PERCEPTIONS OF GRADE 3 EDUCATORS IN MASHISHILA CIRCUIT TOWARDS SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THEIR CLASSES

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DECLARATION

I, Murendeni Lukhele, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled: "Perception of Grade 3 educators in Mashishila Circuit towards supporting learners with special educational needs in their classes", is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete referencing.

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ABSTRACT

The incorporation of inclusive education has been one of the most important post-apartheid policies of South Africa as well as other countries of the African continent and the world. At school level, educators perform a central role in the successful implementation of an inclusive education system given their responsibilities as facilitators and mediators of learning. Although the successful realisation of inclusive education is primarily dependent on the capabilities and skills of the educators, the literature has overlooked the perceptions, views and attitudes of the education community, particularly the educators who teach learners with special educational needs (LSEN) in the successful implementation of an inclusive education.

Against this background, the aim of this study was to discover and understand the perceptions, views and attitudes of Grade 3 educators towards supporting the LSEN. The study applied a qualitative research design which is located within the interpretivist paradigm to explore and assess the views, perceptions and attitudes of the Grade 3 educators in supporting LSEN in the Mashishila Circuit. The Mashishila Circuit comprised of 22 primary schools which were mainly situated in rural areas and most of them had shortages of educators and most learners in the area lived in child-headed households. The purposive sampling method was used to select three primary schools, three principals and nine educators from these schools from the target population. The total sample size of the study was 12 participants. In line with the qualitative research approach, open-ended interview schedules and unstructured questionnaires for the principals and educators respectively were used for the data collection processes in the study. Content analysis and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.

The study revealed that educators had mixed perceptions of the LSEN. Some educators expressed a positive attitude while others illustrated a negative attitude towards supporting the LSEN in the Foundation Phase education. The study also discovered that teaching LSEN in the Foundation Phase of education is primarily carried out by female educators. The study also showed that educators felt they

needed more control over how to recognize and assist students with special needs. As part of the recommendations, the study proposed that educators should receive adequate training on how to recognize, help, and evaluate students who have different kinds of special educational needs. To assist teachers who are working with students who have special educational needs, in cooperation with schools, the Department of Basic Education should establish training initiatives workshop and capacity-building-programs. Inclusive if the educators responsible for the teaching of the LSEN have negative perceptions and attitude towards supporting the LSEN. Educators of LSEN have a crucial role in the realization of IE, particularly in the Foundation phase of the education system.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family. The support and your passion I have received from my family members are much appreciated. Thank you all for your understanding and support.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Hereunder is a list of abbreviations and acronyms frequently used throughout the thesis.

Acronyms and Abbreviations	Phrases in full
ADHD	Adult Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CCN	Compound Communication Needs
CPD	Continuing professional development
CRPD	United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EAHCA	The Education for all Handicapped Children's Act
EWP6	Education White Paper 6 (EWP6): Special Needs Education
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
ID	Intellectual Disabilities
IDEIA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
IEP	Individual Education Programmes
IE	Inclusive Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports
NDP	National Development Plan
LSEN	Learners with special educational needs
PE	Physical Education
PBS	Positive Behavior Supports

PLAAFP	Present levels of academic and functional performance
SE	Special Education
SpLD	Specific learning difficulties
RTI	Response to Intervention
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Educational, Scientific and
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The incorporation of inclusive education has been one of the most important post-apartheid policies of South Africa as well as other countries of the African continent and the world (Department of Education, 2001). Inclusive education seeks to help leaners of diverse characteristics thrive in their learning while participating and engaging with their learning in the same learning environment. Such differences can range from gender differences, academic ability, physical disability, socio-economic status and others. The idea of inclusive education is a practice that is founded on the concept of human rights, dignity, justice and fairness in the provision and practice of education

(UNICEF, 2013). The full realization of inclusive education requires that countries or educational leaders and policy makers eliminate all forms of exclusion in educational institutions and in the society at large (Chao, Sze, Chow, Forlin & Ho, 2017; Gavish, 2017; Hienonena, Lintuvuoria, Jahnukainen, Hotulainena & Vainikainena, 2018).

At school level, educators play a essential part in the successful operation of an IE system given their responsibilities as facilitators and mediators of learning. Therefore, the success and failure thereof of IE in ordinary schools can be explained in terms of the capacity that educators have in managing inclusive classrooms. Educators' attitudes, their level of training as well as the continuous development programmes and support that they receive, to enhance their competence in managing diversity of students learning in inclusive learning environments and classrooms was therefore crucial.

It has been widely recognized that much of the failure of inclusive education is a consequence of negative attitudes of the educators who experience challenges like classroom management, particularly in supporting the learners with special educational needs (Bossaert, Colpi,Pijl & Petry, 2013; Kourakli, Altanis, Retalis, Boloudakis, Zbainos & Antonopoulouc, 2017), likewise, there is a lack of response in educational policies to diversity. (Gonçalves & Lemos, 2014; Cramerottia & Lanesa, 2016; Ruijs,

2017).The successful realization of IE is primarily based on how people perceive views and attitude of the education community, particularly the educators who teach LSEN. This study therefore examined the perceptions of Grade 3 educators in three schools in Mashishila Circuit towards supporting LSEN. This chapter presents the background to the study, objectives of the study, problem statement, goals, purpose and significance, as well as the study's delimitation. Contextual definitions of terms are also given after which the chapter closes with a brief description of each of the chapters making the study.

1.2 Background of study

Research conducted by the World Bank (2012) has shown that many children around the world are excluded from schools and the general society because of their disabilities, race, language, religion, gender, and poverty. In a similar vein, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2013) noted that youngsters with disabilities experience various forms of discrimination that result in their exclusion from society and school. For example, in Hong Kong, the inclusion of the LSEN in the Foundation Phase level has significant challenges in relation to teachers' classroom management (Choa, Forlin and Aho, 2016). In an African context, the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) has highlighted that the problem of children with learning difficulties range from handicaps, blindness, deafness, mental retardation, social maladjustment, physical disability. In spite of the fact that finding strategies to pinpoint and eliminate learning barriers is a never-ending process in Africa, educators still struggle to put those strategies into practice, let alone to uphold high standards in their teaching methods (McLeskey, Waldron, and Reddy, 2014).

The implementation of inclusive education and the accompanying support systems for students who require specialized instruction in South Africa have been mapped out in the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education,2001).Although educators are central to the realisation of inclusive education, several studies have indicated that many educators still lack capacity to offer the necessary support for the students with

different educational desires during the training and knowledge progression (Dreyer et al., 2012) Ironically, some educators believe that the needs of learners with unusual instructive desires can best be met through the administration of separate classrooms (Nel et al., 2013).Educators have a huge role in supporting the LSEN, and as such they are the key stakeholders. Depending on the attitude of the educators, the outcome of their support may be positive or negative. As Dreyer et al. (2012) indicate, educators have the power to type and enforce their labels and classifications on students and this has a huge effect in terms of how these students approach their studies.

As a result, the inclusion of LSEN in the third grade will significantly aid in understanding how educators perceive supporting the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. A successful implementation of IE depends heavily on teachers in particular. Research from the past, sadly, has shown that general education professionals feel unprepared to teach students with SEN. Teachers who work with learners who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often lack confidence and competence (Westling, 2010; De Boer et al. Van der Kamp, Simpson, Van der Worp, et al., 2011; , 2013), Lindsay et al (2014) pointed out that integrating these students into the mainstream classroom appears to be a challenging task. For educators, it can be difficult to accommodate the variety of needs of learners with ASD due to the population's heterogeneity (Breitenbach, Armstrong, and Bryson, 2013).

According to Lynch and Irvine (2009), "the degree of individualization of the educational program greatly influences the learners' academic performance." Communication with the instructor or other educational specialists, like a teaching assistant or an educational specialist, is essential in this regard (Caplan, Feldman, Eisenhower, and Blacher, 2016).Both the teacher and the students have an impact on one another at all times (Fogel and Garvey, 2007). The direction of this interaction is influenced by the learner's specific behavioral challenges, the learner's interests, and educators background in working with scholars with ASD (Caplan et al. , 2016), and requirements for helping these students in an inclusive environment. Even though the necessities of learners with

ASD in inclusive training have been subject of numerous studies, particularly their need for social support, there is still a knowledge gap regarding how educators view supporting LSEN (Able, Sreckovic, Schultz, Garwood, and Sherman, 2015). This study therefore aims to fill this knowledge gap by offering insights into how educators viewed the LESN in the context of teaching and learning experiences.

1.3 Statement of research problem

While many nations, including South Africa, have pledged to actively promote inclusion in their educational systems, many LSEN continue to be socially and emotionally excluded from participating in typical classroom activities (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). As a result, learners with SEN run the risk of developing lower academic self-concepts, which in turn affects their learning outcomes (Elbaum, 2002; Li, Tam, and Man, 2006;Wei, Marder, 2010). Additionally, LSEN are more likely to experience prejudice and bullying (Avramidis, Rose, Monda-Amaya, and Espelage, 2010), and this increases their risk of dropping out of school (Grütter et al. 2017 Schwab et al., 2017, and 2013 (Schwab). Researchers Stiefel, Shiferaw, Schwartz, and Gottfried (2017) discovered that, in comparison to others, learners with SEN feel less included in school, have on average, less friends, and negative peer relationships. Lack of inclusion is also associated with a number of negative emotional and developmental outcomes, including depression (McGraw, Moore, Fuller, and Bates, 2008), substance abuse, and other mental health problems (Arslan, 2018), all of which have a detrimental effect on academic performance. The systems, procedures, and practices at some institutions have not been entirely changed to accommodate learners with special educational needs.

The democratic government of South Africa has made sure that the Department of Education has an IE system as a strategic priority. The White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (2001) states that for the South African inclusive education system to be effective, it must be able to recognize the diversity of all learners and provide them with the support they need to grow and expand their potential to contribute as equal members of society. Importantly, a policy framework also prescribes those learners who

require low levels of support for their attendance at regular schools and educators should be retrained and capacitated to be able to meet the learners' needs. However, very little is known about how educators in Grade 3 understand and manage LSEN.

Lemos (2014) made the perceptive observation that access to positive social interactions and general academic success tends to be hampered by peers', teachers', and other school community members' attitudes. Learners with special educational needs gain access to differentiated learning experiences that are vastly different from those of other students through social interactions within the context of the school environment. With regards to South Africa, the White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (2001) noted that schools, school personnel, and society at large have a propensity to form unfavorable social attitudes, biases, and stereotypes toward students with special educational needs.

Understanding educators' perspectives on the provision of inclusive education in schools is crucial. Currently, much uncertainty still exists about the educators' level of preparedness to effectively handle inclusive classrooms, where the needs of diverse students thrive. As a result, this study looked into the attitudes of grade 3 teachers in Mashishila Circuit towards assisting students with special educational needs.

1.4 Research Questions
The main research question of the proposed study is: What are the perceptions of educators towards supporting learners with special educational needs in their classes?

Sub-questions
From the main research question, the following sub-questions were formulated:
- What are Grade 3 educators' perceptions of teaching LSEN?
- What do Grade 3 educators regard as learning barriers for LSEN?
- What support strategies (including training) are needed to help Grade 3 educators manage LSEN?
- What support strategies are needed for LSEN?

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study was to understand the perceptions of Grade 3 educators towards supporting the LSEN in their classes. The following research objectives were developed to operationalize the goal.

- To explore the perceptions of Grade 3 educators in teaching LSEN.
- To establish what Grade 3 educators regard as learning barriers for LSEN.
- To identify support strategies needed to help Grade 3 educators cope with LSEN.
- To assess the forms of support needed for LSEN in Grade 3.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Inclusive education: According to Bui et al. (2010), inclusive education (IE) is while all students, irrespective of any challenges, are positioned in age-suitable trendy training which might be near domestic if you want to get hold of excessive great training that permits them to attain success. In addition, Sebba and Ainscow (1996: 9) define IE as the process by which a school tries to respond to each learner as an individual by rethinking how it organizes and provides for its curricula.

1.6.2 Special educational needs: According to Santrock (2009), special education needs refers to leaners that have limitations in their individual abilities and require special support in schools. LSEN and disabilities are at an importantly improved danger of facing unfortunate psychosocial results (Humphrey et al., 2013).

1.6.3 Educator: The South African Schools Act (1996:1) states that educator is a person who is employed in a permanent or a temporary base by the department of education to facilitate learning at a primary or secondary school. Van der Horst and McDonald (2003: 12) further define an educator as a mentor who advises learners on their approaches to life and learning.

1.6.4 Learning barriers: Barriers prevent communication and bar advancement. A barrier to learning refers to the disorders that hinder the educational advancement of

children, Prinsloo (2011).

