

**Mainstream teachers' perceptions toward inclusion of learners with  
special needs in Kgakotlou Circuit in Limpopo Province**

**By**

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## **DECLARATION**

I proclaim that a research on mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs, Kgakotlou Circuit in Limpopo province is my own work and that all quoted sources or that I have used have been acknowledged and indicated by means of references.

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Signature Raphadu M.J

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Date

## Dedication

The study is dedicated to my parents and son.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I would like to thank God Almighty for his favour and mercy towards me.
- I would also like to thank all the individuals that have contributed towards success or completion of this dissertation:
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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify teachers' perceptions towards learners with special needs, using rural schools, Kgakotlou Circuit in Limpopo Province. The study made use of the qualitative research approach where a case study design was adopted. The population of the study was formed by teachers from five rural schools in Kgakotlou Circuit. For instance: All five schools, sampled through purposive sampling technique, participated in semi-structured and two schools participated in focus-group interview. All nine teachers were able to participate in semi-structured interview whereas only four teachers took part in the focus-group interview. From the in-depth interview a lot of information regarding areas that seem to influence teachers' perceptions was gathered. The data provided insights to the way teachers understand inclusion, and the supports that they require in practice and how they meet classroom challenges in practice. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that teachers' negative and positive perceptions on inclusion of learners with special needs have a significant effect on their education. The results also showed that negative perceptions influence learners' academic performance. The study recommends that the department of education should organise an in-service training for teachers on inclusion.

Keywords: inclusion in education, teachers' perceptions, learners with special needs

## Table of Contents

DECLARATION .....	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	II
DEDICATION .....	III
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>VI</b>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.BACKGROUND AN MOTIVATION.....	1
1.1 Research problem.....	3
1.2 Purpose of the study.....	4
1.3 Research Methodology.....	4
1.3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	4
1.3.2 Sampling.....	4
1.3.3Data analysis.....	5
1.3.4 Quality Criteria.....	6
2.1Introduction.....	10
2.2 History of inclusion.....	11
2.3.1Perceptions.....	10
2.3.2 Mainstream schools.....	11
2.3.3 Inclusion.....	11
.....	
2.4Inclusion policy in education.....	12

2.5 Special education needs.....	13
2.6 Perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs from the international side to national side.....	16
2.7 Factors that influence inclusion.....	20
2.8 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY.....	20
3.1 Introduction.....	23
3.2 Research paradigm.....	23
3.3 Research approach.....	24
3.4 Research design.....	24
3.5 Sampling.....	25
3.6 Data Collection.....	25
3.7 Data Analysis.....	26
3.8 Quality Criteria.....	27
3.9 Ethical Consideration.....	28
3.10 limitations of the study.....	
4.1 Introduction.....	34
4.2 Biographical Information of Participants.....	34
4.3 Analysis, interpretation and discussion of data collected from interviews.....	35
5.1 Introduction.....	52
5.2 Discussion.....	52

5.3 Recommandations.....	55
Conclusion.....	57
Références .....	58
Appendices.....	64



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The notion of inclusive education has been studied broadly. The Salamanca Statement (1994), United Nation's Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), as well as the UNESCO's document from 2005 onwards support and provide guidelines for inclusion (Florian, 2008). Special Educational Needs (SEN) allude to learners with learning difficulties, physical and formative incapacities, behavioural, emotional and correspondence issue. Teacher perceptions play an important role in creating a positive learning environment, and teachers with a healthy and positive perceptions towards inclusion are more likely to be successful in implementing inclusive practices in their classroom (Costello & Boyle, 2013; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016).

#### **1.1. Background and motivation**

This chapter will briefly discuss inclusion in education, learners with special needs which is the broader picture of my study. The chapter will also discuss the problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, the significance of the study.

Inclusion in education by European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2012) recognises inclusion as a basic right for human and equal society. Forlin (2012) defines inclusion in education as a mode of teaching learners with special needs, in such a way that they spend most of their time with their peers who are not the same as them. From this perspective, Education White Paper (2011) argues inclusion places a learner with special needs into a regular or mainstream school.

It is said that, since teachers are essential to achieving the goals of inclusive education, teacher training and development of appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for the success of inclusion (Department of Education, 2001; Walton & Nel, 2012), and should be a priority (Engelbrecht, 2016). However, Adrienne (2010) argues that teachers in South Africa are not adequately trained for inclusive education. Additionally, despite the importance assigned to the development of teachers skills it has been found in one study by Engelbrecht, Oswald, and Forlin (2006), where they used the British Index for Inclusion in three Western Cape primary schools, that teachers indicated that there was insufficient development and training opportunities

and that they lacked knowledge about dealing with diverse learners' needs and behaviours. De Jager (2013) also found in her study, regarding South African teachers' use of differentiated instruction in the inclusive classroom, that teachers highlighted that they lacked training in dealing with learners' diverse barriers to learning. Furthermore, Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue that South African teachers lack the skills and knowledge for teaching diverse learners in one classroom without substantially increasing their workload. They further argue that training programmes provided by the Department of Education for accommodating diverse ability level learners are insufficient (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). If the aim is to have inclusive classrooms then it is imperative to evaluate what teachers are doing in the classroom to achieve inclusiveness of learners into the classroom and the accessibility of the curriculum given that teachers are an important resource in achieving inclusion of learners in the classroom and curriculum (Department of Education, 2001; Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

The education of learners with special needs should not be an issue that is racial but a concern of human rights (Hay & Beyers, 2011). There is evidence that learners with special needs are discriminated against in some schools, and this practice is a result of lack of training on inclusive education (Donohue & Bornman, 2013). Perceptively, I believe that teachers who never received training to work under inclusion conditions in mainstream classrooms may find it challenging to work with learners who are affected. I decided to pursue this study because no single study has been conducted in the targeted area. From my observation, inclusion of learners with special needs in rural schools remains a challenge, owing to a few factors including, senior teachers who never received training and inadequate resources at the said schools to accommodate such learners. Considering that the perceptions of teachers towards the inclusion of learners with special needs seem to be a significant source of success (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, & Tlale, 2015).

Despite the right of children with disabilities or barriers to learning to be educated in ordinary mainstream schools and classrooms as long as this is in their best interests, it has been found that mainstream South African schools do still discriminate against such children (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Mainstream schools within South Africa

decide whether they will and can accommodate learners with certain needs and disabilities with many refusing to admit those who they are unable and unwilling to accommodate (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Parents within South Africa are also often unaware of their rights and are not provided with adequate information or access to support services that can assess their children and help them make a decision that is in the best interests of the children (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

In the light of this, the I find it fascinating to explore the perceptions of teachers in rural mainstream classrooms that have learners whose needs are regarded as special. This study also aimed at identifying factors that influence those perceptions and how preceding factors can be dealt with.

## **1.2. Research problem**

A Learner with special needs is a learner who differs significantly from his or her peers in terms of individual characteristics and educational competence for various reasons. Attaching to the continuing absence of steady meaning of inclusion, perceptions extend from learners with special educational needs being instructed with learners without the said needs in mainstream classrooms (Skinner & Meltzoff, 2017). Most teachers still find it hard to accept learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms. Teachers' negative or positive perceptions have a certain impact on the academic performance of the said learners (Kemp & Carter, 2005). Therefore, this problem must be extensively investigated.

According to Sideridis and Chandler (2009) and Van Reusen, Shoho and Barker (2011), it is important to examine the perceptions of mainstream teachers towards inclusion of diverse learners, including those with special needs into mainstream classrooms as their attitudes may influence their behaviour towards acceptance of such learners. This is the gap the study is attempted to close. The researcher has observed that, the phenomenon of inclusion is still discriminated against at her working environment. It is proven that teachers seem not to be treating learners in the same

way based on their differences (Pijl, Minnaert & De Boer, 2011). Different perceptions may vary, due to inadequate skills and knowledge of teachers towards learners with special needs (Gal, Schreur & Engel, 2010). This study sought to answer the following question: what are teachers' perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with special needs?

### **1.3. Purpose of the study**

#### **1.3.1 Aim**

The aim of this study is to investigate mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs in Kgakotlou Circuit in Limpopo Province.

#### **1.3.2 Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To explore mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs.
- To determine factors that impact teachers' perceptions towards learners with special needs, and to identify measures or ways to deal with preceding factors.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

The findings of this study go a long way to informing the government key programme areas that need to be considered to update teachers with the relevant knowledge critical to implementation of successful inclusive programmes. This could involve organising awareness meetings that target updating teachers on policy developments and changes in practice.

This study is going to provide information to people who develop a framework to help provide inclusion programmes that are significant in improving the performance of learners with special needs in mainstream schools. Additionally, it will deliver information to developers of the curriculum about a clear understanding of teachers' attitude towards learners with special needs and help them to effectively deal with issues derived from those attitudes. The results may provide information to

administrators in universities about practical knowledge as an enhancement for preparation of teachers that are newly appointed. Moreover, the study may help theorists in revising their body of work for senior teachers to receive improved information.

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology section will be addressed in Chapter 3 of the study. In that chapter I will be discussing the research design, paradigm, sampling and sampling procedure, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations in length.

Qualitative research method was used to conduct this study. The qualitative research interest is in realisation of the way people realise their own strive. In this study, the I believe that more information can be gathered from peoples' perspectives, expressions and experiences.

### **1.5.1 Research design**

Research design is a plan for collecting meaningful data based on the purpose of the study (Cohen Manion & Morrison, 2004). In this study, the design helps to plot and accomplish the research to maximise the validity of the findings (Mouton, 2010). This study used the case study design. It was applied because it can be used to describe, explain or explore events or phenomena in the everyday context in which they occur (Yin, 2017). Case study was relevant for this research as it allows for rich analysis, and deep data generation, within a specific, bounded system (Berg, 2009). The type of case study that was used is illustrative case study. It is a case study that is used to describe a situation, what is happening with it and why it is happening (Gerring, 2006).

### **1.5.2 Sampling**

Purposive sampling was applied in this study, because it involves purposive choice of precise items of the universe for constituting a sample. This type of sampling is adopted because it gave the researcher the stage to select what is to be acknowledged and set out to find individuals who are eager to provide information by virtue of their knowledge or experience (Lewis & Shepard, 2006; Bernard, 2002). Nine teachers from five schools were selected for this study.

