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AN ESSENTIAL ASSESSMENT OF DESTITUTION AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING IN LIMPOPO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

Elizabeth Mantlhapane Dikgale

220151903

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Supervisor: Dr Metse Juliet Masalesa

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DECLARATION

Name: ELIZABETH MANTLHAPANE DIKGALE

Student number: 220151903

Degree: CODE: MEDECE (MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILD EDUCATION)

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I, Elizabeth Mantlhapane Dikgale, hereby declare that this paper, titled "An essential assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in Limpopo elementary schools" is original to me and has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for academic credit. I further certify that sources have been fully acknowledged in the text and in the reference section. I also understand that any unethical academic conduct, which includes plagiarism, is seen in a serious light by the University of Mpumalanga and punishable by disciplinary action. I also vouch that I have not already submitted this work.

Elizabeth Mantlhapane Dikgale

STUDENT NUMBER: 220151903

Signature: _~~Dm Dikgale~~_ Date: 10 September 2023.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, who has been an inspiration and supported me in this journey of research. I would like to thank my husband and my children for their support, prayers, and tolerance. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved sisters, relatives, and friends.

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ABSTRACT

Although, hundreds of studies have documented the relationship between family poverty and children's health, and achievement and behaviour, few measure the effects of the timing, depth, and duration of poverty on children. Many studies fail to adjust for family characteristics, for example, mother's age and schooling, that may account for many of these observed correlations between poverty and child outcomes in the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province. This study sought to examine a recent set of studies that explore the relationship between poverty and child outcomes in depth. Largely, this research supports the conclusion that family income has selective, but in some instances quite substantial, effects on the child and their well-being. Family income appears to be more strongly related to children's ability and achievement than to their emotional outcomes. Children who live in outrageous destitution or beneath the poverty line for a long time, suffer the worst.

Keywords: Barriers, Education, Limpopo, Poverty, Socio-economic issues

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Poverty and limited resources continue to plague the educational landscape of South Africa despite the giant strides made so far in this regard. Destitution is a major issue in South Africa, especially for underprivileged learners. The learners generally encounter several hurdles to learning, such as malnutrition, inadequate healthcare, a lack of access to necessary resources, and limited family and community support. Therefore, understanding destitution as a barrier to learning is crucial in addressing this challenge and improving learners' academic outcomes.

In many primary schools in Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province, South African children live with the reality of destitution. Research has shown that a child's performance in school is strongly related to their socio-economic status, and that education often offers a means of breaking the cycle of poverty for children in low-income families (Gallagher 2020). For the parents, buying these supporting resources is regarded as a waste of money and of no value whilst they can hardly afford to buy food. The child's performance will drop far below the expected level.

While it is known that education can allow individuals to rise out of poverty, it has also been shown that the educational barriers related to poverty affect academic achievement. Canadian research confirms poverty's negative influence on student behaviour, achievement, and retention in school (Flessa, 2018). Both Canadian and other international research has shown that the effects of poverty can be reduced using sustainable interventions (Ferguson et al., 2019).

1.1.1 Background

Limpopo Province is one of South Africa's low-income area (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The province shares border with Mozambique, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. The

low socio-economic status of the provinces delineates its educational standard (Gadisi et al., 2020). Concerned policy and decision makers have focused attention and resources towards a wide access to standard elementary education. However, the educational spectrum of Limpopo provinces grapples with some fundamental hurdles owing to the lingering poverty among school children.

The literature has substantially established the strong correlation between child poverty and their academic performances. One such study examined the effects of poverty and the quality of the home environment on changes in the academic and behavioural adjustment of elementary school-aged children (Dubow & Ippolito, 2020). Beyond the notable consequences that poverty exhibits in learning potentials and performances. These risk factors included the absence of a father figure, the number of children at home, and maternal education. Moreover, amongst these risk factors, poverty ranks highest in the magnitude of negative consequences on elementary school children learning outcomes and social behaviour (Dubow & Ippolito, 2020). In addition, poor families with many dependent children may see the need to take children out of school or education early or marry their daughters off young for financial security.

Additionally, children of parent who often leaves home early and return late are left in the care of the grandparents who are not educated. The vulnerability of the children to guardians who fails to meet up with the basic educational and intellectual needs is a critical contributing factor to the various domains of their learning challenges. Furthermore, previous studies have revealed that chronic poverty is not only associated with lags in development and educational achievement, but also with deficits in social development. It is interesting to note that while several researchers have suggested educational intervention as the ideal means of reversing the academic deficits of children living in poverty, one study believes that educational intervention with youngsters would be powerless, unless enhanced and supported by different intercessions at different social levels (Gallagher 2020). If the education of a child cannot be supported at numerous social levels, the intervention would be powerless.

Payne, (2021) points out that children raised in low-income families score lower than children from more affluent families on assessments of health, cognitive development, school achievement and emotional well-being. According to Payne (2021), four responses were identified as being effective in promoting learning for at-risk learners: developmental preschool programmes, supplemental reading programmes, reducing class size, and school wide projects in prevention and support.

Children from affluent families do well because they have educated parents who motivate or take more interest in their children's progress at school. These children do not struggle to get devices like laptops and smart phones to do their work, or even work online. Those from poverty-stricken families lack motivation and encouragement to succeed in their studies and drop out of school. They give up and resort to crime for survival. Middle-class parents visit schools more and usually request to see the class educator and the principal whilst poverty-stricken parents are usually satisfied to see the class educator only if called to the school.

School absenteeism is mainly related to two explanations: one being familial circumstances, for example irresponsible parents, low income, and related disadvantages; and the other being the school, which may not be well organised or able to meet the needs of the pupils. School absenteeism is strongly associated with child poverty, with pupils at primary school being much more likely to be affected by the areas' economics and employment deprivation than their counterparts at secondary schools.

1.1.2 Rationale and Purpose of the study

Every child deserves quality education, however, impoverished South African learners face many obstacles that limit their education and academic performance (Maebana et al., 2022). Destitution affects learners' food and healthcare, and consequently has a long-term impact on learners' academic performance and attendance, contributing to South African society's disparities. Destitution as a barrier to learning is understudied in South Africa, notably in Limpopo Province. Thus, this dissertation is aimed at assessing destitution's effects on Limpopo's elementary school children's

learning experiences and outcomes. This dissertation examines the challenges and opportunities facing impoverished children and identifies strategies and interventions that can help to mitigate the effects of destitution on their academic outcomes and overall well-being. This research is further motivated by the need to address South Africa's education inequities and examines how impoverishment affects learners' academic results and attendance to better understand these discrepancies and find solutions. The outcome of this research could inform education policy and practice, particularly in Limpopo Province, and improve education for all South African learners.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

South Africa's poverty, especially in rural communities like Limpopo, is still rooted in economic disparities. Since the official end of apartheid in 1994, the country has been struggling to combat entrenched poverty and inequalities. About 20% of the population lives below the food poverty line, meaning they cannot afford food that meets a minimum calorie intake (UN 2023 report of the World Summit for Social Development). South Africa's nation's wealth is still concentrated in the hands of a few, which means the country still suffers from serious poverty and high unemployment.

Education in rural areas suffers even more because of the barriers presented by the location. Critical resources such as water, electricity, books, and technology are missing from many schools, which present obstacles for South African children, who cannot have a complete educational experience. Another challenge is brought about by where the school is situated, and children are presented with long commutes (Gwangwa, 2017). Without reliable transportation, learners and educators both struggle to consistently arrive at school on time.

The South African education system, characterised by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and relatively poor educational outcomes, is perpetuating inequality and as a result failing too many of its children, with the poor being the hardest hit, according to a new report published by Amnesty International (Mohamed, 2020). Most schools in poor communities still use pit latrines, which in the past has resulted in the death of primary school children in Limpopo who fallen into these pit

latrines, whilst the white communities have proper resource infrastructure (Mohamed, 2020). These circumstances aggravate the situation, and the educational outcomes remain poor. A recent international survey found that more than three quarters of children aged nine could not read for meaning. This is as high as 91% in Limpopo and 85% in the Eastern Cape. In addition, of 100 learners that start school, 50-60 will make it to matric, 40-50 will pass matric and only 14 will go to university (Mohamed, 2020).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

South Africa has made giant strides towards improving the standard and qualities of the entire spectrum of learning in recent years. However, Limpopo provinces still grapples with numerous hurdles in this space particularly confronting learners at the elementary level (Kyei. 2014; Maebana et al., 2022). Destitution remains a challenge which delineates Limpopo elementary school thus necessitating a holistic assessment of the dimensions of this challenge to unveils its pertinent drivers and causes and viable approach for addressing the influence on elementary student's learning success.

However, there is a paucity of research on how destitution affects elementary school learners. The province's low economy affects learners and impacts the academic performance of learners. Despite these issues, there have not been many studies conducted in this space, making it difficult to identify their individual needs and devise suitable treatments. Most studies on impoverishment and education in South Africa have focused on urban areas, leaving a huge knowledge deficit for rural learners in Limpopo. This research fills this gap by assessing destitution's effects on Limpopo's primary school learners and will highlight their unique challenges while adding to the body of knowledge about destitution and education in South Africa, particularly in rural areas.

South African education is defined by persisting inequities, especially for impoverished learners (De Clercq, 2020). This disparity is exacerbated by destitution. Poor learners attend underfunded classrooms without textbooks, lab equipment, or computers. This is a critical gap in the research space which requires significant attention. This

research seeks to understand these gaps in education outcomes and identify opportunities while seeking for viable interventions to address these concerns. Notably, the deficiencies in the relevant regulatory policy framework int this regards to mitigate the consequences which delineates the educational sector is a critical factor of consideration in South African's context. This research thus seeks ways to mitigate the negative impacts of these hurdles on student's performance using elementary schools in Limpopo province as a case study.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

Poverty, unemployment, unequal opportunity, racism, and malnutrition are examples of social problems. So are substandard housing, employment discrimination, inadequate childcare, and neglect (Wasik & Snell, 2018:15). However, the focus of this investigation is the learners in the Foundation Phase in Limpopo Schools. The main research question is:

What are the barriers to learning under the inclusive education system in Limpopo elementary schools?

The following sub-questions were raised:

1. What are the attitudes toward inclusive education among educators in elementary schools in Limpopo?
2. What are the factors influencing the attitude towards inclusive?
3. What is the impact of inclusion on the assessment practice of educators?
4. What assessment techniques are available to educators for identifying learners with barriers in elementary schools in Limpopo?

1.5 THE AIM OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

According to Taylor (2021: 8), main aims are used to describe the most crucial thing that we want to accomplish in a lesson or a series of lessons (sequence) e.g., sometimes we might want learners to gain a full understanding of a new language and

practice using it. The aim of the research was to investigate how Foundation Phase teachers implement inclusive practices in a full-service school.

The objectives were:

- to investigate how Foundation Phase teachers are managing inclusive practices in their classrooms;
- to explore the competencies that Foundation Phase teachers have to implement inclusive practices;
- to determine the support, the Foundation Phase teachers, receive in the context of a full-service school; and
- to conduct an inquiry into the successes and challenges that Foundation Phase teachers experience when implementing inclusive practices.

The research will assist (DBE, 2010:26) to put more effort into staff development, learner-educator and support material and time frames (Educator's Guide, 2003:23).

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When conducting the study, the researcher used her knowledge and experience to structure the inquiry; hence, it is important to note that research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum. The term "theoretical framework" is defined by Radhakrishna, as a conceptual model of how one theory makes logical sense of the relationship between several factors that have been identified as the problem. It positions the research in the discipline or subject in which the researcher is working (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2019:25). For Merriam (2020), a theoretical framework forms the "Scaffolding" or the underlying structure of the study.

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2006:40), Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory has a significant influence on shaping how different levels of a system in the social context interact in the process of child development. For Bronfenbrenner (cited in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006:41-42) child development happens within four nested systems, the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, and macro-systems, which all interact with the Chronosystem.

In this study, the researcher will adopt Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and Freire's human capital theory (Freire, 2018), to gather information related to learners experiencing barriers to learning in primary school. The Freirean approach focuses on empowerment through education. By providing basic education to the illiterate population, those who are afforded the opportunity will develop cognitive and literacy skills that will help them deal with the daily socio-economic challenges they face instead of always waiting for the government to solve their problems.

1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.7.1 Research approach and design

The research approach is a plan and procedure that consists of the steps of broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It is, therefore, based on the nature of the research problem being addressed. The research approach is essentially divided into two categories:

- the approach of data collection and
- the approach of data analysis or reasoning.

The researcher followed the qualitative research process, which, consists of interviews, questionnaires, and observations. Qualitative design is further classified into interactive design, which uses face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in their natural setting, and a non-interactive design, which investigates concepts and events through an analysis of documents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2018:26-27). Purposive sampling was used to select educators who were teaching classes in the foundation phase from Grade 1 to 3, as well as HOD's of schools in Limpopo Province. The sample consisted of three mainstream primary schools in the area. Three foundation phase educators per school from Grade 1-3 were selected, and one HOD from the chosen schools was included in the study. A research design is a strategy for answering your research question using empirical data. Creating a research design means making decisions about: Your overall research objectives and approach. Whether you'll rely on primary research or secondary research.

1.7.2 Sample

A sample is viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested (De Vos et al., 2018. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, guided by a process that provides rich and detailed data on the problem of study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen 1993:33 as cited in 2021). Sampling depends on the researcher's judgement of who can provide reliable information. In this study, educators in the early childhood development phase were selected from three different primary schools in the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an inductive way of organising data into categories and identifying patterns (i.e., relationships) among those categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2018). After completing data collection, the researcher conducted the analysis.

1.8 CONCEPTS CLARIFICATION

1.8.1 Poverty

Poverty often means having limited access to healthcare, food and housing security, greater risk of school drop-out for children, homelessness, unemployment due to lack of education, or childcare and, unfortunately, not reaching one's full potential (Brown 2020). If these basic needs are not met, it can affect the child's level of concentration and even cognitive skills.

1.8.2 Limpopo Province

Limpopo is a South African province bordering Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. It is known for the bushveld and wildlife reserves including part of the Kruger National Park. "The fact the Limpopo Department of Education says that it will take an estimated 14 years to replace all pit latrines in the province public schools is shocking. Given the recent deaths, it is unacceptable that the government cannot guarantee that more children won't die this year or any coming years for that matter,"

said Mohamed (2020:15). Without proper infrastructure quality education cannot be guaranteed.

1.8.3 Education

Education is often referred to as the great equaliser: It can open doors to jobs, resources, and skills that a family needs to not just survive but thrive. Access to high-quality primary education and supporting child well-being is a globally recognised solution to the cycle of poverty (Giovelti, 2020). If poor children fail to access high and quality primary education, it will be almost impossible for them to break the cycle of poverty.

1.8.4 Socio-economic issues

Social and economic factors, such as income, education, employment, community safety and social support, can significantly affect how well and for how long we live. For example, employment provides income that shapes choices, about housing, education, childcare, food, medical care and more (Bullock, 2018). If a child does not have an education the chances of being employed are very slim. The child will not be able to afford healthcare, proper housing and food. In the long run, there could be problems in the community in which she or he lives in because they will resort to crime as a means of survival.

1.8.5 Barrier

Something material that blocks or is intended to block, passage. Anything, either natural or manmade, that keeps something from passing through/ a boundary or limit (Webster, 2021). Children living in poverty face many barriers to accessing education. The barriers range from overcrowded classrooms, absenteeism by both educators and learners, gender roles, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds or communities who are more likely to miss out on school, including girls and children with disabilities.

1.9 ISSUES OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability and validity are ways of demonstrating and communicating the rigour of research processes and the trustworthiness of research findings (Murphy & Dingwall, 2020). If research is to be helpful, it should avoid bias. Researcher bias tends to result from selective observation, the selective recording of information and allowing one's personal views and perspectives to affect how data is interpreted and how the research is conducted (Johnson & Christensen, 2019:275). Reliability means the researcher needs to be consistent. Validity simply means that a test or instrument accurately measures what it is supposed to (Stephanie, 2016).

Lincoln and Guba (in Dorney, 2011:57) propose four alternative constructs that more accurately reflect assumptions of the qualitative paradigm. They are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Credibility, or the truth-value of the study, was enhanced by continuing data collection over a long enough period to ensure that the participants had become used to the researcher and were behaving naturally. Transferability, or applicability of the results to other contexts, was achieved by reporting thick descriptions. "Thick descriptions" refers to the process of using multiple perspectives to explain the insights gleaned from the study (Mackey & Gass, 2021:180).

Dependability, or consistency of findings, was achieved since the interviews were recorded. Electronically recorded data helped the researcher to make use of interpretive cues in order to draw inferences and evaluate the dependability of the inferences that had been drawn (Mackey & Gass, 2021:81). Conformability or neutrality of findings was achieved since full details of the data on which claims, or interpretations were based were made available. Other researchers will be able to examine the data and confirm, modify, or reject the interpretations.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations for this research included Informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and only assessed relevant components.

