

**AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY IN SELECTED MAINSTREAM
SCHOOLS IN THE OSHANA REGION, NAMIBIA**

BY

TAIMI TUKWATHA SHEETHENI



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SUPERVISOR: Prof Aslam Fataar

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DECLARATION

I Taimi Tukwatha Sheetheni, do hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, all sources are acknowledged and referenced. I declare that this work or part of it has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher learning.

15.03.2021

T.T Sheetheni

Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late grandmother Selma Ndjago, my husband Ileni Ngheekelwashi and my children Gerson, Diina and Ileni-komwene. Grandmother, you taught me to be a hard worker and to always fight for the best and achieve my dreams, rest well in eternal peace - I am living my dreams. Mr Ileni, you supported and believed in me in all my ways. My children, my wish is for you to do better than me. I believe in you.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates teachers' views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in selected mainstream schools in the Oshana region of Namibia. The research approach used in the study is qualitative, guided by the interpretive paradigm. A purposefully selected sample of 9 teachers from 3 selected mainstream schools in the Oshana region participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data on the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Content analysis was used to analyse the data and the qualitative findings are presented according to themes and sub-themes derived from the research questions. The study reveals that most of the teachers who were interviewed indicated that the inclusive education policy is important as it helps Namibia to fulfil the dream of Education for All (EFA) which is aimed at ending exclusion in education in the country. However, the study also shows that many teachers are struggling to implement the policy as they feel that they have not received the necessary skills and knowledge during their teacher training to implement the inclusive education policy. The implementation of the policy of inclusive education by the teachers is, therefore, viewed as being effective only to a very limited extent. The study reveals that the implementation of the policy has many challenges such as school environments which are unfit to accommodate all learners with learning impairments especially learners on wheelchairs. In addition, many schools lack the necessary facilities and equipment for learners with hearing and visual impairments. Furthermore, another challenge cited by the teachers was the lack of knowledge and skills for accommodating learners with barriers to learning. This study, therefore, recommends in-service training on the inclusive education policy especially for teachers who started teaching before the policy was introduced. Furthermore, support and monitoring of the implementation of the policy and provision of the relevant resources and improvement of infrastructure at mainstream schools are recommended. The research study concludes that inclusive education requires the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture and all other stakeholders to work harder to make its implementation successful in all mainstream schools.

KEYWORDS

Inclusive education, inclusive education policy, special learning needs, disability, marginalised children, access to education, equity, Education For All

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ABBREVIATIONS

BETD- Basic Education Teachers Diploma

CPD- Continuous Professional Development

EFA- Education for All

EAHCA-Education for All Handicapped Children Act

ETSIP- Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme

IDEA- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

MOE- Ministry of Education

MBEAC- Ministry of Basic Education Arts and Culture

SPIE- Sector policy on Inclusive Education

UNICEF-United Nations Children's Fund

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This master's thesis analyses the views of teachers regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in the Oshana region in Namibia. It aims to present the successes and challenges encountered by teachers in the implementation of the Namibian inclusive education policy. This chapter starts by presenting the background and rationale of the study followed by the research question, research sub-questions, and objectives of the study as well as the aims of the study. This is followed by the problem statement of the study. The chapter concludes by providing the layout of the thesis.

1.2 Background and rationale of the study

In Namibia, the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture's strategic plan for the period of, 2012 to 2017 calls for, "an accessible and equitable inclusive education system." Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, strategic plan, 2016:4). UNESCO (2008) defines inclusive education as:

... a process of addressing and responding to diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies with a common vision which covers all children of appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.

Ali et al (2006:36) defines "inclusive education as a concept that allows students with special needs to be placed in mainstream classes and to be taught by mainstream teachers." The inclusive education policy, therefore, requires the inclusion of all children in mainstream schools where all children, regardless of ability, are taught together. In addition, the policy allows parents with children with disability to enrol them in mainstream schools near their homes (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2013). This means that the policy enables children with special educational needs to be educated alongside learners in mainstream education classes. According to Malahlela (2017: 24) "Classroom teachers are therefore required to ensure that all learners, particularly those with special educational needs, are supported in mainstream classroom settings." However, for many teachers, this is a challenge as they are not trained to implement and manage learners with special educational needs and

therefore often struggle to implement the inclusive education policy in their classroom and schools.

This study is aimed at interrogating the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools with a specific focus on teachers' views regarding the implementation of the policy. According to Ali et al (2006:36), "the hallmark of inclusive education is the teachers' willingness to accept students with special needs. Their attitudes and knowledge about inclusive education are important as these are indicators of such willingness". This means that teachers need to have an understanding of the importance of the inclusive education policy and its implementation in mainstream schools. I was interested in doing a study on selected teachers' views of the inclusive education implementation in mainstream schools because teachers are the main agents in implementing the policy as they are in the classroom every day to implement the curriculum and education policies.

The objective of the research was to find out teachers' views and understanding of the inclusive education policy. The focus of the study is on teachers as the main implementers of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. Handal and Herrington (2003:4) stress that "the central role of teachers in implementing the curriculum and call on policymakers to take teachers' attitudes and perceptions into account." In addition, Bradshaw and Mundia (2006:1) state that teachers' "acceptance of the inclusive education policy is likely to affect their commitment to implementing it". This study, therefore, aims to establish whether the teachers understand the policy and if they support the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. It is hoped that the research data from the study will help policymakers to understand the challenges of implementing the inclusive education policy so that they can support teachers to better implement the policy in their classrooms. As stated by Bradshaw and Mundia (2006:1), "the successful implementation of inclusive education policy depends to a large extent on the positive attitude of teachers toward the policy."

1.3 Research aims

This study aims to explore the views of different teachers regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in the Oshana region in Namibia. The Namibian inclusive education policy emphasises that "the full range of educational opportunities should be open to all children, regardless of disabilities, in mainstream schools"

(MoEAC, 2010:40). This study, therefore, aims to determine how teachers have adopted and implemented the inclusive education policy in their schools.

1.3.1 Research objectives

This study was directed by the following objectives

1. To explore what is meant by the inclusive education policy concerning its implementation in schools.
2. To explore teachers' views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.
3. To explore teachers' views about the importance and necessity of the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.
4. To explore teachers' views about how the inclusive education policy is being implemented in mainstream schools in Namibia.
5. To investigate the challenges and successes experienced by the teachers in the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

1.4 Research question

The research question of this study focuses on the views of teachers with regards to the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

1.4.1 Main research question

What are the views of teachers on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in selected mainstream schools in the Oshana region in Namibia?

1.4.2 Sub research question

Five sub research questions guided and directed this study

1. How do teachers understand the meaning of the inclusive education policy and its implementation in mainstream schools?
2. What are the teachers' views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in their schools?
3. What are the teachers' views on the importance and necessity of inclusive education policy implementation?

4. How are the teachers implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in Namibia?
5. What are the teachers' views on the challenges or successes experienced in implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools?

1.5 Statement of the problem

Namibia, like many other countries of the world, “is a signatory to international agreements such as United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990), Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) and UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (2006)” (Republic of Namibia, 2013:6). Therefore, Namibia’s cabinet approved the Sector Policy on Inclusive education in 2013. “The policy on inclusive education paves the way for all children in Namibia to learn and participate fully in the education system, particularly in the schools commonly referred to as ‘mainstream schools’.” (MoEAC, 2010:36)

Many children referred to as children with special learning needs are enrolled in mainstream schools but are not adequately supported as per the Namibian policy objectives. While there are still schools in urban towns called special schools, these schools are not available in rural areas. The *Sector Policy of Inclusive Education* of 2013’s main aim was “to ensure that all learners are educated in the least restrictive educational setting and schools in their neighbourhood to the fullest extent possible”. According to Engelbrecht and Green (2007:54), “children with special or diverse needs are often neglected, ignored, abandoned and left out of classroom activities”. For these reasons, the study aims to understand teachers’ views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in their respective schools and classrooms. The teachers will be asked how they feel about the policy, the importance of the policy, as well as the challenges or successes they have experienced in implementing the policy.

According to Mowes (2012), “inclusive education in Namibia can be promoted if stakeholders in education are enabled to understand and have their attitudes and perceptions relating to children with diverse/ special needs changed.” This highlights some of the challenges that teachers and other stakeholders have in relation to a lack of knowledge and skills in supporting children with special needs. In addition, inadequate infrastructure to help learners with special needs in mainstream schools can lead to ineffective implementation of the inclusive education policy. A preliminary literature search by Mowes (2012) has revealed

that “only a limited number of studies on the teachers’ views on the implementation of the policy of inclusive education in mainstream schools in Namibia have been conducted”.

1.6 The research process

1.6.1 Research paradigm

The study is conducted based on the interpretive paradigm. Alexandra Schmidt (2011:60) stated that “this paradigm is related to post-positivism which is often utilized in qualitative research and stresses the importance of understanding each individual’s perception of reality. Research must include how individuals experience the world, and each of these experiences is considered valid truth”. The interpretive paradigm allowed me as the researcher to study and understand the realities of the problem as it involves the teachers who experience the situation, their feelings and experience of implementing the inclusive education policy, and the daily situations of their school.