### **1.5.3 Data Collection**

Collection of data was done using the following instruments: focus-group and semi-structured interviews, where the researcher had a set of questions to be asked, obtained diverse thoughts from people who were taking part in focus-group.

#### **1.5.3.1 Semi-structured Interview**

Data was collected through interviews to gather information about past or present experiences or behaviours (Christensen & Johnson, 2008). The researcher prepared the interview guide that included topics and questions that need to be covered. The researcher encouraged participants to respond from their perspectives for the interviews to be effective and to bring forward different thoughts on the same issue.

#### **1.5.3.2. Focus-group interview**

This study used focus-group interview to obtain different views about the topic. The responses were written down to ensure accuracy. To control participants' interaction, breaks were allowed during the process and inform the participants beforehand about the main purpose of the interviews as well as thanking them for their participation prior to the process.

### **1.6 Data Analysis**

In this study, data was analysed by using of transcripts and recordings. This study was composed of field notes, follow ups with participants and achieves investigation. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. The themes and codes emerged from the interviews.

#### **6.4.1 Transcription and recordings**

In this study, interviews were recorded in a smartpone and transcribed. The responses of the individuals were analysed, compared and categorised with the outcomes of transcriptions on interviews, interpreted before drawing conclusions.

### **1.7 Quality Criteria**

Creswell (2013) asserts that qualitative research's' honesty is established through strategies of confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility.

Trustworthiness is used as a measure in qualitative research, as to which extent data analysis and data trustworthy are believable.

### **1.7.1 Dependability**

To ensure the dependability of the study, the researcher was consistent throughout the research by performing dependability audit. The researcher ensured dependability audit through record keeping.

### **1.7.2. Credibility**

Silverman (2013) points out that credibility refers to the correctness of data that translates more appropriately for naturalistic enquiry. In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2013) argue that credibility is an evaluation of whether the research finding represents a credible conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data. The researcher shared the data conclusions, and interpretations with the participants.

### **1.7.3. Transferability**

Neergaard (2007) contended that like external validity for qualitative research, the researcher needs to give solid interpretation for people who read to inform if whether it can be applied to their situation as well. This study achieved transferability through conducting a purposive sampling, because the sampling tolerates choices to be completed about the collection of participants (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010) and kept recordings and documents safe for cross-checking to ensure transferability.

### **1.7.4 Conformability of findings**

Conformability refers to the extent to which the findings are free from bias (Silverman, 2013).The researcher evaluated the level at which findings could be trustworthy of people in other settings, same projects making use of similar techniques but carry them out in diverse conditions (Seale, 2010).

## **1.8 Ethical considerations**

All studies have several ethical dilemmas which must be identified and addressed prior to the study. All researchers must adhere to ethical principles in research (Babbie & Mouton, 2011).

### **1.8.1 Request letter**

The researcher asked for permission to conduct the study by issuing a request letter to the Limpopo Department of Education and it was granted, included as an appendix.

### **1.8.2 Informed consent form**

To ensure ethical considerations, participants were given an informed consent form to complete before participating in the study.

### **1.8.3 Confidentiality and privacy**

The researcher informed participants that in this study that their involvement was private and voluntary; to ensure that there is confidentiality. Wimmer and Dominick (2014) bring an argument that due to confidentiality, it must be made clear to the participants that, even if they can be identified in the study as individuals, information disclosed will not be taken to the public with their names. Fines and punishments won't be there if the participant decides to pull out during the interview process. All participants taking part in the study were informed that their participation is voluntary, and withdrawal can be made anytime (McCray & McHatton, 2011). The researcher told them that they won't receive any payment for their participation. However, in the case of follow-ups, the researcher had a record of all participants' details; name, identity number, contact and email address which were corresponding with the names that they were given such as Teacher 1(T1). The record book is kept in a locked cardboard and the researcher will be the only person to access it.

### **1.8.4 Anonymity**

To protect the privacy of the participants, the researcher pseudonyms instead of their names in the research study. For audio recordings, participants were advised that they are at liberty to disapprove or approve such recordings. No recordings were made without prior consent by participants.

### **1.8.5 No harm to the participants**



The researcher did not reveal information that can embarrass, demean or make the participant uncomfortable to answer, such as their income, characteristics, social welfare and any other irregular behaviour. The researcher also ensured that data collection through interviews was done safely and privately for the participants without being afraid and scared. Nevertheless, if there was any psychological danger because of the study; the researcher was going to issue a proposal letter for the affected participants to see the experts.

### **Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter the background to the study was presented, the problem statement articulated, research aim, and objectives were also presented, the significance and limitations of the study was highlighted. The next chapter focuses on the literature review as well as the theoretical framework supporting the study.

### **1.9 Outline of the Study Report**

The study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one introduces the study by clarifying all the aspects that were involved. It expounds the rationale of the study, its orientation, as well as the background, ethical considerations and study limitations. In this chapter functional terms are explained in relation to the purpose of the study, as they may have different meanings in the outside world.

Chapter two presents the literature review. This chapter refers to various policies that guide the implementation of inclusion education in South Africa and history of inclusion. It explains the perceptions of teachers nationally and internationally. The chapter discusses factors that influence teachers' perceptions. The chapter also explores the theoretical framework that underpinned the study. Theories that assisted in understanding the findings and presenting the arguments are explored. This chapter provides a window through which the teachers' perceptions were viewed (Garud et al., 2011; Nel, 2016).

Chapter three discusses the research methodology, and the design, sampling, the research paradigm, instruments and the approach.

Chapter five presents the data and discusses the findings. Reference is also made to the literature and the theoretical framework. Teachers' perceptions about the inclusion of learners, especially of those with special needs, are discussed. The data revealed that the diverse perceptions of the teachers related to the education they received as well as their teaching experience.

Chapter six presents the conclusions and the recommendations. The conclusions are presented with reference to the study objectives. The chapter is concluded with salient recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter gave an overview of the background, problem statement, the aims and objectives, the significance and limitations of the study. The present chapter aims at looking closely at appropriate work around perceptions to special needs and inclusion. The chapter intends to make it clear that significance of teachers' perceptions in route for inclusion and how people can understand perceptions relating to teachers in practice at schools. The review of literature also investigates inclusion from diverse perspective range.

This chapter follows this design: Firstly, history of inclusion in education. Secondly, perceptions, mainstream school, an inclusion, special education needs are explained extensively. Thirdly, perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs are described from the international side to national side. Fourthly, factors that influence inclusion are mentioned and discussed. Fifthly and finally, the theoretical framework that guided this study is discussed.

#### **2.2 History of inclusion in education.**

Cline and Frederickson, 2010 defines inclusion as the philosophical focus on changing a school, society and a home to provide opportunities for everyone despite their diversities. Whereas according to Grue, 2015, "Critics of inclusion is a movement aimed at taking a ruling class to task and reaping undeserved benefits from the society". Making changes to cultural, philosophical beliefs including political and economic circumstances had an impact on educational trends of learners with special needs through integration, segregation, categorisation and inclusion currently, (Duhaney & Salend, 2011). At first services of education for learners with special needs was available for the blinds and deaf in Europe at eighteenth century and got improved during nineteenth century. New schools were established during 20<sup>th</sup> century for learners with other impairments such as mobility impairment, (Duhaney & salend, 2011; Peters, 2003).

Regionalist and charity institutions initially provided services for learners with special educational needs. During those times learners with special needs were regarded as useless and uneducable so their education was not viewed as human rights but as an issue of charity. According to O'Brien and Forest, 2004; Winzer, 2009, through 1980s, "concerns of advocacy groups about slow progress in Canada and USA led to come about notion of inclusion".

## **2.3 Conceptualisation of inclusion in education**

### **2.3.1 Perceptions**

According to Haddock and Maio (2016), "perceptions are significant, they influence how we view the world, what we do and think". However Ajzen 2011 "defines it as a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event". According to Livingstone 2008 perceptions are defined psychologically as the process or an act of becoming aware of external or internal events or sensory stimuli, involving interpretation of those stimuli and the meaningful organisation and the evaluations of other' and one's own beliefs and internal states, as well as sensory stimuli. Segen (2012) refer perceptions to the constellation of mental procedures by which person organises, recognises and interprets emotional intellectual and sensor data in in a meaningful or logical fashion. Perceptions are closely related to attitudes in that 'perception' is how a person interprets and what he or she hears or see, whereas 'attitude' is the way an individual acts towards something often expressed through words or behaviour. In the current study, perceptions mean how teachers view or see learners with special needs in mainstream schools.

### **2.3.2 Mainstream schools**

According to the Department for Education and Skills (2001) a mainstream school refers to an independent or non-special school. Mainstreaming is about engaging learners into an existing system. It is also about providing support to learners with special needs that can be integrated into a classroom routine with their peers who are different from them, (Ayres, Duncan & Sapon-Shevin, 2002; Landsberg et al., 2005; Education white paper 6, 2001). Furthermore Cipkin and Rizza (2011) avows that mainstreaming involves placement of a learner with special needs in a regular

education class or into a general curriculum. In the current study mainstream school refers to all schools in Kgakotlou Circuit in Limpopo province.

### **2.3.3 Inclusion**

According to United National Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI, 2010), is defined as a system that responds to the difference of needs among all learners through increasing participation in cultures, communities, and minimising exclusion within and from education. It includes changes in approaches, content, strategies and structures led by common vision that includes all children and the principle that, it is the responsibility of the regular system that accommodates all of them. Furthermore inclusion in education is defined as a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society (Chambers, Forlin, Deeper & Sharma, Loreman, 2013).

Inclusion is about being proactive in identifying obstacles and barriers learners encounter in attempting to reach the opportunities for quality education, as well as in removing those obstacles and barriers that lead to exclusion. According to UNESCO (2017) it is the procedure that helps overcome obstacles limiting the participation, achievement and presence of learners. In the current study inclusion refers to embracing and accommodating the differences of learners in mainstream schools.

## **2.4 Inclusion policy in education**

According to Du Plessis (2013) "an inclusion policy can be defined as an obligatory tool made to be implemented as part of a huge struggle against human rights violation and imbalanced discrimination, to make sure that social justice in education prevails. BBI Briefs (2013) states that, guidelines and provisions that supports employees' complete integration, including those with special needs into a workplace that is functionally equal and it helps to create a work environment where employees cannot feel marginalised or discriminated and denied access to benefits of employment.