1.7 Significance of the Study

The results of the study will be useful to various stakeholders including the leaners, educators, and Department of Basic education. The findings will provide useful insight to educators on how to support learners with special educational needs. The educators will improve their teaching strategies and skills which in turn benefit the learners who experience barriers to learning. The research may provide useful information to the Department of Education on the development of policy initiatives that aim to promote inclusive education in schools. By identifying the gaps in the existing practices in the provision of inclusive education in schools, the study may provide the basis for sending educators for in service training so that they are capacitated to handle learners with special needs.

The findings of the study might assist educators and schools to realise more in supporting learners with special educational needs in classroom. The department of Basic Education officials responsible for curriculum design may also benefit in the sense that they can design programmes that support learners with special educational needs. The society in general will also benefit because once all the barriers that affect learners with special educational needs are identified and addressed, schools will be able to enrol diverse learners in larger numbers than before which is good for social development.

Furthermore, the study has the potential to contribute towards addressing problems such as school dropout, high failure rate and absenteeism. The study will recommend measures of enhancing inclusive education practices, systems and processes which will lead to quality education.

1.8 Delimitation of the study
This research took place in Mashishila Circuit which falls under Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province. Mashishila Circuit comprises 22 primary schools which are

mainly situated in villages of Highveld area in the Mpumalanga Province. The focus of the study is to understand the perceptions of Grade 3 educators in three selected schools, towards supporting the learners with special educational needs. Data were collected from three school principals and nine grade three educators who were purposively selected. Recommendations in relation to improving inclusive education (IE) practices for all leaners were provided.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Background information is presented in this chapter along with an introduction to the study. It includes the problem statement, research questions, as well as the study's goals and objectives.

Chapter 2: Literature review: Using themes and sub-themes, this chapter thoroughly discusses the study's goals. It also covers Theoretical framework of the study

Chapter 3: This chapter will cover the research paradigm, target population, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and a description of the study area.

Chapter 4: The chapter discusses the results and analyzes the information that was gathered through interviews.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations. The findings of the study are summarized in the chapter along with recommendations for improvement.

1.10 Chapter Summary

The introduction and background of the study were the main topics of the chapter. Aims and objectives of the study were also described in the chapter. The importance of the study as well as ethical concerns was covered in this chapter. The chapter also included the chapter order, which shows how the whole dissertation is organized. The next chapter focuses on the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Education opens access to opportunity and educational achievements that do not only benefit the individual but has ripple effects on families, individuals, communities, societies, and nations. Education also allows learners experiencing barriers to learning to develop wider awareness of themselves and external context in which they live. According to Maguvhe and Mogano (2017), learners who encounter challenges to learning should be freed from the shackles of limited education with the appropriate competencies, technical skills and knowledge that will prepare them to meet challenges in life.

Previously, special schools existed for learners who required special education (Koay et al.2006; Walton and Lloyd (2011). The South African post-apartheid government has prioritized the right to a basic education for all learners in general and learners with special education need in order to correct the segregated system and align South Africa with other countries in accommodating learners with special education needs. Right now, the South African government is promoting an IE system (Zyoudi, Sartwai, and Dodin 2011; Koay et al. 2006). This section explores the theoretical framework and literature review that informed this study, consistent with the research questions as set out in chapter one.

2.2 Theoretical framework of the study

This study will be informed by the theory of multiple intelligences and the sociocultural approach to cognitive development. The theories were used by researcher to help explain phenomena, draw connections, and make predictions.

2.2.1 Theory of Multiple Intelligence

Learners may have different or multiple intelligences, according to the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2005). The theory of multiple intelligences put forth by Howard Gardner is the foundation for these multiple intelligences. The curriculum in schools is quickly adopting Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences. He broadened the definition

of intelligence to include things like musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, and intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence in his theory of multiple intelligences.

Intelligence, according to Gardner (1989: 4), is the ability to come up with solutions to issues or create things that are valued in one or more cultural contexts. He developed a list of eight intelligences using research in biology and culture. The linguistic and logical mathematics intelligence, are most applicable to study of LSEN in schools. The following three, including musical, spatial, and bodily- kinaesthetic intelligence, are typically linked to the arts. These also have important ramifications for comprehending how students with special educational needs learn. The following two are what Gardner referred to as interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, and the final one is a naturalistic intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

Gardner (1983) asserts that even though the intelligences seem to operate independently of one another, this is very uncommon. Instead, as people learn new skills or tackle problems, they typically use multiple intelligences simultaneously and in a way that is complementary to one another. To put into effect IE, the Department of Education has supplied a whole lot of studying approaches (DoE, 2005e).The way the curriculum is put into practice is determined by the diversity of the learners.

The Department of Education (DoE) (2005e) claims that it is crucial to recognize that students have different or multiple intelligences in inclusive classrooms including learners with special educational needs. Because of this, it's crucial to start by taking the learners' intelligence and related education styles into account when selecting the teaching strategies and assessment techniques to be used. Since all eight intelligences are necessary for successful social functioning, it is imperative that educators view all eight Intelligence as similarly important (Gardner, 1999). This is in stark contrast to traditional educational frameworks that often focus on the development and application of verbal and mathematical intelligence.

2.2.2 Theory of Social Cognitive Development

According to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social cognitive development, social interaction is essential for cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978:89) is credited with inventing the proximal developmental zone (ZPD). It is the "gap between actual developmental levels determined by independent problem-solving and potential developmental levels determined by problem-solving under adult supervision or in collaboration with more capable peers." The goal of Vygotsky's (1978) theory is to explain the challenges associated with assessing and learning future development and measuring mental age. This concept of proximal developmental zones can be used by third-grade teachers to predict the future development and knowledge of students with unusual needs in their curriculum.

Vygotsky's (1978) method, the learner's zone of proximal development is where effective instruction takes place in the classroom. Although instruction targeted at the level of completed (actual) development can broaden the learner's knowledge base, it will have little to no impact on their cognitive abilities. In such instruction, the learner collaborates with experts or others who are more competent (e.g., teachers or parents) to complete difficult tasks that they are unable to complete on their own. This aspect of the theory highlights the significance of assisting LSEN in order to expand their zone of proximal growth.

According to this theory, the teacher or any other expert should set an example of appropriate problem-solving behaviors, present fresh perspectives on the issue, and motivate the learner to use their developing skills by taking on some of the task's responsibility (Vygotsky, 1978). Less assistance should be given as the learner gains required assistances, and should remain competent to handle most of problem on their own. The learner will concurrently come across tasks that are even more difficult and will keep getting help with. As a result, effective teaching-learning interactions produce successive proximal development zones.

When teaching students with special needs, the teachers must enter the students' zone of proximal development and scaffold the students' learning until they are ready to function independently. This necessitates that educators fully comprehend the potential of every learner, including that of those who face educational barriers and those with special needs. As a result, the Department of Basic Education has offered learning methods that are intended to be remedial.

The theoretical foundation for this study has been examined in this chapter. This involved giving an exposition of two theories that form the basis of the study namely, the theory of multiple intelligence and the theory of social cognitive development. This was followed by a summary of the chapter. The next chapter looks at Research design and methodology.

2.3 Perceptions and Perspectives on LSEN

2.3.1 Educator beliefs and inclusive education

Inclusive education is a worldwide phenomenon, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as both a model and a source of support for it (Lindahl, 2006). It is based on the concept of "education for all" (Heung and Grossman, 2007), which stipulates that all children, including those who have special educational needs be admitted to schooling on par with children who do not have any special needs. As a result, teachers all over the world have been forced to adopt the inclusive education initiatives in their nations (Heung and Grossman, 2007). In order to address educational barriers for all students, policymakers have viewed inclusive education as a proactive strategy (Budiyanto, 2011). In 2003, the government of Indonesia ordered the establishment of at least four inclusive schools in each region, which served as the beginning of the country's inclusive education program. Regular or special schools could be categorized prior to 2017 (Aprilia, 2017). Consistent schools might accept a student if they had no behavioral issues and "only if they have normal intelligence, have orientation, and have mobility" (Aprilia, 2017: 50). Children who do not meet these criteria are usually enrolled in special schools (Purbani, 2013). However, it has been noted that a child's eligibility for admission to special education is governed by the

policies of individual school principals (Aprilia, 2017). Many children were denied access to special education because of the stigma of having an ID card (Tucker, 2013).

Since 2003, Indonesia has seen an increase in the number of inclusive schools providing education to all learners, including those who may have been previously excluded. The IE movement is well established. For example, 158 countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which requires each country to create a comprehensive education system (Rieser, 2014). However, IE remains an ill-defined and divisive concept, applied in different ways within and across countries (Rix et al. 2013). Implementing inclusive classrooms and teaching methods (as opposed to policy) remains a challenge for teachers, leading to "troublesome compromises" and "continuous struggles" in methods (Rix, 2015:13). As such, teachers may be influenced by their own epistemological beliefs when deciding how to accommodate student diversity in inclusive classrooms. To understand the nature of inclusive pedagogy and its development, it is important to explore the relationships between epistemological, pedagogical, and inclusive beliefs. Although there is a considerable amount of global epistemological research, not much has been done in the area of inclusive education. Even this relatively small area tends to prioritize differences and barriers over inclusive pedagogy (Sheehy and Budiyanto, 2015). Martin (2011) and Murcia and Ida'rraga, (2013); examined how teachers perceive pupils who have particular category labels or impairments and how they are accommodated in mainstream settings or the opinions of various subject specialists on instructing students with disabilities (Qi and Ching Ha, 2012). This context is frequently reflected in the scant research on inclusive education and epistemological beliefs, which frequently starts by evaluating preconceptions regarding particular disability categories or disabled students (Jordan and Stanovich, 2003).

"Researchers have not examined the precise nature of the relationship between epistemological beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion," claims Silverman (2007: 43). Participants in epistemological research frequently include current or prospective students of education (Yilmaz and Sahin, 2011), special education teachers (Silverman,

2007), or staff members of institutions that do not accept all learners (Lee et al., 2013). The attitudes of teachers in inclusive schools in terms of epistemology are not well studied. Further, the study might not make a distinction between LSEN receiving an inclusive education and being integrated as individuals. For instance, Silverman (2007) conducted a study of 71 future teachers' perceptions of their right to an education that would enable them to succeed alongside their peers in a more mainstream setting (UNICEF, 2012).

The lack of research on inclusive education and how all learners learn in inclusive classrooms, according to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), is a major problem. In an uncommon instance of epistemological research in inclusive schools, it was discovered that teachers' perceptions of the different kinds of learning disabilities and difficulties that learners encounter whether as a result of inborn fixed factors or contextual influences have an impact on teachers' perceptions of themselves. Using a scale to evaluate attitudes of general and special educators towards inclusion and integration. Because there is no accepted definition of inclusive education, terms like mainstreaming or integration can be used to refer to related or unrelated concepts (Rix et al., 2015). Regarding inclusive education, it is important to consider the epistemological position of teachers in inclusive schools. In the context of this study, inclusive education can be used by learners with special needs to explore a number of relevant studies (Jordan and Stanovich, 2003; Jordan et al., 2009), and by all learners and teachers in the classroom. According to Jordan and Stanovich (2003) and Jordan et al. (2004), teachers' perceptions of disability were either interventionist or idiosyncratic.

While Jordan's (2013) pathological (P) beliefs view disability as a discrete set of 'learner pathological characteristics', interventionist (I) beliefs are consistent with the social model of disability and constructs obstacles in a way that does (Shakespeare, 2006).These beliefs influence how teachers interact with students with special educational needs in the classroom. Proponents of P believe that other specially trained professionals should be responsible for the education of these students (Jordan, 2013). Educators who believe in me, on the other hand, believe that all students can learn

``without individual differences'' (Jordan, 2013:10). Therefore, they consider it their duty to educate every student in their class.

2.3.2 Educators' views on learners with special educational needs.

Educators' opinions and experiences of students who have unusual educational prerequisites vary. Numerous educators concur, according to Selesho (2012), that schools must effectively integrate learners with learning disabilities into the regular classrooms. In most schools, students with disabilities are frequently labeled as passive learners. The case for these students' successful integration is based on the fact that the majority of them are excluded from the general education curriculum for a portion of every day. Because of this, students with special educational needs should continually re-establish themselves as participants in the schools. When compared to scholars with sensitive and behavioral disorders, educators are more open to including students with physical disorders, according to Bayliss and Burden (2000: 28).

