledge of Inclusive Education and its implementation. As educators are highly regarded as the key to change in education, their feelings of frustration and inadequacy are potential barriers to Inclusive Education (Aniftos & McLuskie, 2003:6). The challenge in this regard is brought to the surface by the outcomes of a study conducted by Subban and Sharma (2005:6) which revealed that mainstream educators generally lack confidence as they attempt to include students with disabilities into their classes, due to the fact that they lack proficiency in modifying the regular education curriculum to suit students with individual learning needs. However, the above-cited study was carried out with semi-structured interviews as the main tool for gathering data. Though semi-structured interviews are generally considered the better way of collecting data, they have been found to be time-consuming, difficult to generalise findings, and the researcher might be biased when analysing the data (Hardon, Hodgkin & Fresle, 2001:28). Pottas (2005:75), in his study conducted in South Africa, posited that educators, as the key to the implementation of Inclusive Education philosophy, are exposed to high levels of stress, not only as a result of being expected to implement the said philosophy, but also of being constantly under pressure from changes in society and new education policies. This brings forth the notion that educators are, in most cases, experiencing support challenges at school level, which include poor strategic planning on the part of the school, district officials' resistance to change, and their uncertainty about the roles they must play (Stofile & Green, 2007:58). The present study investigated whether the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education divulge the challenges they encounter in the process of putting inclusion into practice in their schools.

The majority of educators find it difficult to adapt their teaching style to one that promotes more active, child-centred methods (Ras, 2008:12). On top of the said challenges, in 2008, the then South African Minister of Education adopted a policy, amongst others, called '*Care and Support for Teaching and Learning*' (CSTL) which is, according to Donald, Lazarus and Moolla (2014:24), a comprehensive, coordinated, multi-sectoral response to addressing barriers to learning, aimed at support provisioning in all aspects, including the classroom, by responding to specific learning needs. Inclusive Education advocates that children with special needs have to be educated alongside their normal peers in the regular classrooms (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014:1). Although the Department of Basic Education has introduced the Education White Paper 6 (2001) with its key strategies for the implementation of

Inclusive Education, Ladbrook (2009:47) reported that currently many children in South Africa are out of school. Primary schools have not been converted to full service schools and special schools are not functioning as resource centres. The administrative issues regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education that pose a challenge to educators include the curriculum, adjusting lesson plans, and obtaining funds for necessary support (Engelbrecht, Swart, Eloff & Forlin, 2001:82). Landsberg and Gericke (2006:27) believe that the transition process in South Africa, which started in 1996, has been based on clear policy principles to provide quality education for all and the development of a more inclusive system of schooling. In the same vein, Stofile and Green (2007:53) pointed out the priorities for those shaping education policies after 1994, which was to transform education by addressing the disparities and inequalities of the past and to create one system (the Inclusive Education system) that could provide learners with access to quality education. The present study examined the perceptions of secondary school educators with regard to challenges that inhibit them from offering quality education and implementing Inclusive Education policies in their teaching and learning situations.

The challenges of not being able to assist learners with disabilities in their classrooms cause educators' attitudes to become less positive (Stofile, 2008:58). In Zimbabwe, studies (Mpofu et al., 2007:74; Chireshe, 2011:159) revealed the challenges related to the implementation of Inclusive Education as including the negative attitudes of Zimbabwean school personnel towards educating students with intellectual disabilities, curriculum aspects which include educators who could not handle an inclusive class, regular class educators who had problems adapting their programmes to accommodate SNE children, and the curriculum which may not be accessible to many students with disabilities. Many educators in South Africa are reluctant to engage themselves fully to meet the diverse learners' needs due to their negative attitude towards inclusion. The reason behind this kind of attitude is basically the fact that, even if we might know a considerable amount about the implications of inclusive values for any particular context, we still do not know how best to put them into action, since making sustained principled changes within schools is notoriously difficult (Ainscow et al., 2006:3; Nel et al., 2011:77). The experience of being an inclusive educator is viewed by Subban and Sharma (2005:2) as challenging enough to cause educators to become physiologically and psychologically stressed. The Inclusive Education system of South Africa puts more pressure on educators and schools to provide for the needs of all the children in their communities,

regardless of ability and disability, and to consider the practice of Inclusive Education as requiring the involvement of and collaboration between educational professionals (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014:1). Each day in the classroom presents a new challenge for educators and, as they grapple with the complex and multifaceted demands that face them, the enormity can, at times, feel overwhelming (Dakada et al., 2014:406). The present study endeavoured to reveal whether the educators in mainstream secondary schools of Limpopo Province of South Africa perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as posing difficulties or challenges to them or not.

In Europe, many schools do not have educators or head-teachers with specialist expertise in teaching intercultural education, and there are relatively few examples where issues relating to inclusion and diversity are included as an aspect of initial or continuing professional training (Rashid & Tikly, 2010:14). The study conducted by Chopra (2008:9) in Kurukshetra (India) revealed that the educators, who belonged to rural origin, exhibit less preparedness due to their environmental situation and the lack of knowledge to deal with the challenges that arise in the process of implementing Inclusive Education in comparison to their urban counterparts. Another earlier Northern Ireland study by Lambe and Bones (2006:172) revealed similar sentiments when it established that educators felt they lacked the necessary knowledge, skills and assistance or appropriate preparation to teach effectively in an inclusive setting. The schools in economically richer countries (e.g. Western Europe, North America, Australia / New Zealand) are failing in their objectives of implementing Inclusive Education because of conflicting pressures which often result in the increased exclusion of pupils, overloaded curricula, stressed educators, underachieving pupils, as well as growing pressure to include children with different impairments (Stubbs & Lewis, 2008:31). Meijer (2004:72) reveals that, in theory, there are many educators in Spain who accept integration, but that the actual presence of students with difficulties in their classrooms is a challenge because they are inadequately trained and unable to give them the necessary support. The countries which are known as the substantially economically poorer countries such as Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America, are experiencing challenges related to the large numbers of schools offering very poor-quality education (Stubbs & Lewis, 2008:30). While countries within the developed world have gone beyond categorical provisions to full inclusion, most countries in Africa are still grappling with the problem of making provisions for children with special needs, even on a mainstreaming basis (Eunice et al, 2015:42;

Akinsola & Chireshe, 2016:134). The present study sought to establish if the same challenges experienced in other countries of the world above are experienced and perceived as such by educators in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane, Limpopo Province of South Africa.

The prevalence and concentration of children living with either a moderate or severe disability is higher in low- and middle-income countries than in rich countries, and is highest in sub-Saharan Africa where the educators face difficulties with handling such children (Walker, et al. 2013:8). The lack of training has been seen to be a challenge in the implementation of Inclusive Education in a number of African countries, for example, in Ghana (Kwaku, 2012:22), in Namibia (Zimba et al., 2007:47; Materechera, 2014:175), and in Zimbabwe (Chireshe, 2011:159). It has been discovered that, due to the lack of training, the main teaching strategy that characterises secondary school teaching in this region of sub-Saharan Africa is the large amount of educators' talk, which involves questions generally asked to the whole class, which also implies the fact that a considerable amount of time is spent by educators talking to students without considering learner diversity in the classroom situation (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010:8). The study carried out by Kwaku (2012:22) in Ghana revealed that a large proportion of educators are not professionally trained and do not have any relevant working knowledge in special education to effectively handle these categories of learners with special needs. Chireshe's (2011:159) study on teacher-trainee's views on Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe also revealed that not all educators could handle an inclusive class, and that regular class educators had problems adapting their programmes to accommodate included Special Needs Education children (SNE). In other African countries, such as Namibia, despite the highest budgetary allocation to education, the education system, in general, is still faced with a lack of adequately trained educators, which hampers the implementation of an effective Inclusive Education programme (Zimba et al., 2007:47; Materechera, 2014:175). In Namibia, Zimba et al. (2007:47) revealed that, though the Colleges of Education offer a Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) to prepare educators for Grade 1 to 10 learners, some aspects of special needs education have not been integrated into the diploma, and this will exacerbate the lack of knowledge for educators who are expected to interact with diverse learners in Inclusive Education settings after completion of such qualifications.

Most of the educators in South Africa have been trained in an apartheid separatist

environment therefore, their beliefs are echoed by those traditions which make them very difficult to change and the adjustments to new paradigms even more complicated (Geduld, 2009:4). Oswald (2007:151) and Dunge (2015:27) confirmed that, according to Education for All (EFA), the previous system of education in South Africa did not succeed in empowering all educators with the necessary competence, and that there is still a large proportion of unqualified and underqualified educators in the system. Many educators in South Africa are ill-prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:2) and South Africa remains a newcomer or a new role player in the implementation of Inclusive Education (Nel et al., 2011:75). In the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, an investigation into the ecological aspect, which affects the implementation of Inclusive Education, revealed that the implementation of Inclusive Education is not only hampered by aspects within the school environment, but also by aspects across the entire ecological system of education (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:1). The release of the Education White Paper 6 on South African schools made educators face challenges in the implementation of inclusion due to their lack of training, and the needs of learners with barriers to learning are not being adequately met. The Education White Paper 6 (2001:18) states that educators need to improve their skills and knowledge in the area of Inclusive Education, and that, in mainstream education, priority will include multi-level classroom instruction; co-operative learning; curriculum enrichment; and dealing with learners with behavioural problems. Although some effort was made by the task team set by the Minister of Education 2009 to review the structure of Curriculum 2005, streamline its design features, simplify its language, align its assessment, improve educator orientation and training, many educators found the new curriculum difficult to understand and could not relate it to the challenges within their own context, which made them uncomfortable with the level of educator autonomy that it originally offered (Stofile & Green, 2007:60). Educators have not had appropriate training and are still grappling with the implementation of Curriculum 2005 (Ladbrook, 2009:4). The present study sought to investigate the educators' perceptions of the challenges they face on a daily basis in their interactions with the diverse learner populations in their schools.

The Department of Basic Education in South Africa faces a challenge (especially in rural communities) with establishing educator development programmes which are designed to equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills not only to increase their repertoire of teaching, but also to create a caring, supportive and enabling learning environment

(Department of Education, 2002a:219). In the same vein, Blackie (2010:17) revealed that there are five areas that are the most stressful for educators in their attempts to implement Inclusive Education, namely, administrative issues; the lack of appropriate support; issues relating to students' behaviour; educators' self-perceived competence; and a lack of interaction with parents of students. Other Inclusive Education challenges experienced in South Africa include limited allocated planning time, which was the most frequently raised concern in relation to the implementation of Inclusive Education (Blackie, 2010:17). The above-cited study was a non-experimental, descriptive study, which also used a survey approach to explore the perceptions of educators towards Inclusive Education. However, the major disadvantage of a non-experimental research design is that the results obtained and the relationship between the dependent and independent variables can never be absolutely clear and error-free (Patidar, 2015:34). The present study embarked on a qualitative design whereby in-depth interviews and field observations were used as tools to establish the educators' perceptions on the implementation of Inclusive Education. The researcher found the combination of these two instruments viable for use in this study because the field observations were intended to corroborate the data that was obtained from the in-depth interviews as the initial strategy for data collection.

The current education system of South Africa considers the 'developmental time' of individual learners, which is said to be affecting the interactions between other ecological systems, such as the ordinary school set-up (Donald et al., 2014:46). The challenge faced by the educators in this regard is with consideration of the duration (time spent by each learner in a given learning activity) and the complexity of a learning programme. In South Africa, one of the biggest challenges of preparing educators for Inclusive Education is to help them to understand what it is, and how to put it into practice in their own classrooms and schools (National Department of Education, 2002:14). Landsberg et al. (2005:12) posit that Bronfenbrenner (1994), in his fifth level of systems (the chronosystem), proposes that, whilst the educators are busy interacting with the various learners in the classroom and school environment, these learners are also active participants in their own development and have their own perceptions of the environment in which they live. The above-cited literature (Donald, et al., 2014:46) resonates with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory that informed this study that the macro system of development (level four of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model), which constitutes the philosophical assumptions of the education system

at large, specifically with its attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies, exerts a huge pressure on educators at the grassroots level (microsystem) to see to it that Inclusive Education is being implemented. The present study investigated the perceptions of educators about the demand on them by the Department of Education to implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools and the challenges they encounter in its implementation.

A large proportion of the South African educator workforce is over 50 years of age (Armstrong, 2009:9; Donohue & Borman, 2014:4) hence, reorienting educators to new ways of educating learners after many years in the profession, remains a significant challenge to inclusive practices. This study established how the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive the challenges related to the implementation of Inclusive Education in their institutions with regard to administrative issues, student behaviour, their knowledge and competencies on IE, and their interactions with parents of learners who experience barriers to learning. A study conducted in Kwa-Zulu Natal by Siebalak (2002:56), which explored the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education, indicated that working with learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools would pose serious challenges for them, due to the fact that the educators perceive these learners as being less cooperative, less attentive, less able to organise themselves, less able to cope with new situations, and less socially acceptable to others. Educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being difficult because they would be faced with the task of making learners with learning disabilities fit into a normal classroom, and these learners are perceived as being less desirable to have in the classroom (Armstrong, 2009:9; Donohue & Borman, 2014:4). On the contrary, Subban and Sharma (2005:11) argue that, while educators view Inclusive Education as a challenge, they are accepting of students with disabilities in their regular classrooms. The challenge in this regard is that educators operate in their individualistic environments where very few opportunities are created for them to express the challenges related to the unwelcoming environments and uncertainties they face in mainstream education (Geduld, 2009:10). The present study endeavoured to establish if educators are experiencing a challenge with regard to the environments in which they undertake their daily duties with a diversity of learners in an endeavour to implement Inclusive Education.

The next subheading will highlight the gender perceptions of educators with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools.

2.5 GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Educators around the world differ, either with their ages, experiences, gender or even with their perceptions concerning any issue or phenomenon around them. The main focus of this section of the present study is on the educators' gender and perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools. Inclusivity is the major concern incorporated in the millennium goals of Education for All (EFA) which were set to achieve, among others, that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, should have access to completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality, the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and the achievement of gender equality in education, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality (UNESCO, 2009a:27).

Literature (Eurydice, 2010:29) revealed that even when educators believe that they treat their students equally, they are more likely to chastise male students and pay them more attention, while at the same time, creating greater dependencies in their female students. A variety of studies from different European countries have shown that both male and female teachers tend to encourage passivity and conformity in their female students, while at the same time, valuing independence and individuality in their male students. Avramidis and Norwich (2002:136), in their study conducted in Europe, maintain that female educators have a greater tolerance level for integration and for special needs persons than do male educators. On the contrary, a study conducted by Chopra (2008:6) in Kurukshetra (India) revealed that male educators' attitudes are more positive towards Inclusive Education compared to their female counterparts, and that it might be due to the reason that the male educators are more aware about Inclusive Education than their female counterparts. The above literature further revealed that male educators were either significantly more confident than female educators about their ability to teach students with disabilities. Khan (2012:115) reported that educator diversity in Bangladesh (in the present study, gender) and their perceptions should be taken into consideration in an endeavour towards a successful implementation of Inclusive Education policy, because of "confusion or uncertainty" about Inclusive Education among classroom educators. The present study endeavoured to establish if the same applies to male

and female educators of South Africa.

A study conducted in the Bahamas on the implementation of Inclusive Education revealed that male educators, who expressed mixed feelings towards the implementation of Inclusive Education during their interviews, agreed that the practice is an excellent idea, but it could only work as long as the prerequisites are in place (Hunter-Johnson, et al., 2014:8). To this effect, the above study reported that one of the male respondents was of the opinion that inclusion is a lofty idea and a strong foundation ought to be built before implementing it. On the contrary, one of the female educators, who held a negative perception of Inclusive Education, stated that she would only reconsider the idea of the implementation of Inclusive Education if she had a disabled child of her own (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014:9). Although the said study by Hunter-Johnson et al. (2014) employed a qualitative phenomenological approach, only one instrument (semi-structured interviews) was used in data collection. The researchers could have employed more than one instrument for the corroboration and triangulation of findings because their samples were generally very small and it would be difficult to conclude that the qualitative nature of their findings could be presented in a manner that would be usable by other practitioners (Armstrong, 2010:1). The researcher in this study collected the data by making use of both qualitative in-depth interviews and field observations, to give the researcher the platform to ask open-response questions which, according to Trafford and Leshem (2008:91), have the chief advantage of giving freedom to the respondents. Field observations were conducted to substantiate the in-depth interviews, enable the researcher to record information as it occurred in natural settings, to study actual behaviour, and to study individual educators who had difficulty verbalising their ideas (Creswell, 2014:235-236).

Dukmak (2013:35) revealed that, in the United Arab Emirates, educators' gender impacted their attitudes towards inclusion for students with disabilities. Dukmak revealed that educators showed supportive attitudes towards inclusion, and male educators had more supportive attitudes towards inclusion than females did. However, another study carried out in Australia by Subban and Sharma (2005:28), who investigated educators' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular settings, found that female educators are inclined to have more favourable attitudes and appeared to have higher expectations of students with disabilities than their male counterparts.

The issue of gender perceptions and attitudes with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools seems to be controversial because, according to the researcher in the current study, some studies reported no difference between male and female perceptions, while others reported some discrepancies. Female educator trainees, in the study carried out in Australia by Vaz, Wilson, Falkmer, Sim, Scott, Cordier and Falkmer (2015:68), are reported to be more tolerant in implementing Inclusive Education, especially when faced with diverse learners in an inclusive setup. Gender appears to be a predictor of educator attitudes towards inclusion and male educators were found to have a more negative attitude than female educators because female educators were perceived as having a more conative attitude for inclusion. The above literature is in tandem with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that informs the current study that the microsystems in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model are outlined as a level at which both male and female educators at school, who are attentive and caring (thus having positive attitudes towards implementing Inclusive Education), can provide a positive environment (the exosystem) which, over a sustained period of time, boosts the learner's self-esteem and sense of security (Landsberg et al., 2005:11). This will promote good relationships between male and female educators serving under the umbrella body called the macrosystem which has an influence on their belief systems, life styles and perceptions about the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools. The present study investigated whether the educators' gender influenced their perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools and whether gender also influenced their opinions on the inclusion of children with disabilities and diverse learning abilities in their regular classrooms.

A study conducted in Papua, New Guinea (Rombo, 2006:35) and another one in Nigeria (Olufemi, Adeniyi & Adeyinka, 2009:165) revealed that gender is the first educator-related variable that can influence educators' attitudes towards inclusion. The outcomes of the study conducted in Nigerian secondary schools by Fakolade, Adeniyi and Tella (2009:155) indicated that female educators have a more positive attitude towards the inclusion of special needs students in their ordinary or regular secondary schools than their male counterparts, which called for the researcher in the present study to discover if the same scenario could apply to male and female educators in South Africa. The above literature found that there was a marginal tendency for female educators to express more positive attitudes towards the idea of including children with behavioural problems than male educators and that educators'

attitudes change to a lesser or greater extent when considering the types of special needs that they are faced with in real classroom contexts. The present study sought to establish if the educators' gender differences influenced their perceptions of implementing Inclusive Education as was the case in Australia, New Guinea and Nigeria.

Research conducted by Siebalak (2002:105) in Kwa-Zulu Natal revealed that female educators show more empathy with Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) than their male counterparts. The above study collected data through joint task groups, which comprised core members, commissioned researchers and additional consultants. This method of research may come up with unreliable results because sometimes the data generated through this methodology tends towards the reproduction of normative discourses and there are limitations associated with it such as the tendency for certain types of socially acceptable opinion to emerge, and for certain types of participants to dominate the research process (Smithson, 2000:116).

To implement Inclusive Education in classrooms, it is important that both male and female educators provide an effective and stimulating educational environment for all pupils (Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014:95) and uphold the implementation of an Inclusive Education curriculum which has an instrumental role to play in fostering tolerance and promoting human rights that are powerful tools for transcending cultural, religious, gender and other differences (UNESCO, 2009a:18). Mashiya (2003:22) revealed, that in Kwa-Zulu Natal secondary schools, educators tended to have more positive attitudes, but they still seemed averse to the idea of educating the disabled, especially those with behavioural disorders, including the mentally retarded and those with multi-disabling conditions, in the regular classroom situation. Mashiya (2003:22) further asserts that there is a marginal tendency for female teachers to express more positive attitudes towards the idea of integrating children with behavioural problems than male teachers. The present study will establish if male and female educators in mainstream secondary schools of Limpopo Province of South Africa bear the same perceptions about the implementation of Inclusive Education. Mutengi and Nderitu (2014:95) are of the opinion that every teacher, regardless of their gender, should have a positive view on inclusion and its implementation, value all children, regardless of their needs, in order to be able to interact with them accordingly. The present study sought to establish whether the gender of educators influenced their perception with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools.