Active consent involves consenting to participate in a research study by signing a consent form (Johnson & Christensen, 2019:114). Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee at Mpumalanga University's Education Faculty.

Full details concerning the procedures, purpose of the research as well as the benefits of the study were presented to all participants and subjects. All participants were given details that participation was optional, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

The participants were guaranteed that no threats or psychological pain would be caused because of their participation in the investigation. They were reassured of secrecy and impartiality. They were also made aware that their names would not be disclosed, and they would also benefit from the study. Participating schools and educators would be offered feedback on the results if required.

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A vital limitation of this research is the sample size. Logistical or access constraints made it difficult to sample pupils and schools in the entire Limpopo Province. The findings may also be limited by the sample size. Generalisability may also limit the study. This research may only apply to Limpopo Province. This was considered when interpreting and applying the study's findings. The study is limited to primary schools (Foundation or Early Development Phase) and its learners and educators. Learners were not included in the interviews due to informed consent difficulty in learners of this age group, who have limited ability to fully express, reflect and elaborate on their experiences. Despite these constraints, this research can benefit South African education. This dissertation acknowledges these limitations and recommends further future studies to resolve them and better understand how deprivation affects learners in Limpopo Province.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review, according to Creswell (2020: 80), is a composed synopsis of diary articles, books and different reports that describe the past and the current situation with data about exploration study. The reason for writing a survey in any review is to differentiate what has been done from what should be done and help the researcher in finding pertinent factors applicable to the topic. This chapter will examine current research in-depth that can lead to a better understanding of the problem and assist to identify possible solutions to help children, educators, and families in overcoming educational barriers related to poverty. The study also looks at the child's early years of development, using two main theoretical frameworks, Bronfenbrenner ecological system and Freire theory of learning supporting inclusive education, specifically, learners with barriers related to poverty.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM THEORY AND FREIRE THEORY OF LEARNING.

Theory can be defined as a carefully thought-out clarification for perception of the natural world, which utilises scientific methods and which unites numerous realities and hypothesis (Angielezyk, 2017). Theories derive their meaning from the information people collect through the five senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and feeling (Henning, Van Rensberg & Smit, 2019:14). It is important to know that, although theories are abstract principle set of facts with knowledge, they guide and give meaning into specific situations. According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2019:9), a theory can be characterised as a set of thoughts, suppositions and ideas requested so that it educates us regarding the world, ourselves, or part of the real world. Since theories do not have to be based on facts or truths, they can continuously change as individuals effectively draw meaning from them. Since the full intricacy of life cannot be caught by a solitary hypothesis and afterward extricate reality as material

to a specific setting, it is basic to concentrate on various theories and concentrate on reality as relevant to a specific context (Swart & Pettipher, 2019:10). In this study, the researcher adopted Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and Freire's theory of learning to accumulate data related to destitution as a barrier to learning in foundation phase in an inclusive classroom.

2.2.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory.

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory the development of a child as an arrangement of interrelated systems is impacted by different levels of climate, from the quick setting of family and school to wide social qualities, regulations, and customs (Guy-Evans, 2020). To concentrate on a child's development then, we should not just look at the child and their prompt climate, yet additionally at the effect of the bigger environment too. Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory centres on the quality and setting of the child's current circumstances. He expresses that as the child develops, the interaction inside these conditions turns out be more complicated yet interlinked. The intricacy can emerge as the child's physical and mental designs grow and develop (Guy-Evans, 2020). All these ever-changing processes interact with other systems and in that way affect each other in providing support for the learner. Bronfenbrenner accepted that an individual's improvement is the result of a correlation between social, monetary, political, and mental frameworks (Swart & Pettipher, 2011:10). In a comprehensive school system, there is an intricacy of collaborations and interrelationships among learners and different frameworks in the public eye, like homeroom, school, family, community, and government. Bronfenbrenner's (1974) theory is similar in some respects to Albert Bandua's social learning theory and Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. All the three stated theories suggest that the climate is a pivotal system in the child's development. All theories state that the environment you grow up in affects every facet of your life development directly. For Bronfenbrenner (cited in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006:41-42), child advancement occurs inside four-settled systems, namely, the miniature or micro-system, meso-system, exo-system and large scale or macro-system, which all collaborate with the chrono-system. This study embraced Bronfenbrenner's exo-systemic outline because

his model clearly defines how the environment affects the execution of comprehensive schooling, particularly among learners with barriers in foundation phase. Bronfenbrenner separates these advancements into five subsystems, which all impact on the development of the child.

2.2.1.1. The Micro-system

The micro-system is the first and the most persuasive and influential level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, and the factors that have direct contact with the child in their nearby environmental setting include, the developing child, guardians, siblings, educators, and school peers. Connections in a micro-system are bi-directional, meaning others can influence the child's convictions and activities and vice versa. Parents play a very important role in the micro-system from when the child is born until adulthood. The child's bond with the family is not just social but also biological. What we acquire from our parents, for example, incorporates hereditary and organic qualities like behaviour, preferences, norms, and beliefs. In the event that a child's parent is effectively engaged with the fellowship of their child, for instance, they welcome their child's friends over to their home, there's an opportunity to invest time and energy with them, then the child's improvement is impacted decidedly. On the other hand, if the parents have relationship with the child's educators, this connection may influence the child's development positively.

However, far off and unaffectionate guardians will adversely affect the child. Instructors ought to be able to comprehend their learners' families who might be encountering challenges, including social and monetary challenges that may affect their learners. These factors are an essential component that interlink with the aspects that are essential for the different frameworks. Physiological challenges such as hunger may adversely affect the learner's capabilities to take part or perform optimally in learning opportunities.

2.2.1.2 The Meso-system

According to Bronfenbrenner (cited in Drew, 2022) the Meso-system is the circle where the child's micro-systems communicate with one another, and thus impacts the

child. For example, the school and the family are two micro-systems. At the point when the child's educators at school communicate with the guardian in giving criticism (the child is a quick learner, or the child experiences issues fitting in), this circles once more into forming the child's character. For instance, a child who is neglected or abused at home might struggle to develop emotionally and communication with companions and educators will be troublesome. The meso-system is thus seen where individual micro-systems do not work freely yet are interconnected and influence one another. The child might feel lonely and isolate himself or herself from peers thus missing the opportunity to learn from others.

2.2.1.3 The Exo-system

The prefix 'exo' denotes the outside. Subsequently an exo-system connects with factors that are not directly connected with the youngster but affect the child. An example of an exo-system is when one or both the guardians have work that requires migrating, serving in the military for instance, the child might need to move schools and make new companions most of the time. Each level of this framework enjoys its own benefits and inconveniences. Each of these levels have similar significance to one another. The variables in this framework can influence the improvement pace of a child. For instance, if a youngster's parents lose their employment, it can turn into an issue for the child. The parents will not have many options except to purchase food and pay the lease.

2.2.1.4 The Macro-system

The macro-system is part of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that highlights what social components mean for a child's turn of events, like financial status, riches, destitution, and identity. The macro-system is the bigger, all-encompassing social, and political setting in which the child thinks of itself as implanted. For example, various social orders have different social standards and values that youngsters assimilate. A child residing in an ancestral local area in sub-Saharan Africa is moulded by an alternate macro-system than another child experiencing childhood in a metropolitan Scandinavian town. The socio-economic factors can play a big role in the child's

development, if the child's parents are poor because of lack of education and in turn unable to earn good salaries and meet their child's needs, the child can ultimately be discouraged and drop out of school, thus promoting the cycle of recurring poverty.

2.2.1.5 The Chrono-system

'Chronos' means time in Greek, and the chrono-system connected with the arrangement of changes that happen in an individual's life throughout some undefined timeframe. The progressions could be private occasions, like conflicts, catastrophic events, and so on. The chrono-system consequently broadens well past the child's transformative phase, and records factors influencing human improvement all through their life. This framework comprises of each of the ecological changes that happen over the time of their existence which influence improvement, including significant changes, for example, beginning school, and guardians getting a separation or moving to another house. When parents get divorced this can have a negative impact on the child's performance at school since parents going through the process can neglect the child thus causing the child to be vulnerable and could lead to abuse. Bronfenbrenner additionally recommended that, to comprehend the impact of these proximal cycles on advancement, we need to focus on the individual, setting and formative results as these cycles shift and influence individuals in an unexpected way (Bronfenbrenner & Evans 2000). Understanding how these proximal cycles interact and shape individuals in their respective environments, will help developing a child especially those with learning barriers in an inclusive classroom.

2.3 FREIRE'S CRITICAL THEORY OF LEARNING

Freire's critical pedagogy theory is one more fitting theory to this review since it focuses on empowering and transforming the marginalised communities and learners through education, especially learners with barriers to learning. Basic teaching methods are both the theory and practice that assist learners with creating basics cognizance. These methods concerned with the change relationship force which may be severe, and which prompts the persecution of people. It endeavours to acculturate and engage learners. Freire (2018) states it is important to focus on the provincial

reality to change instruction to the real factors of the country. As a matter of a fact, they have attempted to concentrate in instructive anticipating the way any educational program should be founded on current real factors of the lower society. Educational plan arranging ought to have the option to acquire the regressive network in the society, the public into standard of instruction and make them mindful of their political freedoms. Educators ought to enable their learners by making them mindfulness about the reproducibility of the course of inconsistent status in high school training and offering social foundations (Freire, 2018). It is the duty of educators to possess knowledge, skills, and capabilities to be able to scrutinise and change existing disparities in the public eye. Educators ought to utilise the technique considering opposing inquiries during instruction, pose questions about issues in the learners' everyday environment, and permit them to basically think and allow the learners to create new value of life for themselves (Freire, 2018). Such conditions of teaching can help to offer the learner a chance to pursue self-decision and self-navigation. Freire's principal objective is libertarianism, so the educational programme ought to have correspondence with the conventional and social setting. In light of their attitude towards educational programme advancement, the school cannot be isolated from the economy and useful establishments as well as governmental issues (Keesing-Styjes, 2018). Freire's critical pedagogy theory also emphasises that educators must be aware of challenges and the family situations of the learners they are teaching, what these learners are encountering socially and economically. Economically, lack of money can prevent the child from getting a better education since their parents will not be able to afford the best private performing schools. On the other hand, if they fail to supply the child with their basic needs like food, the child who is hungry will not be able to concentrate thus their performance will drop and the child will fail to perform optimally.

2.4 RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY CAUSED BY APARTHEID PAST

Poverty is one of major threats to the realisation of children's rights worldwide and in South Africa. This places all other rights at risk, the right guaranteed by the South African constitution and by the United Nations convention. Poverty and inequality in

South Africa continue to worsen. There are particularly vulnerable groups of children, such as those infected by HIV/AIDS, those leaving on the streets, children of farm workers and illegal immigrants. These children face discrimination, isolation and extreme hardship (Du Plessis and Conley 2020). Frye (2019) reinforces the idea that South African social security laws are still based on the pre-1994 Social Assistance Act, with tweaks. These laws were aimed at the well-being of white South Africans in the context of virtual full employment for white men. They do not accommodate the lifelong income poverty of millions marginalised from decent work. Because of these historic apartheid inequalities, which have been aggravated by some of the choices made by our leaders, the inequality in South Africa is staggering. We rank as the most unequal country in the world.

2.4.1 Racial Discrimination Policies

The South African Colonial and apartheid past is a classic example of the manifestation of Sen (2020) and Haswell's (1975 as revised by Handwerker 2019) definition of poverty, since on the most basic level of understanding, these definitions encapsulate what happened to the black majority. These definitions encapsulate poverty experienced by people living in informal settlements today. According to Sen (2020: 40), capabilities constitute a person's freedom, a person's real opportunity to achieve well-being. He describes education as a basic capability, part of their centrally important being and doings that are crucial for well-being. Hoffman (2018:2) also takes this view, seeing access to education and the promotion of a concrete set of basic learning outcomes as foundational to other capabilities. Osman (2022) says poverty can be regarded as failure to take part in community life. The researcher supports the above definitions because education is a key to free a person from hunger, to combat poverty, to get a decent job and to be able to voice one's thoughts and concerns in the community. Racial discrimination policy has also promoted high levels of inequality with black people inheriting schools that are under resourced, poor primary healthcare services and poor infrastructure. The economy, farms, factories, mines, and production remain in the hands of minority whites.

2.4.2 Poor households and spread of HIV/AIDS

Recent studies in Africa show that girls aged 15-19 years are eight times more likely to be HIV-positive than boys in the same age range, and between the ages of 20-24 years, women are still three times more likely to be infected than men their age (UNICEF, 1999b:6). Girls are the first to be withdrawn from school, particularly secondary school, when the household encounters economic pressure. Thus, engaging in a sexual relationship with an older man represents the only way for a girl to continue her education. It becomes common practice that these girls will be dependent on older men, or sugar daddies, who are often married to sponsor their studies in return for sexual favours. The end result is that many of these girls' contract HIV/AIDs. For Du Plessis and Conley (2020), poor community and households are most heavily affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS. Families living with this disease are likely to lose wages, or self-employment income if an earner gets sick, while having to spend a larger portion of income on healthcare and funeral expenses. If these children are infected by HIV/AIDS there is a greater chance they will miss school, thus deepening poverty. On the other hand, if these children's parents have died from AIDS, they will be vulnerable to rejection by their peers and community members due to the stigma attached to AIDS. The difficulty these girls face is huge, and if they drop out of school their stepfathers and exploitation of early marriages to older men, can leave them vulnerable to abuse.

2.5 LACK OF PHYSICAL NEEDS

According to White (2021), a lack of food security and clean water are two big reasons why children and their families struggle to break free from a life of inequality and marginalisation to experience the opposite of poverty – a life in which enough food, clean water, and opportunity, are available to render the disadvantage of poverty harmless. Collecting clean water also takes valuable time, mostly for women and girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, for 29% of the population (37% in rural areas and 14% in urban areas), improved drinking water sources are 30 minutes or more away. The United Nations estimates that collectively; 200 million hours are spent collecting

water every day. Without nutritious food and clean water, one could struggle to gain a proper education, which in turn can deprive them from getting proper job opportunities and breaking the cycle of poverty. Poverty remains a factor in school dropout rates despite pro-poor policies to address barriers to access. This is partly because poor learners continue to face the access cost, uniforms in particular remain a burden for poor households and in some cases a barrier to access (Strasburg et al., 2020). If children are temporarily turned away from school for not having a school uniform this could lead to missing important information, discouragement and dropping out of school. Thus, poverty as a barrier will continue to rise, robbing these children of the chance to better their lives. According to Banovcinova (2018), people on a low income increasingly tend to live alongside others who are materially disadvantaged. Deprived neighbourhoods have inadequate housing and a lack of basic amenities and services, all of which can contribute to stress. Balancing safety with opportunities for children's development adds to pressure for parents. However, more families on low incomes live outside of deprived areas than in them, meaning that localised policies alone will not tackle poverty. Living on a low income can bring multiple stresses such as food and fuel poverty, debt, dispossession, and restricted social opportunities affecting family relationships, harming parent's physical and mental health, and contributing to feelings of stigma, isolation, and exclusion for the whole family (Banovcinova, 2018). If parent's physical and mental health is affected, they will fail to support the child with their schoolwork, and the child will also be isolated and ultimately drop out of school (Banovcinova, 2018),

2.6 HEALTH, WELL-BEING, AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

The link between poverty and health is undeniable. In countries where health systems are weak, easily preventable and treatable illnesses like malaria, diarrhoea, and respiratory infections can be fatal, especially for young children. In rural communities especially, people must travel far from home, adding transportation costs to fees associated with doctors' visits and medication. Many must choose between food and medical care, an impossible decision (White, 2021). The United Nations believes that many people living in poverty have little to no access to medical care; and it is very

difficult to measure the rate at which people are dying from poverty. According to Porter (2017), poverty creates ill-health because it forces people to live in environments that make them sick, without decent shelter, clean water, or adequate sanitation. Poverty creates hunger, which in turn leaves people vulnerable to disease. It also highlights the link between good health and economic survival. One of the barriers to people living in poverty is accessing treatment because of lack of medical aid. The cost for mental health providers usually very high and requires several visits before prescribing treatment. Stigma surrounding mental health, can force parents not to believe in themselves, which in turn will affect children who need their support. Roberts (2018) reinforces that lives lost means reduced economic production as well as personal tragedy. Production is further slowed while people are ill or caring for others. There were 1.7 million HIV-related deaths in 2007 and 990 000 deaths from Tuberculosis. Most of these were among young adults in their most productive years. The cost of doctors' fees to care for a member of a family who is ill, can mean a child may have to give up her education, and look for waged work to support the household's finances. Missing education can negatively affect a woman's opportunity to better her life and health.