### **2.4.1 South Africa Education White Paper 6 (DBE, 2015)**

- Education White Paper 6 definition of inclusion education is about admitting that all youth and a child can learn, and they all need support.

- Is respecting and accepting the fact that all learners are diverse in some way and have diverse needs of learning which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience.
- Is about allowing education systems, structures and methodologies of learning to meet all learners' needs.
- Respects and acknowledges the diversity in children, whether due to HIV Status, disability, class, language, ethnicity, gender, age, etc.
- Is wider than mainstream schooling, and admits that learning take place in the community, home and within structures and informal and formal modes.
- Is about changing environments, curricula, methodologies, behaviours, attitudes, to meet the needs of all children.
  - Is about increasing the partaking of all learners in the culture and minimising barriers to learning, the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering.

In this study, inclusion policies refer to the legal framework that brought about the obligations for all teachers in mainstream schools of Kgakotlou Circuit to include learners with special needs in general classrooms.

## **2.5 Special education needs**

The education of children who differ mentally, physically or socially from the average to such an extent that, they require modifications of usual school practice. The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act was passed in Dublin by the Government into law in July 2004. Special educational needs are defined in this act as: A restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition (NCSE, 2014).

Children with special educational needs are children with a variety of different disability such as health and mental health conditions that require special intervention, services, or support. Parenting a child with special needs can be particularly challenging (Kirk, Gallagher, Coleman, & Anastasiow, 2009).

## **2.6 Perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs from the international side to national side**

The word inclusion has been something of a national and an international catchword. From my understanding, it can become a burden or a challenge if a person does not understand its meaning and how it can be engaged in a mainstream classroom. The inclusion of learners with impairment in mainstream classes is a growing practice and extensive in the current education. Even though there is an existing information about “perceptions of teachers towards inclusion of learners with special needs ” in some of the numerous places around the world and the united states, The review of literature has found no research so far piloted on “perceptions of teachers towards learners with special needs” serving rural schools in Kgakotlou Circuit, Limpopo province.

The researchers disputed that many teachers who did not take part in programs of inclusion were the ones who often had negative feelings and had a feeling that those people who made decisions lost it in classroom realities. Learners with special needs in the mainstream must be put in an environment that will build their development, socially and academically as way of providing equal education (Williams, 2002). Learners with special needs should go to one school amongst three schools: mainstreams, special and as integrated schools as revealed in a Poland study (Nygren & Wilczenski, 2014). The Minister also commented that the hours spent by learners with impairment at school should be less than time spent by their peers of general education which leads to learners being divided. A study in India affirms that government in India doesn't take responsibility in putting into practice education that is inclusive (Janshala 2003). Giffard-Lindsay (2007) asserts that NGOs try to create for insufficient provision of services by government in India. However, the study found that teachers have negative perceptions.

A study by Gaber et al., (2016) revealed positive perceptions towards inclusion but the research did not confirm that. However, an Australian study by Forlin and Chambers (2011) found that teachers have negative perceptions toward inclusion. A study by Oswald and Swart (2011), in South Africa, found that inclusion is mostly accepted by

female teachers than male; wherein anxiety is most experienced concerning the procedure. Donohue and Bornman (2014) in their current research in South Africa highlight that 70% of learners with special needs at schools are away from school. This continues regardless of the thrust for “inclusive education enshrined in the White Paper 6 by South Africa’s Department of Basic Education in 2001. Nevertheless, they specify that what is happening in the classroom is not necessarily transformed by practices of acceptance. Deficient training of teachers, lack of resources and undesirable attitude for learners with special needs by the teachers contributes to factors obstructing inclusion in South Africa.

From the latest key analysis of world-wide literature on perceptions towards inclusion, Pijl, Minnaert and De Boer (2011) made a revision from sixteen countries on twenty-six studies, circulated amongst the year nineteen ninety-eight and two thousand and eight, concentrating on consistent perceptions of teachers in primary schools. Pijl, Minnaert and De Boer’s study (2011) found that educators have undesirable attitude towards inclusion, and they are not experienced to include learners with needs that were special. However, they found that senior teachers manifested unacceptable attitudes towards inclusion. They furthermore debated this superficial contradiction as probable evidence that teachers with more teaching experience may mature enough in their occupation (De Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011). However, another understanding may be that direct experience in inclusion may draw fears of the unknown and therefore may have more influence than general experience in segregated systems.

A survey from university of Pretoria aimed at establishing teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion found:

- Majority of teachers thought that including learners with difficulties in learning will not help those learners to improve their performance.
- Surveyed teachers believed that inclusion was more beneficial to social growth of those learners as opposed to their intellectual growth.



- The findings also revealed that teachers found it easier to include learners with physical impairments as compared to those with learning difficulties.
- There are low expectations and inadequate preparations for the deaf at most schools.

From different literature across the world and in South Africa, researchers assert that teachers hold perceptions which are negative towards learners with special needs. In this study, researcher aims to investigate the perceptions of teachers in rural mainstream schools; seeking to find out how teachers in rural schools' view inclusion of learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms. This study further aimed at finding the factors that influences teachers' perceptions towards learners with special needs. Finally, the study looked at how preceding factors can be dealt and addressed to bring about positive treatment of learners with impairment in mainstream schooling.

## **2.7 Factors that influence inclusion**

### **2.7.1 Teacher-related factors**

#### **2.7.1.1 Lack of confidence**

It has been stated that inadequate confidence towards teaching learners with special needs were known to cause negative perceptions to inclusion. Hereafter, perceptions of teachers are perhaps correlated to the amount of struggle with classifying solutions to problems such as availability of physical, environmental and human support.

#### **2.7.1.2 Age**

Studies shows that age contributed to teachers' perceptions toward inclusion (Cwirynkalo et al., 2017; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Vaz et al., 2015). Evidence report that teachers who have been working for a longer period holds more negative perceptions towards inclusion as these teachers may have no training in inclusion (Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Vaz et al., 2015).

#### **2.7.1.3 Gender**

In majority of studies conducted in South Africa, It is found that male teachers are less accepting of inclusion as compared to their female colleagues (Cipkin & Rizza, 2000). In some international studies too, female teachers were found to be more open to the inclusion idea (Maio & Haddock, 2016).

#### 2.7.1.4 Work experience

It is found that, elderly teachers still lack understanding of inclusion despite the training they received (Monsen & Kokwa, 2014).

#### 2.7.1.5 Teacher Training

Training of teachers on practices of inclusion enable teacher confidence towards learners with special needs. Evidence reveals that training of teachers is a contributing factor to teacher perceptions towards inclusion, as more teachers who acquired training on inclusion practices are showing extreme positive perceptions towards inclusion more than those who received inadequate training ( Akalin et al., 2014; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2017;Vaz et al., 2015). Many teachers have, thus, not been well prepared nor properly trained for developing strategies and skills for the inclusive classroom that accommodate for diverse learners needs and help to overcome barriers to learning that learners may experience (Engelbrecht, 2006; Williams et al., 2009).

Thus, it is argued that in preparing teachers to accommodate for and address the needs of diverse learners there is a need to prepare and train teachers for using multi-level teaching methods that can address the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

#### 2.7.1.6 Previous education

Teachers who had inclusion as part of their university or college subject were only taught once in four or three years of their study period, so some did not get a clear understanding of what they will be faced with at schools ( Oswald & Swart, 2011).

### **2.7.2 Factors related to learners**

### 2.7.2.1 Type of special needs

Teachers' perceptions toward inclusion seem to be related to the level of disability a learner have. It is said in an Australian study, that teachers held negative perceptions towards inclusion of learners who could be violent physically to other learners in their classrooms (Chambers & Forlin, 2011). Little support was also there for learners with behavioural or emotional problems (Avramidis, Burden & Bayliss, 2012).

### 2.7.3 Environmental factors

#### 2.7.3.1 Resources

In rural schools teachers' perceptions are driven by lack of resources to accommodate all types of special needs in their mainstream classes, the size of the classroom, adequate facilities of the school, and the community and family support influence successful implementation of inclusion ( Alquraini, 2012; Amr et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kokwa, 2013; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). The research also confirmed that if the teachers get support from the community and family their perceptions would be positive towards inclusion.

#### 2.7.3.2 Staffing

In most of rural schools the staff has few teachers, inclusion of learners with special needs appear to be too much so they end up developing undesirable perceptions because of the pressure.

The acknowledgement of these factors is in more recent research on inclusion (Swart & Oswald 2011; Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Chambers & Forlin, 2017). A study in Britain by Porter and Ellins (2010) on teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs in primary schools based on teachers' taught subjects, the study revealed that English, mathematics and science teachers as compared to their colleagues they held unfavourable perceptions. Learners with special needs achieved lower results in these subjects.

The least support exists for the inclusion of children who have emotional or behavioural problems (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000a). An Australian study that included 67 student teachers showed a similar trend (Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

According to that study, new teachers held fewer positive perceptions towards inclusion of children who could be physically violent towards others.

A South African study also indicated that female teachers are more accepting of inclusion compared to their male colleagues, but at the same time, they experience more anxiety regarding the process (Oswald & Swart, 2011). In other international studies too, women were perceived as more open to the idea of inclusion compared to male teachers (Journal of Universal Excellence, 2016, pp. 30–46; Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000a; Ellins & Porter, 2005; Forlin, Kawai, Higuchi, 2015; Malinen et al., 2013). Furthermore, Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000b) also found that attitudes towards inclusion are more positive in teachers who have previous experiences with the inclusion process.

## **2.8 Theoretical framework**

The current study was guided by Icek Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (TPB), which is used to understand how individuals choose to engage or not to engage in certain behaviours as they relate to attitudes. This is a widely utilised model to ascertain behaviour rising from attitudes and has been used in a number studies involving attitudes towards learners with exceptionalities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Macfarlane & Woolfson, 2013; Yan & Sin, 2014). TPB was developed to understand how our attitudes predict our behaviours. It considers that engagement in behaviour is determined by the person's behavioural intention. Theory of planned behaviour would assume that a teacher with favourable attitudes or perceptions toward inclusion see themselves as being projected to include learners with impairments and who believe they have the required abilities and skills would likely have effective inclusive classrooms. Nevertheless, It was noted that the relation of subjective norms and attitudes as well as perceived behavioural control to the prediction and behaviour intention diverse across circumstances and behaviours (Ajzen, 2005).