The efforts to make a mainstream school inclusive, with both male and female educators harmoniously interacting with their learners in an Inclusive Education milieu, calls for them to become “caring communities that celebrate and accommodate diversity” (Swart & Pettipher, 2007:107). The above-cited studies by Swart and Pettipher (2007) were mainly descriptive. The findings of descriptive survey methods may present the possibility for error and subjectivity. For example, when a researcher designs a questionnaire, questions are predetermined and prescriptive (Murphy, 2006:1). The present study focused on in-depth interviews and field observations for one data collection strategy to elucidate further or complement the findings of another. The present study delved into investigating the influence of gender on the perceptions of educators concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Various themes have been discussed by reviewing the related literature pertaining to the perceptions of educators on the implementation of Inclusive Education. The following subsection summarises what has been discussed and what is to follow in the next chapter.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed literature under the following subheadings: the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education, perceptions of the educators on the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education, challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools, and gender and perceptions in the implementation of Inclusive Education. In this chapter, literature indicates that there is a need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream and all other types of schools as mandated by various Inclusive Education policies. Literature further indicates that the implementation of Inclusive Education is on-going and it is being effective to a lesser extent, especially in South African schools. This chapter also highlighted the challenges that are experienced by educators and their gender differences in perceptions regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education. The following chapter discusses the research methodology followed in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to establish the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane area, Limpopo Province. The research methodology aspects discussed in this chapter are the research paradigm, the research design, samples, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis, and ethical issues such as permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

“What are the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Polokwane mainstream secondary schools?” is the research problem that served as the basis for the researcher's engagement into an inquiry, and the choice of the research paradigm, which ultimately has a greater impact on the choice of the research design for this study. The following section discusses the paradigm adopted in this study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is an idea or concept that guides the way we do things, especially when undertaking a research. It is a set of beliefs that guides actions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:25). Weaver and Olson (2006:460) noted that “paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished”.

The research paradigm in this study was *interpretive*, to clarify the researcher's pattern of inquiry and the methodologies that were used to reveal the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools. Since the present study focused on the perceptions of educators, their feelings and opinions concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education in their respective mainstream secondary schools, it drew its design from an interpretive, naturalistic paradigm or approach to the world, in order to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people brought to them in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3), who say that an interpretive paradigm is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings people have about the world. The interpretive paradigm in the present study was underpinned by in-depth interviews, field observations and interpretation. The present study employed field observations in order to observe and collect information about

Inclusive Education events that took place in mainstream secondary schools and to corroborate the data that was collected through the in-depth interviews. The interpretive research paradigm formed the basis for interpretation of the data collected, and to give meaning to the gathered information by drawing inferences or by judging the match between the information and some abstract pattern, in an attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assigned to them (Kwadwo & Hamza, 2015:218).

According to Salovey (2004:45), the interpretivist research paradigm acknowledges that people's subjective experiences and activities are valid, multiple and socially constructed in accordance with their individual interpretations of social phenomena and therefore analysis of them falls within the constructivist paradigm. The interpretive paradigm in this study contributed towards understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of educators in mainstream secondary schools concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education, as they emanated from meaning (versus measurement) oriented methodologies, such as interviews and field observations (Thomas, 2010:296). Goldkuhl (2012:5) adds that,

[t]he aim of all interpretive research is to understand how members of a social group, through their participation in social processes, enact their particular realities and endow them with meaning, and to show how these meanings, beliefs and intentions of the members help to constitute their actions.

The interpretivist paradigm in this study served as an underlying philosophical basis upon which the qualitative research design is established, and the said design for the present study is discussed in the following sub-section.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research approach is a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning, whereby the researcher tries to understand how others make sense of their experiences (Shank 2002:5). The research approach is the overall plan for linking the conceptual research problem to the relevant and practicable empirical research (Van Wyk, 2011:3), with the purpose of providing the most valid and accurate answers possible to the existing research questions within an appropriate mode of inquiry (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:31). The researcher found the qualitative approach to be more suitable for the study to delve the educators' perceptions, experiences and attitudes and emotions regarding the need,

effectiveness and the challenges they have experienced in their endeavour to implement Inclusive Education. The qualitative interpretivist approach in this study served as a basis for the researcher to discover and understand the perceptions of educators in mainstream secondary schools of the Polokwane area in Limpopo Province about the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Since this study draws its theoretical framework from Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1994), which is used as a tool to understand and guide the various aspects of this research project, the researcher found it worthwhile to adopt the qualitative research approach to establish the educators' perceptions about the implementation of Inclusive Education in their situations, where proximal processes are continuously played out between themselves and the learners at school (microsystem), which might be influenced by the broader category of systems called the macrosystem. According to Landsberg et al. (2005:12), the macrosystem has a role to play in the area of educators' attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies inherent in their particular societal system, for example, the education system, and culture which has an indirect influence on how they have been trained. With this notion, the researcher in this study embarked on a qualitative approach to reveal the perceptions of educators on the implementation of Inclusive Education. The present study attempted to investigate how educators make sense of their experiences on the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of the Polokwane area, Limpopo Province.

The qualitative research approach was used, with limited quantitative analysis of observation data, in this study. Manwa (2014:52) attests that the qualitative approach is a method which attempts to understand and interpret what exists at present in the form of conditions, practices, processes, trends, effects, attitudes and beliefs as they are perceived by the actors. The qualitative approach was relevant since the present study endeavoured to disclose the educators' perceptions, feelings and opinions about the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools. The relevancy of this research approach was derived from the fact that the researcher in the present study sought to investigate the educators' perceptions, analyse and interpret their individual and collective social actions in mainstream school setups, in an attempt to uncover the relevant answers to the main and/or sub-research questions. The present study attempted to investigate the naturalistic views and feelings of educators about the implementation of the phenomenon 'Inclusive Education' in mainstream secondary schools of the Polokwane area, Limpopo Province.

Related studies, for example, Peterson (2011:67-69), who explored and analysed how general education teachers describe and interpret the instructional strategies they use in their inclusive classrooms when teaching students with disabilities, employed a qualitative research approach which also assumed an interpretivist or constructivist paradigm to discover and understand how people make sense of what happens in their lives. A detailed description of the factors that furthered or obstructed the inclusion of children with special educational needs was discovered by making use of a qualitative research approach which was based on in-depth semi-structured interviews, corroborated by observational data. The data from each sampled school was first processed via a “within-site” analysis, and then a “cross-site” analysis to find similarities and differences between the different cases. More credible Inclusive Education studies across the globe (Meijer, 2004:119; Bui, Quirk, Almazan & Valenti, 2010; Peterson, 2011:66; Ghesquie`re, Maes & Vandenberghe, 2004:178), found a qualitative approach obtained credible data, hence the use of the approach in the present study.

The researcher in the present study was interested in understanding the meanings educators have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009:13), specifically with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study employed a phenomenological research design to achieve the objectives. The purpose of phenomenological enquiry is to explicate the structure or essence of the lived experiences in the search for meaning that identifies the essence of the phenomena, and its accurate description through every day’s lived experience (Mamabolo, 2009:50). A phenomenological research design is defined by Kothari (2004:31) as constituting the blueprint for the collection, the measurement and analysis of data, the advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data, the techniques to be used in data analysis, which include keeping in view the objectives of the research, as well as the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. Padilla-Díaz (2015:107) explains the origin of phenomenology as of a philosophical character and that its greater contribution has been to provide a new vision of philosophy that allows the researcher to view things in themselves.

A phenomenological design can be used during data collection to allow the participants to describe their lived phenomenal experiences; when analysing data to get at the essential meaning of the experience and to come up with essential themes; and when discussing the study's findings to relate them to theories presented in the introduction (Waters, 2017:1). A phenomenological design in this study allowed participants, through in-depth interviews, to elicit their own meaning of their experience of being involved in teaching and learning situations where they are mandated to implement Inclusive Education.

Phenomenology occupies a transcendental area to systematically inquire into the mind and human experiences to reflect the essences of phenomena as well as the intentionality of conscience. The phenomenological design allowed the researcher in the present study to scrutinise objects in their natural settings or real-world settings, in an attempt to understand and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that people attached to them (Williams, 2007:82; Patton, 2001:39). Inclusive Education phenomenon and its implementation in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province was investigated in the present study.

The following sub-section discusses the sample and sample procedures adopted in the study.

3.5 SAMPLE

A sample is a representative subset of the population from which generalisations are made about the population (Michael, 2004:1). Twenty educators from ten mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province participated in this study. There were 10 males and 10 females. Purposive non-probability sampling was used to select the sample. The sample of this study was drawn through purposive sampling because it is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals included in the sample were taken by the researcher. This was based upon a variety of criteria, which included specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research (Oliver, 2006:1). Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest, and for in-depth study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319; Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2013:1). Information-rich cases are those from which one can

learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term, “purposeful sampling” (Harsh, 2011:65). In purposive sampling, the researcher in this study intentionally selected individuals and sites to learn and understand the central phenomenon (main research question) (Creswell, 2014:228). The qualitative researcher was concerned with understanding rather than explaining the phenomenon, and with subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of insiders (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011:308). As already highlighted, the two educators per school who were purposively selected or sampled for in-depth interviews and observation sessions by the researcher, specifically entailed learner support educators (LSE) or special needs educators (SNE), who also formed part of the school-based support team (SBST) of the school, and who were conversant with Inclusive Education matters. The most preferred purposive sampling strategy employed in this study was as follows:

3.5.1 Homogeneous Sampling

Homogeneous sampling is the process of selecting a small homogeneous group of subjects or units for examination and analysis, and it is used when the goal of the research is to understand and describe a particular group in depth (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006:1). A homogeneous sample is often chosen when the research question that is being addressed is specific to the characteristics of the particular group of interest, which is subsequently examined in detail (Lund Research, 2012:2). In this study, secondary schools as sites and secondary school educators as participants were purposefully selected for the sample of this study because they possessed similar traits or characteristics and were regarded as members of a common subgroup (Department of Education) that had defining characteristics (Creswell, 2014:230).

The following section provides the biographical data of the research participants. The biographical data provides the context in which the data was collected.

3.5.2 Biographic data of participants

The table below displays the biographic data of the Polokwane mainstream secondary school educators who participated in the current study.

Table 3.1: Biographic data of mainstream secondary school educators (N = 20)

Biographical Variable	Variable Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	50
	Female	10	50
Age	30 – 35 years	3	15
	36 – 40 years	6	30
	41 – 45 years	5	25
	46 – 50 years	5	25
	Over 50 years	1	5
Qualifications	Advanced Certificate (ACE) in Inclusive Education	5	25
	Diploma (SNE)	5	25
	BEd. (Honours) in Inclusive Education	6	30
	MEd. (Inclusive Education)	4	20
Type of School	Public secondary school	8	40
	State-of-the-art secondary school	2	10
	Private secondary school	4	20
	Former Model-C secondary school	6	30

Table 3.1 above shows that 20 educators comprising 10 males and 10 females, participated in the present study. The table illustrates that the majority of educators were between 36 and 50 years of age, while a few of them fell within a range of 30 and 35 years of age. The educators' qualifications are shown to have varied between Master of Education in Inclusive Education and an Advanced Certificate in Inclusive Education. The highest percentage (30%) of educators who participated in the present study had B.Ed. (Honours) in Inclusive Education, whereas the lowest percentage (20%) had Master of Education degrees in Inclusive Education. The table further illustrates the different mainstream secondary schools from where the data was collected, predominantly Public, State-of-the-art, Private and former Model-C secondary schools. Most of the educators who participated in the current study were from Public and former Model-C mainstream secondary schools, and the least number of educators were from Private and State-of-the-art secondary schools.

3.6 INSTRUMENTATION

The study used in-depth interviews and field observations in collecting data, which are discussed below:

3.6.1 In-depth interviews

The in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest & Namey, 2011:29). In-depth interviews in this study served as the main instrument used to investigate the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools. This instrument was used to reveal the feelings and opinions of educators in response to the main research problem formulated in Chapter 1, which is specified as: *"What are the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Polokwane mainstream secondary schools?"* The in-depth interviews also yielded rich and valuable information from the purposively sampled educators through the scheduled open-ended interview questions, in an attempt to answer the sub-research questions.

The in-depth nature of the interviews in the current study tied in with the intention of the interviewer to uncover details of the interviewee's experience that was undisclosed (Allmark, Boote, Chambers, Clarke, McDonnell, Thompson & Tod, 2009:3). In-depth interviewing was fruitful in this study because it is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents in order to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). A small sample of educators was needed in this study to explore their experiences pertaining to the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools. This implied that the participants were encouraged and prompted to talk in depth about the topic under investigation, without the researcher's use of predetermined, focused, short-answer questions. The researcher was not required to prepare an extensive list of questions rather, the researcher was required to be aware of the major domains of experience likely to be discussed by the participant, and to be able to probe how these related to the topic under investigation (Given & Cook, 2008:1). The researcher did not lead participants according to any preconceived notions, nor encourage participants to provide particular answers by expressing approval or disapproval of what they said (Mack et al., 2011:29). In-depth interviews are useful when the researcher needs detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours or to explore

new issues in depth (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). In this study, the educators' feelings and thoughts about the implementation of Inclusive Education as a new system of education prescribed to them by the Department of Education were explored.

The in-depth interviews, as one of the methods of data collection in this study, were specifically conducted without utilising any of the researcher's prior information, experience or opinions in a particular area, as recommended by De Vos et al. (2011:347), who says that, in the process of interviewing, the researcher is supposed to explore new territory with the participant, and the meaning of what emerges in the interview session should be actively constructed within the interaction. When collecting data, the researcher in this study found the in-depth interviews valuable to safeguard the participants, who might have felt uncomfortable talking openly in a group, or for the purpose of distinguishing individual (as opposed to group) opinions about the program, and to refine questions for future surveys of a particular group (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). In-depth interviewing was also used in this study to explore interesting areas for further investigation into the research problem identified for the present study. This type of interview involved asking informants open-ended questions, and probing, wherever necessary, to obtain data deemed useful by the researcher (Berry, 1999:1; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:350), on how individual educators conceived their world of Inclusive Education and how they explained or made sense of the important events in their lives.

The in-depth interview in this study employed a semi-structured format. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013:154), semi-structured interviews are more flexible and more likely to yield information that the researcher had not planned to ask for. Thus, qualitative interviewing offered an informal platform, and more open opportunities for both the researcher and the participants to engage in a discussion that was characterised by the use of terms and words that gave meaning and interpretation to a situation in an attempt to construct knowledge (Kwaku, 2012:38). Semi-structured interviews in this study consisted of several key questions that helped to define the areas explored, but also allowed the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008:292).

In instances where the interviewee had difficulty answering a question or hesitated, the interviewer probed. Open-ended questions were asked so that the participants could best

voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings (Creswell, 2014:240). This instrument gave the researcher the platform to ask open-response questions, which, according to Trafford and Leshem (2008:91), had the main advantage of giving freedom to the respondents. Another advantage of in-depth interviews in this study was that they provided much more detailed information about the perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education, than that which would be available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. They also provided a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information, such that the participants in this study felt more comfortable having a conversation with the researcher about their programme as opposed to filling out a survey (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3).

3.6.2 Field observations

Observation is the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site (Creswell, 2014:235). In other words, observation refers to what can be seen through the eyes of the observer (De Clerck, Willems, Timmerman & Carling, 2011:8). Observation in this study took the form of gathering field notes by spending more time as an observer than as a participant (Creswell, 2014:235), which was the researcher's technique of directly observing and recording without interaction (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:346). Non-participant observation or observation from a distance refers to the researcher's long-distance observation of activities related to the topic of interest, which is also a form of observation that is spectator-like, or conducted unobtrusively in such a way that participants do not notice the researcher (De Clerck et al., 2011:8). Field observations in this study were used to corroborate the data that was obtained from in-depth interviews as an initial strategy for data collection, or they served as natural outgrowth of in-depth interview strategies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:350). Prolonged and persistent field observations allowed interim data analysis and verification (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:6), and enabled the researcher to do away with any bias that might have encroached into the research findings. Field observations in this study were done with the aid of observation checklists, to establish if the educators were able to implement the requirements of Inclusive Education policies in the real teaching and learning environment. The researcher in this study attached value to the process of field observation because the interpretive paradigm in qualitative research sought to analyse social actions in their natural setting, through direct and detailed observation, in order to understand and give the necessary interpretation of how people create

meaning in their social world (Neuman, 2011:72). Qualitative field observations in this study entailed descriptive recordings, presented as field notes, of events, people (educators), actions, and searching for patterns of behaviour and relationships towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in the school settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:359). The aim of conducting observations in this study was to enable the researcher to record information as it occurred in a setting, to study actual behaviour, and to study individual educators who had difficulty verbalising their ideas (Creswell, 2014:235-236). This form of observation enabled the researcher in this study to obtain the educators' perceptions of events that encompassed the implementation of Inclusive Education, to reveal the processes expressed in their actions, their feelings, thoughts and beliefs about inclusivity.

Observations in the selected mainstream secondary schools enabled the researcher in this study to examine how barriers to learning were being managed (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:5) and how Inclusive Education was being implemented. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, South Africa is presently in a state of transformation, and a paradigm shift, which entails replacing the old education system with the one that highly recommends the implementation of Inclusive Education (Doran et al., 2011:30). Field observations in this study served as an active process to gauge the extent to which the educators in South African mainstream secondary schools are prepared to comply and implement the Inclusive Education policy in their daily interaction with the diverse learner population of their country.

Field observation in this study was regarded as valuable because it revealed deep-seated, natural or real feelings and behaviour of educators towards an Inclusive Education phenomenon in their various school and classroom environments. The researcher was able to detect whether Inclusive Education was perceived by educators as being needful, effective or as a challenge to them in their interaction with the diverse learner population in their teaching and learning processes. The observation strategy of collecting data in this study was intentionally unstructured and free-flowing to allow flexibility (Leedy & Ormrod (2013:152-153). The education milieu in both the classroom and the school premises of the selected sites were allowed ample time to unwittingly unfold the information to the observer about the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in their learning institutions, the effectiveness of implementing Inclusive Education, and the challenges they came across in their endeavours to implement it. As advocated by the theory of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of development, which was the one that informed this study, the researcher in this

study found it worthwhile to engage field observations as one of the strategies to collect data. The above-cited theory suggests that the school set-up, as the field for observation in this study, is part of the microsystem where particular forms of interaction between the organism (the child) and the environment (the school) are played.

The researcher in this study, during field observations, was engaged in a process of recording and observing conditions, events, feelings, physical settings and activities through looking rather than asking questions (Walliman, 2006:95). The study which investigated teaching and learning methods in inclusive classrooms, conducted in the North-West Province of South Africa by Motitswe (2011:13) revealed that the observation method can be used in order to obtain valid and reliable answers as it also allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon that is investigated, especially when it is used in combination with interviews.

The instruments used in the quest to reveal the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education were highlighted in the above sections. The next sub-section will elucidate the assurance of trustworthiness of the data collected in the present study.

3.6.3 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study was tested through clearly asking the participants or educators in mainstream secondary schools the questions that were relevant to the present education system, which requires the implementation of Inclusive Education. The researcher was transparent towards the educators by showing them their responses to the questions they had been asked and how they would be recorded.

According to Golafshani (2003:601), "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability". If the reliability or trustworthiness can be maximised or tested, then a more credible and defensible result may lead to generalisability (Stenbacka, 2001:551). Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the data obtained in the study is plausible, credible, and trustworthy (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:330). Usage of in-depth interviews and field observations during data collection is another way of strengthening the internal trustworthiness of the data collected for the study (Kwaku, 2012:42). The present study used triangulation (between-method triangulation) to test or maximise the trustworthiness of the research findings (Golafshani, 2003:603). Triangulation is defined to be "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence

among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study.” (Creswell & Miller, 2000:126). It is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analysing a research question from multiple perspectives (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011:1). “Triangulation can be used to deepen the researchers’ understanding of the issues and maximize their confidence in the findings of qualitative studies” (Guion et al., 2011:3). In this study, the results from both in-depth interviews and field observations were compared to establish if similar conclusions were reached, in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

The following trustworthiness issues were addressed in the present study:

3.6.3.1 Dependability

In order to ensure the dependability of the findings in this study, the processes (procedures followed) within the study are reported in detail in section 3.6 to enable future researchers to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results (Shenton, 2003:71). This study’s research design and its implementation, the operational detail of data gathering and its analysis, have been clearly outlined to enable readers of this research report to develop a thorough understanding of how the said procedures have been effectively applied to ensure their dependability and trustworthiness.