New evidence compiled by the World Health Organization and the World Bank (2021), shows that the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to halt two decades of global progress towards Universal health coverage. The organisation also revealed that even before the pandemic more than half a billion people were affected with extreme poverty because they had to pay for health services out of their own pockets, and that the pandemic is likely to make the situation worse. The pandemic also triggered the worst economic crisis since the 1930s, making it increasingly difficult for people to pay for care. The researcher also supports the report compiled by the World Health Organization and World Bank because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the poorest groups and those living in rural areas have very slim chances of coping with paying medical expenses from their own pockets. A recent study in Bagamoyo, Tanzania revealed that 55% of boys and 37.5% of girls were contributing to schooling costs through casual work (Bendera 2022:124). Children are used on both a part- time and full-time

basis as casual farm workers, hawkers of food stuffs, clothing, and miscellaneous items, house-girls, assistants in home beer brewing, and in the manufacturing industry, while the feminisation of child labour is mostly found in domestic labour and commercial sexual exploitation (Bendera, 2022:118). Cost- sharing in the education sector has resulted in sharply declining primary school enrolment rates, accompanied by high drop-out rates and very low performance, particularly of girls, because of the inability of parents and guardians to pay school expenses, combined with their need for children's labour at home. The Tanzanian public health service has also become conspicuously underfunded, spending about $3.5 capital per annum, well below what is normally acceptable (Bendera, 2022:118). This has led to a deterioration in staffing, infrastructure and availability of drugs and equipment in basic healthcare, reflecting in the increased mortality rate for children under five, high maternal mortality rate and AIDS (Bendera, 2022:118). This simply means that population is gradually dying of illnesses caused by AIDS. The majority of the 730 000 orphans in Tanzania are being cared for by extended family members. However, many guardians are either too old or too young to meet these orphaned children's material and emotional needs, and many older children leave their adoptive homes and make their way in the informal sector on the streets. Women and girls may suffer most concerning their careers and miss out on bettering their health and standard of living. Orphaned children experience loss, sorrow and suffering long before the death of their parents, due to the psychological trauma of the long-term fatal illness that afflicts their parents, combined with the increasing domestic burden of nursing their dying parents, caring for their siblings or elderly grandparents, and increased work in the fields (UNICEF, 1999b). The distress and social isolation experienced by children, both before and after the death of their parents is exacerbated by the shame, fear, and rejection of the AIDS stigma. As a result, children may be denied access to schooling and healthcare, and their rights to an inheritance and property may be denied, particularly in the case of girls (UNICEF, 1999b; Barnett and Whiteside 2002). Many orphaned children lack the support of parents, are not emotionally supported, and most are left in adoptive homes which in turn pushes them to the streets in search of a better life. Most of these children from AIDS-affected homes are usually not welcomed by their extended families. The

orphaned children usually experience economic exploitation as child domestic workers if they are homeless after having left home; and they are usually paid less or not at all.

Du Plessis and Conley (2020) also support the idea that families in communities heavily burdened by HIV/AIDS are likely to take in children and adults affected by the pandemic, which increases the dependency on the limited income and assets of such households. Children in households affected by HIV/AIDS risk missing school, either to care for a sick household or to try and earn money to supplement the household income, thereby increasing the likelihood that perpetuates into their generation. Experience in many African countries has shown that a large proportion of orphan caregivers are extended family members. However, capacity and resources are stretched to breaking point, and those providing the necessary care in many cases are already impoverished. In most cases, once the parents are buried, the relatives or extended families do not welcome these children instead they face harassment and abuse.

In response to the fear, harassment and rejection, these children face due to the AIDS stigma, in order to survive they resort to the streets. However, orphaned children's emotional vulnerability and financial desperation being homeless make them particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, abuse and survival sex. Thus, these young people are at a far greater risk of becoming infected with HIV themselves, thereby tragically perpetuating the cycle of poverty, HIV and AIDS which claimed one or both of their parents. (Karlenza, 1998). The exploitation of these girls as domestic workers is linked to the smaller proportion of girls living independently in the street environment. Tanzania suggests that girls only represent an estimated 20-30% of the total number of 'street youth' due to the fact that traditional cultural values restrict girls' freedom of movement compared to boys, thus girls are discouraged from migrating to urban areas, girls who are found on the streets are likely to be recruited into wealthier households as domestic servants, and female children represent a source of revenue for their family in the form of bride price when they get married, leading to forced early marriages (Mwakyanjalo, 2021). This reinforces the idea that girls' presence on the street subverts cultural norms and gender relations more than boys; since girls are

responsible for reproductive duties within their homes, while boys have more freedom to explore public space and engage in income–generation activities in urban areas (Koda, 2020). The researcher supports the above because girls that do not conform to cultural norms of gender are usually sanctioned by society. This limits their movement and chances of getting employment to better their lives.

The power imbalance governing relations between child commercial sex workers and their clients means that 'children have no power to ask for a high fee from adult customers' or to negotiate condom use to protect themselves from STDs and HIV infection. Girls on the streets are at a high risk of sexual coercion, rape, survival sex, pregnancy and infection from sexually transmitted diseases. The perception that street girls face a high level of vulnerability and risk compared to boys is also found in studies conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean and Tanzanian studies on street children perceived this to be the case because commercial sex work seemed to be the only means of income for street girls.

2.7 POVERTY AND EDUCATION

Poverty and education are interconnected. Poverty can affect learners' academic performance, access to education, and educational achievements. Even when they can attend school, low-income children may face extra obstacles that hinder their academic progress (Hofmarcher, 2021). Low-income families may struggle to provide their children with food, shelter, and clothing, making it hard for them to study. They may also lack textbooks, laptops, and internet access, putting them at a disadvantage compared to their wealthier peers. They may struggle to keep up with coursework, finish assignments, and study for examinations.

Education might be one of the keys to decreasing and eradicating poverty, but only quality education, tailored to meet the unique needs of poor, malnourished and/or traumatised children will be truly effective in breaking the poverty education cycle (Bradley, 2017). Educational barriers can take many forms; barriers can be physical, technological, systemic, financial, or attitudinal (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2014). Poverty is often used in international documents to explain limited access to

schools (UNESCO, 2021) and there have been global campaigns to bring down the cost of schooling and increase social spending with some meaningful results. In Kenya, for example, the introduction of fee -free schooling saw a dramatic increase in enrolments (Kattan, 2020). When reading the work of Bradley, UNESCO, 2021 and Kattan all give solutions as much as possible to children with educational barriers.

Poverty affects learners' health and well-being in addition to restricting resources (Al-Jundi et al., 2020). Malnutrition, asthma, and other chronic conditions might hinder learning in low-income learners. Due to financial uncertainty, housing instability, and other circumstances, they may have increased tension and anxiety, making it harder to study. The quality of low-income schools can also affect poverty and education. These schools may be underfunded and under-resourced. Overcrowded classrooms, obsolete texts and technology, and fewer extracurriculars can result. These schools may provide a lower-quality education than those in wealthier communities, which may limit the children's academic and career prospects. Poverty can hinder education, but there are ways to offset its effects (Ingutia et al., 2020). Low-income learners and their families may benefit from additional resources and support. This may include providing food, shelter, medical care, tutoring, mentoring, and other academic support services. Increased funding and resources for low-income schools can also improve education for all learners. Poverty can impair pupils' resources, health, and schooling. These issues must be addressed holistically by supporting low-income families and enhancing low-income schools (Zhang, 2014). Thus, we could ensure that all learners, regardless of socio-economic status, have access to quality education and its benefits (Asongu et al., 2021).

2.7.1 Poverty and poor nutrition

According to Brown (2020), malnutrition affects brain development in many children, and an estimated 151 million children worldwide under the age of five years have been prevented from growing or developing properly due to a lack of food. Reports claim that malnourished children are less likely to be able to read by the age of eight years. Hunger also leads to a lack of focus and concentration, not to mention illness, which could cause children to miss school. Although the relationship between poverty and

schooling is extremely complex there are numerous steps that schools can undertake to mitigate the effects of poverty. This includes initiatives to address the basic needs such as hunger including school meals programmes that do not stigmatise learners. (Flessa, 2018). He furthermore recommends the creation of a school with mixed cohorts of pupils from both advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. Flessa and Nelson both give the remedy to the situation of learners with barriers.

2.7.2 Absenteeism and late coming.

Poverty also affects daily school attendance. A study focusing on children in rural areas by the Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) reveals that domestic and agricultural chores and long-distance travel to school often ate into the school day or resulted in absenteeism (Maarman, 2019). The lack of secondary schools close to home and the cost of transport was perceived to be a primary reason for learners dropping out of school. Poverty remains a factor in school drop-out rates despite pro-poor policies to address areas to access. This is partly because poor learners are continually being faced with other access costs, uniforms remain a burden for poor households and in some cases a barrier to access (Strassburg et al., 2020a). Maarman and Strassburg support each other by giving reason for learner absenteeism. According to the Borgen Project (2020), about 10% of educators across the country are absent from school on any given day and 79% of Grade 6 mathematics educators do not have content knowledge to be teaching at their respective level. The Borgen Project also supports the two researchers above concerning learner and educator absenteeism. Hogan (2020), states that without reliable transportation, learners and educators both struggle to consistently arrive at school. Nortje (2017), also emphasises that the effect of poor infrastructure in schools can also be seen in learners drop-out rates and low-educator retention rates.

Research analyst, White's (2019) poverty and education reports discuss why it is important for educators to understand the structural causes of poverty, and why they must challenge their assumptions about poverty that stigmatise low income children and their families. Data from the 2015 to 2016 National Educator and Principal Survey shows that learners from low-income families "are consistently, albeit modestly, more

likely to be taught by lower prudential and no voice educators "(Garcia and Weiss). Taylor (2017) states that beyond education-related deficiencies, low-income children could experience inadequacy with physical and cognitive development disparity regarding access to healthcare and sources that help ensure success. Furthermore, data shows that low-income parents are five times more likely to drop out of high school than those who are high income and 13 times less likely to graduate from high school. Data from National Educator and Principal Survey, and Taylor both show that a lack of high-quality instruction by qualified educators can have a negative impact on learners' academic achievement.

Woullard (2020), believes that chronic absenteeism can result in poor coping skills and high drop-out rates for learners in low-income areas. Children from certain racial minority backgrounds in poverty or with disabilities, often face distinct challenges in attending school, leading them to miss more relative to their non-minority, more socio-economically advanced and non-disabled peers (Taylor and Francis, 2018). Woullard, Taylor and Francis (2021) also support the idea that absenteeism is highly related to dropout.

2.7.3 Poor infrastructure and overcrowding

According to Brown (2020), the right environment can be pivotal to a child's education; It improves concentration and has the materials that can aid their learning. However, across developing countries, poor classroom facilities mean children often find themselves in overcrowded classrooms, buildings that are falling apart or having to learn outside. A report published by Amnesty International (2020), highlights poor infrastructure in public schools, including sanitation, which has tragically resulted in the death of two children in pit latrines in recent years. Both Brown and Amnesty International highlight the dangerous situation that can hinder education and learner drop-out rates.

2.7.4 Lack of learning materials

According to Brown (2020), a lack of learning material as well as a lack of trained educators, Schools across the globe also lack basic educational resources such as

textbooks, exercise books and worksheets which are in short supply in poorer countries as well as stationery that the developed world takes for granted. Educators too, have fewer materials to help them plan lessons which effects the quality of what children learn. Schools in low-income areas are also typically overcrowded and have limited resources and infrastructure. There are fewer books and computers to go around, and educators may be unqualified to teach their subjects or may be burnt out from operating under prolonged resource strain (Bradley, 2017). Many impoverished families lack access to computers, high-speed internet (three to four households currently have access to high-speed broadband), and other materials that can eat into the student's aid outside school. (Gracia and Weiss, 2015).

Economic emancipation of any nation begins with affording every child the right to basic education. Unfortunately, access to education remains a significant challenge in many parts of Africa. According to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), around 258 million children and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to education. The main reason cited for this is poor infrastructure, insufficient funding, inadequate educator training and outdated curricula. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education has made strides to bridge the gap in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through the introduction of policies. The policies aim to provide quality care and education from birth to age 6, to prepare children for formal schooling. Some of the key ECD policies and programmes in South African rural schools are as follows:

- National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four years (NCF): provides a comprehensive framework for ECD programmes. It is designed to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or location, receive quality ECD services.
- The National Integrated Policy: aims to ensure that all children have access to quality ECD services. In this policy, guidelines, and standards for ECD programmes are provided as well as those specific for rural areas.
- The ECD forum: a tri-partite forum comprising of government (policymakers), practitioners and other stakeholders to discuss ECD issues and share best

practices. This forum includes rural ECD issues such as training, curriculum development and resource provision.

- Conditional grants: provided in provinces with rural areas. These grants are aimed at supporting the implementation of ECD policies and programmes, provide resources to ECD centres and support educator training.
- Home visiting programme: targets rural areas where children may not have access to ECD centres. Trained ECD practitioners visit children in their homes to provide support to parents and caregivers on ECD and offer age-appropriate play-based simulations.

The introduction of ECD programmes in rural schools is a positive step, but there are limitations in its ability to impact quality and accessibility of education. Addressing access and quality gaps in ECD programmes in rural schools requires government support, intervention of private and non-governmental organisations, training and building capacity for parents, educators, advocacy, and community mobilisation. Furthermore, to make ECD programmes effective in rural schools, policymakers and school administrators must consider the unique challenges of the rural environment and develop inclusive approaches and assessment tools that are able to promote learning outcomes for all rural children.

2.8 IMPACT OF POVERTY ON LEARNERS' ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Poverty affects academic performance, while its effect is felt more in a growing economy like the Republic of South Africa. Several parameters which can affect learners' academic performance and widen the achievement gap between poor and fortunate learners are bad housing, healthcare, and education (Asongu et al., 2021). Learners' academic performance suffers from poverty's poor education. Textbooks, computers, and trained educators are scarce in low-income schools. Larger class numbers make it tougher for educators to provide each student with individual attention, lowering academic achievement (Shen & and Del Tufo, 2022)). The literature is replete with studies which established strong correlation between poverty

and a child's readiness for formal education. This encompasses several dimensions such as health, events at home and community, and educational opportunities. Low-income learners also attend schools with lower academic standards, less extracurricular activities, and fewer advanced subjects.

Further to this, children from economically disadvantaged home faces the challenges of getting enough motivations, and thus unable to acquire the required social competence needed for their readiness for school. Prominently this issue is demonstrated in the form of inconsistency in parenting practices, and frequent change of primary caregivers and lack of monitoring and poor role modelling (Ferguson et.al. 2019). Additionally, poverty affects cognitive development and academic preparation. One of the key areas influenced by family income is educational outcomes. Also, persistent socioeconomic disadvantage has a negative impact on the life outcomes of many. There are many challenges faced by children raised in poverty. Some challenges are long term obstacles such as chronic stressors and changes in brain structure that effect emotion and memory. Other challenges are more situational causing emotional and social struggles. Poverty-related stress, anxiety, and trauma can impair cognitive development and reduce academic performance in children. Malnutrition, caused by poverty, can influence learners' cognitive development and academic performance. Poverty puts children in overcrowded, unsafe dwellings with limited access to books, educational toys, and other learning opportunities. Low-income children's parents may be less educated and have less time and money to help their academic development. In addition, children raised in poverty may not have been taught to be polite and may not be socially gracious. This inability to work well with classmates often results in learners becoming unwanted participants in groups, adding to their feelings of inadequacy and resulting in the learners giving up on a task just before they successfully complete it. These factors can hinder learners' academic success (Luby et al., 2013).

Poor learners may also lack academically enriching experiences. Cultural events, museums, and other educational opportunities that broaden viewpoints and spark interest may not be available to them. Learners may struggle academically due to this

lack of exposure. Poverty affects learners' academic performance, and the achievement gap between disadvantaged and fortunate learners remains. Poverty affects learners' academic results by limiting their access to an excellent education, cognitive development, home situations, and academically supportive experiences and opportunities (Nyagwencha-Nyamweya, 2022*).*

2.9 POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT REDUCING POVERTY AND IMPROVING EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

A sustainable regulatory framework in South Africa's legislative arm is critical in alleviating poverty and improving educational standards to foster development across the entire spectrum of the national economic landscape. These policies and activities aim to increase educational equity and quality. The National Development Plan (NDP) is South Africa's most important poverty-reduction and education policy (Adetoro et al. 2023; Cumming et al., 2017). The 2030 NDP aspires to end poverty and inequality. The NDP aims to provide quality education and training to all South Africans, regardless of socio-economic status. The NDP promotes strengthening early childhood development, improving basic education, and increasing post-school education and training.