This theory provided a beneficial framework for addressing the relationship between teachers' behaviour and attitudes and having a clear understanding of how factors such as hours of teachers' workloads, teacher training and years of teaching

experience can predict teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of learners with special needs. The researchers found that teachers had a greater level of behavioural intention to engage in inclusion practices when they held more favourable attitudes and had greater levels of perceived behavioural control using our diverse measures to assess teachers' perceptions or attitudes, behavioural intention and behavioural control as related to inclusion (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). In their study the subjective norm component of the model had no or little predictive power over behavioural intention.

The theory was used in this study for a better understanding of teacher's perceptions toward learners with special needs. The model suggests that perceptions towards behaviour may be influenced by experiences, previous knowledge and newly acquired knowledge (Ajzen, 2005). According to Rise, Sheeran and Hukkelberg (2010), attitudes play significant role in determining behaviour. Therefore, the theory was also used to determine the factors shaping the perceptions of teachers towards learners with special needs. More specifically, this study was based on the idea that the perceptions of teachers towards learners with special needs are influenced by inadequate training and newly acquired knowledge which made it relevant for the mentioned theory to be applied.

### **Summary of the chapter**

This chapter intended on clarifying the meaning of the term "inclusion" in that way the readers can understand and follow the concept of the current study. What is more, it is also vital that a comprehensive review of previous studies and commentary of the findings are presented. From my point of view, this gives a meaning to the current research and allows the researcher to rely on a background and compare the final results of this current study with those of previous, later on, after the data have been analysed. According to the previous studies concerning this topic, teachers' perceptions vary from study to study, affected by a series of factors that are also presented based on the review of literature. Perceptions appear to be positive, negative or neutral towards inclusion, but the important part, in accordance with the previous studies, is the factors that influence them.

The chapter consists of seven sub headings, which focused on history of inclusion, the conceptualization of perceptions, mainstream, inclusion are, perceptions of teachers internationally and nationally, factors that influence teachers' perceptions and the theoretical framework, which helped me identify gaps in literature in which the study might fill. The next chapter focuses on research methodology which will show how the study was conducted.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter I discussed, the history of inclusion, perceptions, mainstream, inclusion, Special needs, perceptions of teachers internationally and nationally, factors that influence teachers' perceptions and the theoretical framework. In this chapter the researcher will discuss the research methodology that is used to conduct the study. The current chapter is outlined as follows: First I will discuss the research approach and the research design as well as sampling. This is driven by a description of how data is analysed and collected. Second, description of how data is analysed and collected is discussed. Third and finally a brief description on ethical consideration and quality assurance are explained.

#### **3.2 The Research Paradigm**

The investigation followed an interpretive research paradigm and was qualitative in nature. The conceptual framework that was employed provided in-depth guidelines on the study design and processes. The qualitative nature of the study aimed to gather teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon of inclusion. According to Garud et al. (2011:48) "the interpretive paradigm offers a method for people to share their professional knowledge with one another and to create a mutual ground for endorsing coordinated action within establishments". Nel (2016) and (Anfara & Mertz, 2006) concur that the interpretive paradigm is premised on social phenomena that occur in contexts in which they are constructed and produced through occurrences.

The study was thus located in the interpretive paradigm (Yeni, 2012) by utilising the qualitative methodology. According to (Li, 2010; Wertz, 2011), case study helps to make sense of proceedings and activities in people's lives. I thus selected the interpretive paradigm to assist me in answering the why and how parts of the phenomenon under study. Singh (2014) describe the interpretive paradigm as an approach that aims to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study by exploring its background, and in this case, it was teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs. Singh (2014) advocates that the interpretive paradigm investigates how the participants make sense of their experiences and thus

create realities that are typically personal and subjective. The participants thus relate to the topic in their own way when they narrate their authentic experiences and perceptions. According to Garud et al. (2011) and (Phoenix et al., 2016), narratives offer a way for teachers to share their professional experiences with one another and create common ground for promoting coordinate action to address a particular topic. The qualitative methods of research are thus explained below to show how the study was planned and how it proceeded.

### **3.3 Research approach**

Qualitative research approach was followed in this study. It is explained as a method of enquiry which aims together in depth understanding of human behaviour. I chose this approach because it investigates why and how the questions in human perceptions and experiences as a qualitative research looks at a phenomenon from the participants' view ( Creswell, 2013). Rhodes corroborates this by showing that it collects "information on describing phenomenon across a larger number of people. More information was gathered through peoples' perspectives, perceptions, and expressions.

### **3.4 Research design**

Research design is explained as the set of procedure and methods used in analysing and collecting measures of the variables mentioned in the research problem (Kirumbi, 2018).The design in a study "obliges to plot in order and accomplish the research to maximise the validity of the findings (Mouton, 2010)." Collection of data and the design are guided from assumptions of core philosophy as stated, (Gerring, 2007). Further additions are made, that research design is defined as action strategy that shows a shift from one place to the other, wherein in this study can be explained as the preliminary set this study was a case study design, (Yin, 2017). For this study case study design was applied. According to Cohen et al. (2011) and (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), a case study is an inquiry that includes an experimental study of modern occurrences and it relies on the compilation of substantial knowledge regarding what participants perceive as impacting the phenomenon under study.

Yin (2009) describes three main categories of case studies: explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. Descriptive case study, as the name states, intends merely to



examine a familiar case to help others to understand it. It is one of the case studies in research methodology and is primarily descriptive. In this type of case study, usually, one or two instances are utilized to explain what situation is like. It was chosen to give of profound capabilities of inclusion phenomena, events, people or organisations under the study.

### **3.5 Sampling.**

Sampling is a technique, process or an action of picking a proper sample or a representative part of the people with the resolution of determining characteristics of people as a whole or parameters, (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2013).The study applied non-probability sampling. It comprises of purposive choice of specific items of the universe for constituting a sample. Meaning applicable participants were targeted. The sampling was adopted because it gave me a stage to make a decision on what is to be known and set out people who were willing to give provision of information by virtue of experience ( Sohlberg, Gilljam,& Martinsson, 2017; Sturgis et al., 2018).

In this type of sampling the researcher chooses a sample based on their knowledge about the population and the study itself. The participants in the study were chosen based on the purpose of the study. Creswell (2013) confirms that purposeful sampling is a strategy in which a particular setting, person or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that cannot be found in other choices. Purposeful sampling enables the researcher to elicit the most information rich sources (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). That is the reason why it was chosen for this study. The educators were sampled two per selected school.

#### **3.5.1 The target group**

The target group refers to a group of individuals who have some mutual characteristics that are of interest to the researcher (Kahn & Best, 2006). The target group of this study consists of teachers from five different schools located in the same town. To get rich information related to the research questions, nine teachers were selected, and four schools were represented by two teachers and one school was represented by only one teacher.

#### **3.5.2 Population**

Creswell (2013) refer to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. The population was consisting of 3 male and 6 female teachers from schools within Kgakotlou Circuit. There were five schools selected from the Ga- Mothapo area in Kgakotlou Circuit.

### 3.5.3 Description of participants

Table 1 : The descriptions of participants.

<b>Code name</b>	<b>Subject</b>
<b>SCHOOL A</b>	
Teacher 1 (T1)	L.O and English Grade 7 (Senior phase)
Teacher 2 (T2)	Sepedi and Life skills grade 6 (Intermediate phase)
<b>SCHOOL B</b>	
Teacher 3 (T3)	Foundation Phase grade 1
Teacher 4 (T4)	Foundation Phase grade 3
<b>SCHOOL C</b>	
Teacher 5 (T5)	Sepedi Grade 11 (FET)
Teacher 6 (T6)	Economics Grade 12 (FET)
<b>SCHOOL D</b>	
Teacher 7 (T7)	Physical science Grade 11 (FET)
Teacher 8 (T8)	Mathematics grade 10

	(FET)
<b>SCHOOL E</b>	
Teacher 9 (T9)	Mathematics Grade 4 and 5  (Intermediate phase)

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Collection of data was done using focus-group interviews and semi-structured interviews where I had a set of questions that were asked to gather diverse thoughts of individuals who were taking part in this study. I further gave all participants the exploration question before we began.

#### **3.6.1 Focus-group interview**

Focus group interviews are considered as a qualitative study whereby the perspectives of the respondents are transcribed so that how a group thinks about an issue is assessed (Doody, Slevin, & Taggart, 2013). However, focus groups help to explore interpretations of survey findings based on a range of opinions or views on a topic of interest to collect a wide variety of local terms or texts or keywords. Furthermore, words and texts help to assess the main implications of the discussions and the trend of usage of words.

I used focus-group interviews to obtain different views or perceptions about the topic, participants' responses were written down to ensure accuracy. The interviews were held at my place in a quiet room. To control the participants' interaction, breaks were allowed during the process and I have informed the participants' beforehand about the main purpose of the interviews, finally I thanked all the participants for their participation prior to the process. From the five schools, only two schools (four teachers) were able to participate in the focus-group interview. They were asked the same questions that were asked on the individual interviews.

#### **3.6.2 Semi-structured interview**

According to Bailey, Hennick and Hutter, 2011, "Interview is a verbal conversation between two people with the objective of collecting applicable information for the purpose of research." It allows respondents to speak out their feelings, opinions, attitudes, experiences beliefs and insights about a problem in question using exploratory questions.

The purpose of the interview was to obtain description of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to the interpretations of the meaning of the described problem (Kvale, 2009). A Semi-structured interview was my preferred instrument for data collection. In this context it meant preparing questions that would leave space for flexibility and emergent opinions (Galleta, 2013).

I collected data through interviews with the aim of gathering information about the past or present experiences or behaviour (Christensen & Johnson, 2008). I prepared a guide that included topics and questions that needed to be covered. I have encouraged the participants to respond from their own perception for the interviews to be effective and to bring forward different thoughts on the same issue. I began with the topics to be explored beforehand during interview. I obtained the approval letter from Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) (see Appendix 1a) and The Limpopo Department of Education (DoE) (see Appendix 1b) before collecting data, to conduct the study after receiving permission.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Qualitative methods of analysing data were adopted since this study was qualitative in nature. According to Silverman (2013) data analysis is the process of bringing structure, order and meaning to the mass of data collected. Furthermore, Denzil and Lincoln (2013) describe qualitative data analysis as working with data, searching for patterns, synthesising it, breaking it into manageable units, organising unit and discovering what is significant." In this study, I used a thematic analysis of the data. In this context it meant analytically examining small texts and phrases in the data on participants' experiences to get a clear understanding of their perceptions (Silverman, 2011).