3.6.3.2 Credibility

To ensure credibility as one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness and accuracy in the recordings of the findings about the phenomenon under study (implementation of Inclusive Education), the researcher in this study ensured honesty in the informants by making provision for them in the informed consent form to opt out in case they no longer felt comfortable with their participation in the study, so that the data collection procedures could involve only those who were honestly prepared or willing to take part in the process. To determine the accuracy of the present study’s qualitative findings on the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools, specific descriptions or themes that emerged from the transcribed data were taken back to the participants by the researcher (member checking) to establish their accuracy. In other words, the researcher made follow-ups with participants in the study in order to provide an opportunity for them to go through major findings, listen to the tape-recorded articulations to ensure a clear link between them and the written transcripts, and to comment on the findings

(Creswell, 2014 :251).

3.6.3.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the external trustworthiness, which is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations and populations (Shenton, 2003:69). The researcher in this study provided an adequate description of the educators' perceptions of the need, the effectiveness and the challenges they faced in an attempt to implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools, as well as a model for the improvement of its implementation, which could be knowledge transferrable to other situations or places. The report of the findings of this study may inspire the readers to have a deeper understanding of Inclusive Education and its implementation and enable them to compare the outcomes of the phenomenon investigated in the present study (implementation of Inclusive Education) with what is happening in their mainstream schools, other provinces of South Africa and outside countries. To ensure transferability of the methodologies and the extent to which the findings of this study may be true, similar projects may be conducted in other settings or environments, as has been done in this study.

3.6.3.4 Conformability

Confirmability is a way of ensuring, as far as possible, if the study's findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2003:72). To ensure confirmability of the findings in this study, member checking was once more done by asking the participants to read and comment on the accuracy of verbatim quotes, to obtain their approval to use their direct personal quotes in written or verbal reports of the study, and to obtain their permission to cite them (Creswell, 2014:47). Triangulation was also employed in this study to reduce the effect of researcher bias.

3.6.4 Pilot study

A pilot study is a miniature study or a small-scale version of the full study that will be performed at a later stage (Wheeler, 2010:1). It is a feasibility study, a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to a larger study, in order to improve the latter's quality and efficiency (NC3Rs, 2006:1). A pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed experiment or procedure and these can then be addressed before

time and resources are expended on large-scale studies (NC3Rs, 2006:1). This kind of study is, in other words, a small study which helps design a further confirmatory study and may have various purposes, such as testing study procedures, the validity of tools, the estimation of the recruitment rate, and the estimation of parameters, such as the variance of the outcome variable to calculate sample size (Arain, Campbell, Cooper & Lancaster, 2010:1). In this study, a pilot study was conducted for the researcher to experiment with the existing interviewing design, followed by observations with a small number of Special Needs Educators (SNEs), for example, four educators consisting of two males and two females, selected from two mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane. The pilot study in this regard was conducted making use of a small fragment of the population that was not involved in the main study. The selected SNEs were interviewed and observed individually in their respective mainstream secondary schools to test the feasibility of the chosen research design and methods for the present study. The researcher was obliged to test the instruments to be used in this study in order to refine them for the formal process of data collection. The same instruments and procedures that were used in the main study, were the ones used in the pilot study. In a pilot study, the researcher approached some of the practical aspects of establishing access, making contact and conducting the in-depth interviews, as well as becoming alert to her own level of interviewing skills (De Vos et al., 2011:350). The pilot study was also conducted in order to come to terms with the duration or length of the interviews; to eliminate technical errors which might encroach on the proceedings of the main study; to eliminate uncertainties in the open-ended questions designed for the interviews; to pre-test the set sub-research questions as to whether they would answer the main question or not; to allow for a preliminary data analysis, and to establish if it would be possible for the researcher to generate themes and categories. The pilot study aided the researcher in this study to discover and merge similar concepts on the interview schedule in order to avoid duplication. For example, two questions were merged because they covered the same concept or meaning: the need for the 'integration' of learners and the need for the 'assimilation' of learners with and without disabilities in mainstream classrooms which, during the pilot interviews, sounded the same. The results of the pilot study were generally similar to those of the main study.

The following sub-section will highlight the procedure that was followed when conducting research on the perceptions of educators towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher personally visited the research sites and, on arrival, obtained consent from the field observation participants and interviewees in the study by having them complete informed consent forms. Ten sites that best helped the researcher understand the central phenomenon (the implementation of Inclusive Education) were purposively selected amongst the mainstream secondary schools in Polokwane District for conducting observations.

In order to conduct interviews effectively, the researcher preferably looked for a quiet, suitable place, free from distractions. The researcher made personal contact with the selected participants for the interviewing sessions, especially after working hours. Before starting with the interviews, the researcher conveyed to the participants the purpose of the study, the time the interview took to complete, the plans for using the results from the interviews, and the availability of a summary of the study when the research was completed, as advocated by Creswell (2014:243). The researcher kept focus on the intended areas of interest in the interview schedule during the interview process to allow maximisation of the use of the interview as part of the data collection toolkit and knowledge construction process (Kwaku, 2012:39). During the interviews, questions and responses were audiotaped to give the researcher an accurate record of the conversation or to record the conversations verbatim in order to enhance validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:324). Brief notes were taken to guard against the events of a malfunctioning of the tape recorder, recorded on a form called an *interview protocol*. Data collected during interviews was transcribed. “Transcription is the process of converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data” (Creswell, 2014:263).

Observations began by having someone introduce the observer (the researcher) to the educators to be observed. In the process of observing, the researcher first assumed the role of a nonparticipant observer and an “outsider” who sat on the periphery or in some advantageous place, for example, at the back of the classroom, to watch and record the phenomena under study (the implementation of Inclusive Education).

The classroom observational protocol was used as another means to record field notes. The researcher tried to separate stereotypes, personal opinions and judgments from accurate observations with the effective recording of wording, meanings, and opinions of the research participants (De Clerck et al., 2011:4). The natural boundary for data collection through

nonparticipant observation was for a period of three weeks.

The next sub-section discusses detailed information on how data was analysed in this study.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative content analysis was used in this study to analyse the data collected from both the in-depth interviews and field observations. Qualitative content analysis involved a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inferences and interpretations (Patton, 2001:39). This process used inductive reasoning, through which themes and categories emerged from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison (Patton, 2001:39). This is a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may manifest or be latent in a particular text. It allowed the researcher in this study to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:1).

The following steps were followed in conducting qualitative content analysis for this study:

Step 1: Preparing the data or getting to know the collected data

The researcher in the current study transcribed the data into written text before analysis could start (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:3). The researcher carefully read and reread the data, looking for key words, trends, themes, or ideas in the data that helped outline the analysis, before any analysis took place. This entailed writing down any impressions that arose as the researcher went through the data, for use at a later stage (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003:2).

Step 2: Focusing the analysis

This entailed using individual themes as the unit for analysis. A theme ought to be expressed in a single word, a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph. The researcher in this study primarily looked for the expressions of an idea in the entire document by assigning a code to a text chunk of any size, as long as that chunk represented a single theme or issue of relevance to the research question(s) (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:3). Key questions that were to be

answered in the research task were to be written down to help the researcher start the interview, and to focus the analysis to look at how individual educators responded to each question. At this stage, the data was organised by question to view all respondents and their answers in order to identify consistencies and differences, by putting all the data from each question together (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003:2).

Step 3: Categorising information

Categories were generated inductively from the data by making use of the constant comparative method to establish differences or similarities between apparent categories. This involved continuously comparing specific incidents in the data to all other pieces of data that were either similar or different; identifying themes and patterns and organising them into coherent categories that summarised and brought meaning to the text (Bazeley, 2009:6; Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003:2). This included reading and rereading the text and identifying coherent categories by assigning abbreviated codes of a few letters, words or symbols, and placing them next to the themes and ideas found. Transcripts were coded according to participant responses to each question and/or to the most salient themes that emerged across the set of interviews (Mack et al., 2011:30). As the process of categorising continued, other themes that served as subcategories emerged. The researcher in this regard continued to categorise the data until all relevant themes have been identified, labelled and sorted according to responses to the research questions, and according to the themes in the literature review of the study (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003:2).

Step 4: Identifying patterns and connections within and between categories

To describe the data within a category, the researcher in the present study summarised information pertaining to one theme by capturing the similarities or differences in people's responses within a specific category or theme. This was done by assembling all the data pertaining to the theme or category to reveal the key ideas being expressed within it, and the similarities and differences that could be established in the responses of the participants towards that particular theme (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003:5).

The data between categories was analysed by creating larger or 'super' categories that combined several categories. The researcher worked inductively from more specific categories to larger ideas or concepts to reveal how the parts related to the whole. To reveal

the general pattern and *relative importance* of the themes or categories, the researcher counted the number of times a particular theme came up. The *relationships* between themes were shown by incidences, where two or more themes occurred together consistently in the data (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003:5).

Step 5: Interpreting the data

The researcher developed a list of key points or important findings discovered as a result of categorising and sorting the data. This included the important items discovered, application to other settings, or studies, and an outline for presenting the results to other people, or for writing a final report which included quotes or descriptive examples to illustrate the points and bring the data to life by means of a visual display or a diagram with boxes and arrows to show how pieces of data (themes) fit together.

This study also employed some quantitative analysis of data through percentages and in tables that illustrate statistics gathered from literature, biographic data of participants and observation checklists.

3.9 ETHICAL ISSUES

The following research ethical issues were considered in this study: permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

3.9.1 Permission

Ethical clearance with the endorsement or approval of the Research Ethics Committee of the university under whose umbrella the present study is conducted was obtained, as well as written permission from the Limpopo Department of Education to conduct research in schools around Polokwane. The permission to conduct the research in the Polokwane area was obtained before the commencement of the research project, from the gate-keepers at the Department of Education (Capricorn District), such as the District Senior Manager, the Circuit Manager of Polokwane cluster schools, the Principals of secondary schools and the educators who participated in this study.

3.9.2 Informed consent

Informed consent is an on-going process in which a (prospective) participant is informed

about the facts of a specific clinical trial so that he/she can decide whether or not to participate or continue to participate in it (Department of Health, 2015:1). It involves signing a written consent form, which forms the basis of the person's willingness to participate in a trial. The informed consent form is not a contract, but it is signed to ensure that a person takes part in a trial of his/her own free will (Department of Health, 2015:1).

In gaining permission from the participants (educators) to participate in this study, the researcher gave them assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, described the intended use of the data, and made sure the protocol for informed consent was signed by each participant as advocated by (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:334; Allmark et al., 2009 :12). Obtaining informed consent implied the explanation of the conditions to consider by the participants, such as: the purpose of the research and expected duration and procedures; participants' right to decline to participate or to withdraw from the research project at any time once it had started, without penalty; reasonably foreseeable factors that may influence their willingness to participate, such as potential risks, discomfort or adverse effects; any expected research benefits; participation in this study to be done voluntarily and willingly, and that a thoroughly reasoned decision about their participation should be made (Smith, 2003:56; Henning, 2004:73; Creswell, 2014:117).

3.9.3 Confidentiality

To maintain the confidentiality of the research findings, the researcher sought a private and quiet place, such as an office or separate room during the interview sessions. In this way, the researcher protected the individuals' confidences from other persons in the setting or environment where the interviews were conducted. Confidential information provided by the research participants was treated as such by the researcher, even when the information provided enjoyed no legal protection or privilege (Mouton, 2001:244). The participants were given an assurance of confidentiality and a description of the intended use of the data.

3.9.4 Anonymity

Anonymity essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study – even to the researchers themselves, serving as a strong guarantee of privacy (William, 2006:1). The researcher in this study protected the participants' identities from the general reading public, in line with McMillan and Schumacher (2006:334), by making use of

pseudonyms instead of using their real names and the names of their institutions. The researcher ensured that the participants were not identifiable in print, as advocated by Leedy and Ormrod (2013:101), and considered the fact that informants have the right to remain anonymous.

The next sub-section summarises various themes that were discussed in this chapter with regard to research methodologies.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the paradigm, research design, sample, instrumentation, procedure, data analysis, and ethical issues. The qualitative research methodology that was discussed in this chapter proved to have been suitable and relevant tool to delve the educators' perceptions, attitudes and feelings about the need, effectiveness and challenges they have experienced in the implementation of Inclusive Education. The following chapter discusses information on data presentation, analysis and discussions.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present study was to reveal educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province. The previous chapter outlined the research paradigm, design and methodologies that were employed to collect the data. The data presented in this chapter responds to the study's main research question: "*What are the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Polokwane mainstream secondary schools?*" The findings from the data collected in this study are also presented in response to the study's objectives which include examining the extent to which the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education, establishing how the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the effectiveness of implementing Inclusive Education in their schools, finding out the challenges that the educators in mainstream secondary schools are faced with in their attempts to implement Inclusive Education, finding out if male and female educators have the same perceptions about the implementation of Inclusive Education in their schools, and to produce a model to improve the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of Limpopo Province. This chapter presents and analyses the data obtained through research methodologies outlined in the preceding chapter and discusses the findings of the study.

The following section presents the findings of the current study in response to the sub-research questions and the formulated objectives.

4.2 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The present study presents the general themes or categories that are pre-determined and described in accordance with the detailed information from interview transcripts, as well as the subthemes that emerged after thorough reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts. Direct quotes from interview transcripts presented as verbal accounts of either *female participant* (FP) or *male participant* (MP) are used to substantiate the findings, the descriptions and interpretation of the researcher, hence the appropriateness of the interpretivist paradigm that underlies the research design of the present study. The following data is presented based on the objectives of the study. The data findings of the present study

were derived from the interview transcripts of verbal accounts of the educators concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools, corroborated by the observed data, which was gathered and recorded on observation checklists. The transcribed data was analysed and categorised as indicated in Chapter 3 of the present study, informed by the study's objectives. The findings from the in-depth interviews will be presented in this section, followed and substantiated by data collected and recorded from field observations of Inclusive Education phenomena as they naturally unfolded in the teaching and learning environments.

4.2.1 The need for the implementation of Inclusive Education

The first objective of the present study presented in section 1.5 was to establish the extent to which the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful. The findings of the perceptions of educators on the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful are presented below.

The following themes or categories were derived from the data transcribed:

4.2.1.1 The educators' passion and willingness to implement Inclusive Education

The findings of the present study from the in-depth interviews revealed that the educators perceived Inclusive Education as being needful in their mainstream schools and they are passionate and eager to accommodate or embrace learner diversity. The educators' responses revealed their concern about including learner diversity in their schools and were willing to make Inclusive Education fully implemented in order to catch up with the requirements of the present education system, which upholds inclusion, and to nurture the learners' strengths and talents. The following verbal quotes from the interview transcripts reflect the educators' perceptions:

"We've got different learners who learn differently and schools have to accept and welcome learners who have got different learning barriers." (FP9)

"I think that Inclusive Education is necessary because it helps in developing individual strength and gifts for each learner." (MP2)

"Indeed Inclusive Education is very necessary because we find that it entails all groups of learners and it is very important that all learners should be catered for." (MP3)

Educators believed that discriminating against learners with barriers to learning by sending them or referring them to special schools is utterly not acceptable. The suggestion was that all learners should be accommodated in mainstream schools and their diversities are to be acknowledged and embraced by all the school stakeholders. The following quotes reflect the educators' perceptions:

"I think discriminating against learners with disabilities is not proper because in real life we learn from each other, even though those learners are classified as having special needs, but they do know something that learners who are classified as normal don't know about."

(FP1)

"It's not good to separate these learners because those learners with disabilities, whether physically or mentally challenged, will never feel isolated. They will feel that they are like other learners." **(MP6)**

"In our school, we are against discrimination of learners with disabilities and I think it is necessary that we mix the learners with disabilities with those who don't have disabilities."

(FP7)

4.2.1.2 Compulsion of Inclusive Education implementation in South Africa

The findings from the in-depth interviews revealed that the educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful and compulsory because it coincides with the Constitution of South Africa and the present Department of Education's policies. The educators also perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being an obligation endorsed by the South African Schools Act for them to accommodate learner diversity. The verbal quotes below demonstrate the educators' feelings about the compulsion of Inclusive Education implementation:

"I would say we really need this Inclusive Education to be implemented because the South African Constitution says that there should be no discrimination." **(MP3)**

"Inclusive Education is compulsory, I mean, looking at the present departmental policies like CAPS, we are really compelled to implement it because it says we must support learners with barriers to learning." **(FP7)**

"Inclusive Education needs to be practiced in the mainstream schools because the South

African Schools Act compels us to accommodate all learners, regardless of their differences.” (FP2)

“If Inclusive Education can be implemented in our school, it will be good because we really need it and it is in accordance with the Constitution of South Africa.” (MP10)

On the other hand, some educators felt it was improper for the Department of Education to make the implementation of Inclusive Education compulsory without considering their present schools’ environments, which were perceived as not yet ready for the accommodation of learners with disabilities. The educators further perceived the compulsion of the implementation of Inclusive Education policies as presently not being necessary since the mainstream schools are not yet well resourced. The following verbal quotes reflect the educators’ perceptions:

“The only thing I am concerned about is the readiness of the South African mainstream schools to accept learners with special needs, especially that our school environments are not accommodative of such learners.” (MP1)

“Compulsion of Inclusive Education policies is not necessary for now because it has to go with availability of resources by the government.” (MP4)

“It’s not necessary for the DoE to enforce or make the implementation of Inclusive Education policies compulsory. Schools need to be well-resourced first.” (MP5)

4.2.1.3 The need for an integrated system of education

Integration of normal learners with those who have learning disabilities was upheld by educators who based their ideas on the fact that this will promote corporate or shared learning, and will instil a sense of self-confidence in learners with disabilities. The following verbal quotes substantiate the above statement:

“Integration is proper because the learners can learn from one another in any way. So, I don’t think there will be any problem if they are mixed like that because those learners with disabilities will gain confidence from their peers who are without disabilities.” (MP9)

“It is proper to integrate learners because learners who have got some challenges and disabilities, when they are included with those who are without, they will learn from them.”

(MP10)

“If we accept them in our schools, the learners with disabilities will gain confidence; they will feel that they are the same as other learners.” (FP2)

On the contrary, some educators found it improper to integrate normal learners with those who are challenged or have disabilities in the same classrooms. According to the educators, the learners with disabilities need extended time to learn in the classroom situation and integrating them can turn into an indirect exclusion to the supposed ‘normal learners’. It was further revealed that the educators found it needful for the DoE to consider running a parallel stream or programme for learners with disabilities within the same mainstream school, but in separate classrooms with expert teachers placed in mainstream schools for that purpose. The verbal quotes below reflect the educators’ perceptions on the issue:

“If we integrate normal learners with those that have disabilities, we ultimately give more attention to the learners with disabilities. This becomes an indirect exclusion to the normal learners.” (MP6)

“Learners with special needs should not be integrated or be put in the same classrooms with the learners without special needs because of their different learning paces. Those who have got special educational needs will need extended time and special attention.” (FP9)

“I think the problem comes when we put these learners in the same stream, same classrooms so that we can be seen to have accommodated all learners. This is not going to work.” (MP5)

“If ever these learners are accommodated in the mainstream schools and are provided with specially trained educators in all the Grades; having parallel classes and periods in the same mainstream school, I think that will be better.” (FP10)

The following subsection presents data obtained through observations to verify the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Table 4.1: Observation checklist findings of the educators’ passion and need for the implementation of Inclusive Education

Inclusive criteria observed	Capability		Incapability		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Identification and giving of additional support to learners in accordance with the SIAS policy.	6 (60%)	8 (80%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	20 (100%)
Organisation of the classroom to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment.	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)	20 (100%)
Confidence in dealing with the diverse learners in the classroom.	4 (40%)	8 (80%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	20 (100%)
The educator has the passion or is willing to make the implementation of Inclusive Education possible in their school.	8 (80%)	9 (90%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	20 (100%)

The data presented on Table 4.1 above shows the generalised outcomes of the observed teaching and learning environments for both male and female educators with regard to their need to make the implementation of Inclusive Education feasible. The findings of the observed data revealed that the majority of educators, 60% (n = 6) of male educators and 80% (n = 8) of female educators, had the ability to identify learners who had barriers to learning and development, and that the same percentage of female educators was able to deal with learners with disabilities which is more than that of their male counterparts. It emerged from the findings of the observed learning environments recorded on the checklists presented on the table above, that both male and female educators were enthusiastic and passionate about the implementation of Inclusive Education and perceived it as being needful.