Yaraya et al (2018) argue that knowing learners' characteristics, can influence a teacher's willingness to accept them as learners with special needs. However, Soodak, Podell, and Lehman (1998) found that both new and seasoned teachers frequently lack the abilities needed to effectively meet the needs of the students in their classrooms. Teachers who have a poor attitude toward learners with disabilities are less likely to be effective because they lack the necessary training. As demonstrated by Taylor, Smiley, and Ramasamy (2003), educators with extensive teaching experience are more receptive to efforts to promote inclusion than those with less experience. One of the difficulties in supporting learners with special needs in school is often cited by educators at the Foundation Phase level as being a lack of support. These opinions and experiences have raised awareness of the demand for educational development programs for teachers in inclusive schools that aid in improving learner support and lowering learning barriers for LSEN.

2.3.3 Inclusion of students with special needs in the classroom.

Numerous LSEN continue to be socially and emotionally excluded from regular classroom experiences, according to Banks, McCoy, and Frawley (2017), Bossaert, Colpin, Pijl, and Petry (2013), Prince and Hadwin (2013), and Schwab, Gebhardt, and Gasteiger-Klicpera (2013). According to EWei and Marder (2010), SEN students run the risk of having lower academic self-concepts. According to Grutter, Gasser, and Malti (2017) and Schwab (2017), these risks can be minimized through academic, social, and emotional inclusion at school.

Access and support provided to students with SEN may vary between inclusive schools, resulting in bigger or lesser inclusion benefits (Prince and Hadwin, 2013). Key social skills might be lacking in SEN learners, according to Schwab et al. 2013, as well as Wight and Chapparo (2008). According to Rose, Monda-Amaya, and Espelage (2010) as well as Grutter et al. (2013), they are more likely to encounter prejudice and bullying at school as well as feel excluded from it. Schwab et al. 2017 and Schwab (2017). Numerous comprehensive studies have discovered that students with SEN felt less included at school (Stiefel, Shiferaw, Schwartz, and Gottfried, 2017), had fewer friends than other learners, and had unfavorable peer relationships (Avramidis, Avgeri, and Strogilos, 2018; Banks et al. Huber, 2017, as well as Huber, Gebhardt, Gerullis, and Schwab (2018).

Lack of inclusion is also linked to a number of detrimental emotional-developmental outcomes, such as depression (McGraw, Moore, Fuller, and Bates, 2008), substance abuse, and other mental health issues (Arslan, 2018; Bond et al., 2007), as well as less favorable academic results (Szumski and Karwowski, 2015; Van Ryzin, Gravely, and Roseth, 2009), such as a weakened academic self-concept. Children with SEN are more likely to have poor academic outcomes because they have lower academic self-concepts and less positive feelings of inclusion (Korhonen, Linnanmäki, and Aunio, 2014; Szumski and Karwowski, 2015).

All community members, including those with special educational needs, should have access to all resources, including educational and public services, facilities, and

information, to give them the opportunity and choice to participate in all aspects of community life (Maguvhe and Mogano, 2017). Legislation and social policies in developed countries have helped to remove many of the barriers to education and the inclusion of all students. To achieve access and equity, societal perceptions of those with special educational needs must be modified (Schwartz et al., 2010). According to Maguvhe and Mogano (2017), South Africa uses IE, which is based on social models, to remove barriers to learning and give every learner the chance to participate fully in the learning process.

2.4 Learning Barriers and Challenges of LSEN

In line with Humphrey et al. (2013) it is widely believed that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are the most vulnerable group of students. According to numerous studies (Zhang, Katsiyannis, and Kortering, 2007; Zhang, Van Cleave, and Davis, 2010a; Department of Education, 2010a), they run the risk of having significantly worse academic and psychosocial outcomes over the course of their education.

Learners with physical and other learning disabilities are the most socially neglected groups in society today. They face different forms of exclusion which affect them in different ways due to factors such as the kind of disability they have and where they live (UNICEF, 2013). Additionally, learners with physical disability in our schools tend to be socially excluded, due to their physical appearance and stigma from society. Therefore, experience of exclusion has affected them in a negative ways (UNICEF, 2013).

2.5 Support Strategies for LSEN

2.5.1 Types of assistance available for leaners with special needs.

According to the circumstances and requirements of the learner, various forms of support for LSEN have been presented in number of studies on inclusive education. According to Ruijs (2017), the support for LSEN can be divided into four clusters based on the nature of those needs. Students with visual impairment make up the first cluster, while those with communicative disabilities, such as severe hearing loss or very limited

communication skills, make up the second.

The third cluster focuses on students who have cognitive and physical disabilities, which include students who have intellectual disabilities, students who are physically challenged, and students who have long-term illnesses like epilepsy; the fourth cluster is made up of students who have severe social, emotional, or behavioral challenges, which includes students who have been officially diagnosed with a behavioral disorder. In order for LSEN to reach their full potential, Antonak and Livneh (2000) emphasize the need for specialized programs that are tailored to their disabilities. This may entail assistance such as the implementation of pertinent policies, the provision of suitable tools for their assessment prior to placement in programs, and the provision of adequate educational facilities for their schooling.

To ensure that every learner is ready for effective participation in the economy and society, it has been suggested that schools create programs and teaching strategies that include all learners. Poon-McBrayer and Ping-man (2013) support the idea that every learner disabled or not, should receive support from the school system to enhance both their academic performance and social aspects of their lives. Asking students to share their experiences with other students as part of some teaching strategies can motivate them to take part in the procedure for instructing and learning.

2.5.2 Curriculum support for learners with special educational needs
The primary duty of an educator is to impart knowledge while also attending to the needs of the learners; modifications must be made to the way the curriculum is delivered. In a classroom that is inclusive of all students, teachers must employ a range of policies to backing the learners' diverse needs. According to Maguvhe and Magano (2017), the educator must take the following into account in order to support the curriculum: content, in order to make sure that all students have access to instruction at the grade level that is best suited to their needs, and taking cognizance of the particular barriers they encounter; process (how they teach), using a variety of teaching methods and strategies; and modified activities in order to ensure meaningful participation.

Additionally, the outcome (how learners exhibit content material mastery) will exhibit how the evaluation is changed. When it involves timing and scheduling, a few learners would require greater time to finish assignments, and the instructor will want to plot more than one sport or evaluation possibilities for college kids who've been identified with ADHD, terrible concentration, or a health- associated disability.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), previously referred to as the Education for All Handicapped Children`s Act (EAHCA) of 1975, stipulates that scholars with disabilities need to acquire an unfastened suitable public training (FAPE). To do this, an IEP need to be created for every scholar with unique academic needs so one can meet their particular requirements. Because it directs each factor of a scholar's unique training program, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is vital for educators, parents, and college students. In particular, the IEP report need to encompass the scholar's educational and behavioral needs, additionally referred to as an announcement of gift ranges of educational and purposeful overall performance (PLAAFP), the measurable annual desires that manual his or her program, the unique training programming and placement, the approach of statistics series so as to be used to reveal and document a scholar's progress, and the volume of participation within side the preferred training study room setting. According to Bateman and Linden (2006) and Yell (2006), the IEP technique and ensuing report function a avenue map for imparting a FAPE to college students with disabilities. As a result, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is on the middle of many Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEIA) disputes because it serves as the primary justification for the suitability of a scholar's academic plan (Bateman, 2011; Bateman and Linden, 2006). The significance of selling suitable conduct in addition to educational fulfillment need to be identified through educators as they consider the way to expand suitable IEPs. In actuality, a correlation among the 2 regions has been discovered.

According to Brigham, McKenna, Lavin, Brigham and Zurawski (2018), Jurbergs, Palcic and Kelley (2010), Kauffman and Brigham (2009), Morgan, Farkas and Wu (2009), and Schaeffer et al. (2009), school learners who showcase behavioral problems in faculty

are probably to revel in bad effects which include fewer educational possibilities, reduced efficiency, failing grades, terrible overall act on consistent tests, dropout, delinquency, peer rejection, drug and alcohol use, 2006). Additionally, it's far supported as an endorsed exercise to apply IEP desires and goals to tailor educational and behavioral offerings for college kids with disabilities (Pretti-Frontczak and Bricker, 2000). In 2008, the South African authorities added the Kha Ri Gude (Let Us Learn) Adult Literacy Campaign2. According to the South African authorities' Department of Education (DoE) in 1996, 1997, and 2000 in addition to the Ministerial Committee on Literacy in 2006, person simple training and literacy are essential enablers for the terrible improvement and growth in their variety of alternatives in life. The marketing campaign method targeted on women, rural residents, out-of-faculty youth, the unemployed, prisoners, and adults with disabilities so one can attain the 4.7 million adults who lack literacy (McKay, 2012:5).

2.5.3 Learning material for learners

UDL is gaining popularity because it offers teachers a solid framework within which to differentiate and adapt instruction. It focuses on the various ways that knowledge and skills can be presented, allowing students with physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways (Voltz et al., 2010). The principles of UDL can assist teachers in making sure that the classroom and learning experiences engage all learners rather than planning for an idealistic homogenous class that excludes the majority of students, including many children who experience disability.

According to Rose and Meyer (2002), the UDL framework makes it less difficult to layout curriculum substances which can be available to learners with even the maximum complicated needs. The framework is split into ideas that inspire the improvement of adaptable methods for the presentation of records and the assessment of content material mastery (Hall, Meyer, and Rose, 2012). By doing away with limitations that scholars face at some point of instruction, providing appropriate lodges and helps to assist college students examine and display their know-how, and keeping

excessive success expectancies and engagement of all college students, the 3 UDL guiding ideas are looking for to create this flexibility (Coyne, Pisha, Dalton, Zeph, and Smith, 2012). Technology is needed for UDL to be possible in a school room setting. Digital technology that provide adaptable strategies and media for content material shipping and evaluation are required (e.g., text-to-speech, hyperlinks, motion pictures that complement text) (Edyburn, 2010).

Wehmeyer 2019 contends that by promoting school-wide models of inclusion in special education, we can move beyond the current continuum of placement for students with disabilities based on the nature and severity of their disabilities. Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), three successful school-wide initiatives that have emerged over the past ten years in special education and incorporate the structure of person-environment fit models, were presented by the speaker. Wehmeyer emphasizes the value of cooperation between all educators working to alter prevailing mindsets and the entire educational system. Along with UDL components, curriculum design, student responses, and the environment, he also emphasizes the principles of "personalizing" education. Wehmeyer suggests using UDL and making use of technology to move "beyond textbooks". The way we educate students with disabilities will be significantly impacted by the use of technology, including sophisticated 3D printing and the Internet of Things, to supplement instruction. In addition, it encourages peer-to-peer learning, teamwork, and access to data for decision-making (Wehmeyer, 2019, p. 59). However, obstacles like the price and complexity of device use may make technology more accessible to learners with disabilities.

Providing multiple channels for perceivable information is essential for making content accessible from a UDL perspective (Hall et al, 2012). These various sources of perceptible content can significantly increase students' understanding of subject material who have ID or who have trouble understanding verbal or textual information. Making sure that all students have meaningful opportunities to engage and participate in learning activities is a crucial component of UDL (Center for Applied Special Technology

[CAST], 2011). A key component of inclusion in college is supporting learners' participation and interaction within a course, in addition to aligning with UDL (Griffin, Wendel, Day, and McMillan, 2016). Not only does it encourage students' participation in a course, but it also gives them the chance to socialize with their peers and develop relationships outside of the classroom (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2013; Griffin, Mello, Glover, Carter, & Hodapp, 2016).

2.5.4 Teaching strategy for learners with special educational needs.

The significance of the lecture room as a whole mastering environment, such as the specific new tendencies in ICT, is emphasized via way of means of studies proof and expert guidance (McKeown, 2000). One of the important thing additives permitting the introduction of adaptable, inclusive lecture room preparations has been recognized as collaborative crew planning. However, it's been cited in a United States (US) overview that the direct studies proof for the educational effect on college students with mastering disabilities is rather combined and inconclusive. Cooperative institution mastering is thought to provide high quality instructional and social consequences for college kids in general, however it's been cited that those consequences aren't always high quality for college kids with mastering disabilities. The argument that scholars with mastering problems are in all likelihood to want greater practice, greater examples, greater revel in with transfer, and greater cautious evaluation than their friends than their friends is a great instance of the want to address complicated and probably competing short-time period and long-time period desires in studies at the improvement of inclusion. Plans like Family Literacy, in keeping with Brooks (2002), may be competitively priced in addition to powerful in phrases of education. He does factor out, though, that tutors want to be competently skilled for his or her function in partnership methods with parents, grown up volunteers, and different kids.

Support is acknowledged by EWP6 as one of the most important methods for lowering learning obstacles. By networking and pooling expertise, support services can be strengthened; institutions can do the same. Full-provider colleges ought to apprehend the price of this aid and set up mechanisms for peer-aid due to the fact college students

are an often underutilized supply of aid for one another (Walton, 2011a).Through interplay with diverse aid providers, teachers` aid objectives to decorate college students' learning. This manner may be supported inside establishments with the aid of using selling open communication, and it's far diagnosed that each one stakeholders have substantial contributions to make to college students' education.