This involved carrying out the exercise of pin pointing, examining and recording patterns emerging from the data and placing them under pre-determined themes.

Themes in this case refer to those patterns across the data sets associated to my specific research question and key to describing the phenomenon in detail. The use of thematic analysis in this study holds the advantage of being theoretically flexible in that, it can be used to respond to different questions linked to the participants experiences (Gibson & Andrew, 2009). I felt this method as the most appropriate due to the emphasis it gives to the organization, and the rich description of data. This method goes beyond the idea of simply counting words or phrases in the transcribed text, to identifying the implied and the explicit concepts within the data. Data was analysed using transcripts and recordings. Smartphone was used to record the interviews so that I do not miss anything that was said by the participants when transcribing.

### **3.7.1 Transcriptions of data**

In this study, I did a word to word transcription from voice to text to guide in particularly identifying aspects of data that could be used for analytic purposes (Gibson & Andrew, 2009). I personally did this immediately after the interview and before the next interview to avoid accumulation of work aware of the amount of text involved. All the information recorded in the field notebook during the interview including observations was merged throughout the transcription process. I cross checked and proofread the transcriptions for accuracy against the audio recordings and later send a copy to each participant to read and confirm if the transcription reflected own words.

### **3.8 Quality Criteria**

Creswell (2013) asserts that “qualitative research honesty is established through strategies of conformity, dependability, transferability and credibility.” Trustworthiness is used as a measure in qualitative research, as to which extent data analysis and data trustworthy are believable.

#### **3.8.1 Dependability**

Dependability is corresponding to reality, which are continuous observations of the identical situation. Bitsch (2005) says dependability is “the constancy of results over a certain period of time.” Manion and Morrison, 2011; Cohen, Tobin and Bergly, 2004 avows that dependability involves evaluation of the results regarding the study to ensure that they are all guided by the data obtained from the partakers in the research

study. Dependability was ensured through being consistent throughout the research by performing dependability audit.

### **3.8.2 Credibility**

Macnee and McCabe, 2008 and Holloways and Wheeler, 2002, explain credibility as “sureness that can be positioned in the truth of research results”. Lincoln and Guba 2000 avows that it establishes whether or not the findings of the research signify believable information drawn from the original data of people who were taking part in the study as well as right elucidation views that are original from participants, Kumar (2020) suggests that for confirming credibility the researcher should take results of the research to the participants for congruence, approval, confirmation and validation. The researcher familiarised herself with the organisation and participants prior to data collection. According to Maree (2016) the researcher can exercise credibility by submitting the transcripts to the participants to correct the errors.

In this study I began the severity of the inquest by adopting the following strategy, member-checking. Member-checking was done through sharing the conclusions, data and elucidations with the participants, as it is believed to give participants an opportunity of making clarifications of what they were intended to do, correcting mistakes and making additions where necessary.

### **3.8.2 Transferability**

Transferability as defined by Lincoln and Guba (2011), it is conclusions of the study can be useful to other settings or situations. According to Neergaard (2007), “Like external validity in for qualitative research, the researcher needs to give impenetrable interpretation for people who read to be informed if whether it can be applied to their situation as well”. According to Martens (2015), a researcher should ensure transferability by providing incident information that is satisfactory, so that the readers could generalise in terms of case-on-case transfer. I also achieved it through conducting purposive sampling, as “if tolerated choice to be completed about the collection of participants” (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorenson, 2010). I also kept recordings and documents safe for cross checking to ensure transferability.

### **3.8.4 Confirmability of findings**

I confirmed my findings by verifying source in transcripts. I also evaluated the level of my findings to be trustworthy of the people in other settings; same project made use of same techniques but carried out in diverse conditions (Seale, 2010). Lincoln and Denzil (2013) “define conformability as the extent to which finding are free from bias” It focuses on the characteristic of the data collected and processes leading to its collection that yields to findings that are neutral, credible and consistent.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

A subject in the public domain warrants attention to ethical considerations, particularly individual rights of participants (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002). The fact that inclusive education is in the public domain warrants requires ethical clearance. The ethical committee of the University of Limpopo and the Department Of Education was consulted and permission was granted. The following ethical issues have also been observed: (a) Informed consent, (b) confidentiality and anonymity, (c) No harm to the participant.

#### **3.9.1. Request letter**

I asked for permission to conduct the study by issuing a request letter to the selected schools and the Limpopo Department of Education and it was granted.

#### **3.9.2 Informed consent**

In this study, informed consent meant that any person who was involved as a participant was notified of the aims of the study and given the benefit of accepting or declining to participate. This involved a proper explanation as to the aims of the study, adequate time to make participatory decision and thereafter signing a written consent form to confirm such acceptance. The researcher gave a detailed explanation of the procedures and purpose of the study to the participant and their consent sought.

#### **3.9.3 Confidentiality**

Participants were told that their involvement is private; to ensure that there is confidentiality. Wimmer & Dominick (2014) bring an argument that due to confidentiality, it must be made clear to the participants that, even if they can be identified in the study as individuals, information disclosed will not be taken to the public with their names. I have also told them that fines, and punishments won't be

there if they decide to pull out during the interview process. All people taking part in the study were informed that their participation is charitable, and withdrawal can be made anytime, (McCray & McHatton, 2011). I also told them that they won't receive any payment for their participation.

### **3.9.4 Anonymity**

I made use of pseudonyms such as T1, T2, and etc, instead of participant's names in the research study. For audio recordings, participants were advised that they be at liberty to disapprove or approve such recordings. No recordings were made without prior consent by participants.

### **3.9.5 No harm to the participants**

The researcher will not reveal information that can embarrass, demean or make the participant uncomfortable to answer, such as their income, characteristics, social welfare and any other irregular behaviour. The researcher will also ensure that data collection through interviews is done safely and privately for the participants without being afraid and scared. Notwithstanding, ought to there be any psychological dangers because of the study; the researcher will issue a proposal letter for the influenced participants to see the experts.

### **3.10 Limitations of the study**

Limitations that impact a study are the perceived challenges that are considered by the researcher before administering the actual study. The size of the sample was adequate; however, it cannot be generalized to larger populations. Due to the predominant qualitative nature of data, I cannot generalize the findings to broader context as qualitative data has a low external validity (Hay, 2009). This research is only applicable to the specific population of educators in Kgakotlou circuit. Therefore, the research findings cannot be generalized to other countries.

The most impactful limitation of the study was its small scope. Only two teachers at one school were sampled, and the findings may therefore not be generalised to the entire school population in the province and beyond. However, although a small sample of teachers was used, this is encouraged in qualitative research as rich data



of their lived experiences could be elicited from these purposively selected participants (Morton, 2013).

### **Summary of the chapter**

This chapter has described the research methodology used in this study, the design, paradigm and approach of the study. It also showed descriptions of the data collection techniques used, how the participants were sampled and data analysis methods that were used to analyse the data. The chapter also highlighted the quality assurance criteria which was used to govern the study in terms of confirmation, credibility, transferability and dependability. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Data analysis, interpretation, and discussion**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter presents the findings obtained from collected data to shed a light on teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs. Conversely, the rural setting choices, and the themes under discussion and those that emerge from the data are valuable indicators of the possible insights held by teachers. This chapter also engages the study outcomes by discussions about issues that arose from the data as reflected in literature. However, teachers' views were more distinct in some themes and therefore, only such were deemed more relevant for discussion.

#### **4.2 Biographical information of participants in this research**

There were 9 participants in the study. 5 of them were male teachers and 4 were female teachers. Four teachers from school A and C were able to participate in focus-group interview. Out of those nine teachers 3 were over 50 years of age and others were younger. Those who were over 50 had over 20 years of working experience whereas as others were having less than 20 years.

#### **4.3 Analysis and interpretation of data collected from interviews**

Based on semi- structured and focus-group interview the following themes have incurred:

Theme 1: Understanding inclusion and knowledge of inclusion

Theme 2: Description of a learner with special needs

Theme 3: teachers' perceptions

Theme 4: Support for learners with special needs

Theme 5: Possible improvement on teachers' perceptions

Theme 6: Rural schools

Theme 7: Learners learning process

Theme 8: Factors that affect teachers' perceptions on learners with special needs

### **Theme 1: Understanding inclusion and knowledge of inclusion**

For inclusion to succeed it is important that its implementers understand what it really means. This will enable them to make informed choices when dealing with diversity and during classroom practice.

About the theme, here are responses of the teachers:

#### **SCHOOL A**

*Teacher 1 mentioned that, "it means that all people regardless of their disabilities, health care needs or their abilities have the rights to be respected and be valuable."*

*Teacher 2 mentioned that "an inclusion is when a learner special needs attends the same class with learners without special needs."*

#### **SCHOOL B**

*Teacher 3 said that, "it means to accommodate all learners without discrimination". While teacher 4 said "inclusion is about recognizing, supporting and respecting the differences among all learners. Developing good strategies that will benefit all learners and overcoming barriers."*

#### **SCHOOL C**

*Teacher 5 said that "inclusion is where the learners with special needs attend school with learners in the mainstream (non-special school)".*

*Teacher 6 said that, "It means to accommodate learners with regard to their learning abilities."*

#### **SCHOOL D**

*Teacher 7 said that, "inclusion secures opportunities for learners with disabilities to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in general classroom."*

Teacher 8 said that, "it means teaching all learners in the same class regardless of their diverse needs."

### **SCHOOL E**

Finally, teacher 9 said that' "Inclusion is including learners with special needs in mainstream schools."

### **SCHOOL A**

Teacher 1 said, "Collaboration with the mainstream teachers merges and raises awareness about inclusion". This will help a teacher to shape the environment and support school to foster and sustain inclusive practices, shadow teachers help the child to perform, belong, interact and participate better."

Teacher 2 said, "I think Workshops or training should be provided to all educators, the Department of Education should allocate enough resources to all schools, the SMT should provide support to all its teachers by monitoring their teaching and ensuring that educators are not overwhelmed."

