

**THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM PILOT  
INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS: EXPERIENCES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DIMAMO  
CIRCUIT OF LIMPOPO**

by

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## **TITLE**

The management of Inclusive Education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools:  
Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo.

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### **THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM PILOT INCLUSIVESCHOOLS: EXPERIENCES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DIMAMO CIRCUIT OF LIMPOPO.**

I declare that the above dissertation 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.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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SIGNATURE

1 June 2022

DATE

## **DEDICATIONS**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Kedibone Mabokachaba, my mother Maria Mabokachaba; who always believed in me and my four children (Mohale, Masekela, Tebogo and Lesedi) for their prayers, support and encouragement. I also dedicate this work to teachers of learners experiencing barriers to learning in mainstream schools; for their unwavering support to learners and parents.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study was a qualitative research that used a phenomenological approach to investigate the perspectives, perceptions and understandings of school principals, Departmental Heads in schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants (EAs) in managing and leading the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools in the DIMAMO Circuit within Capricorn South district of education, Limpopo Province. The study was conducted in two mainstream primary schools and two mainstream secondary schools designated as mainstream pilot inclusive schools in DIMAMO Circuit. A mainstream school is a school that provides general education and is mainly administered by teachers who were trained about teaching general education curriculum. A mainstream pilot inclusive school is a mainstream school that is designated by the Department of Basic Education to offer admission of learners with low-level disabilities and barriers to learning. I used stratified purposive sampling to select participants from each school. In addition, I used unstructured interviews to collect data from participants. Furthermore, I used thematic data analysis to analyse data from participants. The analyses of data revealed that teachers welcome learners with diverse abilities and disabilities in their schools and classrooms, but were concerned about their lack of knowledge of different assessment techniques to assess learners with different barriers to learning. Teachers lacked the necessary knowledge and skills to assist learners with psychosocial problems. SMTs did not use information on inclusive education to develop teachers, parents, learners and other stakeholders. I recommended that principals and Departmental Heads in schools must engage teachers and support -staff in strategic thinking and strategic management. In addition, the study recommended measures to improve the provision of curriculum and resources for quality inclusive education in schools. Furthermore, I recommended how schools with low enrolment numbers could be assisted to upgrade and maintain their existing school infrastructure. Lastly, I recommended ways to address lack of communication and support between the school and parents of learners. This study concluded that if teacher and learner support initiatives were to succeed, the Provincial Department of Education should consider appointing teacher assistants and general school assistants on a permanent basis to increase the commitments of schools towards implementing and managing the SIAS policy in inclusive education.

**Keywords:** Assessment techniques, Barriers to learning, Education Assistants (EAs), inclusive education, mainstream pilot inclusive schools, phenomenological approach, psycho-social problems, School-based Support Team (SBST), School Management Teams (SMTs), stratified purposive sampling, thematic data analysis.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ATP- Annual Teaching Plan

CAPS- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CBST- Circuit-Based Support Team

CPD- Continuous Professional Development

CPTD- Continuous Professional Teacher Development

COVID- Corona Virus Disease

CSTL- Care and Support for Teaching and Learning

DBST- District-Based Support Team

DDD- Data Driven District

DH- Departmental Head

DoE- Department of Education

EA- Education Assistant

EWP6- Education White Paper 6

FET- Further Education and Training (Grades 10 -12)

GET- General Education and Training (Grades 8-9)

IE- Inclusive Education

ILST- Institutional-level Support Team

ISHP- Integrated School Health Programme

ISP- Individual Support Plan

IQMS- Integrated Quality Management System

NCCC- National Corona virus Command Council

NCS- National Curriculum Statement

NECT- National Education Collaboration Trust

NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation

NSNP- National School Nutrition Programme

OECD- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PYEI- Presidential Youth Employment Initiative

QMS- Quality Management System

REQV- Relative Education Qualification Value

RNCS- Revised National Curriculum Statement

SACE- South African Council for Educators

SASA- South African Schools Act

SAsams- South African schools administration and management systems



SBST- School-Based Support Team

SCOPE- South African Finnish Cooperation Programme in Education

SGB- School Governing Body

SIAS- Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support

SMT – School Management Team

SNA- Support Needs Assessment

SSRC- Special School Resource Centre

UK- United Kingdom

UN-United Nations

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Introduction

This study has explored the views and experiences of principals and Departmental Heads who by virtue of their appointment, served as members in School Management Teams (SMTs) and School-Based support Teams (SBSTs); the views and experiences of classroom teachers and Education Assistants (EAs); in managing and leading the implementation of inclusive education specifically in mainstream pilot inclusive public schools within the DIMAMO Circuit and provided recommendations for an effective development programme for principals, SMTs, classroom teachers and SBSTs in the DIMAMO circuit. Inclusive education is a system of providing education with opportunities for all learners who have learning barriers and have the potential intelligence and special talents to attend education or learning in the educational environment together with other learners in general (Sulasmi & Akrim, 2020:335). Furthermore, Stainback and Stainback (1990) as cited in Sulasmi and Akrim (2020:335) define an inclusive school as a school that accommodates all learners in the same class and provides an educational program that is appropriate, challenging, but adapted to the abilities and needs of each learner as well as the assistance and support that teachers can provide, so that children will succeed.

In light of the above, this chapter presented and discussed the background of the study, motivation and rationale for doing the study, significance of the study and a summary of philosophical orientation; and research methodology for this study. Lastly, important concepts used in this study are clarified.

### 1.2 Background of the study

On an international level, Engelbrecht, Nel, Smith and van Deventer (2015:1) declared that inclusive education as a global movement emerged more than 30 years ago as a response to the exclusion of learners who were viewed as different by education systems. According to Walton (2017:101), the origin of inclusive education can be found in human and disability rights initiatives championed by the United Nations (UNESCO, 1994). In 1948, the Declaration of Human Rights issued a

statement that education is the most basic human rights and that was further supported in the Convention on the Rights of the Child organised by the United Nations in 1989 (Sulasmi & Akrim, 2020:334). In addition, the World Convention on Education for All in Jambanja (1990) stressed the need to expand access to education for all children and to provide equal opportunities to female children (Sulasmi & Akrim, 2020:334). Consequently, the Jambanja Declaration was empowered in The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994 which demanded that education for children with special needs be inclusive, so that the education system that separates individuals and their communities is considered as a violation of human rights (Sulasmi & Akrim, 2020:334-335). Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (United Nations, 2006) guarantees that all children, regardless of ability or disability, have a basic right to be educated alongside their typically developing peers in a local school (Kurniawati, de Boer, Minnaert & Mangunsong, 2017:287).

In accordance with the above, Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018:1) cited researchers (Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn & Christensen, 2006; Kalyanpur, 2016) who argued that the discourse of inclusive education emerged from a predominantly resource-rich model of support provision in high income countries for learners who have traditionally been marginalised within the educational mainstream and soon became an important item on the global educational agenda. Countries such as Australia, Canada, France and Germany have addressed the issue of support for inclusive education through the use of task forces, long-term studies, short-term professional development and short-term pay incentives (Mampane, 2017:181). Consequently, the historical legacy of separate special schools in higher-income countries was gradually challenged in high-income countries by moral concerns about segregated special education and its effectiveness (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018:1). As such, it was suggested that it might not be in the best interests of those with disabilities, or even of society as a whole, for them to be separated from the mainstream leading, first of all, to the notions of mainstreaming and integration, and since the late 1990s to inclusive education (Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016; Terzi, 2008 cited in Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018:1-2). For instance, in Russia and other countries, practitioners and theorists pointed out the importance of a complex merging of external and internal conditions in creating

equal starting opportunities for all children in a class (Stepanova, Tashcheva, Stepanova, Menshikov, Kassymova, Arpentieva & Tokar, 2018:157).

The discussion highlighted above presented the notion that conceptualisations and understandings of inclusive education in developing countries like South Africa reflected the export of thinking based on the development of inclusive education in high-income countries, where adequate funding as well as highly qualified professional support structures are freely available (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018:2).

The legacy of apartheid in South Africa has left many challenges in the country's current education system. The scourge of apartheid has been and is still felt in many parts of the country and in different settings. According to Christie (2009:140), one of the aims of the apartheid education system was to build up an awareness of racial difference. Schools were part of creating and maintaining an awareness of separateness and difference (Christie, 2009:141). It has taken South Africa more than four decades before realising the beginning of the end of apartheid education system within its shores, since the inception of that system in 1948. Nevertheless, South Africa belongs to the global community.

In accordance with the above, , Badat and Sayed (2014) as cited in Engelbrecht et al (2015:2), stated that a non-racial democratic South Africa came into being in 1994 on a tide of expectations and political will to change education to address and respond to the needs of all citizens. This was with the belief that schools were well positioned to guide teachers and other school personnel on how to navigate diversity challenges which historically divided the country (Brown & Buthelezi, 2020:2). When South Africa's first democratic government was sworn in 1994, it had a significant impact on the education system, most especially on those learners experiencing barriers to learning (Mncube & Lebopa, 2019: 147). The introduction of the new constitution in 1996, which included a bill of rights, ensured that every South African's right to basic education was considered (Mncube & Lebopa, 2019: 147). This has led to the introduction of Education White Paper 6 (hereafter referred to as EWP6): *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusion Education and Training System*, where the main focus was on affirming that no learners, irrespective of the disabilities or barriers to learning which they face, should be denied access to equal

education (Engelbrecht et al, 2006; Lebopa, 2018 cited in Mncube & Lebopa ,2019: 147). For this reason, inclusive education came to be understood in South Africa as a system-wide response to groups of learners who have been, or continue to be disadvantaged in terms of educational provision (Walton, 2017:101). In addition, Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018:1) emphasise that the understanding of inclusive education in South Africa has led to a broad definition, one which includes not only those with disabilities, but also those excluded on the basis of race, language or culture. On the one hand, the important purpose of inclusive education is to build up a world where all children are welcome and all children nurtures up in proper environment with constant support people (Thomas & Kumar, 2020:16). On the other hand, researchers (Forlin, Loreman & Sharma, 2014) cited in Mncube and Lebopa (2019:147) posit that teachers are facing challenges in transforming their views and practices with respect to teacher preparation because schools and systems are shifting towards making environments more inclusive. Even so, inclusive systems value the unique contributions made by learners from different backgrounds and allows diverse groups to grow side by side, to the benefit of all (Aimau & Paul, 2021:17). In addition, it provides all children with opportunity to develop friendships with one another (Aimau & Paul, 2021:18). Moreover, the inclusive system of education fosters a culture of belonging and respect, providing an opportunity to learn about and accept individual differences (Aimau & Paul, 2021:18). Furthermore, inclusive system of education encourages the involvement of parents in the educational activities of their children and the activities of their local schools (Aimau & Paul, 2021:19).

In light of the above, Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018:3) highlighted that educational restructuring in South Africa embraced systemic approach that fostered collaborative efforts to implement inclusive education. Systemic support was provided at the different levels needed namely; low-intensive support in ordinary mainstream schools; moderate support in full service or inclusive schools; and high-intensive educational support continued in special schools or resource centres (Department of Education, 2001 cited in Mfuthwana &Dreyer, 2018::3)

In addition to the above, inclusive approach requires that key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, peers and policymakers collaborate and contribute towards the development of a school system where the needs of all learners including those with

disabilities are effectively addressed (Aimau & Paul, 2021:19). Thus, inclusion requires a participative situation in which learners with disabilities are educated together with their non-disabled peers (Mampane, 2017:181).

It is almost more than twenty years since EWP 6 was introduced within the Department of Basic Education. However, school principals, SMT members, classroom teachers and SBST members still lack the knowledge, skills and capacity to manage and lead the implementation of inclusive education in public schools in a well-coordinated and supported manner.

### **1.3 Motivation and rationale for the study**

This study has come about as a result of my observation as school-Principal at a designated pilot inclusive mainstream primary school in the DIMAMO circuit; having observed the extend of barriers to learning amongst school children in my classes and the negative effects these barriers seem to have on the children involved. The predominant objective of an education system is one of providing quality education for all learners in order to enable them to realise their full potential and thereby meaningfully contribute to and participate in society (Prinsloo, 2001:344). In addition, I have attended several management meetings on inclusive education within the Capricorn South District in Limpopo Province and have had informal discussions with colleagues at the schools within the DIMAMO circuit. As a public servant with vested interest in issues affecting children and the community at large, I argued that the problem lies in insufficient professional development and support offered to School principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants to manage inclusive education policies in mainstream pilot inclusive schools. Research studies on international level (Kurniawati, de Boer, Minnaert & Mangusong: 2020) evaluated the effect of teacher training programme on teachers' attitudes, knowledge and teaching strategies regarding inclusion of learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools. In addition, researchers (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smith, van Deventer, 2015; Mampane, 2017) investigated policies within the South African context to address the implementation of inclusive education. While acknowledging the work completed by researchers in the field of Inclusive education, I am of the view that understanding of local perceptions could be important in addressing barriers to learning amongst children in public primary and

secondary schools. Inclusive education will always only happen in schools. Bornman and Donohue (2014:3) highlighted that the primary explanation for the lack of any significant movement in inclusive education was the apparent lack of clarity as well as issues pertaining to the poor implementation of Education White Paper 6 Of 2001 on Inclusive education. Moreover, I argued that those efforts to transform other schools within the circuit into becoming inclusive schools have remained a challenge despite having had pilot inclusive schools to serve as beacons of transformation. Consequently, I was motivated to seek to find out and focus on the shared experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education assistants on their experiences regarding the management of inclusive education at their ordinary public mainstream schools. For this reason, I held the view that this study will contribute to the effective development programme for principals, Departmental Heads, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in DIMAMO circuit.

#### **1.4. Statement of the problem**

Management of inclusive education remained a challenge for many principals, Departmental Heads at schools and classroom teachers in mainstream public schools despite available strategies to implement inclusive education in school in South Africa. Several research studies on management have highlighted that challenges in the effective management of schools was as a result of the lack of knowledge and skills from those recruited and appointed to lead and manage schools (Mestry, 2017; Kalenga & Chikoko, 2014; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013; Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011; Van der Westhuisen & Van Vuuren, 2007). In addition, researchers (Mpu & Adu, 2019; Mariga, McConkey & Myewzwa, 2014; Ngcobo & Muthikrishna, 2011; Fullan, 1996) cautioned that schools lack teachers who are prepared with necessary knowledge to bring changes and deliver inclusive education. This study was aimed at investigating the experiences of principals and Departmental Heads, classroom teachers working at mainstream pilot inclusive schools; in managing and leading the implementation of inclusive education. The principal and Departmental Heads at schools are as a result of the nature of their appointments members of SMT and SBST respectively. The functionality of the SMT and the SBST rests on knowledge and practical skills that principals, Departmental Heads and classroom teachers bring to transform schools.

In accordance with the above, several studies (Engelbrecht, 2019; Mampane, 2017; Bush & Middlewood, 2005; Lewis, Goodman & Fandt, 2004) have suggested that managers and leaders at schools must establish structures that will support the educational needs of teachers and learners. School-based support teams were then established. On the one hand, researchers (Cote, 2017; Munir & Khalil, 2016; Northouse, 2007) presented strategies on educational leadership which school principals, teachers and members of the school management teams could use to increase their leadership potential towards inclusive education and develop the ability to motivate and empower others within the school environment. On the other hand, researchers (Mpu & Adu, 2019; Dreyer, 2017; Makhalemele, 2011; Ntombela, 2011) suggested strategies for the professional development of teachers to provide quality educational opportunities to every learner at school. Professional development of teachers remained inadequate and not responsive to the implementation of inclusive education.

On classroom management, research studies (Tebid, 2019; Malinen, 2012; Nel, Muller, Hugo Helldin & Backman, 2011) identified challenges posed by the differences that exists for the implementation of inclusive curriculum in relation to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and presented ways in which these differences could be addressed. Teachers remained challenged by their inability to transform their classrooms into inclusive classrooms as they were trained in the traditional general education curriculum and Outcomes- based education (OBE). As a result, they remained not able to address the educational needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

However, researchers (Davids, 2020; Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2012) required school management to create collaborative relationship between the school and the parents of learners. In addition, researchers ( Mohapi & Netshitangani, 2018; Xaba, 2011) advocated for the entrenchment of a culture of collaboration and accountability in schools between management and school governance on aspects relating to utilisation of school resources such as school funds received as a result of the national norms and standards for school funding.

Despite the strategies and contributions made by researchers and the Department of Basic Education in the field of inclusive education, there appeared to be insufficient

research that explored the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads, classroom teachers and Education assistants who were employed in schools designated as mainstream pilot inclusive public schools. For this reason, I explored the experiences of such stakeholders (principals, departmental Heads, classroom teachers and Education Assistants) on the management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive public schools in DIMAMO Circuit within Capricorn South District, Limpopo province. The fact that I located the study in Limpopo province meant different variables related to the management of inclusive education in mainstream public schools could be produced.

## **1.5. Research questions, aim and objectives of the study**

### 1.5.1. Research questions

On the basis of the above background, the main research question in the study was:

What were the views and experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in managing the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive public schools within the DIMAMO Circuit? From the main research question, the following subsidiary questions emerged to help direct the research study:-

1.5.1.1 What management, leadership and communication strategies did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experience in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the circuit?

1.5.1.2 How did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experience curriculum provisions and resources in mainstream pilot inclusive schools?

1.5.1.3 How did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experience the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators in mainstream pilot inclusive schools?

1.5.1.4 How did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experience the involvement of parents and community in their mainstream pilot inclusive schools?



### 1.5.2 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in managing Inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province.

### 1.5.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:-

1.5.3.1 Describe the management, leadership and communication strategies that school principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants EAs experienced in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.

1.5.3.2 Interpret how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced curriculum provisions and resources in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.

1.5.3.3 Describe how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.

1.5.3.4 Evaluate how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced the involvement of parents and community in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.

## **1.6. Theoretical Framework**

### 1.6.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory

This study was situated within the Ecological Systems theory as formulated by Bronfenbrenner (1979). The theoretical framework adopted provided a lens upon which data generation and analysis of findings for this study were explained. Accordingly, Soyer (2019:77) stated that Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) was an influential, Russian development psychologist who was mostly known for developing the ecology of human development, which altered the way researchers understand

child development in relation to the environment. This study investigated the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in managing Inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province. The experience of these stakeholders in education has a direct impact on educational development of children in schools. This study found relevance within the ecological systems theory as the study investigated ways to provide relevant inclusive education to learners with barriers to learning. Barriers to learners are impediments in the development of learners.

In accordance with the above, Kamenopoulou (2016:515) highlighted that the ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner is derived from the General Systems theory formulated by von Bertalanffy (1972). In this study, ecological systems theory was presented as a theory of human development in which everything is seen as interrelated and our knowledge of development is bounded by context, culture, and history (Darling, 2009:204).

On the one hand, Bronfenbrenner argued that each human being can be perceived as embedded in multiple nested systems, and that development is the result of complex interactions between the individual and various systemic factors or components that influence each other (Kamenopoulou, 2016:516). On the other hand, Bronfenbrenner argued that, in order to understand the complexity of education, phenomena must be studied from diverse perspectives (Smets & Struyven, 2018:67). Following from that, this study has investigated and described the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads, classroom teachers and Education assistants on issues pertaining to the management the schools and learners with barriers to learning; leading schools to become inclusive schools; the provision of resources; the provision of quality teaching and the development of teachers in mainstream pilot inclusive schools. The study of the complex interaction amongst the stakeholders (Principal. Departmental Heads, classroom teachers and education Assistants) enabled this study to arrive at conclusions and recommendations. Therefore, the ecological systems theory was best placed in this study to provide a framework upon which different levels in the management of inclusive education could be understood. As such, there are different systemic levels

proposed by Bronfenbrenner to describe interactions between individuals and their surroundings (Smets & Struyven, 2018:67).

#### 1.6.1.1 Different systemic levels

##### i. Microsystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979:22) cited in Crawford (2020:1) defines the microsystem as “a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced over time by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics”. This study was conducted at four mainstream pilot inclusive schools in the DIMAMO circuit which provided a good setting for the study. Setting is defined as environments in which individuals participate in activities and each of them has their roles in that environment (Soyer, 2019:78). Following from that, I have explored on the roles and interrelationships that emerged within the school environment amongst teachers, learners and how the relationships influenced the implementation and management of inclusive education; and in turn how teachers and learners were influenced by the implementation and management of inclusive education. In other words, this study has identified the reciprocal relationships relating to the management of inclusive education within the mainstream pilot inclusive schools in the DIMAMO circuit. In addition, data was generated at microsystem level about the experiences of stakeholders with regard to their attitudes towards inclusive education.

##### ii. Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979:40) cited in Crawford (2020:2) defined the mesosystem as “a system of microsystems”. In the same way, the mesosystem is about the influences between members of the microsystems, for example: school and family relationships (Kamenopoulou, 2016:516). In addition, Soyer (2019:78) explained that microsystem is nested in the mesosystem, which emphasises the relationships between two or more settings that the individual interacts with. In the case of this study, the relationship between a child’s home environment and school environment and how this interaction affects the child developmentally was the focus of the mesosystem (Soyer, 2019:78). For this reason, it became the focus of this study to generate and

explore data in relation to management activities by school management teams to involve parents and caregivers in the best interest of the education of children.

### iii. Exosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) in Crawford (2020:2), the exosystem is much like the mesosystem in that it is made up of microsystems that interact with each other; however, in the exosystem, at least one of the microsystems cannot contain the person at the centre of this system. Thus, the exosystem is about the external influences on the individual from systems not directly related with or external to the microsystem, for example: policy and legislation (Kamenopoulou, 2016:516).

### iv. Macrosystem

Macrosystem is about the broader cultural and social influences, for example: social and economic status (Kamenopoulou, 2016:516). The macrosystem accommodates all the environments in it and focuses on the uniformity between the systems (Soyer, 2019:78).

### v. Chronosystem

Chronosystem is about changes in all systems and their members across time (Kamenopoulou, 2016:516). When Bronfenbrenner first developed the Ecological Systems theory, he did not account for time as a construct in human development (Crawford, 2020:2). Later he added this concept, noting that many human development theorists had looked at time as it pertained to the process of aging (Bronfenbrenner, 1986 cited in Crawford, 2020:2). This includes not only the aging and maturation of the person but also the time in which that person lives and develops (Crawford, 2020:2).

## 1.6.1.2. Concepts used in the ecological systems theory

### i. Setting

Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed that individuals display behaviours in every setting as they interact with the environment by ascribing social meaning (Soyer, 2019:78). Learners with barriers to learning influence and are influenced by the environments

where they learn. Therefore, every unique experience will affect the behaviour being observed in a particular environment (Soyer, 2019:78-79).

#### ii. Nestedness

The idea of nestedness as explained by Burns and Knox (2011) is used to describe interactions between individual agents within systems and other systemic agents at, for instance, the meso- or macro-level (Smets and Struyven, 2018:71). The focus of inclusive education is on removing the barriers and meeting the needs of learners. For this to happen there must be interactions amongst stakeholders with vested interest in providing appropriate inclusive education to all learners irrespective of abilities or disabilities. Following from that, this study has collected and analysed data and made recommendations for appropriate inclusive practices.

#### iii. Equifinality

Crawford (2020:2) stated that equifinality is not a concept discussed in Bronfenbrenner's writings; however, the concept is central to the General Systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1951b) and is applicable to the Ecological Systems theory. Equifinality can be understood as the concept that the starting place of an organism does not, necessarily define its end place (Bertalanffy, 1951a cited in Crawford, 2020:2). Germain (1978) in Crawford (2020:2) described equifinality as understanding that a person may achieve different goals through a myriad of means depending upon the environment in which he or she is raised and upon the systems that influence that individual throughout life. Learners in school environment and within their classrooms can learn in different ways.

#### iv. Ecological validity

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological validity refers to the extent to which the environment experienced by the subject in a scientific investigation has the properties it is supposed or assumed to have by the investigator (Crawford, 2020:3).

### **1.7 The philosophy and methodology for the study**

This study was a qualitative study that is located within phenomenology as its philosophical orientation. The roots of phenomenology are found in the epoch of Plato, Socrates and Aristotle as a philosophy of human beings (Fochtman, 2008,

cited in Qutoshi, 2018:216). Furthermore, phenomenology is part of constructivist/interpretivist paradigm that is both philosophy and methodology (Qutoshi, 2018:217).

On the one hand, phenomenology as a philosophy provides a theoretical guideline to researchers to understand phenomena at the level of subjective reality (Qutoshi, 2018:215). In addition, this philosophical framework or the theory of subjective reality plays a key role in understanding the actor or subject regarding a particular event or a phenomena relating to his or her life (Qutoshi, 2018:215-216).

On the other hand, researchers (Fochtman,2008; Wojnar & Swansin,2007) cited in Qutoshi (2018:216) acknowledged that during the first decade of twentieth century, Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher became successful in his attempt to establish phenomenology as an approach to study lived experiences of human beings at the conscious level of understanding.

In accordance with the above, the phenomenon or event that was explored in this study is the management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO Circuit; the main purpose was to explore and understand the lived experiences of principals and teachers with regard to the management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) cited in Ngozwana (2018:20), highlighted that qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophy that assumes that reality is an interactive, and shared social experience, which is interpreted by individuals. In other words, people's perceptions are what they consider real and they direct their actions, thoughts and feelings accordingly (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:20).The purpose of doing phenomenology in this study was to explore the complex world of lived experiences from the actors' (those who live it) point of view (Qutoshi, 2018:220). In the same way, I explored the lived experiences of principals and staff members from mainstream pilot inclusive schools to base my analysis of research findings for this study. In doing so, it not only helps us to understand a phenomena or an event at a deeper level of conscious, but at the same time it helps us to explore our own nature, bringing a transformation at personal level (Qutoshi, 2018:220). In this way a researcher can reflect critically and become more thoughtful and attentive in understanding social practices as well (Qutoshi, 2018:220).

Having considered the philosophical framework for this study, I took into account issues of qualitative research design for this study.

## **1.8 Qualitative research design**

I used a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design, according to Ngozwana (2018:20), provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data.

### **1.8.1 Identifying places and participants for the study**

This study was conducted in selected mainstream pilot inclusive public schools within DIMAMO circuit. DIMAMO circuit has derived its name from an acronym 'DIMAMO' which stands for Dikgale, Mamabolo and Mothiba; an area of 14 villages within the traditional leadership of Kgosi Dikgale of Ga-Dikgale, Kgosi Mamabolo of Ga-Mamabolo and Kgosi Mothiba of Ga-Mothiba within the Polokwane Municipality in Limpopo Province. The greater part of this circuit is a rural area. The circuit is one of the five circuits in the Mankweng circuits cluster within the Capricorn South District of Education in Limpopo Province. DIMAMO circuit has a total of 19 primary and 16 secondary public schools; and one special school for learners with intellectual impairments. From the total number of schools in this circuit, two primary and two secondary mainstream public schools were designated as mainstream pilot inclusive schools since the year 2011. These are the schools that assumed a different character in their admissions by including learners experiencing disabilities of a low level nature and learners experiencing barriers to learning. According to Yildiz (2020:18), it is important to carry out the research in the natural setting where the participants live, exist, and work. In addition, Creswell (2015:20) cited in Yildiz (2020:18), emphasised that being present in these settings means understanding and evaluating correctly what the participants say. Consequently, the four selected schools served as natural settings for this study.

In addition, school principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants working at these schools were selected to participate in the study. According to Dooley, Moore and Vallejo (2017:353), the researcher and/or research team will always obtain informed consent from all parties involved in the research prior to implementing the research project.

### 1.8.2 Data collection

For the purpose of this study, data was collected through in-depth unstructured one-on-one interviews from school principals, Departmental heads, classroom teachers, Education Assistants of the selected schools. On the whole, Alase (2017:14) cautioned that it is important that the 'lived experiences' of the research participants be allowed to tell the narration of the research study. I made arrangement with management of selected schools; and with principals and teachers selected for the study. As a result, this study was not conducted at selected schools during the time of examinations.

In addition to the above, Creswell (2013) cited in Alase (2017:14), emphasised that in a phenomenological research study, the process of collecting information involves primary in-depth interviews with as many as ten individuals. However, I selected more than ten participants for in case some participants decided to withdraw from the study or became unavailable because of work or personal commitments.

### 1.8.3 Method of data analysis and interpretation

I used thematic data analysis adapted by Braun and Clarke (2013) as the method of analysing. The steps of this data analysis method proved to be effective for this study to analyse the lived experiences of school principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants with regard to management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools. This confirms the view expressed by Creswell (2013) cited in Alase(2017:11), that the participants' 'lived experiences' are what helps and guides many of these qualitative approaches to make sense of their research analysis. For the same reason, Dooly et al. (2017:352) caution that researchers should try to be as ethical as possible when interpreting the study results and not over-interpret or misinterpret the data and present the possible conclusions as closely as possible. Furthermore, Qutoshi (2018:220) explains that in phenomenological studies, reporting of the findings need to be focused on detail description of the phenomena, before reaching at interpretation of the description or the interpretation of the research participants.



#### 1.8.4 Risk category for the study

During the study, I adhered to applicable research ethics; in particular the principle of voluntary participation. Dooly, Moore and Vallejo (2017:351) acknowledge that qualitative researchers, especially studies in educational contexts, often bring up questions of ethics because the study design involves human subjects, some of whom are underage. In terms of the Guidelines for CEDU Research Ethic Committee Application (2019) issued by University of South Africa (Unisa) College of education, this study was classified as a category two study because it involved human participants where the only foreseeable risk in the study was one of inconvenience. In the same way, anyone who has not been directly involved in the data compilation may only have access to processed data for such purposes after requesting explicit permission from those directly responsible for the data collection (Dooly, Moore & Vallejo, 2017:354-355).

#### **1.9 Significance of the study**

This study has addressed a problem that affects children, teachers, parents and their community in their environment. The results of the study will be made available to the DIMAMO Circuit and contribute to the advocacy programmes on Inclusive Education within the circuit. Moreover, the study will contribute to attitude change on teachers, parents, learners and rural communities; and how they relate to children with learning barriers and disabilities. Furthermore, the local authorities and the schools will use recommendations from the study in their awareness campaigns. Recommendations can be used by Subjects Committees in the circuit to argue the subject frameworks and methodology of teaching different subjects. Consequently, the results of the study may be used for the professional development of teachers by school management teams. In addition, recommendations will benefit School Governing Bodies (SGBs), the Circuit Management and Teacher Unions by adding knowledge to dimensions during the interview of teachers for different positions within schools. The study will contribute to advance inter-departmental collaboration between the Capricorn South District of Education and the Capricorn District Department of Health and Social Development within the local area where the research was conducted. This research study may be used to advance the Constitutional Right of all children to basic education and legal implications as

contained in the Constitution and in Education White Paper 6. Finally, the findings and recommendations from this study may be used to add knowledge on further research.

### **1.10. Chapter outline**

#### Chapter 1: Introduction and overview

This chapter provided the introduction and background to the study, motivation and rationale for the study, the statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study and an explanation of the main concepts.

#### Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provided a critical and evaluative review of the thoughts and experiences of other researchers about inclusive education. In addition, the chapter outlined management, leadership and communication strategies; curriculum provisions and resources; provision of quality teaching and the development of educators; and the involvement of parents in schools.

#### Chapter 3: Research design and data collection

The chapter outlined the research design and methodology. These included: - interpretive research paradigm, qualitative research method, phenomenological research strategy, purposive sampling strategy, unstructured interview as data collection techniques; and data analysis and interpretation procedures.

#### Chapter 4: Results and discussion

The chapter provided the results and the findings of the research study. Collected data was analysed and interpreted in this chapter

#### Chapter 5: Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study

The chapter outlined the summary, conclusion and recommendations from the study.

### 1.11. Definition of key concepts

**Barriers to learning** refers to difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself which prevent both the system and the learner's needs from being met (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:23).

**Constructivist philosophy** is philosophy that assumes that reality is an interactive, shared social experience, which is interpreted by individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:20).

**Curriculum content** is what teachers modify and teach ranging from abstractness-to- complexity-to- variety and what learners are expected to understand or be able to do (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:4-5).

**Curriculum Differentiation** refers to the process of modifying, extending or adapting the curriculum according to the ability levels of the learners in one class (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:23).

**Data-Driven District** is a portal used that schools login to find information about improved learner outcomes.

**Impairment** is any condition of a learner that weakens the functionality or participation in the educational activities.

**Interpretive paradigm** is a research paradigm that recognizes that truth is subjective because the researcher is part of the world under review and its organisations and institutions are viewed as a constructed social reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:20).

**Learning environment** is a place or setting where learning occurs characterized by physical factors that include classroom spaces, classroom infrastructure, arrangement of furniture, level of noise, class size, classroom displays and resources and psychosocial factors that include interpersonal cooperation, effective communication, protection against harassment, and classroom and school culture (Department of Basic Education 2011a:6-7).

**Mainstream pilot inclusive school** is a mainstream school that embraces the values of inclusive education; accepts the principle that a learner is no longer required to 'fit in' but schools have to adapt in order to accommodate for the needs of all learners (Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018:3).

**Nonprobability sampling** is a sampling type which does not include any type of random selection from a population (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010:136).

**Phenomenological study** describes meanings of a lived experience (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010:24).

**Purposive sampling strategy** is a sampling method in which participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study Maree (2007:79). The researcher purposefully seeks for participants who are likely to contribute to a deeper understanding of the questions or topics posed by the study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015:123).

**Qualitative data analysis** is concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognising, coding, mapping, exploring and describing patterns, trends, themes and categories in the raw data, in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meaning Ngulube (2015:132).

**Scaffolding** refers to the personal guidance, assistance, and support that a teacher, peer, or task provides to a learner (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:9).

**SIAS Policy** is a policy that specifically aims to identify the barriers to learning experiences, the support needs that arise from barriers experienced and to develop the support programme that needs to be in place to address the impact of the barrier on the learning process (Department of Basic Education, 2014:4).

**Situational leadership** focuses on how a leader motivates and influences followers in situations (Cote, 2017:54).

**Teacher autonomy** refers to the teacher's capacity, willingness and right to make informed decisions about classroom tasks (Rajedran, Athira & Elavarasi, 2020:173).

**Thick description** gives an account of the phenomenon that is coherent and that gives more than facts and empirical content, but that also interpret information in the

light of other empirical information in the same study, as well as from the basis of a theoretical framework that locates the study (Henning et al, 2011:6).

**Transformational leadership** is a style of leadership wherein the leader focuses on the follower's values, emotions, ethics, long-term goals while assessing motives, and satisfying their needs in a transformational process that changes people (Cote, 2017:53).

**Transactional leadership** is the style of leadership wherein the leader motivates and empowers each follower through one-on-one coaching and mentoring to grow and become fully actualised (Cote, 2017:60).

**Wi-Fi** refers to a facility used to allow computers and smartphones to connect to internet within a specific place.

## **1.12. Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter presented the introduction and background of this study in which an overview of understanding of inclusive education in South Africa was outlined. In addition, reasons for motivation to embark on this study were provided. Furthermore, the statement of the problem, the main research question and objectives for the study were given. Moreover, the philosophical and methodological orientation of this study was briefly outlined. Finally, this chapter has outlined the purpose of other chapters that follow and has defined key concepts used in the study. The next chapter provides a description and evaluation of past research relating to management and implementation of inclusive education in mainstream public schools.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter One) presented an introduction and review of this study in which the background to the study, the aim and objectives and summary of the methodology for the study are outlined.

This chapter presented a description and a critical evaluation of past research related to the implementation of Inclusive education in mainstream inclusive schools; in line with the researcher's attempt to meet the four objectives (objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4) as presented in Chapter One of this study. Firstly, in accordance with its aim and objectives, this study has explained its conceptual framework upon which Inclusive Education is premised. Secondly, the study has presented and critically interpreted the findings of other researchers on the experiences of principals in managing the school as organisations for Inclusive Education. In addition, the study interprets the findings of other researchers about the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in relation to the provision of curriculum, resources, classroom management and professional development. In addition, this study has explored on the experiences of principals and teachers in collaborating with different education support structures and governance structures. Lastly, the study has investigated how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced and understood the involvement of parents and the community in issues relating to Inclusive Education.

#### 2.2 Conceptualisation of Inclusive Education

Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018:2) asserted that the implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) poses major challenges to educational systems around the World in both developing and developed countries. That meant South Africa was no exception. It was for this reason that this study focused on describing management and leadership challenges that principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced in mainstream pilot inclusive schools. As a result, the debate by researchers on the implementation of

inclusive education has received attention in South Africa and in other parts of the World (Rajendran, Athira & Elavarasi, 2020; Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna, 2019; Mpu & Adu, 2019; Tebid,2019; Dreyer, 2017; Nel & Tiale, 2014; Walton, 2011; Phasha, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010; Miles & Singal, 2010; Clough & Corbet, 2000; Oswald,2007). As inclusive education is implemented in education systems around the globe, the question remains as to whether justice to those included is served, particularly in emerging economies like South Africa (Dreyer, 2017:1). However, Miles and Singal (2010) as cited in Dreyer (2017:1) highlighted that current international debate on inclusive education centre on the notion of providing quality education to all learners, including those who face barriers to learning in the mainstream schools. Legotlo (2014:176) argued that the South African context presents unique challenges in the implementation of inclusive education. In the same vein Phasha as cited in (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:170) mentioned that the multi-faceted understanding of the term 'inclusion' reflects an endorsement of the relevance of perspectives which have not previously enjoyed a space in the education or the academic discourse in South Africa. For instance, a Sotho perspective reveals the following meanings: hlakanya, kopanya and akaretsa (adding together, unite, embrace, welcome) and, thus, the meaning derived from unique South African perspective on inclusion could be summed up as acceptance with love and respect (Phasha in Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:170). However, Dreyer, Engelbrecht and Swart (2012) in Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018:2) mentioned that developing countries such as South Africa too often take on structures from the wealthier countries and what is of concern is that these models or structures, if not adapted to suit the needs of the people they are intended to serve, will not be contextually relevant.