South Africa has also taken steps to improve basic education. Annual National Assessments (ANA) measure learners' reading and numeracy skills. ANAs are used to detect education system weaknesses and propose interventions to improve student performance. The Curriculum and evaluation Policy Statement (CAPS), the government's new curriculum, provides explicit learning outcomes and evaluation requirements for each grade to improve education. Social handouts reduce poverty and improve education in South Africa. Social grants are government cash handouts to poor families and individuals, namely, the Child Support Grant, Old Age Grant, and Disability Grant. Social handouts help families afford school fees, uniforms, and textbooks, improving education outcomes.

Beyond these grants made available by the government, the government has established Early Child Development (ECD) scheme targeted at fostering

developments across the entire spectrum of early child education. The government has built a nationwide network of ECD facilities and trained and supported ECD practitioners to ensure quality early childhood education. The ECD program has offered immense benefits to the child in assisting them to listen better, enhance their communications and instruction adherence, and ultimately their concentration in task and activities.

Another critical dimension of government's involvement in this endeavour is the establishment of post-secondary student financial assistance at the tertiary level. This funding alleviates learners' financial difficulties at the tertiary level while supporting their education dreams and aspirations. The government also offers vocational education and training to prepare learners for the job and the economy. Despite the government's efforts, poverty and education remain problems. The disparity in resources between wealthy and poor schools is a major issue. Poor schools lack texts, classrooms, and skilled educators. Rich and poor learners have very different educational outcomes.

2.9.1 SIAS Policy (Screening, identification Assessment and Support)

2.9.1.1 Definition

The Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) provides a framework for standardising the procedures for identifying, assessing, and providing programmes for all learners who require additional support to improve their participation and inclusion in the classroom.

2.9.1.2 The Policy's objective

(1) The aim of the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy (SIAS) is to provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess, and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to improve their participation and inclusion in school.

(2) The SIAS policy aims to increase access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who encounter learning barriers, such as:

(a) learners in mainstream schools who are struggling to learn because of obstacles of any kind (family disruption, language barriers, poverty, learning difficulties, disability, etc)

(b) Learners in mainstream schools who are failing academically due to any kind of obstacle (such as family discord, difficulties with language, poverty, learning difficulties, disability, etc.)

(c) Learners with disabilities in special schools where their disability may pose a learning obstacle.

(d) Learners who dropped out of school due to disability-related factors

(3) The policy is closely aligned with the Integrated School Health Policy to establish a streamlined system for prompt identification and efficient intervention to reduce learning breakdown and the possibility of dropping out.

(4) The system is guided by the policy in all aspects of planning, budgeting, and programme support.

(5) In accordance with the recommendations of Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education, the policy needs to be viewed as a key procedure for ensuring the transformation of the educational system in favour of an inclusive system: Building a System of Education and Training that is Open to Everyone.

(7) Another goal of the policy is to give clear instructions on how to enrol learners in special schools and settings. These instructions should also consider how important parents and educators are.

(8) A protocol and a set of official forms are included in the policy to be used in the screening, identifying, and evaluating of barriers faced by learners, educators, and schools to plan support according to programme domains and monitor these by the district-based Support Team.

2.9.1.3 Competencies involving the SIAS Process

Different levels of authority within the system are responsible for different competencies of the SIAS process:

(a) Educators/ Educators

(a) Support groups in schools

(c) District-based support systems.

The SIAS policy specifies screening techniques and procedures for the foundation through senior education levels. Screened learners must be identified as needing more support. This competency includes identifying cognitive, physical, sensory, and emotional impediments to learning and growth. Learners who need more support must be examined to establish their learning and development hurdles. This field requires an understanding of cognitive, educational, and health assessments. After the assessment, learners need appropriate help. This area requires an understanding of special education, therapeutic services, and counselling. Educators, parents, SGBs, and support services providers must work together to execute the SIAS policy. This area requires collaboration and excellent communication with SIAS stakeholders. SIAS requires monitoring and evaluation skills. This requires routinely monitoring the progress of learners who received additional support and assessing the effectiveness of support services.

2.9.2 South African School Act (SASA)

The SASA governs education in South Africa. The 1996 Act governs education governance, finance, and provisions. SASA guarantees basic education for all and defines the education system's goals. It governs, funds, and regulates public and private schools. The statute also specifies national, provincial, and local education duties. SASA requires every public school to have a School Governing Body (SGB). SGBs oversee, manage, and administer their schools and ensure quality education. SASA creates provincial education departments and the Department of Basic Education. These departments execute education policies and evaluate schools. SASA also guarantees special education rights for pregnant, disabled, and

expelled learners, and allows for special schools and special education integration. The Act has been revised multiple times to accommodate education system changes and new issues. The most recent revision, the Basic Education Laws Revision Act of 2011, introduced the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) to evaluate learners' performance and required all learners aged 7–15 years to attend school. SASA is crucial to education in South Africa, affecting learners, instructors, and politicians. The Act ensures that all learners receive quality education and that schools are well-managed and accountable to their communities.

2.9.3 Effectiveness of government policies and programmes aimed at addressing destitution in education.

Destitution hinders education in many developing nations, including South Africa. Destitution's impact on school achievements demands comprehensive and integrated policies and programmes to provide food, shelter, and clothing to disadvantaged learners. Some stakeholders question whether government policies and programmes address education destitution. This section evaluates South African government education impoverishment policies and programmes. Poverty and destitution plague South African schooling. Income inequality is one of the greatest in the world, while poverty and unemployment are especially rampant in rural areas. These obstacles hinder learning for underprivileged learners. Destitution's impact on education is addressed by many South African legislation and programmes. The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) feeds underprivileged learners during school. Poor families receive government assistance for school fees, uniforms, and other educational costs.

South African education impoverishment policies and initiatives have had uneven success, according to studies. Funding is one of the biggest obstacles, limiting programme reach and efficacy. The NSNP has provided lunches to certain learners, but many schools lack the capacity to feed all learners. This has caused unequal coverage and the exclusion of some learners who may need the programme more. Lack of implementation and coordination among government departments and entities executing destitution alleviation policies and programmes is another major issue.

Various departments may employ various criteria to identify and target poor homes, resulting in unequal access to programmes for underprivileged learners. Despite government programmes, many learners still face destitution-related barriers to education.

Despite these obstacles, some South African government policies and programmes to combat education destitution have been successful. Subsidies for school fees and uniforms have improved enrolment among impoverished learners. School meals increase attendance, focus, and academic performance for underprivileged learners. The government has collaborated with civil society and other stakeholders to improve programme implementation and outcomes. Several suggestions can improve government education destitution policies and programmes. First, destitution alleviation efforts need enough and persistent finance. This will help impoverished learners reach their educational aspirations. Second, destitution alleviation strategies and programmes need better coordination and implementation among government agencies and entities. This will target and implement programmes for better results. Several government policies and programmes address destitution's impact on education. These policies and initiatives' efficacy is debated. Some projects have had great results, but others have been limited by insufficient funding, implementation, and collaboration between government agencies and organisations. Sustained funding, greater coordination and implementation, and government-civil society partnerships can strengthen these policies and programmes. These efforts will help impoverished learners get a quality education and succeed.

Further study is needed on how destitution alleviation policies and programmes affect education outcomes. This will assist in uncover policy and programme gaps and weaknesses, resulting in more targeted and effective interventions. Research can also discover effective practices from other countries that have successfully tackled destitution's influence on education. The government should also involve learners, parents, and communities in poverty alleviation policies and activities. This would guarantee that policies and programmes are responsive to learners and communities

and better target destitution-related education impediments. Community involvement increases programme accountability and transparency, thus improving results.

Finally, South Africa's education destitution policies and programmes are still being debated. Some projects have had great results, but others have been limited by insufficient funding, implementation, and collaboration between government agencies and organisations. Sustained funding, greater coordination and implementation, government-civil society partnerships, and community involvement are needed to improve these policies and programmes. These efforts will help impoverished learners get a good education and succeed, creating a more equitable and prosperous society.

2.10 SOUTH AFRICAN CHARTER AND UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION

Poverty is considered one of the predominant threats to cognizance of children's rights worldwide and in South Africa, while posing risks to all other rights. A provision is made by the South Africa policy framework giving exclusive educational rights to its citizen particularly children and adolescents. Similarly, beyond the spectrums of children education right in the local South Africa context, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child also guarantees childhood right of education. Discrimination, loneliness, and hardship plague these children (Du Plessis and Conley 2020).

The South African government and the UN have acknowledged the challenges faced by learners in the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province, including poverty, lack of quality early childhood education, and inadequate school infrastructure. Both the South African Charter and the UN Convention recognise that poverty can be a barrier to education and urge for efforts to guarantee that all children, including those in need, have access to quality education. The administration has committed to enhancing educational outcomes for all district learners through policies and programmes.

2.10.1 Admission to education and basic skills acquisition

The South African colonial and apartheid eras are traditional instances of the manifestation of Sen's (2020) and Haswell's (2019) definition of poverty, given that at the most fundamental level of know-how these definitions encapsulate what has been

passed on to the black majority. These definitions encapsulate the poverty experienced by using human beings living in informal settlement nowadays.

According to Sen (2020:40), abilities constitute a person's freedom, that is a man or woman's real opportunities to acquire well-being. He describes training as a simple functionality, a part of centrally critical being and doings that are crucial for well-being. Hoffman (2018:2) also takes this view, seeing admission to education and the advertising of a concrete set of basic studying consequences as foundational to different skills. Osman (2022:2007) says poverty may be identified with a failure to participate in community existence.

2.10.2 Home environment

Recent studies in Africa show that ladies aged between 15 and 18 years, are eight times more likely to contract HIV than boys in the same age group, and women aged between 20 and 24 years are three times more likely to be infected than males of the same age group (UNICEF, 1999b:6). Girls are primarily the ones to be withdrawn from schools (especially secondary college) when the family encounters economic stress. This, in some cases, results in women engaging in sexual activities and engagements with older men, to fend for themselves or to sustain themselves through school.

It has become a common place for these women to be dependent on older men, or sugar daddies who are often married, to sponsor their studies in return for sexual favours. For Du Plessis and Conley (2020), terrible community and families are at risk with the unfold of HIV/AIDS. This health challenge would greatly impact the wellbeing and economy of the patient managing the illness.

2.11 FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

According to Beaverton (2021), poverty in South Africa is obvious as malnutrition and starvation have risen for years. Hunger has grown dramatically. At least two million South Africans suffered from hunger in 2020 in comparison to 2008. In addition, one in four youngsters suffers from stunting due to malnutrition. According to White (2021), a lack of meals and access to water are two big motives because children and their

families struggle to break free from a lifestyle of inequality and marginalisation and experience the alternative of poverty – a life with enough food, clean water, possibility, and so on is to be had to render the downside of poverty innocent.

Collecting clean water also takes precious time, mostly for women. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, for 29% of the populace (37% in rural areas and 14% in urban regions); clean drinking water sources are 30 minutes or more away. The United Nations estimates that together; two hundred million hours are spent accumulating water each day. This is partially since there continues to be an admission cost, uniforms specifically remain a burden for poor households and in some instances are a barrier to gain entry to schools (Strasburg et al., 2020).

If children are turned away from schools for not having the correct uniform this can lead to them lacking critical facts, discouragement and dropping out. Thus, poverty as a barrier will continue to rob these children of the chance to better their lives. According to Banovcinova (2018), people with low earnings increasingly tend to stay alongside others who are materially deprived. Deprived neighbourhoods have inadequate housing and a lack of basic facilities and offerings, all of which can make contribute to the pressure felt by these children. Balancing protection with possibilities for children's improvement increases the pressure on the parents. However, extra households on low earning live outside disadvantaged regions in them, that means that localised policies by government will not address poverty.

Living on a low income can carry multiples stresses including food and gas poverty, debt, dispossession, and confined social opportunities affecting their own family relationship, harming parent's physical and intellectual health, and contributing to feelings of stigma, isolation, and exclusion for the whole family (Banovcinova, 2018). If the parents' physical and intellectual fitness is affected, they will fail to assist the child with their schoolwork, and the child will also be isolated and may drop out of school (Banovcinova, 2018).

2.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter encompassed literature related to destitution as a barrier in an inclusive classroom. The two theories, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system and Freire's theory of learning were discussed. These theories support all the stages of the child's development. The chapter also focused on the role of parents and educators with regards to learners with barriers. Furthermore, policies and legislations supporting learners with barriers to learning were discussed, the international perspective regarding inclusive education, inequality and racial discrimination caused by apartheid were also discussed. In addition, health, and socio-economic issues, as well as the impact of poverty on learners' academic outcomes were a focus in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION.

This section describes how data was collected, analysed, and interpreted to answer the research questions and meet the study goals. This dissertation will examine how destitution affects learning in Limpopo elementary classrooms. To reach this goal, a rigorous and systematic process was followed to collect and analyse the data. This approach aligns with the research questions, design, and sample. This section will discuss the study's research design, sampling strategy, data gathering, analysis, and ethical considerations. We described the research design as a qualitative approach, using interviews and focus groups. Any research methodology must include ethical considerations. This section explains how informed consent was obtained and privacy and confidentiality were maintained.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is a gathering of assumptions or feelings about major pieces of insight that lead to a particular perspective (Vosloo, 2014). It takes an honest look at principal convictions in view, including thoughts about the idea of the real world (cosmology), the association between the know and the knower (epistemology) and assumptions about technique (Lincoln and Guba, 2005)

Du Ploy-Celliers and Bezuidenhout (2014) guarantee that a research paradigm helps the specialist to determine which questions are essential for the request and what strategies to use to ensure that the inquiries are tended to. Merriam (2020:27) makes sense of the research paradigm from the direction that the scientist conducts in the review, while for Guba (in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:25) research is a group of convictions that guide activity. As per Babbie (2017:31), a worldview is a central casing of reference utilised by scientists to organise their perceptions and reasons. This review depends on cooperative human experiences, by which the analyst examines

how variety is addressed to discuss learning issues, as well as the connection between the educators and learners in comprehensive classrooms, fully intent on acquiring legitimate comprehension. The exploration worldview recognises that individuals' emotional encounters and experiences are substantial, numerous and socially.

According to Dunn (2021), qualitative researchers work with socially produced realities and traits that are complicated and impossible to categorise into discrete quantities. Therefore, their goal is to try to describe, comprehend, and interpret how different social players construct the environment around them (Merriam, 2020:29). As a result, the researcher has built this study on a qualitative design since it uses an inductive technique, which is based on viewpoints that arise from the data itself rather than predefined or prepared thoughts. In this example, extrinsic barriers are addressed to satisfy the learning requirements and learning styles of all learners, and inclusive classrooms are managed in the foundation phase. These are the kinds of perspectives and understanding that qualitative research attempts to build.

The research paradigm was relevant to the study since it assists the researcher to better understand the participants' perceptions and experiences of recognising learners with special needs in various schools, or educational institutions. Creswell's (2018:8) observation that when using a qualitative approach the inquirer frequently makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives and multiple meanings of personal experiences that are socially and historically constructed to develop a theory or. To address diversity, the researcher will gather the opinions and perspectives of educators, who will serve as key participants, on what they know about inclusive education and the strategies employed to include all learners.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is created once a researcher has chosen a research question. The research design is essentially a blueprint for how the researcher will methodically gather and analyse the data required to answer the research question. It is the deliberate and planned nature of research observation that distinguishes it from other

forms of observation. The difference between research and daily observation is that research observation is deliberate and systematic (Durrheim, 2021:29).

The following questions should be addressed by the research design:

- 'What proof or data must be gathered by the researcher in order to answer the research question?',
- 'How will the researcher gather that data (or what procedures will be employed for data collection?)' and, what will the researcher do with the data after it has been collected?' and,
- 'How will the researcher analyse and make meaning from the data?'

The study design is an important plan, but it is not a set plan that follows a very structured, linear path. Practical issues influence the flexible and non-linear process of research. Burton and Bartlett (2019:215) advise that it is important, before undertaking research, to create guidelines that give order and direction to the study, to assist the researcher not to lose focus. This is done through research design and methodology. The research design details all the issues involved in planning and executing the research project, and for Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2019:31) it is a way of guarding against an alternative interpretation of results. The researcher chose the qualitative research design in order to gain a holistic picture of inclusive classrooms in the mainstream school. The next section gives an in-detail description of the chosen research design.

This research adopts **ethnographic research design**. It is an example of naturalistic research which is conducted in a natural (hence the term naturalistic), uncontrived setting. Real-world contexts with the researcher being as non-intrusive as possible (Harwati, 2019). An ethnographic study generates qualitative data and is occasionally used with the interpretive paradigm. This design approach generally means that the researcher immerses themselves in the social situation for an extended period of time in attempt to understand the culture. The study's design was based on corroboration demonstrating what kind of education and help educators require in order to be

empowered in recognising and supporting Limpopo elementary school learners whose learning journeys are affected by destitution.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative research approach was used to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon, event, or occurrence in naturalistic contexts (Leedy and Omrod, 2015). According to Creswell (2018:175), a qualitative researcher is someone who collects data in the field by interviewing or watching persons at the location where they are exposed to the issue or problem under study. Qualitative researchers, according to According to Creswell (2018:175), is interested in how people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and give those experiences significance.