### **SCHOOL B**

Teacher 3 said that, "The teacher must know different disabilities of learners and know how to handle those challenges, e.g. A learner with specific learning disabilities. Be sympathetic towards learners and participate the creation of welcoming and supporting environment."

Teacher 4 said that, "the Department of Education need to hire teachers who are trained to teach learners with special needs."

### **SCHOOL C**

Teacher 5 said that, "Knowledge of inclusion is every important to every educator and support-services from clinics, social workers and health."

While teacher 6 said, "Teachers should learn to acclimatize themselves with their learners' learning abilities. Set up diagnostic assessment which will assist in knowing what kind of learners an educator is about to teach. Take effort in attending workshops"

*on inclusion and lastly, being optimistic that learning is change in behavior, therefore every learner is unique, and they learn differently.”*

#### **SCHOOL D**

*Teacher 7 said, “Teachers should implement inclusion practices by involving all children with disabilities in the classroom activities. There should be education programs for teachers to teach them to accommodate learners with special needs.”*

*Teacher 8 said that, “Teacher training can help to avoid negative perceptions.”*

#### **SCHOOL E**

*Teacher 9 said that, “The department must issue books that talk about inclusion to school for teachers, proper in-service training and provision of adequate infrastructure.”*

Looking at the teacher’s responses, I think how teachers explain inclusion depends on how they see it, practiced, or implemented in their schools. Their descriptions show that it is what they think is correct and how they experienced it.

This view is influenced by special school or education, but inclusion in education goes beyond disabilities whether physical or cognitive (Slee, 2011). This view speaks to what is endorsed by this study. It is about breaking the barriers that hinder learning like socio economic issues, racial or gender discriminations. Based on teachers’ responses on the knowledge of inclusion, the teachers expressed themselves fully.

### **Theme 2: Description of a learner with special needs**

#### **SCHOOL A**

*Teacher 1 said that, “a learner with special education needs have a learning difficulty or disability which requires special educational provision. Yes, I have (slow learner).”*

*Teacher 2 said that, “It is when a particular learner has a certain disability that can make learning for that learner to be difficult. NO learner.”*

#### **SCHOOL B**

*Teacher 3 said that, “a learner with special needs has factors including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments as well as psychosocial disturbances.”*

*Teacher 4 said that, “it is physically, mentally, hyperactive or a slow learner.”*

### **SCHOOL C**

*Teacher 5 said that, “A learner with special needs is a learner who needs a special support to learn. The learner has difficulty to perform the same as learners of his or her age. Yes, I have learners with special needs.”*

*Teacher 6 said that, “it is a learner who has some physical impairment, emotionally absent, cognitively slow and psychologically disturbed, No I don’t have any in my class.”*

### **SCHOOL D**

*Teacher 7 said that, “A learner with special needs is a child with emotional, behavioral, cognitive, intellectual, speech, vision, hearing or learning disabilities. I don’t have any learner.”*

*Teacher 8 said that, “it is a learner with learning barriers. I have two learners (the other one is a slow learner and the other one is hyperactive.”*

### **SCHOOL E**

*Teacher 9 said that, “it is a learner who cannot learn like her or his peers because of some impairment that he or she has. Yes, I have.”*

The teachers’ responses show that they view learners with special needs differently, as such I think their descriptions matches the way the see or view them. Teacher 3 from school B, teacher 6 from School C and teacher 7 from School D responses seem to corroborate each other as they all think special needs includes physical disability.

## **Theme 3: Teachers’ perceptions**

### **SCHOOL A**

*Teacher 1 response was so irrelevant, it seems like the teacher misinterpreted the question.*

*While teacher 2 said that, “many teachers have perceptions that learners with special needs cannot learn like learners without special needs. They also think learners with special needs should have their own school.”*

## **SCHOOL B**

*Teacher 3 said that, “there are negative perceptions.”*

- *Discriminatory attitudes on basis of race, gender, culture, disability, religion, ability, and sexual preference*
- *And labeling of learners*

*Teacher 4 said that’ “Teachers have negative perceptions because they are not trained to teach learners with special needs.”*

## **SCHOOL C**

*Teacher 5 said that, “Teachers who did not attend courses on how to deal with learners with special needs, happen to be impatient with them because they can’t handle or deal with their behavioral problem.”*

*Teacher 6 said that, “Teachers believe that learners with special needs cannot catch up with learners in mainstream”.*

- *They think that learners with special needs must be separated from mainstream learners to not disadvantage them from their learning.*

## **SCHOOL D**

*Teacher 7 said that, “Teacher holds different perceptions; others think that learners with special needs should be at special schools and not be sent to mainstream classrooms because mainstream teachers do not have enough knowledge on how they should accommodate those learners.”*

*Teacher 8 said that, “teachers perceive learners with special needs as those who must learn separately from their peer who differ from them.”*

## **SCHOOL E**

*Teacher 9 said that, “majority of the teachers’ perceptions towards learners with special needs are favorable”.*

According to the literature, inclusion means that there should be behaviour management and support for learners who exhibit challenges and that means that there should be interventions so that learners become responsive to education and that teachers address the individual profile and needs of learners (McClean, 2012; Rymond, 2017; Walton, 2015; Walton & Lloyd, 2012).

Looking at the teachers’ responses it seems as if some teachers still on the era whereby learners with special needs were taken to special schools making them to have negative or unfavorable perceptions, for example T2, T6 and T7s responses reveal that. In this regard teachers still think learners with special needs cannot be taught in mainstream schools.

### **Theme 4: Support for learners with special needs**

## **SCHOOL A**

*Teacher 1 said, “Yes, I always give learners with special needs opportunities for success, because learners with disabilities often feel like they don’t succeed in certain areas, but structuring lessons that lead to successful results in a way that would motivate them.”*

*Teachers 2 said, “yes, by giving that particular learner class activity according to his or her abilities”.*

- *Accepting that every learner learns differently.*

## **SCHOOL B**

*Teacher 3 said, “Yes, I make sure that I give learners activities based on their abilities.”*

*Teacher 4 said, “As a teacher I treat all learners equally, for those who have special needs, I have time taken to be with them and I give them work suitable for their*



*understanding. For example, teach them to pronounce vowels whilst those without special needs write sentences and words”.*

### **SCHOOL C**

*Teacher 5 said, “yes, I give them work based on their understanding and questions set according to their IQs”.*

*Teacher 6 said, “I believe that every learner learns in different ways, therefore learners with diverse learning abilities are at times given less tasks and more time than others. Secondly, visual activities are mostly adopted in the classroom to keep them occupied since a normal text with a lot of reading and interpretation can bore them and make them absent from their learning. Thirdly, I adopt teaching where I break apart content to avoid overloading them with more content. Lastly, I apply scaffolding on every activity to engage them and keep them interested, instead of focusing on the end goal.”*

### **SCHOOL D**

*Teacher 7 said, “Yes, I make sure to maintain an organized classroom and limit distractions. I also learn about that learner’s condition so that I will be able to help him or her.”*

*Teacher 8 said, “Yes, I ensure that I group learners according learning abilities so that they will also grab an opportunity to participate with their peers who are like them.”*

### **SCHOOL E**

*Teacher 9 said’ “yes, I make sure that I give such learner fewer activities as compared to those of his or her peers who differ from him or her.”*

Majority of teachers are positive about accommodating learners with special needs, from their responses; they understand what special needs learners requires as compared to their peers without special needs. Teachers seems to be accepting the indifferences even though others don’t have any learners with special needs, but they offered their how they can handle the situation. It shows that they are very enthusiastic about their profession no matter the challenges.

### **Theme 4b: Support from the Department of Education**

## **SCHOOL A**

*In regard with the above question Teacher 1 said that, “The Department of Education must not allow learners with special needs to be in mainstream classes because those learners are not respected and valuable when mixed with normal learners.*

*Teacher 2 said that, “The Department of Education must organize workshops concerning learners with special need, in the workshop the main topic should be about how to tackle and give methods on how teachers can improve ways of viewing learners with special needs, educational specialists must be invited to the workshops, to share their experiences and knowledge.”*

## **SCHOOL B**

*Teacher 3 said that, “The Department of Education must supply or equip all schools with relevant physical resources. Human resource must hire educators who specialized in inclusive education, nurses, psychologists, and social workers to assist when learners have difficulties. Even the ratio of teacher learners must be the same for the whole country.”*

*Teacher 4 said that, “They must train more teachers according to abilities of learners to improve the facilities of the schools.”*

## **SCHOOL C**

*Teacher 5 said that, “The Department should give all educators in mainstreams bursaries to study inclusion in education and also make schools to be favorable for learners with special needs.”*

*Teacher 6 said that, “The Department must implement and establish programs to support educators to cater for inclusion. Although the policy suggests inclusion, but it does not evidently indicate on how to approach inclusion by setting out activities for learners with special needs.”*

## **SCHOOL D**

*Teacher 7 said that, “The Department of Education should provide workshops for teachers. So that the teachers can change their perspective towards the learners with special needs. The Department should also provide resources such as hearing aid.”*

*Teacher 8 said that, “The Department must include workshops that focus on inclusion in education on their quarterly plans. Provide all schools with relevant materials to cater for inclusion. Improve school’s infrastructure to accommodate learners with special needs*

### **SCHOOL E**

*Teacher 9 said that, “The Department of Education must provide adequate resources to schools*

All teachers suggested more workshops on inclusion which I think will make a huge difference on how mainstream teachers perceive inclusion because they will be gathering unknown information and even understand everything better than they did before which will lead to a success to the implementers of inclusion.

According to (Butin, 2005; Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 2017; Walton, 2015; Walton & Lloyd, 2012), it is still challenging in South Africa to provide academic excellence without conceptual clarity and scholastically appropriate initial teacher education courses for an all-encompassing schooling system. Internationally and in South Africa, it is agreed that the skills development of teachers needs to be dynamic to enable them to be scholastically responsive to the various needs of learners in numerous teaching environments (Vygotsky, 2017). These are the means that are put in place so as to address the issue of support and training required in order for teachers to acknowledge the call for inclusive education. It is also through teacher’s perception that training and education is mainly what they see as hindering them from fully including all learners.

## **Theme 5: Possible improvement on teacher perceptions**

### **SCHOOL A**

Teacher 1 said that, “teachers need to treat all learners equally regardless of their situation because those learners did not choose to be in the situation they are at.”

Teacher 2 said that, “teachers need to acknowledge that learners with special needs learn differently”.