Despite the effect of the debate outlined above, Engelbrecht and Muthukrishna (2019:108) maintained that inclusive education has evolved as human rights and social justice agenda that endeavour to challenge exclusionary policies and practices in the education system In addition, the right to education is enshrined in the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act.

In order to address the inequalities in education entrenched during the apartheid era, Education White Paper 6 proposed that the entire education system be transformed to an inclusive one – so that all learners can access education and training, no

matter what individual support needs they may have (Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna, 2019:108). In the present decade, professionals discussed and debated inclusive education in terms of diversity perspective (Rajendran, Athira & Elavarasi, 2020:170). This expanded view of inclusive education paved ways to look at the concept as a whole of school issue (Rajendran et al., 2020:170). In addition, it allows learners to participate because of the issues arising not only out of disability but also other factors like gender, behaviour, poverty, culture and other factors (Rajendran et al., 2020:170). Education is not simply about making schools available for those who are already able to access them. It 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". (UNESCO, 2012 cited in Rajendran et al., 2020:170). In the same way, the underlying commitment in Education White Paper 6 is to establish an inclusive education and training system and, at the same time, to transform the system so that learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early in their schooling, and appropriate support be provided. In South Africa (Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna, 2019:108). In addition, the focus of Inclusive Education is on removing the barriers, the difficulties and meeting the needs of all learners through differentiation, adaptation and support.

Alternatively, Phasha as cited in (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:170), stated that the idea behind inclusive education is to integrate both the special and non-specialised schools in order to enable diverse learners to receive education of quality alongside their peers in ordinary classrooms located in their areas of residence. In general, many nations around the globe, including South Africa, have an understanding of 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 (Legotlo, 2014:167). However, Tebid (2019:109) argue that the reality of providing for inclusion in schools is without a doubt a complex issue, and should not be seen as an idea of placing learners with diverse needs and barriers in regular classes, without the support related to their actual barriers.

Therefore, drawing from the sources discussed above, this study concluded that the conceptualisation of inclusive education both globally and in South Africa in particular, is not without controversies.



## **2.3 Legislative Framework underpinning Inclusive Education**

The objective of this study was to evaluate how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in selected pilot inclusive mainstream public school experienced legislation underpinning the implementation of Inclusive education in South African schools. In other words, the principle of inclusivity underpins all education policies. However, Dreyer (2017:1) argued that legislation alone is not enough to bring about changed perspectives or to ensure implementation. Even though the policy on inclusion is part of the national agenda for social transformation, Dreyer (2017:1) asserted that to bring about the desired changes, it is imperative that both policies and practices become contextually responsive. For instance, the following are some of the legislations and policies related to the implementation and management of Inclusive Education in the schools:

### **2.3.1 The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1998)**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996b) provides the Bill of Rights which serves as a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa; enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. In addition, the Constitution of South Africa provides that no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds including age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, ethnic or social origin, culture, language and birth (South Africa, 1996b). On the contrary, Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:11) argue that the current management of Inclusive education in many schools constitute a serious violation of the stipulations of the Constitution.

### **2.3.2 Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) of 2001**

The Department of Basic Education has provided EWP6 of 2001 which outlines how the system of education will be organised to address barriers to access, teaching, learning and development in the form of support programmes and support provisioning (Department of Basic Education, 2015:10). Nonetheless, Romm, Nel and Tlale (2013:1) presented the view that the complexity of inclusive education policies is an on-going concern for both theorists and practitioners of education in

South Africa and elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, Engelbrecht and Green (2007) in Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht and Nel (2016:1) argued that inclusive education, as well as the search to find strategies to identify and remove barriers to learning in South Africa, is a never-ending process and it has brought about huge challenges for education. Nevertheless, in South Africa, the EWP6 outlines the framework and strategy for inclusive education that would be phased in over a realistic period of 20 years (Daniels,2010: 636). For this reason, the implementation year for Inclusive Education has been the year 2001; almost more than 21 years ago.

Despite challenges indicated above, Daniels (2010:636) concluded that most of the short and medium term goals [between the years 2001 and 2008] have already been achieved. Hence, since the acceptance of the EWP6, there have been several implementations of a number of projects (Materechera in Legotlo, 2014:178). For instance, these include the South African Finnish Cooperation Programme in Education Sector (SCOPE); screening, identification, assessment, support (SIAS); workshops, and research on the effective training of educators and provision of support services in inclusive schools that have contributed knowledge regarding the implementation of inclusive education (Materechera in Legotlo, 2014:178-179).However, Engelbrecht, Green and Engelbrecht (2007:58) cautioned that the challenge of building an inclusive school requires strategies that engage with change in an intentional way. In addition, Kalenga and Chikoko (2014:329) maintained that in South Africa, ordinary schools will find themselves having to contend with learners with special needs in their environments with or without the presence of the Inclusive Education policy and that it therefore remains crucial for the Department of Education to play a significant role in implementing this policy as promised in the White Paper 6.

### 2.3.3 The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In keeping with the goal of inclusive education, Article 24 of this policy by the United Nations states that no child can be excluded on the basis of disability (Department of Basic Education, 2015:10).In addition, the policy puts measures in place to ensure that every child will have access to an inclusive, quality education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live (Ibid, 2015:10). However, Tlale and Romm (2017) emphasised that inclusive education is not about addressing disability

because this places the problem with the learner who is seen as disabled as an individual with a problem, rather than working from the social point of view, from the societal, systemic point of view to consider ways of incorporating inclusivity.

#### 2.3.4 The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996a) as amended

The South African schools Act (SASA) (South Africa, 1996a) mandates a public school to admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. Furthermore, the right of access to basic education and of equal access to educational institutions is not only enshrined in the Constitution but has been taken forward in the South African Schools Act (1996) as amended and the Northern Province School Education Act N0.9 of 1995, Gazette N0. 19377 of October 1998(Limpopo Department of Education, circular N0.86/2014 dated 12/06/2014). On the contrary, Geldenhuys and Wevers, (2013:13) stated that most learners that experience barriers to learning are still discriminated against in terms of the kind of developmental and participatory opportunities that they are provided with in mainstream schools.

Despite the challenge indicated above, Brown and Diale (2017) as cited in Brown and Buthelezi (2020:10) emphasised that schools should prioritise safe and inclusive learning and teaching environment that will ensure that learner's needs are catered for at school. In addition, Tlale and Romm (2017:5) mentioned that inclusive education is based on the idea that learners with learning barriers should ideally not be segregated, but should be included in a classroom with their typically developing peers.

#### 2.3.5 The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), Gr R-12 (2011)

The Department of Basic Education (2011:4) holds that the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 gives expression to the knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South African schools. In the same way, inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school (Department of Basic Education, 2011:5). In addition, the key to managing inclusivity is ensuring that barriers are identified and addressed by all the relevant support structures within the school community, including teachers, District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs),

Institutional-Level Support Teams (ILSTs), parents and Special Schools as Resource Centres (SSRCs) (Department of Basic Education,2011a:5-6).Furthermore, to address barriers in the classroom, teachers should use various curriculum differentiation strategies such as those included in the Department of Basic Education’s Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (2010) (Department of Basic Education,2011a:6).

#### 2.3.6. The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy of 2014

The SIAS policy specifically aims to identify the barriers to learning experiences, the support needs that arise from barriers experienced and to develop the support programme that needs to be in place to address the impact of the barrier on the learning process (Department of Basic Education, 2014:4). For this reason, schools must identify organisations, stakeholders and partners; and in the community or district that can provide social, emotional and psychological support (department of Basic Education, 2020b:59). In addition, schools must identify organisations for persons with disabilities who may be able to provide specialised expertise to assist in the support of learners at school who have particular disabilities (Department of Basic Education, 2020b:59). The following are the organising principles of SIAS process:

- (a) Every child should have the right to receive quality basic education and support within his or her local community;
- (b) Every learner has a right to receive reasonable accommodation in an inclusive setting;
- (c) Decisions about the child should be in his or her best interests at all times;
- (d) The policy advocates a shift from a system where learners are referred to another specialised setting other than the school nearest to their home, where a request is made for assistance to be delivered at the current school. (Department of Basic Education, 2014:7).

Furthermore, the policy aims to facilitate the shift from individual learner disability as the driving organiser for support provision to that of the range, nature and level of support programmes, services, personnel and resources that will be made available

for special and ordinary schools to increase learner participation in the learning process (Department of Basic Education, 2014:12).

On the one hand, the Department of Education (2014:1) explained that the introduction of the SIAS strategy in the education system was to overhaul the process of identifying, assessing and providing programmes for all learners requiring additional support so as to enhance participation and inclusion. In addition, the policy framework was to develop a profile for each learner from the day that he/she entered Grade R or Grade 1 and was structured in such a way that it ensured that teachers and schools understood the support needs of all learners so as to enhance the delivery of the National Curriculum Statement. Furthermore, the SIAS process was intended to assess the level and extent of support needed to maximize learners' participation in the learning process (Department of Education, 2014:1). In addition, through a set of forms, the strategy outlined the protocol that had to be followed in identifying and addressing barriers to learning that affect individual learners throughout their school career (Department of Education, 2014:1). It further identified the responsibilities of teachers, managers, district-based support teams and parents/care-givers through a set of accompanying guidelines (Department of Education, 2014:1). Moreover, the Department of Education (2014:8) emphasised that the SIAS is designed to manage and support teaching and learning processes which affect learners within the system.

### 2.3.7 The National School Nutrition Policy (2013)

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa protects the right of every child to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services (South Africa, 1996b). In the same way, the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education in the circular for Bid specification for the supply and delivery of foodstuff to Primary schools (2011-2013) dated 19/01/2011, indicated that the Government of the Republic of South Africa is committed to satisfy the complex requirements of school nutrition. The government through the Department of Education had to establish the necessary mechanism to deliver the required goods and services in an organised, equitable and planned manner within districts in order to ensure that the needy primary school learners from the disadvantaged communities get a meal a day. Moreover, the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education stated that the national School Nutrition Programme

(NSNP) will continue to support the schools participating in NSNP by providing a certain amount towards procurement of fuel in the form of firewood/ gas and or electricity to make sure that cooking takes place and learners are fed on all school going days. (Limpopo Provincial Department of Education, Circular 54/2016 Ref: 3/10/1 dated 16/03/2016).

The objectives of NSNP were

- (a) To provide supplementary nutrition meals to needy learners at needy primary schools to enhance learning capacity;
- (b) To educate learners and community at large about nutrition and healthy lifestyles;
- (c) To facilitate economic activities and food production projects (gardens and livestock in schools to improve household food security. (Limpopo Department of Education, National nutrition programme circular dated 19/01/2011).

#### 2.3.8 Integrated School Health policy (ISHP) of 2012

The Limpopo Provincial Department of Education has released a departmental circular 146/2013 to schools in which it stated that the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Health and Social Development have joined forces to strengthen school health services through the Integrated School Health Programme, which aimed to provide learners in selected Grades, at the rate of one Grade per phase; with essential health services starting in 2012 and being rolled out over the next five years and beyond. For this reason, ISHP was implemented to improve learners' health, reduce learning barriers and assist them to stay in school and perform to the best of their ability (Limpopo Provincial Department of Education, circular 146/2013).

#### 2.3.9 The Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Programme (2008)

According to the Department of Basic Education (2014:21) the CSTL Programme intends to prevent and mitigate factors that have a negative impact on the enrolment, retention, performance and progression of vulnerable learners in schools by addressing barriers to learning and teaching. In addition, the Department of Basic Education has identified nine priority areas to address barriers to teaching and learning which include the following: nutritional support, health promotion,

infrastructure for water and sanitation, safety and protection, social welfare services, psychosocial support, material support, curriculum support, co-curriculum support (Department of Basic Education, 2014:21).

Drawing from the legislative framework underpinning Inclusive Education, this study concluded that there was a need to review some of the policies to address efficiency in the implementation of inclusive education.

The next sections in this study interpret past research on the experiences of principals, SMT members, classroom teachers and education assistants in implementing and managing Inclusive Education.

## **2.4 Management, leadership and communication strategies in schools**

Walton (2017:104) believed that much more research was needed to understand what it is that teacher education should offer to enable more inclusive education, and why it is that current offerings are not translating into the realisation of greater inclusivity in schools. For this reason, this study needed to understand past research on management, leadership and communication strategies in order to describe the experiences of school principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in managing and leading the processes to implement inclusive education; and in improving communication strategies in the selected pilot inclusive schools. Firstly, the focus was on research done in relation to recruitment and appointment of school principals. Secondly, the study focused on past research relating to the management functions of planning, organising, leading and control. Thirdly, the study focused on educational leadership by presenting past research on selected leadership styles. Fourthly, the study focused on past research relating to communication challenges and strategies in educational institutions. Next, the study focused on past research relating to managing change in schools. Lastly, the study focused on past research on managing attitudes towards inclusive education.

### **2.4.1 Recruitment and appointment of school principals**

Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007) in Mestry (2017:7) stated that South Africa is one of the few countries that do not require a compulsory and specific qualification for principalship. In South Africa, teachers received their training from

colleges and universities. Most of the colleges were situated in the former homelands and are either closed or converted to education multi-purpose centres. Those colleges provided a three-year diploma teaching qualification as entry level for persons to qualify as CS1 educators. In other words, in South Africa, there are no rigorous criteria for teachers to be appointed as school principals (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011; Townsend & MacBeath, 2011 cited in Mestry, 2017:7). However, the Employment for Educators Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998), requires that an applicant should at least hold three years teachers' diploma (REQV 13) and seven years teaching experience (Mestry, 2017:7-8). This implies that a post level one teacher may be appointed as principal on the recommendation of the school governing body (SGB), without having any leadership and management qualification or experience (e.g. passing through the ranks of head of department or deputy principal) (Mestry, 2017:8). Drawing from the above, I observed that the management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools required principals who were skilful and knowledgeable about inclusive education. Thus the lack of proper knowledge and experience remained a challenge in the implementation of inclusive education and the challenge needed to be addressed.

On the contrary, in the UK (United Kingdom), teachers who wished to continue up the career ladder first became senior teachers or deputy heads, and thereafter worked with the principal as a member of the senior management team and with an average of about five years' experience as deputy, they could apply headship post (Mestry, 2017:7). For the same reason, Mestry (2017:3) emphasised that it is thus crucial for the South African education authorities to attract and select prospective principals with the right leadership and management qualities to lead public schools. In other words, this meant that collective agreements reached on sifting, shortlisting and interview of employees for principalship posts could be reviewed. At the time of this study, I noted that candidates for the position of principalship were not interviewed by Circuit Managers, but by principals themselves as shortlisting and interview panel members.

Having considered the effect of recruitment and appointment of school principals as outlined above, Kalenga and Chikoko (2014:328) revealed that the principal of the selected school in their study operated from the deficit-oriented approach. This meant that the principal of the school selected for their study did not see the



importance of transforming the school to admit learners with barriers to learning. This is contrary to the expectations of the Department of Education that principals and their SMTs should have an unwavering belief in the value of inclusive schooling and considerable knowledge and skills for translating the concept into practice (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013:12).

## 2.4.2 Management functions

### 2.4.2.1 Planning

Engelbrecht (2019:61) defines planning as systematic and intelligent exposition of the direction an organisation, community project; group, family or individual must follow to accomplish predetermined goals. According to Du Toit, Erasmus and Strydom (2007) in Engelbrecht (2019:61), planning captures three dimensions namely: a determination dimension, a decision-making dimension and a future dimension. In addition, Engelbrecht (2019: 63) stated that all the managers and employees of the organisation must be willing to make the commitment not only to develop a plan but also to implement it. Following from this, I evaluated the management, leadership and communication strategies that principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit in order to determine whether they were willing to implement management plans for inclusive education.

Furthermore, the on-going process of strategic thinking and strategic managing should take place on a regular basis, and should involve as many workers as possible (Engelbrecht, 2019: 64). In the same way, Mampane (2017:181) emphasised that school leaders and managers should establish a variety of external and internal support structures that provide for the needs of teachers.

Drawing from the above arguments, I noted that inconsistencies in the planning process result in a delay in the implementation of inclusive education.

### 2.4.2.2 Organising

The next task which influences the role of principals and SMT members in management is that of organising. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (1995) in Engelbrecht (2019:69) defined organising as the process of arranging and allocating

work, authority and resources among employees of an organisation so that they can achieve the goals of the organisation. Thus, Bush and Middlewood (2005:83) maintained that all employees need to be treated appropriately, taking into account as far as possible their needs and aspirations. In the same vein, Lewis, Goodman and Fandt (2004) in Engelbrecht (2019: 70) stated that the structure of an organisation establishes its chain of command and its hierarchy of responsibility, authority and accountability. A command structure means that employees have to be clear about whom to report to (Engelbrecht, 2019: 70). This study has identified school principals and Departmental Heads at schools as both SMT members and SBST members. Authority is the right of a manager to give commands and demand actions from staff members (Engelbrecht, 2019:70).

#### 2.4.2.3 Leading

Engelbrecht (2019: 73) highlighted that leadership is founded on communication, whereby leaders communicate their vision, plans, problems and expectations to people with whom they are working, and they therefore also need to be listeners to know the ambitions and aspirations of the people with whom they are working. In addition, leadership involves motivating and influencing others to act towards the accomplishment of goals of the organisation, unit or group (Engelbrecht, 2019: 73). In a similar manner, Mampane (2017:183) cautioned that the principal, as a critical member of the school, is looked to for direction; if the leader of a school sends uncertain or contradictory messages, teachers struggling to implement the new policy of inclusion will not be motivated. In other words, successful leaders are able to establish trust, are willing to learn and to change, facilitating people towards a feeling of confidence in effective decision making and encouraging people to take risks (Engelbrecht, 2019: 73).

#### 2.4.2.4 Control

Engelbrecht (2019: 82) stated that an effective control system discovers errors of managers and employees, and makes sure that all are doing their job well. In addition, control further ensures that resources are deployed in such a way that the goals of the organisation and service users are accomplished (Engelbrecht, 2019: 82). Hence, the task of monitoring and evaluation should be done by all workers

against agreed baseline standards to ensure quality work and a continual improvement of services (Engelbrecht (2019: 82).

### 2.4.3 Educational leadership towards inclusive education

#### 2.4.3.1 Transformational leadership

One of the objectives of this study was to describe the management, leadership and communication strategies that school principals, SMT members, classroom teachers, SBST members and EAs experienced in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit. In other words, school principals, SMTs, classroom teachers, SBSTs and EAs have a role to transform their leadership potential towards the realisation of inclusive education in the schools. Transformational leadership is described as a process of inspiring, encouraging, motivating and influencing the followers to think innovatively and critically to achieve the organizational goals beyond expectation (Northouse, 2007 as cited in Munir & Khalil, 2016: 44). In addition, Cote (2017:53) stated that the transformational leader focuses on the follower's values, emotions, ethics, long-term goals while assessing motives, and satisfying their needs in a transformational process that changes people (Cote, 2017:53). However, Tai and Abdul Kareem ( 2018:10) argued that school principals need to identify resistant behaviours and who supports the change and who needs to be influences. Furthermore, transformational leaders motivate and empower employees to do great things in times of change and uncertainty (Cote, 2017:60). Moreover, they follow a core set of values and ethical principles to develop relationships and to provide support by understanding each follower's needs and desires (Cote, 2017:60).In addition, they motivate and empower each follower through one-on-one coaching and mentoring to grow and become fully actualized (Cote, 2017:60).

#### 2.4.3.2 Transactional leadership

The objective of this study was to interpret how principals, SMT members, classroom teachers, SBST members and EAs experienced and understood curriculum provisions and resources in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit. According to Northouse (2017) in Munir and Khalil (2016:44), transactional leadership is a process of exchange of transactions between leaders and the

followers. In other words, transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges between the leader and the employee (Cote, 2017:53).

In addition to the above, transactional leaders are task-oriented and focus on clarifying employee's roles and task requirements by providing specified rewards and punishment based on performance outcomes (Burns,2008) in (Cote, 2017:53). Transformational leaders provide support by understanding each follower's needs and desires (Cote, 2017:60). Furthermore, they motivate and empower each follower through one-on-one coaching and mentoring and are effective in helping employees set goals, monitor goal progress and reward or punish according to performance. In the same way Tai and Abdul Kareem (2018:11) suggested that the school principal need the ability to harness others' emotions so as to enhance others' thought towards effective performance.

#### 2.4.3.3 Situational leadership

The objective of this study was to 1.4.3.3 Describe how principals, SMT members, classroom teachers, SBST members and EAs experienced and understood the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit. In light of this research objective, school principals, SMTs, classroom teachers and EAs have a responsibility to assist each other in the provision of quality teaching in schools. For the same reason, Cote (2017:54) believes that situational leadership focuses on how a leader motivates and influences followers in situations (Cote, 2017:54). In a way of emphasis, leaders need to adapt their style to the demands of the followers in different situations (Cote, 2017:54). In addition, leaders evaluate and assess employees based on competence and commitment to perform tasks (Cote, 2017:54). Depending on the situation and employee's motivation to complete a task, leaders will change the degree in which they are directive or supportive in meeting the changing needs of employees (Northouse,2016) in (Cote, 2017:54). In the similar manner, Tai and Abdul Kareem (2018:10) emphasised that the school principal needs to foresee and predict what would happen and be prepared with preventative measures against behaviours that could jeopardise change initiatives.

#### 2.4.4 Communication strategies

Information is a resource that can be developed and used as an integral part of the job (Engelbrecht, 2019: 93). According to Powell (2003) in Engelbrecht (2019: 93), the core aims of effective information management are to contribute to the efficiency of the organisation; facilitating creativity within the organisation; making the organisation more effective; and empowering employees and partners.

However, Engelbrecht (2019:93) warned that when information is privileged to only few and not readily available to all, it deters participation and restricts the capacity to make informed decisions (Engelbrecht, 2019: 93).

#### 2.4.5 Managing change towards inclusive education

Change is the process of transforming the schools' organisational practices into new behaviours that support a shared vision of achieving the institutions' goals (Mestry, 2017:3). For the same reason, Bantwini and Moorosi (2018:2) concur with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2012:3) which argues that school failures penalise a child for life, and that educational failure imposes high costs on society as poorly educated people limit economies' capacity to produce, grow and innovate. In the same way, Engelbrecht (2019: 97) cautioned that the process of change might be undermined if the change management process does not acknowledge, recognise and manage resistance to change in an appropriate way. For this reason, Engelbrecht (2019: 97) provided that irrespective of the type of change, all employees have to participate in the change process in one way or another. Consequently, the essence of successfully managing change is regular, and appropriate communication, transparency and ensuring that employees fully understand what they will gain (Engelbrecht, 2019: 97).

In addition to the above, change is inevitable for public ordinary schools to become mainstream inclusive schools. According to Avissar, Reiter and Leyser (2003) in Horrocks, White and Roberts (2008:1464), in order to assure that inclusive practices reflect more fundamental types of change in schools, it is necessary to overcome attitudinal and knowledge barriers that can impact the success of the inclusion of special needs [learners] in schools. Hence, feelings of frustration negatively affect teachers' attitudes and ability to support their learners, especially those with barriers

to learning (Materechera in Legotlo, 2014:185). Furthermore, Donohue and Bornman (2014:9) argue that schools currently lack teachers [and principals] who have the capacity and knowledge to instruct a diverse body of learners in a single classroom without considerably increasing their workload. However, Meltz, Herman and Pillay (2014:7) support the view as expressed by Fullan (1996) that change needs shared vision and leadership. In addition, Donohue and Bornman (2014:4) hold the view with Zoller, Ramathan and Yu (1999) that successful inclusion depends on the attitudes and actions of the principal. However, the results of the feasibility study in three countries, Lesotho, Zanzibar and Tanzania has shown that although there was generally a positive attitude towards inclusive education, around one third of stakeholders doubted if the approach would work (Mariga, McConkey and Myewzwa, 2014:87). Similarly, Allan (2008:52) argued that research on inclusion has done little to help understand what the purpose of inclusion is supposed to be and how this might be achieved. However, Engelbrecht (2019: 97) emphasised that efforts in change management have to be monitored and assessed to understand the progress made and to proactively identify potential challenges.

The study conducted by Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011:362) showed that the one school sampled for the study did not make any progress in its environment to change its system. However, Allan (2008:4) argued that the exclusion of certain children from mainstream schools has become legitimate and acceptable, especially if it can be argued that they would have a potentially negative effect on the majority of children within the mainstream.

Despite the challenges outlined above, Pantic and Florian (2015) in Rajendran et al (2020:174) stressed the importance of teachers to become agents of change for successful inclusion and social justice; and emphasise the need to develop teachers' capacity for working with other agents to remove the structural and cultural barriers for some learners' learning and participation. In other words, teachers involved in promoting inclusive education should be made aware of equity, equality and should be committed to education for all (Rajendran et al., 2020:175).

#### 2.4.6 Managing human attitudes towards inclusive education

Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) in Nishan and Matzin (2020:35) explained teachers' attitude towards inclusion as a level to which teachers have positive notion

of teaching learners with special needs in mainstream setting and accept this as a responsibility of their profession. However, according to Donohue and Bornman (2014) in Brown and Buthelezi (2020:3), one of the challenges that SBST face in schools is the fact that most teachers have negative views or attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education in schools, while many are not trained in this role. For the same reason, Nel et al (2016:3) agree that it is imperative that teachers make a mind shift in terms of their teaching practices and their attitudes; including cultural attitudes and values towards learners with barriers to learning. On the contrary, the Department of Basic Education (2020a:5) acknowledged that perpetual under-performance of learners due to teachers being unable to deal with challenges brought about by large class sizes has created a lot of stress for teachers, resulting in many leaving the profession and a lot more facing fatigue, depression and ill-health.

Despite the challenge outlined above, Nishan and Matzin (2020:35) acknowledged that research about teacher attitudes in inclusive education can have many benefits, Firstly, according to Monje (2017) in Nishan and Matzin (2020:35), such studies can provide insights to better prepare pre-service teachers. Secondly, school administrators can plan how to develop professional development programs based on the insights of the study for general education teachers to be confident and be well prepared to teach learners with special needs in general classrooms (Nishan & Matzin, 2020:35).

The findings of the study conducted by Dreyer (2017:8) suggest that teachers' perception of and attitudes towards inclusive education are still very much framed within the perspective of a medical model which locates and categorises deficits in the person and translates these into curative interventions. Dreyer (2017:1) believes that teachers are generally ill-equipped to provide adequate support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Similarly, Tebid (2019:109) stated that teachers are worried that schools and other learning establishments in South Africa are not equipped to handle an IE system. Instead, many mainstream teachers still believe they are incapable of teaching learners who face barriers to learning and that this should be done by specialists (Dreyer, 2017:8).

However, Pajares (1992), as cited in Zagona, Kurth and MacFarland (2017:164) acknowledged for the need to investigate teachers' preparedness for inclusive education, including their skills and knowledge, rather than solely exploring their beliefs and disposition because teachers' knowledge of inclusive education may differ from their beliefs. Furthermore, teachers' knowledge of inclusive education and self-evaluation of their readiness to implement inclusive practices may influence their attitudes and beliefs towards the practice (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006 as cited in Zagona et al., 2017:164).

## **2.5 Curriculum provisions and resources for quality inclusive education**

### **2.5.1 Knowledge and understanding of curriculum**

This study was focused on the extent to which the school principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants at pilot inclusive mainstream public school within the Circuit, managed to implement the curriculum and enrichment programmes as offered in those schools in order to meet the aims and objectives of an inclusive education system. In order for quality teaching and learning to be successful, schools must provide curriculum resources to support teachers. Nel, Muller, Hugo, Helldin and Backman (2011:88) argued that teachers are aware that they lack the necessary knowledge and support to address the needs of learners with special needs and often feel threatened and unsure about inclusive practices in their classrooms. This argument highlighted the fact that inclusive education workshops provided to teachers must be effective. Although many teachers are positive about inclusive education, especially those who have had the opportunity to practice it and see the benefits, Loreman, Deppeler, and Harvey (2010) as cited in ( Legotlo, 2014:179) argued that the idea of catering to the needs of all learners in the same classroom, is daunting, and is by no means without its controversies. In addition, Engelbrecht et al (2007:128) cautioned that making a success of inclusion requires more than a change of curriculum. This study was focused on describing the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants on the provision of curriculum in their mainstream pilot inclusive schools. Drawing from the arguments above, I noted that there was still a huge challenge about inclusive curriculum that teachers had to be trained about.



### 2.5.2. Curriculum differentiation

The Department of Basic Education defines curriculum differentiation as a strategy involving the processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum (Department of Basic Education, 2011b:4). In addition, curriculum differentiation ensures that curriculum itself is not a barrier to learning. According to Rajendran et al (2020:170) an inaccessible curriculum constitutes a barrier to learning and development.

However, Recchia and Lee (2013:38) conceded that although individual learners' shortcomings may need to be acknowledged, teachers who create a socially inclusive environment for a group of diverse children need to find ways to ensure that all of the children's contributions to the classroom community are visible and respected. The above arguments presented the view that teachers should engage in trial and error initiatives to foster opportunities to implement inclusive education at schools. At the time of this study, I have observed that teachers used Revised Annual Teaching Plans (RATP) that gave direction on activities which had to be performed for teaching and learning within a specified period. Based on the above information, I noted that teachers had to modify, change, adapt, extend and vary the content that was presented in their subject-grade specific Revised Annual Teaching Plans.

On the one hand, researchers cited in Mpu and Adu (2019:71) such as (Nel et al., 2014); (Nel, Muller, Hugo, Heldin, Backmann, Dwyer & Skarlind, 2011); (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen, 2012) argued that educators' ambivalence regarding the implementation of inclusive education increases as they become more concerned with teaching subject matter and completing curriculum requirements, rather than diversifying instruction to meet a range of learner needs. This highlighted the need for teachers to be offered proper training opportunities to implement inclusive practises at their workplaces.

On the other hand, the study for inclusive education conducted in Lesotho, Zanzibar and Tanzania has made the finding that some teachers felt it would be a lot of work, that they will not meet the syllabus, they felt inclusion will lower their standard and the pass rate will be affected (Mariga, McConkey & Myezwa, 2014:88). The argument

presented here suggested that learners would be progressed to the next grade without having received support to deal with their barriers to learning. In addition, Allan (2008:1) highlighted concerns as raised in Macmillan et al (2002) and Edmunds (2009) that questions raised by teachers' unions about teachers being unprepared and concerns that inclusion is placing unnecessary pressures on teachers and adding to their existing stress. Nevertheless, Clough and Corbet (2000:73) maintained that it is crucial to find ways of demonstrating that learners who are included and those they are working with are all able to benefit and progress within the same learning environment.

Drawing from the research studies presented here, I noted that school principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants had to be exposed further on curriculum provisions and differentiation for quality inclusive education.

### 2.5.3 Curriculum content

According to the Department of Basic Education (2011a:4-5) curriculum content is what teachers modify and teach ranging from abstractness-to- complexity-to- variety and what learners are expected to understand or be able to do. In addition, content differentiation involves changes made to the content of what is covered and to additional content that must be covered (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2012:149). The focus of this study was to interpret how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants provide and modified curriculum content in order to include all learners within the teaching and learning process.

However, in order to achieve the above, Donohue and Bornman (2014:3) suggested that teachers should have adequate training, sufficient support, and a positive attitude. The challenge for classroom teachers was to know which learners needed assistance (Smith et al., 2012:111). The results of the research study done by Materechera suggested a strong need for inclusive education-specific training so that teachers could improve their knowledge, confidence, and ability in handling inclusive classrooms (Legotlo, 2014:184). In addition Donohue and Bornman (2014:9) stated that how teachers are expected to accomplish the task of tailoring the curriculum to suit each learner's particular needs and pace of learning is not thoroughly detailed.

However, Mpu and Adu (2019:72) mentioned that South African teachers continuously need to develop strategies daily to provide quality educational opportunities for every learner in their classrooms as their classroom contexts in mainstream schools are increasingly characterised by a complex constellation of barriers to learning and development – primarily those of social class, ethnicity, language and ability/disability. The mainstream teachers in the study concluded by Dreyer (2017:8) suggested that too much emphasis was being placed on academic performance, and that the emotional wellness and vocational skills, which could prepare their learners for life were being ignored

#### 2.5.4 Learning environment

The Department of Basic Education (2011a:6-7) describes a learning environment as a place or setting where learning occurs characterized by physical factors that include classroom spaces, classroom infrastructure, arrangement of furniture, level of noise, class size, classroom displays and resources and psychosocial factors that include interpersonal cooperation, effective communication, protection against harassment, and classroom and school culture. As explained earlier in chapter one on the section of ecological systems theory, the school functions as a microsystem where diverse interrelationships are taking place. The schools selected for this study provided proper setting where teaching-learning support was observed. In addition, accommodation refers to changes that are made to support learners within various educational settings (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2012:111). This study has focused on exploring and evaluating the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in creating a positive learning environment within the school to address issues of diversity and inclusion. In all schools, classrooms must be sufficient, appropriate, furnished, maintained and be accessible for teachers and learners with physical barriers.

According to the study by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, teachers in rural schools taught larger classes than are the norm in other parts of the country and this has consequences for the quality of teaching and personal interactions between teachers and learners (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005:86). Furthermore, the study undertaken by Macbeath et al (2006) as cited by Allan (2008:2) revealed that there was a general positive regard for inclusion, with teachers seeing the benefits for all

learners, yet they expressed concern about whether mainstream schools were able to provide a suitable education for children with complex emotional needs.

This study has evaluated the level at which the principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive mainstream public schools within Dimamo Circuit, provided healthy, safe and secure environment for all learners. Polat (2011:57) as cited in Donohue and Bornman (2014:5); argued that resources and improved infrastructure are essential but what is more important is changing attitudinal barriers amongst school professionals to make inclusive education happen.

#### 2.5.5 Teaching methods and assessment

An issue that has received a great deal of attention internationally has been educator preparedness and teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms (Mpu & Adu, 2019:70). In addition, the Department of Education (2020a:5) acknowledged that learners who feel excluded by the system end up creating disciplinary problems for the teachers, with many failing to progress and dropping out of the system. On the basis of this, I evaluated the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in four pilot inclusive mainstream schools in DIMAMO circuit; based on their teaching and assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Recchia and Lee (2013:64) stated that most teachers come to their practice with notions of teaching and learning that are based on their own experience at the school and in the world. This meant that most teachers struggled because of their lack of knowledge of teaching and assessment methods to prepare for inclusive teaching and learning. In addition, Daniels (2010:640) highlighted that teachers concede their own lack of teaching skills due to poor training under the apartheid education system and are unable to differentiate their lessons across ability groups, lack the versatility of knowing different teaching approaches, and most feel overwhelmed by the idea of also teaching children with disability. On the other hand, Engelbrecht et al (2007:103) alleged that there is dissatisfaction all over the World with regard to the traditional forms of assessment as they cost learners with learning barriers to repeat their grades. However, the Department of Basic Education (2011:9-10) maintained that teachers should differentiate their teaching methods when they provide learners with learning materials that cater for different learning

styles; when they use a range of teaching methods (e.g. scaffolding and flexible grouping); when they plan teaching/learning activities'; and when they organise lessons in different ways. In contrast, the study conducted by Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011:360-361) showed that teachers are still teaching in the old ways of using learning methods of "able bodied learners" as a measure of defining how learning had to happen for learners with disabilities. In addition, Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:13) contended that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is not supportive of the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) which is meant to promote curriculum and assessment differentiation.

One of the major limitations faced by teachers is their dependency on the administration in decision making (Rajendran, Athira & Elavarasi, 2020:173). Alternatively, Marian Corker in Clough and Corbet (2000:78) suggested that teachers need to have the opportunity to get constructive helpful feedback on how they behave towards learners while they are teaching. According to Recchia and Lee (2013:65) reflecting on classroom dilemmas through a different lens can create space for teachers to reconsider what is happening and to generate new ways to respond better and promote classroom practise. In the same way, teachers should be in a position to be self-reliant in planning and making important decisions, as in practising inclusive education because implementation of uniform rules and regulations may fail to work owing to diversity (Rajendran et al., 2020:173). On the other hand, the dependency on the decision-makers makes the teachers inefficient to function properly as this limitation will hinder them in framing the need-based syllabus for diverse natured learners; to implement specific pedagogical practises; and to collaborate with other professionals (Rajendran et al., 2020:173). In addition, Sanahuja-Gavaldà, Olmos-Rueda and Moron-Velasco (2016:305) believe that schools make efforts for providing support to mainstream classroom, although the type of support differs among schools according to their policies and conception of the support which determines the level of inclusion of learners with barriers to learning and special needs in the mainstream classroom.

Sprenger and Wadt (2008) in Rajendran et al (2020:173) suggested the concept of teacher autonomy. The concept of teacher autonomy as noted by Sprenger and Wadt (2008), is teachers' capacity, willingness and right to make informed decisions about classroom tasks, where the teacher is conscious of his/her potential and his

learners' potential to produce changes in their cultural, social and political context (Rajendran et al., 2020:173). This means that teachers should be more confident in making informed decisions about the ways they use to teach learners; especially learners experiencing barriers to learning. Furthermore, Greenway, McCollow and Hudson (2013) observed that autonomy in teachers would result in being accountable (Rajendran et al, 2020:173). In addition, Sprenger and Wadt (2008) pointed out that if teachers become more autonomous, they will probably feel confident to make decisions (Rajendran et al., 2020:173).