As potential causes of learning difficulties, teaching strategies and materials were, however, infrequently looked into (Westwood, 2007). Westwood (2007) adds that effective teaching techniques lengthen the period of class time during which students are actively engaged in their work, giving them the best opportunity to learn. The underlying premise of the educational application is that the strategies used to put into effect the curriculum within side the school room do now no longer efficiently meet the wishes of the kid at the moment in phrases of studying. Beveridge (1999) asserts that curriculum assignments have to be extra carefully matched to college students` previous understanding and abilities. Therefore, it's far the duty of the instructor to prepare the curriculum's studying duties right into a hierarchy of aspect talent elements. For college students with unique wishes, the incremental steps may be modified to make the demanding situations at every level much less daunting. By mechanically preserving song of a kid's fulfillment inside any such sequences, it's far viable to suit coaching exactly to the studying level that they've attained. Vygotsky (1978) noticed the space among what youngsters can accomplish on their very own and what they could accomplish with person help as an operational definition of capacity developmental areas (Thomas, 2005).

According to Vygotsky's theory (1978), children's learning actually depends on adult supervision. There is an assisting position for educators. Ransburg et al. (2005:452) argue that gaining knowledge of need to begin on the learner level. If you discover the content material hard to apprehend or master, you may pick out from decrease tiers till you experience an experience of accomplishment. Content should be contextualized so that learners can better understand it. For example, when describing the terms "larger" and "smaller," an airplane cannot be compared to a car unless a rural learner has seen

a large airplane on the ground.

The choice of teaching method should take into consideration the learner's learning style (Fielder, 2005). Visually orientated newcomers lack motivation in teacher-focused classrooms. It might be tedious to simply take a seat down and listen, even for tactile newcomers who analyze satisfactory with the aid of using touching and manipulating objects. I experience pressure after I try and resolve it quickly.

2.5.5 Supporting educators who teach learners with SEN

The stop purpose of inclusive schooling structures is to ensure that each learner gets admission to worthwhile, exceptional academic possibilities of their neighborhood, along their buddies and peers (European Agency, 2015). An important step in figuring out this imaginative and prescient is offering all instructors with the expertise and abilities important to offer such exceptional academic possibilities for all learners. According to Rouse (2008:6), "additional needs" are caused by "a discrepancy between what a system of schooling ordinarily provides and what the child needs to support their education and empowering Teachers to Promote Inclusive Education learning." As a result, fewer students might be deemed to have "additional needs" if more teachers possess the skills and confidence to innovate, as their getting to know might be supported with the aid of using the possibilities which might be commonly available. This argument also can be used to aid instructor instruction programs. They require help in knowing that they already own a great deal of the important information, understanding, and abilities to paintings with all forms of learners.

According to Jordan, Schwartz, and McGhie-Richmond (2009), colleges can also additionally refuse to consist of or exclude unique newcomers on account that their instructors lack the expertise and information important to educate them.

Teachers require assistance so they can be creative rather than stick with older, more established methods of "delivering" content. Teachers must have the confidence to be flexible and to allow students to take more ownership of their learning if they are to produce meaningful learner outcomes, especially over the long term. The key is to arm

teachers with concepts from which they can draw in order to comprehend the various contexts in which they find themselves. As a result, they will be able to think clearly and formulate responses that benefit all students by drawing on their prior knowledge, abilities, and experience (Hollenweger et al, 2015).

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature that is relevant to the study. In line with the research questions, the review covered literature relating to perceptions of educators on LSEN and learning barriers. It also explored literature on supporting LSEN and supporting educators cope with LSEN. The next chapter provides the research design and methodology that informed the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the methodology used in the study. This involves explaining the research paradigm used which is the interpretivism. The research approach is described as well as the research design. It goes on to identify and describe the population of the study, sampling procedure and data collection and analysis procedure.

3.2 Research paradigm.

The term "paradigm" is used to explain a researcher`s "worldview," declare Kuyini and Kivunja (2017).In the sphere of instructional studies, it alludes to the viewpoint, manner of thinking, or organization of ideals that impacts how studies facts are understood or interpreted (Varpio and MacLeod, 2020). A paradigm, in step with Kuhn (1962), is a cohesive series of ideas, factors, and problems which have been methodologically and substantively associated. Furthermore, in keeping with Lather (1986), a research paradigm inherently shows the researcher`s beliefs about the arena they live in and the best they aspire to live in. A paradigm, in keeping with Maree (2007), is a collection of presumptions or beliefs about essential qualities of something or just a worldview. This research made use of the interpretivism paradigm so as to understand grade three educators' perceptions towards supporting learners with special educational needs at grade three levels. The interpretivist paradigm was regarded as appropriate since it links well with the qualitative approach.

3.2.1 Interpretivism

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), the essential philosophical tenets of the interpretivist studies paradigm are that truth or fact is socially built and changeable. According to Cronje (2011), "interpretivists consider that the human knowledge is subjective, and can be obtained through a process of social interaction with the aim of explaining circumstances or social events

Intepretivism is based on the assumption that methods and strategies used to access knowledge cannot be similar to the ones used within the natural sciences due to the fact that people interpret their surroundings and act according with that interpretation (Hammersley, 2013: 26). The paradigm was found useful as it enabled the researcher to access educators' views with regards to supporting learners with special educational needs at grade three levels in Mashishila Circuit.

3.3 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative methodology. Creswell (2009: 13) asserts that qualitative research gives the researcher the opportunity to collect data through official contact with the participants. The qualitative method focuses on the perceptions of the participants and requires a thorough understanding of people, their motivations, capacities, and behaviors. Qualitative research appears to be a more effective method of examining emotional responses because human emotions are challenging to quantify; as a result, it is appropriate for this study (Creswell, 2010; McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:315). The depth of the problem is examined by qualitative researchers because they think the approach has multiple dimensions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2013).

By using qualitative data collection, the researcher was able to gather information that is not numerical, explore how decisions are made, and give the reader a thorough understanding. This strategy was chosen because it offered a comprehensive setting for exploring and describing educators' perceptions of supporting LSEN in Grade 3 classes.

3.4 Multi-case study as the research design.

In this study, three schools in the Mashishila Circuit were used as the sites for a multi-site case study to examine educators' perspectives on supporting students with special needs. Singh (2006) defines a case study as a methodical research into an occasion or collection of occasions with the aim of unfolding, explaining, and comprehending the wonder. A case study, according to Creswell (2010), enables the researcher to investigate and explore a current real-life phenomenon through in-depth

contextual analysis of a small set of events and their connections. A case study was therefore found suitable for this research which sought to understand perceptions of grade three educators towards supporting LSEN in a particular circuit.

The researcher was able to understand the differences and connections between educators' perceptions toward supporting LSEN in Grade 3 classes from three multiple-case studies the use of the multiple-case design enabled a thorough exploration of the research question and theoretical framework. The Mashishila Circuit is a bounded system because it consists of institutions with the shared objective of collaborating to try to enhance student learning. The case study was conducted across multiple sites because the cluster has several schools, each of which was considered as a site. Other research designs might make it challenging to access such data. This multiple-case design had the advantage of securing various viewpoints from the principals and teachers at the three chosen schools.

3.5 Description of study area and targeted population

Mashishila Circuit is situated under Chief Albert Luthuli municipality in Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. Mashishila Circuit comprise of 22 primary schools which are mainly situated in rural area and most of them have shortages of educators and most learners in the area live in child headed households (Nziyane & Alpaslan 2011).

Population refers to any collection of specified groups of human beings or of non-human entities from which the study elements are selected (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). The population for this study comprises of all the grade three educators and the school principals in the 22 primary schools in Mashishila circuit of the Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

3.6. Sampling Procedure

The researcher employed purposive sampling to select participants for this study. Purposive sampling refers to the selection of participants based on knowledge or experience about the phenomenon being studied (McMillan & Shumacher, 2001).

Maxwell (1996) regards purposive or judgmental sampling as a strategy in which

settings, persons or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices. It is where the researcher includes cases or participants in the sample because they believe that they warrant inclusion, and it involves the selection of a group from the population based on available information. Purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases that help fulfil the goals of the study (Yu, 2007).

This study investigated the perceptions of grade three educators towards supporting LSEN. The samples of the study were nine educators three per school drawn from the three schools and three principals from each school. These were purposively selected on the basis of their experiences of teaching grade three learners in the schools concerned. Teachers were selected from those who had five years of teaching experience and above as these were considered as having rich information that would help address the research questions. The three schools were selected from a sampling frame of 22 schools derived from Mashishila Circuit database using systematic sampling. A sample interval of seven was applied to select the three schools from which the nine grade three teachers were selected with three teachers coming from each school. Purposive sampling was used to select three principals one per school. The total sample size of the study was twelve consisting of nine educators and three school principals.

3.7. Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study were generated using two principal techniques namely the open-ended interview schedule and open-ended questionnaires. These techniques, while having their own demerits, were considered adequate to provide the much needed data that would help in addressing the research questions. In line with qualitative research tradition of data collection, the researcher found the use of open-ended interviews and open-ended questionnaires as ideal for the study. Below is a brief description of instruments that was used by the researcher for data collection.

3.7.1 Open-ended interview schedule

According to Monet et al. (1986:156), "An interview includes the interviewer analyzing inquiries to the respondent and recording the answers". Interviews are a usually used technique for accumulating statistics from human beings together with their opinions, experiences, beliefs, and thoughts approximately applicable issues (De Vos et al., 2011).

Kumar (2011) states, that all interviews are interactive events, in which both the interviewer and the respondent are deeply and necessarily involved in the creation of the supposed meaning in the participant. Respondents should provide more detailed information that provides greater insight into the social phenomenon being investigated (Parveen and Showkat, 2017). Interviews are also useful for data collection when studies address more sensitive issues where participants may not be comfortable speaking openly in groups (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick, 2008). The research process allows for an open research process to gain detailed knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation.

This study used an open-ended interview design to understand educator perceptions of supporting LSEN (Clegg and Stevenson, 2013). According to Kumar (2011), the main advantage of open-ended interviews is their flexibility in content, material and structure. Researchers can speak openly with participants who in turn can provide motivated responses to describe their feelings which would be difficult to obtain using other data gathering techniques

3.7.2 Questionnaire

According to Kumar (2011), a questionnaire is a written listing of inquiries to which respondents have to record their answers. In surveys, respondents examine questions, recognize expectations, and write down their responses. In a survey, there is no one to explain the meaning of the question to the respondent, so it is important to phrase the question clearly so that the respondent can easily understand it.

Questionnaires are relatively convenient, inexpensive and anonymous (Kumar, 2011). However, questionnaires have low response rates, self-selection biases, and fail to clarify issues (Kumar, 2011). Despite these drawbacks, the researcher used the questionnaire because the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

This study used an open-ended questionnaire to gather information from educators and understand their perceptions of supporting LSEN. Educators were given questionnaires with a large space to write down detailed responses. The benefit of open-ended questionnaire is they permit respondents to provide detailed responses that represent their views while remaining anonymous..

3.8. Data Analysis Method

According to Singh, (2006) analysis of data means studying the tabulated material in order to determine inherent facts or meanings and it involves breaking down existing complex factors into simpler parts and putting the parts together in new arrangements for the purpose of interpretation. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) define analysis as the process that a researcher uses to reduce data to story and its interpretation. Patton (1987) identifies three important processes in data analysis that involves the organisation of data, its reduction through summarization and categorization, the identification of patterns and themes in the data. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) suggested that data analysis should be done as soon as possible after data collection from the field, and they describe field analysis as including inscription, description, and transcription.

In this study data were analysed using content and thematic analysis. The researcher reviewed all the transcripts to assess whether the data made sense. The data collected using interviews with principals were tape recorded and the researcher made notes during interviews. Audio taped data transcribed, coded and categorized to enable thematic analysis (Creswell, 2010:256; McMillian & Schumacher, 2010:360). Data from interviews with school principals presented as verbatim statements and quotes. The data collected from open ended questionnaires with educators analysed inductively using emerging categories and themes.

Marshall and Rossman 2010:36)describe the notion of content analysis as an "objective and neutral way" to secure qualitative descriptive data, where specific words are counted. Elo and Kyngas (2008) assert that researchers who choose inductive content analysis are advised to organize the qualitative data through open coding, creating categories for abstraction.