### **SCHOOL B**

Teacher 3 said that “By discouraging labeling of learners, avoid categorizing learners; establish the real strength of every learner for the purpose of development. Teachers must not discriminate learners and lastly, they must start positive awareness considering any particular barrier and assess differently”.

Teacher 4 said that, “they must try to work hard towards meeting the needs of all learners.”

### **SCHOOL C**

Teacher 5 said that, “they must enroll with the universities and study about learners with special needs, know their behavior and how to deal with them. Understand that every child is unique on his or her own ways.”

Teacher 6 said that, “teachers must learn to appreciate different learning abilities. Proper in-service training on how to approach and handle learners with special needs is highly recommended. Support from social workers and psychologists should also serve as a tool to help teachers to have different and effective view of learners with special need.”

### **SCHOOL D**

Teacher 7 said that, “teachers should research more about special needs so that they will have more understanding about the conditions which will enable them to help and create a positive learning environment for the particular learners.

Teacher 8 said that, “teachers need to attend workshops about inclusion, learn about learners with special needs on internet or through reading books about them.”

### **SCHOOL E**

Teacher 9 said that, “teachers need to accept that learners with special needs are also people like others and they don’t need to be left out or be treated differently or discriminated against their peers.”

All teachers stated that there is need for developing inclusion knowledge through reading, attending workshops, and enrolling for inclusion course at the university as this will also help when having to work with learners with different needs. From their

responses it seems as if they are also willing to improve to accept inclusion in schools without any difficulties.

## **Theme 6: Rural schools**

### **SCHOOL A**

Teacher 1 said, “No, they don’t, because most teachers in rural schools they don’t care about learners with special needs, as they think they are wasting their time focusing on them, so most do not cater for inclusive education at all.”

Teacher 2 said “yes most rural school caters for inclusion because they take learners with special needs in their schools.”

### **SCHOOL B**

Teacher 3 said, “No, we teach content so that learners work on various aspects of the same subject matter. Enable learners to work on similar concepts at levels that do reflect previous achievement. Encourage learners to work through materials at the same speed.”

Teacher 4 said, “No, some schools are not equipped, and the building plan is not organized”.

### **SCHOOL C**

Teacher 5 said, “No, rural schools do not cater for inclusion, e.g. most schools are not wheelchair friendly. There are steps or stairs everywhere. People who are trained to guide and support the blinds at school are not available.”

Teacher 6 said, “No, most rural school lack proper infrastructure for learners with special needs. Additionally, even educators treat learners the same in the classroom and these results in some learners being left behind in their learning.”

### **SCHOOL D**

Teacher 7 said, “No rural schools have poor infrastructure and often don’t have enough means to accommodate learners with special needs. They also lack qualified teachers and lastly in rural schools’ learners with special needs are not prioritized.”

Teacher 8 said, “Yes, some rural schools have ramp to accommodate those learners with wheelchairs.”

## **SCHOOL E**

Teacher 9 said, “No, there are inadequate skills, lack of infrastructure to accommodate or include special needs.”

Majority of the teachers have explained that most of the rural schools cannot accommodate or offer inclusion to learners with special need due to certain things such as lack of infrastructure, T7,T6; No specialists , T5, Other teachers commented about the content which to me appears to be a significant factor for the success of inclusion and education of learners with indifferences.T2 and T9 said that the schools accommodate inclusion , which I believe they are saying so looking at few schools at their area. Looking at the answers, I think a lot needs to be done to improve the state of rural schools.

## **Subtheme 2: Availability of Resources**

### **SCHOOL A**

Teacher 1 said that, “Yes, because all teachers have been taught about inclusive education in their varsity studies.”

Teacher 2 said, “No, because they do not have enough resources to satisfy the special needs of learners, for example, they may not have ramps for learners with wheelchair.”

### **SCHOOL B**

Teacher 3 said, “No, some schools do not have ramps to accommodate people with disability, overcrowded classrooms, multilevel teaching approach not yet practiced. No arrangement made for learners who need to be assisted, e.g. if they can’t write but

can answer orally. We set the same test for all learners not looking at their performance”.

Teacher 4 said, “No, they do not meet requirements and no plan for special needs learners”.

### **SCHOOL C**

Teacher 5 said that, “Rural schools are very far to satisfy the special needs learners, the infrastructure does not cater for learners with special needs (those who use wheelchair). Equipment to assist learners with special needs is not available. E.g. Carpentry- learners who can learn the skill of working with wood; it is difficult to assist such children since there is no equipment.”

Teacher 6 said, “No, rural schools do not observe practical needs of learners.”

### **SCHOOL D**

Teacher 7 said, “No rural schools do not satisfy the special needs learners, for example teachers are labeling them, they don’t have adequate infrastructure.”

Teacher 8 said that, “Some schools do satisfy those learners’ needs, they have teachers who understand inclusion and how they should work with those kinds of learners.”

### **SCHOOL E**

Teacher 9 said, “No, they do not have suitable resources to accommodate such learners and majority of the teachers are not trained to work with such kind of learners.”

T1 and T8 seems to have different answers as other teachers which I think is because of what they see in their schools whereas other participants are saying the resources are indeed insufficient and with regard to that majority of the lessons involving learners with impairments cannot be successful. Therefore, learners with special needs will not have an opportunity to learn with their peers.

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## **Theme 7: Learners learning process and lack of training**

## **SCHOOL A**

Teacher 1 said, "Yes because learners feel like they are not welcomed and they end up not concentrating in the classroom because of their situation, so it really affects them a lot."

Teacher 2 said, "Yes because learning and teaching cannot take place effectively."

## **SCHOOL B**

Teacher 3 said, "Yes, labeling of learners may discourage learners to come to school and perform poorly. They may develop poor self-esteem. They may be demoralized and feel isolated and anger will develop."

Teacher 4 said, "Yes learners become discouraged and demotivated to learn."

## **SCHOOL C**

Teacher 5 said, "Yes, teachers can identify the learners and referral might take time because some parents do not accept that their children have special needs."

Teacher 6 said, "Yes, Teachers are not spending much time with them, they give the more activities they cannot handle, and they end up failing."

## **SHOOL D**

Teacher 7 said that, "teachers tend to forget that learners with special needs require to be taught with certain methods different from those of their peers, they give them tests before they can even understand the concepts taught, learners tend to feel left out, leaving them with no opportunity but to feel unenthusiastic about their learning."

Teacher 8 said that, "learners with special needs end up feeling they don't deserve to learn and think better solution is to leave school."

## **SCHOOL E**

Teacher 9 said that, "in most school majority of learners with special needs are failing as compared to those without barriers to learning."



*Looking at these responses, I should say without making any conclusion; that learners are discriminated against in their schools, what the teachers are saying seems to be what they are really experiencing in classrooms.*

Teachers' answers reveal that most learners with special needs perform poorly as compared to the peers without special needs. I think is because the teachers are not trained to work under inclusion circumstances.

## **Theme 8: Factors that influence teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs:**

### **SCHOOL 1**

Teacher 1 said:

- Teachers' awareness and knowledge about inclusive practices.
- Background and training.
- Attitudes towards inclusion.
- Understanding of inclusion.
- Collaboration with mainstream teachers.

Whereas teacher 2 said:

- Lack of training
- Shortage of resources
- Administrative support
- Lack of support from school management teams

### **SCHOOL B**

Teacher 3 said, "Labeling of learner and discriminatory attitudes on the basis of gender, race and differences."

Teacher 4 said, "stress- teachers are not trained to teach special needs learners."

## **SCHOOL C**

Teacher 5 said that, “the curriculum in the mainstream does not accommodate learners with special needs.

- Stress- Teachers become stressed because they are not trained to teach learners with special needs

Teacher 6 said,

- “Impatience- the inability to distinguish between special needs, inclusion and disability
- Knowledge capacity and lack of empathy are other social factors.
- Socio-economic background can also influence teachers’ in viewing inclusion as an impossible way of dealing with different learners

## **SCHOOL D**

Teacher 7 said; “Previous experiences on inclusive classrooms.”

Whereas teacher 8 thinks, “it includes teaching experience, Gender, and teacher training.”

## **SCHOOL E**

Lastly teacher 9 said, “Inadequate resources, overcrowded classroom, teacher experience and gender influence the teachers’ perceptions.”

A study in Albania by UNICEF in 2016 discovered that teachers only contact different learners in school. This disrupted the inclusion in education progress in that country as the teachers were not adequately trained (UNICEF, 2016). Similar conclusions revealed that collaboration between mainstream education and special needs will help developing positive perceptions among teachers.

The answers show that there are still a lot of factors that influence teachers’ perceptions. Teachers have identified different factors. Teacher 2,4,5 responses corroborates each other as they all stated that stress is one of the driving factors that influence how teacher view or feel about inclusion of learners with special needs.

## **Summary of the chapter**

This fourth chapter present the outcomes of the research where the researcher investigated information about perceptions of mainstream teachers towards learners with special needs. The chapter analysed and interpreted the data collected from the interviews and themes were discussed. The next chapter will give an overview of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

## **Chapter 5**

### **An overview of the investigation, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter focus was on the analysis and interpretation of collected data through interviews with the aim to find the perceptions of mainstream teachers towards inclusion of learners with special needs. The investigation confirmed that teachers had a likely common understanding of what inclusion is and learners with special needs. For instance, they viewed inclusion as educating all learners (special needs and non-special needs learners). The chapter discussed teachers' perceptions, also revealed that factors such as inadequate training, lack of knowledge on inclusion, limited resources were major factors that influence teachers' perceptions.

The current chapter is designed as follows: it will first focus on summary and discussion of the findings, secondly outline the recommendations for the findings, then finally conclusion of the chapter.

#### **5.2 Summary and discussion of findings**

The study was conducted at Kgakotlou Circuit to find out the perceptions of mainstream teachers towards inclusion of learners with special needs. The main aim of the research was to investigate mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs, to explore mainstream teachers' perceptions of learners towards inclusion of learners with special needs, to determine factors that impact teachers perceptions towards learners with special needs and to identify measures or ways to deal with preceding factors as explained in chapter 1.