This study used observations, focus groups, interviews, and document analysis to perform qualitative research to better understand the participants' viewpoints. As a result, the participants were able to openly express their feelings regarding their experiences in identifying destitution as a barrier to learning in Limpopo elementary schools. These open expressions helped this study make recommendations of how educators could be better skilled and equipped to identify learners with such barriers.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

According to Leedy and Omrod (2021), several data gathering procedures are used in the majority of qualitative research. The researcher employed interviews and document analysis to collect data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). These are covered in the section that follows.

3.5.1. Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a set of questions that responders must answer. Closed-ended or open-ended questions can be included in questionnaires. A questionnaire is just a set of questions or items used to collect information from participants about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions. Questionnaires can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

The purpose of a questionnaire is to gather data from a target audience. It will include open-ended questions, close-ended questions, or a combination of both. As participants fill out a questionnaire, they are providing the researcher with valuable data. The next section describes different types of questionnaires:

- Structured
- Unstructured
- Open-ended ⎤
- Close-ended ⎦ YES/NO

According to Hair, Ringle, and Sarsted (2018:247), a questionnaire is a pre-written sequence of questions (or measurements) that participants or interviewers use to capture their responses (data). A questionnaire generates primary data. The questionnaire was thus created to collect the demographic backgrounds of the educators, which included their gender, title, age, and qualifications. A questionnaire was best suited for this study since it allowed the researcher to quickly gather information from as many educators as possible. Questionnaires were distributed to six ECD (Early Childhood Development) educators and seven foundation phase educators (Refer to Appendix page).

3.5.2. Focus group interviews.

A focus group interview is a conversation between five to twelve people with the goal of gathering in-depth qualitative data about a group's perceptions on a certain issue (Maree, 2018). Combining individual interviews and focus groups to increase data richness is what a focus group is all about. Focus groups allow access to group meanings, processes, and norms can help one understand how people feel or think about topics, products, or services (Greeff, in De Vos et al., 2018:288).

The researcher explored the educators' attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions on identifying destitution as a barrier to education through a free and open discourse between the educators and the researcher. Many academics believe that focus groups provide

precise data, yet some participants find them scary. The researcher must be aware of this possibility and pay attention to how the focus groups are carried out. In this study, focus group interviews were used to evaluate the teaching and learning strategies used in inclusive classrooms, with the goal of collecting data on collective meanings made regarding classroom experiences. Six early childhood educators from three schools in Limpopo Province (two educators from each school) presented a detailed explanation of how they managed inclusive classrooms. The researcher also understood how the curriculum was modified to be adaptable and accessible to all learners. All focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews (Refer to Appendix page, D) were based on the research questions, which the researcher established prior to the interaction to stay focused on the purpose of the investigation (Hancock and Algozzine, 2021). The interviews were tape-recorded with the full permission and consent of the participants, to ensure that important information was not omitted. Table 3.1 shows the advantages and disadvantages of focus group interviews:

Table 3.1: Advantages and disadvantages of focus

Advantages of focus group interviews	Disadvantages of focus group interviews
Simple to set up	A biased facilitator may have an impact on the process.
Participants feel more relaxed and less inhibited in the presence of other colleagues.	A few people in the group might control (or even try to control) the conversation to further their own objectives.
Participants may feel empowered and supported in the presence of colleagues, making the interview session a learning space for all involved (Greeff in De Vos et al., 2018:360).	

They allow the researcher to see many conversations on a specific topic in a short period of time.	
Reliable	
They provide actual proof of participant opinions' similarities and differences	
The information is not challenging to comprehend.	

3.5.3. Document analysis

Documents, according to Creswell (2018:223) and McMillan and Schumacher (2018), are crucial data sources for qualitative research. To obtain information from schools, the study employs several document analysis approaches. According to Leedy and Omrod (2019), document analysis sheds light on the topic under inquiry. Among these are institutional documents, files, and records (Leedy and Omrod, 2019). The researcher collected data through document analysis, focusing on all types of written communication that could provide insight into the topic in question. The researcher reviewed the following materials to gather background knowledge for the current investigation:

- Inclusion policy documents (SIAS, EWP6).
- Plans for lessons.
- Learner profiles.
- Special Needs Assessment Forms (SNA1 and SNA2).

3.5.4. Interviews

Interviews are the most popular way of collecting data or information in qualitative research. A researcher obtains information from a person or organisation who is known to have or is believed to have the knowledge they seek, during an interview. Maree (2022) mention this. The participant's thoughts, views, perspectives, attitudes, and behaviours regarding the research issue are of interest to the researcher.

The participants provided their opinions and comprehension of the study's issue (Maree 2022:87). The researcher used a semi-structured interview as a method of data collection in the study. In this kind of research, the researcher and participants have far more flexibility. A more detailed image may be provided by the subject, and the researcher is able to investigate specific topics of interest that develop during the interview. The researcher was able to organise questions for the semi-structured interview and create an interview schedule, but the session was directed rather than controlled by the schedule.

The researcher used this technique to confirm data from participant questionnaires, field observations, and document analysis. The researcher paid special attention to the participants' reactions to spot new, emergent lines of inquiry that were uniquely pertinent to the topic being studied (Maree, 2022:93). In this study, seven foundation phase educators from three schools in Limpopo Province were interviewed. In this study, the researcher paid particular attention to the participants' comments as they discussed how they explore the identification of destitution as a barrier to learning. The researcher assisted participants in getting back on track when they became side-tracked by trivial details unrelated to the study.

The researcher's job was to make sure that the interview focused on the context of the study to get appropriate responses. According to Maree (2022:85), a good interviewer is someone who pays attention to the participants' comments and empathises with their feelings and behaviour. Interviews, according to White (2019:143-144), often last a long period and can become contentious and difficult depending on the issue. As much as this can be deemed a disadvantage, this approach is considered the best method as it offers the advantages described in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Description of the advantages of the interview

Interview Advantage	Description
Adaptability	The interviewer was able to probe questions that could be adjusted at any point to meet the participants' understanding.
Question order	Questions were structured in such a way that participants did not feel compelled to leave the interview early. The researcher was able to begin by asking straightforward questions.
Nonverbal	The researcher was present during the fieldwork to observe nonverbal behaviour and assess the veracity of the participants' responses.
Clarity	Participants were provided clarification on tough questions.
Flexibility	Qualitative interviews also give both researchers and participants options for participation, two-way communication, and cost-effectiveness.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews in order to obtain information that may not have been immediately available in other formats. The researcher was able to alter the interview schedule in advance to focus on what the participants were saying throughout the interview and to always keep an eye on the coverage schedule interview. The interview study questions were non-judgmental, unbiased, and neutral rather than value-laden or leading. The researcher encouraged participants to speak freely during the interview; and more open-ended questions were prepared.

3.5.5 Observation

Observation is a meticulous procedure of documenting individuals' behavioural patterns without asking or speaking to them (Maree, 2022:90). Observation is a significant data gathering tool since it gives the researcher insider perspectives on the group dynamics and behaviours in the varied situations. It makes it possible for the researcher to see, hear, and experience reality in ways similar to those of the participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2018:35) used observation as a method in their study to gather information about the participants' evolving knowledge and understanding regarding recognizing learners with special educational needs. The researcher made sure to explain to the participants the objective and focus of observation before using it as a data-gathering strategy. In the early stages of the observation process, the researcher took a mostly passive position.

The researcher acted as an impartial observer to gather data without getting in the way of the study activities. The participant's opinions and behaviors about the implementation of inclusive education were observed, heard, and recorded by the researcher with sufficient time McMillan and Schumacher (2018:350). The researcher was able to collect data while being a non-participant in the study without influencing the participants' choices. The study emphasised the advantages and challenges of aiding learners with unique needs in the early childhood and foundation phase. According to Borden and Abbott (2023:237), observation helps researchers comprehend how behaviour works.

The researcher observed the study based on what he heard and saw while the curriculum was being taught. The researcher analysed, investigated, and evaluated the participants' feelings and attitudes using the data collected while in the classroom To record what he/she had heard and seen during the observation, the researcher thought about what had happened throughout the observation.

3.6 NOTE TAKING AND VOICE DATA COLLECTION.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2018:350), the researcher should make notes so they can reflect on what they have seen, heard, and experienced during and

right after the observation. The researcher gathered data by capturing it on various electronic media during his leisure time. This enabled the researcher to gather the information before it was lost or confused. The researcher conducted data analysis using the information obtained through recording and then suggested further investigation. Hancock (2019:9) states in a similar vein that researchers should record participant behaviours and the environment in which their research was done so they can refer to it afterwards.

The researcher should take notes to reflect on what they have observed or heard, as well as what transpired during and immediately after the observation, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350). The researcher may more easily access the data at a later time through the use of various computerised data gathering methods. These provide the researcher with access to the data before it gets muddled or lost. The researcher used the data gathered through recording for data analysis and to make suggestions for additional research. Like this, Hancock (2019:9) asserts that the researcher takes notes about people's behaviour and the setting in which the research was conducted so that these notes can be used later.

The researcher was able to pay attention to what was being said, follow up on noteworthy points made, and avoid getting distracted while trying to take notes. The audio recording of the data was a benefit to the researcher in preventing erroneous interpretation of the information offered by the interviewees. The researcher recorded each interview with each participant. The recordings were helpful since they could be played back and any passages that were unclear could be listened to without any interruptions. The researcher found it helpful to listen to all of the audio recordings made during the interviews numerous times because some of the individuals spoke quickly. The researcher was unable to write down or observe the material, so the audio recordings helped to record the data.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

To evaluate the symbolic and meaningful content of high-quality data, interpretative philosophy is frequently the foundation of qualitative data analysis. The procedures of

data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting are all linked because qualitative data analysis is ongoing and recurrent. According to Kothari (2022:122), coding is the process of carefully looking through your transcribed data line-by-line and splitting it into suitable analytical units. The researcher was able to streamline the material obtained from the interviews by classifying and labelling it.

Transcribing is the process of transferring data obtained through interviews, audiotape recorded interviews, observation, and note taking into a format that facilitates analysis, claims McMillan and Schumacher (2018:370). The researcher transcribed the data to improve the audio-captured data. The researcher recorded the information acquired in order to review the responses and ask follow-up questions at the conclusion of the interview. To identify any gaps that needed further examination in subsequent interviews, the researcher listened to the recording and reviewed the notes once the interview was over.

Maree (2020:104) adds that when transcribing material gathered digitally, such as via a tape recording, everything should be transcribed verbatim to reduce bias and that pointing or laughing shouldn't be ignored because this may also add meaning to spoken words. Both verbal and nonverbal data were considered in the study. These were all very significant because this data illuminated the study's significance when it was analysed.

3.8 LOCATION

The investigation was conducted at Moutse Central Circuit which is in the Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. The researcher discovered the website to be more practical and reachable. The researcher spent little to no money on travel to the selected schools to collect data. Traditional schools that had already started adopting inclusive education were identified as the settings for the selected classrooms.

3.9 POPULATION

According to Terre Blanche, Durkheim, and Painter (2020), the population is the broad group from which our sampling element is chosen and from which the findings are generated. All the ECD and foundation phase educators in the Sekhukhune District, Elias Motswaledi Municipality made up the population. They all had an equal chance to participate in the study, and a sample of the population was selected.

3.10 SAMPLE

A sample is a segment or component of the study's population. De Vos et al. (2018) defined a sample as a subset of measurements gathered from an interest population or a population that is being examined for inclusion in the study. A study population, according to Babbie (2020), is the collection of elements from which the sample is really drawn. To apply a random selection methodology, the researcher must develop a method or system that guarantees that each unit in the population has an equal probability of being chosen. In this experiment, deliberate sampling was used. The method by which the researcher selected the participants for the sample is known as "purposeful sampling" (Saldana, 2013:43). A researcher uses intentional sampling, which entails selecting a sample that will enable them to comprehend and gain insight into the question they intend to study, (Merriam, 2020). This confirms Creswell's (2020) claim that researchers purposefully select the settings and subjects they speak with to identify and understand the primary phenomenon. Six educators who work with learners in the ECD and foundation phase who have special educational needs made up the sample for this study. They are between the ages of 23 and 50 years old.

3.10.1 Profiles of Educators

Table 3.3: Displays the profiles of educators (n=7) that were interviewed

TEACHER	Teacher1	Teacher2	Teacher3	Teacher4	Teacher5	Teacher6	Teacher 7
Population Group	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female

Age	57	54	51	37	56	52	48
Highest Qualification	Diploma + ACE in management	Diploma in Education + ACE, HONOURS	B.Ed. Hons	ACE+ TEACHERS Diploma	Diploma, B.A and Hons DCG	Diploma	B.Ed. Hons
Grade educator is teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 2
Experience	Over 20 years	Over 20 years	Over 20 years	0-5 years	Over 20 years	0-5 years	16-20 years

Table 3.4: Profiles of the ECD practitioners (n=6)

EDUCATOR	**Partititioner1**	**Partititioner2**	**Partititioner3**	**Partititioner4**	**Partititioner5**	**Partititioner6**
Population Group	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	57	32	59	54	23	28
Highest Qualification	Diploma in Education	PGCE	Diploma	Diploma Hons in special needs	Grade 10 (Matric)	B.Ed. degree
Grade educator is teaching	Grade R	Grade R	Grade R	Grade R	Grade R	Grade R

3.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In terms of verbal and written content, notably, the way information is obtained, organised, and categorised is referred to as "trustworthiness" (Di Fabio and Maree, 2012:140). A qualitative study's dependability can be increased by using a variety of data collection strategies, like observations and interviews. The researcher considered these elements to ensure the validity of the study.

3.11.1 Credibility

The quality and reliability of the facts and the conclusion determine the credibility of a study (McMillan, 2018:302). To ensure credibility, the researcher verified members. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend that you send your field notes or transcripts to participants for fact-checking. Following the participant interviews, the researcher turned in the field notes and transcript for editing. In-depth interviews with foundation phase educators with more than three years of experience and ECD practitioners with more than one year of experience were used by the researcher to establish trustworthiness. Through these conversations, the researcher was able to gather as much information as possible.

3.11.2 Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the results can be applied to a larger population (Cohen et al., 2018:248). To maximise transferability, qualitative researchers should focus on how typical the participants are to the environment being studied (Denzin, 2018). To determine how aware Early Childhood and Foundation Phase educators are of recognising learners with special needs at an early stage of development, the researcher conducted the study with them.

3.11.3 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the study's findings can be effectively duplicated by other researchers. According to Cohen et al. (2018:248), dependability is the consistency of the outcomes. This study used interviews and outside observation to assess dependability.

3.11.4 Conformability

Cohen et al. (2018:48) define conformability as the extent to which study results are unbiased and unaffected by the researcher's prejudice, motivation, or interest. It is about addressing bias issues and the reality that the only factor influencing findings is participant responses. Participants were asked to read the verbatim quotes and provide feedback on their accuracy to verify the validity of the study's conclusions.

This was done to determine if the participants agreed with the researcher verbally or in writing directly referencing them for the study.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

According to Strydom (2023), research ethics are a body of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules and behavioural expectations for the most appropriate conduct toward experiment subjects and researchers. The researcher has an obligation to protect the rights and welfare of the participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2018:15). It is imperative to draw attention to the ethical concerns raised by the research. The issue of protecting the participants' identities was one ethical consideration that the researcher paid attention to. Prior to participating in the study, the participants signed consent forms that were provided by the researcher. The participants received assurances that all audiotapes and other recording devices used during the interview would be destroyed once the researcher finished gathering the data. To make sure that the participants were not in any way put at risk by taking part in the study, the researcher followed the following ethical principles.

3.12.1 Permission

The University of Mpumalanga's ethics committee approved the researcher's request to conduct the study. Additionally, ... has granted the researcher permission to conduct research in.................................. The circuit's leaders and participants provided the researcher with an opportunity to inform and explain the study's objective to the participants.

3.12.2 Informed Consent

Prior to participating in the study, participants completed consent forms that were created by the researcher. All participants signed written consent forms detailing the study's objectives before taking part. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study if they decided it was no longer in their best interests. The researcher gave the participants a general summary of the goal of the study. In order for the

participants to choose whether or not to participate, the researcher also disclosed to them the details of their individual engagement.

3.12.3 Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2018:122), entails ensuring that only the researcher had access to the data, that the participants' names would not be used, and that the information gathered was kept private. Participants in this study received guarantees of anonymity and information about how the data would be used without ever using their names.