The following subsection presents the educators’ responses to the current study’s objective 1.5.2 in Chapter 1 to reveal their perceptions on the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education.

4.2.2 The effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education

The second objective of the present study presented in section 1.5 was to establish the extent

to which the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the effectiveness of implementing Inclusive Education in their schools. The findings of the perceptions of educators on the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education are presented below.

4.2.2.1 Perceptions of the effective implementation

The responses of some educators during the in-depth interviews indicated that the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools has been done to a lesser extent. The educators maintained that their schools have started to implement at least the first stage of the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) protocol at school level and ‘*Curriculum differentiation*’ of the learning content, methodologies, and assessment strategies, which denotes that it has not yet effectively been implemented. Verbal quotes that are presented below reflect the perceptions of those educators.

“Yes, we are doing our best to implement Inclusive Education. We have also undergone the SIAS training, the screening process and we believe that the screening process will really help us into implementing this process effectively.” (MP9)

“We have got situations whereby we try to identify learners with learning barriers and problems and then we’ve tried in our own capacity and capability to actually implement at least the first step of SIAS. All I’m saying is, we are trying.” (FP8)

“Yes, we are trying our best to implement ‘Curriculum Differentiation’. I always make sure the content of my lesson is adapted to suit all the learners, even when I assess them, you know, the questions cover all their levels of understanding.” (FP10)

The findings from in-depth interviews also revealed the perceptions of some educators about the inclusive teaching and learning strategies being effectively implemented in their schools. The educators expounded on how they usually make some efforts to apply or implement various inclusive teaching strategies in their classroom situations to accommodate learner diversity. The inclusive teaching and learning strategies that the educators claimed they were applying in their classrooms were revealed as they gave explanations, for example, peer-tutoring, flexible grouping of learners, designing down and scaffolding, accommodation of learners with visual impairments, and accommodation of learners with intellectual

disabilities. The following verbal quotes reflect what the educators have elucidated:

(a) Peer tutoring:

“In the classroom situation, I usually group learners and assign a group leader in each group. I normally encourage peer tutoring to help those learners who are struggling.”

(FP10)

“Sometimes we use self and peer assessment where learners assess each other and sometimes assess themselves.” **(FP4)**

(b) Flexible grouping of learners:

“I make it a point that I group these learners, look at those different abilities and identify their levels of IQ (intelligent quotient) which in most cases helps me to know them so that I can be able to classify or group them according to their IQs.” **(FP2)**

“For those who are highly gifted, sometimes I give them enrichment which is a little bit of their standard. I give them varying types of assessment so that I can include them all and they don't get bored.” **(MP9)**

(c) Designing down and scaffolding:

“I use different types of assessment in my class. I know that the learners in my class are not the same. We have those who are gifted and those who are not gifted, so when I assess, I take that into consideration.” **(FP7)**

“We usually give them remedial work; extra work and so on and then starting of course with the work which might not be difficult and then we take it from there, from the known to the unknown. We give them guidelines.” **(MP3)**

(d) Accommodation of learners with visual impairments:

“In our school, we have a case of Albinism. We always expand the font because she has got a problem with eye-sight, and she is writing Grade 12 examinations this year. We also filled the concession form for her and the paper will come during the Trial Exams with enlarged font.” **(FP6)**

“For those learners that are in the class for now, like those that are visually impaired; we put them in front just closer to the chalkboard, so we are trying to implement Inclusive

Education.” (FP3)

(e) Accommodation of learners with intellectual disabilities (dyslexia and dysgraphia):

“Normally we identify our learners with reading and writing problems in high school at Grade 8 and the latest in Grade 9 so that when they write the exams, the examiner and the marker will be told not to pay a lot of attention to spelling.” (FP5)

“Some of the learners have got a problem regarding their hand-writing, yes, at secondary school level, and in Grade 12. I’ve got evidence of those learners; I’ve got evidence of their work, and they are now showing improvement.” (MP2)

The in-depth interviews further revealed that the educators had positive perceptions about supporting learners with behaviour problems, especially those who were perceived as being hyperactive, and having a tendency to finish writing before the others, and those with bullying behaviour. In both cases, the educators reported that they would give advanced activities to the hyperactive to keep them busy, and remind the bullies of the classroom rules in order to calm them down. The following verbal quotes reflect the educators’ perceptions:

“In cases of those who are hyperactive and have a tendency of finishing to write before others, I give them an advanced work to keep them busy.” (MP1)

“In my class, I do accommodate these different learners, so others show bullying behaviour; I normally remind them of our classroom rules and the consequences for those who are found ill-treating other learners.” (MP9)

Having presented the findings regarding the educators’ perceptions of the effective implementation of Inclusive Education, the following subsection presents the findings on the challenges that the educators experienced in their endeavours to implement Inclusive Education.

4.2.3 Challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education

The third objective of the present study presented in section 1.5 was to establish the challenges that the educators in mainstream secondary schools are faced with in their attempt to implement Inclusive Education. The findings of the perceptions of educators on the challenges they face in their attempt to implement Inclusive Education are presented below.

4.2.3.1 Lack of training and the implementation of Inclusive Education

It emerged from the in-depth interviews that the educators perceived their lack of training in the area of Inclusive Education as being a challenge. Many educators who participated in the current study asserted that they were not trained for Inclusive Education, and that they find it difficult to adjust or adapt their ways of teaching to suit the newly introduced Inclusive Education. The interview responses of some educators indicated that the issue of the lack of training with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education is the reason behind many educators being reluctant to involve themselves in applying Inclusive Education teaching strategies in their classroom situations. The verbal quotes below illustrate the feelings of the educators:

“The teachers are trying their best but as we know they are not trained; they are still using the old method, so it is a challenge to them.” (FP7)

“Such teachers who were trained during apartheid education are very much reluctant in getting the new information and also making initiatives to try and implement Inclusive Education teaching strategies.” (MP10)

“Educators didn’t receive any form of training regarding Inclusive Education, so this is a disadvantage to the learners with learning barriers.” (MP2)

4.2.3.2 School environments and the implementation of Inclusive Education

It emerged from the findings of the in-depth interviews in the current study that the educators perceived their school environments as unfit for the implementation of Inclusive Education. The educators raised issues, such as old school buildings for the accommodation of learners who are physically challenged; the lack of facilities and predicaments with regard to service delivery, and the shortage of equipment to assist learners with various other disabilities. Verbal quotes from interviews reflecting the educators’ perceptions of their school environments are given below:

“You know; these are old ‘Parliamentarian buildings’. As you have just seen, they really need lots of renovation. The school environment cannot at all accommodate learners in wheelchairs. It’s really a challenge.” (MP3)

“You look at the stairs in our building which is double-storey, we don’t have an escalator or

a winding path where one can use a wheelchair.” (MP5)

“We don’t have signage, walkways and toilets that accommodate the learners with physical disabilities, as well as the equipment to assist learners with other barriers to learning.” (FP7)

The findings from the in-depth interviews further revealed the challenge of overcrowding in some of the classrooms of mainstream secondary schools. Many educators in secondary schools around Polokwane reported that their classrooms were so overcrowded that it was difficult for them to move around, especially when they were supposed to facilitate the classroom activities. The responses of the educators during the in-depth interviews indicated that it was not possible for them to give the learners with barriers to learning the necessary individual attention because of congestion in the classrooms. According to the educators, it seemed difficult for their schools to accommodate learners with physical disabilities in their classrooms because of the lack of space. The educators further alluded that learners with visual impairments, and those with epilepsy could be injured in an overcrowded classroom. The educators found it difficult to manage their classrooms due to overcrowding. The following verbal quotes support the above issues that emerged from the educators’ responses:

“Sometimes you find that as a teacher you have to move around in the classroom or to move between the desks and it is difficult because of overcrowding.” (FP6)

“If you have given them the activity, you are unable to facilitate and give them individual attention.” (FP3)

“Definitely for a learner with visual impairments; who has epilepsy, the classrooms are not ready for them and they cannot cater for such learners with disabilities.” (MP1)

“When you are teaching a large group of learners you’ll find that you have a problem of discipline. You’ll find them making noise and disturbing the other ones with barriers to learning.” (MP10)

On the contrary, some educators, especially those in former Model-C and public State-of-the-art schools, perceived their mainstream schools as having infrastructure relevant to accommodate learners with physical disabilities, even though their school buildings were double-storeyed and without lifts. Some of the educators asserted they also had relevant

facilities, like toilets, that were accessible for learners with disabilities, but relevant equipment to cater for such learners was not available. Excerpts from interviews reflecting the educators' perceptions are given below:

“Since our school is the former Model-C school, I don't think we've got that much challenge with infrastructure because when you look around, we've got areas where wheelchairs can be used.” (FP6)

“In my school, we've got newly constructed building blocks where learners with wheelchairs can freely move and even the ramps are there. The only challenge is with the equipment to cater for other disabilities.” (FP9)

“We have got the ramps for those learners in wheelchairs and the sanitary system which is relevant for them, but we don't have the equipment to help learners with hearing impairments and visual disabilities.” (MP2)

The subsequent section (Table 4.2) presents the observed findings that corroborate the issues raised by the educators concerning their school learning environments.

Table 4.2 Observation checklist findings on the challenges of the implementation of Inclusive Education faced by the educators in their mainstream secondary schools

Inclusive criteria observed	Competent		Incompetent		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Ability to manage an overcrowded classroom and make the implementation of Inclusive Education possible.	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)	20 (100%)
Availability of time to give support to learners with special needs.	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	20 (100%)
Ability to apply inclusive teaching and learning strategies, and to facilitate learning activities.	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	20 (100%)
Ability to manage learners with behaviour disorders, e.g. attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bullies, and maintain discipline.	7 (70%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	20 (100%)

Table 4.2 shows that only 30% (n = 3) of male educators and 40% (n = 4) of female educators were found to be competent in their classroom management. The highest percentages, 70% (n = 7) of males and 60% (n = 6) of female educators were unable to manage their classrooms due to higher numbers of learners or overcrowding. Individual attention given to learners with barriers to learning was observed to have been done minimally, as reflected by the findings on Table 4.3 below, that only 20% (n = 2) of males and 60% (n = 6) of females made some effort in this regard. Both male and female educators were observed to be having serious challenges with regard to the organisation of the classroom to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment, hence the 30% (n = 3) capability of male educators, and the 40% (n = 4) capability of female educators.

The observed data further revealed that only 45% (n = 9) of educators (male and females combined) had some competence in their application of inclusive teaching and learning strategies and the facilitation of classroom learning activities due to overcrowding. Out of the 20 educators that were observed, only 60% (n = 12) of male and female educators combined, could handle the learners with behaviour problems.

The following table (Table 4.3) further reveals the observed findings of the school environments.

Table 4.3 Observation checklist findings on the schools' learning environments that uphold the implementation of Inclusive Education by type of school

Type of school	Infrastructure and resources	Level of availability		
		Available	Not available	Total
Public secondary schools (n=4)	Ramps, signage, pavements, accessible toilets	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	4 (100%)
	Accommodative classroom furniture	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)
	Well-ventilated classrooms	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	4 (100%)
	Elevated window levels	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)
	Assistive devices for disabilities	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
State-of-the-art secondary school (n=1)	Ramps, signage, pavements, accessible toilets	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
	Accommodative classroom furniture	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
	Well-ventilated classrooms	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
	Elevated window levels	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
	Assistive devices for disabilities	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Private secondary schools (n=2)	Ramps, signage, pavements, accessible toilets	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
	Accommodative classroom furniture	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
	Well-ventilated classrooms	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
	Elevated window levels	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
	Assistive devices for disabilities	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Former Model-C secondary schools (n=3)	Ramps, signage, pavements, accessible toilets	1 (33%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
	Accommodative classroom furniture	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
	Well-ventilated classrooms	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
	Elevated window levels	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
	Assistive devices for disabilities	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)

Table 4.3 shows the observed findings, which revealed that the majority of the schools (80%) had well ventilated classrooms while the minority (20%) had classrooms that did not have enough ventilation. Out of the 10 schools observed, only three (one Public, one State-of-the-art and one former Model-C school) were found to have access ramps, signage, pavements and accessible toilets. All three former Model-C schools, one Private school and the State-of-the-art school were found to have classroom windows, which were elevated enough for the protection of the learners against outside distractions during lessons. The remainder of the schools (four Public schools and one Private secondary school) had low-levelled windows. All the observed schools were found to be without the assistive devices, which the educators could use to give additional support to learners with disabilities.

4.2.3.3 Lack of knowledge of Inclusive Education policies (SIAS and EDW 6)

The findings from the in-depth interviews with the educators revealed their challenges with regard to the lack of knowledge of Inclusive Education policies, which underlies their reluctance to implement Inclusive Education confidently in their mainstream schools. Some have reported that they were not even sure whether those policy documents were actually in their Principals' offices or not. Some have indicated that even though they did have the policy documents at their schools, they did not have time to read them because of their workloads. The following verbal quotes reflect the educators' perceptions:

"I can say the first challenge is lack of information. The second is resources. You can't implement something that you don't know. I don't even know if these policy documents are available in our school." (FP8)

"I've been here in this school for seven years and I've never seen any one of the Inclusive Education policy documents." (MP3)

"The educators in our school don't have knowledge. We came back with EDWP6 and SIAS and then we promised them that we will make copies. Then I remember we made copies and they showed no interest." (FP3)

4.2.3.4 Lack of support from the Department of Education

It emerged from the in-depth interviews that the educators perceived the DoE as being not supportive enough towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream

schools. Some pit-falls were identified to be the responsibility of the DoE, which, according to the educators, needed serious attention in order to enhance the effective implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools. These included regular monitoring of Inclusive Education activities in mainstream schools, teacher training or in-service training of teachers on Inclusive Education, and the provision of resources, equipment and facilities to mainstream schools. The verbal quotes below validate the above information as perceived by educators:

“I think the district-based support team (DBST) must seriously visit the mainstream schools just to control or monitor if Inclusive Education has been implemented.” (FP1)

“I think if they can just send someone, maybe like monitoring because we need someone from the Department who can adopt our school and then support us because we do not get enough support from the DoE.” (FP9)

“The Department of Education must take educators to workshops, inductions, or take them to in-service training so that they can get proper education on how to assist the learners with special needs.” (MP4)

“I think the DoE must supply us with resources in terms of manpower, the right equipment and facilities for these learners because it is a challenge.” (MP5)

The following subsection presents the data obtained through the in-depth interviews to establish the educators’ gender and perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education.

4.2.4 Gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education

The fourth objective of the present study presented in section 1.5 was to establish the gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in their schools. The findings of the gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education are presented below.

4.2.4.1 Confidence in handling learners with barriers to learning and development

The findings of the present study revealed that male and female educators perceived

themselves as having different levels of confidence as far as handling learners with barriers to learning is concerned. The difference in their levels of confidence was perceived to be caused by the fact that female educators have a mothering nature and try to understand the growing child, unlike their male counterparts. The educators further stated that the difference can be attributed to the fact that male educators are mostly short-tempered and if the learner has a particular behaviour problem, they assume the learner is being disrespectful. The educators also reported that male educators lack confidence when faced with the challenges of dealing with learners who have barriers to learning, and they would instead refer these learners to the female educators to attend to their problems. Excerpts from in-depth interviews reflecting the perceptions of the educators on their levels of confidence are shown below:

“Generally female educators will be more understanding and confident than male educators. If male educators are faced with a challenge in the classroom, sometimes their ego is also challenged.” (FP1)

“I don’t think we have the same confidence because as a female, I’m a mother, I have been rearing children, so the feeling, the passion that I have as a mother, it will never be the same as that of a male teacher.” (FP6)

“Male educators are somehow small-hearted because they cannot tolerate to work with such learners. Female educators know how to take care of people because they are mothers.” (MP1)

“We men usually shelve the responsibility to female teachers, which means in a nutshell that men are not accommodative and lack confidence towards learners with disabilities.” (MP2)

Some of the educators argued that the level of confidence is the same between male and female educators, meaning that they did not see any difference between male and female educators. They justified their views by stating that the confidence to deal with the diverse learners is naturally there in each person, whether male or female. According to these educators, the confidence to handle learners with disabilities or with barriers to learning and development only depends on the teacher’s personality and acquired skills. The following verbal quotes highlight the educators’ perceptions:

“I haven’t seen any difference. I think most of us we are kind of like the same, yes, I think it comes with personality, whether you are male or female, no, it comes with one’s personality,

and how involved are you with these learners.” (FP8)

“You know; confidence is not divided by whether a person is male or female. Confidence is just there by nature. It might be there by nature in a man, or there by nature in a female.” (MP6)

“No, I don’t see a difference in confidence. I think I’m as much confident as any female educator to deliver quality education to these children.” (MP8)

4.2.4.2 Abilities to identify learners with barriers to learning and development

Through the in-depth interviews with educators in mainstream secondary schools, the present study revealed that female educators were more capable of identifying learners with barriers to learning and development in their learning environments than their male counterparts were. The educators perceived female educators as having compassion for children and the ability to identify barriers to learning as they interact with them in the teaching and learning environment. Some of the educators reported that male educators were sometimes ignorant, and when a learner behaved in a strange way, they threatened them and were unable to identify the underlying cause of the undesirable behaviour of the child. The following verbal quotes support the above findings:

“Female educators will find it easy to identify learners with difficulties unlike male teachers. I don’t know whether I can say sometimes male teachers are ignorant or what.” (FP5)

“I think females would be in a better position than males. Female educators have got that ability and the ‘eye’ to identify a number of learners with disabilities, but men are ignorant. I’m sorry to say that (laughing).” (MP2)

“Females have that compassion for kids and are always able to identify these learners than male educators.” (FP3)

“Well, with identification of the barriers, I think females are usually the ones who are able to identify the learners with barriers than males. I don’t think we as men have that ability to identify such learners unlike females who are able to handle any situation.” (MP1)

On the other hand, some educators who were interviewed perceived both men and women as having the same capabilities and wisdom to identify learners with barriers to learning and

development as they interact with them on daily basis. The educators maintained that it is not a matter of being male or female, but it depends on the learning area that the teacher is offering in the classroom, the teacher's personality, and the skills that the educator has acquired to identify learners with barriers to development. The following verbal quotes support the issues that emerged from the educators' responses:

"It is not a matter of gender. It is a matter of an educator doing their job, and depending on the subject that you are teaching. They are the same. Identifying is the same with both male and female teachers." (FP4)

"In identification, I think we are more or less the same and in some cases you'll find a male teacher being able to see that this learner has a problem." (FP6)

"Both male and female teachers have the same ability to identify learners with barriers to learning, depending on their personalities." (FP8)

"I think as far as I'm concerned, this has nothing to do with gender. It has to do with the heart of a person." (MP4)

"It would depend on the skill that someone has to do that, so I cannot say the male teachers are that much better than the women. It will depend on the skill." (MP9)

Having presented the findings from the in-depth interviews and the observations of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools, the subsequent section discusses the results.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The current study aimed at establishing the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province. In this section, the findings are discussed under the four sub-headings, which were derived from the objectives of the study formulated in Chapter 1. The subheadings are specified as: the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education; the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education; the challenges faced by educators in the implementation of Inclusive Education; and the educators' gender and perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education. The discussion of findings in this study is presented

in relation to the existing literature.

The following sub-section discusses the educators' perceptions of the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education.