1.6.2 Research design and methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach. Creswell (2007:8) states that “qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding where a researcher develops a complex holistic picture based on an analysis of words, reports, and detailed views of informants”. The researcher decided to use the qualitative approach to find out the teachers’ views and experiences of implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. “Qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding of the issue and enables researchers to understand individual experiences” (Kobus, 2007:260).

1.6.3 Research Method

The method used in conducting this study involved semi-structured interviews. This approach involved open-ended questions and was used to find out more about how the teachers were implementing the inclusive education policy. As noted by Seidman (1998:123), “in-depth interviewing is an interest in an understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.” Therefore, to understand the teachers’ experiences the semi-structured interview approach allowed the teachers to express their views and provide their input in response to the research questions.

1.6.4 Data collection

Nine participants participated in this study. Teachers who participated in the study were from three selected mainstream schools in the Oshana region in Namibia. The participants were chosen by their school principals and invited to volunteer to be part of the research study. Each school was represented by three teachers.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with all nine teachers. Five research questions that probed how they were implementing the inclusive education policy at their respective schools were asked. Content analysis was employed in this study to organise the findings into themes which were then analysed using the relevant literature. Creswell (2007:9) states that “content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes or concepts within qualitative data. By using content analysis the researcher can quantify and analyse the presence, meanings and relationships of certain words, themes or concepts”.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study aimed to provide a discussion on the policy of inclusive education implementation in mainstream schools. The study contributes to the literature on inclusive education policy implementation and its challenges. The findings of this study add value to prior studies conducted in the inclusive education field, especially in relation to the contextualised site, namely the Oshana region in Namibia. The knowledge from this study may help to strengthen the relationship between various stakeholders in the ministry of education including policymakers and the teaching community for an improved and effective implementation of the inclusive education policy.

1.8 The structure of the study

The study is arranged in six chapters. The first chapter (this chapter) introduces the study by presenting the background and rationale of the study and presents the research aims, questions, and objectives of the study and the research problem statement. The research process is discussed as well as the research paradigm and research methodology that the study employed to collect the data. The theoretical framework is outlined and the significance of the study and structure of the study is presented.

The second chapter presents the study's literature review that establishes the context for the thesis. This chapter provides an overview of the literature in relation to inclusive education and policy reform in inclusive education in general, as well as specifically within the Namibian context.

The third chapter comprises of the research methodology, paradigm and methods of collecting the data. It also presents the motive behind choosing an interpretive research paradigm and qualitative approach. I also discuss the use of semi-structured interviews for collecting the data for the study.

The fourth chapter comprises of the data presented. The fifth chapter comprises of the data analysis. The sixth chapter comprises of conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to establish teachers' views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in the Oshana region of Namibia. This chapter provides an overview of the literature with regards to inclusive education and research in inclusive education. The chapter further provides a discussion on policy reform with regards to changes in inclusive education both globally and within the Namibian context. Included is a discussion on how teachers have responded to the policy reform in inclusive education, specifically within the Namibian education context.

2.2 An overview of inclusive education

There is no single accepted definition of the concept of inclusive education. Rather, according to Swart (2001:5), "it has various meanings for people in differing times and contexts." Nutbrown (2013:7) define inclusive education as "the unified drive towards maximal participation and minimal exclusion from schools and society". While Gibb, Tunbridge, Chua and Frederickson (2007:111) suggest that inclusive education "is about ensuring students achieve their maximum growth both academically and socially".

Dyson (2001, in Swart, 2001:6) analyses definitions of inclusive education from different countries and suggests that "each definition pertains to a particular group of learners, has a specific interpretation of what it means to be included, assumes a precise ideal of the society which it aims to build, and has varying implications for different schools". Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou (2011:31) suggest that "it is not that inclusion means different things to different people, but rather that it can end up meaning everything and nothing at the same time". The reason for a lack of consensus with regards to what inclusive education is in various education settings, according to Florian, Rouse and Black (2007:16), "is due to the fact that inclusive education has developed out of different contexts both historically and geographically". However, there is an agreement regarding some of the main principles of inclusive education, "such as equity and social justice" (Rouse & Black, 2007:16).

While, as noted above, "there is no universal, national or local definition of inclusion, it is important to have some understanding of what inclusive education refers to in order to achieve equity and social justice in education" (Rouse & Black, 2007:17). According to the National Curriculum for Basic Education in Namibia (MoEAC, 2010:38) inclusive education

means “ensuring that the physical and social environments are conducive to all learners and that all the necessary teaching and learning aids are in place”. UNESCO (2009:9) defines it “as a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach all learners”.

There are three broad principles of inclusive education, namely “social justice, educational equity and school responsiveness” (Dyson, 2001 in Swart, 2001:6). Given these broad principles, “the core agenda or vision of inclusive education includes a commitment to building a more just society and a unified, more equitable, education system by creating schools that are responsive to learner diversity in order to provide equal educational opportunities for all.”(Dyson, 2001 in Swart, 2001:6)

Further, in order to have a better understanding of inclusive education, there is consensus that it is necessary to differentiate “inclusive education from the other two models widely used in education: segregation and integration” (Diego, 2015:35; Mitchell, 2009:4). For Anderson, Klassen, and Georgiou (2007:132), “integration in education can be seen as an inflexible system with minimal alteration in pedagogical practices, school philosophy and environment, in which all students must adapt to it despite individual learners’ characteristics”. Furthermore, “Integration is unable to respond to the increasing diversity in schools, and it is contrary to the responsibility of the education system of accommodating every learner, who may be diverse in terms of race, language, gender, learning style, cultural norms, religion or disability” (Green & Engelbrecht, 2011:4).

There is a wider difference between inclusion and segregation “than between inclusion and integration” (Diego, 2015:36). “Segregation in education labels and places learners with special educational needs in settings which exclude them from the mainstream system and society in general. This segregated system is based on the idea that children with disabilities are too vulnerable to receive education in mainstream schools; therefore, special schools are required in order to protect these students” (Kavale & Forness, 2000:270). However, Reddy (1999:10) states that “very often special needs schools and classrooms tend to become “dumping grounds for those students viewed as un-teachable or undesirable”. “People in favour of inclusive education, therefore, criticise segregation because it is just a perpetuation of exclusion”. (Reddy, 2000: 271)

According to Armstrong and Barton, (2008:2) “inclusive education should not only refer to disabled children or children who have been identified with learning difficulties as all

children have the right to attend their local schools regardless of their differences.”The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) supports this and states that “inclusive education means creating a conducive learning and teaching environments for all children in mainstream schools, regardless of differences in socio-economic background, disability, race, colour, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity, among others” (Namibia, 2015). Armstrong and Barton (2008:2) support this stating that “inclusive education refers to all students being allowed to attend their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes where they are supported in their learning and encouraged to contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school”.

According to Alfredo, Thorius, Bal, Neal, Waitoller & David, (2011:357) “the inclusive school movement is a cornerstone of contemporary education reform”. “The basic premise of inclusive school communities is that schools are about belonging, nurturing and educating all children and youth, regarding less of their differences in culture, gender, language ability, class and ethnicity” (Acedo, Ferrer & Pamies, 2009:42). In order, therefore, for all schools to be inclusive of all learners, “it is important that educators consider how they organise their classrooms, programmes and activities so that all students have access to quality education and are supported to learn and participate equally” (Armstrong & Barton, 2008:2; Ainscow, 2005:10). Armstrong and Dyson (2002:26) state that “low enrolment rates, high dropout rate and huge gender disparities cannot be blamed on family poverty and ignorance alone”. The school system is itself at fault in most countries, partly “because government fails to invest in the education of their children or the training of their teachers, but also because the curriculum and the way it is taught fails to capture the interest of children or motivate them to learn and to participate. Reform of the school curriculum, therefore, is at the heart of the inclusion movement, not only for disabled children, but also for all children”. (Armstrong & Dyson, 2010:27)

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) 2005 report “conceptualises inclusive education as a process that requires the identification and removal of barriers to learning in order that all students, especially students most at risk of exclusion and marginalisation, can participate in quality learning opportunities”. In order to achieve the aims of inclusive education, “the United Nations has created a number of legally binding international conventions, or treaties, together with mechanisms for public monitoring and accountability. These include conventions on Racial Discrimination (1965), Civil and

Political Rights (1966), Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Women and Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)” (Armstrong & Dyson, 2002).

2.3 Research on inclusive education

Internationally many countries have embraced inclusive education “based on their own national goals” (Kearney & Kane, 2006; Johnson & Chapman, 2008). In order to discuss the manner in which some countries have embraced inclusive education within their schooling system, based on policy changes, this section discusses inclusive policies in seven countries, namely: New Zealand, China, United States of America (USA), Sweden, Malaysia, South Africa and Botswana.