3.9. Validity and reliability

According to McMillan and Shumacher (1993), the validity of an empirical measure is how well it captures the essence of the concept being studied. Reliability refers to the consistency or reproducibility of a dimension or aspect. Pre-testing improved effectiveness and reliability of survey tools (Leedy and Ormrod, 2013). Both questionnaires and interview plans were tested with educators and school leaders who were not directly involved in the study. Pretesting helped researchers identify and eliminate inconsistencies and ambiguities in questionnaire instruments. Using two data collection methods in this study also helped to improve the validity and reliability of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1994:-114), as part of the constructivist paradigm, proposed a framework of four criteria that correspond to' validity' and' reliability' in quantitative research. There are two groups of criteria "for evaluating the goodness and quality of research in the constructivist paradigm" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:114).

Instrument reliability refers to the ability to provide consistent measurements when administered to the same or similar populations under the same conditions. The ambiguity of questions, changes in the physical environment for data collection, the mood of respondents when providing information, the nature of interaction between interviewers and interviewees, and the reversibility of research methods are factors that affect the effectiveness of research tools or factors that can affect reliability. In this study, researchers sought to increase credibility by asking clear questions, conducting interviews in a relaxed atmosphere, and conducting interviews when respondents were in good mood.

3.10. Methodological integrity

The methodological integrity of this study is enhanced and validated by the strategies used to establish trust, compliance, transparency, and accountability (Yin, 2011; Baxter and Jack, 2008).

3.10.1 Dependability/Trustworthiness

The study's reliability was ensured through the consistent application of qualitative methods to the design of the case studies. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), the basic approach to achieving reliability in case studies is to ensure that the research question is clearly formulated, that targeted sampling strategies are appropriately applied, and that the data are organized systematically. It was collected and managed in a timely manner and ensured that the data was properly managed. Correctly analyzed. In the future, other researchers may use the data provided in their studies. This is because the research was done so that others could have confidence in the methods and results used.

3.10.2 Confirmability

This examine carried out the triangulation precept in phrases of numerous statistics reassets in addition to a couple of instances on the way to make certain the conformability of the findings. That is, interview transcripts, educator's questionnaire and literature reviewed in relation to perceptions of educators towards assisting pupils with different learning necessities in their programs. Moreover, review of literature was wide to provide data on educators view and experiences towards supporting LSEN in ordinary schools. According to Yin (2013); Gaudet and Robert (2019), the gathering and contrast of records from a couple of reassets in a case study; It is a basic strategy for improving data quality, following the principles of idea convergence and insight confirmation. As such, all the data sources consulted in this study were well collected, recorded and transparent.

3.10.3 Transparency

According to Saldaña (2013), in a case study research, the investigator must describe the research procedures so that other people can review and try to comprehend them, and importantly, all the data must be made available for inspection purposes. Accordingly, all the procedures associated with the data collection, recording and transcribing in this qualitative multiple-case study were clearly described and well documented for the purpose of transparency and inspection. In this regard, a Digital Voice Recorder WS-852 was used during interviews with school principals in order to confirm that entirely data were correctly recorded, and information were copied and saved as an MP3 file in a designated folder in computer software for accountability purposes. An Audio-into-Text Transcription Application was used to transcribe all the audio recorded interview sessions held with the contributors. The scholar also questioned colleagues and supervisor to scrutinize instruments to ensure face and content validity.

3.10.4 Creditability/Accountability

Research credibility measures make sure that the looks at consequences are dependable or sincere from the factor of view of the look at participants. In this view, the goal of this qualitative look at is to explain or recognize the phenomena of hobby from the participants` factor of view. The researcher assumes duty for private biases that could have stimulated the consequences and recognizes biases in sampling and maintains to seriously replicate on techniques to make sure enough intensity and appropriateness of facts series and analysis (Noble et al. Smith, 2015).

3.11. Request permission for collecting data

According to Waters Adams (2006:195), consent must be acquired before data can be collected when conducting study in institutions like schools. The researcher asked authorization to do research at particular research sites in a letter to the management of Mashishila Circuit. The investigator received a letter of approval, which was then sent, together with the research proposal, to the Mpumalanga University Ethics Committee.

Researchers sent an email to the principal, arranged a visit and interview time, and handed questionnaires to third-grade educators after receiving ethical approval from the University.

3.12. Ethical issues

A set of usually generic moral concepts is known as ethics. These concepts set up tips and behavioral expectancies for the fine behavior for check subjects, respondents, and users. Employers, sponsors, researchers, assistants, and learners (DeVos, et al., 2011).Once completed, the have a look at now no longer most effective recognizes and references all works noted through different educational sources, however additionally correctly reviews the findings and outcomes whilst acknowledging the restrictions of the have a look at . . The following moral troubles have been discovered on this have a look at: studies authorization; moral clearance; agreement; confidentiality and anonymity; voluntary participation and the proper to withdraw. The written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Mashishila Circuit, Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province. Additional permission turned into sought from principals and third grade educators at decided on schools. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary. The researcher explained to the participants of the study that, it is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any stage of the interview, if not feel comfortable. At first, the participants will be asked permission for interviews to be recorded. However questions asked during interviews were not intended to evoke pain or hurt in the participants. The protection of participants was one of the main functions of research ethics.

(Doyle et al., 2010). Participants' non-public facts turned into anonymized in the course of and after the have a look at (Hoecht, 2011). Participants signed knowledgeable consent paperwork earlier than they have a look at began. The consent shape presents facts approximately the intention of the have a look at, its timeline, the player's involvement within side they have a look at, what is going to occur to the have a look at findings, and the way the player will make the most of it.

3.12.1 Informed consent

Informed consent means that the participant is competent, autonomous, voluntarily involved, and has not been tricked, coerced, or coerced into participating in the research process. (O'Leary, 2017). Research participants should be informed of what they are working on before deciding to participate in research (Gaudet and Robert, 2019). Participants should only participate in the "involvement" if they fully understand the desired engagement, including the time commitment, type of activity, topics covered, and possible physical and emotional risks involved. "Formed consent" can be provided (Casebolt, 2012). A written contract outlining the conditions of the research and involving each subject is the preferred method for obtaining informed consent (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:170). All participants in this study were informed of the nature and goals of the study. Before the study began, each participant was required to sign an informed consent form as confirmation.

3.12.2 The rights to privateness and participation.

As said through Leedy and Ormrod (2005:102), researchers ought to make certain that topics voluntarily consent to take part within side the take a look at and feature the liberty to go away at any time. This requirement turned into met on this take a look at through requiring all contributors to signal a knowledgeable consent shape previous to the begin of the experiment. When wearing out this take a look at, ethics associated with participation and privateness had been considered. Researchers in my view brought themselves to contributors and went over the goals of the take a look at, the rewards and advantages of participation, and the contributors` rights to take part or now no longer without being compelled to do so. Researchers declare that we have to admire those who determine in opposition to going to school.

3.12.3 Anonymity and confidentiality.

Confidentiality guarantees are the most crucial protection against privacy invasions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:175). According to O'Leary (2005:73; O'Leary, 2017), confidentiality refers to the protection of respondents' identities, and "anonymity" refers

to freedom from researcher self- identification. Nahumias and Nahumias (1996:88) make the case that a participant is considered anonymous when researchers or other parties are unable to identify information about them. In any survey, respondents are required to provide information that can be regarded as confidential, (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:102).

In this research, confidentiality included protecting the identity of those providing research data, and all identifying data was reserved for researchers only. Due to the confidentiality of the educational support provided to LSEN. The confidentiality and anonymity of every participant were always maintained, according to researchers.. Protecting confidentiality and anonymity in this study also included secure storage and restricted access to raw data.

3.12.4 Ensuring no harm to respondents

O'Leary (2017) it writes that the study did no harm to the respondents. Carelessness in research studies by researchers can harm research participants. This consists of now no longer handiest bodily damage, however additionally emotional or mental damage. Physical damage is exceedingly smooth to spot, however the chance of mental damage may be hard to discover and predict (O`leary, 2017).In this study, researchers prevented harm to participants by ensuring that information about individual participants was not disclosed or shared with outsiders. Participants' names were also not used to report study results.

3.13. Chapter Summary

The technique used to behavior this observes is mentioned on this bankruptcy. This bankruptcy diagnosed and labelled the interpretivism paradigm, research plan, observe layout, population, the sample, and the statistics series equipment for this observe. In three schools at the Mashishila Circuit, a cross-web page case observe layout become used to analyze educators` views on supporting college students with unique needs. The consequences of the statistics evaluation are supplied and mentioned within the following bankruptcy.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected on LSEN in three primary schools. The purpose of the study was to examine grade 3 educator's perceptions towards supporting LSEN. This research was based on the following four questions:

- What are Grade 3 educators' perceptions of teaching LSEN?
- What do Grade 3 educators regard as learning barriers for LSEN?
- What support strategies (including training) are needed to help Grade 3 educators manage LSEN?
- What support strategies are needed for LSEN?

The chapter presents raw data gathered from participants and an analysis and interpretation of the results. The data is presented as below:

4.2 Demographic Profile and Characteristics of Participants

This chapter first presents the demographic characteristics of participants. This involves examining their age structure, gender, highest qualifications and teaching experience of learners with special educational needs in classroom. This is followed by presentation of data obtained through open-ended questionnaires for educators and interview schedule for school principals about their views and experience towards supporting LSEN.

4.2.1   Demographic profile

This study examined the perceptions of grade 3 educators in order to explore how their demographic characteristics influenced perceptions of participation and attitudes towards dealing with learners with special educational needs.

4.2.1.1   Gender composition of participants

The study interviewed Grade 3 educators who were teaching learners with special educational needs in schools. Gender profiling of the participants was important in order

to determine which gender was most associated with teaching grade 3 learners with special educational needs. The figure below (figure 4.1) shows that 85 per cent of female participants were teaching grade three learners with special educational needs.

Figure 4.1: Gender composition of participants
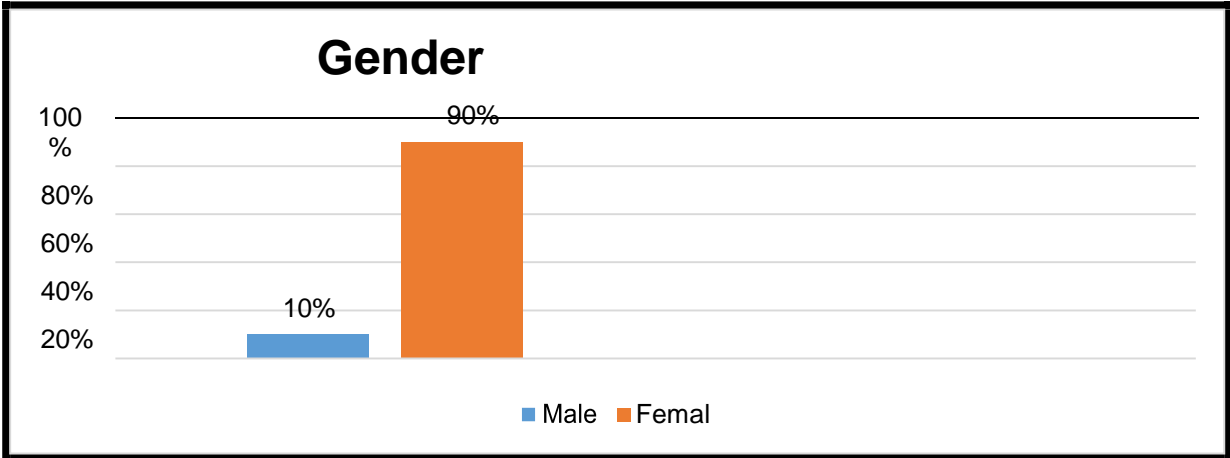
Figure 4.2

Source: **Survey (2021)**
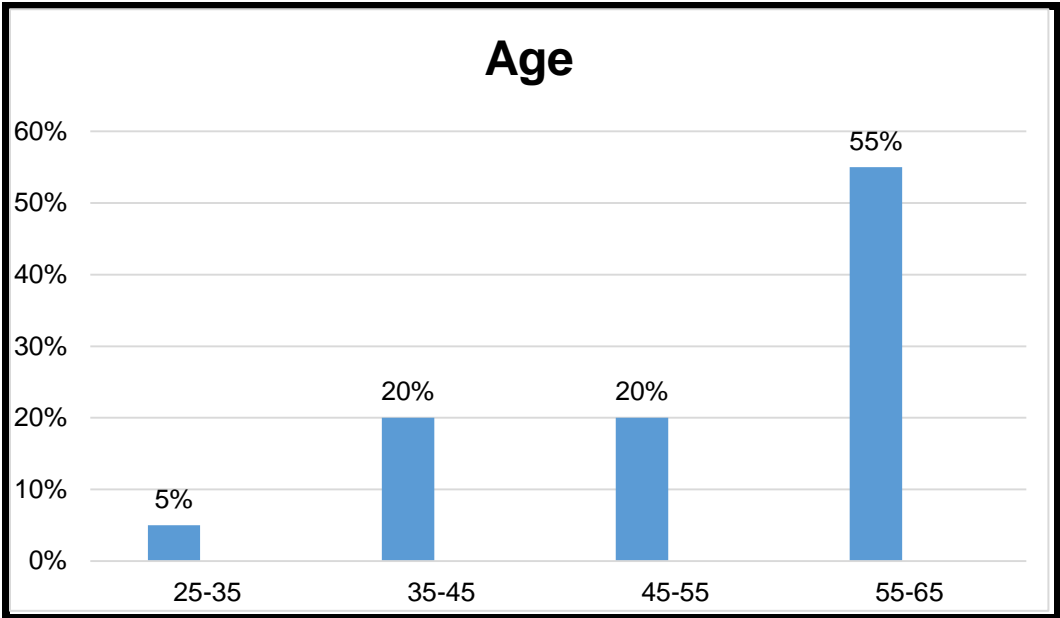
Source: Fieldwork data

Figure 4.2 clearly shows that most of the educators interviewed are older. 55% of the population group surveyed was from 55 to 65. 20% of the participants. They were between the ages of 45 and 55, and also between the ages of 35 and 45. Young educators were a minority, with only 5% of educators between the ages of 25 and 35. These figures clearly show that older people still occupy a place in the classrooms. In this sense, it follows that older women are capable of caring for students with special needs at school.