3.12.4 Anonymity

The fact that the researcher guaranteed the participants' anonymity made it possible for them to freely offer information. The participants were given the assurance that their identities would always be kept private. To maintain participant anonymity, study participants' names were kept secret. By using pseudonyms instead of real names, such as "Teacher 1," "Teacher 2," and "Practitioner 1," "Practitioner 2," the researcher was able to prevent readers from recognising the participants.

3.13 CONCLUSION

The study design, research design, demographic, sampling, data collection techniques, data analysis, reliability, and ethical considerations were the chapter's key subjects. The primary subjects of the next chapter are the data analysis and presentation of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATIONS OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings of the study based on a critical analysis of information provided during the focus group discussion among educators and participants**.** The researcher followed a pattern of identifying themes as stated in the guide and sub-themes were identify from observed patterns in the participant responses. Additionally, direct quotes were used to support each theme and sub-theme, direct quotes were presented verbatim in italics to indicate quotations.

Clarity on Participants:

School A – Educator A1, Educator A2, Educator A3 & Participant A1, A2 etc.

School B – Educator B4, Educator B5, Participant B1, B2 etc.

School C – Educator C6 & Educator C7, etc.

4.2 KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the barriers to learning under the inclusive education system in Limpopo elementary schools?

4.2.1 Sub-questions

1. What are the attitudes toward inclusive education among educators in elementary schools in Limpopo?
2. What are the factors influencing the attitude towards inclusive education among educators?
3. What is the impact of inclusion on the assessment practices of educators in schools?
4. What assessment techniques are available to educators for identifying learners with barriers?
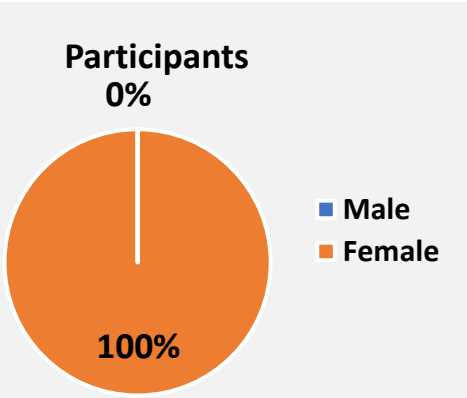
4.3 DATA PRESENTATION

The data presentation in this section displays the information that was collected from the thirteen participants in this survey. The practice of using a variety of graphical representations to illustrate the relationship between two or more data sets is what the researcher recognises as data presentation. This enables data analysis and a deeper comprehension of the data. Throughout this investigation, tables and pie charts were used to present the data.

4.3.1 Biographical details

The researcher began the interview process by collecting the participants' biographical information as the first element of the interview schedule. A descriptive analysis of the participants is provided in this section, broken down into frequencies and percentages.

Table 4.1: Biographical information of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Graph
Female	13	100%	Figure 0.1: Biographical information of participants
Male	0	0%	
Total	13	100%	

Figure 0.1: Biographical information of participants

All the participants (100%) were female, whereas no male participated in the survey, according to Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1. Participants who preferred not to state their gender were absent (0%).

4.3.2 Grades of participants

In this section, the researcher presents the descriptive analysis of the information gathered regarding the grades taught by the participants, broken down by frequency and percentage.

Table 4.2: Grades taught by the participants.

Grade taught	Frequency	Percentage	Graph
Grade 1	1	8%	Figure 0.2: Grades of participants
Grade 2	4	31%	
Grade 3	6	46%	
Grade R	2	15%	
Total	**13**	**100%**	

Figure 0.2: Grades of participants

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 indicate that 8%, 31%, and 46% of the participants taught Grade 1, 2 and 3 respectively while 15% of the participants taught Grade R.

4.3.3 Qualification of participants

In this section, the descriptive analysis of the qualifications of the participants in this study are presented using frequency and percentage. This illustrate the distribution of the highest qualification of participants in the research to provide a better understanding of the educational background of the participants and can be used to make informed decisions related to the findings of the research.

Table 4.3: Qualification of participants

Qualification of participants	Frequency	Percentage	Graph
Only Diploma	3	23%	Figure 0.3: Qualification of participants
Diploma + ACE or honours	4	30%	
PGCE	1	8%	
Matric (grade 12)	1	8%	
B.Ed.	3	23%	
B. A	1	8%	
Total	**13**	**100%**	

It is revealed in Figure 4.3 and Table 4.3 that most of the participants (30%) had a diploma with another qualification like ACE or honours, while 23% of the participants only had a diploma and another 23% had a B. Ed. Degree. Only 8% of the participants had PGCE, and another 8% had a B.A degree while 8% has Grade 12.

4.3.4 Age of participants

In this section, the researcher presents the descriptive analysis of the information gathered regarding the ages of the participants, broken down by frequency and percentage.

Table 4.4 : Ages of participants

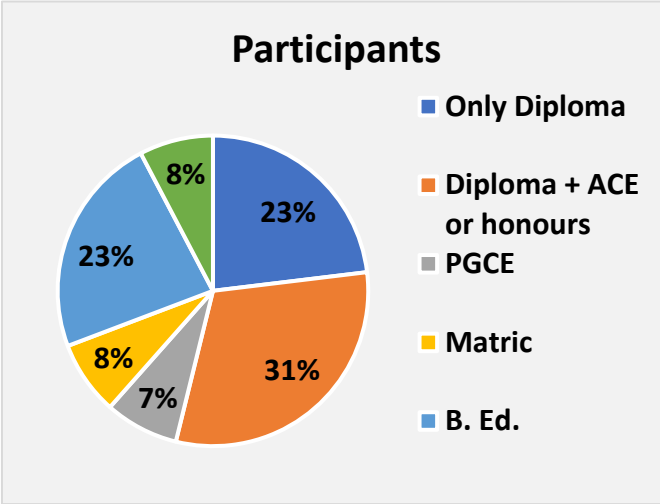| Age range	Frequency	Percentage	Graph
20 – 30	**2**	15%	Figure 0.4: Ages of participants
31 – 40	**2**	15%	
41 – 50	**1**	8%	
51 - 60	**8**	62%	
Total	**13**	**100%**	

Figure 0.4: Ages of participants

4.4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

After being collected from the participants by means of semi-structured interviews and the focus group, the data was analysed, coded, and categorised before being presented in the form of themes with sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes are presented in the following sections:

4.4.1 What type of attitude do educators have towards inclusive education?

4.4.1.1 Theme: Attitude towards inclusive education

The majority of the foundation phase and early childhood educators mentioned that educators have a negative attitude towards inclusive education. Reasons explicitly stated by educators for this negative attitude were a lack of training and resources.

Educator A1: *They have negative attitude because they've never trained to deal with learners with barriers.* (Early childhood educator 1, School A)

Educator A2: *They have negative attitude because they've never trained to deal with learners with barriers.*

Educator A3: *Some are positive, and some are negative, this is because they don't know what to do. They shift the responsibility to those who did ACE special needs.*

However, a few participants mentioned that educators have a positive attitude towards inclusive education, with peer support as a reason for this positive attitude.

Educator 4B: *Educators have positive attitude towards inclusive education, and they are implementing inclusive practice in their classroom.*

Educator 4B: *Educator's attitude towards inclusive education was moderate to a favourable level that is some show positive some are not in favour of inclusive education. Peers support results in positive attitudes.*

The attitude of educators towards inclusive education and its determinant has been reported in studies. A study conducted among the mainstream and special education educators show that both sets of educators have a positive attitude, but special education was more willing to engage with learners with barriers such as in this study. Some of the participants attribute their negative attitude to having no training on how to deal with learners with barriers. Attitudes towards inclusive education have also been shown to be associated with self-efficacy (Miesera et al., 2019; Savolainen et al., 2022; Yada et al., 2018). Both self-efficacy and attitudes have been shown to predict actual behaviour (Miller et al., 2017; Ryan et al., 2015).

Recommendation

The training of all educators on how to deal with learners with barriers should increase educator skills and attitudes toward learners with barriers.

4.4.2 What is the importance of educator's assessment practices in the assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in foundation phase?

4.4.2.1 Theme: Importance of educator's assessment practices

Different importance was mentioned by both the foundation phase educators and the early childhood educators, and these were:

(a) Grouping learners as per their capability

Both the foundation phase educators and the early childhood educator's belief that an educator's assessment could help group learners according to their capability, making it easier to assist them and adjust the teaching to their level.

Educator 3A: To be able to group them and assist them according to their capability.

Educator 6C: *Group learners according to their abilities.*

(b) Identifying learning difficulties and learning needs.

Until there is an assessment, it may be difficult to identify learners who have barriers. Assessment was clearly stated as useful in identifying learners with barriers and deciding when a referral to a special school would be more helpful for the learner.

Educator 6C: The importance is that educator can identify learners with barriers and pay more attention to that learner.

Educator 3A: *You will know the learner better and refer him/her to special school after assessment.*

(c) Monitoring learner's progress.

Since there is a learning outcome that has been designed, the assessment would help to measure the extent of the progress towards the learning outcome in each period.

Educator 3A: *To provide information on learner achievement.*

(d) Differentiation

Participants mentioned that assessment practice could also help to determine the teaching method that would be the best fit for learners.

Educator 7C: *Is to identify the barriers, change the teaching method and assessment method and also provide support. Assessing then become a lens for understanding learners learning, identifying invisible barriers, and helping us to improve our teaching approaches and appropriate support.*

4.4.3 Which assessment practices do educators use in their classrooms for learners with barriers?

4.4.3.1 Theme: Types of assessment practice used.

Whereas some participants, both in the individual interviews and the focus group discussion, mentioned that no specific tools were used for assessing learners with barriers, some mentioned various tools and methods adopted to assess learners within the classroom.

(a) The use of group work
Educators uses group work to give learners the opportunity to learn from each other and support each other in any area possible.

Educator 1A & Educator 6C corroborated: *Group, teamwork so that they can help each other, they will help learning by grouping them according to their paces to sit in groups of 4 or 5 and do peer grouping.*

(b) Individual assessment

Individual assessment is used by educators to understand learners' individual strengths and weaknesses, and sometimes seems to be more appropriate for diagnosing learners that have needs that demand special attention.

Educator 7C and Participant 6C corroborated: *Educators assess learner individually to diagnose their different barriers and give learners test and more works to check their abilities.*

(c) Sufficient time to complete assigned task

Educators offered enough time to learners to give them a higher chance to try their best before a conclusion was drawn. This fosters an opportunity for the learner to think deeply which is beneficial.

Educator 2A, Educator 3B, Educator 6C and Participant 6C *Give them time to complete the task and go through the questions with the learner.*

4.4.4 What challenges do educators experience in assessing learners with barriers?

4.4.4.1 Theme: Challenges educators experience in assessing learners.

(a) Lack of resources

The absence of specific tools for the effective assessment of learners with barriers was mentioned as a challenge by one of the foundation phase educators and two members of the focus group discussion among the early childhood educators.

Educator 1A, Educator 7C Participant 4B: *Lack of specific resources and we don't have specific tool to assess those learners.*

(b) Lack of training

Assessing learners with barriers will remain a challenge if learners are not properly assessed. Lack of effective training on the approach to identify learners with barriers was mentioned by both the foundation phase educators and early childhood educators.

Educator 2A, 3A, 4B and nearly all participants were in agreement: *Lack of effective training of the teachers,* l*ack of effective training of teachers on the approach to identification…" Most of us have never been trained or attended any workshop. Assessments are common task from department.*

Lack of training, which is a determinant of professional competencies needed to carry out every support needed, may hinder the success of inclusive education programmes (Savić & Prošić-Santovac, 2017). This was echoed in our study as a lack of training in how to identify learners with barriers could prevent educators from acting when there is a need to do so.

(c) Lack of parental involvement.

Lack of parental involvement was reported by the participants in the individual interviews and focus group discussion.

Educator 3A, 4B, 7C and Participants 3B, 5C and 4B corroborated: *Parental involvement is scarce and little participation of the parents.*

The reasons for little parental involvement have been mentioned in literature, one of which is low socio-economic status (Zhang et al., 2011). Parents may not be able to offer the best support if they are not properly empowered to complement the educators' effort in educating the learners with barriers. The importance of family was promoted in the Autism Strategy in Northern Ireland (The Autism Strategy (2013 – 2020) and Action Plan (2013 – 2016).

(d) Overcrowding.

The need to spend more time with learners with barriers maybe challenged by overcrowded classrooms which were reported by three foundation phase educators and one member of the early childhood educators' group.

Educator 1A, 2A; 3A & Participant 6 said: *Because of the number of learners in classroom, educators are unable to give individual attention to learners and overcrowding in the classroom.*

Within the time available for educators to engage with learners, an overcrowded classroom, as mentioned by educators in this study, may make it impossible for educators to give special attention to leaners with barriers. Educators in another study emphasised that one of the interventions that would make the inclusion process work is to reduce the class size (Radojlovic et al., 2022).

(e) Poor concentration

One of the foundation phase educators mentioned that some learners exhibit disruptive behaviour in her class whenever she is teaching and that, rather than paying attention to instruction, they are busy with other things and distracting other members of the class.

Educator 6C: *When I teach some are disrupting others with their behaviours. Some are busy with their things…*

4.4.5 Which assessment techniques are used in supporting learners with barriers to learning?

4.4.5.1 Theme: Assessment techniques used to assess learners.

(a) Oral and verbal questioning

Oral and verbal questioning was mentioned by four foundation phase educators and two members of the early childhood educators' group discussion.

Educator 6C: *I will first interview them and after I will give them an essay of 4-5 lines.*

Educator 2A; Participant 3B & 6C: *Learner says the answer and the educator write those answers for him/her and interview the child, Give them exams test.*

(b) Scaffolding

A foundation phase educator and early childhood educator were positive on the importance of breaking the task into smaller step and limiting the assessment given to learners.

Participant 4B & Educator 6C: *Make learning participative, breaks tasks into smaller steps (limit the assessment) and for ADHD task should be short.*

(c) Mnemonics

A participant mentioned using mnemonics to assess learners.

Educator 5B: *Educators uses mnemonics.*

4.4.6 How do stakeholders support educators in addressing these challenges?

4.4.6.1 Theme: Support from stakeholders

Most of the participants' report that they have not received any form of support from stakeholders in addressing the challenges educators face with the learners. Stakeholders, such as parents, were reported not to be supportive with addressing the challenges of learners with barriers.

(a) Provision of training/workshops

While a foundation phase educator in school B mentioned that stakeholders organise workshop to enhance their knowledge, another educator in foundation phase from school A said stakeholder do not.

Educator 4B: *They are conducting a workshop that are about learners with barriers.*

Educator A: *There is no special attention/workshop about the problem or phones to call parents to inform them about their children.*

(b) Provision of resources such as learning and teaching materials

A foundation phase educator mentioned that learning teaching materials are provided for them by the stakeholders.

Educator 7C & Educator 5B: *Learning and teaching material.*

(c) Referral and provision of health services

Stakeholders participate in the provision of healthcare and referral whenever they identify a need for referral in the learner.

Educator 3A & Participant 1A, 4B and 6C: *Dept. of health sometimes health checks all learners and those with problems are referred to hospital school* and *SBST committee helps learners who were identified, by referring them to psychologist.*

(d) Awareness campaign

One of the foundation phase educators mentioned that stakeholders assist with awareness campaigns to sensitise the community and to look for volunteers who are willing to support with helping the learners with barriers.

Educator 7C and 7C: *Conducting awareness campaigns and encouraging community to volunteer to help with the problem.*

Other ways educators get support from stakeholders were mentioned by participants as the processing of relevant forms submitted by educators and the provision of extra classes to learners with barriers.

Participant 1A & 1B: *By processing relevant forms submitted by educator.*

Educator 7C & 3A: *SGB is involved / extra classes are provided.*

The influence of collaboration among stakeholders in fostering a well-meaning inclusive education and enhancing the academic success of learners has been mentioned in previous studies (Heras et al., 2021; Kisbu-Sakarya & Doenyas, 2021; Vlcek et al., 2020).

1.1.7 What is the impact of inclusion on an educator's assessment practices?

4.4.7.1 Theme: Impact of inclusion

(a) Importance of inclusive education

The educator must come up with different ways of assessing learner, which needs time.

Educator 4A: *Help the educator to understand the level of the environment of learner, where he/she needs help. How the educator and where to offer more support and lack of paying attention to learners with barriers.*

(b) Frustration of educators

Educators are frustrated, they are not work-shopped, and they don't know how to help them.

4.4.8 Have you been trained in inclusive education? Did it give you skills for identifying learners with special educational needs?

4.4.8.1 Theme: Training in inclusive education

Surprisingly, out of the 13 persons that made up the participants for the individual interview and focus group discussion, only three had been trained in inclusive education. Although one of the participants she has not been trained, also mentioned that she had attended a workshop on inclusive education where they were introduced of inclusive education.

"No, we were once work-shopped about implementation/introduction of inclusive education in public schools, but we were not brought on board in terms of the whole process.