In 1996 New Zealand “instituted a specific policy that was designed to meet the needs of students labelled as having special needs within the schooling system”(Kearney & Kane, 2006:206). The aim of this policy was to bring New Zealand in line with the global trends on inclusive schooling that focused on providing “learning opportunities of equal quality for all students by moving towards the inclusion of all children with special education needs in local educational settings” (Learney & Kane, 2006; McMenamin, 2011:12). “This policy brought changes that made it easier for students with special needs to enrol in their local school”. Learney & Kane, 2006; McMenamin, 2011:12).

Likewise, “the USA has made an effort to embrace inclusive education. Up until 1975 children with disabilities were segregated from their non-disabled peers. However, since the introduction of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, which was refined and is now referred to as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, a free appropriate public education has been available to all children with disabilities” (Hossain,2012:4). This Act emphasises school accountability and ensures “that all students with disabilities have access to mainstream classrooms and are provided with quality education” (Hossain, 2012:5).

In Sweden, “in 1994, the government implemented several far-reaching reforms, and among other things, a new curriculum was implemented. In the same year, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) was signed and published, placing inclusive education on the international political stage as an educational ideal. In line with this Swedish policy documents now state

that students in need of special support and students with disabilities should receive their education within mainstream classes”.(Gidlund, 2018:11).

Research done in schools in Sweden, however, shows that teachers in mainstream schools are frustrated and insecure about how to organise education for inclusion and diversity, (Gidlund, 2018:12). The research found that teachers struggled to implement the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools, as initially Sweden had two different school systems namely special education schools and mainstream schools. When the policy changed to make mainstream schools inclusive, there was confusion and many educators rejected the notion of inclusive education being integrated into the mainstream school system. Elias and Norwich (2010:9) found that “teachers’ views about implementing inclusion policy were found to be strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition of the children presented to them. Further, educational environment-related variables, such as the availability of physical and human support, were consistently found to be associated with attitudes to inclusion”.

Research done in Malaysia, by Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2006:23), on inclusive education being integrated into the mainstream classroom, “showed that in general teachers had a positive attitude towards inclusive education. The teachers agreed that inclusive education enhanced the social interaction and inclusion among the students, and this minimized negative stereotypes regarding special needs students”.

Botswana began practising inclusion and integration of learners with special needs in mainstream schools “after signing a number of international declarations such as the 1994 Salamanca Framework for Action on Special Needs Education which advocates for all schools to accommodate all children. However, it was only in 1997 when Botswana’s first inclusive education policy was introduced that special education provision was provided in all schools. Up until this time, a small number of non-governmental organisations had already been providing education for children with specific special disabilities”. (Chhabra, Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010:2).

Research done in Botswana about teachers’ implementation of inclusive education in their schools, “shows that teachers in Botswana have a somewhat negative attitude with regards to inclusive education” (Otukile-Mongwaketse, 2011:53).Simmi, Chhabra, Srivastava & Srivastava’s (2009:34) “research revealed that many mainstream teachers feel unprepared and

fearful of working with learners with disabilities in their classes and display frustration, anger and negative attitudes toward inclusive education because they believe that it could lead to lower academic standards”. The results of this research show that this fear and negative attitude to inclusive education has led to the policy not being implemented as teachers are concerned that their results will drop as the special needs learners will not be able to perform at the same level as the other learners in their class.

In South Africa, “the former education system used during the apartheid era (1948-1994) promoted segregation by providing separate education for the four designated racial groups: whites, Indians, blacks and coloured” (Swart, 2001:233). “In the post-apartheid era, a more comprehensive approach to understanding children with barriers to learning was envisaged within the education system” (DoE, 1997). The aim was to find ways in which all children could participate in learning opportunities in order that an effective education could be provided for all learners. Swart (2001) “states that within the South African school context inclusive education is concerned with reducing learning barriers and developing schools and training institutions that are capable of meeting the needs of all learners. The aim of inclusive education in South Africa is to contribute to the wider democratic notion of building a more just society that embraces diversity and values and respects every member”. For South Africa to make the dream of inclusive education a reality, the Department of Education released the White Paper 6 in 2001. This Paper outlines a radical departure from the traditional model of special education provision and it allows for both special schools that cater for learners with the most intense barriers to education “as well as the implementation of inclusive education in schools” (Swart, 2001:34). According to Engelbrecht and Green, (2007:150) “there is an emphasis on inclusion as one of the more important principles enshrined in the country’s Constitution”.

A study conducted in South Africa (Malahlela, 2017 in Prinsloo, 2001:345) revealed “those educators’ perceive the implementation of inclusive education as being an important need in South African education”. The literature above shows that there has been significant support from South African teachers in accepting “the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools as they perceived it as necessary and appropriate in South Africa context as a strategy for curriculum differentiation in inclusive classrooms” (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012:9).

Unlike the countries discussed above, China has struggled to meet the goal of inclusive education. Traditionally in China, children with a disability are considered at the lowest level of the social hierarchy. This placement is a reflection of the influence of the ancient teaching of Confucius and as a result of the prevalence of this teaching approach, China has tended to remain mired in negative attitudes and perceptions about students with disabilities. In the 1990s, “China adopted the idea of an inclusive education system; however, within the Chinese schooling system still today, the national goal of full inclusion of all disabled students is far from being achieved because most of the schools still do not welcome children with special needs” (Hu, 2011:7).

2.4 Policy reform in inclusive education

Internationally there are human rights agreements, declarations and conventions which have focused on bringing about the reform of the education system to include inclusive education. According to Peters (2007:32), “there are a number of key documents which have assisted to develop the policy of inclusive education since 1960. These are:

- *1960 United Nations Convention against Discrimination in Education.*
- *1971 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons.*
- *1975 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled People.”*

In addition, and in support of these policy documents, “there have been a number of significant declarations and conventions that have influenced the change in policy regarding inclusive education globally. These include:

- The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that advocated for the right of all children to receive education without any form of discrimination. (Karabelle,2010);
- The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All adopted in Jomtien, Thailand. (Smith Davis, 2002);
- The 1993 United Nations Standard Rule on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities that affirms the equal rights of all children, youth and adults with disabilities to receive education within a mainstream school setting (Lang, 2009);
- The 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action in Special Needs Education that requires all schools to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social-emotional linguistic abilities (Smith-Davis, 2002);

- The 2000 Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) for Action framework that incorporates the 200 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which stipulate that all children should have access to free and compulsory primary education by 2015” (Hunt, 2011:54).

Malahlela (2017:6) reports that “there are many countries around the world which have changed their inclusive education policy and which are now effectively implementing inclusive education in mainstream school contexts. An example of this is within the USA’s Department of Education (2010) where over 80 percent of all students with disabilities receive most of their education in general education classes, far more than was the case only a decade ago”. Further, Darne (2017:1) reports that in a study completed it was found “that students throughout the USA take advantage of full or partial inclusion in multiple school systems and that some schools offer partial inclusion and allows students with disabilities to participate in classrooms with students without disabilities”.

A study conducted by Avramids and Norwich (2002:130) shows that” in the United Kingdom (UK) teachers’ beliefs or opinions and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusive practices and these also have practical implications for policymakers endeavouring to promote inclusion in schools”. Moreover, Materechera (2014:170), revealed in a study “that the importance of the implementation of inclusive education has gained ground internationally”. Supporting this, Musken’s (2009:3) report on Italy and Spain “revealed that the ideal implementation of inclusive education is feasible and effective in these European countries for all pupils with special needs, disabilities and physical or mental handicaps and that it showed good educational results for all”. Musken’s (2009) study also looked at “the implementation of inclusive education in some African countries, such as Uganda, which has also been reported as being effective”. Munandu (2011:19) states that “Uganda is leading the way in its commitment to integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schooling as a step in the process towards inclusion”. A study done in Zimbabwe by Chireshe (2013:227), shows that the “implementation of inclusive education in this country is viewed as having improved”.

According, to a study by Mahlahle (2017, in Tchatchoueng, 2016:91) “in many developing countries of Southern Africa, the implementation of inclusive education in schools is still presently perceived as ineffective. While the physical placement of learners with disabilities and other learning barriers in general education classes is often emphasised, other aspects of

effectively managing the inclusive education classroom show that inclusive education is being inadequately implemented and still requires attention". For example, "the implementation of inclusive education in Botswana was perceived as being less effective as much of classroom practices assumed were teacher-centred and whole-class teaching, student listening and doing silent deskwork, with little time being spent by teachers working with individuals or groups" (Dart, 2007:17). "Teachers tended to ignore incorrect student responses to questions and did not offer additional support, thus leaving the inclusive learner with very little support in the mainstream classroom. Similarly, in Lesotho, the implementation of inclusive education was perceived as being ineffective" (Johnstone, 2007). Johnstone (2007:29) established that "no provision in national law requires that students with disabilities should receive their education in mainstream schools or that these students are provided with appropriate services and as such there was very little inclusive education taking place in mainstream schools". Similar findings were revealed by Mosia (2014:279) who stated "that the implementation of inclusive education in Lesotho was perceived as ineffective since the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was not successfully supporting schools and teachers to provide quality education for all learners".