Educational level of participants

Participants were asked to provide information about their qualifications. The study revealed that most teachers had bachelors degrees qualifications as shown on figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: Educational level of the participants
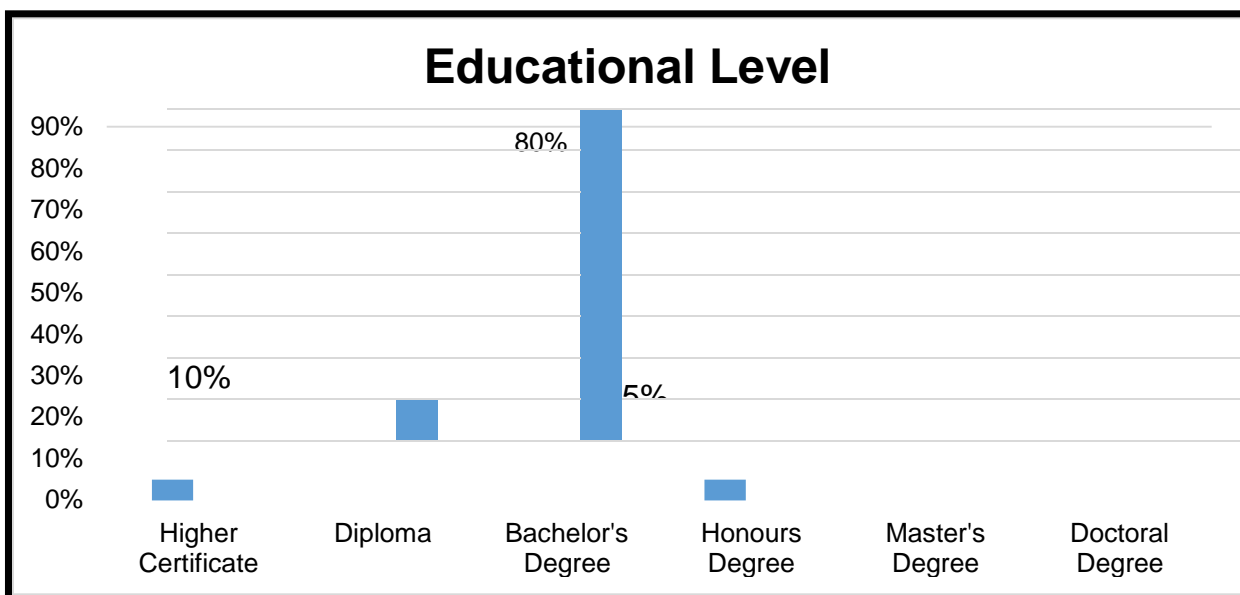
Source: Survey (2021)

There is a belief that acquiring formal education poses high chances or exposes one to better employment opportunities, Clarke, Nelson and Stoodley (2013). This seems to be the case in the current study. It was found that almost 80 percent of the sample possessed a bachelor's degree while 10 percent had a diploma. Furthermore, only 5

percent had honours while another 5 percent higher certificates. This clearly shows that the majority of teachers were well qualified for their teaching positions. The assumption is that well qualified educators are better able to support learners with special educational needs than those who are not well qualified.

4.2.1.2   Number of years teaching in the school

Participants were asked to provide the researcher with the number of years they have been teaching in the school.

Figure 4.4: Teaching experience of participants
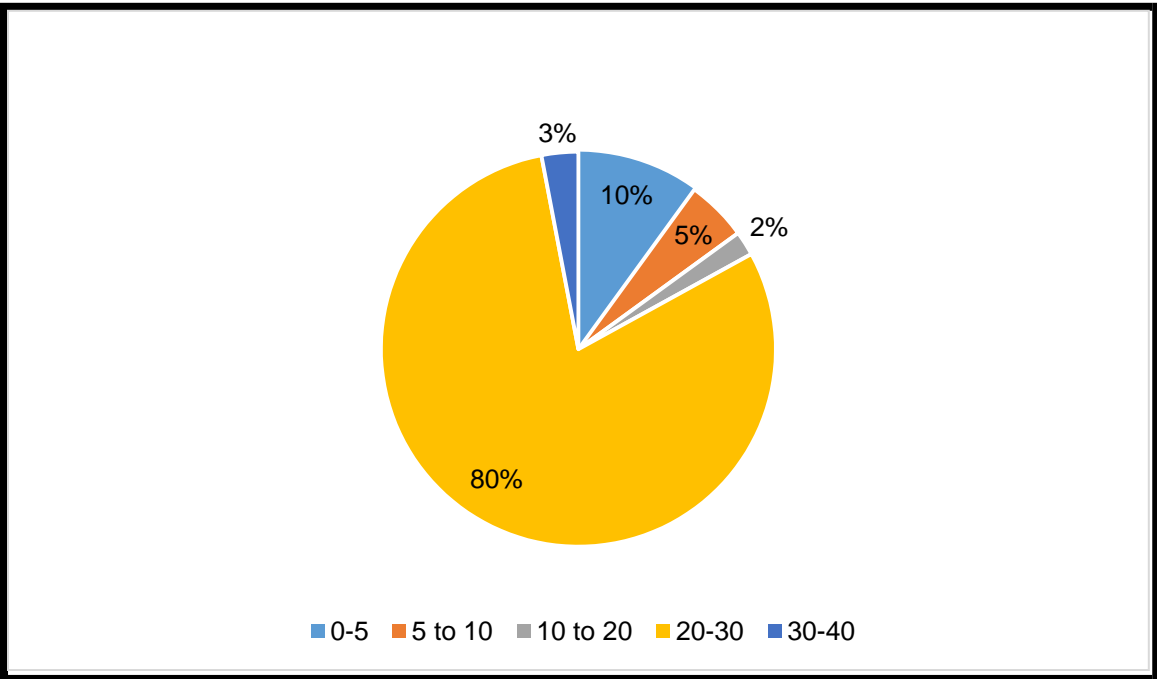
Source: Field work data

Figure 4.4 shows that most of the educators who were interviewed in the study have been teachers for a very long time. 80 percent of the participants have been educators

for a period of between twenty to thirty years. This is followed by a minority of about 10 percent who were new teachers with teaching experience ranging from zero to five years. Only 5 percent were those who have been educators from five to ten years and 3 percent were those between five to ten years of experience. This clearly shows that most of the educators interviewed were very experienced at their job. It is therefore assumed that over the years these educators would have developed better ways of supporting LSEN.

4.3 Grade three teachers' perceptions on teaching LSEN

During the interviews, there was a general positive attitude among the participants in relation to how they perceived LSEN in their schools.

One of the participants mentioned that:
"Working with children with special needs will teach me very important lessons in life. I have come to realize that I don't have to be saint in meeting their needs. I like it because it teaches me to be more patient and teach them with love."

Another participant expressed excitement about the way learners with special educational needs pay attention during the teaching and learning activities:
"Mostly they pay attention, are innocent and eager to learn and usually they repeat what the educator did."

A common view among the participants was that learners with special educational needs require different teaching styles and methods. The participants felt that the learner with special educational needs learn effectively through playing. On the same note, other participants argued that media and home visits are helpful methods in facilitating the teaching and learning of learners with special educational needs. There was a suggestion that educating learners with special educational needs should be a collaborative responsibility with other stakeholders, as illustrated by most participants.

Some educators mentioned the need to use differentiated styles of teaching and

visiting their homes. There was a suggestion that educating learners with special educational needs should be a collaborative responsibility with other stakeholders. One participant articulated the following:

"We discover lots of problems and special needs that needed to be attended by psychologists and other stakeholders".

This finding suggests that teaching and learning of LSEN is an all-stakeholder responsibility, which should involve other professionals apart from the mainstream educations. This is consistent with the theory of social cognitive development, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction for cognitive development (Vygotsky,1978). As such, collaborative stakeholder approach can have a meaningful impact in advancing the teaching and learning experiences of SEN in the Foundation Phase education.

During the interviews, there were some negative responses of teaching LSEN. Some of the educators who teach in mainstream education appeared to be unprepared for inclusive education since they did not receive sufficient education and training with regards to dealing with learners with special educational needs. This happened in circumstances where the number of special needs learners is constantly increasing. Participants mentioned that they have not been sufficiently supported by the department of education in terms of coping mechanisms that assist them in teaching LSEN. Some participants stated that:

"We as educators perceive learners with special educational needs as those struggling academically and those who can't achieve as expected. We see these learners as needing extra individual support."

"We also view this as extra work, wasting our teaching time and delaying us from attending to other learners without special needs."

"Working with special needs learners requires a strong sense of understanding and having guts to accept that everyone's needs are different and that each person requires his/her own sort of attention."

The above responses seem to suggest that several LSEN have the potential to remain socially and emotionally excluded in their regular classroom experiences (Banks, McCoy, and Frawley, 2017; Bossaert, Colpin, Pijl, and Petry, 2013; Prince and Hadwin, 2013; Schwab, Gebhardt, and Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2013). This tends to affect such learners to adopt a lower self-concept of themselves (EWei and Marder, 2010). Teachers' attitudes appear to be affected by characteristics of children with special educational needs (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000; Baker et al., 2015). According to Baker et al. (2015), educators with training in special education tend to have a more positive attitude towards children with intellectual disability, visual and hearing impairment, as well as speech and language impairment than teachers and administrators without training in special education.

Some participants said that their support for LSEN was the foundation of their educational success. They also said that teachers with more positive attitudes toward inclusion have more controlled learning environments than do teachers with more negative attitudes. The literature has shown that the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream educational settings is becoming increasingly common (Ainscow and Cesar, 2006; Cook, Cameron and Tankersley, 2007),) and has resulted in dramatic changes in schools conceptually, organizationally, and structurally (Gavish and Shimoni, 2011).

4.4 What do grade three educators regard as learning barriers and challenges of LSEN

When asked to share their understanding of what learning barriers are one participant responded as follows:

"These are things that make learners not to learn well. They hinder and disturb their

learning process. Language used can be a barrier, if you are unable to use teaching and learning language appropriately. Some barriers are psychological, physical and emotional conditions, which learners find themselves in".

Participants were asked to share their understanding of the various types of barriers that affect LSEN in their learning. It came out that most barriers in schools include language barriers, numeracy and reading problems.

One participant reported that in order to reduce barriers they provide them with phonics, printing, worksheets, readers which respond to different levels of difficulties or learners levels of development. They don't have much of barriers which are physical or psychological. They can't see properly; they don't understand well, and some can't even write or transcribe properly on their own.

The common view among the participants was that barriers include the recognition of numbers, recalling and motor gross of the learners. The problem of reversals, number recognition, word recognition, recalling, pencil grip small motor gross were also cited as common barriers. The following were some of the highlights:

Most of the time we find that learners with special educational needs have the problem with word recognition, reversals of letters and numbers, under developed small motor gross, number recognition and recalling. The poor learning skills in reversal, word and number recognition, pencil handling or in developed small motor gross and recalling always pitch out during the lessons.

During class activities, learning barriers affect how learners understand information, communicate, or learn new skills, and this includes difficulties in reading, writing, and with mathematical computation. The severity of learning disability varies from learner to learner, although each barrier has the same effect of standing in the way of a child and his or her ability to learn effectively.