#### 2.5.6 Gaining background information on the learner

According to the Department of Education (2014:11), the school must develop a learner profile for each learner who receives admission to school, particularly those in Grade R and Grade 1. When the profile is completed and initial risk factor or indications of expectations of exceptional talent and giftedness, or the need for additional support is identified, the school must make arrangements for an interview with the parent/caregiver (Department of Education, 2014:11). Following from this, I evaluated how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced the involvement of parents and community in their schools.

In addition, Tebid (2019:111) states that one of the key recommendations of the SIAS policy document, in terms of how the SBST should function, is that the SBST should collectively identify school needs and, in particular, barriers to learning at learner, teacher, curriculum and school levels; and also, to collectively develop strategies to address these needs. Furthermore, basic information is required to inform an overall picture of who the child is, what his/her experience has been before arriving at the school, what his/her family and home circumstances are, and what his/her strengths, weaknesses and interests are, in the parents' view (Department of Education, 2014:12). Findings in the study conducted by Mpu and Adu (2019) revealed that although teachers showed regard for the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in their mainstream classrooms as their right, their classroom teaching and learning support practices tend to be related not only to a lack of fundamental resources but to the lack of proper knowledge and skills (Mpu & Adu, 2019:73) and that their (teachers') line of thought is centred on the notion that there

is a specific specialist pedagogical approach for all learners with special educational needs that teachers need to be introduced to, to successfully include these learners in mainstream classrooms without an acknowledgement of barriers to learning caused by extrinsic factors (Mpu & Adu, 2019:71). This suggested that teachers did not have the capacity and enthusiasm to support learners with barriers to learning. However, the central focus of White Paper 6 is that inclusive education is embracing, recognising and celebrating learner diversity; acknowledging that all learners can learn and need support; and capacitating educators to enable them to address a wide range of learning needs by focusing on teaching and learning actions that will benefit all students who experience barriers to learning (Oswald, 2007 cited in (Mpu & Adu, 2019:71).

#### 2.5.7 Identification of barriers and enabling factors in school and classroom

According to the Department of Education (2014:14) the school must identify information about barriers experienced by the learners in terms of their abilities to communicate, their behavioural and social competencies, health, wellness and personal care, and/or the level of physical access. Tebid (2019:109) concurred that policies such as the Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) which was first published in 2008 and later revised in 2014 (Department of Basic Education, 2014), spells out the role of teachers especially in the foundation phase, parents, managers and support staff within the new framework of how support should be organised. Accordingly, teachers were expected to identify learners experiencing learning difficulties as early as possible within their phase and give the necessary support in collaboration with the SBST, observing learners carefully so that necessary adaptations can be made (Tebid, 2019:109).

#### 2.5.8 Individual Support Plan

According to the Department of Education (2014:15), the process of identification of support needs would provide sufficient information on how the school and teachers could effectively support a learner. In contrast, Tebid (2019:111) argued that there was a huge need for specific, well-structured and coordinated support strategies that would address the needs of foundation phase teachers and ensure successful implementation of IE. However, the Department of Education (2014:15) maintained that the individual support plan must be provided and followed up through an on-

going review process; and be used at the end of each year when making decisions about progression. However, the Department of Education (2014) expected teachers to identify and support learners who: are in need of an enriched programme; are in need of a support programme; require diagnostic help in specific aspects of a learning programme; have a learning barrier; have problems because of a mismatch between home language and the language of teaching; Tebid (2019:109) asked as to why teachers were expected to perform these responsibilities when they were trained as ordinary classroom teachers.

### 2.5.9 Establishing levels and nature of support

Stage three is a formal assessment and review of the information provided in Stages 1 and 2 (Department of Education, 2014:15). It is in this stage that decisions can be made about the level of support needed and the type of support package needed (Department of Education, 2014:15). This stage is managed and coordinated by the DBST (Department of Education, 2014:15). The approach is a multi-agency one, which requires that all significant partners are involved in decisions about the support package needed (Department of Education, 2014:15). Furthermore, White Paper 6 asserts that the education system must transform to accommodate the full range of barriers to learning and development, including needs caused by intrinsic medical causes ( e.g. disabilities, chronic illness), as well as barriers caused by extrinsic systemic barriers, including socio-economic factors, an inflexible curriculum, problems with language and communication, and poorly-trained educators (Mpu & Adu, 2019:71). However, despite a strongly stated position on the socially-constructed nature of difference and resultant extrinsic contextual barriers, White Paper 6 still depends on a medical model approach when support for diverse barriers to learning is proposed (Mpu & Adu, 2019:71). In addition, it recommends a continuum of support for learners who experience barriers to learning that distinguished between learners with low-intensive support, who receive support in mainstream schools, learners with moderate level support requirements, who are to be accommodated in full-service schools, and learners who require high-intensive educational level support, who are to be accommodated in special schools that will also play a role as resource centres for neighbouring mainstream schools (DoE,2001: Engelbrecht & Van Deventer, 2013 as cited in Mpu & Adu, 2019:71).



#### 2.5.9.1 Low levels of support (Levels 1-2) for day-to-day support in the classroom

A basic but critical package of support is needed at levels 1 to 2, for learners identified as having low support needs (Department of Education, 2014:19). At this level, the process is linked to day-to-day class teaching strategies, changes of culture in the school, and appropriate attitudes within the school community (Department of Education, 2014:19). It is in many ways the most essential stage as it could enhance inclusion and participation (Department of Education, 2014:19). Based on information collected in stages one and two (Sections one and two of the form), teachers, parents and the ILST are made aware of what the barriers within the context might be, not just those perceived to be within the learner (Department of Education, 2014:19). In the process, it may become clear that minor modifications are necessary either at home or in the school or classroom to improve conditions which affect the child's learning and development (Department of Education, 2014:19). This may relate to an improvement in school effectiveness, provisioning, planning and collaboration to improve teaching and learning to the benefit of all learners (Department of Education, 2014:19). Many of the changes that need to be made will affect the whole school with the purpose of developing inclusive cultures, policies and practice (Department of Education, 2014:19-20). The extent to which the schools are able to become inclusive schools will have an impact in the long term on the levels of support needs that they will be able to cater for (Department of Education, 2014:20).

Resources within this package will be primarily located within the classroom, school, home or local community. A formal application for external support, requiring additional funding, will be required only in cases where the identified support cannot be provided by the school without some support from the District office (Department of Education, 2014:20).

However, it has become evident that the procedure for learning support as prescribed in the SIAS document requires teachers to have specific knowledge and skills to enable them to identify and help learners who experience learning difficulties in their classes (Tebid, 2019:109). Therefore, teachers need to be developed into a competent, confident, critical and well-informed corps (Gallant, 2012 cited in Tebid, 2019:109). For this empowerment to occur, Tebid (2019) concurs with Swart and

Pettipher (2011) and Ferguson (2008) that systemic changes as well as levels of support were perceived as needing to increase, in relation to the increased demands that were placed on teachers when managing a diverse range of individual learning needs within a single classroom (Tebid, 2019:109).

#### 2.5.9.2 Coordination of support at school – level by the Institution level Support Team

The decision-making process should involve the ILST (including the Principal or Senior Manager) and parent/caregiver (Department of Education, 2014:20). Where external support is required, the process will also involve the input of the DBST (Department of Education, 2014:20). DBST involvement at levels 1 and 2 should be forthcoming only where minimal physical or material support is required and this is located at, or can only be accessed through the District office (Department of Education, 2014:20). The DBST is responsible for providing information on support available within the local community around the school (Department of Education, 2014:20). A list of these services should be made available to the ILST at each school (Department of Education, 2014:20). Where needed, the DBST is responsible for assisting the school in accessing such support, or coordinating the provision of such support (Department of Education, 2014:20). The DBST will also assist the school through facilitating educator development to assist educators in addressing common barriers to learning in their school community (Department of Education, 2014:20).

An appointed member of the ILST will act as a Lead Professional (LP) in coordinating the meetings with significant partners identified from both within and outside the school (Department of Education, 2014:20). Agreements should be made on what support is needed, where and how to access this, and a process for implementing and monitoring in relation to the impact on the learner and his/her learning (Department of Education, 2014:20).

It is worth mentioning here that before the introduction of IE, the responsibility of assisting learners with barriers to learning lay with specially qualified persons employed either by educational support services or special schools (Tebid, 2019:109). This implied that teachers and schools did not view the assistance of learners experiencing barriers to learning as their responsibility, but rather their duty

was only to identify and refer the learners to more specialised people (Mahlo, 2011 cited in Tebid, 2019:109).

School-based support teams (SBSTs) have been established in full-service and mainstream public schools in South Africa to serve as one of the tools to deal with the challenges teachers faced in implementing IE (Tebid, 2019:108).

#### 2.5.9.3 Moderate level of support (Level 3)

The decision-making process about levels of support and support packages will involve the ILST, parent/caregiver and member of the District Based Support Team (DBST) (Department of Education, 2014:20). The Lead Professional (LP) will be a member of the DBST appointed to coordinate meetings with significant partners, including a member of the ILST and the parent/caregiver (Department of Education, 2014:20).

#### 2.5.9.4 High levels of support Levels 4 – 5)

The decision-making process about levels of support and support packages will involve the ILST, parent/caregiver and member of the District Based Support Team (DBST) (Department of Education, 2014:21). The Lead Professional (LP) will be a member of the DBST appointed to coordinate meetings with significant partners, including a member of the ILST and the parent/caregiver (Department of Education, 2014:21).

#### 2.5.10 Planning, providing and monitoring support

In Stage Four (SNA: Section 3b) of the process, the District Based Support Team (DBST) reviews the motivation for additional support which is outlined in the form The decision-making process about levels of support and support packages will involve the ILST, parent/caregiver and member of the District Based Support Team (DBST) (Department of Education, 2014:21).The Lead Professional (LP) will be a member of the DBST appointed to coordinate meetings with significant partners, including a member of the ILST and the parent/caregiver (Department of Education, 2014:21). There are a number of steps involved in verifying whether the assessment – which has been conducted by the DBST in consultation with the school – is valid, mainly by reviewing whether all supporting documents are attached The decision-

making process about levels of support and support packages will involve the ILST, parent/caregiver and member of the District Based Support Team (DBST) (Department of Education, 2014:21). The Lead Professional (LP) will be a member of the DBST appointed to coordinate meetings with significant partners, including a member of the ILST and the parent/caregiver (Department of Education, 2014:21).

After verification, the proposals for support are analysed and captured into the Action Plan (SNA: Section 3b) (Department of Education, 2014:21). This form is filled in by using the Guidelines for Planners (Department of Education, 2014:21). Care must be taken to review what is already available in the school (Department of Education, 2014:21). If the necessary support can be provided to the school in the form of training, mentoring and resources, this is where it should take place (Department of Education, 2014:21). It is only when the DBST feels that the learner could be more effectively supported in a site where there is more concentrated and full-time support available that a decision is made on placement (Department of Education, 2014:21). Quality assurance and continuous improvement of services will be taken into consideration at the regular reviews before the support programme is renewed (Department of Education, 2014:21).

#### 2.5.11 Learner Profiling

##### 2.5.11.1 Learner Profile

Once the Learner Profile form is completed for a learner, and it is clear that the learner might have additional support needs, the SIAS toolkit is used to achieve a deeper understanding of his/her needs. All information will be recorded on the SIAS form (SNA). (Department of Education, 2014:9).

##### 2.5.11.2 Diagnostic Profile

All diagnostic information will be provided by a doctor, a medical practitioner, or health clinic on the Diagnostic Profile. Any other supporting information, for example, professional assessments, psychologists' or therapists' reports, selected curriculum and any other relevant information, should be kept together with the SNA form, for each learner. (Department of Education, 2014:9).

This profile will follow the learner throughout the GET and FET phase, so that information regarding the learner's experience and his/her progress is readily available (Department of Education, 2014:9).

Such information should be held by the ILST and made available to teachers only if it is necessary, and if the parents/caregivers and/or learner involved, or if the parents/caregiver and/or the learner requests that the information be shared with teachers to make them aware in advance of the needs of the learner (Department of Education, 2014:9). In addition, during the first stage of the SIAS process a Diagnostic Profile (SNA, DP) must be filled in for a child who is at risk (Department of Education, 2014:13).

The DBST must ensure that this form is completed by a health professional working in the district or at special schools or by medical doctor, medical practitioner, therapist in a hospital, primary health care clinic and /or private practice and will help to provide a clearer understanding of the extent of the functional limitations experienced by children who are disabled or ill (Department of Education, 2014:13). However, in itself, this diagnostic profile provides no indication of the education support that is needed by learners, and it may not serve as a recommendation for educational placement or indication of level of support needs (Department of Education, 2014:13).

## **2.6 Continuous professional teacher development towards inclusive education**

The objective of this study was to recommend for an effective development programme for school principals, teachers and school support teams in pilot inclusive school within the DIMAMO circuit. Mestry (2017:6) mentioned that most of the development programmes arranged by education districts deal mainly with curriculum changes such as the NCS, Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and CAPS.

According to the Department of Education (2014:2), the implementation of the SIAS strategy was to be supported by activities over a period of two to five years which included the training of all teachers, managers and Provincial and District officials in the use of the strategy; and extended consultation with other government departments, especially the Department of Health and Social Development to align

services and procedures at all levels. However, Swart and Pettipher (2011) in Tebid (2019:109) asserted that most teachers supported inclusion on condition that adequate funding, appropriate legislation, and collaborative support from administrators, parents, education professionals, and community, accompanied the move to an inclusive system. On the other hand, the South African Council for Educators (SACE) emphasises that like all professionals, teachers and SMTs (including principals) require deep knowledge, which is continuously updated and widened, and which involves complex skills that need to be continually adapted to new circumstances (Mestry, 2017:8). However, researchers such as (Engelbrecht, 2013); (Oswald, 2007) as cited in (Mpu & Adu, 2019:71) argued that the focus on inclusive education in South African teacher education programmes tend to be fragmented and short-term, lacking in-depth content knowledge. For the same reason, Mathibe (2007) in Ntombela (2011:7) maintained that teachers' professional development needs to focus on giving them appropriate attitudes, knowledge, skills and values to perform their tasks well and resourcefully.

Ferguson (2008) as cited in (Tebid, 2019:109) acknowledged that EWP6 on Special Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001) in South Africa – is the policy document which requires that inclusive practices be made available to everybody, everywhere and all the time. This therefore implies that the role of teachers, especially those at the foundation phase, has to change very rapidly as responsibilities mount (Tebid, 2019:109). In addition, Walkins (2012) as cited in Mpu and Adu (2019:71) emphasised that teachers must have a deeper understanding of inclusive education and diversity; knowledge and range of skills to collaborate widely with all stakeholders; engage in inclusive instructional planning by being reasonably prepared to anticipate and be responsive to high-priority needs within regular classrooms; and effectively support learners with diverse learning needs to participate fully in all classroom activities, rather than being supported in separate special classrooms or resource centres.

There is a concern by researchers (Engelbrecht & Van Deventer, 2013); (Kozleski & Siuty, 2014); (Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel & Tlale, 2014); (Oswald, 2007), as cited in Mpu and Adu (2019:71) that student teachers complete their training without any sustained interaction with learners who experience barriers to learning and development especially those with disabilities so that their ability to translate and

enact what they have learnt in mainstream classrooms remain questionable. In other words, teacher education programmes appear not to focus in depth on what Loreman (2010) calls the essential outcomes for inclusive education-related teacher education programmes (Mpu & Adu, 2019:71). Thus, schools should be encouraged to strengthen professional learning communities within schools and engage with those who need to change their practice (Mestry, 2017:9).

## **2.7 Managing the involvement of parents and caregivers towards inclusive education**

The objective of this study was to describe the experiences of teachers on the extent to which the four pilot inclusive mainstream schools in the circuit encourage parental and community involvement in the education of the learners and how the schools make use of the contributions by parents and community to support the progress of learners. According to the Department of Education (2014:12), the school should obtain information that relates to the learner's family and home situation, by recognising that the child's identity is influenced by his/her family structure, the level and nature of contact with immediate family members or care-givers, such as siblings, parents, extended family. The parent/caregiver's understanding of the child is sought to provide a perspective on the child's strengths and weaknesses, goals and aspirations, interests and personality (Department of Education, 2014:12). Such information is necessary to provide a picture of the child through the way he/she is able to present him/herself at home and in other environments (Department of Education, 2014:12).

In some cases the parent/caregiver's understanding of the child may in fact emerge as the barrier to learning and development, or a teacher's perspective may present as a barrier in the classroom (Department of Education, 2014:13). Such assessments demand extreme sensitivity to reach a non-biased, balanced appraisal (Department of Education, 2014:13).

According to Smith, Polloway, Patton and Dowdy (2012:58) parents should be encouraged to visit the school to observe their children in the classroom. Although the parent's presence could cause some disruption in the daily routine, the school personnel need to keep in mind that parents have a critical stake in the success of the educational effort (Smith et al., 2012:58).

## **2.8. Managing school structural and organisational changes towards inclusive education**

### **2.8.1 Environmental changes**

As in other countries, research studies on the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa have pointed out that additional complex contextual issues including funding constraints that affect the availability of resources, resultant overcrowded classrooms and school cultures that influence attitude towards difference and disability, have complicated the implementation of the recommendations of White Paper 6 (Walton, 2011; Walton & Lloyd, 2011 as cited in Mpu & Adu, 2019:71).

Apart from the barriers arising out of conceptualising inclusive education, the other barriers include stereotypic attitudes, inaccessible curriculum, inadequate resources, teachers not adequately trained, lack of parental involvement and lack of multidisciplinary orientation (Poornima, 2012 cited in Rajendran, Athira & Elavarasi, 2020:170). Of all these factors, teacher competencies and the teachers' positive attitude are considered vital as at the end it is teachers who has to teach students with diverse nature in their classroom and implement the principles of inclusive education in true sense (Meijer, 2011 cited in Rajendran et al., 2020:170). It was also documented that teachers are not adequately trained and lack competencies to practice inclusive education across the globe (Rajendran et al., 2020:170).

### **2.8.2 Organisational changes**

According to the researchers; interactions between teachers and educators are important social processes that contribute to every learner's academic, social and emotional development ( Luckener & Pianta,2011 cited in Mpu & Adu, 2019:70). Whilst the restructuring and reorganisation of educational policy in response to national and global imperatives for development of inclusive education might shape broader social and institutional contexts in which educators operate, it is their personal interpretations and understandings, as well as their day –to-day enactment of inclusion, which determines the way in which policy is reformulated in practice (Sikes, Lawson & Parker, 2007 cited in Mpu & Adu, 2019:70).Consequently, their attitudes towards inclusive education and understanding about its meaning and implementation are crucial elements in the success of inclusive education (Mpu &



Adu, 2019:70). The way in which they implement inclusive education practices in their classrooms are therefore not only likely to be influenced by systemic contextual factors, including for example , the ethos within their own schools as well as the wider educational system's approach to inclusive education, but importantly, also by their understanding of inclusive education (Mpu & Adu, 2019:70).

## **2.9 Management and school governance collaboration towards Inclusion**

The objective of this research study was to describe the collaboration strategies among stakeholders in education as experienced by principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit in the Capricorn District of Education, Limpopo Province.

The findings revealed that a culture of collaboration is not entrenched in the schools (Tebid, 2019:119). However, collaborative consultative relationships need to be established following a holistic, integrated approach in order to deal effectively with barriers to learning and development, which may be present at various levels of the system (Tebid, 2019:119).

According to Smith, Polloway, Patton, Dowdy (2012:51) good communication between the school and parents is critical if a true collaborative relationship is developed but however, many parents feel that too little communication takes place between them and the school (Smith et al., 2012:51).In accordance with the above, the next paragraph describes the functional roles of the School Governing Body.

### **2.9.1. The School Governing Body (SGB) and development of institutions**

The Department of Basic education (2014) outlined the following role of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in promoting inclusive education:

- (a) SGBs must ensure that the culture, ethos and policies of the school are inclusive, promote participation of all learners and reduce exclusionary practices;
- (b) A sub-committee of the SGB must be established to oversee learner support and inclusion;
- (c) SGBs must monitor the implementation of the SIAS process at school and ensure that every possible measure is taken to provide reasonable accommodation for

learners with additional support needs, including learners with disabilities (Department of Basic Education, 2014:35).

Dauids (2020:2) maintained that SGBs are considered an enactment of the principles of inclusivity of all the stakeholders and decentralisation of authority and have been constructed with the intention of addressing a very specific agenda, namely cultivating democracy through parental and community participation. In addition, Recchia and Lee (2013:60) emphasised that inclusive communities are best established and sustained when key stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, and policy makers have a shared vision that is supported by state and national policies. Furthermore, Dauids (2020:2) highlighted that the function of SGBs is that of the overall functioning and financial wellbeing of the school.

Despite the roles outlined above, Dauids (2020:6-7) stated that according to a report by Corruption Watch (2018:13), within the first six months of 2018, 10.8 percentage of the cases of corruption received showed a continuing trend of principals, SGB members and staff members conspiring and colluding to rob schools of funds and resources or to flout procurement and employment processes, with the sole goal of creating favourable conditions for acquaintances, friends and relatives who seek procurement deals and employment opportunities. In addition, according to Mohapi and Netshitangani (2018); and Xaba (2011) as cited in Dauids (2020:6), the incapacity of parents to fulfil the governance function is frequently used by principals to justify why they often assume the responsibility of the SGB.

### 2.9.2. The School Management Team and institutional structures

Education White Paper N0.6 of 2001 requires a teaching and learning environment that consists of the following three functional and effective structures:

- (a) Governance structure (SGB) as prescribed by the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1998
- (b) Management structure (SMT) as prescribed by Employment of Educators Act (EEA) of 1998
- (c) Support structure (SBST) as prescribed by EWP6 of 2001.

### 2.9.3 School level (SBST) by the School Principal

As prescribed by EWP6 of 2001, teaching alone is not sufficiently enough. Support service is crucial in the delivery of education for all learners. Structures must exist at different levels. For the same reason, Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014) in Brown and Buthelezi (2020:2) identified the following primary functions of the SBST:

- Organizing all learner, teacher, and curriculum support in the school;
- Finding school needs with a focus on barriers to learning at learner, teacher, curriculum and school levels;
- Developing appropriate in-class and school-based strategies to address those needs;
- Encouraging collegial/ peer support;
- Drawing upon additional resources from within and outside the school to address these challenges;
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an action-reflection framework.

In contrast, the research study conducted by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:12) revealed that Institutional Level support teams (ILSTs) are not operational in most of the participating schools in their research study, and that the participating schools' current activities are mostly limited to the identification of learners that experience barriers to learning, without reaching the stage where learners are exposed to support programmes to make their participation in school programmes meaningful.

### 2.9.4 Whole school issues

Issues in this category include developing policies, infrastructure, culture, partnerships, identifying barriers to learning, implementing action plans, monitoring progress, reducing barriers, making schools accessible for all learners. Findings in the study conducted by Ntombela (2007) suggested that teachers in the three schools that participated in the study had had very limited experiences of the policy statement in terms of information, training and/or support in preparation for the development of an inclusive system of education (Ntombela, 2007:9). On the other hand, Kalenga and Chikoko (2014:329) concede that mainstream schools should be moved into a zone of possibilities in which some of the challenges are transformed

into opportunities, and thus, stress the need for developing the school's top executive. Moreover, according to Parker and Day (1997) in Horrocks, White and Roberts (2008:1464) the principal must manage and coordinate resources for curriculum and instruction in ways that support inclusion; monitor and support individual learner progress; and supervise teaching to continually encourage and strengthen that culture.

#### 2.9.5 Teacher support issues

Principals and SGBs should not be entirely dependent on the DoE for the professional development of principals and staff at their schools. The SGB should set aside funds to accommodate the professional development of principals and teaching staff. (Mestry, 2017:9).

Schools should be encouraged to strengthen professional learning communities within schools and engage with those who need to change their practice. (Mestry, 2017:9). In terms of the Department of Basic Education (2014:10) the SBST should respond to teachers' requests for assistance with support plans for learners experiencing barriers to learning. Issues in this category include skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that educators need to respond effectively to diverse learner needs. A teacher in Harvey-Koepin's (2006) study as cited in Allan (2008:17) conveyed a strong sense of guilt that inclusion was not possible because "it takes more human hands than are available". In addition, the results of the study conducted by Romm, Nel and Tlale (2013) showed that South African teachers do not collaborate in a way they should with one another, with principals, with the District Office, with professionals such as psychologists and speech therapists, and with the Universities (Romm, Nel & Tlale, 2013:7). The SBST should facilitate, provide support and developmental programmes for educators. However, according to Croll and Moses (2000); Ballard (2003a); Thomas and Vanghan (2004); Mittler (2000) and Hanko (2005) as cited in Allan (2008:2) teachers are increasingly talking about inclusion as impossibility in the current climate and are lacking confidence in their own competence to deliver inclusion with existing resources. Alternatively, Nel, Muller, Hugo, Helldin and Backman (2011:88) recommended further research on specific needs of teachers with regard to Inclusive education in mainstream schools

by obtaining information at National and district level to establish a clear picture of teachers' needs and attitudes.

#### 2.9.6 Learner support issues

Dixon (2005:51) argued that if proper supports are provided for the regular classroom teacher, the situation where the difference between the [learner] with the disability and those without are so great to merit a non-inclusive setting, would be rare. In the same way this research study has argued that a diversity of learners experiences a diversity of barriers to learning because of their individuality and their developmental conditions. The SBST should work with educators by offering support programmes. However, the Department of Basic Education (2014:10) has mandated the SBST to review teacher-developed support plans and provide direction and support in respect of additional strategies, programmes, services and resources to strengthen the Individual support Plan (ISP). By way of contrast, Dyson in Clough and Corbett (2000:85) argued that simply removing barriers to learning is likely to change to any significant degree, the life-chances of many children as new and more barriers will simply emerge to take their place.

#### 2.9.7 Implementing SIAS policy

The Directorate of Inclusive education and Public Special schools in the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education has outlined the following multifarious roles and responsibilities of the SBST among others as identifying learners with learning barriers; assessing support needs; referring complex cases to relevant structures; supporting learners with barriers; recommending learners for admission; developing Individual support Plans for learners with barriers; managing SIAS Toolkit and Protocol; administering Examination concessions; keeping records of diagnostic profiles and learner profiles; developing networks with stakeholders; organising awareness and parent sessions; developing intervention strategies and promoting diversity; promoting inclusion and recognising diversity (Limpopo Department of Education, Directorate: Inclusive Education and public Special schools). However, Allan (2008:16) argues that for parents of disabled children [children with disabilities], the lack of information about provision options and schools' and education authorities' apparent unwillingness to accept their children in mainstream create frustration and often intense pain.

The EWP6 (Department of Education, 2001) has recommended the development of SBSTs, whose function is to identify and address specific barriers to learning through problem-solving (Tebid, 2019:113). The SBST is a dedicated and specially skilled group of teachers who identify problems and give support in the schools (Tebid, 2019:113). Teachers cannot meet all the challenges alone and need support to deal with the problems that exist in the schools on a daily basis (Tebid, 2019:113). The SBST supports class teachers by making recommendations for intervention within the school and classroom (Tebid, 2019:113). The primary function of the SBST is to discuss specific needs and problems referred by teachers in the school and to come up with ideas and solutions for intervention (Tebid, 2019:113). According to Walton, Nel, Muller and Lebeloane (2014) as cited in Tebid (2019:113), if the SBST is not in a position to support learners and teachers, it is advised that the DBST should step in and provide additional support necessary as well as monitor its implementation.

#### 2.9.8 District Level by District-Based Support Team (DBST)

The research study conducted by Donohue and Bornman (2014:8) revealed that education officials in South Africa were unsure regarding the goals of inclusive education, with some officials reporting they were unclear about how ordinary and special schools would be transformed into schools more suitable for inclusive education. In addition, Wilderman and Nomondo (2007) stated that other officials were confused about the parameters of barriers to learning and exactly how these barriers would be addressed within inclusive schools (in Donohue & Bornman, 2014:8). Ntombela (2011:13-14) argued that changing the existing culture of exclusion, individualism, and marginalization in schools to an inclusive one will take substantial amounts of time to achieve, far more than is currently allocated. To unlearn all the teachings of the deficit paradigm and learn a new one will take years of re-training, dialogue, debates, demonstrations, practice and information sharing at school and district level (Ntombela, 2011:14). One of the ways the DBST has shown its commitment to empower teachers in school through the SBST is by appointing learning support educators to address those on the spot issues which the DBST could not reach (Tebid, 2019:113). The learning support educators are permanent in schools and they are expected to provide support to teachers on issues regarding curriculum and whole school improvement to ensure that the teaching and learning

framework is responsive to the full range of learning needs (Mahlo, 2011 cited in Tebid, 2019:113). However, comments made by an inclusive education coordinator at the district as well as from anecdotal evidence show that the learning support educators have not been given clear guidelines on what and how they should be doing in schools in terms of supporting teachers (Tebid, 2017 cited in Tebid, 2019:113). The DBST manages support for the curriculum, including IE at the district level, and is the channel through which support should be provided (Tebid, 2019:112). The EWP6 (Department of Education, 2001) has maintained that the focus of the DBST is also to introduce in-service training for all involved in the education system , in order to upgrade their knowledge and skills and to provide a framework for service delivery at district level and learning sites (Tebid, 2019:112). DBST coordinators can play a vital role in building effective teaching and learning as well as in designing a flexible curriculum in order to address the barriers to learning and encourage the participation of learners (Tebid, 2019:112).

The DBST must identify all special schools and resource centres (SSRCs) and should ensure that mainstream schools are clustered around these SSRCs (Tebid, 2019:112). The district's role is also to ensure that these SSRCs should be linked to the schools so that they will be providing specialised support to teachers, learners and the community (Makhalemele, 2011 cited in Tebid, 2019:112).

In line with the above, research by Makhalemele (2011) found that DBST members have come to terms with the fact that their roles have changed over time, and that they now include, amongst other things; the provision of resources to schools; the evaluation programmes and suggestions for modifications; the provision of collaborative formal and informal support with communities, educational institutions and other sectors (Tebid, 2019:112). Their findings also revealed that the DBST members find it difficult to fulfil these roles (Tebid, 2019:112). The DBST roles are not being executed successfully, due to insufficient support received from the Department of Basic Education (macro level) and exo levels and because there are gaps in the responsibilities of the provincial departments and the districts (Tebid, 2019:112).

According to Foley and Sigler (2009), creating whole systems of successful schools requires school districts to be a key player in reform and within the education system (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018:2).

#### 2.9.9 Provincial level (Province-Based Support Team) (PBST) by Head of Department (HOD)

Donohue and Bornman (2014:8) highlighted that the Department of Education appears to have deficits in funding to provide to schools, while schools currently lack the capacity to accommodate diverse learners in one classroom and they further recommend that funding be increased in the short term so that schools can make the infrastructure changes that are needed.

### **2.10 Disadvantages and hiccups of inclusive education for learners, teachers, principals and the Department of Basic Education**

#### 2.10.1 Disadvantages and hiccups of inclusive education for the learners

The study conducted by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) revealed that mainstream schools are not accommodating learners that experience barriers to learning in large numbers. As a result learners do not receive the needed support. In the same way, Odom, Buysse, and Soukakou (2011) as cited in Recchia and Lee (2013:60) found that there has been less progress in the previous decade in placing learners with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. In instances where learners experiencing barriers to learning are admitted in mainstream schools, Kalenga and Chikoko (2014:328) caution that mainstream schools may become dumping sites for such learners and that not only are learners likely to be more excluded, teachers and school managers in mainstream schools called upon to absorb learners with special needs are likely to resent their work environment due to a sense of hopelessness. In addition, Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) revealed that learners with barriers to learning are condoned to next grades without being offered the support that is needed.

#### 2.10.2 Disadvantages and hiccups of inclusive education for the teachers

On the one hand, the South African teachers perceived that their expertise was not sought when Inclusive Education policies were planned and that they were not consulted when in-service training on SIAS was compiled and introduced by the



National Department of Education (Nel, Muller, Hugo, Helldin & Backman, 2011:87).As a result, Dreyer (2017:8) cautioned that mainstream teachers do not feel confident enough or sufficiently qualified to offer the kind of specialist support they believe is needed by some of the learners in their classes. The argument by researchers cited above highlight that teachers were not trained properly on implementation of inclusive education. Teachers were faced with training which Lessing and de Wit (2007) in Ntombela (2011:7) argued that using once-off training sessions for teachers have shown to be ineffective.

In accordance with the above, Stainback and Stainback (1982) in Horrocks, White and Roberts (2008:1471) argued that many teachers with longer tenure had been educated in non-inclusive schools and therefore, have little or no knowledge to guide their responses toward learners with barriers to learning. By way of example, Harvey-Koepin (2006) as cited in Allan (2008:2) reported that teachers in the United States who were previously willing to include learners with learning barriers in their classrooms, have begun to refuse them because of concerns that their low test scores would have a negative effect on their own school careers.

Consequently, Hargreaves(1994) argued that if more and more work is added onto the existing structures and responsibilities, and little is taken away, and less is restructured to fit the new expectations and demands of teaching, educators become overloaded, their work intensifies, they feel guilty all the time and are remorselessly pressed for time (cited by Materechera in Legotlo, 2014:171).

### 2.10.3 Disadvantages and hiccups of inclusive education for the principals

According to Mampane (2017:186) principals cannot monitor the process of teacher support because of their lack and depth of knowledge of inclusive education. The researcher has highlighted the principals' lack of knowledge attributed by poor development workshops offered to principals. In the same way, Mestry (2017:6) argued that the quality of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes offered to principals leaves much to be desired. It is the responsibility of principals to provide leadership in SBTs within the schools. Tebid, (2019:108) argued that although the SBTs are working very hard towards strengthening teacher capacity, their hard work is not visible compared to the challenges that teachers experience in

schools. This means efforts by SBSTs to not equal the challenges that teachers and learners face within the schools.

#### 2.10.4 Disadvantages and hiccups of inclusive education for the Department of Basic Education

Geldenhys and Wevers (2013) as cited in Mpu and Adu (2019:71-72) asserted that although on the one hand, curriculum transformation has integrated inclusive education by bringing in flexible teaching methods, assessment, pace of teaching and the development of learning material (DoE, 2001), on the other hand, the current Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) does not support the requirements of a flexible curriculum as stated in Education White Paper 6.

In accordance with the above, the policy on SIAS requires teachers to identify learners with barriers to learning and to provide remedial support to these learners (Department of Basic Education, 2020a:5). However, this is not happening in most schools due to large classes which results in the exclusion of learners from learning despite being present in school (Department of Basic Education, 2020a:5). Moreover, Nel et al (2014) in Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018:2) highlighted that few schools in South Africa have adequate access to support services from DBST. According to Tebid (2019:112) there are other barriers that hinder the DBST's service delivery. An example is the inadequate facilities and infrastructure that are available to DBST members to provide education support services at the district level, more specifically, the inadequate availability of human resource and transport for officials to visit schools (Makhalemele, 2011 cited in Tebid, 2019:112-113). One setback for the Department of Education's efforts on inclusive education is the lack of funds in schools (Meltz et al, 2014:7) and deficits by the Department of Education to provide funding for schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014:8) that are responsible for delaying the implementation of inclusive education.

#### **2.11 Summary**

In conclusion, this study was aimed at investigating the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in managing inclusive education in pilot mainstream inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn District of Education, Limpopo Province. This chapter has

presented a description and a critical evaluation of past research relating to the implementation of Inclusive education in mainstream inclusive schools; in line with my attempt to meet the four objectives (objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4) as presented in Chapter One of this study.

In accordance with its aim and objectives above, this chapter has presented and critically interpreted the findings of other researchers on the experiences of principals in managing the school as organisations for Inclusive Education. In addition, this chapter has interpreted the findings of other researchers about the experiences of principals, teachers, SMTs, EAs and SBSTs in relation to the provision of curriculum, resources, classroom management and professional development. Moreover, this chapter has explored on the experiences of principals and teachers in collaborating with different education support structures and governance structures. Lastly, this chapter has presented previous research studied related to how principals, teachers, EAs and SBSTs experience and understand the involvement of parents and the community in issues concerned to Inclusive Education. The next chapter presents a comprehensive outline of the research methodology and designs for this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

#### 3.1 Introduction

This study was aimed at bringing forth the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in managing Inclusive education within the DIMAMO Circuit and how to address these experiences. Chapter 1 of this study has outlined the purpose and objectives and summary of the methodology for this study. The previous chapter presented a description and a critical evaluation of past research relating to the management of inclusive education.

In accordance with the above, this chapter firstly presented the paradigm that underpins the research approach for the study. Secondly, the chapter outlined how the sites and participants for the study were selected. Thirdly, the chapter outlined the data collection and instrumentation procedures I have followed. Fourthly, the chapter presented issues relating to the credibility and trustworthiness of this research study. Finally, the chapter outlined issues relating to research ethics.

#### 3.2 An interpretive research paradigm

This study has followed an interpretive research paradigm. In fact, interpretive paradigm recognises that truth is subjective because the researcher is part of the world under review and its organisations and institutions are viewed as a constructed social reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:20). In the same way, I have focused on the subjective lived experiences of school principals and teachers in the management of inclusive education within their pilot inclusive primary and secondary schools.

Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:21) stated that the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. In the same way, I have focused on the in-depth understanding of school principals in managing inclusive schools and in-depth understanding towards experiences of teachers in managing inclusive classrooms.

In accordance with the above, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:22) stated that the aim of scientific investigation for the interpretive researcher is to understand how reality goes on at one time and in one place and compare it with what goes on in different times and places. The management of inclusive education takes place in both primary and secondary school. For the same reason, I have sought to explore the experiences of principals and teachers in managing the implementation of inclusive education at schools where they were employed at the time of the study. In addition, I have focused on both types of schools in order to compare the experiences of teachers in both primary and secondary public school. Interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretation of the world around them (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:22).

In addition to the above, interpretive paradigm is used for understanding peoples' experiences in their natural setting (Chilisa & Preece, 2005 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:20) as knowledge is dependent on the human experience and guided by the culture, history, and the context in which people live (Ngozwana, 2018:20). In the same way, I have visited participants at their schools because their schools were natural settings where they were employed and were influenced by the organisational culture that took place there. In addition, my focus was to interview research participants within their local context. For instance, In the study conducted by Ngozwana (2018), interpretive paradigm was considered to be the most relevant paradigm for qualitative research undertaken, because of the focus on the subjective beliefs of the participants which needed to be understood in relation to the local context (Ngozwana, 2018:20).

Furthermore, interpretive researchers believe that there are many, equally valid, interpretations of reality, and that these interpretations are dependent on when they are made and the context in which they are made, i.e. they are time and context dependent (Biggam, 2011:137). In the same way, I attempted to make an in-depth description, interpretation, and evaluation of the experiences of school principals, SMTs, classroom teachers, EAs and SBSTs in managing the implementation of inclusive education in the pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit in Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province.

### **3.3 Qualitative research method**

This study was a qualitative research study. I based this study on a constructivist philosophy that assumes that reality is an interactive, shared social experience, which is interpreted by individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:20). In other words, peoples' perceptions are what they consider real and they, direct their actions, thoughts and feelings accordingly (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:20). In the same way, this study explored the experiences of principals, teachers and school-based support teams in managing inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit within the Capricorn South District of Limpopo province. According to Berkhout (2010:35) qualitative research seeks to explore and explain phenomena from the perspectives of those who are studied. For the same reason, I have selected participants who were able to provide in-depth information about the phenomenon explored in this study.

### **3.4 Phenomenological research approach**

This qualitative study used phenomenological research approach. In particular, a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation (Leedy & Ormond, 2013:145). In addition, English and English (1958) in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:22) define phenomenology as a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality. Furthermore, phenomenological approaches are more effective in describing rather than explaining subjective realities, the insights, beliefs, motivation and actions and folk wisdom (Husserl, 1977) by clearly showing the research participants rather than hiding (Plummer, 1983; Stanley & Wise, 1993 cited in Quotoshi, 2018:219).

In accordance with the above, I have sought to find out how things appeared directly to participants and had focused on the participants' shared experiences on beliefs, intentions, values and self-understanding with regard to the management of inclusive education. Moreover, I have described, verified and interpreted the perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of principals, SMTs, classroom teachers, EAs and

SBSTs in managing the implementation of inclusive education in the pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit in the Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province.

In comparison to the above, Biggam (2011:138) states that phenomenology research is interested in how the world appears to others, i.e. in subjective experiences. In the same way, I have described and explained the experiences of principals, teachers and school-based support teams in managing inclusive education within mainstream pilot inclusive schools.

Furthermore, Leedy and Ormond (2013:145) state that the actual implementation of phenomenological study is as much in the hands of the participants as in the hands of the researcher. In addition, Yildiz (2020:18) maintains that conducting research epistemologically requires being sincere and close with the participants as far as possible. As MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:24) put “the aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a description of its ‘essence’, allowing for reflection and analysis.” Similarly, through efforts of collaboration with participants, I have attempted in this study, to bring forth a “thick description” of the views and experiences of participants.

### **3.5 Sites and Sample selection**

#### **3.5.1 Sites Selection**

I have collected data from two pilot inclusive primary schools and two pilot inclusive secondary schools, located within the DIMAMO circuit in the Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province. Table 3.1 below illustrate the school selected for this study. These four schools are all public schools. One primary school and one secondary school are located in the township whereas the other two are located in villages. In accordance with the above, Yildiz (2020:18) stressed that it is indisputably very important to carry out the research in the natural setting where the participants live, exist, and work. In the same way, I have selected these four pilot inclusive schools as sites for the study by taking into account the nature of their diversity and that the study was to be conducted within their natural settings. In addition, selected four pilot inclusive schools were selected as good sites to produce meaningful results for the research objectives and in answering the research

question. In addition, the four pilot inclusive schools had recent experience in implementing Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education. Consequently, I visited the selected school more than once to conduct interviews and had to know the practises within these schools much better. In fact, being present in those settings meant understanding and evaluating correctly what the participants said (Creswell, 2015:20 cited in Yildiz, 2020:18).

### 3.5.2 Purposive sampling

This study was based on non-probability and purpose sampling rather than probability or random sampling. In particular, Maree (2007:79) defined purposive sampling as a sampling method in which participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study. At the time of this study, there were 15 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and one special school for learners living with intellectual and physical disabilities within the DIMAMO Circuit. Four schools were sampled for this study. The schools were sampled based on their defined characteristic of being selected by the Limpopo Department of Education to function as mainstream pilot inclusive schools. Out of the four schools, two primary schools and two secondary schools were sampled. Rudestam and Newton (2015:123) put it that the qualitative researcher is deliberate and purposeful in seeking participants who are likely to contribute to a deeper understanding of the questions or topics posed by the study. The four schools were mandated by the Capricorn South District to attend meetings on inclusive education and to start implementing inclusive education policies since the year 2012. I expected the schools to provide sufficient information to address the research question and objectives of this study. Furthermore, Smith, Flowers and Larking (2009:48) state that samples are selected purposefully (rather than through probability methods) because they can offer a research project insight into a particular experience (cited in Alase, 2017:13). I identified participants based on the research question that the study had to answer (Leedy & Ormond, 2013:152).

For the same reasons as above, participants for this study were selected from amongst a homogeneous sample pool of participants to understand the true make-up of the research subject-matter (Alase, 2017:13). All participants for this study were sampled from the four mainstream pilot inclusive schools in DIMAMO Circuit. In



addition, Rudestam and Newton (2015:123) a phenomenological study usually involves identifying and locating participants who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon that is being explored. I identified the principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants from the four sampled schools as they were directly involved with the implementation of inclusive education at their schools. Furthermore, the participants were selected according to preselected criteria relevant to the research question (Maree, 2007:79). Creswell (2012:146) as cited in Alase (2017:13) suggested that when selecting participants for a study, it is important to determine the size of the sample you will need. In a phenomenological research tradition, the size of the participants can be between 2 and 25 (Alase 2017:13). Initially, through regular consultation with the management and contact with individual staff members of the four schools, I managed to have 20 individuals who agreed to participate in this study. Correspondingly, the principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools in the DIMAMO circuit, were identified in the research question and in the research title as participants for the study. In addition, I selected participants from these schools, who were able to provide the best information to address the purpose of the study. However, my intention was to achieve an in-depth understanding of selected individuals, not to select a sample that will represent accurately a defined population (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996:218). In addition, MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:136) stated that the researcher will use subjects [participants] who happen to be accessible or who may represent certain types of characteristics.

In a similar manner as above, I considered the following characteristics and hierarchy that existed in the schools when selecting participants:

- The principal for being in charge of the management and implementation processes for Inclusive education at the school and for being involved in strategic decision-making and leading the SBST.
- The Departmental Heads (DH) for being in middle management and for being charged with staff development, curriculum monitoring and member of the SBST. In fact, they regularly hold curriculum meetings with Post level 1 educators and coordinators of SBSTs.

- Post level 1 (CS1) classroom teachers as providers of teaching and learning and implementers of inclusive education in the classroom.
- Education Assistants were selected because of being assistants to teachers in classrooms; which was a temporary arrangement by Department of Basic Education; supported through Presidential Youth employment Initiative (PYEI) in public schools during the period of Covid-19 lockdown.

Table 3. 1: sites and selection of participants

Total number of pilot inclusive Schools	Number of Principals	Number of Departmental Heads	Number of level 1 educators	Number of Education Assistants	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
4	4	4	6	6	<b>20</b>

I have formulated Table 3.1 above to illustrate schools and participants sampled for this study. The table above indicates the initial number of schools and individuals who showed their willingness to participate. This table presented a total of 20 participants who gave consent to participate in the study before the process of data collection. During the process of data collection (period of interview) the number of participants who consented dropped to 18 participants. Two participants withdrew from the process. Table 4.3 in chapter 4 of this study presented the characteristics and final number of participants involved at the completion of this study. Thus, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:328) cautioned that qualitative researchers are guided by circumstances and that a study may have a small sample size, but the researcher may be continually returning to the same situation or the same informants, seeking confirmation.

### **3.6 Data collection techniques and Instrumentation**

In describing the process of data collection, Creswell (2012:140-141) noted that the process involves the steps of determining the participants to study, obtaining permission needed from several individuals and organisations, considering what type of information to collect from several sources available to qualitative research (cited in Alase, 2017:15). Similarly, I have collected data from principals, Departmental

Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools through one-on-one interviews (Appendix F). Interviews are explained by Rozakis (2004) in (Ngozwana, 2018:20) as personal meetings with individuals or groups. I have met each participant as an individual who participated in this study at their own schools and at the time they chose to be interviewed. Smith, Flowers and Larking (2009:57) stated that a qualitative research interview is often described as a conversation with a purpose (Alase, 2017:15). However, this purpose is informed implicitly at least, by a research question. (Alase, 2017:15). The main research question for this study was: What were the views and experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools in managing the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive public schools within the DIMAMO Circuit?

Having considered the above information, I adapted the following steps as proposed by Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:306) in preparing and conducting research interviews: The steps are as follows:

### 3.6.1 Defining the purpose of the study

According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:306) the first step in this study was to define the purpose of the study.

#### 3.6.1.1 Purpose of the study

As outlined in Chapter 1, the aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools in managing the implementation of Inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province.

#### 3.6.1.2 Objectives of the study

As outlined in Chapter 1, the objectives of this study were to:-

- Describe the management, leadership and communication strategies that principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools experienced in pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.

- Interpret how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools experienced curriculum provisions and resources in pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.
- Describe how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools experienced the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators in pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.
- Evaluating how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools experienced and the involvement of parents and community in the pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.

### 3.6.2 Designing the interview format

Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:309) stated that in qualitative research, the interview format is not so tightly structured because the researcher's goal was to help respondents express their views of a phenomenon in their own terms. Similarly, I have used unstructured interview schedule (Appendix F) to interview principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools. However, Rudestam and Newton (2015:127) stated that phenomenological researchers generally prepare some questions in advance, preferring to alter them if doing so seems appropriate as the interview progress. I have used the main research question, the sub-questions, and research objectives to formulate questions to guide the format of the research interview sessions.

### 3.6.3 Conducting the interviews

#### 3.6.3.1 Unstructured interviews

I have engaged principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools on one-to-one unstructured interview schedule (Appendix F) for at least 60 minutes per session. Instead of writing on a questionnaire, the participants responded by giving the information orally and face-to-face (Best and Kahn (1993:251). I used open-ended questions to allow the interview process to flow well. I allowed participants to express their responses in line with questions aligned to the objectives of this study. The purpose was to obtain

rich information on the experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants of pilot inclusive schools selected for this study. Smith, Flowers and Larking (2009:57) as cited in (Alase, 2017:15) stated that the interviewing process allows the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions are modified in the light of participants' response, and the investigator is able to enquire after any other interesting areas which arise. I have probed individual interviewee on aspects that I needed more clarity. The interviews with school principals and Departmental Heads of schools took place in their individual offices at school. In addition, the interviews with principals and Departmental Heads were lengthy as they exceeded 60 minutes. Principals took time explaining the source documents they used to implement inclusive education and the challenges they face as school managers. However, interviews with classroom teachers and Education Assistants took place in separate rooms that were chosen by participant away from the main staffroom but within the schools yard. Consequently, from my observation, the participants felt at ease, found the setting safe, confided in me and I never interrupted each one of them as they talked (Yildiz, 2020:20). As a result, the one-to-one in-depth interview proved useful in this study and uncovered the participants' perspectives that were linked to the research objectives and questions.

I conducted the interviews by myself and had created an opportunity to gain experience in conducting interviews. I obtained information from literature sources on past research studies that used interviews to collect data from research participants. In addition, I made use of knowledge gained from attending workshops that were arranged by UNISA at the Polokwane Unisa regional campus. In fact, the literature sources I accessed on research methodology and inclusive education have provided me with enough information to command the subject matter of this study and knew what the study had to do (Yildiz, 2020:20). However, I was aware that this data collection method has a weakness of being dependent entirely on openness and honesty from participants. As a result, I remained sensitive to participants during data collection and had never tried to force participants to answer questions that they did not want to answer (Maree, 2007:89). I even allowed participants to respond in a language that we agreed whenever they found it difficult to respond in English language,

### 3.6.4 Data collection instruments

I made use of field notes and tape recorder to provide accurate and relatively complete records. This study has supported the view as expressed by Best and Kahn (1993:253) that recording interviews on tape is preferred because they are convenient and inexpensive and obviate the necessity of writing during the interview, which may be distracting to both interviewer and participant. In contrast, Rudestam and Newton (2015:127) recommended the use of tape recorders to record interviews and place little reliance on the use of field notes. However, Yildiz (2020:20) cautioned that using recording devices during interviews can be a problem. Nobody usually likes to be recorded (Yildiz, 2020:20). For the purpose of this study, I have explained to the participants about the use of voice recordings in this study. In addition I have personally provided participants with participant information sheet (Appendix D) before they consented to participate in this study. In addition to the above, I have discussed with each individual selected for the study on how data would be collected and that the data collected was generally non-sensitive. In addition, I considered that participants were adults from mainstream pilot inclusive schools and not from a vulnerable research population. Moreover, I obtained permission from participants before using tape recorders to record the interviews because it is unethical according to Best and Kahn (1993:253) to record interviews without the knowledge and permission of the research participants. In addition, I made arrangements with the school principals and concerned participants to avoid days and times of loadshedding as recordings required electricity connections.

Having considered the above, I avoided note taking during the interview as it could have restricted participants to reveal more needed information. However, I transcribed data the same day after the interview. Transcribing data the same day gave me time to comment and make preliminary analysis of the interview session at an earliest convenience. According to (Quotoshi, 2018:219), the data collection and meaning making in phenomenological research takes place simultaneously.

### 3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

According to Mathipa and Gumbo (2015:38) the researcher should clearly explain how to analyse data and the adopted or adapted techniques. For the same reason, I have analysed and interpreted data gathered through unstructured interviews.

Furthermore, Ngulube (2015:132) holds the view that qualitative data analysis is concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognising, coding, mapping, exploring and describing patterns, trends, themes and categories in the raw data, in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meaning. In the same way, I have transformed and explored raw data about the lived experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in managing inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit in Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

In addition to the above, Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2011:127) stated that data analysis is an on-going, emerging and non-linear process. For the same reason, Miles (1979) in Ngulube (2015:134) cautioned that collecting and analysing data is highly labour-intensive and generates a lot of stress. Nonetheless, Johnson and Christensen (2004:500) mentioned that data analysis begins early in a qualitative research study, and during a single research study, qualitative researcher alternate data collection and data analysis. Thus, I started data analysis the same time as data collection took place.

On the basis of the above background, the main research question in the study was:

How did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in mainstream pilot inclusive schools in the DIMAMO Circuit experienced the implementation of Inclusive education?

From the main research question, the following subsidiary questions have emerged to help direct the research study:-

- What management, leadership and communication strategies did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced in pilot inclusive schools within the circuit?
- How did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced curriculum provisions and resources in pilot inclusive schools?
- How did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators in pilot inclusive schools?

- How did principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced the involvement of parents and community in their pilot inclusive schools?

On the basis of the above research questions, I used thematic data analysis as the method of data analysis for this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2013) in Ngulube (2015:141) thematic analysis is a method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question. In the same way, I have followed the following steps in thematic analysis adapted by Braun and Clarke (2013) in Ngulube (2015:142):

#### Step 1: Transcribe

I followed a qualitative research analysis by transcribing the interview transcripts from the tape recorder and transferred verbatim to the personal computer and saved as word format documents. I have connected headsets to the recording device to listen and replay the recorded words from the audio system. On the transcripts which were on a word format, I made use of a three-column format with codes in the left column; the transcript in the middle column; and reflective notes on the right column (Maree, 2007:104). The participants and sites were given codes on the transcripts. I inserted the codes manually and typed in word-for-word from the audio system into the transcript document in the laptop. I then saved in the information as a file in the laptop. The next step for this study was to read the transcripts and to take note of important items from the transcripts.

#### Step 2: Take note of items of interest

In a qualitative data coding process, researchers are advised to begin their data coding by reading the interview transcripts several times; at least, they are encouraged to read the transcripts three times to get a feel of what the research participants were saying verbally, and also to get a better feel of the participants' state of mind vis-à-vis how the subject-matter has affected their lived experiences (Alase, 2017:16). I listened to the voice recordings several times and read the transcripts several times; and identified relevant statements related to the topic (Leedy & Ormond; 2013:146). This helped me in narrow the words and sentences in the transcripts. As I continued listen and reading, the statements emerged from the



research participants. After reading the transcripts for several times, I came up with themes and categories of responses by the research participants (Alase, 2017:15-16). I worked on the themes and categories several times to align them with the research questions and objectives.

### Step 3: Code across the entire data set

Flick (2002) in Ngulube (2015:141) identifies two types of thematic analysis namely thematic coding and theoretical coding. As a result, I used thematic coding on transcripts in this study. In the same way, I gave each participant an identification number and all data obtained from the participant was marked with that number (Maree, 2007:104). The codes for participants for this study are indicated in chapter 4 (refer to table 4.2). According to Alase (2016) in Alase (2017:15), data coding requires three generic cycles. The first generic cycle is a process that gradually codes the sometimes lengthy and convoluted responses by research participants into meaningful chunky statements or sentences (Alase, 2017:16). Moreover, this process was meant to help in breaking-down the responses by participants in this study; into sentences or statements that I could condense and manage (Alase, 2017:16). In addition, this process helps researchers being mentally aware of some key words or phrases that are repeated or expressed by the participants (Alase, 2017:16). I was able to identify in the transcripts, repeated ideas and statements from participants and had to group the statements and ideas together using the copy and paste function from personal computer.

### Step 4: Search for themes

Thematic coding starts with specific data that is then transformed into categories and themes. In the same way, I have allocated codes on data on transcripts and classified data according to categories and themes. I allocated codes to similar data which I grouped using the copy and paste function of the personal computer. The themes and categories identified in this study are illustrated as Table 4.4 in chapter 4. The conclusions in this study were based on the observation from transcribed data (Ngulube, 2015:141). Moreover, I have aligned the categories and themes that emerged in relation to the main research question, the research objectives and the literature review. In addition, I have studied multiple examples of statements and points of view provided by participants in an effort to find out what experiences

participants had in common (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:365). In so doing, I made printouts of hardcopies of coded transcripts to increase my access to refer and gain more understanding at all times.

In addition to the above, I had to reduce the first generic chunky statements (or sentences) into fewer words to move closer to the 'core essence' of what the research participants were actually expressing (Alase, 2017:16). This second data condensation gave me another opportunity to extrapolate in very few tangible words the true gist (or core essence) of what the research subject-matter (management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools) has meant to the lived experiences of principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants (Alase, 2017:16). The next step in this study was to review and identify the relationships among the themes.

Step 5: Review themes by mapping provisional themes and their relationships

I have grouped statements further into meaningful units and reflected on the various aspects (meanings) of the phenomenon as was experienced (Creswell (2007) cited in Leedy & Ormond, 2013:146). According to Johnson and Christensen (2004:500) interim data analysis is used in qualitative research because qualitative researchers usually collect data over an extended time period, and they need to continually learn more and more about what they are studying during this time frame. On the other hand, I conducted an interim analysis during this step on data collected to develop a deeper understanding of the research topic. The next step in this study was to define and name the themes.

Step 6: Define and name themes

The researcher will describe data that is already organised (Best & Kahn; 1993:203) I have ensured that the themes were related to the main research question and the sub-questions of this study The third and final generic cycle stage is what Alase (2016) in Alase (2017:16) describe as the category phase (or stage). This stage allows researchers to narrow down to extremely few words the responses of the participants. In this final stage, the category stage, what the researcher is trying to do is to encapsulate (capture) the 'core essence' of the central meaning (meaning unit)

of the research participants' lived experiences in one or two words (Alase, 2017:16). The next step in this study was the final step data analysis process.

#### Step 7: Finalise analysis

Best and Kahn (1993:204) state that only after the data has been organised and described does the researcher begin with the final phase of the analysis process, interpretation. In interpretation, I have explained the findings, and answers “why” questions, attached significance to particular results, and put patterns into an analytical framework (Best & Kahn, 2013:203). In explaining the findings, I have formulated diagrams in chapter 4 of this study, to illustrate and explain the findings in relation to the four objectives of the study and in confirming or not confirming the literature review presented by this study. In addition, Creswell (2013:193) as cited in Alase (2017:16) suggests that researchers should “Write a description of “what” the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon.” According to Creswell (2013) as cited in Alase (2017:16), this is known as the textual description of the participants' experiences, and the written descriptions of what happened to the research participants must include verbatim examples. At this stage of the phenomenological method of analysis, Creswell (2013:194) as cited in Alase (2017:16) suggests that researchers should write a “description of “how” the experience happened.” In essence, writing the description of the “how” is what Creswell (2013:194) as cited in Alase (2017:16) referred to as structural description, so that the researcher is able to reflect on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced.” Finally, Creswell (2013:194) as cited in Alase (2017:16) advises researchers to “write a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textual and structural descriptions.”

### **3.8 Credibility, trustworthiness, dependability and transferability**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is often explored in terms of credibility, dependability and transferability (Rule & John, 2011 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:25). Trustworthiness for qualitative research as explained by Rule and John (2011), Patton (2002), Patton (1990), McMillan and Schumacher (2006), Rakotsoane and Rakotsoane (2006), and Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2006) can be enhanced by using a combination of strategies: prolonged fieldwork, multi method strategies, participant verbatim language, multiple researchers, member checking (cited in

Ngozwana, 2018:25). For the purpose of member checking, I printed hardcopies of individual interview transcripts from the personal computer and enclosed in sealed envelopes; and personally delivered to research study participants. The purpose was to allow participants in this study to verify as to whether the information they read in the transcripts came from them.

In addition to the above, transferability in this study was enhanced by comparing the similarities and differences of the findings (Ngozwana, 2018:25) with regard to the experiences of school principals and teachers in managing the implementation of inclusive education in pilot inclusive schools. The lengthy data collection period for this study has, in the same way, provided an opportunity for thematic analysis, preliminary comparisons and corroborations to refine ideas and to ensure the match between evidence-based categories and participant reality, which increases credibility and promotes trustworthiness in a study (Patton, 2002; Rule & John, 2011 cited in Ngozwana, 2018:25).

Furthermore, Biggam (2011:144) mentions that central to reliable research is the concept of “trust”. In the same way, I have followed an interpretive research paradigm; a qualitative research method; a phenomenological research strategy; used purposive sampling strategy; and used data collection techniques and instruments in order to achieve results that can be trusted. In addition, I have provided details of the research sites, details of participants for the study and evidence of research interview questions together with transcript of interviews. In this study, member checking took place when data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions were tested with school principals and teachers who participated in this study.

Having considered the positive effects of trustworthiness and transferability issues of this study, the next issues I took into consideration involves research ethics.

### **3.9 Research Ethics**

#### **3.9.1 Requisition for permission to conduct research study**

I have obtained a clearance certificate from the University of South Africa (Unisa) before starting with the research data collection (Appendix A). In negotiating entry to the schools, I applied for permission from Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE),

DIMAMO Circuit Office and from the selected four pilot Inclusive education schools (Appendix B). In the application to request for permission to conduct research at the four selected schools in the DIMAMO Circuit, I indicated the aim of this research study. As outlined in Chapter 1 the aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of school principals, SMTs, classroom teachers, EAs and SBSTs in managing the implementation of Inclusive education in pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province. In addition, I have in chapter one described the nature and procedures that the study entails. Furthermore, in my application, I have outlined the benefits of the study. In addition, I have indicated that this study was of a low risk category. By this I mean that this study has involved human participants directly in which the only risk foreseeable was one of inconvenience. Thus, I have collected data regarded as non-sensitive. Moreover, the participants were adults and were not considered to be a vulnerable research population. Furthermore, my application for permission has also entailed feedback procedure to participants (Appendix D). A clearance certificate from the University has accompanied applications to Limpopo Department of Education (Head Office) and DIMAMO Circuit Office and to the selected schools. I have received permission from Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) for entry to DIMAMO Circuit and the four schools. In addition, I made proper arrangements with the Circuit Office and school management teams to prevent any interference with the daily activities of the schools and learners (Appendix C). Having received permission to conduct the study in pilot inclusive school within DIMAMO circuit, I visited the schools in order to receive consent from principals, classroom teachers, SMT members, EAs and SBST coordinators who willing voluntarily to participate in this study.

### 3.9.2 Informed consent

I have explained the purpose of the research study to participants before requesting them to participate (Appendix D). As stated in Chapter 1 of this study, this study was expected to collect important information that could contribute to the advocacy programmes on Inclusive Education within the DIMAMO circuit. In a similar manner, this study may contribute to attitude change on teachers, parents, learners and rural communities; and how they relate to children with learning barriers and disabilities. In other words, the local authorities and the schools may use recommendations from

the study in their awareness campaigns. Furthermore, the results of the study may be used for the professional development of teachers by SMTs. In addition, this study may contribute to advance inter-departmental collaboration between the Capricorn South District Department of Basic Education and the local Department of Health and Social Development within the DIMAMO circuit. Furthermore, this study may contribute to advance the Constitutional Right of all children to basic education as contained in the Constitution and in Education White Paper 6(EWP6).The findings and recommendations from this study may be used to add knowledge on further research.

Based on the above explanation, this study supported the view expressed in Lekhetho (2015:32) that there should be informed consent from participants before they take part. This means that they should know exactly what they are being asked to do, and what the risks are, before they agree to take part (Lekhetho, 2015:32). For the same reason, I have explained to participants why they were being invited to participate by describing how I obtained the participants' contact details and why I chose them as particular individuals, in order to comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act,nr 4 of 2013, which necessitates the disclosure of how access was granted to the personal information of prospective participants. Apart from this, I have disclosed the number of participants needed for this study so as to provide this information to help the participant to make an informed choice whether to participate in this study. In addition, I have described to participants their actual role as participants in this study.

In addition, I have explained to participants that participation in this study was voluntary and participants were under no obligation to consent to participation and for the participants who decided to take part, I gave them information sheets (Appendix D) and asked them to sign written consent (Appendix G). As a result, participants were allowed to withdraw at any time and without giving reasons. The next issue I considered related to maintaining anonymity and confidentiality of participants for this study.

### 3.9.3 Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality

Confidentiality and anonymity, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2006) as cited in (Ngozwana, 2018:26), simply means that the setting and participants should

not be identifiable in all reporting. In order to maintain confidentiality, I gave the participants codes (Table 4.2) when transcribing and translating the data (Ngozwana, 2018:26). In emphasis, McMillan and Schumacher (1997:419) state that it is the researcher's dual responsibility to protect the participants' confidences and to protect the informants from the general reading public (Appendix E). For the same reason, I have explained to participants the extent to which confidentiality was to be maintained. In order to maintain confidentiality, I assured participants that each participant's name would not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from me and identified participants in the research study, had to know about the participant's involvement in this research study (Appendix E). As a results, the participants' names were not recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect the participants to the answers they gave. In addition, the answers given by participants were given code numbers. Furthermore, the settings and participants are not identifiable in print. Hence, I have stored hard copies of participants' answers for future research or academic purposes. In addition, I have stored electronic information on a password protected computer. If necessary, I will destroy the information by shredding hard copies and permanently deleting electronic information relating to interviews. Consequently, participants were treated with respect, dignity and courtesy since they did not owe anything to me (Huysamen, 1993:173).I have provided participants with contact numbers in case they liked to be informed of the final research findings.

### **3.10 Summary**

To sum up, this chapter has presented the research methodology and design for this study. Firstly, an outline of interpretive research approach was explained. Secondly, the selection of participants was discussed. Thirdly, this chapter has presented the data collection strategy used and data collection instruments employed to collect data from participants in the four selected schools for the study. Fourthly, an explanation about the choice and use of thematic data analysis was given. Lastly, ethical issues relating to this research project were explained and adhered to.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This study was premised within the ecological systems theory formulated by Bronfenbrenner. The data analysis and discussion of findings in this chapter were provided in line with the theoretical framework that was presented in chapter one. In addition, analysis of generated data for this study was discussed in relation to the main research question and the objectives of the study. The objectives of this study were to describe the management, leadership and communication strategies that school principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit; to interpret how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced curriculum provisions and resources in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit; to describe how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit; and to evaluate how principals, Departmental Heads at schools, classroom teachers and Education Assistants experienced the involvement of parents and community in mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit.

#### 4.2. Thematic data analysis method

On the basis of the objectives of this study, research question and theoretical framework presented in chapter one, I have adopted thematic data analysis as the method of data analysis for this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2013) in Ngulube (2015:141) thematic analysis is a method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question. In the same way, I have taken the following steps in thematic analysis adapted by Braun and Clarke (2013) in Ngulube (2015:142):



#### 4.2.1 Transcribing

I have collected data from four pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit in the Capricorn South District of Limpopo Province. Alase (2017:17) stated that in a qualitative research analysis, the interview transcript should be transcribed verbatim into a hard copy and then analysed by utilizing the color-coded (or any other practical method) and categorization for analyses (i.e. common themes) I have used tape recording to collect data. In order to organise data on personal computer word for word, I made use of a three-column format with codes in the left column; the transcript in the middle column; and reflective notes on the right column.

#### 4.2.2 Taking note of items of interest

In a qualitative data coding process, researchers are advised to begin their data coding by reading the interview transcripts several times; at least, they are encouraged to read the transcripts three times to get a feel of what the research participants were saying verbally, and also to get a better feel of the participants' state of mind vis-à-vis how the subject-matter has affected their lived experiences (Alase, 2017:16). In this step, I have read the transcripts several times. In reading the transcripts, I then identified the statements from the transcripts that relate to the topic by separating relevant from irrelevant information (Leedy & Ormond; 2013:146). The first thing that a researcher does when he or she is about to embark on a data coding process is for him or her to read through the interview responses; this can help the researcher narrow down (condense) the words or sentences in a transcript (Alase, 2017:15). The next step for the researcher is to re-read each transcript (and/or listen to any recording devices used during the interview) again, for clarity (Alase, 2017:15). Perhaps after reading the transcript for the third time, the researcher can probably come up with some themes and categorization in the pattern of responses by the research participants (Alase, 2017:15-16).

#### 4.2.3 Coding across the entire data set

Flick (2002) in Ngulube (2015:141) identifies two types of thematic analysis namely thematic coding and theoretical coding. I have made use of thematic coding. I have

given each participant an identification number and all data obtained from the participant was marked with that number (Maree, 2007:104). According to Alase (2016) in Alase (2017:15), data coding requires three generic cycles. The first generic cycle is a process that gradually codes the sometimes lengthy and convoluted responses by research participants into meaningful chunky statements or sentences (Alase, 2017:16). This process is meant to help researchers break-down the responses into a format (i.e. bloc of sentences or statements that they, the researchers, can condense and manage (Alase, 2017:16). This process can also help researchers be mentally aware of some key words or phrases that are repeated or expressed by the participants (Alase, 2017:16). These words or phrases can sometimes mean a lot to the veracity of what the participants are trying to convey to the researcher. (Alase, 2017:16).

#### 4.2.4 Searching for themes

Thematic coding starts with specific data that is then transformed into categories and themes. The conclusions are based on the observation from transcribed data. (Ngulube, 2015:141). In the same way, I have allocated codes on data on transcripts and classified data according to categories and themes. I have aligned the categories and themes that emerged in relation to the main research questions, the research objectives and the literature review. I have searched for essential structures of a phenomenon by studying multiple examples of it and finding what experiences people have in common (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:365).

#### 4.2.5 Reviewing themes by mapping provisional themes and their relationships

I have grouped statements into meaningful units and reflected on the various aspects (meanings) of the phenomenon as was experienced (Creswell (2007) cited in Leedy & Ormond, 2013:146).

I did member checking as from this step. In addition, I have conducted an interim analysis during this step on data collected to develop a deeper understanding of the research topic. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004:500) interim data analysis is used in qualitative research because qualitative researchers usually collect data over

an extended time period, and they need to continually learn more and more about what they are studying during this time frame.

#### 4.2.6 Defining and naming themes

The researcher will describe data that is already organised (Best & Kahn; 1993:203) I have ensured that the themes relate to the main research question and the sub-questions. The third and final generic cycle stage is what Alase (2016) in Alase (2017:16) describe as the category phase (or stage). This stage allows researchers to narrow down to extremely few words the responses of the participants. In this final stage, the category stage, what the researcher is trying to do is to encapsulate (capture) the 'core essence' of the central meaning (meaning unit) of the research participants' lived experiences in one or two words (Alase, 2017:16).

#### 4.2.7 Finalising analysis

Best and Kahn (1993:204) state that only after the data has been organised and described does the researcher begin with the final phase of the analysis process, interpretation. In interpretation, I have explained the findings, and answers "why" questions, attached significance to particular results, and put patterns into an analytical framework (Best & Kahn, 2013:203). Creswell (2013:193) as cited in Alase (2017:16) suggested that researchers should "Write a description of "what" the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon." According to Creswell (2013) as cited in Alase (2017:16), this is known as the textual description of the participants' experiences, and the written descriptions of what happened to the research participants must include verbatim examples. At this stage of the phenomenological method of analysis, Creswell (2013:194) as cited in Alase (2017:16) suggested that researchers should write a "description of "how" the experience happened." In essence, writing the description of the "how" is what Creswell (2013:194) as cited in Alase (2017:16) referred to as structural description, so that the researcher is able to reflect on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced." Finally, Creswell (2013:194) as cited in Alase (2017:16) advised researchers to "write a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textual and structural descriptions."

### 4.3 Coding

Table 4.1: Codes for selected mainstream pilot inclusive schools

CODE	DESCRIPTION
P1 P2	PRIMARY SCHOOLS
S1 S2	SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I have formulated table 4.1 to illustrate how the four selected schools were given codes for data analysis. Two primary schools and two secondary schools were selected as sites for the study. These were the school designated as mainstream pilot inclusive school in the DIMAMO circuit.

Table 4.2: Codes and descriptors for participants

CODE	DESCRIPTION
PP1	Principal of Primary School A
PP2	Principal of Primary school B
PS1	Principal of Secondary School A
PS2	Principal of Secondary School B
DHPA	Departmental Head of Primary school
DHSA	Departmental Head of Secondary School
TPA TPB TPC	Classroom teachers at Primary schools
TSA TSB TSC	Classroom teachers at Secondary Schools
EPA EPB EPC	Education Assistants at Primary Schools
ESA	Education Assistants at Secondary Schools

ESB	
ESC	

I formulated Table 4.2 to illustrate how research participants were given codes during data analysis process.

Table 4.3: Characteristics and number of participants

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>
Principals of primary schools	1
Principals of secondary schools	2
Departmental heads at primary schools	2
Departmental Head at Secondary Schools	1
Classroom teachers at primary schools	3
Classroom teachers at Secondary schools	3
Education Assistants at Primary schools	3
Education assistants at Secondary schools	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18 participants</b>

I formulated the above Table 4.3 to present the characteristics and final number of participants who were involved in this study. The initial number targeted was 20 participants. However, the number dropped to 18 participants. I could not secure interviews with one Departmental Head at a secondary school as I had to abide by protocols pertaining to COVID-19 at the time. There were no visits allowed at schools except by designated departmental officials. The principal of one primary school retired before data was collected.

Table 4.4: Codes and themes/categories of data collected

<b>CODE</b>	<b>THEME/CATEGORY</b>
BCI	Benefits and challenges of inclusive teaching and learning in pilot inclusive schools
MLC	Management, leadership and communication strategies in pilot inclusive schools
CPR	Curriculum provisions and resources for quality Inclusive

	Education in pilot inclusive schools.
QTD	Quality of teaching and development of educators.
IPC	Involvement of parents in pilot inclusive schools.
SSC	School structural changes in pilot inclusive schools
RF	Recommendations for the future

I formulated table 4.4 above to illustrate codes awarded to each theme that emerged during data analysis process. According to table 4.4, there were six themes or categories that I identified. These themes emerged from an analysis of statements provided by participants. I have grouped statements from research participants that answered the research questions under the same theme.