In Zimbabwe, Chireshe (2013: 226) posited "that a number of challenges have made the implementation of inclusive education problematic. These challenges, which contributed towards the ineffectiveness of the inclusive education policy, include a shortage of resources, a high teacher-pupil ratio which left teachers with no room to cater for children with disabilities, and insufficient funding for inclusive education".

2.5 Policy reform in Inclusive Education in the Namibian context

During the apartheid years in Namibia, not all citizens had full and proper access to education. "From 1953 to 1980 the Namibian government divided the education system into three different systems according to race: one for whites, another for blacks and the third for coloureds" (Pomuti & Weber, 2012:2). This system, "described as a Bantu education system, was an explicitly discriminatory policy on racial and ethnic segregation, inequality, low-level of transparency and top-down policy from the white minority to the black majority in order to protect white privileges" (Diego, 2015:36).

During this period, "the education system was divided into ten different educational systems that were developed according to the different ethnic groups. This system was openly discriminatory. For instance, in 1986, the State spent almost ten times more per white student

than per black student” (Chase, 1987, in Jauch, Edwards & Cupido, 2011:189). “White students were the only group receiving free and compulsory education”, while black students had to pay tuition fees (Harber, 1993:148).

After independence in 1990, “the government of Namibia identified some challenges facing the education sector that needed to be changed in order to address past imbalances” (Naanda, 2005:6). “These included the need to reform the education system to make it relevant to the needs of Namibia and its people, setting up programmes aimed at reducing levels of poverty and addressing the issues of unemployment especially among the youth, and sustaining economic growth” (Naanda, 2005:6). According to the Namibian Constitution, (1990:12), Article 20, clearly states “that every person residing in Namibia shall have the right to education. This implies that everyone, irrespective of their age, abilities or disabilities, environmental, cultural or social backgrounds should benefit from quality education”. The focus of inclusive education has since been broadened beyond “a focus only on students with special needs based on disabilities, to include a consideration of other aspects of disadvantages and marginalisation, such as gender, poverty, language, ethnicity, and geographic isolation” (Mitchell, 2010:14).

Thus, “after independence in 1990, Namibia was firmly committed to break with the former inequalities in education and to ensure the building of a better Namibia without memories of the past” (Diego, 2015:29). “The government replaced the ten segregated ethnic educational systems with a unified one” (Jauch, Edwards & Cupido, 2011:199). “Equity, justice, democratic participation and respect for human dignity were the main goals of the new approach to education”. (MoEAC, 1992:22). Furthermore, “an education policy entitled ‘Toward Education for All’ in 1992 was formulated which sought to move away from its colonial moorings” (MoEAC, 1992:22). “In the policy, there was a serious commitment to abolish any kind of racial and ethnic discrimination”. (MoEAC, 1992:25). “The policy created a shift from educating the elite to educating all Namibians. At the helm of this policy there are four major goals: access, equity, quality and democracy”. (MoEAC, 1992:24). After independence, education policy reform focused on rights to education which are enshrined in the country’s constitution based on equity, quality, access and democracy. “The training of teachers to implement inclusive education strived to:

- Develop teachers who will respect and foster the values of our Constitution, contribute to nation-building, and respond positively to the changing needs of Namibian society.
- Develop understanding and respect for diverse cultural values and beliefs.
- Enhance respect for human dignity, sensitivity, and commitment to the needs of learners.
- Promote gender awareness and equity to enable all Namibians to participate fully in all spheres of society.
- Develop a positive attitude toward individual differences and enable teachers to meet social and individual needs” (Ministry of Basic Education Arts and Culture, 1993:126).

The mandate of the Ministry of Education, with regards to inclusive education, was “to provide education and training to learners with special needs and disabilities” (MBEAC, 1993:130). “Included in this group were children with vision, hearing, or other physical, emotional, or mental impairments, as well as children who were above average, gifted and specifically talented learners. The focus of this mandate also included learners in mainstream classrooms who are significantly underachieving” (MBEAC, 1993). “The principal strategy for addressing the needs of young people with physical or other impairments was to integrate them as fully as possible into general education programmes. Reasons given for the need to integrate all learners is that in general, all learners benefit from a heterogeneous learning environment, and learners who do not see or hear well, for example, are more likely to do better when they work with and are challenged by their peers. A further reason given is that the policy of inclusiveness and integration permits Namibia to more effectively use the country’s limited education resources” (MBEAC, 1993:132)

The inclusive policy required the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture to help schools and their staff to develop the sensitivity and skills to integrate learners with special needs into mainstream school classes and other activities and to provide supportive services and remedial education as necessary. For the most severely impaired, the Ministry pointed out that there should be special classes and institutions provided with appropriately trained staff. The Ministry envisioned the creation of an Institute for Special Education to lead, guide and coordinate these efforts (MBEAC, 1993:131).

In support of educational reform, “Namibia signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 8 September 1990 and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography on 16 April 2002” (Naanda, 2005:7). “The country has also committed itself to the Millennium Development Goals and to achieving the Dakar Framework of Action by 2015. Furthermore, in order to meet the needs of all children in Namibia, the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, following the policy in the document titled ‘Towards Education for all: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training’ (1993) emphasised access, equity, quality and democracy within the education system. The report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training of 1999, reflected the determination of the Namibian society to equip children with new skills so they could cope with the new challenges and technological demands of life in the twenty-first century. The same principles were reflected in the ‘Strategic Plan for the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) 2005-2020’ that was developed by the Government of Namibia” (Government of Namibia, 2005).

The signing of the documents mentioned above highlights Namibia’s commitment “to inclusive education in order to ensure access for all children who may not necessarily have benefited from education since their special needs were not adequately addressed. However, it is important to point out that inclusion is much more than a place; rather inclusive education represents a set of values which guide educational decisions, frame teacher education and give children the opportunity to grow and develop as responsible future citizens. Inclusive education is concerned with educational equity and the establishment and maintenance of high-quality education”, (Naanda, 2005 in Giangreco, Baumgart & Doyle, 1995; Donald, 1996; Engelbrecht, 1999; Kaoma, 2004). To this end, Namibia adopted an inclusive education policy in 2013. “The policy is a medium for attaining accessible, equitable and sound education for all through efficiency, democracy and solid advocacy for life learning. The Ministry of Education Arts and Culture has established an inclusive education and training system as a response to the applicable national legal frameworks and several international legal frameworks which Namibia has ratified”. (MoEAC, 2013:13)

A number of pertinent statements about inclusive education from key Namibian policy documents and legal frameworks state that “all persons shall have the right to education, and that primary education shall be free and obligatory for all children up to the age of

16”(Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, Article 20, 1990:16). Further, the National Policy on Disability (1997:4) stressed “that the government should ensure that all children and youth with disabilities have the same rights as other children and youth in the country”. In pursuit of these aims, the National Disability Council Act (2004) “focused on creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities as well as ensuring that all persons had access to vocational, educational and employment training”. In 2013 the implementation of the Universal Primary Education in Namibia provided the policy to realise the constitutional rights of all learners as stated above. In order to achieve this goal, the policy states that it is essential to improve the efficiency of the education and training system and eliminate inequality in the system. Supporting this vision is crucial for the successful development and implementation of Inclusive Education.

The Namibian Ministry of Education Arts and Culture acknowledges that there are presently multiple barriers to learning in Namibia such as systematic, organisational, pedagogical, curriculum-related, environmental, financial, societal, cultural and attitudinal barriers. However, the Ministry believes it has an obligation to eliminate all barriers to learning and to restructure educational policies and practices for the benefit of all Namibia’s children, especially the educationally marginalised children (MoEAC, 2013:13).

The commitment of the Namibian Ministry of Education to Inclusive Education requires the education sector to adopt a flexible and holistic approach to budgeting, programme planning and development. However, the implementation of this policy relies on all stakeholders to understand the policy strategies which focus primarily on the belief that “collectively we move forward to a better and an inclusive education system” that will benefit everyone from the policymakers to the implementers and most importantly, all learners regardless of their abilities and challenges. Therefore, by 2013, the policy of Inclusive Education had been disseminated into schools for full implementation (MoEAC, 2013:14).

2.6 The state of Inclusive Education in Namibia

In Namibia, in response to the new educational ideal of creating a just and fair society for all, the government formulated a policy to guide the development of learner inclusion in mainstream schools in the country. This ideal included “the abolition of systems that are ingrained with disadvantage and discrimination through the limited availability of educational opportunities for some students by focusing on an inclusive education system that supports

schools to manage the learning of children who had a wide range of abilities, attitudes and motivation” (Armstrong, Armstrong, Lynch & Serevin, 2010:5).