Participants were asked about the numerous difficulties faced by LSEN in classrooms. Most of the participants mentioned a lot of challenges that learners face every day in class and also at school in general. Participants mentioned that learners with physical disabilities face challenges such as being unable to understand properly what they are taught and also struggling to write properly. Other participants mentioned that some learners fail to accept them in classes, which affects their sense of belonging and also prevent them from participating in classes and other class and school activities. One of the participants said that:

"Leaners with special educational needs face a lot of difficulties in my class such as reading and also completing their class activities in time. I try to give them as much time as I could so that they can cover but it is never easy."

It is evident that a lot needs to be done to assist learners with special educational needs in schools. The challenges they face need to be addressed so that they stand better canes of succeeding in their education without many dilemmas. To ensure that these issues are resolved, teachers who work with these students have a crucial responsibility to play. To prevent special education students from feeling excluded from classes, it is also necessary for other students to learn how to accommodate these students.

4.5 Supporting Strategies for LSEN

Special educators work with students who have learning, intellectual, emotional, or physical disabilities. They have adapted general education to make it relevant to a range of students with mild to moderate disabilities (Colony, 2020). They also teach basic skills to students with severe disabilities. In dealing with LSEN and challenges, educators use different support methods in order to create a better learning environment. One of the participants remarked as follows:

"I think we need to empower educators on how to identify and support these learners. We need to review our post provisioning system to allocate more educators so that we get more to attend to these learners. So if post provision is like as it is at the moment,

they won't get sufficient time to attend to learners. Furthermore, we need to divide the class to enable learners to attend together with those of similar capability."

"The creation of learner profiles which will be used by incoming educators, we need separate schools for such learners in order to have more time to focus on given tasks and early identification and screening by educators and referral to support system within the school."

Some educators use the word card and argue that it helps them to remember things that the learners have done during the class. While some feel that giving fewer activities to LSEN supports their ability to learn. Differentiation in their class work gives them less work but more time to do it. Some make sure that the work is not too much or challenging for them, and also demonstrating the pronunciation of words (Okech and Yuwono, 2021). Some participants mentioned that they write clearly and use handwritten method poorly. Another participant mentioned the following:

"In my class I have a learner who does not hear properly, so usually when I communicate with her, I use sign language to pass the message to her. As an educator I need to accept her, and identify with her. Give such learners support using one on one; lastly refer them to school-based support teams. I start with believing in them, debrief and assess constantly, use enabling language, guide and sleep aside."

It is evident that educators in various schools are trying their best to assist LSEN to learn properly. Most of the participants have shown courage in assisting these learners in terms of their class activities and they also ensure that they pass. The educators work together with parents of those learners with disability so that they can be an integral part in ensuring that they feel the sense of belonging and willing to learn in schools.

Participants were asked about the participation of LSEN in class activities. Learners with special needs who actively participate in class have better social interactions with

teachers and other learner, which also helps them study more effectively. Through class participation, the educator is able to discover learners' strengths and develop strength-based learning strategies. Other participants mentioned that it is difficult for those learners to collaborate with other learners during class activities, especially groups, as they tend to isolate themselves from others. One of the participants stated that:

"If an activity is given and explained in class to all learners, I then talk to the learner using the sign to make sure that she has understood the instruction properly and also know what is expected from her as a learner."

Although there were positive comments about learners' participation in class activities, some negative comments were also noted. It emerged that the lack of participation of some learners may be caused by some external factors, like unaccommodating building structures and shortage of equipment that supports their personal situations.

"

Most participants stated that they think it is vital for a school to ensure that there is always enough and relevant equipment that will assist LSEN. There were just few participants who mentioned that their schools always had equipment for LSEN at all times. One participant mentioned that:

"I think that our classrooms are not suitable for learners with barriers as they are fully packed. Most of the classrooms have more than fifty leaners which makes it difficult for us to attend to them all at times."

It is evident that schools are facing difficulties with the provision of equipment which is suitable for assisting pupils with different instructive requests. The Department of Education, working together with schools, should come up with a proper solution in order to deal with this problem so that LSEN can have a proper education like others.

4.6 Support strategies needed by teachers for LSEN

Lack of assistance in the form of seminars for teachers of LSEN makes it difficult for them to deal with the difficulties they encounter. The majority of participants in the interviews said that neither the department nor the school held any workshops specifically to capacitate them on how to deal with LSEN. Educators have noted that the Department of Basic Education just thinks that they can manage the strain on their own, and that working with students who have special educational needs is challenging without the department's support. Few teachers identified the programmes they have in place at their institutions to help LSEN teachers cope with LSEN learners.

"Here, in my school, we always host workshops ones per term which assist us with coping mechanisms when teaching learners with special educational needs. There are some department psychologists who visit our schools to provide us with support but it is not enough because they only come ones in a while."

It is clear that educators who work with students who have special educational needs require a lot of assistance in the form of workshops from the Department of Education and other partners. These workshops can assist them with acquiring proper skills on how to teach learners with special educational needs. Most educators experience problems when it comes to handling a situation where a learner with physical disability is under performing in class. On that note, it is vital for schools and the Department to provide support to both the learners and the educators at large.

It is important for any school which has pupils with unusual educational requirements to have educators who are willing to help and have a good relationship with those learners. Most of the participants mentioned that they have various techniques that they use to motivate the learners in class so that they feel that they deserve to be there and feel the importance of education. Educators mentioned that dramatizing and involving the learners in role plays helps them participate in class. Furthermore, treating them the same as other learners all the time also assists in giving them confidence in class. Other participant mentioned that those who are short-sighted are made to sit in front of

class. One of the educators mentioned that:

"I, as an educator, has a responsibility that all the learners in my class feel welcomed and appreciated whether they have a disability or not. I always make sure that the leaners with special educational needs are well treated and ensuring that other learners do not bully them by creating that room of friendship between them in class."

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It is clear that the majority of teachers in educational institutions appear to care about and support students with special needs in various institutions. For these students to participate freely in all class activities, it is imperative that they feel secure, safe, and appreciated while they are at school.

PE-specific practical training must be implemented in schools with LSEN as well. To promote an inclusive culture in PE, however, PE educators and important support personnel must collaborate. Lessons for students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) should be the focus of PE instructors more often. All students, including those with SEND, should engage in high-quality, independently-paced activities while receiving the proper support for team-based activities (Maher, Moley, Kirk, and Banks et al. 2021). For teachers to be able to offer these, they need continuous professional development in the form of workshops. Attending conferences and in service training to upskill them.

The DoE support of schools which have LSEN remains an important factor in their success in learning. During the interviews, most participants mentioned the lack of support from the Department in their schools. Educators mentioned that the Department has offered no support of some sort in their schools since they started working there. Only few participants mentioned that the Department of Education does offer some support, but not as often as they are supposed to because the support is very limited and not sustainable. One of the participants mentioned that:

"The Department of Education has a role to play in supporting us who teach learners

with special educational needs. Ever since I started teaching these learners, the department has offered little or nothing in terms of providing support to us and these learners which is a serious problem."

It is evident that the DoE provides little or no assistance to teachers and schools dealing with LSEN.The Department needs to provide sufficient support because it is clear that the schools and educators definitely need such assistance. Working together with SGBs and other stakeholders, it can be possible to ensure that proper assistance is provided and sustained periodically in schools which have LSEN.

Studies seeking to document school-level advocacy for inclusion look at attitudes of teachers in different professional roles in schools. Research shows that administrators, senior teachers or principals have the most positive attitudes (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2012, Barker et al., 2015).

It is evident that schools with learners with special educational needs need to have strategies in place to assist them. Educators working together with parents can be essential in identifying the needs of those learners so that they do not struggle in school. It emerged that educators were willing to assist as much as they could to enhance the learning opportunities for learners with special educational needs in schools. According to the Department of Education (2005e), acknowledging that learners have different or multiple intelligences is important for learners with special educational needs in inclusive classrooms. Therefore, the learner's intelligence and associated learning style should be viewed as the starting point for determining the teaching and assessment methods to be used.

Educators have mostly favorable attitudes toward the inclusion of children with physical education, and that experience working with children with SEND was positively associated with such favorable attitudes. According to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social cognitive development, social interaction is very important in the development of cognition. The zone of proximal development refers to "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of

potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance (parents and educators or in collaboration with more capable peers)" (Podolskij, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). Ekins, Savolainen, and Engelbrecht (2016); Shaukat, Vishnumolakala, and Al Bustami (2019) found that teachers with more experience tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy when dealing with students who have special educational needs.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study. The study found that there were more female teachers than male teachers teaching pupils with unusual educational requirements. It turned out that most of the participants in the study seemed to be elderly people over fifty-five years of age. Research results have shown that LSEN require supportive teaching and learning styles and approaches. It was noted that many learners with unusual educational needs remain socially and emotionally excluded from their normal classroom experience, although most teachers were really keen to assist in an environment with limited training and support from the Department of Education. The conclusion, recommendations, and summary from the study are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of grade 3 educators towards supporting LSEN in three selected primary schools in Mashishila Circuit, Gert Sibande District, Mpumalanga province South Africa. This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for the whole study. It starts by giving a summary of findings as per research questions, proceeding to provide conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

- Chapter 1

This chapter deals with introduction and background of the study. The statement of research problem and research question is also included. The chapter also gives research aim and objectives. It also covers the definition of terms, significance of study and delimitation of study.

- Chapter 2

In chapter 2 the literature relevant to this study is reviewed. The theoretical framework of study was introduced by researcher to help explain phenomena. The review covered literature relating to Perceptions and Perspectives, Learning Barriers and Challenges and Support Strategies for LSEN.

- Chapter 3

In this chapter the researcher looked at the research design and methodology. It also covers research paradigm, research approach, sampling process, data collection techniques, methodological integrity, data analysis and ethical issues.

- Chapter 4

This chapter present interprets, analyze and discuss the research data. It also includes demographic profile and characteristic of participants.

- Chapter 5

Summary, conclusions, recommendations and the findings of the study are summarized in the chapter along with recommendations for improvement.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In this section the summary of findings were provided following the order of the research questions as presented in chapter one.

5.3.1 Research Question one: What are grade three educators' perceptions of teaching LSEN?

Generally, the analyses of the findings under this research study showed that most educators were keen on teaching learners with special educational needs in their classes. Their perceptions were on the whole positive although there were numerous operational challenges that they experienced in this process. Under inclusive education, they look overwhelmed by the learning capacity of learners with special educational needs. Lack of support for learners with special educational needs was raised as a huge obstacle towards the advancement of LSEN. The development of learners and learner profile history should be considered when dealing with learners experiencing learning barriers. Educators need expansion in knowledge of how to deal with LSEN.

5.3.2 Research Question Two: What do grade three educators regard as learning barriers for LSEN?

The majority of participants in the study saw the problem of reversals, number recognition, word recognition, recalling, pencil grip small motor gross as common barriers to learning by SEN. Usually, learners with physical disabilities face challenges such as being unable to understand properly what they are taught and also struggling to write properly during the class session. When they experience these challenges, other learners failed to accept them in class, which affects their sense of belonging and also prevents them from participating in classes and other class and school activities. The lack of participation then results in poor academic performance by LSEN

5.3.3 Research Question Three: What support strategies (including training) are needed to help grade three educators manage LSEN?

The study revealed that the teaching and learning process for LSEN is a collaborative process that involves many stakeholders. It emerged that the process of supporting learners with special educational needs should not only involve the educators, but also various social actors such as parents, peer learners, social workers, and health care professionals. Educators who educate grade three LSEN need a lot of training and support so that they cope with the demands of assisting such learners especially during their early years of development. Refresher courses and capacity development workshops on inclusive education were therefore cited as important interventions.

5.3.4 Research Question Four: What support strategies are needed for LSEN?

The study revealed the need to capacitate primary schools with educational resources to support LSEN. Such resources could include inclusive playgrounds and creative classrooms, textbooks, digital learning resources including video, audio, text, animations and images. The study noted that many disabled learners lacked access to classrooms due to the manner in which they were designed. The study revealed that learners with special educational needs could learn effectively through playing and interactive teaching and learning methodologies. The underlining idea was that more need to be done to schools to make them conducive learning centres for LSEN.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

This study's purpose was to investigate the perceptions of grade three educators towards supporting LSEN in three selected primary schools in Mpumalanga province. Lack of or inadequate help for learners with unique instructional needs remains a critical factor that bars learners' development. The development of learners should be considered when dealing with learners experiencing learning barriers. Although learners who experienced learning barriers in the inclusive education settings were encouraged to learn, there was need to capacitate educators who teach grade 3 LSEN with appropriated skills and competencies so that they are able to cope.