Table 4.5: Codes for themes and sub-categories

<b>CODE</b>	<b>THEME/CATEGORY</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Sub-code</b>
BCI	Benefits and challenges of inclusive teaching and learning in pilot inclusive schools	Job satisfaction	JS
		Job challenges	JC
		Job achievements	JA
MLC	Management, leadership and communication strategies in pilot inclusive schools	Job description	JD
		Management roles	MR
		Leadership participation	LP
		Communication strategies	CS
		Management of change	MC
		Management attitudes	MA
CPR	Curriculum provisions and resources for quality Inclusive Education in pilot inclusive schools.	Curriculum differentiation	CD
		Curriculum pacing	CP
		Curriculum integration	CI
		Knowledge and skills	KS
		Learning barriers	LB
		Learning environment	LE
		Teaching methods and assessment	TMA

		Accommodation and concession	AC
QTD	Quality of teaching and development of educators.	Service recognition	SR
		Supervisory support	SS
		Continuous Professional Development	CPD
IPC	Involvement of parents in pilot inclusive schools.	Parent community involvement	PCI
		School community involvement	SCI
SSC	School structural changes in pilot inclusive schools	Environmental changes	EC
		Organisational changes	OC
RF	Recommendations for the future by participants	Inclusive teaching and learning	FCPD
		Management, leadership and communication	FMLC
		Curriculum provision and resources	FCPR
		Parental and community involvement	FPCI

I formulated table 4.5 above to illustrate how themes were supported by sub-categories. Each category has addressed statements from research participants that are grouped under such a sub-category. According to figure 4.5, there are 29 sub-themes that I identified. In the same way, the sub-themes were related to the research questions and questions on the interview guide (Appendix F)

#### **4.4 Findings based on interviews with school principals, SMTs, classroom teachers and EAs**

##### **4.4.1. Theme 1: Benefits and challenges of inclusive teaching and learning**

The aim of the study was to investigate the experiences of principals, teachers and school-based support teams (SBSTs) in implementing Inclusive education in pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn South District of Education, Limpopo Province. The three sub-categories emerged from the main category relating to the benefits and challenges of inclusive teaching and learning in pilot inclusive schools as experienced by principals, SMT members, classroom teachers and

Education assistants within the DIMAMO Circuit. The theme (Theme 1) and the three sub-categories are illustrated below in figure 4.1 which I formulated in seeking to explain the benefits and challenges of inclusive teaching and learning in mainstream pilot inclusive schools. What follows is an analysis of the theme and sub-categories based on the research findings and for the purpose of literature control.



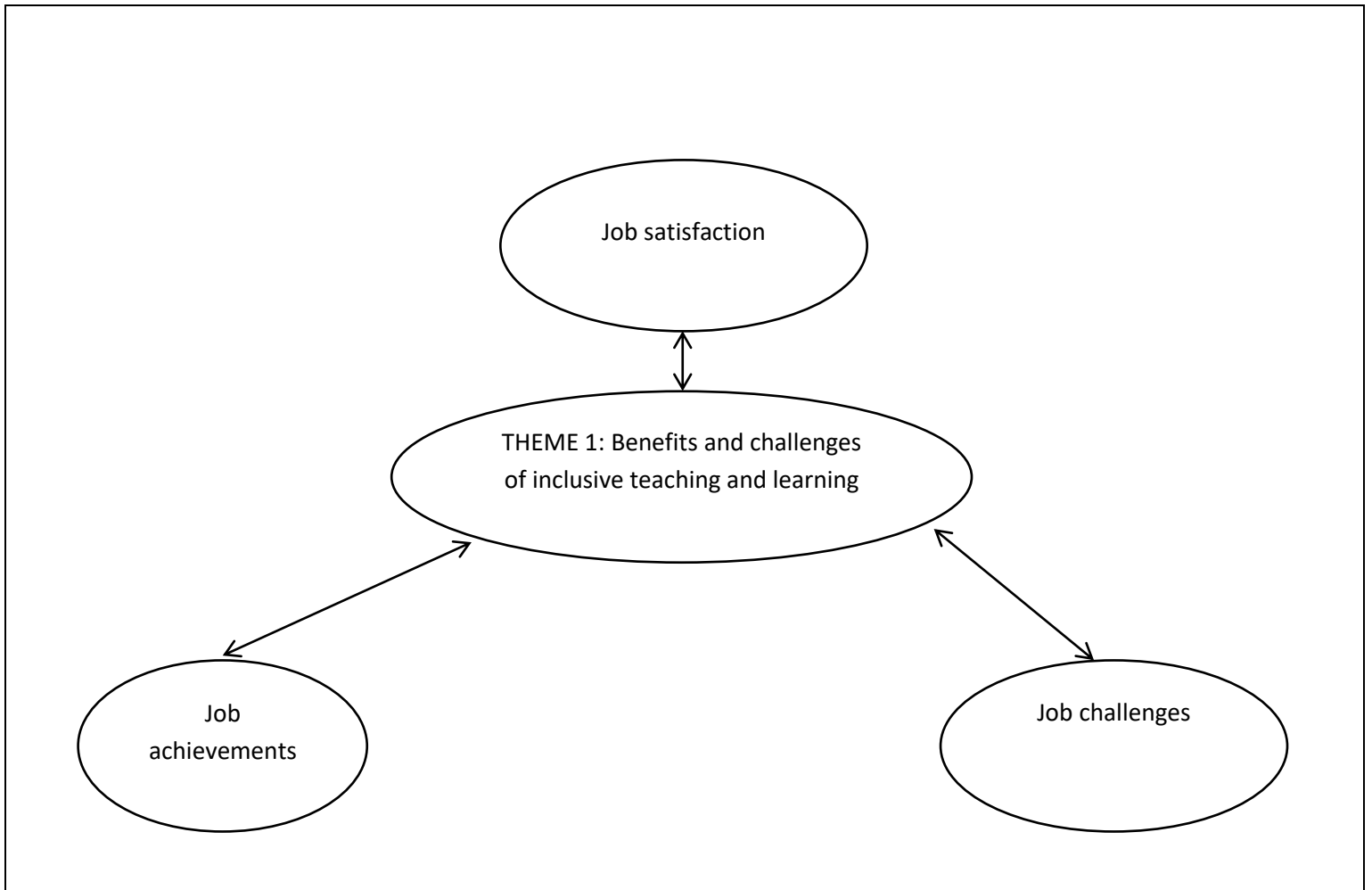


Figure 4.1: Benefits and challenges of inclusive teaching and learning

#### 4.4.1.1 Job satisfaction

I formulated figure 4.1 above to explain the theme that emerged as benefits and challenges of inclusive teaching and learning. This theme had three subcategories that I identified. I identified job satisfaction as one of the three sub-categories. Job satisfaction implies an attitude or internal state which is associated with the work an employee currently does (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:78). Principals of schools and SMT members who participated seemed to be grateful about the work they do as members of the school management team. In responding about the things they like most about their jobs, the principal and the Departmental head of school B responded in the following way:

*Participant: I love routine and working according to time-tables and schedules as it creates order and discipline. (PS1)*

*Participant: Thanks very much. As an Hod I feel honoured to be given this position because I have to apply my theory to practical. You know, I did management at the university level. So, whatever I see or whatever I experience; whatever challenge I face, then I can be able to address that, taking from theory that I have, in management studies. (DHSA)*

The responses of participants further illustrated their acknowledgement of the level of responsibility that comes with their jobs. In the same vein, Frase (1992) in Bush and Middlewood (2005:78) suggests that the greatest satisfaction comes from doing a good job but this satisfaction is not the cause of doing a good job. Improved performance leads to improved learning and improved learning results in greater employee satisfaction (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:78). Principals of schools provide leadership.

In addition, classroom teachers have expressed their satisfaction about their work with regard to opportunities that are created through teamwork, collaboration and knowledge sharing, within their own school contexts. Some classroom teachers in school A have expressed their experience in the following way:-

*Participant: Things that I like about my work being an educator...I think there is a lot. The first one I can say I meet lot of people with different views especially when I am in the classroom, learners have different views of life and most part of my work that I like is that most of the time actually I can say that I am a second parent. So, I help most of learners not just about content but about life; what life need and doesn't need. That is what I like about my work. Another thing is that I can also do some of the projects outside; let me say after work when I am out I can start some of the projects or I can even proceed with my education. (TPA)*

*Participant: Firstly, what I want to say is that I like working with the children because when being with the children is like I have my own friends because they are open to say what they want to. (TPC)*

The responses of participants seemed to suggest that participants were motivated in the performance of their duties. In comparison, Bush and Middlewood (2005:78) highlight that Job satisfaction and motivation are linked because staff needs to feel they are doing a good job and, when that is established, the leader can build on that to try to motivate them to move forward. In the same way, the responses by teachers from school A reflected on their willingness to serve and transform the practises within their schools as they seemed to be ready to exercise leadership because they hold their work in high regard.

Munir and Khalil (2016:43) hold the view as expressed in Biggerstaff (2012) that teachers who perceive their principals' leadership behaviour as transformational and transactional were found responsible towards and satisfied with their jobs. In the same way, Education Assistants in school A have expressed their satisfaction in the following way:

*Participant: "As education Assistant, I am so far satisfied yes because I see many changes in the classes where I am placed. In the two classes I have seen changes compared to my previous time at this school doing practical studies as student in the same classes." (EPA)*

*Participant: So now I can see that many learners are able to do many different things that they were not able to do before in few weeks before I started with the work of Education Assistant.(EPA)*

*Participant: I am very satisfied because I love children. This is the course I completed for Grade R teaching.(EPB)*

Furthermore, participants who are classroom teachers and Education Assistants in selected secondary schools have commented in the following way:

*Participant: What I like about my work is that the chance that I have to share knowledge with our learners and also to remind them of what they are going to be in future. That is what I like and also to motivate our learners that they are the future of this nation. That is what I like about my work. (TSA)*

*Participant: Thank you very much Sir. Eh... the reason why I chose to study bachelor of education is because I love interacting with kids. So, when I interact with them that is the most thing I like because I love guiding them, telling the way forward. Even now I can tell you that one of my major subjects is Life Orientation; because in that field I am able to say whatever I want, groom them and guide them. That is what I like about my work. (TSB)*

*Participant: The amount of work is satisfying in the sense that we don't get an overload of work. The work that we do is easy to control. It is easy to work with and actually the learners respond well to that type of work that we give them. That shows that the amount of pressure is not that much although some days will differ with others. Some days will have more work to juggle and some days will be easier.(ESA)*

The responses of participants seemed to reflect on the kind of management and leadership taking place within the selected schools for this study. This reflection on management and leaderships within the selected schools seemed to agree with Bush and Middlewood (2005:76) that the ability and strategies to motivate staff, to develop staff morale and to try to ensure job satisfaction are central to the leader's role in raising performance. Additionally, Munir and Khalil (2016:43) emphasise the view as expressed in Calaghan and Coldwell (2014)) that transformational and transactional leadership behaviours are very effective in developing positive perceptions among the employees, like job satisfaction and motivation. The findings of this sub-theme have shown that principals, departmental heads, classroom teachers and Education Assistants in all selected primary and secondary schools for the study, reflected positively about the benefits of teaching and learning in pilot inclusive mainstream public schools.

#### 4.4.1.2. Job challenges

Legotlo (2014:176) argued that the South African context presents unique challenges in the implementation of inclusive education. When participants were asked about the challenges of inclusive teaching and learning in pilot inclusive schools, all participants in the selected primary schools and secondary schools felt strongly about their experience

of lack of discipline amongst learners in their schools. The principal of School B responded in the following way:

*Participant: I always worry about unpredictable events such as learner injuries or sickness or fights. (PS1)*

Some of the participants who are classroom teachers and Education assistants have expressed their frustrations in the following way:

*Participant: Eh...the aspect of my work that are challenging is actually the behaviour of some other learners that are making it difficult for me to actually cooperate with other learners or work with other learners during the lessons. (TSA)*

*Participant: Yes. My challenges which I have is that what I hate the most is that the children that are not respecting. We tell them to keep quiet and they just continue to talk. (TPC)*

*Participant: Eh... up so far I have met one challenge. Eh...was not so long. It was a Grade 8 learner and a Grade 9 learner.Eh...they wanted to fight each other with knives. I had to call them to order. Then as I was calling them to order I even gave them advise that whatever they are doing will at the end of the day be destroying their future and they ended-up understanding me. (TSB)*

*Participant: Ok. The challenges are as we know that learners are not the same, so some learners have this tendency of saying that we are not professional teachers. So when we discipline them, they take us somehow by not granting us the same respect they offer to teachers because they have the mentality that we are not teachers. So, we have a challenge to discipline learners especially when the teacher is not in class, as learners do not cooperate well. Eh... I think this might be caused by maybe these learners are told that we are not professional teachers. So, they cannot treat us the same way as their teachers. (EPA)*

The responses of participants seemed to highlight the absence of psycho-social services at the selected schools. Participants appeared not able to deal with disruptive behaviour by some learners. The responses of participants were not in contrast with the

view expressed in Prinsloo (2001) as cited in Rajput, Das and Goswami (2018:8) that teachers find it very difficult to deal with the increasing number of children with behaviour problems in mainstream classrooms; and that these children are disruptive in the extreme and the learning climate in the classroom is negatively affected for all the children. The teachers' lack of the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to understand and assist these learners causes frustration (Rajput, Das & Goswami, 2018:8). These cause serious feelings of inadequacy which disrupts effective teaching and successful learning (Rajput, Das & Goswami, 2018:8). In addition, participants have expressed their disappointment about lack of teamwork which poses a challenge to teachers in both primary and secondary schools. The following comments illustrate the participants' concern:

*Participant: I have a problem with my colleagues also. There is a lot of drama in this school whereby you find that it is not healthy. There are groups. Like now, say I get sick. They don't work together. We have been taught at the university that we should work together as a team. I don't see that being practiced here....because now if I get sick for example. I am talking about something I am seeing now. Somebody is sick and at the present moment we cannot help that person to mark the papers and so forth. They are complaining about marking, but when we are a team I believe that if I am done marking and the other one is not done I am not doing it right because we are all not done. When we work as a team, the thing that we should do is we have a spirit of if the other one fails, we are all failing. I encourage others and support them and we all pass. (TSB)*

Moreover, participants expressed their desperation for the need of resources. One participant who was an Education Assistant commented in the following way:

*Participant: On the part of children we have barriers to learning that our learners encounter and when we look at resources needed; I realized that resources are not there to assist learners who have visual impairment. (EPB)*

Principals of school A, school B and school C have expressed their feeling of powerlessness where they felt they did not have the authority to retain Education assistants and General school Assistants. The principal of school D has expressed his feeling of powerlessness in the following way:

*Participant: We had six of them. During their presence here, the classes were always clean; the floor, the environment, the surrounding was cleaned almost every day. There was such an improvement to the point where I thought these GSAs and EAs could become the aorta, the veins of the school for ever but not as temporarily as it was done. Eh...after they had left, we are slowly seeing the conditions in the school environment slowly deteriorating and it is a pity with an over-worked staff of six teachers. There is nothing they can do except to make sure that the curriculum, which is the main business at the school, is followed up at the expense of other things in the school. The EAs and the GSAs must just come back to the schools. In my opinion, they must just go back to schools and each school should have no less than ten of those. While they were here, the discipline amongst learners improved because the GSAs and the EAs know when learners are bunking classes. Our learners were no longer able to stay at toilettes without being noticed by teachers. Eh... the GSAs helped there (PS2)*

The responses of participants confirmed the view as expressed in Engelbrecht (2019:124) that the advantages of voluntary workers are that they can perform duties at minimal cost, and can free up paid staff members to do other work while they provide a variety of services

The findings of this sub-theme revealed that classroom teachers in both primary and secondary schools are demotivated as they felt that their work is devalued as a result of unacceptable behaviour by learners and some teachers; and were complaining about lack of resources in their schools to improve the quality of education for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

#### 4.4.1.3 Job achievements

Participants have expressed different views about the achievement that their schools have reached with regard to the implementation of inclusive practises in their schools. The following are comments made by some classroom teachers and Education Assistants in primary schools:

*Participant: "Now what I can say achieved if from before compare to now, now is better because most of the learners now I can get eighty percentages in pass mark and it shows there is improvement compared to before. You see." (TPA)*

*Participant: Yes. So far there are some achievements like learners who are unable to read can now read and those who were unable to write can now write well. They are able to write legible things and teachers can see their writings. They are now able to respond in English first additional language.(EPA)*

Inclusive education has evolved as a human rights and social justice agenda that endeavours to challenge exclusionary policies and practices in the education system (Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna, 2019:108).

*Participant: First, learners in Grade R can do social distancing; they can wash their hands; they can follow on activities that they are doing. I able to control the activities that they do. (EPB)*

*Participant: Yes. There are some achievements. Some learners can write their names; and some other learners; eish! They are just doing Grade R. we are using pictures. They read from the chart. I used the picture charts according to the theme. (EPB)*

According to Mwanwenda (1995) in Bush and Middlewood (2005:78), where the job is seen as having no point, the eventual extreme logic will be that there is no point to work and can lead to depression and stress.

On the other hand, the comments by classroom teachers in Secondary schools revealed that some teachers remained uninvolved in implementing inclusive practises in their schools. This was shown by the comment the following comment:

*Participant: mm... up to so far I don't see anything. Let me be honest. Up to so far I don't see anything. (TSB)*

According to Mortimore and Mortimore (1995) in Bush and Middlewood (2005:79), each individual member of staff of a school or college needs to come to school in the morning with an understanding that each is valued first and foremost as a person. If not, the



implication is that the quality of the staff member's experiences that day will diminish and performance will suffer (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:79).

#### 4.4.2. Theme 2: Management, leadership and communication strategies

The objective of this study was to describe the management, leadership and communication strategies in pilot inclusive schools as experienced by school principals, SMT members, classroom teachers, SBST members and Education Assistants within the DIMAMO circuit. I have identified six sub-categories which emerged from the main theme (Theme 2) as illustrated in figure 4. 2 below. What followed was an analysis of findings based on the theme and the six sub-categories I formulated based on statements from research participants:

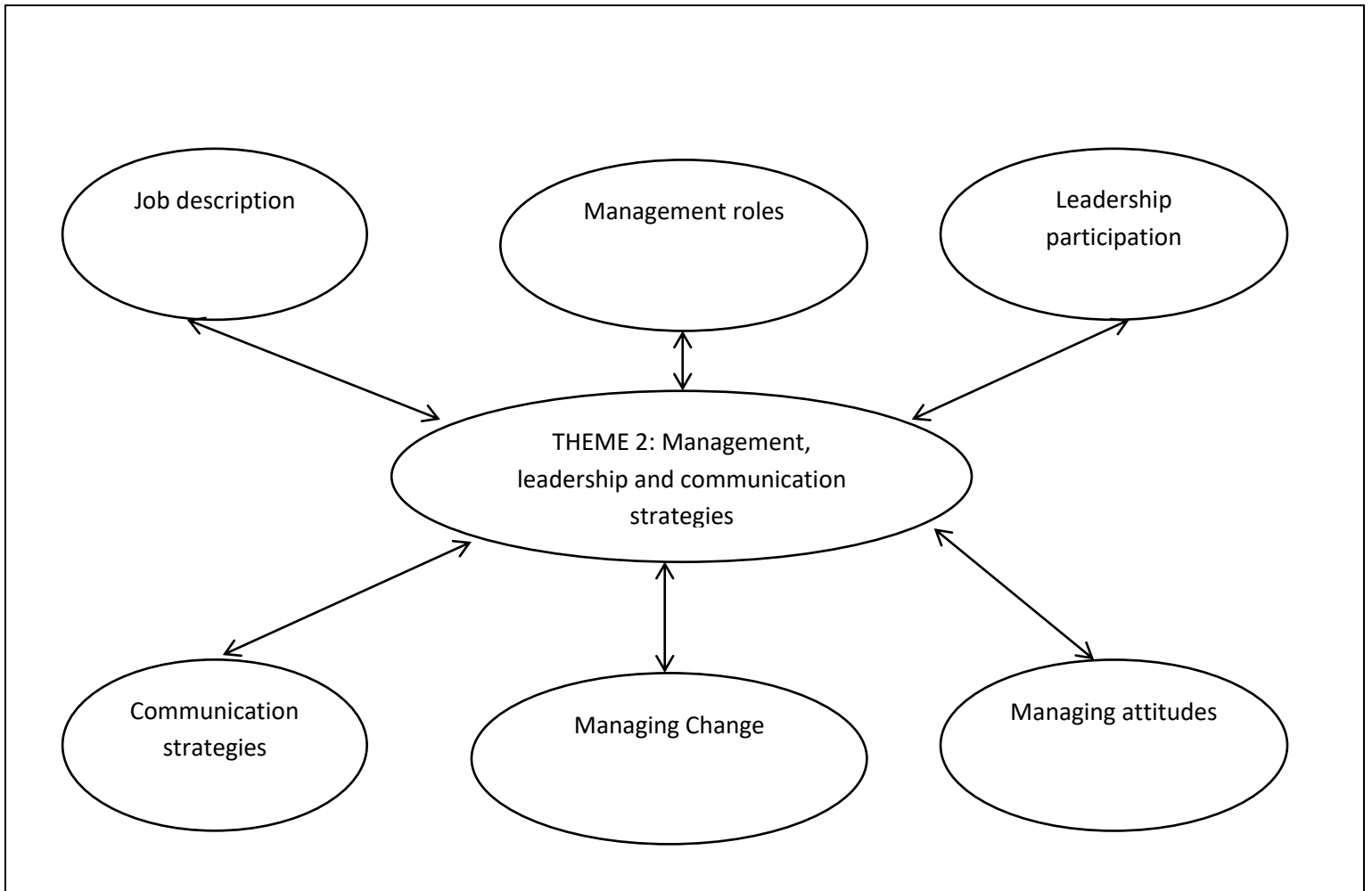


Figure 4.2: Management, leadership and communication strategies

#### 4.4.2.1 Job description

Robbins (1995) in Engelbrecht (2019:120) defined a job description as a written statement of what a jobholder does, how the job is done and why it is done. The job description helps employees learn their job duties and clarify the results that management expects them to achieve (Engelbrecht, 2019: 120). It serves as a standard against which the manager or supervisor can determine how well the employee is performing and can be used for performance appraisals, feedback and promotions (Engelbrecht, 2019: 120).

Participants acknowledged their responsibilities towards learners in managing their classrooms into becoming inclusive classrooms to turn their schools into flexible

teaching and learning environments. Some of the participants commented in the following way:

*Participant: My most responsibility is to identify the types of learners that have difficulties in learning. That is my most responsibility. I am always checking on those types of learners in the class and whether I can identify them and also help them. (TSA)*

*Participant: Oh yes! We were given our job descriptions. I remember very well. One of the job description is to prepare the classroom before the teacher comes and to provide learners with material beforehand as the teacher comes; and also to be available for learners as they need assistance in subjects that we are allocated to. (ESA)*

#### 4.4.2.2. Management roles

Engelbrecht (2019:61) defined planning as systematic and intelligent exposition of the direction an organisation, community project, group, family or individual must follow to accomplish predetermined goals. In responding to how principals and SMT ensured that planning task is functional at the schools, the responses of principals in selected schools for this study seemed to suggest that they are confident with their performance in this task. This confidence was expressed by principals of the selected schools in the following way:

*Participant: Um... together with my Deputy and departmental heads, we, at the beginning of every term, check the teachers' files to observe that planning has been done. Planning with regard to lesson planning; planning with regard to assessment. So, everything is checked in advance. So, when we are satisfied, we know that there is something that guides teachers as they go to class. As they go to class, we also have our plans as SMT, where sometimes we do ask for their files. We check them to see the records, and everything inside the files. We also do class visits where we check curriculum coverage; where we check learners' written work to see that it is in pace with the ATPs. This is how we check the planning task done by our teachers. (PP1)*

*Participant: Yes. Usually we sit in the staff meeting to plan for the year ahead and then we start with admission. We just take any learner who comes to our school although most of them shall have applied ahead of time around August the previous year, and we*

*find that the numbers are very small and then they increase to a larger number in the beginning of the year. Some of them may not have registered. We still cater for them. (PS2)*

The responses of participants have seemed to agree with the assertion by (Engelbrecht, 2019: 64) that the on-going process of strategic thinking and strategic managing should take place on a regular basis, and should involve as many workers as possible. According to Du Toit, Erasmus and Strydom (2007) in Engelbrecht (2019:61), planning captures three dimensions namely: a determination dimension, a decision-making dimension and a future dimension.

On the other hand, classroom teachers spoke out against reluctance on the side of SMT members to be involved in the planning and implementation of inclusive education programmes at their schools. This feeling was expressed by classroom teachers in the following way:

*Participant: The only way they can open ways I think is that the inclusive education programme must start with them because now...inclusive. You cannot say inclusive...inclusive without us being involved. The management must also be involved in that programme. Yes. If we have any workshop they must be there sometimes. They are the ones that can come with information. (TPA)*

*Participant: Even policies that guide us on how we should interact with learners. There has never been a... I do not know whether it is called policy; but it was never been explained or shown to us. (TSA)*

The responses by participants seemed to agree with the view as expressed in (Engelbrecht (2019: 63) that all the managers and employees of the organisation must be willing to make the commitment not only to develop a plan but also to implement it (Engelbrecht, 2019: 63). Furthermore, the responses by participants agreed with the assertion in Mampane (2017:186) that principals cannot monitor the process of teacher support because of their lack and depth of knowledge of inclusive education.

Meanwhile, classroom teachers and Education assistants expressed their feeling of frustration resulting from absence of support groups within their schools. One participant expressed this experience in the following way:

*Participant: Okay Sir. Teachers must do Support Groups to share information about the current barriers to learning in their classrooms. Let me take an example: we have departmental Heads and some teachers and Education Assistants might be having information about auxiliary and ancillary nursing experience. They participate in the support group to identify and share different ways to address barriers to learning amongst learners.(EPB)*

The response by participant seemed to agree with the view as expressed in Mampane (2017:181) that school leaders and managers should establish a variety of external and internal support structures that provide for the needs of teachers.

The next task which influenced the role of principals and SMT members in management was that of organising. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (1996) in Engelbrecht (2019:69) defined organising as the process of arranging and allocating work, authority and resources among employees of an organisation so that they can achieve the goals of the organisation. In responding, principals of selected schools seemed to experience a sense of collaboration with teachers in regard to the organising task within their schools. Participants have expressed this collaborative experience in the following way:

*Participant: Oh...allocation. Usually, we do not have a teacher to teach these learners, say, during this covid-19 times, if we having five classes for grade 7. We do not have one teacher who teach five classes a specific subject. We make sure that two teachers are allocated in that regard. Then, when they do the planning, they do together. We always encourage them to work together. We encourage teamwork. So, they do the planning together in whatever task, especially the formal ones, whatever tasks the learners are to write, it is a single task that is done by both teachers. So far, a subject that we allocate has two to three teachers. (PP1)*

*Participant: Yes. We allocate. We do what we call allocation at the beginning of the year. And then we share responsibilities in terms of those who will be responsible for*

*extra-curricular programmes and so forth. We also assign ourselves to various committees in the school for example those who will participate in the SGB; those who will take care of organising trips for learners; those who will take care of cleaning; those who will check issues of late-coming especially for learners and those who will take care of cleaning of the school environment. (PS2)*

However, some members of the SMT who were in middle management felt frustrated by not being updated timeously by the top management. One participant who is a departmental head expressed this feeling of frustration in the following way:

*Participant: Not as SMT. Maybe only as a teacher if you want to see that Social Worker. That is the loophole I have seen since we have Social workers here because this is not the first Social Worker. He will come but we are not given the direct report as to what he did and how he assisted the school. I know that they are working. Maybe it is because of the workload or maybe I do not understand. He gives the report to the office that I have done this. I am taking this learner to psychologists or I am visiting this family, but as SMT we have never been given that report of the learner of what the Social Worker did; how he has helped the school. This is not the first one. The other ones left the school but we have never been given a formal report that I counselled this learner; I did this and I did that. So, we are not informed about the progress of what is being achieved at the end. So, that is the off sight that I think our Head Master should look into. (DHSA)*

The response by members of the SMT highlighted the caution expressed in Mampane (2017:183) that the principal, as a critical member of the school, is looked to for direction; if the leader of a school sends uncertain or contradictory messages, teachers struggling to implement the new policy of inclusion will not be motivated. Thus, Bush and Middlewood (2005:83) maintained that all employees need to be treated appropriately, taking into account as far as possible their needs and aspirations. In the same vein, Lewis, Goodman and Fandt (2004) in Engelbrecht (2019: 70) stated that the structure of an organisation establishes its chain of command and its hierarchy of responsibility, authority and accountability. A command structure means that employees have to be clear about whom to report to (Engelbrecht, 2019: 70).

Authority is the right of a manager to give commands and demand actions from staff members (Engelbrecht, 2019:70).

Moreover, the other management task that principals and SMT members had to perform was the task of control. The response of participants seemed to suggest that principals of selected school were pleased with their ability to control and supervise the work of teachers. This experience was expressed in the following way:

*Participant: Okay, when it comes to monitoring the work of SMT members, I make sure that I check and monitor their work. There is a time when the SMT's files are submitted where I check in what they have done. Sometimes, on my own I just move around. I just get into the class. Sometimes, I just ask for learners' books. So, this is how I track whether teaching and learning goes on properly. Sometimes there are some disturbances where teachers had to go and attend workshops and when people had to attend meetings and others. But then, generally, I just feel satisfied. I think they are doing their work even though there is room that they can improve. (PP1)*

The above response is supported by the view as expressed in Engelbrecht (2019: 82) that an effective control system discovers errors of managers and employees, and makes sure that all are doing their job well. In addition, control further ensures that resources are deployed in such a way that the goals of the organisation and service users are accomplished (Engelbrecht, 2019: 82).

The role of the principal and SMT is to monitor activities as they happen in schools. In their responses classroom teachers have seemed to appreciate monitoring they received from their immediate supervisors. This experience was expressed by one classroom teacher in the following way:

*Participant: Uhm... Well, I can say up to so far...uhm... everything I do I go to them as I said that I am a new teacher, everything that I do I go to them. When I don't understand a certain thing I go to them and they teach me. They teach me very well and then I understand. They are not harsh. They just teach me and say this is how you are supposed to do. You must do it this way. So, they just give me that thing of to say do*

*the mistake then we will tell you what is right; and then, that's how I learn and I don't see it as a disadvantage. I see as support. (TSB)*

In the same way, the response indicated above seem to be in line with the view in Engelbrecht (2019: 82) that monitoring and evaluation should be done by all workers against agreed baseline standards to ensure quality work and a continual improvement of services.

#### 4.4.2.3 Leadership participation

Leadership is founded on communication, whereby leaders communicate their vision, plans, problems and expectations to people with whom they are working, and they therefore also need to be listeners to know the ambitions and aspirations of the people with whom they are working (Engelbrecht, 2019: 73). Leadership involves motivating and influencing others to act towards the accomplishment of goals of the organisation, unit or group (Engelbrecht, 2019: 73). Successful leaders are able to establish trust, are willing to learn and to change, facilitating people towards a feeling of confidence in effective decision making and encouraging people to take risks (Engelbrecht, 2019: 73).

#### 4.4.2.4 Communication strategies

Information is a resource that can be developed and used as an integral part of the job (Engelbrecht, 2019: 93). According to Powell (2003) in Engelbrecht (2019: 93), the core aims of effective information management are to contribute to the efficiency of the organisation; facilitating creativity within the organisation; making the organisation more effective; and empowering employees and partners.

However, Engelbrecht (2019:93) warned that when information is privileged to only few and not readily available to all, it deters participation and restricts the capacity to make informed decisions (Engelbrecht, 2019: 93).

Participants have expressed their appreciation of communication strategies used in their schools. Some participants from the primary schools commented in the following way:



*Participant: In our class we have something like information book. We write in the information book something like a letter and we give the learner to the parent and the parent will reply. (TPB)*

*Participant: It is useful because most of the parents reply and some they also come to school and talk to me as an educator. (TPB)*

*Participant: Whatever I face in the classroom I come to the office to report .The office will phone those parents to come to school to discuss whatever issues we have. (TPC)*

*Participant: Okay Sir. Teachers must do Support Groups to share information about the current barriers to learning in their classrooms. Let me take an example: we have departmental Heads and some teachers and Education Assistants might be having information about auxiliary and ancillary nursing experience. They participate in the support group to identify and share different ways to address barriers to learning amongst learners.(EPB)*

*Participant: We communicate with parents by letters. We write letters and place them in each learner's book. We have a book for communication in which we place information. When the parent opens up the information book, will find a letter. Sometimes we ask for contact numbers of parents. Sometimes when they come to take learners' books or learning material, we are able to communicate with them.(EPA)*

In addition, participants in secondary school expressed similar comments in the following way:

*Participant: Yes. It is just that when you identify something, you have to write it down so that next time when you get the opportunity to explain it or fix it , you can speak to the people. (TSA)*

*Participant: "Um...one. I communicate with the teacher to actually try and have ways which are simpler to help the learners because some of them they need to be motivated from time to time."(ESA)*

*Participant: ... because when we are here at school some of the learners they get special help from us but it need to go home and be emphasized at home to say this is*

*what happened at school and now it will continue to happen at home so that they may not lose focus as learners. They can keep calm at school and at home but they will remain the same. (ESA)*

However, some participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the way communication process took place at their schools. The following were comments made by Education Assistants:

*Participant: Honestly, we have never communicated with parent as Education Assistants, which I think is some kind of discouragement because parents need to be involved.(ESA)*

*Participant: When the parent comes to school, I refer the parent to the responsible teacher. I really do not know much about the learner. The parent might want to know about his or her child, including the behaviour of the child.(ESB)*

*Participant: I am afraid to speak because I don't want to speak on behalf of the teacher as the teacher is in the rightful position to respond to the parent.(ESB)*

*Participant: Well, on that one I cannot say we have ever communicated with parents. The teacher usually requests me to take care of class as he communicates with the parents of learners, because it is taken that we the EAs we know our work.(ESB)*

The findings of this sub-theme have revealed on the one hand that participants acknowledge the communication strategies in pilot inclusive schools, whereas on the other hand the findings revealed that the communication strategies employed in pilot inclusive schools have the potential of being inflexible to some members of the teaching staff and thus discourage their commitment.

#### 4.4.2.5. Management of change

Engelbrecht (2019: 97) cautioned that the process of change might be undermined if the change management process does not acknowledge, recognise and manage resistance to change in an appropriate way. In responding about their experience of the change process within their schools, classroom teachers spoke out against the inability of their school management teams to bring about changes that would facilitate the

implementation of inclusive education. One classroom teacher responded in the following way:

*Participant: So far I think if I start actually to approach the inclusive education, I would say I am the first person to start the implementation of inclusive education or to give assistance to learners who are having barriers to learning. Now I do not see any action. Learners are there but I cannot see any assistance towards them; because even the school is not wheelchair friendly.(TSA)*

The participant's response seemed to suggest that classroom teacher were not given the opportunity to bring about their knowledge and skills to implement inclusive education in their schools. For this reason, Engelbrecht (2019: 97) provides that irrespective of the type of change, all employees have to participate in the change process in one way or another.

The essence of successfully managing change is regular, and appropriate communication, transparency and ensuring that employees fully understand what they will gain (Engelbrecht, 2019: 97).

Efforts in change management have to be monitored and assessed to understand the progress made and to proactively identify potential challenges (Engelbrecht, 2019: 97).

*Participant: I think the section they must be trained on let me talk about learning barriers and how do we identify that this learner has learning barriers; what can we do to help learners with this learning barrier. (TPA)*

*Participant: Eh...No so far because I just have few months here .I have not realized if I can get a chance to change something because even since when I got here we have never gathered together with teachers including the SMT to discuss the difficulties that learners have as we are the pilot school .So I do not know if one day I am gonna get the chance to bring members together to discuss what actually we have to do as a pilot inclusive school. May be we can change something. (TSA)*

#### 4.4.2.6. Managing attitudes towards inclusive education

Participants were concerned about ineffective communication by their colleagues in handling the behaviour of learners. Some participants expressed this concern in the following way:

*Participant: There are people who are more experienced here at school .If as a teacher you keep a secret and not being open to colleagues. Other colleagues are able to help you on how to work with these children.(TPC)*

*Participant: I would like to add that I have realized that the school itself; they are working very hard and cooperating .I like the spirit of cooperation and that shows that we are learning by talking to each other. (TPC)*

*Participant: Um... I would suggest that they... I have realised that a few of them are unable to... How can I put it? This issue of communication, especially when working with children because we have teachers where you find that... I don't know whether it is the way they are naturally; are short-tempered. On the side of the Social Work, try and understand the child before you speak the way you would like to speak. After that, you will know what I should say and what I should not say. How I should say it and how I should not say it. So, it is a way to know about the child. As for an Education assistant, it is much the same as the one of Social Work. You have to work well with learners. The programme should be based on good working relationships with learners. And these learners must not find themselves hesitating to come to us for help as they already know how negative our responses to them would be.(ESB)*

*Participant: So, the parents are nowhere to be found and when you try to call them, you cannot reach them and you find voice notes and messages on their phone. So, those are some of the challenges we facing but there are those who we can reach and discuss these things. They try to assist these learners. (PP1)*

*Participant: Eh...the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is not that bad because immediately they discover that a learner has just got challenges, especially learning challenges, they try to talk to their immediate senior who will try to intervene.*

*And then, if they see the problem is persisting, the challenge would be brought to us, in the Office. (PP1)*

*Participant: Our school is very small. You can see and the staff is very very small in terms of numbers. You might think that with a low enrolment of the school that the duties are few. That is where one could be wrong because teachers here have are faced with multi-tasks. Teachers leave the school very tired because they are not afforded the opportunity to specialise .They do quite a number of various activities where they cannot concentrate on doing one thing and this is a big disadvantage to service delivery so as to say. (PS2).*

*Participant: A level of dissatisfaction is high amongst teachers because there is too much to do at school besides teaching. Teachers have to...they stand up. They do not have time to rest even to sit down to mark. They have to carry some of the marking work home to finish such work because when they are at school, they start from the first period and stop at the last period. There is no resting. They will only rest or take a break during lunch time and that is the only time they breath. Most of the time they are expected to be in class teaching and they never get a break even to sit down and mark. (PS2)*

*Participant: Some assessment tasks for learners they do not have that and as a result of that it is worrisome factor because as a leader you do not want to work with a tired labour force. (PS2)*

*Participant: The teachers are doing their best although one may say they accept the challenges as they come and see I see commitment in them. I see the love of their jobs. I cannot say they are displeased as such but I see very committed staff members that show love for their learners. Eh...I would under general circumstances say well...teachers are both ways happy that there is this challenge that they must face but sad that sometimes when they are to get these learners out of their troubles, they become so tired, and the work is so demanding upon them. That is the moment when I see their sad faces. (PS2)*

*Participant: But on the whole they are happy to be with their learners by way of saying I see their commitment every day when they come to work here. (PS2)*

#### 4.4.3. Theme 3: Curriculum provisions and resources for quality Inclusive Education

The objective of this study was to interpret how principals, SMT members, classroom teachers, SBST members and EAs experienced and understood curriculum provisions and resources in pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO circuit. I have formulated figure 4.3 which comprises of eight sub-categories that have emerged from the main category. What follows is an analysis of the theme and sub-categories based on the research findings.