In line with these ideals, the Namibian government adopted an inclusive education policy to meet the needs of the Namibian population. In order to contextualise the Namibian inclusive policy to include all learners, the policy focuses on a broad range of learners who have previously been educationally marginalized, namely:

children of farm workers; children in remote areas; street children; children in squatter, resettlement and refugee camps; children with disabilities and impairments; children who are considered ‘over age’ in the current education policies; children with learning difficulties; orphans and vulnerable children; the girl child; the learner parent; children with extreme health conditions/chronic illness, children with emotional and behavioural challenges. (MoEAC, 2013:5)

According to Diego (2015:44), “success in education is not only about access to education”. While most children, within the Namibian context, are now included in the education system, “many still experience exclusion in one way or the other” (Zimba, Mowes & Naanda, 2011:43). “Factors such as high unemployment, poverty, malnutrition and HIV/ AIDS, combined with a lack of educational resources, create a panorama whereby exclusion is widespread throughout the country. This situation has its origins in the colonial era, which was characterised by disparities, inequalities and exclusion, and is still a daunting challenge for the country” (Zimba et al. 2011:44). Ipinge (2001:3-5) state “that the factors currently impeding the achievement of quality education in Namibia include a lack of teaching and learning materials, poor physical facilities, high learner- teacher ratios, inequalities in resources allocation throughout the country and a lack of qualified teachers”.

Zimba et al. (2011:43) claim that “a large number of teachers in Namibia do not have qualifications or experience in dealing with children with diverse needs. Therefore, a cornerstone for the effective implementation of an inclusive system is based on shaping teachers’ attitudes, knowledge and skills according to the principles of inclusion, abolishing the traditional view in which all children learn at the same pace and in the same way”. “In order to accomplish this, teachers need to be supported to design and implement teaching and learning approaches that address the individual needs of their “(Diego (2015:37). Zimba et al. (2011:47) further claim “that the implementation of inclusive education in Namibia requires

well-trained and motivated teachers, adequate teaching and learning materials and a flexible curriculum with the active participation of parents and the community at large”.

Diego (2015:37) suggests that, “while there are mobile schools for delivering education to nomadic minority groups in the northern regions, a fixed setting is optimal for delivering quality education. This situation is challenging for the minority groups living in remote areas such as the San, the Himba and the Zemba people”. In the case of those living in remote areas, the choice is “between keeping their culture and traditions and attending boarding schools far from home” (UNICEF, 2011:15). “According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both culture and education are rights and, thus, families should not need to choose between education and preserving their culture” (UNICEF, 2011: 15).

2.6.1 Teachers’ views of implementing inclusive education policy in schools

In Namibia “the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools has been reported to be effective in only a few schools”. Since, “the introduction of the policy on inclusive education in 2013, many schools have adopted the policy and accepted learners with minor impairment”. (Zimba, Mufune & Likando, and 2007:50). However, “although several children with disabilities are included in mainstream schools by default, many teachers and schools do not feel prepared for teaching learners with disabilities nor do they feel that they are provided with the necessary support by the education department to effectively teach them” (Zimba et al., 2007: 42).

Teachers have different views of the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. According to the research done on views regarding inclusive education by Mowes (2004:74) the results revealed “that some teachers believed that learners with disabilities are incapable of benefiting from what is provided to normal learners and they fear accepting learners with disabilities in their classroom which results in the non-implementation of inclusive education policy, this refers to the negative views of teachers and if teachers are having negative views about the policy this may affect the policy implementation”. However, teachers with positive views regarding the policy of inclusive education are eager to implement the policy in their classroom and motivate learners with disabilities to interact with their external network.

Subban and Sharma (2006:6) explain that,

Teachers view the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream settings as difficult and stressful. The need for collaboration with several support staff has resulted in tension and confusion. Further inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms is viewed by some educators as contributing to increased workloads, more-ever.

In addition, “teachers appear to be concerned about the non-acceptance of students with disabilities by their non-disabled peers; as well as the possibility that the inclusion of learners with disabilities or special education needs might impact on the academic progress of non-disabled students” (Subban & Sharma, 2006).

Research done by Avramids and Brahman highlights the importance of teacher professional development to assist teachers in their efforts to change their attitude towards inclusive education; “In particular, teachers with university-based professional development appeared both to hold more positive attitudes and to be more confident” (2010:30). Thus, as noted by Dana and Juan (2014:29) having “adequate training, sufficient support and positive attitudes is essential to successfully implement inclusive policies in schools. Teachers need assistance regarding the implementation of inclusive education in their classrooms; it could be facilities or training to be able to implement the policy of inclusive education”.

Understanding teachers’ views towards the policy of inclusive education, Mowes (2004:77) stated that “some teachers feel that they have been compelled to make changes in which they have not had any substantive participation in policy decisions”. The study that was done by Mowes (2004) also highlighted that some educators also “lack confidence in their own ability to teach learners with special educational needs” and also worry that the other regular learners in the classes might be neglected when teachers have to spend time supporting learners with special needs.

2.6.2 Teachers and the new curriculum within the Namibian context

As stated above, the Namibian government adopted a new curriculum in 2013. During this process, “a specific emphasis was placed on goal four of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development” (MoEAC, 2013:12). Goal four focuses on, “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (MoEAC, 2013:12). In line with this, “the Namibian curriculum emphasises that schools in the country would be required to organise learning support programmes to meet individual learner needs. In order

to address the needs of all learners, inclusive education requires the social acceptance of learners with impairments as equal members of the class and school, and that they should be valued as individuals by all members of staff, learners in the class and school and all parents and guardian” (Sector Policy on Inclusive Education, 2013). The curriculum states that “the success of each learner in an inclusive school setting will depend on the provision of enabling conditions for success based on an understanding that all learners are equal, and that no-one should be left behind. According to Namibia’s Vision 2030, a caring, integrated society begins in the classroom” (National Institute for Educational Development, 2016).

Furthermore, the new Namibian curriculum of 2016 emphasises that the inclusive education policy “should ensure that both the physical and social environment is conducive to all learners and that all the necessary teaching and learning aids are in place. The policy further demands that all teachers should have a foundation in inclusive education and knowledge of learning support. Every school, therefore, needs to ensure that all teachers have received training in inclusive education as part of their qualification or through continuous professional development” (MoEAC, 2013:14).

According to Naanda (2005, in Winzer, 2006), “the most important and critical person in a child’s learning after the parents at home is the teacher on whom a child’s learning outcome depends”. “Teachers’ views are crucial to a successful implementation of an inclusive approach in any given context as they have an effect on what they teach and how they impart knowledge to children” (Naanda, 2005 in Winzer, 2006; Bricker, 2000:45). Thus, “a successful inclusive programme depends on the positive attitudes of the teacher as far as the special needs of children are concerned. It is important for a teacher to have an understanding of the philosophy of inclusion and to be prepared to deal with the daily challenges associated with inclusive education” (Forlin, 1995; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2000; Winzer, 2006; Zimba, et al., 1999).

According to the research done in Namibia regarding inclusive education implementation by educators, Mowes’ (2002:6) findings show that “Namibia does not appear to have a clear and implementable policy on the education of learners with special educational needs. Further, the results from his study show that the funding for this policy is not in line with the expectations of the Namibian inclusionary policy. What is further evident is that the current curriculum being followed in mainstream schools is not suitable for learners with special educational needs”. There are “a vast majority of educators teaching in Namibian schools

who have never undergone any training in special needs education and who need support services in the form of social workers, psychologists and therapists in order to work with learners who are placed in their classroom with special educational needs” (Mowes, 2002). The results further indicated “that schools need to be modified in order to accommodate learners with special needs. These findings reveal, therefore, that in the Namibian context teachers, similar to other developing countries, find it difficult to implement the inclusive education policy in their schools and classrooms” (Mowes, 2002).

According to Haihambo, Zimba and February (2013:12), “one effort to implement inclusive education in Namibia was to include learners with visual impairments in mainstream education systems, however, at the same, there are still special schools for learners with severe special needs which are often preferred by parents and caregivers of learners with special educational needs”. This highlights the fact that even though the policy of inclusive education was formulated to remove discrimination between mainstream schools and special schools and only have one type of schools, this goal has not yet been fully realised as there are still schools that are called special schools for children with visual and hearing impairments and there are still teachers being trained for special education rather than this training being included in general teacher education training in order to integrate all learners into mainstream schools and give assistance to teachers to deal with the different needs of learners. Haihambo et al, (2013:16) further state that “teachers in regular schools end up teaching learners with visual impairments by default and without adequate preparation and support for this task. The desired outcome for provision of children with special needs, and especially those with visual impairment, is for them to be included in well-resourced and functional inclusive schools”. Teachers in mainstream schools feel that they “need to be prepared well in order to accommodate learners with special needs in their classroom. They found it difficult to implement the inclusive education policy due to lack of training in this regard” Haihambo et al, (2013:18).