4.3.1 The need for the implementation of Inclusive Education

The current sub-section discusses the educators' perceptions of the need to implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools. In the discussion, reference is made to the available literature on the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. The present sub-section discusses the findings of the study in response to the study's objective 1.5.1 in Chapter 1, which reads: To examine the extent to which the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The study revealed that the educators had the passion for the implementation of Inclusive Education and they perceived it as being needful. The findings of the present study confirm Othman (2015:58), who advocates that Inclusive Education creates social interaction, removes segregations among the learners, and helps teachers and pupils without special needs to know the needs of learners with disabilities. The educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful and had the passion and willingness to implement it because they saw a need to accommodate learner diversity in their classroom situations. The educators' perceptions in this study, regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful, further confirm Phasha and Moichela (2011:373) who attest in their study conducted in South Africa that Inclusive Education with its agenda for educational equality and success for all, is undoubtedly an important vehicle which could equip educator trainees, and even practicing educators, with the necessary skills and attitudes to work in diverse classrooms. It becomes imperative for educator training in South Africa, in its initial and in-service programmes, to inculcate an understanding of inclusive education, which will take into consideration its people's lifestyles and thinking. The urge or passion to accommodate learner diversity and the implementation of Inclusive Education, as revealed by the current study, concurs with the South African Inclusive Education policy, the Education White Paper 6 (2001:16) which states that Inclusive Education is about acknowledging that all children and youths can learn and need support. In the same vein, literature (Doran et al., 2011:30) revealed that diversity awareness and the implementation of Inclusive Education is critical in

creating an inclusive culture within schools, and that it promotes equality of educational access and participation of pupils with special educational needs. To show their passion for the implementation of Inclusive Education, the educators strongly indicated that the Department of Education should caution all educators to start implementing Inclusive Education in their schools in order to eradicate the stigmatisation and labelling of learners with barriers to learning and development. At the same time, Hodgson and Khumalo (2016:6) in *'The Foreword to the SECTION27 Report on Umkhanyakude District, KZN'* state that they noted, with great interest, in their study, the passion and willingness shown by educators, Learner Support Assistants, Learner Support Educators, school counsellors, departmental officials and parents, to make Inclusive Education work despite the numerous limitations.

It emerged from the present study that the educators are generally willing to implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools, and as such, suggested that the DoE should formulate support systems that could provide more knowledge or information about Inclusive Education. The current study confirms the findings of the study conducted by Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2006:36) which revealed that the hallmark of Inclusive Education is the teachers' willingness to accept students with special needs and that their attitudes and knowledge about Inclusive Education are important indicators of such willingness. The findings of the present study further revealed the obstacles to the educators' willingness to implement Inclusive Education, which include the lack of relevant resources, knowledge and skills to carry out their duties. The same predicaments were experienced in Nigeria through the findings of the study conducted by Odebiyi (2016:314) who asserted that educators were willing to modify or adapt curricula to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, provided the necessary support is given to them.

The findings that educators had the passion and perceived the implementation of Inclusive education as needful concur with Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework that informed the current study. The theory expounds, among others, the importance of the relationship that exists between the teacher and the developing learner as a central focus of attention within the immediate environment (the school setup) where proximal processes are played out for the benefit of the developing learner. According to Härkönen (2007:7), the relationship or interaction between the learner and the teacher at the microsystems level contains persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief, hence the passion and willingness shown by educators in the current study. The passion and willingness

of the educators to implement Inclusive Education for the benefit of the learners revealed the level at which the educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful. The *'Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment policy'* (Department of Basic Education, 2011b:7) concurs with the educators' passionate feelings and their attempts to implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream school when it states that, "*as teachers we have an important responsibility in making sure that all learners from whatever background feel included and affirmed in the classroom*".

It was revealed in the current study that there is a need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools, and that it should be considered an obligation for every educator to carry it out since it is incorporated within the legal framework of the Constitution of South Africa. Literature (NEEDU, 2013:1) revealed that, in December 2012, the South African Minister of Basic Education declared 2013 as the year of Inclusive Education, the year of consolidating and instituting all systems for the implementation of Inclusive Education on a full scale. The outcomes of the in-depth interviews showed that the educators considered the implementation of Inclusive Education to be a mandate from the DoE. The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) states that every child has the right to education (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:13; Stofile & Green, 2007:53) and that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. The Education White Paper 6 (Department for Education and Skills, 2001:10) delineated the government's new policies, which uphold the implementation of a single and integrated education system for all learners, including those with disabilities. Stofile and Green (2007:54) asserted that, in line with international thinking, South African Inclusive Education activists argued for an education system that could accommodate the learning needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities, in mainstream classrooms.

Participating mainstream secondary school educators in the current study advocated the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools as mandatory since they asserted that it was confirmed by the constitutional framework of South Africa, including the *'United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'* (2007) which states that Inclusive Education is binding on South Africa and the South African Constitution to entrench the right to education for all children, including those with disabilities (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:15). The findings of the current study relate to Bronfenbrenner's ecological

model when it expounds that the developing learner is constantly involved in an environment (the education system at the exosystem level) in which such learner is not directly and actively participating, but the said environment has an influence on the learner's life and interrelationships with others (Landsberg et al., 2005:11). The perceptions of the educators in relation to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model indicate how they are explicitly being influenced or urged by the South African education system (the exosystem), which has endorsed the Inclusive Education policies to be carried out in schools because the policy-makers who believe in Inclusive Education attach much value to it and perceive it as commendable and to be implemented by all schools in the country, hence the macrosystem with its values and belief systems in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

It further emerged from the current study that the educators acknowledged the integration of learners with disabilities and those without disabilities as being needful in order to promote corporate or shared learning among their learners and to instil a sense of self-confidence in learners with disabilities. The perceptions of educators in this context confirm the research findings by Carroll, Forlin and Jobling (2003:76), who state that the inclusion or integration of learners can contribute to the personal growth of teachers, as well as their knowledge of individuals with disabilities, and provides a sense of maturity and confidence in teachers so that they are able to use it in their teaching of all students, particularly those with special needs. At the same time, Konza (2008:39) asserted that inclusion seeks to completely remove the distinction between special and regular education, to provide an appropriate education for all students despite their level of disability, and to completely restructure the educational system so that all schools could have the responsibility of providing the facilities, resources, and an appropriate curriculum for all students irrespective of disability. A two-year study conducted by Bui et al. (2010:2) reported that, in more than 20 years, research has constantly demonstrated that the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms resulted in favourable outcomes and that 41.7% of students with learning disabilities made progress in math in general education classes compared to 34% in traditional special education settings, without the presence of peers with no disabilities.

The findings about the perceptions of educators in favour of the need to integrate learners with disabilities with those without, further confirm Bui et al. (2010:3) who stated that engaged time for typical learners is not negatively impacted by the presence of students with disabilities, and that the presence of students with disabilities results in a greater number of

typical students making reading and math progress compared to those in non-inclusive general education classes. Concurrently, the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) provides the framework for the implementation of Inclusive Education in all public schools; it aims to address the diverse needs of all learners in one undivided education system and strives to steer away from the categorisation and separation of learners according to disability, by facilitating their maximum participation in the education system, based on the rights discourse (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:3). Berg (2004:27) also attests that, when a student with a disability is put into a regular classroom, there are many positives that can come about for that student being provided with a more stimulating environment compared to the traditional special education classroom environment. Similarly, the policy document known as *'Equal Education Law Centre'* (2016:8) brought to the surface the findings from a significant body of research which demonstrated that an Inclusive Education environment allows children with disabilities to be more meaningfully engaged in their day-to-day lives and across settings, and that when children with disabilities are included in general education settings, they are more likely to exhibit positive social and emotional behaviours at a level that is much greater than their peers who are relegated to programs that serve only children with disabilities.

It also emerged from the current study that some educators did not perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful. The findings on there being no need for Inclusive Education confirms a study conducted in KwaZulu Natal by Williams (2007:60), which revealed that KwaZulu Natal educators perceived Inclusive Education as being not needful, stating that the “normal” learners in their classes would be disadvantaged and neglected as a result of all the time and attention needed by and expended on learners with barriers to learning. Some of the educators suggested that, though they acknowledge and concur with the idea of accommodating learner diversity in mainstream schools, integration of such learners in the same classrooms would make it very difficult for educators to do justice to their work or to deliver an equitable and quality education for all learners. The reasons behind the educators’ perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful were based on different learning styles between learners with disabilities and those without and additional support needs for learners with disabilities, and their different learning paces. The findings on there being no need for Inclusive Education also confirm Konza’s (2008:43) revelation that many educators struggle with the tension between

accommodating the special needs of some learners and disadvantaging other learners, and that some educators believed that the integration of learners with disabilities and those without was unfair on learners without disabilities.

It emerged from the current study that the educators who found Inclusive Education as not being needful suggested a new model be put in place by the DoE to introduce parallel streams or groups of learning areas that would be run in different classrooms within the same mainstream schools, that is, stream for '*Mainstream Education*' and another one for '*Special Needs Education*' (*SNE*) within the same school but in different classrooms. The reasons for the perceptions of educators regarding the introduction of parallel streams in mainstream classrooms may be caused by the educators' inadequate knowledge and skills on how to handle learners with disabilities, and their fear and lack of confidence to integrate learners with disabilities and those without disabilities in their classroom situations. The findings on the perceptions of educators who were in favour of parallel streams in their mainstream schools confirm what was revealed by Salend (2001:27) who asserted that some special needs education students who were admitted to mainstream schools gave reports that when in those schools, they could see what their peers could do, and what they could not do, and as such they were depressed, overwhelmed and academically inadequate compared to the classmates without disabilities. Similarly, Donohue and Bornman (2014:5) revealed that, although educators often reported that they agreed with the idea of inclusion, they actually believed that the needs of learners with disabilities were best met in separate classrooms, particularly those learners with greater special needs and more severe disabilities. The above educators' perceptions of meeting needs of the learners in separate classrooms may be emanating from the medical model which was previously adopted by the South African system of education where learners with disabilities were placed in special schools or referred to hospitals for the medical treatment of their disabilities, whereas those without disabilities were admitted to mainstream or ordinary schools.

The sentiments of participants who oppose the system of integration of learners with disabilities and learners without disabilities, contradict Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, which informed the current study. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, there should be harmonious relationships between the learners and their teachers at school, as well as between the learners themselves and their peers. The above-mentioned relationships are regarded as microsystems' interactions, which are the systems of the mesosystem – a positive

environment which, over a sustained period of time, boosts the learner's self-esteem and sense of security (Landsberg et al., 2005:11). The said environment in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model also upholds an integrated system of education, and opposes a discriminatory system of introducing parallel streams in different classroom as alluded to by some of the educators in the current study. The possible reason for opposition to the system of integration may relate to the educators' lack of training and knowledge on how to accommodate learners with disabilities in their teaching and learning situations. However, the relationships that develop and exist between the microsystems should, according to Bronfenbrenner, comprise the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40), hence the support for an integrated system of learning. Classroom educators are, in this regard, expected to act as facilitators of a network of support around a particular child, avoiding the alienation of any members of the team, while at the same time keeping the focus firmly on the child's social (relationships with other learners and parents) and learning needs (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:7).

The subsequent subsection discusses the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools.

4.3.2 The effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education

The current discussion looks into the educators' perceptions of the effective implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools as revealed by the findings of the present study. The discussion of findings in this section addresses the study's objective, which was posed in section 1.5.2 of Chapter 1, which reads: To establish how the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the effectiveness of implementing Inclusive Education in their schools.

It emerged from the findings of the current study that the educators in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being effective. The educators who perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful maintained that they could employ several Inclusive Education teaching strategies to make the implementation of Inclusive Education effective. The inclusive teaching strategies, which were found to have been applied in the selected sites, included, among others, designing down and scaffolding, as well as the accommodation of

learners with behaviour and intellectual disabilities. The study conducted by Mpya (2007:27) in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa indicated the importance of employing inclusive teaching strategies in the classroom situation when asserting that it is incumbent upon an inclusive educator to have good teaching strategies in helping the learner to unfold his/her potential. She further suggested that, for the effective implementation of Inclusive Education, educators should be flexible in their thinking, and be innovative and creative in their approaches to teaching and learning.

It further emerged from this study that the educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as effective in their mainstream schools since they could employ peer tutoring to enhance learner participation and motivate learners with disabilities to partake in the classroom activities. The educators reported that, by applying flexible grouping of learners in the classroom, and by grouping them according to their interests and abilities, this heightened those learners who were struggling. It was further revealed from the study that the educators sometimes used self and peer assessment for learners to socialise and assist one another in the learning process to make the implementation of Inclusive Education effective. The use of peer-mediated instruction and intervention as revealed by the findings of the present study, concurs with Bui et al. (2010:4) who assert that the two approaches are the most effective strategies for inclusive classrooms. At the same time, a Nigerian study by Michael and Oboegbulem (2013:315) suggests that the flexible grouping of learners and the individualised nature of assessment strategies encourages higher motivation for all learners; increases their development of confidence, enhances the effectiveness of Inclusive Education and eradicates the discriminatory nature of fixed tests that are used in labelling.

The educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as effective because of the positive feelings or perceptions about learners who had behaviour problems in their classrooms. The positive feelings led them to support Inclusive Education, hence its perceived effectiveness. The educators were supportive of learners with behaviour problems, especially those who were perceived as being hyperactive and having a tendency to finish their written work before others, and those with bullying behaviour. The educators reported that they would give advanced activities to the hyperactive to keep them busy, and remind the bullies about the classroom rules in order to calm them down. The findings of the current study concur with the study conducted in Maryland, United States of America, by Bui et al. (2010:10), who affirm that when educators have positive perceptions of their relationship

with learners with disabilities, the implementation of Inclusive Education becomes effective, learners' behaviour problems are lowered and they tend to be more socially included with peers. Similarly, the study conducted by Newton, Cambridge and Hunter-Johnson (2016:331) in the Bahamas, revealed that educators' positive perceptions are the key to the success of inclusive programmes, as they are critical to the process of including learners with disabilities into regular classes, and that, if educators were more receptive toward inclusion, learners' achievement, socialisation, skill acquisition, and access to education would increase.

The effective implementation of Inclusive Education as revealed by the findings of the current study confirm the theory of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model by revealing the educators' enthusiasm at school (the microsystems level) to apply various inclusive teaching strategies during their interaction with the diverse learners, which, according to this model, is highly commendable as it shows support for the learner at the centre. The educators' determination or passion for the implementation of Inclusive Education, which was revealed by the findings of the current study, concur with the obligations of the current education system or the present time requirements to implement Inclusive Education, which highlights the chronosystem level of the model. The time frames or the chronosystem compels the educators to execute or put into practice the Inclusive Education teaching and learning strategies which are embedded in the current Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2004). The above-mentioned education policies which encompass the Inclusive Education policy framework were all designed in accordance with the beliefs, values, aspirations and ideologies inherent in the broader system of education of South African (the macrosystem), which, according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, have a greater influence on the learner's life and interrelationships with others, and it also greatly influenced another broader umbrella, the Department of Education which constitutes the exosystem of the model.

While the study generally revealed that the implementation of Inclusive Education was perceived positively, it also emerged that the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane was not perceived as very effective. The current study revealed that the educators in the selected mainstream secondary schools had inadequate knowledge about Inclusive Education, which led to its ineffective implementation. However, they tried their best to apply various inclusive teaching strategies in their classroom situations. The finding on the perceived ineffectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive

Education in mainstream secondary schools concurs with Ladbrook (2009:56) who established that the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa was not effectively done, because many educators did not receive formal training either from pre-service or district offices, and that educators need knowledge and skills for teaching diversity in the classroom. In the same vein, Donohue and Bornman (2014:5) advocated that, in order to initiate effectiveness in Inclusive Education, the national Department of Education must take some steps to determine the extent to which teachers are prepared to educate a diverse body of learners within the same classroom, so that teachers should receive comprehensive training programmes in areas where they lack hands-on training and practical skills to address learners' barriers to learning. The ineffectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education as revealed by the findings of the present study agree with Stofile and Green (2007:59), who attested that teachers are overwhelmed by all the reforms that have been introduced since 1994, some of which had a significant impact on their abilities to deliver effective teaching.

Having discussed the educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education, the following subsection discusses their challenges.

4.3.3 Challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education

The current sub-section discusses the challenges experienced by the educators in their endeavour to implement Inclusive Education as revealed by the findings of the present study. The discussion of findings in the present sub-section addresses the study's objective posed in section 1.5.3 of Chapter 1, which reads: To reveal the challenges that the educators in mainstream secondary schools are faced with in their attempt to implement Inclusive Education.

The present study established that the majority of the educators in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as a challenge because they are not adequately trained nor have they ever received any form of training with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education. The educators have reported that it was very difficult for them to implement Inclusive Education because of their lack of knowledge and skills, and that changing from one system to the other remains a challenge to them. The educators were reluctant to change from their old ways of imparting the learning content to the learners due to their status of being inadequately trained and their

incubated, old mentalities. The findings regarding the educators perceiving the implementation of Inclusive Education as a challenge concur with Thwala (2015:497) in her study conducted in Swaziland, who revealed that the educator-participants showed that Inclusive Education was stressful to them as they generally lacked competencies and knowledge to teach in inclusive classrooms. Another study conducted in Swaziland, Shiselweni District by Adebayo and Ngwenya (2015:251) further revealed the discrepancy that resulted from the lack of teacher training when they pointed out that most of the teachers, who did not have adequate training on handling both the learners with disabilities and the learners without disabilities in one class, had negatively affected the understanding and performance of the learners with disabilities, which was continually perceived as being poor due to the inadequate teaching skills and abilities of the teachers.

The findings on the educators' inadequate training and lack of knowledge on how to implement Inclusive Education further confirm Chireshe's (2011:161) statement that revealed that in-service teacher trainees in Zimbabwe believed that not all educators could handle an inclusive class because, according to their views, regular class educators had problems adapting their programmes to accommodate and include special needs education (SNE) children. As a result, it was further revealed that children with significant disabilities have been turned away from schools in Zimbabwe because teachers perceived themselves as untrained and ill-equipped to assist them. Similar findings were revealed in a study conducted by Shadreck (2012:230), who asserted that the majority of the Zimbabwean teachers perceived themselves as unprepared for Inclusive Education because they lacked appropriate training in this area. The issue of the challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education was further exposed in the findings of the current study as being accentuated by the majority of educators who were formerly trained during the apartheid era and are still present in mainstream schools. It emerged from the current study that such educators could not even identify or develop strategies to meet the needs of learners with barriers to learning and development.

The findings of the perceptions of educators which revealed the challenges of implementing Inclusive Education due to the lack of educator training confirm Stofile and Green's (2007:58) opinion that many South African educators were exposed for many years to the apartheid education system which was teacher-centred and authoritarian, exclusionary and deeply ingrained. Stofile and Green (2007:58) further attest that many educators feel

threatened by the different practices introduced in the curriculum and Inclusive Education initiatives. It was suggested in the findings of the study conducted in Vietnam by Thi Nguyet and Thu Ha (2010:16) that students with disabilities need strong support from adequately trained teachers in order to fully participate in class activities with those without disabilities, and that Inclusive Education requires that teachers have additional skills to be able to design inclusive lessons with a variety of activities that cater for diverse student needs.

It also emerged from the current study that the educators were entirely dissatisfied with their schools' environments, which were perceived as unfit to accommodate learners with disabilities. The educators in some of the schools reported that they worked inside school buildings that needed renovation and adaptations to accommodate the physically challenged learners and those with visual impairments and other disabilities. The findings of the current study further revealed that many schools were operating in environments that were not ready for the implementation of Inclusive Education, for example, the architectural designs of buildings of the former Model-C schools which were double-storeyed without lifts or winding paths for learners with physical disabilities; old infrastructure in the majority of Public schools; the absence of ramps, signage, pavements and toilets to accommodate learners with disabilities; and school furniture that could not accommodate learners in wheelchairs. The unreceptive school learning environments, as revealed by the findings of the current study, do not comply with the '*Guidelines for Full-service Schools*' (Department of Basic Education, 2010:37) which specifies that all classrooms should be accessible for all learners, including those with disabilities; the school should have adequate toilet facilities for learners and staff, including at least one toilet that is accessible for a person using a wheelchair and that the school should be a safe and secure place for all learners and educators.

The learning environments as observed by the researcher in the present study do not comply with the current status of inclusivity because they are the result of the apartheid system of education which did not recognise learners with disabilities for participation in ordinary or mainstream schools. In the South African education system prior to the democratic government, the education policy makers and all education stakeholders had a medical perspective of learners with disabilities, and ultimately believed that they were entirely suitable for special schools, hence, their disinterest in ensuring that ordinary school environments be thoroughly prepared to accommodate learners with disabilities. The study

conducted by Hodgson and Khumalo (2016:12) in the Umkhanyakude District of KwaZulu-Natal Province revealed similar school environmental conditions that do not accommodate learners with physical disabilities to the conditions in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools of Limpopo Province. Hodgson and Khumalo (2016:12) asserted that some schools in KwaZulu-Natal did not have enough classrooms and they made use of mobile classrooms which were perceived as being of low quality and unsafe, for example, some had broken doors that blew over during windy weather conditions and some schools lacked the furniture and facilities required for the education of learners with disabilities.