The researcher used qualitative methods of collecting data from interviews. The outcomes or results indicated how teachers perceive learners with special needs. After collection of data and interpretation, the researcher found that most teachers did not have a proper understanding on what they can do to include learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms. Many teachers feel stressed to teach mixed learners. Some mentioned that they give them different activities to accommodate level of different learners (T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5). Even though it is not easy for

teachers to teach mixed learners, few teachers tried their best by accommodating all learners.

The research found the results for research objectives mentioned. After the interpretation of data, some teachers had favorable perceptions like those who tried to help learners with special needs to participate like others. Below is the discussion of the findings.

### **Theme 1: Understanding inclusion and knowledge of inclusion**

The finding revealed that teachers understand differently but there are also commonalities in their definitions. The results revealed that teachers have a clear understanding of what the phenomenon inclusion is, their comments support this.

### **Theme 2: Description of a learner with special needs**

The study found that teachers are more positive about learners with special needs, the way they define them, it shows that others seem to have an experience of working with such learners. From their comments I don't think they can encounter a lot of challenges when having to deal with them in schools.

### **Theme 3: Teachers' perceptions**

The aim of this study was to explore mainstream teacher's perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs. From this aim, the teachers' comments showed that some of the teachers negatively perceive learners with special needs. Result showed that teachers still think learners with special needs cannot be on the same environment or learn together with learners who are different from them. Some say that those learners must be taught at their own schools away from others like a special school.

### **Theme 4: Support for learners with special needs**

Some teachers seem to have accepted the fact that nowadays learners with special needs are incorporated in mainstream school. They even have strategies that will help in accommodating such learners. The findings reveal that even though there are some negative perceptions, other teachers still try to come up with anything that can help

them to make those learners to feel free and comfortable while learning with their peers.

#### **Theme 5: Possible improvement on teacher perceptions**

The study revealed that teachers are eager to know more and understand inclusion much better. The study found that for teachers can learn more about the phenomenon inclusion through researching, enrolling for a course at university, attending inclusion workshops and get proper in-service training. These findings can help many teachers out there who still negative perceptions towards have including learners with special needs. According to Englebrecht et.al. (2010) training should involve administrative issues surrounding inclusion and the curriculum. This was the perceived need of majority of the participants in this study.

#### **Theme 6: Availability of resources**

The study came to a discovery that majority of the rural schools have no or few adequate resources that will help in including learners with special needs at mainstream schools. Teacher's responses showed that teachers only have more knowledge on learners without special needs; even the methods of teaching accommodate only those learners. The study also found that schools do not have a proper infrastructure or resources that will help in assisting learners with special needs. This can lead to negative perceptions.

#### **Theme 7: Learners learning process**

The study revealed that negative perceptions of teachers towards inclusion of learners with special needs can make such learners to feel discriminated, uncomfortable, give them a feeling that they are not accepted, and these issues can distract their learning process. The study also revealed that labelling of learners can also lead to poor performance.

#### **Theme 8: factors that affect teachers' perceptions on learners with special needs**

Teachers in this study acknowledge that they were not trained sufficiently and educated on the topic inclusion during their teaching years. At the same time, they also feel that the availability of resources which can assist in working with learners

with special needs is important in developing teacher's competencies. To be satisfied and successful, teachers need to be flexible or be free in their role. They need to meet the various needs of learners and adapt to responsibilities and changing role. Teachers generally recognize the need for collaboration with the department of education.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following are recommendations to address factors influencing mainstream teachers' perceptions towards learners with learners with special needs:

- This study has revealed that educators need training to ensure that their attitudes and approaches do not prevent learners with diverse educational needs from gaining equal access to the curriculum. Teachers felt that they had received insufficient guidance regarding what and how to manage inclusive education (T1.2.3, 5.4.3, 5.4.10.2). They felt unprepared and unequipped to manage inclusion in schools and as a result their lack of training resulted in hopelessness in handling the learners with diverse educational needs.
- Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that the Department of Education should organize in-service training for the teachers to ensure that best practices of inclusive education are realized. The training should be done, where possible, in the school because at-job-training seems to be more effective as most of the challenges will be dealt with as they occur.
- To provide sufficient facilities and make teaching aids available to enable inclusion practices in mainstream schools.
- The department need to revise the curriculum accommodate the needs of special learners.
- The department need to provide a budget that is specific for inclusion in education.

- The Department need to put in place, follow up mechanics for implementation of inclusion in education in schools.
- Teachers need to make education of learners with special needs strong by adopting and developing special policy for inclusion.
- Teachers need to change their negative perceptions towards learners with special needs and embrace inclusive teaching and learning practices to address the needs of learners with special needs as well as those of all other learners.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations for the teachers**

- Teachers need to use creativity where teaching aids are scarce.
- Teachers need to work as a team with the aim of learning from each other.
- If it is necessary, they need to claim their rights such as any support from the administrators and a need for training.
- embrace inclusive teaching and learning practices to address the needs of learners with special needs as well as those of all other learners.
- Teachers need to give the support needed to learners with special needs

#### **5.4.3 Recommendations for future studies**

The lack of training for educators was identified as an area of concern in this study. Research could focus on educators' perceptions towards training programmes, as training was seen to be a way to address the inconsistencies of inclusion in educational practice. Further research should be done regarding the training required to assist educators with dealing with various barriers to learning and development.



Future studies are recommended to focus on managing teachers' perceptions towards inclusion in education in mainstream schools. The sample of the study was drawn from rural mainstream schools. Further research could include respondents from township areas, or socio-economically diverse schools and from other provinces within South Africa. Studies of educator perceptions towards inclusion in education and training programmes in different regions of the country are necessary, and with which the findings of the present study can be compared.

### **Summary of the chapter**

This is the last chapter of the study which summarized the whole research. The researcher made conclusion based on the findings. Recommendations which were given to diverse sectors will be taken into consideration to improve teachers' perceptions of mainstream teachers towards inclusion of learners with special needs then those learners will perform well and participate. Finally, the study report was concluded with recommendations that were aimed at the education sector as well as future scholarly endeavours in this field of study

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1.A: Request letter

University of Limpopo  
School of Education faculty of humanities  
Private bag x1106  
Sovenga  
0727

03 September 2020

The Department of Education

Kgakotlou circuit

Dear: Sir/Madam

#### **Request for permission to conduct research at Kgakotlou Circuit schools**

I Matome Johannah Raphadu, student number 201318179, currently studying Masters Education in Curriculum studies at the University of Limpopo, kindly request for permission to contact research in some schools in Kgakotlou Circuit for the project titled: "An investigation on Mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs in Kgakotlou Circuit, Limpopo Province," It is aimed at investigating teachers' perceptions towards inclusion in rural schools. Furthermore the objectives of the study are to explore perceptions of teachers towards inclusion and determine possible factors that may influence teachers' perceptions towards inclusion.

Hoping to hear from you soon

Kind regards

Raphadu M.J

Signature:...



## **APPENDIX 1.B: Request letter to the principals**

University of Limpopo

School of Education faculty of humanities

Private bag x1106

Sovenga

0727

The principal

Dear: Sir/Madam

### **Request for permission to conduct research in your school**

I Matome Johannah Raphadu, student number 201318179, currently studying Masters in Education at the University of Limpopo, kindly request for permission to contact research in your school for the project titled: "An investigation on Mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs in Kgakotlou Circuit, Limpopo Province," It is aimed at investigating teachers' perceptions towards inclusion in rural schools.

Furthermore the objectives of the study are to explore perceptions of teachers towards inclusion and determine possible factors that may influence teachers' perceptions towards inclusion.

Hoping to hear from you soon

Kind regards

Raphadu M.J

Signature.....

## APPENDIX 2: A letter for participation

University of Limpopo

School of Education faculty of humanities

Private bag x1106

Sovenga

0727

Dear: participant

I Matome Johannah Raphadu, student number 201318179, currently studying Master Education in Curriculum studies at the University of Limpopo, kindly invites you to participate in my research project titled: "An investigation on mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs in Kgakotlou Circuit, Limpopo Province, " It is aimed at investigating teachers' perceptions towards inclusion in rural schools.

Furthermore the objectives of the study are to explore perceptions of teachers towards inclusion and determine possible factors that may influence teachers' perceptions towards inclusion. I believe that your involvement in this study is essential as you are suitably positioned to contribute meaningfully.

Yours in regards

Raphadu M.J

Signature.....

### APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The purpose of the study is to investigate mainstream teachers' perceptions towards learners with special needs in Kgakotlou Circuit, Limpopo Province. The interview sessions will take 15 to 30 minutes. Please answer every question accurately as possible. Participation is voluntary. Your grades will not be affected if you choose not to participate. Your participation will be anonymous. No discomfort, stress or risks are expected.

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in research entitled to **“An investigation on mainstream teachers’ perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs in Kgakotlou Circuit, Limpopo province”** in the Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Limpopo. I understand that this participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time with no penalty.

Researcher’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **TITLE: Mainstream teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of learners with special needs, Kgakotlou Circuit, Limpopo province**

1. What do you understand by the phenomenon inclusion?
2. How can you describe a learner with special education needs? Do you have a learner or learners with SEN in your class?
3. What are teachers' perceptions on inclusion of learners with special needs into mainstream classrooms?
4. As a mainstream teacher, are you able to accommodate a learner with indifference in the classroom? If so, how do you do that? Explain....
5. What can teachers do to change their perceptions towards learners with special needs?
6. From your own experience of teaching do you think most rural schools cater for inclusion?
7. What do you think the Department of Education can do in schools to add or amend what was already there about inclusion to improve the way teachers view learners with special needs?
8. From how you see things, do you think rural schools have all means to satisfy the special needs of learners? Explain....
9. Do these perceptions of teachers affect learners' learning process? If so, how? Explain
10. What are the factors that influence the perceptions of teacher towards inclusion of learners with special needs?
11. What do you think can be corrective measures for teachers to deal with preceding factors?

## Appendix 5



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### DEPARTMENT OF **EDUCATION**

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2      Enq: Mabogo MG      Tel No: 015 290 9365      E-mail: [MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

**Raphadu MJ**  
P O Box 3243  
Bochum  
0790

#### **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: **"MAINSTREAM TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN KGAKOTLOU CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE"**
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 School 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: RAPHADU MJ

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.



**Mrs Dederen KO**  
**Acting Head of Department**

12/10/2020  
Date

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: RAPHADU MJ

**APPENDIX 6: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE ETHICS  
CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**



**191 Raphadu  
(1).pdf**