2.7 Conclusion

“Today, Namibia strives to leave behind its troubled past and harness the power of education to provide greater equality of life for all of its citizens. The concept of ubuntu with its emphasis on inclusiveness, equity and equality is central to Namibia’s pursuit of this goal. However, significant challenges such as extreme poverty, an emerging economy struggling with drought and a competitive world market and a populace with multiple mother tongues

and cultural traditions tend to stand in the way of Namibia reaching these goals” (Biraimah, 2016:56). Yet, despite these challenges, Namibia’s Education “Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013) is committed to fulfilling a development agenda aimed at fighting injustice, poverty and inequality” (MoEAC, 2013:15) and remains committed to the global goals of Sustainable Development that it aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

This chapter has reviewed the literature on inclusive education as well as focused on inclusive education reform, specifically within the Namibian context. The chapter also looks at policy reforms regarding inclusive education and teachers’ views on the implementation of inclusive education policy and how teachers are implementing the inclusive education policy in their school.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the outline of the methodology followed to conduct this study. The main aim of this study was to establish the teachers' views on the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools of Oshana region, Namibia. This chapter discusses the research methodology aspects such as research paradigm, the research design, samples, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis, and ethical issues such as permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm defined by Malahlela citing Denzin & Lincoln (2000:25),” is an idea or a concept that guides the way we do things, especially when undertaking research. It is a set of beliefs that guides action”. While Weaver & Olson (2006:462) added that “paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished”. Kuhn (1970:77) defines “paradigms” that “paradigms are frameworks that serve as maps or guides for scientific/ research communities, determining acceptable theories and methods to solve identified problems/ issues”. There are a lot of paradigms such as empiricism, positivism, determinism, post-positivism and interpretive.

In this research, the researcher used an interpretive paradigm. Alexandra (2011:60) states that “this paradigm is related to post-positivism which is often utilised in qualitative research and stresses the importance of understanding each individual’s perception of reality. Research must include how individuals experience the world, and each of these experiences is considered valid truths. Critical humanism is a subtype of this paradigm that involves the persons studied in the process”. The researcher decided to use the interpretive paradigm as it assisted the researcher to study and understand the realities of the problem which involved people who experience the situation and their feelings and experiences of implementing the inclusive education policy. The teachers’ experience of implementing the inclusive education policy is revealed through the interviews that assisted to answer the research questions.

Regarding the interpretive paradigm, Conole (1993:59) states “that

Today, the interpretive perspective has come to be regarded as an alternative epistemological basis for the human science; from this perspective we no longer speak of human behaviour but rather of human action, so from an interpretive perspective human actions have reasons. With interpretive paradigm, value issues would become an integral part of the study in terms of participants' experience and the understanding of it by the researcher. The research report might consist of a summary of what interviewees said, illustrated by representative quotations from the transcripts of interviews and is likely to be of interest to both the research community and the participants who will see their own experience reflected in it".

To this end, this paradigm was suitable for this research because the researcher needed to hear teachers' experience in implementing inclusive education policy in their schools.

The interpretive paradigm the researcher used in this study is underpinned by in-depth interviews which were used to collect data. According to Malahlela, citing Kwadwo and Hanza (2015: 218), "the interpretive research paradigm forms the basis for the interpretation of the data collected, and to give meaning to the gathered information by drawing inferences or by judging the match between the information and some abstract pattern in an attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them".

According to Salovey (2004:45), the interpretive "research paradigm acknowledges that people's subjective experiences and activities are valid, multiple and socially constructed in accordance with their individual interpretations of social phenomena and therefore analysis of them falls within the constructivist paradigm". Further, "the interpretive paradigm in this study contributed towards understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of educators in mainstream schools concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education policy, as they emanated from meaning oriented methodologies, such as interviews and field observations" (Thomas, 2010:296). Therefore, "the interpretive paradigm in this study served as an underlying philosophical basis upon which the qualitative research design is established" (Malahlela, 2017:40), and which is discussed in the following sub-section.

3.3 Research design/ approach

Diego (2015:60, citing Krippendorff, 2004:81) defines the research design "as the network of steps in conducting a research project". As the researcher I chose a design that guided me

throughout the research with the main objective being to answer the research questions in an honest, transparent and reliable way.

The research design is based on a qualitative research paradigm. Creswell (2013:4) “describes qualitative research as an approach for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) “qualitative research studies items in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”.

I chose qualitative research instead of quantitative or mixed methods approach as I was interested in the teachers’ perspectives, experiences, and views regarding inclusive education policy implementation in Namibia. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2007:39), “is based on the desire to explore a social phenomenon”. In this case, the issue that I wanted to explore was the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools of Oshana region, Namibia. I also chose the qualitative research methodology, “because it has the advantage of employing an inductive research strategy that can facilitate such understanding between the causal relationships of variables that emerge in the study” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison: 2007). According to Jackson, Drummond & Camara (2007: 21), qualitative research methodology “is primarily concerned with understanding human beings’ experience in a humanistic, interpretative approach”. In addition, qualitative research methodology, “is more concerned with the ethics, politics and power differentials existing within research contexts” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, 2011: 456).

According to Krippendorff (2004:87) “the qualitative researcher searches for multiple interpretations by considering diverse audiences, alternative perspectives and oppositional critiques”. Following this idea, I used literature that presents different perspectives concerning inclusive education and I interviewed teachers from different schools, in order to acquire diverse perspectives or views to the research questions. According to Shank (2005:5), “a qualitative research approach is a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning, whereby I as the researcher tried to understand how others make senses of their experiences”.

The qualitative research methodology is relevant to this study because it provides a basis for accessing the participants’ perspectives which are central to generating an in-depth understanding of the teachers' views regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in selected mainstream schools of Oshana region.

3.4 Methods / Data gathering

According to Krippendorff (2004:97) “the first task in the research is to decide what is going to be researched and then how the research questions are answered, and thereafter considers the methods for data collection”. The source of data that I chose is interviews with teachers at mainstream schools on the issue of inclusive education policy implementation.

According to MacQueen (2012:11), “the most common source of information in qualitative research is transcribed data, which is generated from an in-depth interview”. Krippendorff (2004:139) states that “interviewing is a way to come to know other persons and to understand the cognitive models that shape their world views”. “These interviews usually consist of unstructured and open-ended questions intended to elicit responses from the participants” (Creswell, 2013:190), as “well as targeted questions on predetermined categories” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:128). With this advice, the researcher has conducted in-depth interviews with selected teachers at mainstream schools to gain information regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy.

Furthermore, Miles & Huberman (1994:27) states that “qualitative researchers generally work with small samples of people and those samples tend to be purposive rather than random because with a small number of sampling one can receive in-depth knowledge from people who have knowledge of the particular matter”. Therefore, I, as researcher, used a purposive approach to find interviewees. I interviewed nine teachers at three different schools because teachers are the most important people in implementing the policy of inclusive education.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured interviews

According to Greeff (2011:342), “interviews are the dominant method of data collection in qualitative research. It enables the researcher to gather information and understanding through direct interchange with an individual that has been identified as possessing the knowledge the researcher is seeking.” “This can also be regarded as a social relationship designed to exchange information between the participant and the researcher” (Greeff, 2011:343). Furthermore, Greeff defines the qualitative interviews as “an attempt to understand the world from the participants' points of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (2011:342).

According to Creswell (2013: 195), “there are many types of one-on-one interviews, such as unstructured, semi-structured and ethnographic interviews”. In response to the research question, I made use of semi-structured interviews. Creswell (2013: 195) defines semi-structured interviews “as an organised method of obtaining information of a particular interest, while allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth”. “Semi-structured interviews are useful in qualitative research for different reasons. The first one is that this form of interviewing allows for the interviewer to use a set of interview questions to obtain the information from the participants, while at the same time being able to deviate from the interview schedule and explore in-depth new information that arises during the course of the interview” (Partington, 2011:56). “This interview format enables me to obtain rich and descriptive life-world experiences and practices of the research participants” (Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2010). “The benefits of this type of interview are that it is adaptable and flexible, allowing the interviewer freedom to change or adapt the wording of questions, to leave out inappropriate questions or include additional exploratory questions based on” the interviewer’s perceptions of what is most appropriate” (Robson, 2002:270). According to Kvale (1996: 125), “the semi- structured design allows the interviewer to create an interactive conversation and lets interviewees feel safe and secure in sharing their feelings and experiences, giving the interviewer privileged access to the subject’s lived world”. Furthermore, “an interview schedule provides guidance for the conversation and allows the data collection to occur systematically, allowing greater comparability during data analysis” (Robson, 2002:273).

Maree (2013:87) states that “a series of carefully formulated open-ended questions are designed as a guide to facilitate discussion around the interview topic. For the purpose of the semi-structured interview for this research, the interview schedule was based on a series of prepared probing questions that were arranged into one category that allowed the researcher to explore the teachers’ views on the implementation of inclusive education policy in their school”. Nine teachers at three different schools were interviewed and the questions in the interview schedule enabled the researcher to explore different aspects of the implementation of inclusive education policy, and then later data was categorised in themes for data presentation and data analysis chapter.