The findings from observations of normal teaching and learning situations at the selected sites (mainstream secondary schools) in the present study revealed similar unfavourable learning environments in some of the schools around Polokwane. The findings from field observations of the inclusive learning environments, which were found to be unfavourable for the implementation of Inclusive Education in the present study, validated the perceptions of educators revealed in the in-depth interviews. The findings about the unwelcoming school inclusive school environments confirm Mahlo's (2011:172) finding in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, that the infrastructural resources in most of the schools were not yet disability-friendly, and the physical environments were not accommodative of learners with barriers to learning in almost all schools in South Africa.

It also emerged from this study that the educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province of South Africa as having challenges, such as the lack of facilities or predicaments with regard to service delivery by the District-based Support Teams (DBSTs) and a lack of equipment to assist learners with various disabilities. The above perceptions of educators in the current study agree with Stofile and Green (2007:56), who pointed out that since the publication of Education White Paper 6 in 2001, DBSTs are not yet well established due to the fact that sectors have not yet internalised a cultural ethos of collaboration and resistance based on support for a medical model and/or the rejection of what are perceived to be additional responsibilities. The findings on the lack of facilities and equipment including the non-establishments of the DBSTs confirm Ladbrook's (2009:90) conclusion that the responsibilities of the DBSTs, as mandated by the Education White Paper 6 to support the South African schools in the implementation of Inclusive Education, was considered negligible, disorganised, and such teams were perceived as not being supportive. Similar

findings were revealed by Adebayo and Ngwenya (2015:249), who assert that in the Shiselweni District of Swaziland, many schools were characterised by inadequacy in basic facilities, such as the necessary assistive devices for learners with disabilities, properly ventilated classrooms, furniture suitable for learners with disabilities and for those without. The above conditions were reported to have limited the enrolment of learners with disabilities in the regular schools and negatively affected the success of the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The current study further established that many schools around Polokwane had the challenge of overcrowded classrooms, which ultimately affected the recommended numbers of learners to be accommodated in classrooms, especially in mainstream Public schools. The findings from the in-depth interviews where educators revealed that they worked under stressful conditions due to overcrowded classrooms also made it difficult for them to manage their classrooms. The current study further revealed that the overcrowded classrooms prohibited the educators from giving learners with barriers to learning the necessary individualised attention because the educators could not freely move in the classrooms, let alone allow for the possibility of free movement for learners in wheelchairs. The educators have reported that they could only pay attention to those learners who seemed to be active in the classroom, and they had to neglect those who never raised their hands during classroom activities. The above findings of the current study agree with Abongdia et al. (2015:498), who pointed out that due to overcrowded classrooms, teachers who participated in their study could not identify learners with barriers to learning. The study conducted by Kheswa et al. (2014: 2867) in the North-West Province of South Africa concurs with the findings of the current study by stating that such unbalanced ratios of educators to learners and the network support within the schools tend to lead to the poor delivery of services by educators, and in turn, contribute towards the encountering of intellectual deficits by learners, owing to a lack of cognitive stimulation. Similar findings were reported in the study conducted in Algeria by Tayeg (2015:15), who established that educators face difficulties in controlling their students in large-sized classrooms where there is a lot of noise, especially when learners have to do activities or finish before the others, and that many educators, as well as learners, may find themselves uncomfortable when teaching/learning in an overcrowded class. The challenge of overcrowded classrooms which was revealed by the findings of the present study further confirms the outcomes of the study conducted in Uganda by Isingoma (2014:71) where it was

revealed that educators could not function successfully where there were no additional inputs, such as a sound curriculum, appropriate text-books, a workable management system, adequate supervision and support, due to overcrowded or large classes, and that over-enrolment compounded the problems of inadequate materials and infrastructure. Similar findings are revealed by Chireshe (2013:226) who asserts that the lack of resources is worsened by the high teacher/pupil ratio (1 to 40) in many Zimbabwean primary schools, and that the high teacher pupil/ratio left educators with no room to cater for children with disabilities. Molosiwa and Monyatsi (2016:273) attest that the large number of learners in inclusive classrooms impedes educator effectiveness and creativity in their attempts to make teaching and learning accessible to all learners.

The study further revealed that the educators had a challenge with regard to the lack of support from the DBE towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in their schools. It was further revealed that the DBE had a tendency of calling educators in mainstream secondary schools, as well as primary schools, for three-hour workshops or inductions, once or twice a semester, regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education, but follow-ups were not made to establish the effectiveness of the implementation thereof. The above findings on the lack of support for the implementation of Inclusive Education from the DBE confirm Stofile and Green's (2007:60) opinion that although the South African DBE has made concerted efforts to build the capacity of educators through training in workshops, the one-week training sessions did not offer a theoretical framework, and had failed to emphasise the epistemological differences between the old and new curricula. The findings on the DBE's lack of support further confirms what was revealed in a study by Luningo (2015:130), who advocates that the educators in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, needed follow-ups after the workshops, and needed to be equipped more in professional development so that they would be able to address the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning in their respective schools; and that there was practically no continuous support or follow-ups done after the workshops. A study about Inclusive Education in developing countries within the Asia-Pacific region (Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Guang-xue, 2013:6) revealed that the need to upskill teacher educators in workshops to offer an appropriate curriculum and to employ suitable pedagogies to prepare teachers for inclusion can be very challenging, especially in countries where there are few academics that are themselves trained in Inclusive Education, with the majority lacking the necessary skills, knowledge and sentiments to undertake such a

role.

A lack of support from the DBE and the inadequate training of educators for the implementation of Inclusive Education, as revealed by the findings of the current study, contradict Bronfenbrenner's theory which informed this study, because, according to this model, the proximal relationships that are expected to exist between the educators and learners at the microsystems level should transpire within a supportive and accommodative teaching and learning environment (the mesosystem). Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of learner development advocates a holistic development of the learner, which is entirely dependent on proximal relationships that exist between such a learner, the family, the school and peers (microsystems). The challenges revealed by the findings of the present study, which are assumed to be emanating from the inadequate support from the DBE as the exosystem of the adopted model, pose an indirect and negative influence on the academic and holistic development of the learner as the focal point of the model. Since the educators were found to be not well-trained and reluctant to change from their old ways of teaching, the theoretical assumptions of the model are contravened, and much still needs to be done on the side of educators and the DBE at the exosystem level. The DBE is, in this context, expected to provide proper training for educators, coupled with follow-ups or monitoring of the implementation of Inclusive Education in order to fulfil the requirements of the current education system (the implementation of Inclusive Education), which also encompasses the developmental milestones of the learner from the Foundation Phase up to the tertiary level of education. This entails the chronosystem in the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, which refers to the time frames during the development of the learner.

The current study further established that the educators in mainstream secondary schools had a noticeable challenge in the implementation of Inclusive Education policies such as the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) and the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6). The majority of the educators reported that they were not even sure whether the said policy documents were available in their Principals' offices or not. Abongdia et al. (2015:497) concur with the above findings on the implementation of Inclusive Education policies by declaring that there is one similar conclusion, that South African teachers have challenges with regard to the implementation of inclusion policy, and that these challenges are experienced by teachers in various provinces and racial lines, in both urban and rural school settings. The educators' perceptions in the current study contradict the mandate of the

DBE which expects them to acquaint themselves with the Inclusive Education policies when stating that educators have an important responsibility in making sure that all learners, from whatever background, feel included and affirmed in the classroom, and that teachers should monitor their own beliefs, attitudes and behaviours when responding to learners with barriers to learning (Department of Basic Education, 2011b:7). The above-mentioned contradiction may emanate from the educators' lack of confidence and enthusiasm to implement Inclusive Education, which is the result of their inadequate knowledge and skill on how to execute inclusivity in their classrooms.

The following sub-section discusses the educators' gender and perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools.

4.3.4 Gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education

The current sub-section discusses the educators' gender and perception of the implementation of Inclusive Education as revealed by the findings of the present study. In the discussion, reference is made to the existing literature on the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education. The current sub-section addresses the study's objective, which was posed in section 1.5.4 of Chapter 1, which reads: To establish gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in their schools.

It emerged from the findings of the present study that there was a difference in confidence between male educators and their female equivalents with regard to handling learners who have barriers to learning and development. The educators reported that the majority of male educators have less confidence compared to their female counterparts due to their general personality traits of short-temperedness, aggravated by their lack of knowledge on how to handle learners with barriers to learning and development. Similar findings were revealed in literature by Prakash (2012:104) and Vaz et al. (2015:137), who asserted that female educators working in regular schools showed more confidence and a positive attitude towards Inclusive Education for children with disabilities, when compared to male educators due to their greater emotional intelligence, and better adaptation ability and empathy. Conversely, the study conducted in India (Gafoor, 2009:1), with student educators who were enrolled for a B.Ed. programme, revealed that attitudes and confidence towards inclusion were found to

be less favourable among female student educators who formed the vast majority in Kerala, compared to their male counterparts. An earlier Indian study by Chopra (2008:4) revealed that there was a significant difference in the male and female elementary school educators' attitudes towards Inclusive Education due to differences in their mean scores, which revealed male educators' attitudes to be more positive towards Inclusive Education compared to their female counterparts.

The study further revealed that a minority of educators perceived no difference in confidence between male and female educators, basing their argument on the assumption that it all depends on one's personality, enthusiasm and preparedness to work under conditions where diverse learners are found. The above perceptions of educators confirm what was suggested by the outcomes of the studies conducted in Kwa-Zulu Natal (Mashiya, 2003:21) and in Nigeria (Buford & Casey, 2012:26), which revealed that there is no significant difference existing between male and female educators in relation to their attitudes or confidence regarding their preparedness to teach in Inclusive Education settings. The findings on the perceptions of male and female educators regarding their confidence in teaching learners in Inclusive Education settings further confirms the opinion of Chireshe (2011:159) who investigated the curriculum, inclusive teaching methods and the accommodation of SNE children by in-service teacher trainees in Zimbabwe, and reported that there were no significant differences between the beliefs of male and female teacher trainees in the above-mentioned inclusive issues.

It further emerged from the findings of the current study that there are differences in the abilities of male and female educators to identify learners with barriers to learning and development in their classrooms. The majority of educators reported that female educators are more capable of identifying learners with barriers to learning and development in their learning environments than their male counterparts, while the minority reported no difference between male and female educators with regard to the identification of learners with barriers to learning and development in their classroom situations. The above perceptions of the educators in the present study concerning their abilities to identify learners with disabilities confirm literature (Sideridis, Antoniou & Padeliadu, 2008:204) which revealed that male educators produced fewer capabilities regarding the identification of learners having disabilities compared to female educators. The current study revealed that the reason behind female educators' abilities to identify and support learners with barriers to learning is their

motherly nature and compassion for children, which enhances their abilities to interact with the diverse learners in the teaching and learning environment. Some of the educators reported that male educators are sometimes ignorant, and when a learner behaves in a strange way, they would threaten them because of their inability to identify the underlying causes of the undesirable behaviour of the child. The study conducted by Vas et al. (2015:58) revealed that male educators had a more negative attitude towards inclusion, and that female educators held more positive attitudes, have greater capabilities and a more conative attitude towards identifying learners with disabilities than their male counterparts. Contrary to the findings on the perceptions of male and female educators regarding the identification of learners with barriers to learning, other studies found that male educators were either significantly more capable than females, in their ability to identify and teach students with disabilities (Dukmak, 2013:26). The said contradiction may be because of different personality traits between male educators and their female counterparts and their different levels of knowledge about learners with disabilities. Nevertheless, classrooms are now becoming more diverse with respect to the students' abilities, therefore, sensitivity and awareness on the part of the general education of male and female educators is essential to promote the successful implementation of Inclusive Education (Chopra, 2008:2). The findings by the *'European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education'* (2010:13) state that both male and female educators have a key role to play in preparing pupils to take their place in society and in the world of work, and that they need the skills necessary to identify the specific needs of each individual learner, and respond to them by deploying a wide range of teaching strategies in an attempt to support the development of young people into fully autonomous lifelong learners. The findings of gender differences in the perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in the current study confirm the outcomes of the study conducted by Chopra (2008:2) in India, who attested that classrooms are now becoming more diverse with respect to students' abilities and disabilities, and that sensitivity and awareness on the part of the general education of male and female educators is essential to promote the successful implementation of Inclusive Education.

4.4 SUMMARY

The current chapter presented, analysed and discussed the findings of the present study on the educators' perceptions of the need, effectiveness, challenges and gender differences and perceptions on the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools

around Polokwane in South Africa, in the context of the objectives of the study posed in Chapter 1. The subsequent chapter will present the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to establish the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane, in Limpopo Province of South Africa. This chapter will present a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations. The present chapter will further present a proposed model for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools of South Africa, suggestions for further research and final comments.

5.2 SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of mainstream secondary school educators concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education. The main focus of the study was to determine the extent to which the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful and effective in their schools, to reveal the challenges they face in their attempt to implement Inclusive Education, and to establish their gender perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education.

5.2.1 Review of the research problem

The study was conducted on the basis that many teachers in South Africa are ill-prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:2), and that South Africa remains a new role player in the implementation of Inclusive Education (Mashiya, 2003:4; Stofile & Green, 2007:60; Nel et al., 2011:75; Mbunji, 2013:1). It was also noted that schools and teachers across the globe are struggling to respond to the wide array of students due to the unevenness of the implementation of Inclusive Education (McLuskie & Aniftos, 2003:2; Mitchell, 2010:1), and that some children and young people remain marginalised by the current arrangements, and the development of more inclusive schools (Ainscow et al., 2006:1). The above predicaments in South Africa and other countries of the world prompted this study, as it was intended to establish the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream secondary schools.

5.2.2 Sub research questions

The study sought to establish the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools. The following sub-research questions were addressed in order to answer the main question of the study:

- 5.2.2.1 To what extent do the educators in Polokwane secondary schools perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as needful?
- 5.2.2.2 To what extent do the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive Inclusive Education as being effectively implemented?
- 5.2.2.3 What do the educators perceive as the challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education?
- 5.2.2.4 What are the gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education?

5.2.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

- 5.2.3.1 examine the extent to which the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education.
- 5.2.3.2 establish the extent to which the educators at mainstream secondary schools perceive the effectiveness of implementing Inclusive Education in their schools.
- 5.2.3.3 establish the challenges that the educators in mainstream secondary schools are faced with in their attempt to implement Inclusive Education.
- 5.2.3.4 establish the gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in their schools.
- 5.2.3.5 produce a model to improve the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of Limpopo Province.

5.2.4 Review of related literature

The study was undertaken to investigate the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools. The literature studies conducted revealed the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools as needful and that all schools have a responsibility to practice Inclusive Education policies (Doran et al., 2011:17; DBE, 2014:12; Rashid & Tikly, 2010:1; Mwamwenda, 2004:339). The literature revealed the need for specialist educators in the field of Inclusive Education in South Africa and other countries of the world to meet the needs of learners with disabilities and those without, in mainstream schools (Ruggs & Hebl, 2012:1; Pradesh, 2012:91; Donelley, 2010:7; Prinsloo, 2001:344; Tyobeka, 2006:2; UNESCO, 1994; Myers & Bagree, 2011:6).

The implementation of Inclusive Education was revealed by literature as being effective in some countries of the world, such as the USA, United Kingdom, Spain and Italy (Daren, 2017:1; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:130; Muskens (2009:2). Literature also revealed the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education in some African countries, such as Uganda, Zimbabwe, and in most South African primary schools, though to a lesser extent (Manandu, 2011:16; Mpofu et al. 2007:75; Chireshe, 2013:227; Stofile & Green, 2007:56). The implementation of Inclusive Education was revealed as less effective in many developing countries of the world, including South Africa (Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014:95; Manisah et al., 2006:39; Makoelle, 2014:184; Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014:4; Pottas, 2005:65).

The literature further revealed the challenges experienced in the implementation of Inclusive Education as inadequately trained educators (Kwaku, 2012:22; Singh, 2013:15; Dakada et al., 2014:406; Dunge, 2015:27), the lack of infrastructure, unwelcoming learning environments and the lack of resources (Shevlin et al., 2009:2; Avissar et al., 2003:355; Maguvhe, 2014:1764; Lebona, 2013:8), educators' attitudinal factors and resistance to change (Eunice et al. 2015:42; Mitiku et al. 2014:123), the lack of equipment and facilities (Mwangi, 2014:121; Odhiambo, 2014:1; Njoki, 2013:46; Wangari, 2015:35), overcrowded classrooms (Stofile & Green, 2007:61; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:11; Materechera, 2014:176; Subban & Sharma, 2005:6; Maher, 2009:19) and the lack of support from the DoE (Blackie, 2010:17; Engelbrecht et al. 2001:82).

The gender differences in the perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education revealed that female educators were more empathetic, capable and

tolerant than their male counterparts (Siebalak, 2002:105; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:136; Chireshe, 2011:158). The literature further revealed female educators as having positive attitudes and more confidence to handle learners with disabilities than their male equivalents (Chopra, 2008:6; Prakash, 2012:93; Subban & Sharma, 2005:6). The literature finally revealed no significant difference in attitudes between male and female educators with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education (Mashiya, 2003:21; Buford & Casey, 2012:26).

5.2.5 Research Methodology

An interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research approach and design were employed; purposive sampling of educators in mainstream schools was adopted and in-depth interviews were conducted, corroborated by field observations. Data collected was qualitatively analysed by carefully coding transcripts according to participants' responses in an attempt to formulate categories, related themes and subthemes, and to answer the main research question of the study. Ethical considerations, such as permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, were also discussed and described in detail.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The summary of findings is presented under each of the study's sub research questions.

5.3.1 To what extent do the educators in Polokwane secondary schools perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as needful?

The findings of the study revealed that educators perceived a need for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province. It transpired in the current study that the majority of educators have the passion and willingness to implement Inclusive Education in their classroom situations, though with difficulty because of their insufficient knowledge and skills. It emerged from the study that the obligation to the South African Constitution and various Inclusive Education policies to put Inclusive Education into practice, leave them with no choice but to comply. The study found that the majority of the educators uphold the integration of learners with disabilities and those without, in order to promote corporate or shared learning among the learners, and to eradicate stigmatisation and labelling of learners with barriers to learning and development. Only a few sentiments revealed the need for integration of learners with negativity, suggesting the introduction of parallel streaming of learning areas to be run in different classrooms, within

the same mainstream schools.

5.3.2 To what extent do the educators in mainstream secondary schools perceive Inclusive Education as being effectively implemented?

The study revealed that the educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane as being less effective. Most educators confirmed that their endeavour to implement Inclusive Education was ineffective due to their unpreparedness and the lack of training to educate a diverse body of learners. The perceptions of educators about Inclusive Education being less effective were reported to have been aggravated by their lack of confidence in addressing barriers to learning and the development or the lack of confidence in giving additional support to the learners affected. The study found that though some of the educators had positive attitudes in handling learners with behaviour problems, their efforts to support such learners were less effective. Some educators revealed that the application of peer mediated instruction and assessment in their classrooms was the most effective way of imparting knowledge to their diverse learners compared to other inclusive teaching strategies.

5.3.3 What do the educators perceive as the challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education?

It emerged from the study that most educators in mainstream schools had never received any formal training with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education, and are reluctant to change from their traditional ways of teaching. The majority of schools around Polokwane were found to have learning environments, for example, school grounds, buildings, and classroom organisation (overcrowded classrooms and furniture arrangements), which were not accommodative for learners with disabilities. It transpired that almost all the schools visited by the researcher had scarcities of assistive devices and equipment to cater for learners with disabilities, exacerbated by the lack of service delivery in the form of in-service training (workshops) with follow-ups and monitoring of Inclusive Education activities by the DoE. It was also revealed that most of the educators in mainstream secondary schools had a challenge with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education policy, especially in terms of the time frame and the resources needed to ensure its implementation.