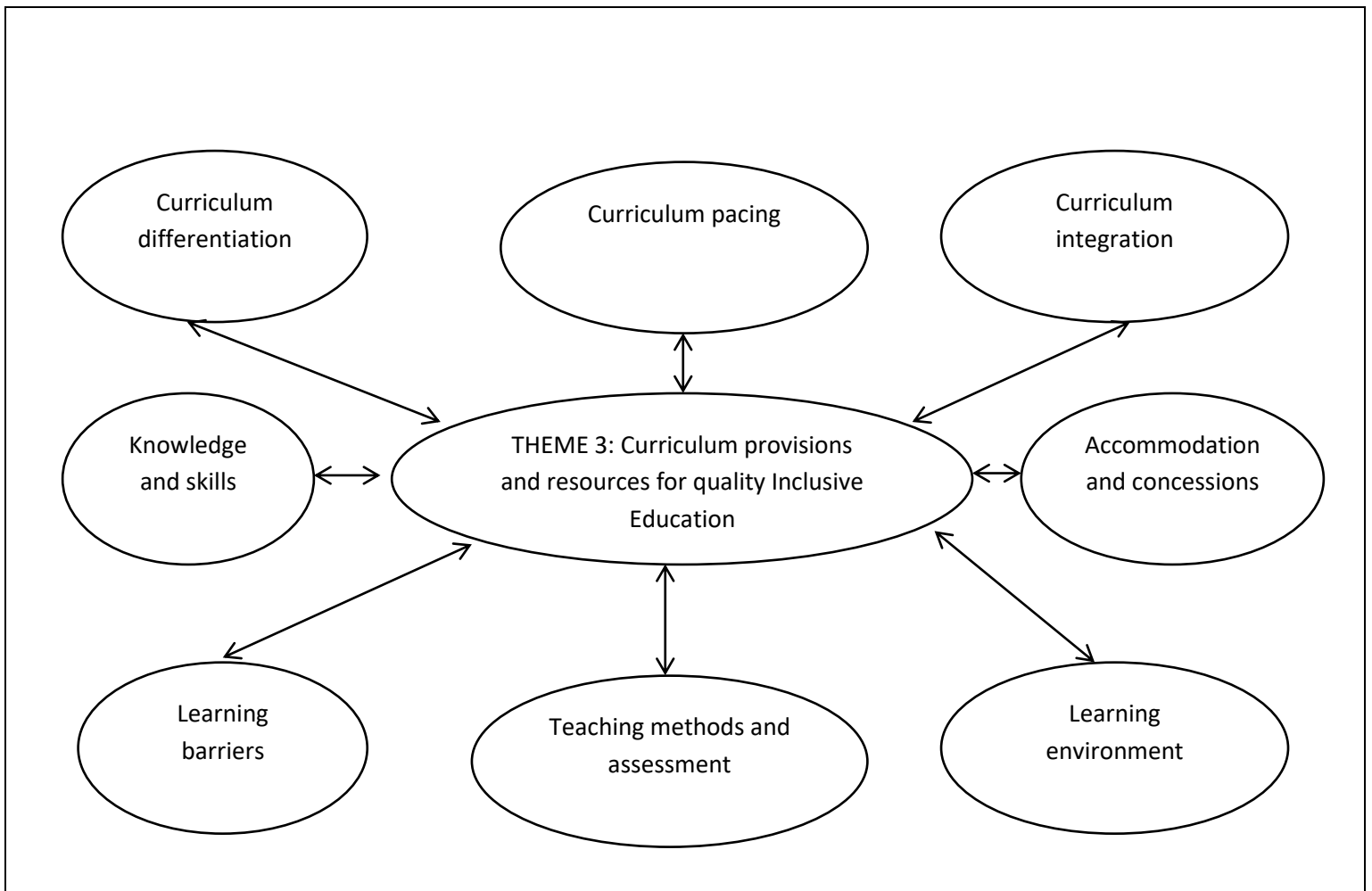


Figure 4.3: curriculum provision for quality inclusive education

#### 4.4.3.1. Curriculum differentiation

Geldenhuis and Wevers (2013:13) contended that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is not supportive of the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) which is meant to promote curriculum and assessment differentiation. In responding to the question on how they manage their classrooms to accommodate learners with diverse abilities, participants indicated some of the efforts they have put in place to sustain communication that reflects on cooperation and understanding between teachers and learners. Some of the participants have expressed their efforts in the following way:

*Participant: We have different types of learners; those that appear to be intelligent and those that experience barriers to learning. We need to know how to work with different groups of learners. There are also those learners who are in the middle. We need to plan our work to support all learners on daily basis; by profiling them and knowing the problems that they are confronted with and provide ways to deal with such challenges.(EPB)*

*Participant: I think teachers can try to work with learners with mild disabilities. They can try to give them special attention and to try and push them to be on the same level with others. They can either find more if their way of teaching maybe the learners do not comprehend much better. They can find teachers for help from other schools who can come and help them on programmes that deal specifically with learners experiencing barriers to learning and those with mild disabilities.(ESA)*

*Participant: I choose the learners that I know that they don't understand then I put them on the floor because we do not have the carpets. Then, I start teaching them about the differentiation of letters like d and b because they are confusing them; b(sound) or 4 because they are writing them upside down. Then you should teach them separately while others are working. Most of them they catch –up with what you are teaching. (TPC)*

According to Rajendran, Athira and Elavarasi (2020:170) an inaccessible curriculum constitutes a barrier to learning and development. The responses of participants highlight that teachers were still struggling to find ways of helping learners with learning barriers. This indicated that there is less assistance that teachers receive to be able to differentiate within the curriculum they offer to learners. However, teachers acknowledged that differences that exist amongst learners that they teach. This was expressed by a teacher at school B in the following way:

*Participant: Eh... I can say that as we know that these learners are not the same; they are not gifted the same. So, we need to keep on encouraging them to learn to study or to read. We need also to give ourselves time and to help these learners. We need to do more remedial to help these learners so that they can achieve their goal at the end.(TSC)*

The responses by participants indicated that teachers and education assistants were committed in working with learners experiencing barriers to learning. Their responses also reflected on the decision by the Department of Basic Education (2011a:16) that to address the barriers in the classroom, teachers should use various curriculum differentiation strategies such as those included in the Department of Basic Education's guidelines for Inclusive teaching and learning (2010). Some of the participants indicated how encouraged they were, to deliver curriculum knowledge that is appropriate for learners and at the level of their Grade. This encouragement was expressed in the following way by some participants:

*Participant: Firstly, learners with cognitive barriers, we do cross-motor activities. Cross-motor activities are physical activities in other words; climbing, moving the heads up and sideways. So, we see the learner who does not do that. We are able to know that the learner has cognitive barrier.(EPB)*

*Participant: So we must check the quality of education that we give to children and also work with them. Give them time actually to improve. Motivate them to work hard to understand the environment they are in; the environment that gives them the opportunity to learn; that can bring a good future out of them.(ESA)*



Recchia and Lee (2013:38) concede that although individual learners' shortcomings may need to be acknowledged, teachers who create a socially inclusive environment for a group of diverse children need to find ways to ensure that all of the children's contributions to the classroom community are visible and respected. This view supports the response by one teacher at school A who responded in the following way:

*Participant: When the grade teacher gives me the theme, I check learners that are not active and help them, or I remain with them afterschool; helping them with that theme or that activity.(EPB)*

The responses of participants in school A and school B reflected on the teachers' central focus of implementing inclusive education. According to Oswald (2007) as cited in Mpu and Adu (2019:71), the central focus of White Paper 6 is that inclusive education is embracing, recognising and celebrating learner diversity; acknowledging that all learners can learn and need support; and capacitating educators to enable them to address a wide range of learning needs by focusing on teaching and learning actions that will benefit all learners who experience barriers to learning.

#### 4.4.3.2. Curriculum pacing

On the one hand, participants have seemed to be frustrated by the way they had to manage time and their work schedule to accommodate the tasks and activities that are prescribed in order to reach all learners. Some of the participants from primary schools expressed their frustration in the following way:

*Participant: In time the content that we are teaching in class and time do not correspond. All the topics that we are given are more compared to the time that we must teach. You will find that after a term, before a term the last week you have three or four topics to finish and you cannot manage to finish during six hours per week. Sometimes I have to jump some of the content and some of the topics. Jumping means some of the questions not the whole topic so that I am checking the time but the problem is that learners will suffer because I won't be able to finish the whole content for the allocated time. So that is why it becomes a challenge. (TPA)*

*Participant: My responsibility is to make sure that those learners I must not be in a haste .When teaching those learners you must not be fast. You must realise that children cannot be able to catch-up at the same time. Be at the same pace with them so that they cannot be left behind. When the children are not afraid of you they are willing; they are always willing to ask where they can be able to understand. (TPC)*

On the contrary, researchers cited in Mpu and Adu (2019:71) such as (Nel et al., 2014); (Nel, Muller, Hugo, Heldin, Backmann, Dwyer & Skarlind, 2011); (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen, 2012) argue that educators' ambivalence regarding the implementation of inclusive education increases as they become more concerned with teaching subject matter and completing curriculum requirements, rather than diversifying instruction to meet a range of learner needs.

On the other hand, some participants seemed to be satisfied with the feedback and progress in the assessment of learners. One of the participants at a secondary school expressed this satisfaction in the following way:

*Participant: I am satisfied. Like they are really doing their work. They are really doing their work. When we give them assignments they even come to ask to submit completed work before due date. If it is homework or any other work you have given to them, they do honestly speaking.(ESB)*

The study for inclusive education conducted in Lesotho, Zanzibar and Tanzania has made the finding that some teachers felt it would be a lot of work, that they will not meet the syllabus, they felt inclusion will lower their standard and the pass rate will be affected (Mariga, McConkey & Myezwa, 2014:88).

#### 4.4.3.3 Curriculum integration

Participants were doubtful about time available to plan and present curriculum activities without leaving other learners behind. One participant at the secondary school expressed this experience in the following way:

*Participant: Covid-19 has just disrupted a lot of programmes that were normal. Now is the new normal as they say. Academically, learners are slow because some of them*

*come to school twice a week while others come once. So, they get left behind because of time. So, time is a barrier to their learning because they need enough time for them to be taught actually. They need enough time for them to understand more of their syllabus. So, they are behind the syllabus. The time is hindering them to learn.(ESA)*

#### 4.4.3.4. Knowledge and skills

Participants revealed differences in their confidence with their application of knowledge and skills regarding White Paper 6 on inclusive education. Some participants expressed their confidence in the following way:

*Participant: I remember studying at the University. It was under inclusive education. We did as a module for inclusive education even if I cannot remember the content that is in White paper Number six about Inclusive education but I remember I did that one. I can say it is of good value but the problem is that the Paper is there but the implementation. It is not implemented but it is there. You see. The values are there but they are not used. (TPA)*

Nel, Muller, Hugo, Helldin and Backman (2011:88) argued that teachers are aware that they lack the necessary knowledge and support to address the needs of learners with special needs and often feel threatened and unsure about inclusive practices in their classrooms.

*Participant: I think it was last year I did the module of inclusive education last year. That is when I touched it; but most of the content I have forgotten. (TSA)*

Findings in the study conducted by Mpu and Adu (2019) revealed that although teachers showed regard for the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in their mainstream classrooms as their right, their classroom teaching and learning support practices tend to be related not only to a lack of fundamental resources but to the lack of proper knowledge and skills (Mpu & Adu, 2019:73) and that their (teachers') line of thought is centred on the notion that there is a specific specialist pedagogical approach for all learners with special educational needs teachers need to be introduced to, to successfully include these learners in mainstream classrooms without an

acknowledgement of barriers to learning caused by extrinsic factors (Mpu & Adu, 2019:71).

In their responses, participants appeared to be encouraged to use their knowledge and skill of curriculum that they possessed to provide opportunities for learners to interact within their classes. This encouragement was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: I identified their lack; the areas where they lack understanding so that we can go back to teachers and say these learners have difficulties when it comes to learning here and here and need attention in such areas. Universities also have programmes where they come to schools and they offer learners here teaching lessons and it starts with the school communicating with the universities to say we need help in certain areas and those programmes are available.(ESA)*

*Participant: As Grade R teachers, we are able to identify learners who experience emotional abuse from home. We give the learner small stones to create characters. We listen to their role-play as the child plays 'Mmasikitlana'. Through this play, the child uses stone characters to reveal what happens in his or her life in reality. We are then able to identify that the child is abused and then we propose further steps to take to support the child. In our school, unfortunately we do not have a Social worker. We need to have at least two support groups; that is, support group under Social Work and support group under teaching. We need to know even their abilities. Children with cognitive, visual and other challenges must be identified and supported. We can group them and do better things than to neglect them or avoid them by giving many excuses. We need to target week days to assist learners with barriers to learning and direct our efforts to learners that are identified.(EPB)*

*Participant: Umh... I check their work. Their work tells me about their areas of lack. Their work tells me where they lack concentration. I help them to have more concentration so that they can understand the challenges that come with the subject they have.(ESA)*

Although many teachers were positive about inclusive education, especially those who have had the opportunity to practice it and have seen the benefits, Loreman, Deppeler, and Harvey (2010) as cited in ( Legotlo, 2014:179) argued that the idea of catering to the needs of all learners in the same classroom, is daunting, and is by no means without its controversies.

*Participant: Okay. Well, I might say there is lots and lots of work, but with all the work I get to learn more about the teachers. I got to learn more about what teaching is all about.. and, as much as there is too much work, it is more of you put yourself in the shoes of teachers who are already here.(ESB)*

*Participant: Um... I try. You know, when the teacher teaches and they don't understand; the teacher usually asks for my help. Maybe, I can explain better in terms of how to teach them. So, we have a relationship to say where learners do not understand his style of teaching, I come in with my own way of teaching in a simpler way so that they can understand.(ESA)*

#### 4.4.3.5. Learning barriers

Participants have expressed their distress about the inability of learners to read and view; and to respond to textual activities. Some of the participants expressed their experiences in the following way:

*Participant: "The challenges that teachers are facing are the challenges of learners who cannot read with understanding. Some of the learners who cannot numerate." (PP1)*

*Participant: Eh...most of the learners around here you find that they have difficulties of reading with understanding and you have to dig deep to make sure that these learners are able to read and not just only to read aloud but to read with understanding. Eh...when one checks their reading speed, they cannot even read forty words per minute, which is a very difficult thing, especially at a secondary school. We expect a learner to be advanced when it comes to reading; at least a minimum of hundred words per minute perhaps would be best. (PS2)*

*Participant: Okay. In my classroom are learners who are slow to learn...; they do not finish writing in time...; even poverty is there because you find learners who are hungry before school Break; and such children become happy after eating. They even are able to come to me to ask for R2.00 stating that their parents gave them nothing. What, what...what, what. And...Ja. (TPB)*

*Participant: The first one I can talk about: some eyesight; voice-they can't hear clear, even the writing cannot read some of the writing. These are some of the main barriers in the classroom. They cannot read. That is the problem. Yes. That is the main barrier. They can't read. They cannot answer. You cannot answer something you can't read. It becomes different. What are you answering? If you can't read you can't answer. You cannot interpret. (TPA)*

*Participant: Oh... in my classes. In the two classes that I am, the first barrier is reading. Some learners can't read so this means that if learners cannot read, when they are issued with the question paper they won't be able to answer the question paper.(EPA)*

The responses given by participants seemed to support the notion offered in Swart and Pettipher, (2011); Weeks and Erradu, (2013) as cited in Tebid (2019:109) that reality of providing for inclusion in schools is without a doubt a complex issue, and should not be seen as an idea of placing learners with diverse needs and barriers in regular classes, without the support related to their actual barriers. In addition, The key to managing inclusivity is ensuring that barriers are identified and addressed by all the relevant support structures within the school community, including teachers, District-Based Support Teams, Institutional-Level Support Teams, parents and Special Schools as Resource Centres (Department of Basic Education,2011:5-6).

On the other hand, participants appeared to be empathetic to learners in their classrooms who experience barriers in reading, writing and presenting of learnt material. Some of the participants expressed their empathy in the following way:

*Participant: Once you get that low performance in terms of reading skills, you find that when you teach, especially that you teach in a foreign language, you turn to be slow so*

*that you explain every word used to the learners for them to comprehend; and the curriculum does not give that much time to spend with these learners. (PS2)*

*Participant: Yes. As I said that there are children who cannot differentiate between 7 and I do not know whether it is L or T. The learners who cannot differentiate the letter S; they are writing it upside-down as 5, 3, 7 and b-sound they write it as s,p,e and they cannot differentiate those.(TPC)*

*Participant: Ja, some do respond well. It is not all of them honestly. Some they do not do the tasks that they are really given. Some do it in the name of doing it but not to learn and actually to understand the content of learning within the tasks.(ESA)*

*Participant: The second one is writing. Many learners cannot write fast and some cannot write at all. So, that is a barrier to their learning. And others cannot speak in English language. As you know that the English language is a medium of instruction in our schools, many question papers are written in English language and so learners cannot respond to question papers because they cannot read in English language.(EPA)*

The responses of participants appeared to support the idea expressed in Tebid (2019:109) that teachers are expected to identify learners experiencing learning difficulties as early as possible within their phase and give the necessary support in collaboration with the SBST, observing learners carefully so that necessary adaptations can be made.

In addition, participants appeared to be saddened by how poverty and other barriers impacted negatively on the participation of their learners at school. This feeling of sadness was expressed in the following way:

*Participant: There are different kinds of barriers to learning which is visual barriers of learning; auditory barriers of learning; physical barriers of learning and intellectual barriers to learning; and there are other more barriers of learning which can prevent a child from learning like poverty. Poverty can prevent a child from learners as the child remains hungry. The child loses concentration. And then there are slow learners. This is a barrier. And these learners who do not finish writing in time. Also these ones need to*

*be taken good care of. As an educator one must not lose patience with these types of learners. You should go with them step by step assisting them and then provide them with extra work so that they could learn and be closer to you. Like albinism, it is part of barriers of learning. Other learners might laugh at a child living with albinism because they differ in skin. This also may cause a learner to feel small and to start thinking that he/she is not like other learners. Yes..Ja. (TPB)*

However, participants have appreciated the presence of learners with physical barriers in their classes but seemed to be concerned about the teaching methods used by teachers to assess the progress and level of attainment for learners with barriers to learning. This sentiment was expressed in the following way:

*Participant: I have realized that there are two learners that are having problems regarding their learning. Actually we have a learner that has difficulty in speech and who cannot actually talk fluently. And also the sight problem; a learner with the sight problem; but those learners are placed at front seats. (TSA)*

*Participant: Mm... I only have the language barrier because I have never seen a disabled child in my class. So, I only have a barrier in language because I end-up teaching Life Orientation with Sepedi so that they can understand me very well. (TSB)*

*Participant: The barriers that I have identified are visual perception problems, auditory problems, social emotional problems, language problems; and cognitive problems. We have learners with auditory perception problems. Auditory perception problem is for someone who cannot hear well. There are learners who cannot hear well. Other learners can hear well but they cannot interpret the words they hear. They have a problem because if I say your name is for example 'Lehlogonolo', the learner may respond to say 'Ogonolo' instead of 'Lehlogonolo'. So, in the afternoon I am able to teach the learner the words or name repeatedly. When the learners keep on repeating, they end up with the ability to pronounce the words well.(EPB)*

Tebid (2019:111) states that one of the key recommendations of the SIAS policy document, in terms of how the SBST should function, is that the SBST should collectively identify school needs and, in particular, barriers to learning at learner,



teacher, curriculum and school levels; and also, to collectively develop strategies to address these needs.

Participants revealed their concern about lack of proper learning space that supports individual and group activities. This sentiment was expressed by participants in the following way:

*Participant: Ok... The first thing is overcrowding. Is overcrowding where you find that it is not easy to form groups. Where I want to group them according to ability. It is not easy because there is no movement. There is no space in the classroom. So, it becomes not easy for me to reach those ... some learners. That is why you find that I had to organise some classes where I am able to reach those individuals or learners. And another thing, most learners are unable to read or write. Ja, that's the challenge I'm facing. Ja, it is not easy to teach because they are not having a good foundation.(TSC)*

However, participants seemed to respond appropriately to intervention strategies to accommodate learners experiencing psycho-social problems but appeared to lack knowledge of different assessment techniques used to assess learners with different abilities. This experience was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: The other one is psychological problems. Some learners come to school with problems from home. So these problems affect them mentally because they don't concentrate in class. So the other thing is that the behaviour of learners disturbs them to their studies. And peer pressure. Peer pressure is one of those barriers because learners mislead one another in classes. So, it disturbs them in their learning process.(EPA)*

*Participant: Well, I would firstly like to response as Social Worker. I would say there are lots and lots of learners who are having problems and these problems they meet them at home and when they come to school they bring these problems along with them and this affects other learners; and not only on the outside but also inside the classrooms. We find that a learner is disrupting other learners because disruptive learners always think about their home problems when they are at school.(ESB)*

*Participant: Eh...There is a learner in Grade 4 who was always quiet. The learner would come to school without having taken a bath and without shoes on. I realised that the learner needed our attention, because the learner might be having stressors from home or the family background was not good. I informed the class teacher so that we could find ways to assist the learner. Some I have experienced through their writing. I have realised that some learners are not able to write legibly. When I check learners row by row, I am able to see that they are not able to write well in their books. They are unable to read. Sometimes when they do oral work, learners would just stand in front and not read as they cannot read.(EPA)*

On the other hand, participants indicated their discomfort due to poor relationships amongst role-players; which contributed negatively towards the exclusion of learners in the teaching and learning programmes. Some of the participants expressed themselves in the following way:

*Participant: Parents of learners may not be able to identify the barriers in their children. They may be shouting the child at home. This will result in the learner becoming a slow learner. I am sorry to say that. I am trying to speak the truth. When the child arrives at school, he or she is always in a state of shock; not feeling well. The Social worker can offer counselling to the learner. The nurse will assist the child by diagnosing the health problems in the child. The teacher will be provided with useful information about the child; and strategies to include the learner in the teaching and learning process. In the faculty of teaching, what teachers know is only to teach children. At times, they shout these learners. Learners who live in fear fail to think much about their school work. No person who lives in fear can have focus.(EPB)*

*Participant: Um... the challenge that I personally have as Education assistant is dealing with different personalities. You know, some learners have more dominant characteristics than others. Some are slow when it comes to learning and some are quicker to grab information. So, you need to find the person in which you accommodate all the personalities. Um...some of the learners have disruptive characteristics. You need to have certain skills on how to deal with such challenges as an EA. (ESA)*

*Participant: As an Education Assistant, I would like to say you want to help learners to be similar with other learners but then they don't really take you serious. It is like they only see us in class doing the job, but they do not see the purpose being to help them and be better learners in life.(ESB)*

*Participant: I think it would come down to their willingness to learn. Some of them do not have that willingness to learn hence we push them to have that heart of learning to keep them involved in every activity, so that at the end of the day they have an achievement in the grade and improve their learning excellence.(ESA)*

#### 4.4.3.6. Learning environment

The Department of Basic Education (2011:6-7) has described a learning environment as a place or setting where learning occurs characterized by physical factors that include classroom spaces, classroom infrastructure, arrangement of furniture, level of noise, class size, classroom displays and resources and psychosocial factors that include interpersonal cooperation, effective communication, protection against harassment, and classroom and school culture. In addition, accommodation refers to changes that are made to support learners within various educational settings (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2012:111). In contrast, participants for this study have expressed their sense of crisis as they were faced with inadequate resources for the creation of effective and inclusive learning and teaching environments in their schools. Some participants have expressed this experience in the following way:

*Participant: No. I don't think our classrooms meet some of the standards because we still lack a lot of things. If the Department can provide classrooms that offer enough space for learners to move around and play because not all learners are good in writing. Yes... so that learners can have a play area within the class. So that I can monitor them. In our class we don't have that thing we place in ears for learners with auditory challenges to help them to listen well and place where the wheelchair moves. Even the sitting arrangement is not good. Learners are overcrowded in the classroom. (TPB)*

*Participant: What I like the most about the school is the fun area because some of the activities we need to do with these children we have to be outside with them but now we*

*are just taking them to the soccer field to play one thing. We cannot be able to see properly what that child likes and what he doesn't like. (TPC)*

*Participant: My school is not...Okay. Okay, let me put it in this way my school is not inclusive friendly actually because actually it is not conducive and we lack so many structures that can support learners with disabilities. Even if we could have a learner with physical disability here; is not going to be conducive because the environment of the school is not going to be conducive to the learner. Yes. We do not have resources. (TSA)*

*Participant: Honestly, here at school they are not more focused on inclusive education because it is not that inclusive. I can start with the entrance of the Office. If now we be having someone using the wheelchair, we are going to have a problem. So, on a serious note. This school, all of it, looking at it right now, it won't be able to accommodate someone who has a disability or using a wheelchair and so forth. They cannot be accommodated. As I was saying from the beginning that there are no ramps here, I would love to see some ramps. This school must be very colourful. Maybe toilets, they being developed for disabled people. In fact they must accommodate everyone.(TSB)*

According to the study by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, teachers in rural schools taught larger classes than are the norm in other parts of the country and this has consequences for the quality of teaching and personal interactions between teachers and learners (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005:86).

However, despite inadequate resources, participants acknowledged their use of some teaching and learning support material. This acknowledgement was expressed by one participant from the primary school in the following way:

*Participant: In both classes I make sure that materials needed are in good order; the textbooks are ready. I make sure that I make copies if copies will be needed. I do copies for each and every activity that the teacher wants to give to learners before the class commences so that when the class starts all materials are made ready. And I ensure that as we know that we are living in the time of COVID-19, so I make sure that all the*

*classes are sanitized before learners get in and all learners are sanitized. And I make sure that all learners are wearing masks before they enter into the classroom.(EPA)*

The response seemed to agree with the findings in the study undertaken by Macbeath et al (2006) as cited by Allan (2008:2) that there was a general positive regard for inclusion, with teachers seeing the benefits for all learners, yet they expressed concern about whether mainstream schools were able to provide a suitable education for children with complex emotional needs.

In addition, participants appeared to be committed to include all learners of different abilities and disabilities to create an all-inclusive positive learning and teaching environments in their schools. Some participants have expressed this commitment in the following way:

*Participant: First of all we need to start with the performance of the school generally because when the performance of the school is a bit higher, it would let more learners to come to school because of the quality that is administered here. (ESA)*

*Participant: Ok. The school must buy equipment for learners who have learning barriers; like graphics, picture charts, phonics and stencils for Grade R learners to trace inside as they write. (EPB)*

*Participant: Yes, they do benefit so much; to a point where some want me to continue with them although there are other classes that need my attention as well. Most learners are very open and willing to be with me as a helper to teach them. (ESA)*

Despite the commitment that participants have shown, the lack of funds in schools (Meltz et al,2014:7) and deficits by the Department of Education to provide funding for schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014:8) were seen to be responsible for delaying the implementation of inclusive education.

#### 4.4.3.7. Teaching methods and assessment

An issue that received attention internationally has been educator preparedness and teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms (Mpu & Adu, 2019:70). In the same way, participants for this study appeared to feel that they were moderately successful by

using different forms of teaching methods and different forms of assessment to test the performance of learners. Some participants have expressed feelings of success in the following way:

*Participant: Let me start with this one of Reading and Writing. With this one I can offer to make extra-classes for these learners so that afterschool I can remain with them and read together for 45 minutes and then teach them how to write because writing starts with knowledge of letters of alphabets. Then I can teach those letters of alphabets first, and then teach them how to write legibly. And the ones for psycho-social problems, I will ask my seniors to approach social workers so that we should know where our learners come from and their family background; and how they are affected by problems from their families.(EPA)*

*Participant: Okay. Picture charts are important because Grade R learners cannot read like us. They cannot read the sentences. They are smaller children. They just see the picture chart and they can have more knowledge when they see the picture chart; and the way they look on the picture chart they are able to understand the theme. They understand what they learn. At the end, the results show that I must do this and that. When we teach learners, we do not teach them in sentences. We do a picture to communicate for example classroom rules.(EPB)*

The responses given by the participants support the view as expressed in Recchia and Lee (2013:64) that most teachers come to their practice with notions of teaching and learning that are based on their own experience at the school and in the world. However, Daniels (2010:640) highlight that teachers concede their own lack of teaching skills due to poor training under the apartheid education system and are unable to differentiate their lessons across ability groups, lack the versatility of knowing different teaching approaches, and most feel overwhelmed by the idea of also teaching children with disability.

Moreover, participants indicated their willingness to ensure all learners become successful in their learning activities. This willingness was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: Okay. When I started here, I found that there were some learners who cannot read properly. So, I have to take time. My own time so that I could help those learners. I would just take a book, an English language reading book and tell them just to read a certain paragraph just to find out if the learner can continue to read and to read with understanding. So, this is some of the activities that I think I can assist learners with. (ESB)*

*Participant: I think my most responsibility I must make sure that if not ninety, let me say ninety-five percentages of our learners must master what we teach them and they must all be included in the listening. Now it means that when I teach I must use more than one teaching method that will cater them all. (TPA)*

*Participant: Yes I have them. About these children; I call them to the table because my table is next to the chalkboard to say that... 'Look at number 1. Can you see number 1?' Then at number 1 what is the first word. Look at the first letter. Then the children must look letter by letter in order to write it properly. (TPC)*

Furthermore, participants appeared to appreciate the arrangements made by teachers for individuality, diversity and learners experiencing barriers to learning within their classrooms. This feeling of appreciation was expressed by participants in the following ways:

*Participant: Okay. The changes that I came with for being in the classes. Most learners understand my style of administering my teaching. So, those that are a bit slow to grab information, I give them special time so that they can be able to pull through and be on the same level with others. Eh... they understand how I help them and they are also willing to learn. They are ready because I tried to change their mind-set because they start to comprehend better and to have perception when it comes to learning. (ESA)*

*Participant: I ensure that I have time to give them so that they can progress. It is painful to see other learners in the classroom being able to read; those when asked to read quickly respond while other learners try to hide because they cannot read. You can tell from this that the learner doubts himself or herself that he or she can start reading other learners will start laughing at him or her. You then have to take the child and place next*

*to yourself and reassure the child that he or she can do like others, so that next time when the teacher requests them to read, they should show confidence. (ESB)*

*Participant: So I have been trying to administer simpler way for formulae; some simpler ways of teaching them that would be easier for them to understand. (ESA)*

In contrast, the study conducted by Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011:360-361) shows that teachers are still teaching in the old ways of using learning methods of “able bodied learners” as a measure of defining how learning had to happen for learners with disabilities.

#### 4.4.3.8 Accommodation and concessions

The SGB must monitor the implementation of the SIAS process at school and ensure that every possible measure is taken to provide reasonable accommodation for learners with additional support needs, including learners with disabilities (Department of Education, 2014:35). In the same way, participants for this study appeared to feel strongly against psycho-social discrepancies that prevent the provision of quality teaching and learning in their school. This sentiment was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: The learners play together including those with barriers like albinism without being segregated and they feel they are the same. Even in my class I do tell these learners that having albinism is no difference from anyone else. (TPB)*

*Participant: Yes. I feel that because ...What can I say about this? When I have these children that is why I said when I have them I feel as if I have my own grandchildren because they are open and I am open and I am not... because I know that they are not the same. I am not going to separate them when teaching them. Even when putting them in the class I don't say that because this can't read I am putting them aside and the others aside. No. I just mix them because they are learning by just being with their friends. (TPC)*

The responses by participants supported the South Africa Constitution which provides that no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or



more grounds including age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, ethnic or social origin, culture, language and birth (South Africa, 1996b). However, Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:11) argued that the current management of Inclusive education in many schools constitute a serious violation of the stipulations of the Constitution.

On the other hand, participants felt that there were no adequate support structures at schools to assist learners with physical and psycho-social barriers. Participants have expressed themselves in the following way:

*Participant: Most learners do not have a background where they have supportive parents or parents that would give them motivation to say it is time to study; let me see your school work; how far are you with your school work?. So, that is where we are coming in so that if you do not have that sort of motivation, you need to be motivated once in a while or from time to time so that you may not lose focus. (ESA)*

*Participant: We also have learners with mild disabilities. You find that there is way such a child is treated for the condition at home. Then, if such a child is not treated for the condition at home and happens to be at school, the condition of the child rapidly changes and we focus too much on the learner as the child must be well. Eh...recently there has been learners who are said to be affected by ancestral spirits ('Badimo' in Sepedi language). (ESB)*

The responses by participants seemed to reiterate the stance by the Department of Education (2014:4) that the SIAS policy specifically aims to identify the barriers to learning experiences, the support needs that arise from barriers experienced and to develop the support programme that needs to be in place to address the impact of the barrier on the learning process (Department of Basic Education, 2014:4). However, participants thought there was little intervention by schools and the Department of Basic Education to procure resources to assist learners with different abilities. This thought was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: I think we must get the resources that the learners must use because there are different types of barriers. Those with auditory problems must be supplied with*

*hearing aids and those with sight problems must be placed at the front and those with wheelchairs must be able to move around in the classroom because now they don't move. (TPB)*

*Participant: "Okay. There is one thing that I have observed about our school. The observation I made is that this school does not accommodate learners who have disabilities. Like, there should be places that are wheelchair friendly. Parents of learners must feel free to apply for admission of their children here knowing that their children will travel freely within the school and not resort on others to be pushed around."(ESB)*

*Participant: I think the school must have the resources to occupy all the learners having barriers to learning. Learners with visual barriers must be assisted with spectacles. Each learner must get something that could support them. (TPB)*

*Participant: And also the issue about unavailability of spectacles that must be given to learners with sight problems. We know that either the lenses or spectacles need to be given so that the learners can work well. The school should assist learners whose families are not able to provide. There must be a way that the school can communicate with persons who deal with sight problems to assist. (ESB)*

On the other hand, participants felt that they should engage in self-reflection in as far as their duty of care is concerned. This feeling was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: What can I say about this? These children. As I said that they need someone who is very patient with them because if you are very strict. I know I am strict but realising that I am working with children that are not.. that are quiet inclusive children then I learn that I have to be the way they are. I have to work with them very.. not strict the way it used to be. (TPC)*

*Participant: Those children with visual problems I prefer to put them in front where they can be able to see properly and the chalkboard. And I allow that 'if you can't see something on the board you must stand up and go and look at that word properly. (TPC)*

*Participant: The learning barriers that I actually have come across... eh...I have only one learner who actually concerns me .She has got a problem of the sight actually. I am even planning to engage my principal on how can we actually help that learner because is having the problem of the eyes and she always release tears from her eyes even when she is not hurt. You can see that the person is not enjoying the lesson. So far I think she is a moderate learner. Maybe if she can actually get help maybe she can perform better than that.(TSA)*

Greenway, McCollow and Hudson (2013) observed that autonomy in teachers would result in being accountable (Rajendran, Athira & Elavarasi, 2020:173). In addition, Sprenger and Wadt (2008) pointed out that if teachers become more autonomous, they will probably feel confident to make decisions (Rajendran, Athira & Elavarasi, 2020:173).

Participants felt they were skilled and willing to teach learners experiencing different barriers to learning. This willingness was indicated by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: Eh...Ok. I think the school must have extra-lessons and accommodate these learners in large numbers to show that at this school we have the interest and willingness to assist learners who struggle to reach their goal. The school must make sure that such learners are admitted and even informing the government that as a school we can do this to ensure that learners receive equal education and be included with other advantaged learners.(EPA)*

*Participant: Ok. For the learners who cannot see, usually we talk about visual closure or visual perception problems. For visual perception problems we take learners and place them in front in the classroom. We can even use graphia. Graphia is a bigger chart that we use when they write their names. Different learners cannot see smaller things; and we help the learners with visual perception problem. We make bigger fonts, and also the picture. In Grade R we talk to learners with pictures. This is why when you come to class you will see different pictures pasted on the wall. (EPB)*

Sanahuja-Gavalda, Olmos-Rueda and Moron-Velasco (2016:305) believed that schools make efforts for providing support to mainstream classroom, although the type of support differed among schools according to their policies and conception of the support which determines the level of inclusion of learners with barriers to learning and special needs in the mainstream classroom.