I am not trained in inclusive education, but as junior primary diploma educator I am trained how to deal with under-achievers offering remedial, and to come up intervention strategies. "

4.4.9 What learning strategies can be enhanced by educators for learners with learning barriers, such as destitution, on complete assessments independently?

4.4.9.1 Theme: Learning strategies that can be enhanced.

(a) Scaffoldings

A good way to ease learning for learners with barriers is scaffolding because lesson plans are broken into shorter sessions. The challenge will be that more time will be needed to execute this plan.

Educator 4A: *Scaffolding- some teacher made classroom assessments enhance learners learning and motivation" and "If the lesson plan can be inclusive, have their special class activities and formal assessment that suit them.*

Educator 5B: *Keep assignment and homework sessions short.*

(b) Provision of clear instruction

Because there is a significant possibility that learners with barriers will experience challenges with comprehending instructions as quickly as other learners, educators suggest giving all instructions in the best way possible to aid the comprehension of these learners.

Educator 4B: *Explain the work you give to the learner thoroughly for them to understand the work even better and repeat instructions as often as possible. Use more pictures.*

(c) Encourage participation and building relationship

An educator in school B said educators who deal with learners with disabilities should build perseverance with their need to engage patiently and consistently. Building relationships is a good way to get to know the learners and see how best to offer them the needed encouragement.

Educator 4A: *The educator should build relationship with the learners.*

Read to your child, be patient and consistent, and do not allow them to give up on their work or themselves.

(d) Time allocation

Educator 3A & Educator 7C: *No time allocated for learners to complete their work. Learners are given same time to finish their work.*

4.4.10 What expertise do you have in dealing with diverse needs in the classroom?

4.4.10.1 Theme: Expertise in dealing with diverse needs.

(a) Training in school

One of the early childhood educators and one of the foundation phase educators mentioned that they have had some exposure to dealing with diverse needs of learners.

Educator 4B: *Honours Degree in learners with special needs.*

From the experience from training college-management diploma, post graduate diploma, diversity management was a course on kits own.

(b) Individual assessment

This also can help to easily trace learners with barriers which allows for early intervention to be designed that can help learners enjoy a better learning outcome, compared to when barriers are not discovered early.

Educator 4B: *Giving learners individual homework and paying attention to individual learner.*

I will help learners according to their paces.

He/she must plan her lesson based on the learns learning requirements.

(c) Visualisation plan

A foundation phase educator provided a conducive atmosphere of learning for participants based on their varied needs.

Educator 4B: *"The classroom must accommodate the learners with barriers like for example, if you have a learner with a problem of an eye, he/she must seat in front of classroom and as educator you must enlarge your alphabet."*

4.4.11 What type of support do you get at school, circuit and district level?

4.4.11.1 Theme: Types of support from school, circuit, and district.

(a) Counselling and mental services

The school offers needed services such as counselling and when there is a need for referral, they notify the parents that they need to get a letter that will be taken to the psychologist.

Educator 3A: *School invite parents to school, fill forms and send them to psychologist.*

(b) Funding and resources provision

Stakeholders play a key role in ensuring learners with barriers get the best services at every level. Among the functions mentioned during the individual interviews were provision of teaching and learning materials and left over food from the feeding scheme.

Educator 6C & 7C: *They supply us with teacher and learning materials which are of help for teaching learners with learning barriers and feeding scheme leftovers.*

(c) Organisation of workshops

A participant from the individual interviews and another from the focus group discussion maintained that educators do get support through the organisation of workshops but discussions during these workshop are not implemented because no follow up is carried out after the workshop. This further highlights some of the challenges of poor stakeholder involvement.

Educator 3A, 3B, 4B & 5C: *The support we got from them is when organising workshops provided by curriculum advisers and we do have workshops at circuit, but it done once after no follow ups.*

4.4.12 What role do you play in identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers such as destitution in the foundation phase?

4.4.12.1 Theme: Role played in identifying and supporting learners with barriers.

The educators contributed to the well-being of the learners in diverse ways in the school and in their homes. Various roles played include identifying learners with barriers and giving relevant support spanning the provision of food, academic support and offering remedial work.

(a) Provision of resources

Educators show much benevolence towards learners in need by providing school uniforms, food and calling social authorities for donations to support their care.

Educator 6C: *I do helps learners by uniform even food to eat.*

I preserve some of the food for the learners to take it home and gave them some food parcels.

Educator 7C: *By calling social authorities for help and asking for donation.*

(b) Identifying learners experiencing destitution

Although a majority have reported not being trained in the identification of learners with barriers, some educators are still able to do so. One of the foundation phase

educators mentioned that they can identify learners with barriers but may not have all it takes to support them due to the severity of their challenges.

Educator 7C: *I talk to learners verbally and these will help me to identify learners with barriers and I can identify learners, but it is difficult to support. Some learners are severely challenged that they cannot even copy what is on the board, so the interventions don't help.*

(c) Offering remedial work

The head of department mentioned that they were willing to offer remedial services to any learner identified with barriers.

Educator 5B: *As the department head, I encourage my subordinate to identify learners with barriers as to help them with remedial work and involving parents.*

(d) Offering academic support

An educator showed a lot of concern for learners with barriers and mentioned that they were able to support different categories of learners.

Participant 4B: *Visual disability enlarge font, sit in front auditory, use actions, place in front. ADHD, learner sits next to me. Use objects for touching and feeling. Learn while playing and I give them oral questions in class just to have something on the work sheet.*

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher used themes and sub-themes that emerged during data collection. The presentation of the themes and sub-themes touched on the educators' attitudes towards inclusive education, the importance of assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning, challenges educators experience in assessing learners with barriers, lack of parental involvement, stakeholders support to educators addressing the challenges, expertise of the diverse needs in the classroom. Identification of these learners and support given is also included in this chapter. The next chapter on these themes draws conclusions and gives recommendations on how

best parents can be encouraged to participate in their children's education, especially learners with barriers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study used a mixed method approach involving individual semi-structured interviews with at least seven foundation phase educators from three schools and six early childhood educators from each of the three schools for a focus group discussion. This chapter summarises the study findings, discusses the suggestions and recommendations made and concludes the study.

5.2 TYPES OF SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL, CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT

(a) Counselling and mental services

This finding implies that Limpopo schools value mental health issues and support pupils who may be struggling emotionally or academically. Schools are proactively addressing student mental health by offering therapy. Parents' participation in the referral process shows school-family cooperation. Schools ensure that learners who need more specialised mental health interventions receive professional care by alerting parents and demanding a referral letter. This approach is good since it recognises that some difficulties may require a psychologist or mental health professional beyond what the school can offer. Schools promote a holistic approach to mental health and learning by encouraging referrals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings on counselling and mental health services in Limpopo primary schools, here are some recommendations to increase student support.

- Allocate sufficient resources and personnel. This will lower the counsellor-to-student ratio and assist more pupils with getting support.

- School counsellors need regular training and professional development to treat a wide range of mental health issues. This ensures they have the latest skills to help pupils.

- Partner with local psychologists and mental health professionals. This cooperation could help learners who need greater mental health support to get prompt referrals, specialised therapies, and a continuum of care.

- Mental health education in schools raises awareness, reduces stigma, and gives pupils coping skills. Mental health-focused classes, workshops, and extracurricular activities could help with this.

- Engage parents in counselling. Regular contact, workshops, and instructional sessions can educate parents about mental health assistance and how they could help their children.

- Work with community organisations, NGOs, and government agencies to expand mental health services beyond schools. To provide children with complete mental health treatment, this could include awareness campaigns, resources, and referral networks.

- Implement a monitoring and evaluation system, to evaluate and enhance counselling services. To assess student, parent, and instructor satisfaction and adjust the counselling programme, and to seek feedback.

(b) Funding and resources provision

This key finding indicates that stakeholders play a critical role in supporting learners with difficulties. Stakeholders provide teaching and learning resources and food from feeding scheme leftovers. It also suggests that stakeholders, such as government agencies, NGOs, and community members, realise the necessity of correcting resource shortfalls to enable learning. Teaching and learning resources enable pupils to learn effectively. Similarly, leftover food from feeding initiatives ensures that pupils are well-fed and ready to learn.

Recommendations

Here are a few recommendations for improving financing and resource provision in Limpopo elementary schools based on these findings:

- Advocate increased government funding to help schools handle resource shortages. This could include budgets for teaching and learning tools and nutritious student meals.

- Collaborate with NGOs and community groups to boost government funding. Partnerships could supply needed teaching materials, books, stationery, and other resources.

- Promote regional resource sharing to maximise material use. This could involve building a platform or system where schools can swap surplus resources to reduce waste and ensure fair access to critical goods.

- Encourage community members to provide books, uniforms, and other educational materials through fundraising campaigns or volunteer efforts. Community resource supply fosters education support and ownership.

- Sponsor schools or educational programmes with local companies and corporations. Corporate social responsibility could help to supplement resource shortfalls.

- Identify resource shortfalls and prioritise areas that need immediate intervention. This data-driven strategy will assist with the allocation of funds and resources.

- Track and manage school resource allocation and use. Transparency, accountability, and effective material distribution will help to prevent mismanagement and resource inequities.

(c) Organisation of workshops

Another critical finding indicates that workshops are conducted to benefit educators. However, lack of follow-up following workshops prevents effective implementation of workshop discussions. This reinforces the problem of low stakeholder involvement.

The finding further suggests that while workshops are held to provide professional development and support for educators, there is a gap in ensuring that the knowledge and conversations from the workshops are properly incorporated in the classroom. Workshops without follow-up and assistance make it hard to apply learned skills to teaching.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, these recommendations would address workshop challenges and promote stakeholder involvement in Limpopo primary schools.

- Workshops should have pre-workshop assessments, interactive sessions, practical application exercises, and post-workshop follow-up. This approach should stress workshop content application and incorporation into classroom practices.

- Encourage group activities, discussions, and best practices in workshops to promote educator collaboration. This will help to encourage peer learning and educator collaboration.

- Implement mentoring or coaching after a session helps participants apply workshop strategies in the classroom.

- Create professional learning communities where educators meet regularly to discuss workshop ideas in professional learning groups. These communities support, collaborate, and share ideas.

- Arrange for feedback after the sessions, where administrators or designated staff observe and provide comments. This will enable specific feedback and suggestions on how instructors may utilise workshop tactics.

- Facilitate educator self-assessment and evaluation on workshop strategy execution to foster responsibility and reflection. Check-ins, self-assessment tools, and reflective journals could help.

- To establish and sustain workshop methodologies, educators need time, tools, and support. This may require scheduling changes, supplementary materials, or dedicated support workers.

5.3 ROLES PLAYED IN IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH BARRIERS

(a) Provision of resources

According to the survey, educators provide school uniforms, food, and even ask social authorities for donations to help struggling children. This shows how instructors help learners with hurdles. It also implies that Limpopo elementary school educators actively help impoverished children. Educators help children feel included and equal by offering school uniforms. Food also reduces hunger and improves children' health, which can increase their learning and school participation. Educators who reach out to social authorities for donations show their dedication to student care.

Recommendations

The following are recommended to increase support for learners.

- Educators, counsellors, and social workers should work together to identify and support learners with difficulties. This team can create plans and provide resources to help meet student needs.
- Foster strong collaborations with neighbourhood organisations, corporations, and local authorities to increase resource access. Solicit donations, sponsorships, and in-kind contributions from stakeholders to support learners.
- Create a fair and transparent resource allocation method for needy pupils. Set explicit qualifying criteria and mechanisms to distribute resources fairly and efficiently.
- Help educators, parents, and learners communicate and collaborate to identify and solve learners' needs. Surveys, parent-teacher meetings, and feedback mechanisms could help to gather information and provide thorough support.
- Provide resource management and use workshops for educators. This will help educators maximise resources and sustain support for learners with challenges.

- Create a local resource referral network to serve learners and their families. This includes referrals for healthcare, social welfare, and financial aid, addressing children's needs outside the school's capabilities.
- Evaluate resource provision tactics periodically to find ways to improve. To ensure resources match learners' needs and support efforts, gather input from educators, learners, and parents.

(b) Identifying learners experiencing destitution

It was revealed that while most educators acknowledged not being educated in identifying learners with difficulties, some were still able to do so. However, one foundation phase educator noted that while he can identify learners with challenges, he may not have the tools and assistance to help them owing to the severity of their circumstances. This implies that educators require better training, resources, and assistance to identify and address destitution-related needs. Due to these learners' complicated and severe issues, educators who can identify impoverishment may feel limited in the support they are able to offer.

Recommendations

Here are some recommendations to improve the recognition and assistance of learners who are in need based on these findings.

- Provide workshops and training to help instructors identify and assist impoverished learners. This training should highlight signs of destitution, creating rapport with learners, and finding assistance services.
- Partner with social welfare, non-profit, and community assistance agencies, to provide a coordinated and holistic approach to aiding learners with significant problems. Educators should be given explicit guidance on how to recommend learners to these agencies.
- School counsellors, social workers, and psychologists should work closely with educators. Information should be shared, cases discussed, and intervention plans developed through regular meetings and communication channels.

- Advocate for more funds to help impoverished learners. This includes funding school uniforms, books, meals, and healthcare. Work with stakeholders to secure resources and distribute them fairly to affected learners.

- Parents, community leaders, and organisations should support learners in need. Awareness campaigns, donation drives, and community volunteers can help afflicted learners and their families.

(c) Offering remedial work

Another finding from the research in investigating the roles played in identifying and supporting learners with barriers is that the head of department expressed a willingness to offer remedial services to any learner identified with barriers. This shows that learners with educational obstacles may benefit from remedial instruction. The head of department's willingness shows a commitment to meeting these learners' needs and helping them overcome their challenges.

Recommendations

These findings suggest six ways to improve remedial work and support for learners with difficulties.

- Establish an extensive remedial programme to meet identified learners' requirements. This programme should assist learners to overcome hurdles with focused interventions, tailored education, and suitable resources.

- Provide instructors with professional development to improve remedial education. Differentiated instruction, personalised learning plans, and suitable resources and materials are examples.

- Create a learners-guardian communication network to actively engage them in the remedial process.

- Carry out a holistic assessment of potential consequences on learners' performance. This encompasses giving appropriate feedbacks while implementing the required adjustment.

- Advocate for instructional materials, and technological tools which are essential tools for the remediation program.

(d) Offering academic support

An instructor voiced concern for learners with hurdles and claimed that they had the abilities to support various learners. This implies that educators are devoted to supporting learners with difficulties. Helping these learners succeed academically requires this commitment.

Recommendations

- Differentiated instruction should be used to meet the requirements of learners with barriers, adapting instructional techniques, resources, and assessments to individual learning styles and abilities.
- Provide instructors with ongoing professional development in academic support. This training should address difficulties experienced by learners and evidence-based instructional practices.
- Support disabled learners using assistive technology. Text-to-speech, screen readers, graphic organisers, and adaptive learning tools are examples. These skills should be taught to educators to improve learning for all learners.
- Encourage collaboration and peer support among learners. Group work and cooperative learning encourage inclusion, knowledge sharing, and assistance for learners with difficulties.
- Create individualised learning plans (ILPs) for learners with hurdles. ILPs detail each student's goals, tactics, and adjustments. Based on learners' progress and needs, ILPs should be updated regularly.
- Allow older pupils, educators, or community volunteers to mentor learners with hurdles. Mentorships enhance confidence, drive, and academic performance.

5.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

A lot of useful information has been gained from the foundation phase and early childhood educators through the individual interviews and focus group discussion respectively. Educators openly discussed their attitudes toward inclusive education, different assessment practices used, challenges related to identification of learners with barriers, role of stakeholders in addressing learners with barriers challenges, impact of inclusion, training related to inclusive education, learning strategies that can be enhanced for learners with barriers, expertise possessed by educators and role of educators in identifying and supporting learners with barriers.

Inclusive education was not welcomed by most of educators in the focus group and individual interviews. Most educators mentioned that educators have a negative attitude toward inclusive education due to their perceived inability to identify learners with barriers because they have not been trained and the lack of resources to properly assess them. Although, this is not expected because South Africa has an inclusive education policy, so this may be considered as a failure.

While some educators played some role in identifying and referring learners that needed to see a psychologist, they still faced a lot of challenges in their attempts to help learners because of a lack of support from stakeholders including the parents. Some parents had refused to honour the educators' invitations when invited to parent-teacher conferences. Educators also mentioned that workshops are not regularly organised to provide updated knowledge on how best to work and operate under the inclusive education system.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study made use of just three schools within the province and the findings' generalisability is so constrained. The study was also conducted within a short timeframe and there was no opportunity to confirm with participants after the transcription was completed.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that educators harness every opportunity such as workshops and training, to improve the knowledge and skills required to work under the inclusive education system. This will make them more relevant in their workplace.
2. It is also recommended that the curriculum for educators in training should be upgraded to include a module that provides them with opportunities to learn skills for handling learners with barriers.
3. The government should routinely sponsor in-service training for educators.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Based on the interviews, this chapter summarises the research on an essential assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in Limpopo elementary schools. The study's goals were to comprehend educators' experiences in recognising and assisting learners with exceptional educational needs. The study's goals were attained, and the research questions were satisfactorily addressed. The negative attitude among the foundation phase and early childhood educators towards inclusive education and the lack of skills to identify and offer necessary support to learners with barriers, will be addressed when training and workshop are mandated. This must be followed by campaigning for overwhelming support from all stakeholders including parents, government, community, school educators and others.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARENCE LETTER

Prof Mahlomaholo Geoffrey MAHLOMAHOLO

School of Early Childhood Education (SECE)

Siyabuswa Campus.