5.3.4 What are the gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education?

The study found that there were perceived differences in the confidence levels between male and female educators with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education, with the majority of female educators believed to handle learners with barriers to learning better than their male counterparts. Some educators perceived no difference in confidence between males and females in the implementation of Inclusive Education, basing their argument on the assumption that it all depends on one's personality, enthusiasm and preparedness to work under conditions where the diverse learners are found. It further emerged from the study that female educators were perceived as being more capable of identifying learners with barriers to learning and development because of their compassion and abilities to interact with children than their male counterparts. Some male educators were reported to be ignorant and find it difficult to identify learners with barriers to learning and development. It also emerged from the study that female educators were perceived as naturally having a motherhood status and their passion to deal with learner diversity in the inclusive classroom outclasses that of their male equivalents.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has the following limitations:

5.4.1 A considerable limitation of this study lies in the small sample size. Twenty (20) educators (10 males and 10 females) were purposively selected and sampled from ten (10) mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province. The sample may therefore not be representative of all the educators in secondary schools around Polokwane.

5.4.2 Only a qualitative approach to data collection was adopted for the empirical study, which might have limited the data gathering scope. Mixed-method designs, in which qualitative data with quantitative data, could have been used to corroborate the findings of the study, generate more complete data and enhance insights attained with the complementary method.

5.5 CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY

Despite the limitations mentioned above, and the fact that other studies on Inclusive

Education might have been conducted around Polokwane, this study is the first to focus on the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools. The knowledge from the study may strengthen a collaborative relationship between various stakeholders in the DoE including policy makers, DBSTs, SBSTs, LSEs, and the entire mainstream teaching communities for an improved and effective implementation of Inclusive Education. The proposed model for the improvement of implementation of Inclusive Education may be of assistance for future plans on how to implement Inclusive Education in mainstream schools, and may, as such, serve as a guideline for policy-makers.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The essence of the current study was to establish the educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province, South Africa. From the findings of the study, in conjunction with the reviewed related literature, it can be concluded that although the educators perceived the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful, it is not yet effectively being implemented due to a number of challenges that are prevalent in their mainstream schools. The educators' gender and their perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education showed significant male and female differences concerning their confidence in handling learners with barriers to learning and development and their abilities to identify such learners in the teaching and learning situation. The subsequent section discusses the recommendations.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the present study and the literature study, the researcher recommends strategies on improving the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. The recommendations are in accordance with the current practices in the field of Inclusive Education as demarcated and applied by international standards of education.

The recommendations are in two categories, that is, policy and legislation, and practice.

5.7.1 Policy and legislation

There may be a need to instigate an Inclusive Education policy that would clearly and concisely make it mandatory for all educators in South African mainstream schools to

implement the Inclusive Education legislative framework as stipulated in policy documents, such as the Education White Paper 6, the policy on SIAS, and the CAPS, supported by an Act of Parliament that defines strict monitoring of such inclusive activities in mainstream schools. The policy will need to specify clearly how the inclusive learning programmes could be administered through the top-down model, to enforce the implementation of Inclusive Education by responsible education stakeholders at national, provincial, district, circuit and school levels for quality assurance.

5.7.2 Practice

5.7.2.1 Training of educators towards implementation of Inclusive Education

Mainstream school educators' responses to the qualitative in-depth interviews propose the need for professional development and training of all educators in mainstream schools, including the school heads and school management teams, for the improvement of the implementation of Inclusive Education. The educators in mainstream schools need to be trained to put into practice the various inclusive teaching strategies which include, among others, the differentiation of the learning content, teaching methodologies, and the assessment of learners to accommodate various learner intelligences. It is also recommended that teachers need to be well trained to comprehend the challenges of teaching learners with learning disabilities and to be equipped to admit responsibility for bringing about change in their daily interactions with the diverse learners.

The current study further recommends adequate in-service training in the form of workshops on Inclusive Education, complemented by regular follow-ups to establish if the knowledge imparted to the educators by the district officials has been put into practice or not. School heads and SMTs may also need training on the implementation of Inclusive Education, so that they develop confidence in addressing issues related to Inclusive Education, to uphold the inclusive ethos in their schools, and to work collaboratively with the entire teaching staff without reservations. The current study recommends an on-going professional development of all school stakeholders, so that they are able to understand and respect all forms of diversity, change their traditional teaching practices, and be able to set and achieve appropriate inclusive learning goals in their classrooms.

5.7.2.2 Resources

The implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream secondary schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province would be improved if the DoE could provide adequate resources, equipment and teaching material for learners with disabilities or barriers to learning and development, such as Braille and mobility accessories, skills for daily living, which include the introduction of South African sign language (SASL), audio-visual equipment (vocal recording and visual aids), technology devices, such as touch screens and laptops, as well as alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices in mainstream schools. For educators to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in their teaching, they should consider the use of assistive devices, as well as information and communication technology (ICT) in order to significantly empower children with disabilities to participate in lessons, to communicate and to learn more effectively. It is suggested that schools should at times consider budgeting for the procurement of assistive devices and specialised equipment for learners with disabilities rather than waiting for a prolonged period for a response from the DoE. Mainstream schools can also assist learners who qualify for free access to assistive devices through the Department of Health to obtain them.

There may be a need for the government of South Africa to restructure and adapt school buildings, especially the Public schools and former Model-C schools to make them accommodative for learners with physical disabilities and those in wheelchairs. The SGB may need to make initiatives to network and liaise with various community stakeholders, government and non-governmental organisations to request funding for the construction and adaptation of the schools' learning environment to make it accessible for learners with disabilities. Mainstream schools will need to be equipped with pavements and walkways to enable learners with physical disabilities to access classrooms. Other physical resources that may need the attention of the DoE entail accessible toilets, clean drinkable water, and a playground or terrain that is safe and accommodative for all learners. The study further suggests the addition of classrooms in mainstream schools to reduce overcrowding, and to enhance effective and quality teaching and learning.

The study encourages the need for human resources, monitoring, and service-provisioning by the DoE in Limpopo Province. Mainstream schools may need more Learning Support Educators (LSEs) to provide additional support to learners who experience barriers to

learning and development. There may also be a need for outside specialist support, such as social support counsellors, speech, physio and occupational therapists, to assist learners with the recuperation of communication, physical and mental disabilities. The employment of teaching staff members with disabilities to work together with those without disabilities will ensure equal employment opportunities, and encourage all learners to accommodate diversity as they grow and explore their various fields of study.

Inclusive mainstream schools may also need accessible transport for learners who live in the peripheral areas of the school and have mobility problems. Accessible public or school transport would assist learners with physical disabilities to attend the local mainstream schools. It is suggested that the District offices may need to arrange and provide accessible transport and transport subsidies, which include fees for public transport, as well as the maintenance of school transports on behalf of the schools that have admitted and accommodated learners with disabilities.

5.7.2.3 Attitudes

The implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools would be improved if the educators could guard against their negative attitudes of being reluctant to change from their old methods of teaching to the new inclusive teaching and learning strategies. Based on this study's findings, it is recommended that positive behaviour support procedures should be put in place by educators for learners, for example, through the involvement of all learners in the development of classroom behaviour rules, which include, among others, mutual respect.

This study further recommends that the DoE needs to cultivate and nurture positive attitudes in mainstream educators towards the implementation of Inclusive Education through support provisioning, which includes assisting teachers to acquire basic skills and knowledge regarding inclusive teaching and learning strategies, improving the professional competence of teachers through in-service training, and the frequent monitoring and support towards the implementation of evidence-based teaching strategies, such as curriculum differentiation.

5.7.3 A model for improvement of implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools

To advance the adoption of the recommendations presented above, a model for the improvement of Inclusive Education implementation in mainstream schools is proposed. This

model is grounded on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, and the provision of improved strategies for the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools under the following components: instigation of a top-down approach to the mandatory implementation of an inclusive legislative framework and policies for quality assurance, in-service training and on-going professional development for all mainstream educators; the provision of adequate resources, equipment and assistive devices for learners with disabilities; the restructuring of school buildings and the adaptation of school grounds to accommodate learners with disabilities; staff-provisioning and the addition of classrooms to lessen overcrowding; the execution of positive behaviour support procedures for learners with behavioural barriers to learning; and the creation of community networks for the generation of additional funds for the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The model is inspired by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, where the implementation of Inclusive Education is greatly influenced by existing proximal relationships between the teacher and the learner at the microsystems level. The model describes the development of a learner as revolving around complex, causal processes which are involved in many kinds of change, for example, changing from an exclusive to an Inclusive Education system (Landsberg et al. 2005:10), as highlighted in section 1.8 of this study. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, in this regard, encompasses the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, specifically the DoE at the exosystems level, which does not ordinarily contain the developing person (learner), but has the power to instigate the events that remarkably influence the Inclusive Education processes at the microsystems level, and indirectly affect the developing learner at the centre (Härkönen, 2007:11).

The attitudes, belief systems, values and ideologies inherent in the system of a particular society and culture have an impact on the rapidity or pace of the implementation of Inclusive Education for that particular society (Landsberg et al., 2005:12). Unsurprisingly, the implementation of Inclusive Education was revealed by this study to have been done to a lesser extent in mainstream schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province. If all the stakeholders in the DoE (starting with those at Provincial level) could change their attitudes and belief systems concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education, the educators and learners at grassroots level (microsystems of the mesosystem) would be inspired to uphold and indulge in the full implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools.

The different components of the model for the improvement of the implementation of Inclusive Education are interlinked as reflected in Figure 5.1, and they are based on various strategies, which the Limpopo Provincial DoE could apply to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools. The anchor for all activities of this model is collaboration and relationships among stakeholders who constitute the ecology in the promotion of the effective implementation of Inclusive Education.

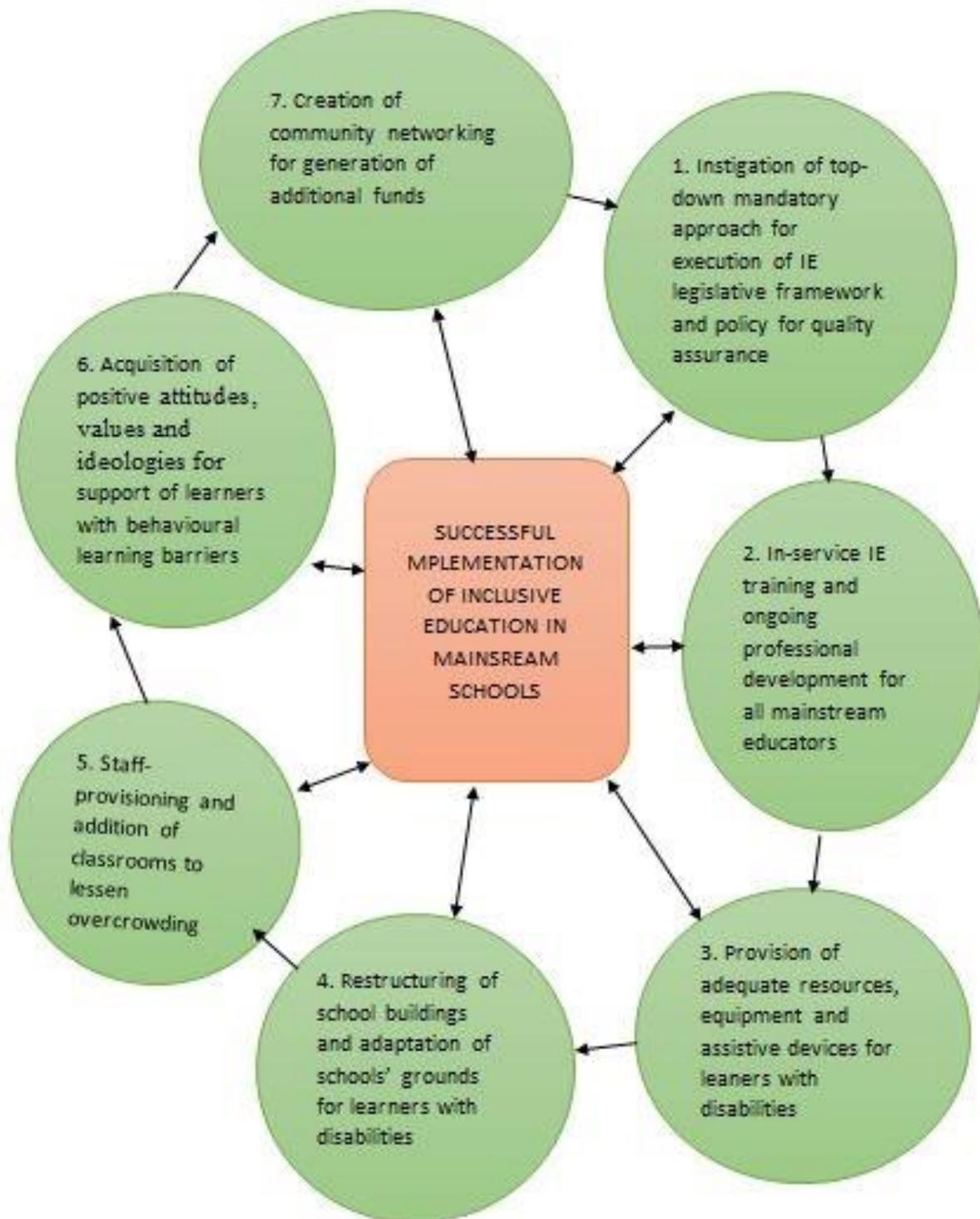


Figure 5.1: A proposed K. Malahlela (2017) Model for improvement of implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools

The above model displays a linkage between all the variables (components) and demonstrates that there is a need to complement each other for the advancement of the implementation of Inclusive Education in the mainstream schools of Polokwane in Limpopo Province, as well as

in the entire country, South Africa. The model denotes a coherent structure for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education, which also involves collaboration among all education stakeholders for the provision of equitable and accessible education for all learners.

Component 1: Instigation of top-down mandatory approach for execution of Inclusive Education legislative framework and policy for quality assurance

The study recommends a system in which there is a top-down approach, effective from national level where the government will provide a vigorous lead, communicate essential principles for the effective implementation of Inclusive Education, and propagate those principles to various provincial departments of education, district offices, circuit offices and the schools at grassroots level. This approach will ensure that the range of individuals and groups who can initiate the move towards more inclusive practices is extended (Landsberg & Gericke, 2006:38). The study further recommends a mandatory execution of an inclusive legislative framework for quality assurance that will foster maximum participation of all education stakeholders towards the effective implementation of Inclusive Education. Through the Inclusive Education legislative framework, the South African National Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with various stakeholders in the education fraternity, will be able to provide relevant educational support services for learners with special education needs at ordinary public schools, and take all reasonable measures to ensure that physical facilities at public schools are accessible to all learners.

Component 2: In-service Inclusive Education training and ongoing professional development for all mainstream educators

The proposed model suggests the provision of adequate and continuous in-service training for educators in the field of Inclusive Education to enhance its effective implementation in mainstream schools. Since it was discovered in this study that the majority of educators in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane were trained during the apartheid era, the proposed model suggests that the DoE, and all public higher education institutions, should provide in-service training programmes for teachers in the area of Inclusive Education, wherein they will be equipped with knowledge and understanding of the various barriers to learning and be capacitated to facilitate inclusive practices in their classroom situations (Department of Basic Education, 2010:19). In-service Inclusive Education training for educators will also foster positive attitudes towards respect for all learners, and instil

enthusiasm in educators to accommodate learners with disabilities or barriers to learning and development. The DoE may need to carry out an ongoing professional development programme for educators to ensure that they are qualified in the area of Inclusive Education; enable them to uphold Inclusive Education principles; respect all forms of diversity and have confidence in handling both learners with disabilities and without, in their mainstream schools. Educators may need to be given ongoing support on the use of assistive technology, and to create individual support plans (ISPs) for learners with barriers to learning and development.

Component 3: Provision of adequate resources, equipment and assistive devices for learners with disabilities

It is recommended that inclusive mainstream schools should have the necessary resources available to create safe and accessible learning environments and infrastructure that promotes effective learning, not only in the schools' surroundings but also in the classrooms. Mainstream or ordinary schools should have adequate toilet facilities for learners and staff, including toilets for persons using wheelchairs. It is further recommended that mainstream schools should have adequate software and hardware suitable for supporting learning difficulties, hearing aids, FM systems, AAC devices, Perkins Braille (Braille typewriters), vocal recordings, visual materials, and adapted worksheets for learners with disabilities (Department of Basic Education, 2010: 38). Resources need to be made available in multiple mediums to ensure that all learners have access to them, including printed textbooks, learning materials through E-versions, and Pictorial and Audio formats (Motitswe & Taole, 2016:227). In the event that the DoE takes time to respond to the needs of learners with disabilities who are admitted at mainstream school, the school may need to budget for the procurement of assistive devices and specialised equipment as part of their learning and teaching support material (LTSM).

Component 4: Restructuring of school buildings and adaptation of schools' grounds for learners with disabilities

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that school buildings, especially those in Public schools and former Model-C schools, which are double-storeyed, should be restructured and adapted to accommodate learners with mobility problems. The DoE may need to construct pavements, walkways and winding paths for the free movement of

wheelchairs and to make it easier for such learners to access classrooms without obstructions. Older school buildings may need renovation so that both learners and educators feel safe and supported in a conducive learning environment. An inclusive school should be clean, with buildings in good condition and a safe playground or terrain.

Component 5: Staff-provisioning and addition of classrooms to lessen overcrowding

The proposed model suggests that more educators should be employed to alleviate the workload of educators in mainstream schools as revealed by the outcomes of this study. The educators may need additional human resources in their schools, preferably experts in Inclusive Education or Learning Support Educators (LSEs), who will assist in giving additional support to learners with barriers to learning and development. It is further recommended that the Department of Public Works in Limpopo Province should ensure the provision of additional classrooms in mainstream public schools to enhance effective teaching and learning and reduce the problems related to overcrowded classrooms. Mainstream schools may need more classrooms to accommodate the recommended teacher-learner ratio and they also need to ensure that all classrooms are accessible for all learners, including those with disabilities (Kheswa et al., 2014: 2867). It is further suggested that the DoE could do away with mobile classrooms, which have been delivered to some public schools around Polokwane and the Limpopo Province at large, since their elevated positions and stairs contribute to systematic barriers to learning for learners with mobility problems. It is recommended that real classrooms that are well equipped with relevant furniture, well-ventilated and adapted to accommodate learners with disabilities should be added or constructed in mainstream schools to uphold the effective implementation of Inclusive Education.

Component 6: Acquisition of positive attitudes, values and ideologies for support of learners with behavioural learning barriers

The model proposes the acquisition of positive attitudes, values and belief systems by all school stakeholders (educators, learners, and non-teaching staff) in mainstream schools, which includes school plans to support learners with behaviour problems, such as bullying, as well as issues around stigmatisation and marginalisation of learners with disabilities. Classroom plans to support learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), the emotionally disturbed, the withdrawn, as well as autistic learners, should also be put in place.

Individual support plans for behaviour problems may need parental involvement in cases where the behaviour is uncontrollable, as well as the reinforcement of positive or desirable behaviour through the giving of rewards (tangible reinforcement) or verbal recognition of improved behaviour. It is recommended that behaviour policies may be developed in schools with all learners involved, especially policies based on the principles of self-regulation and mutual respect.

Component 7: Creation of community networking for generation of additional funds

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that, in the case where the learner in a wheelchair is prohibited by the environmental barriers to access the classrooms, the school governing body (SGB) may devise initiatives to network and liaise with various community stakeholders, government and non-governmental organisations to request funding for the construction and adaptation of the school's learning environment to make it accessible for learners with disabilities and for the effective implementation of Inclusive Education. It is further suggested that the SMT, in collaboration with the SGB, may develop a requisition for funding and request specifications from the DoE to construct ramps and pavements in the school's premises, or alternatively, ask the DoE for permission to make use of funds allocated to the school per annum in accordance with the school's quintile level. The learning support educators (LSEs,) in collaboration with the SBSTs, may liaise with the Department of Social Welfare to request financial intervention for vulnerable children so that they could be offered Child Support Grants for the procurement of mobility devices for learners with physical disabilities.

The following section presents recommendations for further research.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The current study focused on only ten schools around Polokwane in Limpopo Province. It is recommended that further inquiry into the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools should be carried out, and the buffered zone in which the current study was conducted be expanded, to establish whether the findings can be generalised. Mixed methods of research are critical in revealing whether the mainstream schools around Polokwane are actively and effectively implementing Inclusive Education or not. Comparative studies, which include mainstream schools in other provinces of South Africa,

may be carried out to reveal if the same situation prevails in those provinces, and the findings could be compared with what is happening in other countries of the world.