The interview schedule comprised of two parts: firstly, as researcher I asked participants questions requesting their basic demographic information such as personal information like

age, educational qualification and years of experiences. Secondly, a range of open-ended questions was asked based on the research topic in order to gather data for presentation and analysis. The interviews were conducted in English at the time which was convenient for the interviewees. An audiotape recording was used to record the interview and their transcriptions were used to construct data. The data was transcribed by me immediately after each interview.

According to Black (1994:221), “semi-structured interviews generally take place in a setting that allows the interviewee the opportunity to observe the participant and in this way the process enable the researcher to gain insight into what the interviewees say and what they do not ask”. According to, Addison (2007:90), “this allows the researcher to contextualise the responses of the interviewees to the questions as well as the considered reflections”. This process was particularly apt for the interviews that the researcher conducted as these took place at schools in the afternoon after work and sometimes at participants’ houses.

3.5 Sampling procedures

In this section, I discuss the sampling method that I used to select teachers to participate in this study. Maree (2013:123) proposes “seven types of sampling procedures found in qualitative research, which include the following: purposeful, theoretical, snowball, sequential, deviant case, key informant and volunteer sampling”.

Purposeful sampling was chosen as I wanted to interview teachers with a number of years of teaching experiences. I selected three schools which are in the proximity of the region where I is working to cut the cost of transport. The participants of the study were chosen by the principals of the schools that I selected after I had contacted them and explained the focus and parameters of the research study.

3.6 Data Analysis

As Maree (2013:130) explains, “data analysis is a process of analysing and interpreting data to make meaning of it”. For the analysis of the interview data, I used descriptive method to describe how teachers implement inclusive education policy in their schools. I then used a narrative approach to present the data from interviews with teachers.

Maree (2013:131) states that, “the narrative approach is not only an accepted mode of presenting qualitative research; it is also the most appropriate for this research study as it

relays the everyday experiences of teachers implementing inclusive education policy in their schools”. The narrative approach as conceptualised by Connelly and Clandinin (1990:24), “is a process of data collection, narrative interpretation by the researcher, combined with more data collection and further narrative reconstruction”. Thus, the construction of nine narratives in the thesis is based on the semi-structured interviews with the nine teachers representing three schools.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

During the qualitative research, I was keenly interested in observing the ethical issues related to the research and how to address them (Creswell, 2013b:56). As researcher I completed the necessary ethical clearance documents from the University of Stellenbosch ethical committee, which allows me to obtain a consent letter from the Oshana Directorate of Education to allow me access to the three schools to carry out the research study. The principals of the schools chosen identified three teachers suitable for the study and provided me with permission to contact the teachers. I contacted teachers who would take part in the study and obtained their permission to be part of the research process. “In this research prior to the interview, participants were provided with a consent form that they signed and accepted, and once this step was completed, the interview process then started. One of the issues of special concern is how the information and identities provided in the interviews should be handled, therefore, it is important to pay special attention to confidentiality, privacy and anonymity” (Miles & Huberman, 1994:294).

In all interviews audiotape recordings were used and the audio recordings were stored in a secure safe that was accessible only by the researcher and after successful completion of the thesis they will be destroyed. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving an explanation. The issue of privacy was addressed by not discussing the information gained from the interviews with any third persons. Confidentiality was guaranteed by using pseudonyms and only providing a general description of the people interviewed, without giving specific details that could put their confidentiality at risk. The respondents in this research participated voluntarily in the interviews.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the research methodology, data collection processes and data analysis strategies. This chapter concluded by addressing ethical considerations and all steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. The next chapter present data of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate and understand teachers' views regarding the implementation of Namibia's inclusive education policy in selected mainstream schools in the Oshana region. It seeks to achieve this by understanding the perspectives of teachers from three schools in Oshana region. The preceding chapter presented the research paradigm, design and methodology that were used to collect the data. Data for this study was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the teachers and responds to the study's main research question: *What are teachers' views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in the Oshana region in Namibia?* Included in this section are the participants' responses to the study's main and sub-questions that explore the inclusive education policy and its implementation in schools; teachers' views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in their schools; an understanding as to why teachers hold those views; and an exploration of the successes and challenges experienced by the teachers in implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. This chapter presents the analysis and the discussion of the findings of this study.

4.2 Description of the participants

In this section, the study presents the background, personal and academic information of the participants. The participants of the study are teachers from three schools in the Oshana region. To maintain confidentiality teachers are referred to as Teacher A (TA) or Teacher B (TB) while schools are referred to as School 1 (S1) or School 2 (S2).

The study involved nine teachers from three combined schools in the Oshana region of Namibia. Purposive sampling (Groenewald, 2004:8) was used to select the study participants. Table 4.1 shows the personal details of the participants. This is followed by detailed description of each participant.

Table 4.1 Teachers' profiles

Teacher	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Qualifications
TA/S1	Female	13 years	BETD,BED Honours

TB/S1	Female	8 years	BETD, ACE
TC/S1	Female	14 years	BETD, ACE, BED Honours
TD/S2	Male	21 years	BETD,ACE, BED, MASTERS
TE/S2	Female	3 years	DIPLOMA
TF/S2	Female	2 years	DIPLOMA
TG/S3	Male	20 years	BETD,ACE
TH/S3	Female	14 years	BED
TI/S3	Female	18 years	BETD, Further Diploma

Teacher A in school 1 is a female teacher who is 37 years old. She completed grade 12 and then furthered her studies at Rundu College of Education where she obtained her Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD). She is trained to teach Mathematics and Natural Science grade 5-7 as well as Lower Primary as her minor. Her highest qualification is BED Honours in Mathematics Education from the University of Namibia. She has 14 years of teaching experience.

Teacher B in school 1 is a female teacher who is 33 years old. She specialised in teaching Junior Primary grade 0-3. After graduating from Ongwediva College of Education with BETD, she furthered her studies at North-West University and obtained her Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) specialising in learner support. She has 10 years of teaching experience.

Teacher C in school 1 is a female teacher who is 35 years old. After completing her grade 12 she studied at Ongwediva College of Education where she obtained her BETD and is trained to teach Agriculture grade 8-10 as well as Mathematics to grade 5-7. She furthered her studies at North-West University where she obtained her ACE. Her highest qualification is a BED Honours in Science Education which she obtained from Rhodes University. She has taught for 13 years.

Teacher D in school 2 is a male teacher who is 43 years old. After completing grade 12 he studied at the Ongwediva College of Education and obtained his BETD specialising in Agriculture and Life Science grades 8 to 10. He also obtained his ACE qualification from North-West University, and his BED Honours and Master's Degree from the International University of Management (IUM). He has 20 years of teaching experience.

Teacher E in school 2 is a female teacher who is 27 years old. She completed her tertiary education at the University of Namibia's northern campus obtaining a Diploma in Junior Primary (grade 0-3). She is currently teaching a grade 1 class and has 2 years of teaching experience.

Teacher F in school 2 is a female grade 3 teacher who is 28 years old. She completed her tertiary education at the University of Namibia where she studied for three years and obtained a Diploma to teach Junior Primary education. She has 13 years of teaching experience.

Teacher G in school 3 is a male teacher who is 42 years old. He decided to become a teacher after completing grade 12 as there were not many other careers available to him. He completed his tertiary education at the Ongwediva College of Education where he obtained his BETD. He is trained to teach Mathematics and Natural Science grade 5-7 as well as Lower Primary. He has 19 years of teaching experience.

Teacher H in school 3 is a female teacher who is 37 years old. She attended her primary and secondary school education in a rural area and on completion of her grade 12 she studied at Belvedere Technical Teachers College in Zimbabwe, obtaining her diploma to teach Mathematics and Physical Science grades 8-12. She has 13 years of teaching experience.

Teacher I in school 3 is a female teacher who is 41 years old. After completing grade 12 she attended Ongwediva College of Education where she obtained her BETD. She specialised in teaching Mathematics and Natural Science in Upper Primary grade 5-7. She has 22 years of teaching experience.

As can be seen from the teachers' biographical information presented, all the participants have adequate teaching experience to take part in the research study. A description of the background and geographical area of the study follows next.

4.3 Description of the background and geographical area of the study

Namibia has fourteen political regions which also form the fourteen educational regions in the country as indicated on the map in figure 4.2 below. Among the fourteen regions, the Oshana region was selected for the study. The Oshana directorate of education is located in the north-west of central Namibia. It borders the regions of Oshikoto to the east, Ohangwena to the North, Omusati to the West and Kunene North West. The region has eight circuits and fifty clusters. The reason for selecting this region was because the researcher was based and

worked in the region at the time of the study. As mentioned, the participants for this study were purposively selected from three combined schools in this region. A detailed description of each school is discussed below. They are referred to as School 1, 2 and 3 to maintain confidentiality.



Figure 4.2: Namibian Political map showing 14 regions. Oshana region is indicated in red.