Participant felt strongly about the provision of aftercare service to learners requiring interventions. This feeling of appreciation was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: First of all, I think we can adapt to extra-classes and provide extra lessons because learners learn differently. We know that most learners come from different backgrounds So, we can give them opportunity to raise their concern in areas they don't understand and that is where we can relate better with them; ourselves as education assistants. So, also give these learners a platform to say they should identify their areas of lack and then allow education assistants to help them after hours. (ESA)*

*Participant: Firstly, learners have different learning barriers. So, I will divide the learners as a team. I will say this team is auditory perpetual team, and then I deal with them. So, I divide them by different problems. So, I can help them. Let me take the example with writing skill or picture chart. I know these learners with visual problems, I help them with picture chart to see better, to write better their surname. (EPB)*

This feeling of accountability for after care of learners in schools to accommodate learners with barriers to learning, seemed to support the view expressed in Recchia and Lee (2013:65) that reflecting on classroom dilemmas through a different lens can create space for teachers to reconsider what is happening and to generate new ways to respond better and promote classroom practise

#### 4.4.4. Theme 4: Managing quality of teaching and development of teachers

I have formulated figure 4.4 below to demonstrate the three subthemes I identified from statements of research participants to support the theme managing quality of teaching and development of teachers. A detailed discussion of each subtheme followed:

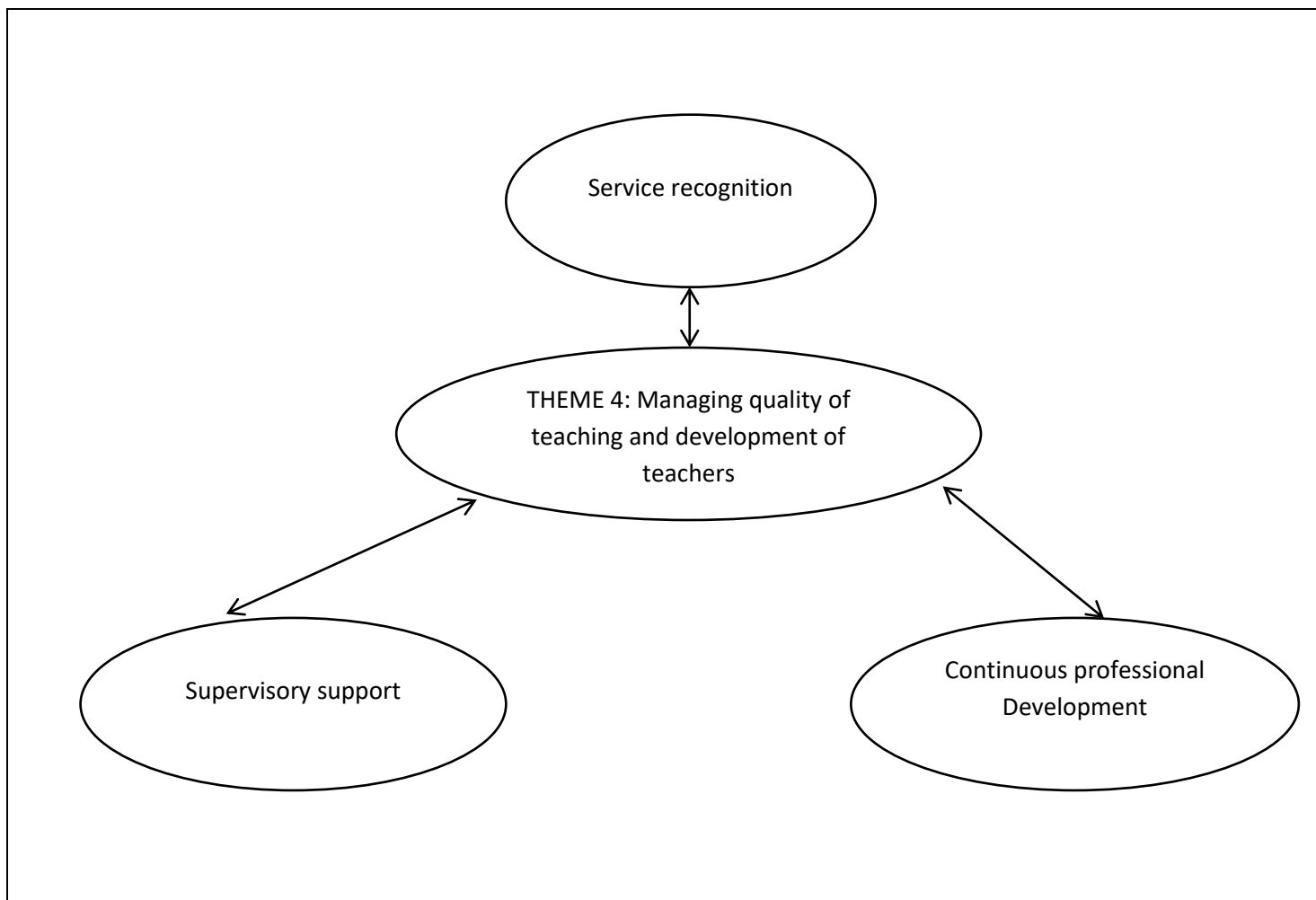


Figure 4.4: Managing quality of teaching and development of teachers

#### 4.4.4.1. Service recognition

Participants appeared to experience their recognition of work by colleagues differently. Some participants who felt recognised at work expressed themselves in the following way:

*Participant: Most of the time most of the teachers they know. When they have a problem, they don't have pride to see that they know that this guy knows they come to me. That is why I say I am recognized. On the part of the circuit...since I was nominated to be circuit coordinator for IQMS, I can say they recognize me. (TPA)*

*Participant: Yes.Because when I have the other colleagues, we used to talk more about the work. Some of them are able to say what I am doing is what they need. (TPC)*

*Participant: Ja, because yes..Eh...I can say yes I am recognized because the school and the Circuit are able to organize workshops and always encourage to teach learners different skills and to assist learners who are struggling. (TSC)*

Mathibe (2007) in Ntombela (2011:7) observes that teachers' professional development needs to focus on giving them appropriate attitudes, knowledge, skills and values to perform their tasks well and resourcefully.

In addition, participants seemed to consider the need to contribute positively towards inclusive school development and harmony. This sentiment was expressed by one participant in the following way:

*Participant: We have to start with us, teachers. If now we are united as teachers I start there. We sit down; we interact with all of us. And then from there, I will develop projects which should be... maybe counselling of kids that are having problems at home and as I have said I encountered a certain situation and looking at them I did not blame them that much because I don't know their background but once I have developed that programme I will be knowing that OK this is he or she; he or she is coming from this background. So, maybe that's why she was able to take out a knife and point it to another person. (TSB)*

However, participants have expressed their disappointment for lack of teamwork to address the objectives of inclusive education in their schools. Some participants expressed themselves in this way:

*Participant: No. There is no recognition. Actually maybe is because of I did not bring anything forward to show that I have done something. Maybe if I can put...eh... an action that can be seen by everyone .That is when I am going to get recognition. (TSA)*

*Participant: mm...No...No...No.No.The reason why I am saying this is because as I mentioned before that there is no teamwork. Eh... others they might look at that eye and say she is still young, what is she saying. Like for instance, now if I can tell them here at school and suggest that how about we build ramps maybe next year, someone who is using a wheelchair or someone who is blind can come here and attend school here. Let us at least do something that will accommodate disabled. Just because the*

*way I have seen so far, just because I am young and looking so, I don't know my body is just too small. I don't think they will take me serious. So, I don't think I will make full use of my knowledge and skills here. (TSB)*

The responses of participants appeared to agree with the research study conducted by Donohue and Bornman (2014:8) which revealed that education officials in South Africa were unsure regarding the goals of inclusive education, with some officials reporting they were unclear about how ordinary and special schools would be transformed into schools more suitable for inclusive education.

In addition, participants seemed to be discouraged by their own supervisors to implement inclusive education in their school. This sentiment was expressed by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: No, I don't see any encouragement whatsoever but because I am not doing it for them, I am doing it for the nation. As we know, the teachers are the mothers of the nation. I want to develop the future leaders, the fathers and mothers of tomorrow. Even if I don't receive the encouragement, I will keep on keeping on. (TSB)*

The response by the participant seemed to highlight the view expressed in Mampane (2017:183) that established support structures in schools, such as the school-based support teams (SBST), may sometimes be supportive and at times act as barrier to inclusion.

However, participants appeared to have welcomed their appointment in the schools and appeared to be hopeful about the future. This feeling was expressed by some participants in this way:

*Participant: Eh... What I can say is that I enjoy being an EA because I am studying towards Bachelor of Education Intermediate phase. So, even myself I am learning about some of the challenges. I learn how to be a teacher; how to learn to accommodate learners of different abilities. And then so I would encourage that this EA programme to continue as a permanent thing because I see it helping learners a lot. So, eh... I will be happy if our government could see it as a programme to happen also in the future and*

*become a permanent thing. I am making a call to our Basic Education Department to see this programme as something more important for the future.(EPA)*

*Participant: I think they may extend the programme because we the Education Assistants, we do a lot of work. Even because of COVID-19, but normally there must be Education Assistants in all the schools. (EPB)*

Furthermore, some participants seemed to appeal to the authorities to recognise them by extending their contracts. This sentiment was expressed in this way:

*Participant: I think we had so much impact on the school honestly, and it would be fair to us to extend the duration of our employment here at the schools because we did not only reduce the work load from teachers but we also created a healthier working environment within the school. (ESA)*

*Participant: Oh! It will make me happy because not only with me being employed but with me feeling contend with the amount of help that I give to these children; with me having developed such a beautiful relationship and it even goes beyond school. So, we even give help at home. At home, some of these learners consult with us and then we help them and they understand. So, it would be such an honour if the government can identify us as helpful and actually keep us working. (ESA)*

*Participant: Our work is more effective. Even teachers have already expressed themselves positively about our impact in the work that they face. So, when we heard that the contract is coming to an end, which it didn't; it was painful for some of us to say why the Department, because it sees that we don't have jobs and this is job creation; that they have created jobs and allow the people to continue doing work because now teachers express it that since we came here we have helped them a great deal. (ESB)*

*Participant: The programme has created jobs for people with jobs. We knew that by the end of March 2021 we would not be here. This shows that there is too much work for our teachers. So, the Department and the National government in general why don't they just make this a permanent position or they make it an annual position that if possible, we give other young people opportunity so that they could get similar experience that we gained here. (ESB)*



The appointment of Education Assistants and General School assistants was acknowledged by participants and seemed to concur with the assertion in Tebid (2019:113) that one of the ways the DBST has shown its commitment to empower teachers in schools through the SBST is by appointing learning support educators to address those on the spot issues which the DBST could not reach.

In addition, participants have stressed the importance of their work and how it should be recognised. This was shown in the following statements by some participants:

*Participant: ...because some other subjects are allocated few periods. The teacher must take the teaching equipment; and must help each learner. The time is too short for the teacher. But, when there are EA in the classrooms, they can assist the teachers. It is my duty as EA to give learners information while the teacher teaches in the classroom. As I am placed in Grade R, I assist learners to hold their pencils as this helps learners to finish their work in time. (EPB)*

*Participant: "think the work is more effective because since we came here we realized a lot of change with learners and teachers as well in the school. The teachers had a lot of work. In terms of marking scripts, going to class, giving learners tasks and also making follow-ups on the performance of learners and checking their books as to whether learners write legibly. So, we have off-loaded some of the work from teachers so that they can make their work easier and to make this environment a happy environment; a healthy working environment so that we may not have complaints from different teachers with an overload of work or from learners that they are not given enough tasks or they are not given enough help where they are to learn. (ESA)*

*Participant: It is very effective. Okay, there are so many things that we do as EAs. We are marking. We are invigilating. We are helping in recording of marks. So, I can say we are able to reduce the workload of teachers. If I take part of the work, then the teacher is able to do the other work. So, we do whatever we are able to do. I cannot refuse delegated work by the teacher. (ESB)*

The utterances by participants seemed to support the view as expressed in Mestry (2017:9) that schools should be encouraged to strengthen professional learning communities within schools and engage with those who need to change their practice.

#### 4.4.4.2. Supervisory support

Participants for this study have expressed different views about the nature and adequacy of support they received from their supervisors in an effort to implement and manage inclusive education programmes in their schools. On the one hand, participants appeared to be satisfied with the type of support they received from their supervisors. This was indicated by some participants in the following way:

*Participant: We no longer use the old method of chalk and talk. Sometimes we can do demonstration. However, when we need the material we tell the school. They buy it for us. It shows that they support us so that we can include all the learners with different learning barriers. (TPA)*

*Participant: Yes... eh, they help me with workshops and so on. I also get support from the principal and old teachers in the school. They give all the support I need. They encourage me not to lose hope. (TPB)*

*Participant: Ok. Eh... My senior or my seniors help me by summoning the parents. They summon the parents of those learners and then they come to school and talk to them. They even discuss some of the issues on how we can help these learners. And another thing is that my senior...my HoD.. Ja, is able to help to assist me...Ja, in presenting some of the topics. She comes with different strategies on how the learners can understand. For that I get support.(TSC)*

*Participant: We do try to call upon motivators to come and encourage the teachers to give out their outmost best. We invited one of the principals around to come and at least give a different voice of saying if we work hard the school will grow bigger once we see the positives that would come out of the hard work and the teachers are trying their level best to work very hard. We start here with morning lessons at seven and we are able to push until half-past four in the afternoon. That is how much one can ask for from these overworked teachers. (PS2)*

The utterances of participants seem to support the view expressed in Mampane (2017:182) that school-based support teams established in schools should consciously strive to meet the challenging needs of the teachers and learners in inclusive classes. In terms of the Department of Basic Education (2014:10), the SBST should respond to teachers' request for assistance with support plans for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

On the other hand, participants seemed to be concerned about the nature of support that teachers received from their supervisors. Participants have raised their concerns in the following way:

*Participant: Okay, we have a programme called IQMS. That is the only supervision I get from HoD and also from my senior teacher .Yes I call him my senior because he has more experience.(TSA)*

*Participant: Some can overload you with work and some can give you light work. It depends on how they see you as a colleague. (ESA)*

This responses by participants seemed to suggest lack of support given to teachers by SMTs and also seemed to agree with the revelation in the research study conducted by Geldenhys and Wevers (2013:12) that institutional Level support teams (ILSTs) are not operational, and that the schools' current activities are mostly limited to the identification of learners that experience barriers to learning, without reaching the stage where learners are exposed to support programmes to make their participation in school programmes meaningful. Moreover, participants seemed to be unfulfilled about insufficient monitoring and support given to principals and school management team members. This feeling was expressed by participants in the following way:

*Participant: Yes, but very minimal. So, if such support can be increased maybe I can say it will assist in minimizing the challenges, (PP1)*

*Participant: Yes. We sometimes welcome curriculum advisors from the District as well as Circuit office. Although we would have loved to get as much support as may be garnished, usually, probably what we are facing here and the school in terms of shortages of staff maybe the district and Circuit office are facing the same challenges.*

*So, the visitations are minimal and not to one's satisfaction as such because you would love to be here so that when your seniors monitor your work that is when you see that you are doing the right thing. Most of the time, the response or support comes in drips and drops. However, sometimes such things we do not have control over. You simply have to deal with what you have; what comes your way. Eh...not necessarily. I would not say is sufficient because during the course of this year, had I received any visit from the circuit? No. It was towards the end of last year. (PS2)*

*Participant: Eh...the kind of support that we get is when we are called upon at meetings and one cannot call that support because it is away from the epicentre; away from the source which is where learners are. Eh...when you say the school should have five teachers what kind of results are you expecting out of that because there are various streams in the secondary schools which have an impact in the future studies of our learners. The five teachers are to deal with the curricula needs that must cater for teaching and learning of these learners to prepare them properly for their tertiary studies. (PS2)*

*Participant: Lack of information makes it difficult. (PS1)*

*Participant: I am not fully satisfied. There is a lot of work in my hands to thoroughly supervise teachers. (PS1)*

The response by participants seemed to acknowledge that the inadequate facilities and infrastructure that are available to DBST members to provide education support services at the district level, more specifically, the inadequate availability of human resource and transport for officials to visit schools, are barriers that hinder the delivery of services to schools by DBSTs (Makhalemele, 2011 cited in Tebid, 2019:112-113).

#### 4.4.4.3. Continuous professional development

Participants have indicated different opinions about the nature of professional development practised at their schools. On the one hand, participants appeared to be happy with the opportunities created by the schools in the form of school activities to develop them. This sentiment was expressed in the following way:

*Participant: There are some of the activities that I am taking role in for example; I can give example of sports, under sports. Even the management of NSNP programme I am also there. Even under the IQMS. I am also there taking part. Now it means I am no longer only on teaching and learning but I am also adding some of the values to my school on other activities. (TPA)*

*Participant: Yes. I think they give us the opportunity to practice inclusive education besides the shortage of those things. (TPB)*

In contrast to the response of participants, Ellins and Porter (2005) in Mampane (2017:182) stress that half of the teachers of learners experiencing learning barriers have no specialist knowledge or training.

Moreover, participants appeared to be discouraged by inadequate training offered to teachers to implement inclusive education. This sentiment was expressed by some participants in this way:

*Participant: "No. No. Not yet but then I had one of my modules at Varsity about Inclusive Education. So I had little bit of light there and then." (TSB)*

*Participant: I want to know more about inclusive. Actually I have questions towards the whole thing; like for instance now at varsity there is no place or module where for instance they are offering teachers to teach sign language so that you can go and teach at some schools where you specialize in that. So, actually I do have some questions that how about the government can practice this. We do not only get training to go to schools whereby ...Actually they should offer things to us so that in the future, even when our schools get developed they are having a teacher who can teach the students... they are having a teacher who can teach people who can't hear. Even learners who are just normal they should also learn it so that they don't feel excluded. So, they should attend with all of us in class even if you are deaf, even if you can't see, you attend with other normal learners. (TSB)*

The above responses by participants highlighted the view expressed in Mestry (2017:71) that SACE emphasises that like all professionals, teachers and SMTs (including principals) require deep knowledge, which is continuously updated and

widened, and which involves complex skills that need to be continually adapted to new circumstances.

In addition, participants were concerned about lack of funding for post graduate studies towards inclusive education and that their current qualifications needed to be improved to respond to the challenges they face to implement inclusive education. Some of the participants indicated in the following way:

*Participant: Professional development that I need I think individually so is to better my qualification studying towards inclusive honours or masters or inclusive programme-educational inclusive programme. That is the professional development that I think it will be of benefit. I think as a school we must participate in most of the programmes. It might be a non-governmental programmes or governmental programmes that teachers must go and attend. I think we can take part in those types of programmes. That is where we benefit. (TPA)*

*Participant: I think I have to study further in this inclusive education so that I can get my honours and masters qualifications because I really like this this course of inclusive education and I really enjoy it. (TPB)*

*Participant: I wish that we could really have maybe three or six month workshop .Something that can improve us about teaching and being inclusive. (TPC)*

*Participant: Yes. If I can be given the opportunity to study...to register; where the Department can assist... finance me. Then, I can be able to study and learn more about inclusive. (TSC)*

Furthermore, participants showed how dissatisfied they were with the Department of Basic education's inability to permanently employ support staff members who are trained to support teachers and learners in schools. This feeling was expressed by one participant in the following way:

*Participant: In my opinion, if it was possible, our government should in future train and employ teachers with a health qualification. Just now, if a learner suffers from epileptic disorder, we as teachers always rush the learner to the clinic. This may be a matter of*

*every week or every day. If we could have someone with a nursing qualification, we will be empowered with knowledge on how to work with learners of different health challenges. (EPB)*

*Participant: As I have said, already because I'm already in the field, I was just thinking of how about the Department can give us workshops where we can be able to understand the sign language, the Braille, and again how to handle...meaning have more knowledge of Inclusive Education. Yes.(TSB)*

The responses of participants agreed with the view by Walkins (2012) as cited in Mpu and Adu (2019:71) that teachers must have a deeper understanding of inclusive education and diversity; knowledge and range of skills to collaborate widely with all stakeholders; engage in inclusive instructional planning by being reasonably prepared to anticipate and be responsive to high-priority needs within regular classrooms; and effectively support learners with diverse learning needs to participate fully in all classroom activities, rather than being supported in separate special classrooms or resources. Moreover, according to the Department of Education (2014:), the implementation of the SIAS strategy was to be supported by activities which included the training of all teachers, managers and provincial and district officials in the use of the strategy; and extended consultation with other government departments, especially the Department of Health and Social development to align services and procedures at all levels.

Despite the challenges that they faced, some participants for this study acknowledged the training they received from their supervisors. Participants expressed themselves in this way:

*Participant: Yes, I received training. The first training was how I should learn to be professional with other teachers and anyone within the school. I do not know how to put it correctly. (ESB)*

*Participant: Before we started with this programme, the School management team has given us our job description. Then we moved through the process of sanitizing,*

screening of learners; and how our classes must be sanitized. And so on and so on.(EPA)

*Participant: I did receive training but it was some sort of mental training. Um... to be professional; to know different characteristics of teachers as well. It was a sort of mental training to say you must know how to become; how to deal with stress; overload of work; how to deal with learners, those that are disruptive in class. You have to have skills enough to know how to deal with different characters. (ESA)*

*Participant: Yes they introduced us to training offered through mobile devices. So, because of their apps. I do not know whether it is working or not. There is problem about their apps from the Department of Basic Education. We are not able to login. We did not get further information. (EPB)*

*Participant: I have found the workshops useful and the guidance from my mentor in Grade R also being useful for me and children become well cared of. (EPB)*

*Participant: It is very effective. Okay, there are so many things that we do as EAs. We are marking. We are invigilating. We are helping in recording of marks. So, I can say we are able to reduce the workload of teachers. If I take part of the work, then the teacher is able to do the other work. So, we do whatever we are able to do. I cannot refuse delegated work by the teacher. (ESB)*

Even though participants acknowledged the training they received in some aspects of their work, Mampane (2017:186) reiterates that school-based support team members in South Africa, though given the power of overseeing inclusive education, do not have the skills to teach inclusive education; they rely mostly on the guidelines which are provided by the department of education and their own discretion in implementing inclusive

#### 4.4.5. Theme 5: Involvement of parents in mainstream pilot inclusive school education

I have formulated figure 4.5 below to illustrate the subthemes that emerged from the statements research participants to support the theme regarding the involvement of parents in mainstream pilot Inclusive school. I have identified two subthemes in this regard. What follows in the next page is a discussion of each subtheme.



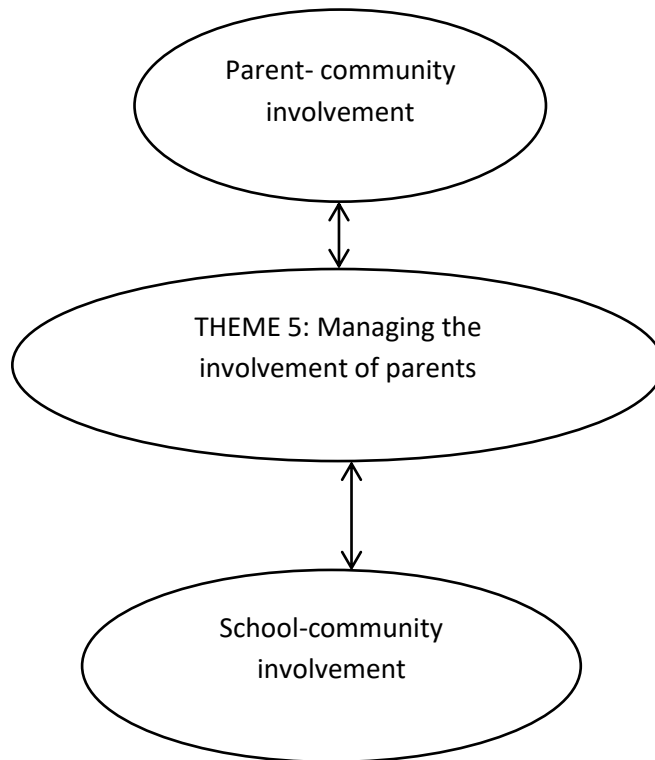


Figure 4.5: Managing the involvement of parents

#### 4.4.5.1. Parent community involvement

Participants for this study have expressed different views about the involvement of parents in the education of learners in their schools. Firstly, participants appeared to be discouraged by lack of communication between the school and parents about the welfare of learners. This feeling was indicated in this way:

*Participant: Eish. We do not communicate most of the time because most of the time as they come to school, some come about to complain. That is when they come to school. But about learner progress they don't normally come. During parents' meetings few will come and others will give their own reasons. So that one I think is a challenge. You know, parent involvement we do not have. (TPA)*

*Participant: Some of them respond and some not and just say that they do not have time. (TPC)*

*Participant: Eh...The involvement of parents is lacking. I can see it is not been alright, because learners are given the work at school for this day. Then, the next day the learner comes to school without the homework being done. This shows that parents do not check books of our learners. If they check books of their children, they can identify that today there is homework to be done and then make sure that the children complete the homework in good time. When learners' work is not monitored by parents, this shows that they are not concerned about the welfare and future development of their children.(EPA)*

*Participant: It is a fifty-fifty percentage situation. I cannot say I am satisfied or I am not satisfied because some of the parents they do so but some other days they just leave it. But most of them they follow our instructions. When we call them they respond and we talk with them about their children. Like with learners who are unable to write, we request the parent to meet us half way because we need to ensure that the learner is able to write much the same way as other learners. The training course I received from University mandates that each learner has the right to access his or her ability the same as other learners.(EPB)*

*Participant: Okay. I think parents are not well trained or educated on how to actually help learners with barriers to learning or their children with disabilities .So, if someone can explain to them they will also take action or they will also interact with teachers; they will help teachers. They will not just withdraw and take their learners to school and withdraw and wait to see what teachers will do. (TSA)*

The responses of participants supported the view expressed by Penh (2005) in Rajput, Das and Goswami (2018:8) that parent-teacher communication and collaboration is crucial, yet it is often difficult to achieve and parents have a key role to play in supporting their children and in campaigning for inclusive education.

Secondly, participants appeared to be disturbed by lack of support by school management, teachers and parents to support learners with diverse abilities and inabilities. This feeling was expressed by participants in the following ways:

*Participant: A child who is more intelligent has the right to go further with school work. We do not have to ignore the child because he or she is able than other learners. This is the reason we involve the parent of the child experiencing a barrier*

*to assist at home as we here at school help the child during school hours and during the time of aftercare.(EPB)*

*Participant: We need to come to a point where parents are involved; and then they are given feedback about the whole performance of the school so that they can know the excellence or the limits that come with the teaching department here at school. (ESA)*

*Participant: I think parents must be invited to meetings to discuss about their children. Parents must also encourage the children because some parents shout at children especially children with barriers to learning and the children did not choose these conditions. Some parents go further to compare learners which is wrong. (TPB)*

*Participant: To have parents' meetings grade by grade. If we can call parents to school to discuss with them grade by grade because if we call them as many parents some of them will not come but if we call them and say alright this week on Monday grade 3 parents must come to school so that you can be able to talk to them about what you are experiencing here at school. I think that will help us to improve. (TPC)*

The responses of participants seemed to suggest the view held in Tebid (2019:119) that collaborative consultative relationships need to be established following a holistic, integrated approach in order to deal effectively with barriers to learning and development. In addition, the response by participant seemed to support the view expressed in Smith, Polloway, Patton and Dowdy (2012:51) that good communication between the school and parents is critical if a true collaborative relationship is developed but however, many parents feel that too little communication takes place between them and the school.

Thirdly, participants were concerned about the socio-economic conditions the parents of learners face. This was expressed by participants in the following statement:

*Participant: Most of the parents of learners with barriers, they don't normally come. Some they stay with their grand-parents. They don't stay with their main parents. You find the parent is working let's say Gauteng the learner is left with the grandmother or grandfather so that is ...I think that is why we are having challenge*

*with learners with barriers. Most of them they don't stay with their parents...the absence of parents in the lives of their children. (TPA)*

*Participant: Eh...if the economic circumstances would allow, I would wish that every learner that comes to school must have a guardian who can be reached with ease by the school whenever they are needed in order to support these children. Eh...that is only wishful thinking. Practically, parents around here are forced to commute to remote towns to seek employment. (PS2)*

*Participant: I think the bilateral discussions between government and labour movements should not only incline on the conditions of employment of teachers. The Department or our unions need to persuade our government to at least direct resources in the running of school; in the governance of schools and if financial resources are directed to schools there is high possibility that schools can come up with innovative means of attracting parents by means of making sure that when parents are called to meetings...maybe is because they are not fed when they come here at school. If there were financial resources, schools can be able to cater for these parents when they come to school because there would be called to school on an empty stomach and leave school on an empty stomach. We know as Africans that we get our energies from our stomach and perhaps on a lighter note, might attract parents if unions can persuade government to direct financial resources and schools do such kind of activities, probably parental participation in the children's education could be improved. (PS2)*

In line with the response by participant, the Department of Education (2014:12) mandated schools to obtain information that relates to the learner's family and home situation, by recognising that the child's identity is influenced by his or her family structure, the level and nature of contact with immediate family members or care-givers, such as siblings, parents, extended family.

Moreover, participants appeared to be discouraged by parents for not participating in the assessment activities of their children. This was shown in the following statements:

*Participant: According to me I think most parents take their responsibility for children as the teachers' responsibility because you give child homework then the following day the homework is not done. Remember the grade 3 learners need parents to*

*assist them; but when asking the child why didn't they help you. They just tell children that it is the teacher's job to do that. (TPC)*

*Participant: Ok. All parents want their children to pass the grade, but the thing is that they do not want to help the children. You cannot want your child to go to another grade while you do not help your child. It is their wish but they do not want to meet our teachers halfway.(EPB)*

*Participant: Oh. Oh...Oh! What I have experienced; actually from my experience and my subjects; I do not know about other subjects if parents are interacting with those teachers; but from my side they are not interacting with me.” (TSA)*

*Participant: Another challenge is parental support. Most of the learners lack parental support. I know they are from different backgrounds but still we have a lot to talk to the parents. To encourage parents; to motivate them to be part of their children's education. Sometimes we give learners homework, and some of the learners just return them to school without having written those. So, this shows that parents do not care. They do not look. They do not look. They do not check the children's homework. (PP1)*

The responses of participants agreed with the view expressed in Smith, Palloway, Patton and Dowdy (2012:58) that parents should be encouraged to visit the school to observe their children in the classroom. Although the parent's presence could cause some disruption in the daily routine, the school personnel need to keep in mind that parents have a critical stake in the success of the educational effort (Smith, Palloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2012:58).

Furthermore, participants were concerned about learners who prevent parents getting involved in their learning activities. This was expressed as follows:

*Participant: It is quite difficult. One finds that most of our learners live with their aged grannies at home. When learners are supposed to come with parents, they just ask anyone to accompany them to school. We discovered this in the sense that once you say you need a parent this week and we instruct them to call parents again, they come with different ones. Eh...I do not think that one should say parental involvement is satisfactory. You may even find that you have four or even five guardians for one learner. (PS2)*

*Participant: I have never communicated with parents of learners who are actually differently abled because I tried one day on one of them. The one with difficulty in speech. I think he gave me the wrong number of his parents. And so, I couldn't communicate with the parents but I wanted to talk to parents. I couldn't reach them. (TSA)*

In addition, participants were concerned about lack of efforts by parent to correct the behaviour of children. This was expressed by one teacher in this way:

*Participant: There was a case we called the parent. Mm... the parent wanted to advocate for the child. So, I was surprised on to say how can you advocate for somebody who is wrong. So, I can say somewhere, somehow there are parents that are difficult to communicate with. There are some who are not difficult because I was once having this case of kid not coming to school wearing school uniform. So, I once took a step and called one learner's parent and the parent responded very well to me and promised that tomorrow when she leaves home they will check her thoroughly, whether she is having a full proper school uniform on her.(TSB)*

The response by participant seemed to suggest the assertion by the Department of Education (2014:13) that in some cases the parent or caregiver's understanding of the child may in fact emerge as the barrier to learning and development, or a teacher's perspective may present as a barrier in the classroom; and that such assessments demand extreme sensitivity to reach a non-biased, balanced appraisal.

Again, participants appeared to be worried about parents who are not willing to disclose the barriers to learning that their children experience. This was shown in this way:

*Participant: I will speak in general as far as I see things.as you know that when you have someone who is not able to study because of some reasons, eh... some they still hide these kids. Some they don't want to understand. They don't know this information. They are not even interested. If I get out of this topic and tell you about somebody who I know that she wouldn't be able to attend school like other learners. As we speaking just now, that person is somewhere like ten years old. The parents, they are not doing anything. They are just relaxed. She is just at home with them. They are not even thinking of taking her out and ask outside eh... about how can we get help for this kid so that she can get active and start to learn and start to do all*

*these things. So, there are just some parents who are not interested or they just eh... Some you can just see that those people are just waiting to see their child die and say what a relief. That's how I see things.(TSB)*

The response by participant seemed to suggest the view as expressed in Rajput, et al (2018:8) that one of the major barriers to enrolment today is that parents no longer see the value of their children getting an education.

In addition, participants were concerned about lack of inclusive education outreach programmes to parents. This was indicated in the following way:

*Participant: Eh... The education level of these parents clearly shows that the majority of parents are not formally educated. So, them not formally educated places them in a situation of not caring about the learning process of their children.(EPA)*

*Participant: ...because back in the days, it was a taboo to have such a kid but now we are having institutions that are accommodating such people but still there are some difficult parents out there.(TSB)*

*Participant: mm... Some parents admit. They can see that their learners are struggling but some it takes time for them to understand. Yu need to explain to them and keep on summoning them so that they understand what is going on. Ja. Only few parents who are understanding or who are believing that their kids are not doing well. Some say no my child he or she can do better. Ja... but when you summon them and explain to them some they start to understand that yes their children are struggling in some things.(TSC)*

*Participant: So, parents need to understand that being taught in the classroom differs from learner to learner. So, some learners deserve to be given attention by teachers where we identify their talents. We identify their ability to excel in other environments and then they are given focus in that environment. We may delay their studies here at high school. They can actually be placed in an environment that would suit their ability because we are trying to avoid their lack of understanding in the classroom. We are trying to avoid their lack of participation in the classroom; and actually to end up with them creating certain behaviour because of lack of progression from the classroom. So, that is where parents need to come in and understand that their*

*children are different and some deserve to be given attention in certain environments. (ESA)*

Despite the challenges that participants were experiencing in their schools, some participants appeared to be satisfied with the involvement of other parents. This was shown in the following statements:

*Participant: I think parents appreciate what I am doing in class. Up to this time, no parent came to complain about his or her child. They are satisfied. (TPB)*

*Participant: With parents we do remedial work. Remedial work is the type of work we talk with parents about telephonically or we call them to school another day. If the learner has a serious problem, we call the parent to school and talk with the parent about the learner. (EPB)*

However, participants seemed to appreciate the effort by school management teams to create opportunities for parent involvement. This was expressed in the following way:

*Participant: Eh... As I am saying the management helps me to invite those parents. Sometimes I just inform my head of department that I will be summoning certain parents and they come to school and sit down with them and talk to them, discuss about issues that I see or problems that their children or child has. And then, I see...Eh... more support. I get more support from the parents. I don't know maybe is the way I communicate with them. I see more support from these parents. Ja, most of the parents when you talk to them, when you invite them they are willing to help their kids. They do. They do support. (TSC)*

In contrast, participants appeared to be distressed by lack of cooperation and collaboration from teachers and parents of learners. This was indicated in the following statements:

*Participant: Um... Besides the SGB programme where the SGB is involved in the school, there hasn't been a meeting with parents where they get updated with information about the participation of learners with regard to the school. (ESA)*

*Participant: ...but my wish is that parents of learners should develop the same mind-set with that of teachers so that parents will not just say that the child is back from*



*school, while not helping the child even during holidays. They are not worried that the child did not receive homework the entire week. The parents must come to school for reasons behind the child not receiving homework the whole week; to provide information to teachers and to receive information about their children in return. The parent can even ask for some activities from school to help the children at home. Our learners will then succeed in their learning process. (EPB)*

#### 4.4.5.2. School community involvement

Apart from the challenges faced by parents of learners of the selected schools, participants seemed to be aware of lack of community safety consideration for learners in the area after school hours. This challenge on social responsibility was expressed by one participant in the following way:

*Participant: So another challenge that I have just learnt is that there is a problem from the community. We do have social challenges where some of the learners are neglected and...so, it is a challenge in the community. So, but...as we try to solve these challenges together with other departments like Social Development, I think if we can just hold one another in hands, the community will be assisted, but we do have social problems. (PP1)*

The above response seemed to support the view expressed in Bar-On (2013) as cited in Rajendran, Anthira and Elavarasi (202:174) that social responsibility is an ability to identify with social groups, among friends, at work and in the community, and to cooperate with others in a constructive and contributing manner. The response of participant further appeared to suggest that the selected schools for the study did not improve their conditions to involve the wider community in school activities and there is insufficient participation by the schools in community initiated programmes.

#### 4.4.6. Theme 6: Managing environmental and school structural changes towards inclusive schools

I have formulated figure 4.6 below to illustrate the two subthemes I identified from groups of statements from research participants to support the theme: managing school structural changes. What follows is a discussion of each subtheme.