Dear Dikgale EM

220151903

Protocol Reference Number: UMP/Dikgale220151903/SECE/MEd/2023

Project Title: An essential assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in Limpopo elementary schools

Approval Notification: In response to your application received on **23/05/2023**, The Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education has considered the above mentioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

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. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be stored securely in the School/ division for a period of 5 years.

The Ethical Clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from date of issue. Thereafter, Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Wishing you the best with your study.

Yours faithfully,

Prof MG Mahlomaholo

Name of Chairperson (Chair FREC)

Cc: Research Office Administrator: Mr N Kashe and Ms T Mlambo

Cc: Faculty Research Committee Chair: Prof H Israel

1

APPENDIX B: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

District Director : TG Nkadimeng
Department of Education
Sekhukhune District
Private Bag X70
Lebowakgomo
0737
Tel: 015 633 5469
Email:

Dear Sir
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DISTRICT DIRECTOR
Request for permission to conduct research at Moutse Central Circuit, Sekhukhune District.

TITLE: Assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in early childhood and foundation phase.
I, Elizabeth Mantlhapane Dikgale, am doing research under supervision of Dr JM Masalesa at the Department of Early Childhood Development towards the fulfilment of a Master in Education degree at the University of Mpumalanga. We are requesting permission to conduct research in your district.

The aim of the study is to determine the relationship between poverty and learner outcomes. We further aim to understand the impact of identifying learners with barriers to learning in the childhood and foundation phase towards learner performance and achievement. The purpose of the study is to find strategies that can be employed to support these children, teachers and parents.

The study will entail interviewing individual participants face to face, document analysis and completing a questionnaire on how they practice inclusion in early childhood and foundation phase. Participants will be teachers from Early Childhood and foundation phase. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be assured. The study has also obtained ethical clearance from the University of Mpumalanga in order to ensure that it will be conducted in an ethical manner. The interview will be recorded and field notes will be taken. The recorder will be destroyed once recording has been completed and transcripts will be returned to the participants.

The benefits of the study are:

The findings of the study will benefit the schools by recommending valuable guidelines to the school vision, mission, policies and their practices that reflect the commitment to inclusive education in the early years of learning of children. The study will also contribute to the school goals for strategies that can be used to identify learners with special educational needs. It is therefore believed that the findings will contribute in a meaningful manner to the school and parents and the recommendations might assist in improving the learning system for the child in the early childhood and development phase.

There are no potential risks for taking part in the research study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail writing a detailed report or email to your office. Should you have any questions regarding the research, my supervisor may be contacted on 076 060 1822 or on email at Juliet.masalesa@ump.ac.za

Yours sincerely
EM Dikgale

APPENDIX C: GRANTED PERMISSION LETTER FROM DISTRICT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

SEKHUKHUNE SOUTH DISTRICT

Enq: Mphahlele JM   **Tel:** 015 633 2902   **Date:** 01/02/2023

To: Dikgale EM

From: District Director
Mr Nkadimeng T.G
Sekhukhune South District

SUBJECT: GRANTED PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above matter refers.

2. Kindly be informed that your application to conduct Research focusing on Assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in early childhood and foundation phase in Department of Education Sekhukhune South District is approved.

3. Please note you should conduct your research in line with research ethics as prescribed by your institution and international norms and standards for research.

4. The District wishes you well in your research and awaits your findings with great interest.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR
Mr Nkadimeng T.G

01. 02. 2023
DATE

APPENDIX D: GRANTED PERMISSION LETTER FROM CIRCUIT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.

Next to Moutse Mall
Behind Jabulani Industrial
Ellansdoorn J
Dennilton

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Office of the Circuit Manager
Private Bag x4560
Dennilton
1030

Moutse Central Circuit

Kgoro ya Thuto   umNyango we Mfundo   Department of Education

Enq: EB Vilakazi   12 January 2023

079 699 4472

Dear Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KAITSWE, PHUTHIKWENA, AND LEHWELERE PRIMARY SCHOOLS UNDER MOUTSE CENTRAL CIRCUIT.

Ms E.M Dikgale attached to Mpumalanga University is hereby granted permission to conduct research in Kaitswe Primary, Phuthikwena Primary and Lehwelere Primary with effect from the 12th January 2023.

We wish you all the best with the research.

Yours Faithfully

E B Vilakazi

Moutse Central

Circuit Manager

APPENDIX E: GRANTED PERMISSIONS FROM SCHOOLS

KAITSWE COMBINED SCHOOL

Ref No: 996606619
SCHOOL
Enq: MOHLAMONYANE HR
Tel No: 013 110 0416
Cell No: 060 497 2768
E-mail: kaitswecschool@gmail.com

KAITSWE COMBINED

P.O. Box 486
DENNILTON
1030

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Elizabeth Mantlhapane Dikgale, has been conducting her research at the above mentioned institution.

Her research is about Early Childhood Development towards her master's in Education.

She conducted face to face with individual, Document Analysis and Questionnaire

Hope to find this in order

Yours faithfully

H.R Mohlamonyane (Principal)
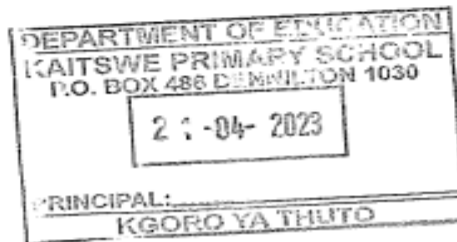
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KAITSWE PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 486 DENNILTON 1030

2 1 -04- 2023

PRINCIPAL:
KGORO YA THUTO

REF   : 996606605
ENG   : PRINCIPAL (MASINA M.N.)
TEL   : 013 591 1221
CELL : 083 744 8654
EMAIL: gettyphutikwena@gmail.com

Sir /Madam

Permission to do conduct research at Phutikwena Primary School

I Masina M.N the principal of Phutikwena Primary School grant Ms Dikgale E.M. working together with Dr JM Masalesa to conduct a research on Assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in Early Childhood and Foundation phase.

The research can be conducted   as from the 24 January 2023 to 26 January 2023 at 13h00.

Hope to find this in order

Yours Faithfully
Masina M.N. (Principal)

Signature : _____ Date : 16 (0.123

LEHWELERE COMBINED SCHOOL

ENQ . MP MASHILO
REF NO: 996606606
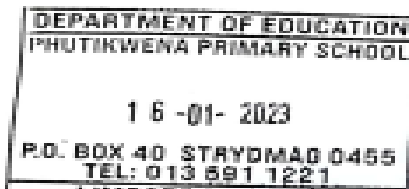072 2170327

LEHWELERE COMBINED SCHOOL

RISE AND SHINE

P O BOX 409
DENNILTON 1030
013 973 7031

Email: lenwelerecombined@gmail.com

28 February 2023

Stand No. 1451

Siyabuswa C

0472

Madam

SUBJECT: Permission granted for conducting research at Lehwelere combined .

This is to confirm that you are granted permission to conduct research in our school. As we are affected by inclusive education, yet lacking more information regarding it, we appreciate the initiative to conduct the research in our school. The outcomes of the research will benefit the school, as we do have learners with learning barriers and we are struggling with strategies to teach and assess them accordingly.

You visit means a lot.

Yours faithfully

M.P Mashilo (Principal)

v

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE & QUESTIONS

Informed Consent (Foundation Phase Educator)

Dear Foundation Phase educator

I am currently doing research for my M.Ed. Masters of education in Early Childhood Development. I need your assistance to provide me with information regarding the project and what your involvement will entail if you feel comfortable with your consent to take part in this study.

<u>Kindly not the following before you give consent to participate in the project</u>:

This dissertation is aimed at assessing destitution's effects on Limpopo's elementary school children's learning experiences and outcomes. This dissertation examines the challenges and opportunities facing impoverished children and identifies strategies and interventions that can help to mitigate the effects of destitution on their academic outcomes and overall well-being. With the assistance of your school principal, you were identified to participate in the research; however your permission is required to take part in the research. The completion of the questionnaire will take place during school hours and will not take longer than 30 minutes. In addition you could be observed while you participate one the one- to –one interview for data verification purposes. The interview will be conducted after school hours and will not take place longer than 60 minutes.

Participation in the research is not compulsory and you may withdraw at any time should you feel uncomfortable. Your inputs will be used for research purposes only and will be treated confidentially. However, the findings of the research may in future assist teachers, principals, circuit managers, curriculum implementers, policy designers, and policy developers .I will conduct the research personally, under the supervision of **Dr Masalesa** from the school of: Early **childhood Development**, **University of Mpumalanga**. If you have any question or queries you can contact m supervisor at **076 0601822 or** Juliet.Masalesa@ump.ac.za

Consent

I _____ (full names) have read and understand the nature of my participation in the project and agree to participate.

1.	I confirm and understand what the researcher is about and have had an opportunity to ask questions	(Please initial)
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw without a reason.	(Please initial)
3.	I agree to take part in this research.	(Please initial)

4.	I agree to my interview being audio recorded. (Please tick (√) selection.	YES		NO	
5.	I agree to the use of anonymised quotations and publications (Please tick selection.)	YES		NO	

Name of participants; _____Signature:_____

Interview's name: _____Signature:_____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor: Dr Masalesa

Topic: AN ESSENTIAL ASSESSMENT OF DESTITUTION AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING IN LIMPOPO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Participant: _____

Date   : _____

Time   : _____

Interview Questions

1. What type of attitude do educators have towards inclusive education?
2. What is the importance of educator's assessment practices in the assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in Foundation Phase?
3. Which assessment practices do educators use in their classrooms for learners with barriers?
4. What challenges do educators experience in assessing learners with barriers?
5. Which assessment techniques are used in supporting learners with barriers to learning?
6. How do stakeholders support educators in addressing these challenges?
7. What is the impact of inclusion on educator's assessment practices?
8. Have you been trained in inclusive education? Did it give you skills for identifying learners with special educational needs?
9. What learning strategies can be enhanced by educators for learners with learning barriers such as destitution on complete assessments independently?
10. What expertise do you have in dealing with diverse needs in the classroom?
11. What type of support do you get from School, Circuit and District level?
12. What role do you play in identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers such as destitution in the foundation phase?

Supervisor: Dr.Masalesa

Participant/ Group: _____

UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA

Creating Opportunities

Date : _____

Time : _____

UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA

I Elizabeth Manthlapane Dikgale at the University of Mpumalanga conducting research on an essential assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in Limpopo elementary schools. Any information and responses will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes. The participants are requested to answer honestly during the focus group discussion.

Place of focus group discussion: _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Participants:

ECD educators	parents

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Participants	AGE	GENDER	Educational level	Occupation	Signature
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

Focus group (Early Childhood Development educators)

1. What type of attitude do educators have towards inclusive education?
2. What is the importance of educator's assessment practices in the assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in Foundation Phase?
3. Which assessment practices do educators use in their classrooms for learners with barriers?
4. What challenges do educators experience in assessing learners with barriers?
5. Which assessment techniques are used in supporting learners with barriers to learning?
6. How do stakeholders support educators in addressing these challenges?
7. What is the impact of inclusion on educator's assessment practices?
8. Have you been trained in inclusive education? Did it give you skills for identifying learners with special educational needs?
9. What learning strategies can be enhanced by educators for learners with learning barriers such as destitution on complete assessments independently?
10. What expertise do you have in dealing with diverse needs in the classroom?
11. What type of support do you get from School, Circuit and District level?
12. What role do you play in identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers such as destitution in the foundation phase?

Questionnaire

A questionnaire to be filled by educators /HOD/Deputy Principal, principal in the Foundation Phase

General Direction

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect necessary data for my M.Ed. study on the topic entitled: "**An essential assessment of destitution as a barrier to learning in Limpopo elementary schools**", and thereby to come up with some workable solutions to overcome the existing problems. The outcomes of this study will highly depend upon your responsible, sincere and timely response. Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire honestly and with great responsibility as per the instruction. Your responses will be read only by the researcher and used only for academic purpose. Moreover, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Please indicate your response by putting (√) next to the option that applies to you.

 Part 1

School name: _____

Gender: Male (   )   Female (   )

1.   What is your teaching experience?

(i)   0-5 years (   )   (ii) 9-10 years (   )   (iii) 11- 15 years (   )

(vi) 16-20 years (   )   (v)   over 20   (   )

2.   What is your highest professional qualification?

   (i)   Untrained teacher teacher( )   (ii) ACE   ( )   (iii) Diploma   ( )

   (vi) Bachelor degree   (   )   (v) Honours Degree ( )   M.Ed.   ( )

Other please specify, _____

3.   Have you ever been trained to identify and teach pupil with special needs?

Yes		No	

4.   If your answer is yes , in what level have you been trained/

   (i)   In service training ( )   (ii) ACE   ( )   (iii) Diploma   ( )

   (iv) Bachelor Degree   (   )   (v) Hons Degree   ( )   (vi) M.Ed.   ( )

5.   Your capacity

5.1.1.		Principal	
5.1.2.		Deputy principal	
5.1.3.		HOD	
5.1.4		Educator	

6. Type of school

6.1.		Mainstream school	
6.2.		Special school	
6.3.		Full Service School	
if other, please specify			

x

Part 2.

The following questions are related to the current practice of inclusive education. Indicate your response saying: **very high=5, agree= 4, undecided= 3, low= 2, very low=1 and mark (√) in the appropriate box.**

1.How do you rate the process of the identification, intervention and support of learners with special needs	5	4	3	2	1
1. Interest of teacher in identifying leaner with special needs					
2 Teacher competency in identifying learners with special needs.					
3. Teacher support their identified learners with special needs					
4. Learners with disabilities and student with non-disabilities equally encourage and motivate.					
5. Enough on developmental and profession training is given to teachers.					
6. There is enough time to support learners with special needs.					

Part 3

The following questions are related to challenge which affected the implementation of identifying learners with special educational needs in the early childhood and Foundation Phase; **very high=5, agree= 4, undecided= 3,low= 2, very low=1 and mark(√) in the appropriate box.**

2. Factors which are affecting the implementation of IE.	5	4	3	2	1
1. Negative attitude towards learners affected by destitution.					
2. Lack of teachers' motivation, interest and commitment to identify and support learners with special needs					
3. Lack of trained or experienced teachers to identify and treat learners with special needs.					
4. Lack of enough time to support learners with special needs.					
5. Lack of parents and communities awareness about their children's education.					
6. Lack of sufficient administrative support from the principal.					

Part 4.

3. Do you think the school has provided sufficient guidance regarding the identification of learners with special needs?

_____

a. How has this guidance been provided?

b. If it is insufficient guidance. What extra guidance is needed?

_____

APPENDIX G: EDITOR CERTIFICATE

Kim N Smit Editorial Services

Declaration of Professional Editing

18 August 2023

This letter serves to confirm that Elizabeth Mantlhapane Dikgale, submitted a thesis to me for editing. The thesis is entitled, 'AN ESSENTIAL ASSESSMENT OF DESTITUTION AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING IN LIMPOPO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS'.

The following aspects were edited:

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Consistency of layout
- Sentence structure
- Logical sequencing
- References (Reference checking involves proofreading and some editing with regards to the simple formatting of the references into the referencing style required i.e. changing the order of the elements – author, date, title, series, place, publisher, journal, volume, issue, pagination etc.)

My involvement was restricted to language use and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style, and formatting of headings, captions and tables of contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content and did not influence the academic content in any way.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Kim Smit

Tel: +27 (0)78 493 6554   Email: kimnsmit@gmail.com
Member of the Freelance panel for the University of South Africa
Member of the Freelance panel for the University of Pretoria
Full Member of the Professional Editor's Guild

APPENDIX H: TURN IT IN PERCENTAGE REPORT

RESEARCH

ORIGINALITY REPORT

22%	20%	4%	15%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	www.studentssupportingstreetkids.org.uk Internet Source	3%
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	2%
3	viuspace.viu.ca Internet Source	1%
4	core.ac.uk Internet Source	1%
5	etd.aau.edu.et Internet Source	1%
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7	www.compassion.com Internet Source	1%
8	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	1%
9	Submitted to University of the Western Cape Student Paper	1%