This study has revealed that educators have varied experiences of supporting LSEN at grade three level in the schools under investigation. A dominant message that came out was the need to use flexible and a variety of teaching approaches to ensure inclusivity of learners including those with special educational needs. Through this research, it has been revealed that there is a need to remove obstacles that make inclusive education impossible in primary schools, more especially the school in question. This requires capacity development and training of educators who are involved in the teaching of LSEN. This places both the school authorities and the department of basic education with a special responsibility to develop and implement appropriate capacity development workshops for educators teaching LSEN. It also became clear that some schools were not adequately equipped with supportive infrastructure that would assist in the learning of LSEN. There is therefore need that school infrastructure be boosted and enhanced.

The study also found that female educators are predominant in the responsibilities and tasks of teaching LSEN in the foundation phase education. This finding suggests two things. First, it may mean that female teachers have been proven to be more competent in handling classes with LSEN. Secondly, this can be an expression of the taken for granted gender assumption that the foundation phase, of which grade three level belongs, is a special domain for female teachers. This then serves to perpetuate the gender ideology which has been transmitted from one generation to another through various social institutions and processes. This ideology may need to be socially deconstructed.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made to inform policy and practice.

- The Department of Education, working in collaboration with schools should put in place training and capacity development programmes and workshops to support educators who are dealing with LSEN. If educators are capacitated and have got the know-how of how to engage with and facilitate learning with LSEN, this will

promote the learning of such learners in schools.

- Schools need to have specially designed structures and facilities that accommodate inclusion of all learners including those with special educational needs.

- The department of basic education should provide LSEN with educational mural resources like playgrounds and in order to support learners with SEN.

- Due to large number of learners with special educational needs in the Mashishila Circuit, it is recommended that the Circuit should have a special school, so that schools can refer learners with learning difficulties such as hearing and autism challenges. A special school has a potential to transform the learning experiences and outcomes of LSEN in the sense that it can promote specialization which enable all learners to be effectively supported and developed.

- Policy makers should draft policies which ensure that learners with disabilities rights are protected at all times in schools.

- The Department of education, working together with educators, have an obligation to create a safe and secured environment for learners with special educational needs.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following areas for further research have been identified in the study.

- More studies should be conducted in order to assist educators on how to deal and cope with teaching learners with special educational needs.

- More research into the teaching of other grades should be done so as to understand educator's experiences of teaching learners with SEN.

- A study to detect approaches to overcome constraints encountered in teaching LSEN should be considered.

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RESEARCH Interview Schedule
Master of Education Research
Project.

Perceptions of Grade 3 Educators in three selected schools in Mashishila Circuit towards Supporting Learners with Special Educational Needs in their classes.

1.What is your understanding about supporting learners with special educational needs in school

2.What are the benefits of supporting learners with special educational needs in the grade 3 classes of this school?

3.In regard to the education of learners with special needs, what assistance is offered by school?

4.Do you think your school has necessary resources to support learners with physical and intellectual disabilities?

5.Is there any professional development training offered for educators in order to support learners with educational needs in your school?

6.What challenges do you encounter in meeting the needs of learners with disability in your school?

7.What perception does school have in regard to special educational needs of learners?

8.Do you think government policies assist in promoting inclusive education in your school?

9.What can you recommend in regard to improving inclusive education for learners with specific educational needs in schools?

10.In your opinion, what are the issues or challenges affecting the implementation of inclusive education?

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire for teachers

Perceptions of Grade 3 Educators in three selected schools in Mashishila Circuit towards Supporting Learners with Special Educational Needs in their classes.

Make a (x) in appropriate block to show your response

Demographic Information:

10.1 What is your gender?

Male		Female	

10.2 My age category is ?

Age	25-35		35-45		45-55		55-65	

10.3 My highest Qualification?

Higher certificate	
Diploma	
Bachelor's degree	
Honours degree	
Master's degree	
Doctoral degree	

10.4 My number of years teaching in the school?

Below 5 years		5-10	10-20		20-30	30-40	

10.5 My number of years in the foundation phase ?

Below 5 years		5-10		10-20		20-30		30-40	

10.6 My years of experience in teaching learners with specific educational needs is?

Below 5 years		5-10		10-20		20-30		30-40	

10.7 Highest number of learners in my class is?

0-10		10-20		20-30		30-40		40-50		50-60+	

Educators' perceptions of teaching learners with special educational needs.

1 What do you like about teaching learners with special educational needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2   What do you not like about teaching learners with special educational needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 How do you feel about teaching learners with special educational
   needs? Give reasons

_____

_____

_____

4 What are your views about teaching learners with special educational needs in separate
   classes and schools?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Learning barrires for learners with special educational needs.

5 What is your understanding for learning barriers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5 Which challenges do learners with special educational needs experience in their learning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6 How do you assist learners with special educational needs to overcome barriers in their

learning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7   Describe how learners with special educational needs collaborate in learning activities with the rest of the learners.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8   Comment on the suitability of class and school equipment, furniture and buildings in supporting learners with special educational needs.

_____

_____

_____

_____

9   What are the characteristics of learners with intellectual and physical disability in the class?
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Support strategies needed to help grade 3 educators manage learners with special educational needs?

10   What did you learn about assisting learners with special educational needs diring intial teacher course?
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11   How often doeas the school hold workshops on how to help grade three educators cope with learner with special educational needs?

_____

_____

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_____

12   How often does the department of basic education holds workshops on how to empower educators who teach leaners with special educational needs?

_____

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_____

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_____

13 What do you say about the workshop offered by the Department of Basic education to educators teaching learners with special educational needs?

_____

_____

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_____

_____

Support strategies needed for learners with special educational needs.

14 What techniques would you use to keep learners actively involved and motivated during the lesson?

_____

_____

_____

_____

15   How does working closely with parents assist you in getting to know the needs of children better?

_____

_____

_____

_____

16   What are your comments on your classroom design, do you think it is conducive for learners with special educational needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

17   Does the department of Basic education usually provide learning material to learners with special educational needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18   Explain how you ensure that all pupils with disability are able to fully access the curriculum by providing extra support or additional resources where appropriate?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19   What measures can you recommend that can be used to improve the learning of

      learners with special educational needs in schools?

_____

_____

_____

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_____

APPENDIX C: Letter to the participants

University of Mpumalanga; Faculty of Humanities. School of

Education Dear Participant

I, Murendeni Lukhele hereby wish to request your participation in a research undertaking which is part of my Masters Study for which I am registered with the University of Mpumalanga, in the Faculty of humanities, and School of Education. In the process of the research undertaking, I would like to ask the Basic Education Foundation Phase level Educators and School Principals from selected Primary schools under Mashishila Circuit some questions through questionnaires and recorded interview in relation to the study. In this regard, please note that the interview will be kept strictly confidential and that the anonymity will be assured. Therefore, should you agree to participate in the study, the questions and answers will be anonymous, and the name will not appear in any publication of the study. Having said that, you may refuse to participate, and even if you agree, you may discontinue the interview at any point in time. Participation or non-participation in and or withdrawal during the course of the interview will not, in any way, harm nor prejudice your position in the Foundation Phase level. Therefore, to participate in the study it will be required of you to provide a written consent that will include your signature, date and initials to confirm that you understand and agree to the conditions of the interview.

APPENDIX D: Agreement letter to be signed by participants

I...agree to participate in the study conducted by Murenndeni Lukhele, with student number 219121923. Titled, Perceptions of Educators towards Supporting Learners with Special Educational Needs in the Foundation Phase level: The case of the Mashishila Circuit in the Mpumalanga Province. I acknowledge that my participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw or refuse to answer any component of the questions at any point in time without any prejudice to me or my position in the company and or my employment. I am also aware that at no time will my identity be revealed to anyone. Moreover, in the process of the data collection, it would be necessary to use a voice recorder instrument, in order to ensure that all the information is captured and recorded accordingly. Again, these recordings will only be used for the purpose of this research and not for any other ulterior purposes. If you agree to this interview procedure, please sign to acknowledge your consent to the requirements of the study

Participant's signature ....Date...............................

Researcher's signature............................. Date................................

Should you have any questions about the research and or the contents of this letter, please do

not hesitate to contact my supervisor at the University of Mpumalanga Dr Severino Machingambi at Severino.Machingambi@ump.ac.za, for further information.

Yours

Sincerely, Mrs

M Lukhele

219121923 (Student Number)

APPENDIX E: Letter to Request Permission to Conduct the Study

Mrs Lukhele M. P O
Box 395
Litjelembube
2357
25 September 2020

ATT: Mr Sikhosana J. The
Circuit Manager
Mashishila Circuit Private
Bag X 178 Elukwatini
1192

Dear: Sir

Re: Request for the permission to collect research data in Primary Schools under the Mashishila Circuit.

I, Lukhele Murendeni (Student No: 219121923), a registered student for Masters of Education qualification in Early Childhood Development at the University of Mpumalanga. I herewith make a sincere request for your Permission to conduct research in Primary Schools under Mashishila Circuit. The research will conducted in 6 selected schools and twelve foundation phase educators will use questionnaire and each school principal will respond to interview questions. The title of the study is as follows: Perceptions of Educators towards Supporting Learners with Special Educational Needs in the Foundation Phase level: The case of the Mashishila Circuit in the Mpumalanga Province.

I would be greatly assisted if I could be allowed permission to conduct the fieldwork as requested; and I will observe all relevant research ethics in keeping with the University of Mpumalanga standard and requirements. In the process of data collection, I will observe all the professional code of conducts.

Should you have any questions about the research and or the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor at the University of Mpumalanga Dr Severino Machingambi at Severino.Machingambi@ump.ac.za, for further information.

I look forward to your favourable decision

Sincerely

Lukhele   M.

APPENDIX F: Permission Letter to Conduct the Study

education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ikhamanga Building, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200.
Tel: 013 766 5552/5116, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umnyango we Fundo   Departement van Onderwys   Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Enquiries: JC SIKHOSANA
Tel: 017 801 6073
Email: j.sikhosana@education.mpu.gov.za

TO	:	**Ms. M LUKHELE** **STUDENT NO. 219121923** **PO Box 395** **LITJELEMBUBE** **2357**
FROM	:	**Mr. JC SIKHOSANA** **CARE-TAKER CIRCUIT MANAGER** **MASHISHILA CIRCUIT**
DATE	:	**14 OCTOBER 2020**
SUBJECT	:	**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA IN** **PRIMARY SCHOOLS UNDER MASHISHILA CIRCUIT**

The above-indicated subject has reference.

This communiqué serves to confirm that permission is hereby granted to your good self to collect data in Primary Schools in the Mashishila Circuit; which is essential towards your Masters of Education qualification in Early Childhood Development.

The department wishes you success in your endeavor that will ultimately see you contributing positively in the betterment of our country.

Hoping you will find this to be in order.

Yours faithfully

Mr. JC SIKHOSANA
CARE-TAKER CIRCUIT MANAGER
MASHISHILA CIRCUIT

Date 2020/10/16

MPUMALANGA
THE PLACE OF THE RISING SUN

APPENDIX G: Ethical Clearence Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA

RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER

Ref: UMP/Lukhele/MEd/2021
Date: 7 June 2021
Name of Researcher: Murendeni Lukhele
Student number: 219121923
Supervisor: Dr Severino Machingambi
School / Department: Department of Early Childhood Education
Faculty: Faculty of Education

RE: APPROVAL FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR THE STUDY:
Perceptions of Grade 3 Educators in three schools in Mashishila Circuit towards Supporting Learners with Special Educational Needs in their classes.

Reference is made to the above heading.

I am pleased to inform you that the Chairperson has on behalf of the University of Mpumalanga's Research Ethics Committee, **approved ethical clearance** of the above mentioned study.

Please note:
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interviews Schedule, Informed Consent form, Title of the project, Location of the study, Research Approach and methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/ modification prior to its implementation.

Prof Estelle Boshoff
Chairperson: University of Mpumalanga's Research Ethics Committee.
Date: 7 June 2021

APPENDIX H: Proof Reading and Editing Certificate

Editing Certificate

This hereby serves to confirm that I, Dr Pamela Makati, edited the MEd dissertation titled "Perceptions of Grade 3 educators in Mashishila Circuit towards supporting learners with special educational needs in their classes" by Lukhele Murendeni. I declare that I have ensured clarity, coherence and cohesion in the presentation of ideas, corrected grammar, spellings and language use, and ensured consistency in spellings, language use and formatting. I have also ensured correct Harvard referencing style.

PMakati
_____

Dr Pamela Makati (D Litt. in English, MA in English, BA Hons in English)
Academic Editor (member of PEG, SATI & EASA)
Date: 08 November 2022

APPENDIX I : Turnitin Similarity Report

Masters Dissertation