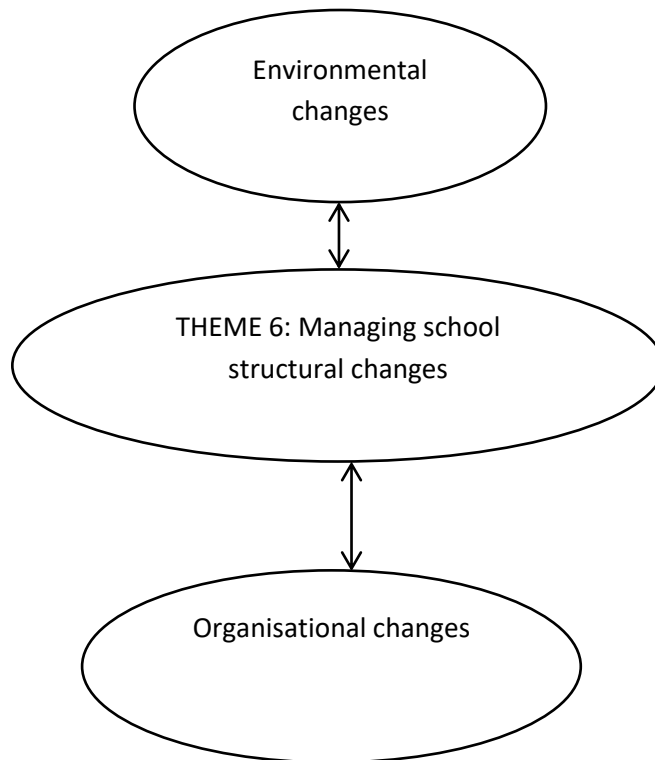


Figure 4.6: Managing school structural changes

#### 4.4.6.1. Environmental changes

Participants appeared to acknowledge physical resources that are available but were worried about inadequate resources. This was shown in the following way:

*Participant: I can talk about physical changes because our buildings unlike before they were not having those hills that if a learner driving a wheelchair will be able to attend the class but now they built them. So, I think most of learners are included. Even when you go to the toilet, those toilet seats are not like before. There is also toilet for learner with disability. I think the most one is the resources because we do not have so enough resources. Even if they are there they are not enough for inclusive. (TPA)*

*Participant: My goodness. That is a tough nut to crack. The desks are not up to scratch. Most of them are broken. We tried to fix but with the limited funds that we receive, it is always a challenge to keep up. (PS2)*

The responses of participants confirmed the view expressed by Engelbrecht, green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999) as cited in Rajput, Das and Goswami (2018:8) that certain physical dimensions may have to be changed in order to remove barriers to learning and all barriers in the physical environment should be removed to make the classroom accessible to learners with physical disabilities.

However, participants appeared to be upset by lack of progress to modify physical resources in the schools. Some participants expressed their feeling in the following manner:

*Participant: The playground, the netball and volleyball courts...all those kinds of sport. Some learners like sport. (TPB)*

*Participant: The first thing even when you get at the gate the first thing that you have to identify, I do not know whether you call them ramps or what...the ones that are used by wheelchair. When you get in the Malls the first thing that you will see is that this place is conducive even for people with disabilities. You will see the ramps, wheelchairs, even the ramps and wheelchairs are not available at my school; and I think even the windows in the school are not conducive for learners with sight problems because they must have curtains or something that can actually stop more light from entering the classroom so that learners can see well on the chalkboard, you see. So, we lack so many things. We lack so many things. What we have is just a building, but the material that actually must support are not there. (TSA)*

*Participant: mm...O.K. I can say that the infrastructure is not accommodating some of the learners because you find that...the... What do we call this? There is no walking... the ramps. We do not have those ramps. There are steps where you find that the wheelchairs are not able to... or the learners cannot walk proper. Is not easy for them to climb the steps. So if we can fix the infrastructure I think it will be better. Ja. We qualify to have such learners. (EPA)*

According to Ileri, King'endo, Wangila and Thurania (2020:150), structural modification can be defined as any intervention within a school whose primary purpose is to improve an individual learner's functioning and independence, thus nurturing access and participation for learners living with disabilities. In contrast, the responses of participants seemed to suggest lack of structural adjustment to accommodate diverse learners.

Moreover, participants spoke out against the facilities at their schools which do not accommodate all learners living with disabilities. This was expressed in the following way:

*Participant: The school must ensure that learners with disabilities receive toilets suitable for people living with disabilities and not mix with those that are regarded as physically abled learners. They should receive their own toilets.(TPC)*

*Participant: The window panes are sometimes broken and we take too long to replace them. During times of bad weather, it becomes very difficult to teach learners in classes under such circumstances. (PS2)*

In the same vein, the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (2014) as cited in Ireri, King'endo, Wangila and Thurairira (2020:150), state that the architectural structure of the classrooms and walkways such as pathways on the school ground should be made easily accessible for the mobility of learners living with disabilities.

In addition, participants complained about acts of vandalism that happened in their schools, which have the potential to halt the efforts to modify the structural changes of their schools. This complaint was expressed in the following way:

*Participant: My goodness. That is a tough nut to crack. The desks are not up to scratch. Most of them are broken. We tried to fix but with the limited funds that we receive, it is always a challenge to keep up We are trying to engage parents and learners to respect school property but since the doors in the classrooms are broken, and that they are not lockable, it becomes very difficult to manage and secure property. (PS2)*

Furthermore, participants appeared to be frustrated by lack of funds in their school account due to low enrolments which delimits their potential to upgrade and maintain the school infrastructure. Participants have expressed their frustration in the following way:

*Participant: The walls are bad. They are just dirty and the paint has faded. We would love to paint the classes. We are unable to afford, let alone affording the people who can come and make the classes look beautiful by painting them. We do not have support staff that would clean the environment on behalf of the school. The SGB cannot afford to hire such a person. So, we are just meeting the standard, just an*

*ordinary standard level of making sure that the environment is conducive to teaching and learning. (PS2)*

The response of participants seemed confirmed the view in Donhue and Bornman (2014:8) that the Department of Education appears to have deficits in funding to provide to schools, while schools currently lack the capacity to accommodate diverse learners in one classroom and the researchers further recommended that funding be increased in the short term so that schools can make the infrastructure changes that are needed.

#### 4.4.6.2. Organisational changes

Participants for this study have expressed their dissatisfaction about the slow pace of organisational changes taking place in their schools. This sentiment was shown in the following ways:

*Participant: The one thing that I suggest is we must get training on inclusive education because some of us we can just know the words but we do not know the deep ...deep meaning of it what does it mean. They just say inclusive...inclusive but not understanding the meaning of it and what does it require. (TPA)*

*Participant: I think if they can train some of the teachers here at school. Maybe few teachers so that we can assist each other in supporting learners with barriers to learning. If they can start a training programme with some teachers here. (TPB)*

*Participant: think management strategies and also the development of skills on how actually to differently abled learners or learners who are having barriers to learning. Actually the implementation of policies and management, actually the skills. (TSA)*

This sentiment expressed by participants supported the view expressed by Gibb, Tunbridge, Chua and Frederickson (2007) as cited in Ewing, Monsen and Kielblock (2017:3) that effective school and classroom management, an inclusive school culture and ethos, and the availability of an 'inclusion Team' who could be contacted for guidance on teaching strategies and practises, have been found to facilitate inclusive practises.

#### **4.5. SUMMARY**

In conclusion, the research findings for this study were presented in this chapter. The research findings related to the main research question posed in the study and the objectives outlined in this study. I used the seven steps in the thematic data analysis method and arrived at the final analysis part of this study. In addition, codes and categories of data were identified. Lastly, the chapter has presented findings based on interviews with school principals, SMTs, classroom teachers, EAs and SBST coordinators from the selected four mainstream pilot inclusive schools in DIMAMO Circuit. The next final chapter presented conclusions and recommendations from this study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter has outlined the summary, conclusion and recommendations from the study. Firstly, summary of research findings was presented. Secondly, the chapter presented the recommendations pertaining to the research findings. Thirdly, the limitations of the study were detailed. Fourthly, the areas for further study were outlined. Finally, a concluding summary with the main ideas in the chapter was provided.

#### **5.2 Summary of findings from the study**

The findings presented by this study revealed that principals and members of the SMT did not implement proper strategies to motivate staff to try to ensure job satisfaction amongst teachers and support staff members. In addition, the findings have indicated that teachers lack the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to understand and assist learners with psycho-social problems. The study has further found that classroom teachers and Education Assistants were not clarified about how each job is done and why it is done in terms of screening, identification, assessment and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Moreover, the research has revealed that the SMTs did not use information about inclusive education as a resource to develop teachers, parents, learners and other stakeholders outside the school, hence poor communication between teachers and parents. In addition, this study has made the findings that parents are not willing to disclose conditions that their children experience. Furthermore, this study has made findings that SMT members lack the ability to bring about changes that facilitate the implementation of inclusive education. In addition, the study has found that there was lack of teamwork amongst teachers as a result of the inability by SMTs to improve curriculum provisions and resources for quality inclusive education in schools. Consequently, the findings revealed that teachers had negative attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education in their schools.

On the one hand, this study has revealed the lack of funding by the provincial department of basic education, for teachers to continue with their post graduate

studies towards inclusive education. On the other hand, the research findings have revealed the inability by the provincial department of basic education to provide administrative staff, health professionals, social workers, technicians, teacher assistants and general school assistants on permanent basis; who are needed to facilitate the management and implementation of inclusive education in schools.

Furthermore, the findings have revealed that the selected schools for the study did not completely change their physical dimensions to remove barriers to learning to make the classrooms accessible to learners with physical disabilities. To conclude, this study has made findings that insufficient funding to schools by the provincial department of basic education contributed to lack of progress to modify physical resources in the schools.

### **5.3 Recommendations pertaining to the research findings**

#### **5.3.1 Recommendation for strategies towards management, leadership and communication in schools**

This study has recommended the following to help SMT members, classroom teachers and EAs to learn their job duties and be clarified about how each job is done and why it is done:

- Subject-committee meetings and phase meetings must be held at the end of each school term. Such meetings must reflect on the support and performance of learners during the term and to formulate performance improvement strategies to address learning barriers among learners during the next term. Additional delegated duties and responsibilities must be discussed. Teachers and support staff employed at the school must each have a management file for inclusive education file with a job description..
- Plan for motivational talks on teacher wellness at least twice a year.
- Plan and allocate duties and responsibilities together with staff members and support staff members and allow suggestions.
- The principals and Departmental Heads must attend strategic management workshops arranged at Circuit and District levels at least at the beginning of the year and in mid-year.



Furthermore, this study has recommended that the SMT working together with the SGB must ensure that information by the school should be used as a resource to develop teachers, parents, learners and other stakeholders outside the school. In order to address the level of dissatisfaction caused by poor communication between teachers and parents, this study has recommended the following:

- Departmental Heads and Senior teachers must ensure that all learners have parent information books wherein information from the school can be made available to parents of learners at an earliest convenience.
- The SGB must set aside allocation in the school budget to finance for Wi-Fi connectivity to enable the SMT and classroom teachers to communicate with parents through media platforms such as virtual meetings and whatsapp platforms in a way to increase parent-teacher participation and to improve capacity to make informed decisions.

Moreover, this study has suggested the following to address the impact of negative attitudes by teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education in their schools:

- The SMT, working together with the SGB, must review the code of conduct for learners to enable the school to address behavioural challenges that classroom teachers encounter when attending learners with behavioural problems.
- The school principal must ensure that all teachers uphold to the value of professionalism in the workplace.

### 5.3.2 Recommendations pertaining to curriculum provisions and resources for quality Inclusive Education

This study has recommended strategies to improve curriculum provisions and resources for quality inclusive education in schools. The following are strategies that the SMT and classroom teachers must implement to improve the provision of curriculum:

- Teachers must maximise the use of revised ATPs and Workbooks daily to improve teaching practise and to identify learners experiencing barriers in the learning content.
- Teachers must conduct item analysis, error analysis and diagnostic analysis in all tasks issued to learners as informal and formal assessment tasks.

### 5.3.3 Recommendations for managing quality of teaching and development of teachers

This study has recommended the following to address lack of teamwork amongst teachers and the inability by SMTs to realise the objectives of inclusive education:

- The Circuit manager must ensure that all SMT members and SBST members receive specialist knowledge and training by DBST, to assist teachers of learners experiencing learning barriers.
- The principal must ensure that all teachers, including SMT members have access to EWP6 and receive training on the implementation of the SIAS policy; and implement Collective agreement number 2 of 2020 on Quality management System (QMS) for school-based educators.

Moreover, this study has offered the following recommendation to address lack of funding for the teachers to continue with their post graduate studies towards inclusive education:

- The Provincial Department of Basic Education should consider providing funding for mandatory registration for post graduate study programmes at universities for all principals and teachers upon approval of their appointments in the province to support the implementation of inclusive education in all schools.
- The Provincial Department of Basic Education should consider appointing teacher assistants and general school assistants on a permanent basis, based on the number of learners, teaching staff and number of subjects offered at the school.
- The provincial department of basic education should consider providing each school with a social worker, health official, psychologist and a technician to provide services needed at school readily available.

#### 5.3.4 Recommendations for strategies to involve parents towards implementation of inclusive education

This study has recommended the following to address the lack of communication between the school and parents about the education needs of their children:

- The school must introduce Adopt-a-learner and Adopt-a-Teacher programmes in which teachers get the opportunity to assist learners from families experiencing adverse poverty and thus creating opportunities of getting support from parents, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the local business community.
- The SMT, SGB, working together with teachers must set-up and budget for aftercare services in an effort to assist learners with schoolwork after the formal contact sessions and through proper protocols request from authority any possibility for funding from school norms and standard account towards travelling allowance for learners with physical and mild psychological barriers to learning in an effort to alleviate long distance and poor security arrangement for such learners.:
- The principal, working together with teachers and the SGB, must establish a well-functioning SBST that include different stakeholders from the community.

In addition, this study recommended the following to address lack of progress to modify physical resources in the school:

- The principal, working together with the SGB, must establish the Development committee with a workable action plan for maintenance of school infrastructure suitable to accommodate all learners of different abilities and disabilities.
- The Provincial Department of education should review policy on norms and standard for school funding with a view to increase funding to schools with low enrolment to fund resources to continue providing educational services to the local community, rather than risking their total closure over time. Learners of different abilities and disabilities can best be served in schools within their locality.

#### **5.4. Limitations of the study**

This study was influenced by time constraints during the collection of data because I used one-on-one interviews as data gathering instruments. The period for data collection was disrupted by level five lockdown as a result of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions by the South African government's National Corona virus Command Council (NCCC). As a result, I was not able to collect data from all selected research participants because all schools were closed. During the period of lower level 3 and 4 lockdown, visits to schools were only limited to departmental officials until lockdown level 1. The number of selected participants has changed during the period of data collection. The period of employment for Education Assistants terminated during the time of data collection. Some participants have indicated their unwillingness to participate in this study.

The results of analysis and interpretation from this study were only limited for use in the selected pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit. Other primary and secondary schools in the Circuit were not included. However, despite its limitations, this study concluded that its findings can be generalised to all mainstream public schools in the Circuit where the research was conducted and schools in the Capricorn District and Limpopo province.

#### **5.5. Areas for further study**

The results of the study may contribute to the advocacy programmes on Inclusive Education within the DIMAMO circuit. The study may contribute to attitude change on teachers, parents, learners and rural communities; and how they relate to children with learning barriers and disabilities. The local authorities and the schools may use recommendations from the study in their awareness campaigns. The results of the study may be used for the professional development of educators by school management teams. The study may contribute to advance inter-departmental collaboration between the Capricorn District Department of Basic Education and the Capricorn District Department of Health and Social Development within the DIMAMO circuit. This research study may contribute to advance the Constitutional Right of all children to basic education as contained in the Constitution and in EWP6. The findings and recommendations from this study may be used to add knowledge on further research.

## **5.6. Summary**

In conclusion, this final chapter has presented conclusions based on the research process and research findings from the previous chapters. Among other things, the findings revealed lack of management skills by school principals and SMTs in handling and managing information relating to inclusive education in a way to develop teachers, SMT members, SBST coordinators and classroom teachers. In addition, the study recommended strategies pertaining to among others, inclusive teaching and learning; management, leadership and communication in schools; curriculum provisioning and resources for quality inclusive education; managing quality of teaching and development of teachers; involvement of parents in pilot inclusive schools; and strategies for managing school structural changes. Lastly, in this chapter the limitations and delimitations of this study are presented; including recommendations of areas for further study.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Research Ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee



**UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Date: 2019/07/24

Dear Mr Mabokachaba

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2019/07/24 to 2022/07/24

Ref: **2019/07/24/8060126/21/MC**  
Name: Mr MA Mabokachaba  
Student No.: 8060126

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**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr MA Mabokachaba  
E-mail address: maytolom@yahoo.com  
Telephone: +27 78 370 3367

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof PR Machaisa  
E-mail address: nyonij@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 84 688 6226

**Title of research:**

**The management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools:  
Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo.**


**Qualification:** M. Ed in Educational Leadership and Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/07/24 to 2022/07/24.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/07/24 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions 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 should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.



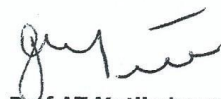
University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2022/07/24**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2019/07/24/8060126/21/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof PM Sebate**  
**ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Request for permission to conduct research at mainstream pilot inclusive schools within the DIMAMO Circuit.**

**Reference number: 2019/07/24/8060126/21/MC**

Title: "Managing inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools: Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo."

The Circuit Manager

DIMAMO Circuit Office

Private Bag X1108

Sovenga

0727

Tel (015)2675641

Dear Circuit Manager

I, MABOKACHABA MAFUNA AARON am doing research with Dr. P R MACHAISA a senior lecturer in the Department of Education leadership and management towards an M Ed degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Managing inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools: Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo". The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of principals, teachers and school-based support teams (SBSTs) in managing Inclusive education in pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn District of Education, Limpopo Province.

Your Circuit has been selected because there are four mainstream public schools in the Circuit that are designated as pilot inclusive schools since the year 2011. They are the schools that assume a different character in their admissions by including learners experiencing disabilities of a low level nature and learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The study entails semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the principal of each pilot inclusive school. Furthermore, the researcher will conduct Focus group interviews with one Head of department, two CS1 educators and chairperson of School-based support teams from each selected school. Each focus group will have four participants. The research project will be conducted at schools.

The benefits of this study are that information collected from this study could contribute to the advocacy programs on Inclusive Education within the DIMAMO circuit. The results of the study may be used for the professional development of educators by school management teams. The findings from this study may be used

to contribute to attitude change on teachers, parents, learners and rural communities; and how they relate to children with learning barriers and disabilities. The selected schools for the study and local authorities may use recommendations from the study in their awareness campaigns. The study may contribute to advance inter-departmental collaboration between the Capricorn District Department of Basic Education and the Capricorn District Department of Health and Social Development within the DIMAMO circuit. This research study may contribute to advance the Constitutional Right of all children to basic education as contained in the Constitution and in Education White Paper 6(EWP6).The findings and recommendations from this study may be used to add knowledge on further research. The only foreseeable risk in this study is one of inconvenience. The participants are adults and not considered to be a vulnerable research population. Feedback procedure entails that the Capricorn District Director and the DIMAMO Circuit Manager will receive a copy of the final research findings. The final research findings would be made available from the District and the Circuit to the schools selected for the study. The school management teams of selected schools for the will provide access to the findings. The researcher will provide his contact numbers to participants for the study, who would like to be informed of the final research findings.

Yours sincerely


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MABOKACHABA M.A

UNISA MEd student

## APPENDIX C

### Research approval letters to conduct study in pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in Capricorn South District, Limpopo

**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

---

**DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

Ref: 2/2/2    Enq: Mabogo MG    Tel No: 015 290 9365    E-mail: MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za


Mabokachaba MA  
PRIVATE BAG X1108  
SOVENGA  
0727

**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: **"THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM PILOT INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS :EXPERIENCE OF STAKEHOLDERTS IN THE DIMAMO CIRCUIT OF LIMPOPO."**
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 in 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.
  - 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.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MABOKACHABA MA

  
CONFIDENTIAL

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

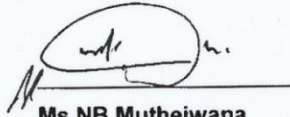
***The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!***



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.



**Ms NB Mutheiwana**  
**Head of Department**

2019/8/24

**Date**

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH:MABOKACHABA MA

CONFIDENTIAL



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT  
DIMAMO CIRCUIT

ENQ: MOJELA K.M  
Tel: 015 267 5641

13 SEPTEMBER 2019

THE PRINCIPAL  
MAINSTREAM PILOT INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Sir

**PERMISSION FOR MR. MABOKACHABA M.A TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT  
YOUR INSTITUTION.**

1. The above bears reference.
2. This office received an application from Mr. Mabokachaba M.A requesting to conduct a research at your institution.
3. Therefore, we, as the office recommend that he be allowed at your school to conduct a research.
4. You are also requested to allow the teachers to collect data required during the research.
5. Find herein the attached:
  - Permission to conduct research from district office
  - Application letter from the applicant and
  - Research proposal from University of South Africa.

Hoping that he will get a necessary assistant he needs.

  
.....  
CIRCUIT MANAGER





**Maphuto Primary School**

Emis No 923242439

1234 Sebayeng Township  
Solomondale  
P.O. BOX 4858  
SOLOMONDALE  
0964  
Phone 071 658 2289  
0787754271

Email: [principalmaphutoschool@gmail.com](mailto:principalmaphutoschool@gmail.com)

13 September 2019

ATT: Mr Mabokachaba M.A

Dear Sir

**CONFIRMATION LETTER: RESEARCH STUDY INTERVIEWS TO BE CONDUCTED AT OUR SCHOOL**

The above matter refers:

1. Kindly be informed that Mr Mabokachaba M.A has requested to conduct his research study at this school.
2. Permission to conduct the study has been granted by DIMAMO Circuit and our school.
3. The school therefore, allows Mr Mabokachaba M.A to interact with educators for the purpose the study.

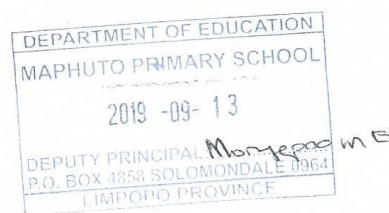
**RESEARCH TOPIC: THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM PILOT INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS: EXPERIENCES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DIMAMO CIRCUIT OF LIMPOPO.**

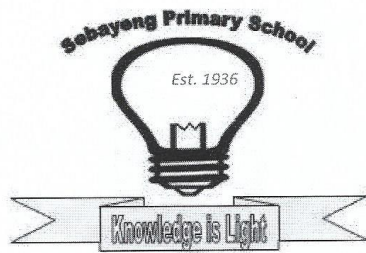
We appreciate and welcome the commitment and support that both the researcher and the University provide to our school.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours Faithfully  
MONYEPAO M.E

*Monyepao M.E*  
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL





P.O. BOX 5008.  
SOLOMONDALE  
0964  
STAND NO. 704 SEBAYENG  
EMIS NO. 92 324 1290  
TEL: 015 286 8067  
EMAIL: [sebayengprimary@gmail.com](mailto:sebayengprimary@gmail.com)

13 September 2021

Dear Mr Mabokachaba

Re: Request to conduct Research at School

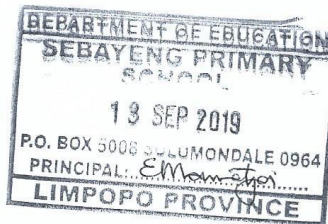
Kindly be informed that permission is granted to conduct your research study at this school.  
Subject to the guidelines granted by Limpopo Department of Basic Education.

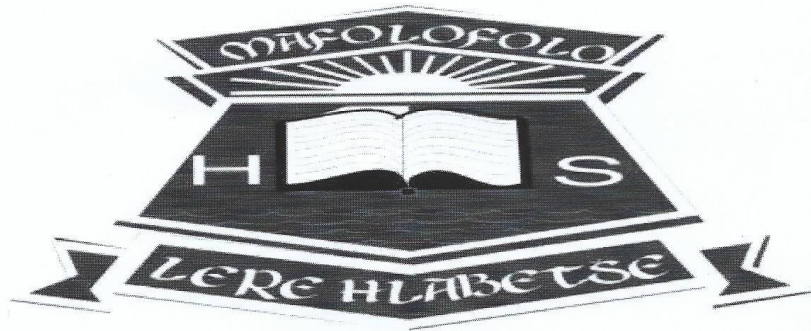
We wish you well in your studies

Yours faithfully

X *E Mmametia*

Mametia M.E  
Principal





ENQUIRIES: RAMOTHOPO IM

17 SEPTEMBER 2021

CELL NO: 084 643 1588

Dear Mabokachaba MA

RE: Request for permission to conduct research

Dear sir

1. You are hereby permitted to conduct research on the study topic: "The management of Inclusive Education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools: Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo"
2. We wish you success in your studies.

Yours in education  
Ramothopo IM



[Principal]

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION <b>MAFOLOFOLO HIGH SCHOOL</b> PRINCIPAL
2021 -09- 17
P.O. BOX 3931, SOVENGA 0727 LIMPOPO PROVINCE

# RANTI HIGH SCHOOL

DISTRICT : LEBOWAKGOMO

EMIS No : 923241269  
ENQ : SELOWA S.A  
CELL : 083 419 7977  
EMAIL : saselowa@gmail.com



CIRCUIT: DIMAMO

RANTI HIGH SCHOOL  
P.O BOX 483  
DIKGALE  
0721

17 September 2019

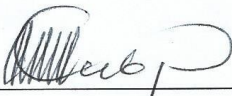
Dear Mr Mabokachaba M.A

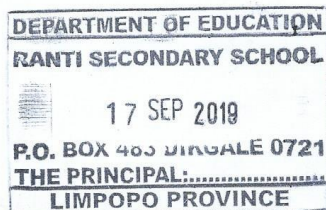
## REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Kindly be informed that Permission is granted to conduct research here at Ranti high school.

Study title" THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE MAINSTREAM PILOT INCLUSIVE SCHOOL. EXPERIENCES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DIMAMO CIRCUIT OF LIMPOPO"

We wish you good luck

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINCIPAL



## **APPENDIX D**

**Reference number: 2019/07/24/8060126/21/MC**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Managing inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools: Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo.

#### **Dear Prospective Participant**

My name is MABOKACHABA MAFUNA AARON and I am doing research with Prof. P.R MACHAISA in the Department of Education leadership and Management towards an M Ed degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled “The management of inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools: Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo.”

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

I am conducting this research to investigate the experiences of principals, teachers and school-based support teams in implementing Inclusive education in pilot inclusive schools within DIMAMO Circuit in the Capricorn District of Education, Limpopo Province.

This study is expected to collect important information that could contribute to the advocacy programmes on Inclusive Education within the DIMAMO circuit. The results of the study may be used for the professional development of educators by school management teams. The findings from this study may be used to contribute to attitude change on teachers, parents, learners and rural communities; and how they relate to children with learning barriers and disabilities. The selected schools for the study and local authorities may use recommendations from the study in their awareness campaigns. The study may contribute to advance inter-departmental collaboration between the Capricorn South District Department of Basic Education and the local Department of Health and Social Development within the DIMAMO circuit. This research study may contribute to advance the Constitutional Right of all children to basic education as contained in the Constitution and in Education White Paper 6(EWP6).The findings and recommendations from this study may be used to add knowledge on further research.

#### **WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. You are chosen to participate in this study because of one of the following characteristics and hierarchy that exists in your school:

- The principal for being in charge of the management and implementation processes for Inclusive education at the school and for being involved in strategic decision-making.
- The Departmental Head for being in middle management and for being charged with staff development, curriculum monitoring and support,
- The chairperson of School based Support Team for being the facilitator of collaboration and implementation of inclusive education at the school, and
- Post level 1 educator as provider of teaching and learning and implementer of inclusive education in the classroom.
- Education Assistant for being the provider of assistance to classroom teachers and learners in the school.

#### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves audio taping and video taping of unstructured interviews. Only open-ended questions will be asked. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with school Principals. In addition, face-to-face unstructured interviews will also be conducted with one school-based Head of department, two CS1 educators and chairperson of school –based support team from each school. The time allocated to conduct face-to-face interviews is one hour per interview session.

#### **CAN YOU 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?**

The benefits of this study are that information collected from this study could contribute to the advocacy programmes on Inclusive Education within the DIMAMO circuit. The results of the study may be used for the professional development of educators by school management teams. The findings from this study may be used to contribute to attitude change on teachers, parents, learners and rural



communities; and how they relate to children with learning barriers and disabilities. The selected schools for the study and local authorities may use recommendations from the study in their awareness campaigns. The study may contribute to advance inter-departmental collaboration between the Capricorn South District Department of Basic Education and the local Department of Health and Social Development within the DIMAMO circuit. This research study may contribute to advance the Constitutional Right of all children to basic education as contained in the Constitution and in Education White Paper 6(EWP6).The findings and recommendations from this study may be used to add knowledge on further research.

**ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The only foreseeable risk in this study is one of inconvenience. The participants are adults and not considered to be a vulnerable research population. Discomfort to participants may occur during face-to-face unstructured interviews for being identified by other educators for being a participant in the study.

**WILL THE INFORMATION THAT YOU CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND YOUR IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

You have has the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified participants in the research study will know about your involvement in this study. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers that you give. In addition, your answers will be given code numbers. However, it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity. While I will make every effort to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the interview, I cannot guarantee that other participants information confidentially. I will however encourage all participants to do so. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Be informed that your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but you will not be identifiable in such a report.

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

I will store hard copies of your answers for future research or academic purposes for a period of five years in a locked cabinet. In addition, I will store electronic

information on a password protected computer. If necessary, information will be destroyed. Hard copies will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

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

There are no incentives or payment for your participation in this study.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the CEDU ERC, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

**HOW WILL YOU BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

Feedback procedure entails that the Capricorn South District Director and the DIMAMO Circuit Manager will receive a copy of the final research findings. The final research findings would be made available from the District and the Circuit to the schools selected for the study. The school management teams of selected schools will provide access to the findings. If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mabokachaba Mafuna Aaron on 0787754271 or [aaronmabokachaba@gmail.com](mailto:aaronmabokachaba@gmail.com). Please do not use home telephone numbers. Departmental and/or mobile phone numbers are acceptable. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Mabokachaba Mafuna Aaron on 0787754271 or [aaronmabokachaba@gmail.com](mailto:aaronmabokachaba@gmail.com). Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor on 0124294560 or [machapr@unisa.ac.za](mailto:machapr@unisa.ac.za) or fax on (012)429-4150.

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

---

MABOKACHABA MAFUNA AARON

## **APPENDIX E**

Reference number: 2019/07/24/8060126/21/MC

### **REQUESTION TO PARTICIPATE IN FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW**

Dear Colleague

This letter is an invitation to consider you participating in a study that I, MABOKACHABA MAFUNA AARON, am conducting as part of my research as a master's student entitled "Managing inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools: Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo." Permission for the study has been given by Limpopo Province Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of inclusive education in education is substantial and well documented. However, as a public servant and having a vested interest in issues affecting children and the community at large, the researcher argues in this study that the problem lies in insufficient professional development and support offered to principals, teachers and school-based support teams to implement inclusive education policies in mainstream pilot inclusive schools. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve advocacy programs on Inclusive Education within the DIMAMO circuit. The results of the study may be used for the professional development of educators by school management teams.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately one hour in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify

any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 0787754271 or by e-mail at [aaronmabokachaba@gmail.com](mailto:aaronmabokachaba@gmail.com).

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows on the next page.

Yours sincerely

---

MABOKACHABA MAFUNA AARON

**APPENDIX F**

**Reference number: 2019/07/24/8060126/21/MC**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULES**

**ONE-TO-ONE UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: (SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND SMT MEMBERS)**

A face-to-face interview research question: How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams (SBSTs) in pilot inclusive schools in the DIMAMO Circuit experience and understand the implementation of Inclusive education?

B E G I N N I N G T A S K  M I D D L E	Thank you for coming along, this will take about one hour , and anything you say here will be confidential in that you will not be identified in any report about the meeting.	
	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
	1. What are the benefits and the challenges of inclusive teaching and learning in pilot inclusive schools?	1. I'd like you to talk to me about the things you like most about your work. 2. Can you tell me about some aspects of your work that are challenging? 3. What achievements have you reached since the school became a pilot inclusive school?
	2. What management, leadership and communication strategies are experienced in pilot inclusive schools?	4. What do you see as your most responsibilities at a pilot inclusive school? 5. Do you feel you have opportunity to fully make use of your knowledge and skills at this school?
	3. How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams experience and understand curriculum provisions	6. Have you had any training by the District with regard to the implementation of inclusive education?

A S K	and resources?	<p>7. From your understanding of Education White Paper 6, do you consider yourself having background knowledge on the implementation of inclusive education?</p> <p>8. Can you tell me about the barriers to learning that you find most challenging at this school?</p>
	4. How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams understand the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators?	<p>9. Do you receive recognition and encouragement from the Circuit and District?</p> <p>10. How satisfied are you with the supervision you receive from the District office?</p> <p>11. Which efforts from the District office are supportive to educators in the implementation of inclusive education?</p> <p>12. What type of professional development do you need to facilitate your implementation of inclusive education?</p>
M I D D L	5. How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams understand the involvement of parents and the community?	<p>13. How well do you and parents communicate?</p> <p>14. Taking your experience into consideration, what are your views of parents with learners experiencing barriers to learning?</p>
E T A S K	6. What are the benefits and challenges of school infrastructure that principals, teachers and school-based support teams experience in pilot inclusive schools	<p>15. How has your school managed to bring changes to the environment to welcome diverse abilities and cultures?</p> <p>16. Which structures do you want to see in place so that you may succeed in implementing inclusive education?</p>

E N D I N G  T A S K		<p>17. Can you suggest one thing that would significantly improve inclusive teaching and learning at your school?</p> <p>18. Can you suggest one thing that would significantly improve management, leadership and communication in your school?</p> <p>19. Can you suggest one thing that would significantly improve your understanding of curriculum provisions and resources for inclusive education?</p> <p>20. Can you suggest one thing that would significantly improve the involvement of parents and the community in Inclusive education within your school?</p> <p>21. Anything else you would like to add?</p>
	Thank you for taking part in this meeting.	

**ONE-TO-ONE UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: (CLASSROOM TEACHERS, EAs AND SBST CORDINATORS)**

A face-to-face interview research question: How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams (SBSTs) in pilot inclusive schools in the DIMAMO Circuit experience and understand the implementation of Inclusive education?

B E G I N N I N G T A S K  M I D D L E T A S K	Thank you for coming along, this will take about one hour, and anything you say here will be confidential in that you will not be identified in any report about the meeting.	
	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
	1. What are the benefits and the challenges of inclusive teaching and learning in pilot inclusive schools?	1. I'd like you to talk to me about the things you like most about your work. 2. Can you tell me about some aspects of your work that are challenging? 3. What achievements have you reached since the school became a pilot inclusive school?
	2. What management, leadership and communication strategies are experienced in pilot inclusive schools?	4. What do you see as your most responsibilities at a pilot inclusive school? 5. Do you feel you have opportunity to fully make use of your knowledge and skills at this school?
	3. How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams experience and understand curriculum provisions and resources?	6. Have you had any training by the school with regard to the implementation of inclusive education? 7. From your understanding of Education White Paper 6, do you consider yourself having background knowledge on the implementation of inclusive education? 8. Can you tell me about the barriers to learning



M I D D L E  T A S K		that you find most challenging in your classroom?
	4. How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams understand the provision of quality of teaching and the development of educators?	9. Do you receive recognition and encouragement from the Circuit and District? 10. How satisfied are you with the supervision you receive from the school? 11. Which efforts from the school management are supportive to teachers in the implementation of inclusive education? 12. What type of professional development do you need to facilitate your implementation of inclusive education?
	5. How do principals, teachers and school-based support teams understand the involvement of parents and the community?	13. How well do you and parents of learners in your classroom communicate? 14. Taking your experience into consideration, what are your views of parents with learners experiencing barriers to learning?
	6. What are the benefits and challenges of school infrastructure that principals, teachers and school-based support teams experience in pilot inclusive schools	15. How has your school managed to bring changes to the environment to welcome diverse abilities and cultures? 16. Which structures do you want to see in place so that you may succeed in implementing inclusive education?

E N D I N G  T A S K		<p>17. Can you suggest one thing that you think would significantly improve inclusive teaching and learning at your school?</p> <p>18. Can you suggest one thing that you think would significantly improve classroom management and communication in your school?</p> <p>19. Can you suggest one thing that you think would significantly improve your understanding of curriculum provisions and resources for inclusive education?</p> <p>20. Can you suggest one thing that you think would significantly improve the involvement of parents and the community in Inclusive education within your school?</p> <p>21. Anything else you would like to add?</p>
<p>Thank you for taking part in this meeting.</p>		

## APPENDIX G

Reference number: 2019/07/24/8060126/21/MC

### CONSENT FORM (Face-to-face interview)

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study “Managing inclusive education in mainstream pilot inclusive schools: Experiences of stakeholders in the DIMAMO circuit of Limpopo” in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, on my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name: (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX H

**EDITING SERVICES**

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for  
**MAFUNA AARON MABOKACHABA**

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

In the subject

**EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**At the University of South Africa**

Dr M G Andrew

31.08.22

  
.....

M G Andrew, PhD University of the Witwatersrand 2017

M A University of Natal

B Commerce University of South Africa