5.9 FINAL COMMENTS

The study successfully established the prevailing state of affairs concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools around Polokwane by investigating the perspectives of educators and observing the school phenomena as they naturally unfolded. The educators in mainstream secondary schools aired their views on how needful Inclusive Education is for them and their learners, how they perceived the effectiveness of Inclusive Education implementation, their views on how to implement it effectively and the challenges that they are facing on a daily basis in their attempts to implement it.

The lack of training, knowledge, skills and the confidence of the educators in working with the diverse learners in their schools and classrooms were found to be critical and in need of urgent attention from the DoE. The schools' learning environments, which included the lack of relevant infrastructures, equipment and assistive devices, were also critical factors, which contributed towards the ineffective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. In spite of the challenges that were highlighted in the study, possible solutions were suggested to bring about change and improvement in the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools.

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APPENDIX A: PROOF OF REGISTRATION

, 0937

MALAHLELA M K MRS
P O BOX 4420
SOVENGA
0727

STUDENT NUMBER : 0837-170-9
ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861670411
FAX : (012)429-4150
eMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za

2016-01-22

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: DED (INCLUSIVE EDUCATION) (98445)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	WEIGHT	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION EXAM.DATE	CENTRE(PLACE)
Study units registered without formal exams:						
@ TFIED05		D ED - INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	1.800	E		
TFIED05		D ED - INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	1.800	E		
@ Exam transferred from previous academic year						

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

Your study material is available on www.my.unisa.ac.za, as no printed matter will be made available for the research proposal module.

RECEIPT NUMBER:	CASH:	CHEQUE:	CARD:	POSTAL ORDER:	MONEY ORDER:	FOREIGN:
20160122-1631-026			15300.00			

STUDY FEES: 15300.00

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 0.00

Yours faithfully,

Prof G Zide
Registrar

0108 0 00 0

**APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH (LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**

College of Education
P. O. Box 392
Pretoria, South Africa
0003

22 – 02 – 2016

The Head of Department
Limpopo Provincial Department of Education
Private Bag X9489
Polokwane
0700
Tel: 015 290 7600 - /7630

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at Polokwane mainstream secondary schools

I, Malahlela Moyagabo Kate am doing research with Professor R. Chireshe in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a DEd degree at the University of South Africa. I would like to conduct research in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane, which are the schools where learners with special needs can be placed into general curriculum or in one or more “regular” education classes to learn alongside normally developing peers. The topic of my research reads as follows: **Educators’ perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo province, South**

Africa

The study will entail finding out the extent to which the educators perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful in their mainstream secondary schools; their perceptions on its effective implementation; the challenges they face in their endeavour to implement it; and how to come up with a model to improve its implementation. Interviews will be conducted preferably at a quiet place, free from distractions, and each session will last for approximately forty-five minutes. Observations will also unobtrusively be done in 10 selected mainstream secondary schools to establish whether Inclusive Education is being implemented by educators or not. The natural boundary for data collection through nonparticipant observation will be for a period of ten weeks (approximately 2 months).

The possible benefits to the Department of Education will entail acquiring insight into the extent to which Inclusive Education is being implemented in mainstream of Limpopo Province, policy designers to have an insight into the educators' perceptions about the implementation of inclusive education and their ideologies about considering learner diversity as a prerequisite in the new CAPS for quality academic achievement of all learners.

There will be no potential risks for any person who will participate in this study. The researcher will upon completion of the study, hand over a copy of the thesis to your office for you to gain insight into the outcomes of the study.

Should you require any further information about any aspect of this study including its outcomes, please contact me at 082 735 3524 or email: malahlelamk@gmail.com

I thank you in anticipation for a written positive response towards my request so that I may submit the same to the University of South Africa's Research Ethics Committee.

Yours truly
Malahlela M.K

Researcher's Signature: -----

APPENDIX C: RESPONSE LETTER FROM LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ref: 2/2/2 Enq: MC Makola PhD Tel No: 015 290 9448 E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Malahlela M.K
University of South Africa
College of Education
P O Box 392
Pretoria
0003

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **“EDUCATORS PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN POLOKWANE MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS. LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA”**
3. The following conditions should be considered:
 - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
 - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.
 - 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
 - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.

Request for permission to Conduct Research: Malahlela MK

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

- 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
- 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
- 4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
- 5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



MUTHEIWANA NB
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (ACTING)



DATE

Request for permission to Conduct Research: Malahlela MK

CONFIDENTIAL

**APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH (POLOKWANE / PIETERSBURG CIRCUIT OFFICE)**

College of Education
P. O. Box 392
Pretoria, South Africa
0003

22 – 02 – 2016

The Circuit Manager
Polokwane (Pietersburg) Circuit Office
Polokwane
0700

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at Polokwane mainstream secondary schools

I, Malahlela Moyagabo Kate am doing research with Professor R. Chireshe in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a DEd degree at the University of South Africa. I would like to conduct research in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane, which are the schools where learners with special needs can be placed into general curriculum or in one or more “regular” education classes to learn alongside normally developing peers. The topic of my research reads as follows: **Educators’ perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo province, South Africa**

The study will entail finding out the extent to which the educators perceive the

implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful in their mainstream secondary schools; their perceptions on its effective implementation; the challenges they face in their endeavour to implement it; and how to come up with a model to improve its implementation. Interviews will be conducted preferably at a quiet place, free from distractions, and each session will last for approximately forty-five minutes. Observations will also unobtrusively be done in 10 selected mainstream secondary schools to establish whether Inclusive Education is being implemented by educators or not. The natural boundary for data collection through nonparticipant observation will be for a period of ten weeks (approximately 2 months).

The possible benefits to the Department of Education will entail acquiring insight into the extent to which Inclusive Education is being implemented in mainstream of Limpopo Province, policy designers to have an insight into the educators' perceptions about the implementation of inclusive education and their ideologies about considering learner diversity as a prerequisite in the new CAPS for quality academic achievement of all learners.

There will be no potential risks for any person who will participate in this study. The researcher will upon completion of the study, hand over a copy of the thesis to your office for you to gain insight into the outcomes of the study.

Should you require any further information about any aspect of this study including its outcomes, please contact me at 082 735 3524 or email: malahlelamk@gmail.com

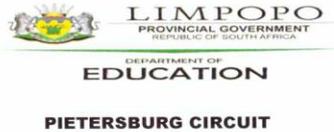
I thank you in anticipation for a written positive response towards my request so that I may submit the same to the University of South Africa's Research Ethics Committee.

Yours truly
Malahlela M.K

Researcher's Signature: -----

APPENDIX E: RESPONSE FROM POLOKWANE / PIETERSBURG CIRCUIT OFFICE

Enq: Tladi NP
Tel: 015 290 9484
Cell: 082 954 3476
Email:
TladiNP@edu.limpopo.gov.za



114 BICCARD STREET
POLOKWANE
0699

Dated: 02 August 2016

Mrs Malahlela MK
P.O. Box 4420
Sovenga
0727

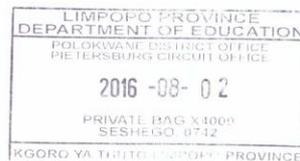
Dear Madam

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.

Research topic: Educators' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in Polokwane mainstream Secondary schools, Limpopo Province, South Africa

1. The above matter bears reference.
2. This office grants you permission to conduct your research in the Secondary Schools in Pietersburg Circuit.
3. Kindly adhere to all the conditions given by the Head of Department, as you have been granted permission to conduct your research in Pietersburg Circuit schools.
4. You are also expected to call and confirm with schools the dates of your visit.
5. We wish you a successful and happy stay in all these schools during your period of research.


Ratale SM: Circuit Manager



**APPENDIX F: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH (SCHOOL HEADS)**

College of Education
P. O. Box 392
Pretoria, South Africa
0003
22 – 02 – 2016

The School Head

Polokwane

Limpopo Province

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in your school

I, Malahlela Moyagabo Kate am doing research with Professor R. Chireshe in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a DEd degree at the University of South Africa. I would like to conduct research in mainstream secondary schools around Polokwane, which are the schools where learners with special needs can be placed into general curriculum or in one or more “regular” education classes to learn alongside normally developing peers. The title of my research reads as follows:

Educators’ perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane

mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo province, South Africa

The study will entail finding out the extent to which the educators perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful in their mainstream secondary schools; their perceptions on its effective implementation; the challenges they face in their endeavour to implement it; and how to come up with a model to improve its implementation. Interviews will be conducted preferably at a quiet place, free from distractions, and each session will last for approximately forty-five minutes. Observations will also unobtrusively be done in 10 selected mainstream secondary schools to establish whether Inclusive Education is being implemented by educators or not. The natural boundary for data collection through nonparticipant observation will be for a period of ten weeks (approximately 2 months).

The possible benefits to the Department of Education will entail acquiring insight into the extent to which Inclusive Education is being implemented in mainstream of Limpopo Province,

policy designers to have an insight into the educators' perceptions about the implementation of inclusive education and their ideologies about considering learner diversity as a prerequisite in the new CAPS for quality academic achievement of all learners.

There will be no potential risks for any person who will participate in this study. The researcher will upon completion of the study, hand over a copy of the thesis to your office for you to gain insight into the outcomes of the study.

Should you require any further information about any aspect of this study including its outcomes, please contact me at 082 735 3524 or email: malahlelamk@gmail.com

I thank you in anticipation for a positive written response.

Kind regards

Malahlela M.K

Researcher's Signature: -----

**APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(INFORMED CONSENT) FOR EDUCATORS**

DATE: 22 – 02- 2016

**TITLE: EDUCATORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN POLOKWANE MAINSTREAM SECONDARY
SCHOOLS, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Moyagabo Kate Malahlela and I am doing research with Professor R. Chireshe, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. We have funding from Unisa Masters by Dissertation and Doctoral study Bursary for research purposes. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Educators’ perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo province, South Africa.**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to find out the extent to which the educators perceive the implementation of Inclusive Education as being needful in their mainstream secondary schools; their perceptions on its effective implementation; the challenges they face in their endeavour to implement it; and how to come up with a model to improve its implementation.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been purposively selected through the help and permission from your school master to participate in this study for in-depth interviews because of your knowledge and insight into Inclusive Education issues. The number of educators that are purposively selected for participation in this study is scheduled to be 20.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves semi-structured interviews with audio taping. Open-ended questions that

allow you to freely divulge your perception about the needfulness, effectiveness and challenges experienced in schools about the implementation of Inclusive Education will be asked in the interviews. The interview session will take approximately one hour to complete.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

It is possible that you may not derive any benefit personally from your participation in the assignment including payment or incentive, although the knowledge that may be gained by means of the assignment may benefit other persons or communities. You will be given access to your own data and summary of findings upon request.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

No risks are foreseen in this study during and after your participation. There is no known injury or harm anticipated to be experienced as a result of your participation in this study.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Confidential information provided by the research participants will be treated as such by the researcher, even when the information provided enjoys no legal protection or privilege.

Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings, but your role and contribution as participant will not be identifiable in such reports.

Your identity as participant will be protected by the researcher from the general reading public by making use of pseudonyms instead of using your real name and the name of your

institution.

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one, apart from the researcher will know about your involvement in this research.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet and the keys will be kept by the researcher, for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. When necessary, hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There are no known amounts of compensation to be provided to participants.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees Committee (SRIPDC), Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Moyagabo Kate Malahlela (the researcher) on 082 735 3524, or email: malahlelamk@gmail.com

The findings are accessible for a year. Please do not use home telephone numbers. Departmental and/or mobile phone numbers are acceptable.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor R. Chireshe on +263 777308244 or email: chireshe@yahoo.co.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you

Researcher' Signature: -----

Researcher's Name: -----



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)_____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

Researcher's signature

Date

APPENDIX H: A LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Parent

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled: **Educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo province, South Africa.**

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to find out if the Inclusive Education policies are effectively implemented in your child's classroom or school environment and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of the educators' knowledge and the strategies on how to deal with and approach the diverse needs of learners. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because it will benefit all learners with barriers to learning. I expect to have other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to:

- Be available or present in the classroom and participate in classroom activities to be given by his/her teachers. Your child's interaction with his/her teachers will be observed and recorded manually and with a video recorder for the purpose of implementation of Inclusive Education.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His or her responses will not be linked to his or her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education will entail acquiring insight into the extent to which Inclusive Education is being

implemented in mainstream schools of South Africa, specifically in Limpopo Province. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof. R. Chireshe, Department of Inclusive Education, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 082 735 3524 and my e-mail is: malahlelamk@gmail.com. The e-mail of my supervisor is: chireshe@yahoo.co.uk

Permission for the study has already been given by the Senior Manager (Limpopo department of Education, the Circuit Manger (Polokwane Circuit), your child's school Principal and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:

Sincerely

Parent/guardian's name (print)

Parent/guardian's signature:

Date:

Researcher's name (print)

Researcher's signature

Date:

**APPENDIX I: A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM
LEARNERS IN A *SECONDARY SCHOOL* TO PARTICIPATE IN A
RESEARCH PROJECT**

Title of study: **Educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo province, South Africa.**

Dear learner

I am doing a study on Inclusive Education as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your teachers can use to help you learn better. This will help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

I would like you to participate in classroom activities for the purpose of implementation of Inclusive Education.

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. You do not have to be part of this study if you don't want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me at 082 735 3524. Do not sign the form until you have all your

questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: Malahlela M.K

Phone number: 082 735 3524



Do not sign written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

WRITTEN ASSENT

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about my study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be in the study.

Learner's name (print):

Learner's signature:

Date:

Witness's name (print)

Witness's signature

Date:

(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed.)

Parent/guardian's name (print)

Parent/guardian's signature:

Date:

Researcher's name (print)

Researcher's signature:

Date:

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following questions will be asked during in-depth interviews:

1.1 The need for the implementation of Inclusive Education

- 1.1.1 What is your perception about the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education by the present education system of South Africa in mainstream schools? Why do you think it is necessary?
- 1.1.2 How do you perceive the possibility of integration or assimilation of learners with ‘special needs’ with normal learners in your mainstream school? To what extent do you think this will be proper?
- 1.1.3 What is your opinion about the need for policy-makers in South Africa to enforce the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream or ordinary schools? Why should Inclusive Education be one of the education policies to be implemented?
- 1.1.4 What is your perception about the willingness of educators you work with, concerning the need for the implementation of Inclusive Education?
- 1.1.5 How important is it for educators to apply Inclusive Education policy in their daily interaction with the diverse learners in their classrooms, or should they adhere to the old system of education? Give a reason for your answer.
- 1.1.6 In your opinion, was it necessary for South Africa after the ‘apartheid’ regime to introduce the inclusive education policies in its education system like other countries of the world? Why do you think so?
- 1.1.7 Why would Inclusive Education be a prerequisite in your school?

1.2 The effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education

- 1.2.2 To what extent do you view the implementation of Inclusive Education as being effective in your school?

- 1.2.3 What is your view about the effectiveness of the implementation of Inclusive Education in your mainstream school amidst of learner diversity?
- 1.2.4 How does your school management team encourage the implementation of Inclusive Education in your school and what are their attitudes towards its implementation?
- 1.2.5 What is your opinion concerning the collaboration between the school-based support team (SBST) in your school, the learning support educator(s) and the entire teaching staff towards the effective implementation of Inclusive Education?
- 1.2.6 How is the school-based support team of your school offering support, specifically to learners that experience barriers to learning and development in mainstream classes?
- 1.2.7 How do you assess different learners in your classroom, or which assessment strategies do you apply to ensure that Inclusive Education in your school is being effectively implemented?
- 1.2.8 What do you think the Department of Education must do to ensure that Inclusive Education is being effectively implemented in mainstream schools?
- 1.2.9 In your opinion, how does the education system of South Africa influence the implementation of Inclusive Education in ordinary schools, as compared to other countries of the world?

1.3 Challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education:

- 1.3.2 Many teachers in South Africa were trained in accordance with the old apartheid education system. How serious do you think such educators are affected by the newly introduced Inclusive system of education in their mainstream schools?
- 1.3.3 How does your school environment, for example, school infrastructure such as buildings, facilities, etc., pose a challenge towards the implementation of Inclusive Education?
- 1.3.4 What is your opinion about the supply of resources by the Department of Education or the district-based support team (DBST) to your school towards the implementation of

Inclusive Education?

- 1.3.5 How do you view the possibility for learners with disabilities, for example, those in wheelchairs, the hard-of-hearing, the partially sighted and the learners with learning impairments to be accommodated in your mainstream classes?
- 1.3.6 To what extent can overcrowded classrooms in your school pose a challenge with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education?
- 1.1.2 What challenges do the educators in your school face with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education Policies such as the SIAS and the Education White Paper 6?

1.2 Gender differences in perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education:

- 1.2.2 In your opinion, is there difference in confidence between male and female educators, when faced with a situation where they are expected to integrate learners with disabilities and normal learners in their mainstream classes?
- 1.2.3 If learners with barriers to learning and development were to be identified in your mainstream school, how different do you think male and female educators would handle the situation?
- 1.2.4 What is your perception about the Department of Education's policy regarding the enforcement of Inclusive education implementation in ordinary or regular mainstream schools of South Africa?
- 1.2.5 How far do you believe Inclusive Education has been implemented in your school?

APPENDIX K: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1 Observation checklist of educators and their implementation of Inclusive Education in the classroom situation (Tick whether Male or Female educator)

Male educator / Female educator	Yes	No
Identification and giving of additional support to learners with special needs in accordance with the SIAS policy		
Organisation of the classroom to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment		
Ability to deal with the diverse learners in the classroom		
The educator’s active involvement in making implementation of Inclusive education possible in their school		

2.2 Observation checklist of educators and classroom management for the implementation of Inclusive Education

Male educator / Female educator	Yes	No
Ability to manage an overcrowded classroom and make implementation of Inclusive education possible		
Availability of time to give support to learners with special needs		
Ability to manage learners with behaviour disorders, e.g. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bullies, etc.		

2.3 Observation checklist of educators and the usage of Inclusive teaching methodologies in the classroom

Male educator / Female educator	Yes	No
<i>Differentiation of the curriculum content</i> , e.g. at levels of abstractness (adapting content to the abstract level of individual learner), complexity (contextualising topics) and variety (expanding the curriculum content)		
<i>Differentiation of teaching methods</i> , e.g. Multi-level teaching, scaffolding or designing down, flexible grouping, etc.		
<i>Considering multiple intelligences in the classroom</i> , e.g. The Spatial learners, Bodily-kinaesthetic, Auditory, Logical-mathematical, Interpersonal, Verbal-linguistic, etc.		
<i>Differentiation of the assessment</i> (assessment approach that is flexible enough to meet or accommodate various learner needs)		

2.4 Observation checklist of the school’s learning environment that upholds the implementation of Inclusive Education

School infrastructure and resources	Yes	No
Does the school environment have visible access ramps, way-finding or signage, corridors, walkways, pathways, toilet facilities for the disabled, etc.?		
Does the school have assistive devices that can be used by all learners including learners with disabilities, e.g. Overhead projector, Video and DVD player, Power-Point projectors, Voice amplifier and microphone, Photocopiers, Computers and screens, Braille and graphics printer, etc.?		

APPENDIX L: EDITOR'S LETTER

Barbara Shaw

Editing/proofreading services

18 Balvicar Road, Blairgowrie, 2194

Tel: 011 888 4788 Cell: 072 1233 881

Email: bmshaw@telkomsa.net

Full member of The Professional Editors' Group

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to inform you that I have done language editing, reference checking and formatting on the thesis

**EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN POLOKWANE MAINSTREAM
SECONDARY SCHOOLS, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

by MOYAGABO KATE MALAHLELA



Barbara Shaw

7th November 2017

APPENDIX M: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

15 June 2016

Ref : 2016/03/16/08371709/32/MC

Student : Mrs MK Malahlela

Student Number : 08371709

Dear Mrs Malahlela

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher: Mrs MK Malahlela
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Email: malahlelamk@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. R Chireshe
College of Education
Department of Inclusive Education
Tel: +2737 773 0824
Email: chireshe@yahoo.co.za

Proposal: Educators' perceptions of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Qualification: D Ed in Inclusive Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 15 June 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
 - 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.*
- An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the*



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