School 1

School 1 was established in 1942. Six principals have led the school since its establishment. The learner enrolment at the date of the research was 427 learners, 214 girls and 213 boys. The school has 20 teachers, of whom 14 are females and 5 are males. The school has 3 non-teaching staff, of which 2 are males and 1 is a female. There are two Heads of Departments (HODs) at the school, both of whom are females. The school offers education from pre-primary to secondary education. The school is well resourced and has permanent structures which are well maintained. The school has furnished classrooms, a computer laboratory, a science laboratory and a library. The school has running clean water and electricity and is located close to the main road in the area and 20 km from the nearest town.

School 2

School 2 was established in 1978. The school enrolment at the date of the research was 788 learners. Seven principals have led the school since its establishment. The school has 30 teachers, 10 males and 20 females. It has 3 HODs, 2 females and 1 male. The school also has four non-teaching staff. This school has a good infrastructure; an administration block, a

science and a computer laboratory, and enough classrooms for all the learners. The school is located in a rural area but is close to a tarred road.

School 3

School 3 is the oldest of the three schools and was established in 1920. The school enrolment at the date of the research was 317 learners of whom 162 are males and 155 are females. Nine principals have led the school since it was established. The school has 13 teachers, 6 males and 7 females and 1 HOD. This school is not well resourced; it has poor infrastructure, no laboratories or a library, and the classrooms are old. It is situated in a rural village about 7km from the main tarred road.

4.4 Presentation of the data

The study now presents the data categorised in different themes that emerged from the interview transcripts. Direct quotes from the interview transcripts are referenced as S1/TA which refers to School 1/Teacher A or S2/TB which refers to School 2/Teacher B and so forth. These symbols represent the three participants from each school and are used as pseudonyms to protect the school and teacher identities as indicated in chapter 3.

The findings of the study are discussed under the main themes which emerged from the transcribed data:

- The teachers' views on the understanding of the concept of inclusive education policy and its implementation in mainstream schools
- The views on teachers' training course and inclusive education
- The views on the teachers' readiness, reception and adaptation of inclusive education policy
- The teachers' views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools
- The teachers' views on the importance and necessity of the inclusive education policy
- The teachers' views on the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools
- The teachers' views on the challenges in implementing the inclusive education policy

The research findings are presented in more detail below.

4.4.1 The teachers' understanding of the concept of inclusive education policy and its implementation in mainstream schools

Participants gave different opinions when they were asked to explain their general knowledge of the concept of inclusive education policy. The findings from the in-depth interviews with selected teachers reveal that teachers have a different understanding of the meaning of the concept of inclusive education policy and some of their responses lacked an understanding of the meaning of the concept inclusive education. The participants gave general information regarding their knowledge of the concept of the inclusive education policy as well as an explanation of their understanding regarding the inclusive education policy and their awareness of the policy. Three teachers stated that the inclusive education policy is a policy that states that all learners should be educated regardless of their different disabilities, and the policy increases the participation of all learners irrespective of their disabilities. Furthermore, three teachers indicated that the inclusive education policy is a guideline or policy that gives clarity on the implementation of inclusive education.

On the same note, two teachers stated that inclusive education is a law enacted in the Education Act that allows disabled and abled learners to learn in one education environment. Further, it is a document that defines strategic paths to ensure the education of all learners and to support full access and participation of all learners.

Lastly, Teacher 1 School A stated that the policy aimed to create a supportive environment which is accommodating and ensure that all learners can be educated in the safe environment: *“This is a policy that aims to create a supporting environment which is accommodating and learner-centred. It also aims to ensure that all learners are educated in the least restrictive education setting and in their neighbourhood to the fullest extent possible”*.

4.4.2 The views on teachers' training course and inclusive education training

During the semi-structured interviews conducted with the nine participants, eight teachers revealed that they received a small amount of training on inclusive education. However, most participants claimed that the training was not enough and they felt that they were not well prepared to implement inclusive education effectively. Six teachers stated that the training they received included knowledge of inclusive education in a subject called Education Theory and Practice (ETP). Two teachers indicated that inclusive education was mentioned in one of their subjects called Educational Psychology. Eight of the teachers felt that even

though inclusive education was mentioned in one of their subjects, it was not inadequate for them to be able to implement inclusive education in their schools. The teachers felt that inclusive education should have been a specific module that they studied during their training so that they could be equipped well with the knowledge and skills regarding how to handle learners with different needs and abilities.

Participants who attended their teacher training course at the College of Education stated that there was a special course on teaching visually impaired students and mostly the teachers who took this course were placed in special schools across the country and not in mainstream schools. Furthermore, a Sign Language course was offered voluntarily to students in the afternoon and mostly the students who took this course are now teaching in special schools around the country. One of the participants indicated that she did not receive any form of inclusive education training during her studies. She completed her teacher training course in secondary education in Zimbabwe. She notes that she was not aware of inclusive education until she finished her studies. When asked to share her background on her teacher education training, she responded by stating:

Throughout my three years of studies the focus was more on secondary education, we did not talk about inclusive education or study anything related to inclusive education. Of course, there were subjects like psychology, Sociology and philosophy but there was never a module or topic on inclusive education.(Teacher H)

From the participants' responses, it is clear that the most of teachers who were trained in Namibian colleges and universities had some pre-knowledge of inclusive education. Even though teachers noted that they had had some inclusive education training during their tertiary education studies, they felt that the training that they had received was not adequate in supporting them to successfully implement the inclusive education policy in their schools. According to their responses, the teachers felt that they should have been as fully trained in inclusive education as those who were going to teach at special schools.

The participants' responses in this study are in line with literature by Zimba et al. (2007) as stated in Chapter 2. "In Namibia, although several children with disabilities are included in regular schools, many teachers and their schools are perceived to be neither prepared for learners with disabilities nor provided with training and support to effectively teach them, which implies that the implementation of inclusive education is ineffective. The lack of good

training for teachers during their studies may have a negative impact on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools” Zimba et al. (2007). The participants were concerned that learners with special needs are not as well taken care of in their classrooms as they should be. Six participants, who were trained to teach from grade 5 to 10, felt that learners with learning difficulties or special needs are not given special attention in classrooms, and in most cases, they are just placed in age-appropriate grades where their educational needs are not catered for. Generally, these learners are then transferred to the next grade without achieving any competencies. These views confirm what is argued in the literature, as mentioned above.

Apart from the challenge of the inadequate training received by the teachers, the teachers trained to teach Junior Primary, when responding to Question 1 CI-II stated:

During the teacher training of junior primary, there were modules such as Educational Psychology 1 and 2, child development, Childhood learning and Lower primary in which there was a topic called Developing an Inclusive Classroom Environment where teachers studied how to work with different learners with different special needs.

Three participants, Teacher B, E and F felt that they were taught how to work with learners with special needs by being given tips on how to help learners with different learning abilities in their classrooms. Even though during their studies or training they did not get a chance to practice with these learners, when they started working, they were able to identify these learners in their classrooms and help them accordingly.

Teacher F responded to question C ii as follows:

I received training on how to teach/ help learners with different special educational needs. Yes, this training equipped me with appropriate training to teach children with special educational needs because now that I am working, I am able to apply what I was taught at University in the field, I now know how to deal with learners who are visually impaired, deaf and who are disabled.

The participants were asked if they had received appropriate training to teach children with special needs. The question was necessary for the researcher to establish if there was a common answer among all participants. It was revealed that the teachers who were trained in junior primary were confident in the teaching of children with special needs, however,

teachers trained in other grades were less confident and stated that they had not received appropriate training to teach learners with different learning abilities and this is the reason why they are not implementing inclusive education in mainstream schools.

4.4.3 The teachers' views on readiness, reception and adaptation of the inclusive education policy

The main question seeks the views of teachers on how prepared they felt when they were implementing the policy of inclusive education as well as how they received it in their schools. It further probes to find out how they adapted and familiarised themselves with the policy.

Seven out of the nine participants in the study indicated that they were already in the teaching profession when the inclusive education policy was introduced in 2013 by the Ministry of Education. Two participants indicated that they found the policy in their schools when they started working. The seven teachers have different views regarding how they received the policy of inclusive education. Four participants indicated that they cannot remember being given the policy or when the inclusive education policy was introduced into their schools. They said that perhaps the policy was received by their school principal and filed. They continued by saying that they only became aware of the policy during the research interview when there was a question regarding the objectives of the policy of inclusive education. The participants stated that no meeting or workshop had taken place about the policy in their school, but that they had downloaded the copy from the Ministry of Education website and read through most of the objectives of the policy.

Three participants indicated that when the policy was introduced their school principals shared a copy of the document in briefing meetings or during their Continuous Professional Development (CPD), but the principals did not go into the details of the policy, they just indicated that they had received an inclusive education policy and that the teachers should borrow a copy of the document or download the policy and read it. Two participants revealed during the interview that by the time they started teaching the policy was already introduced in schools. They indicated that they were not informed about the existence of the policy in the school during their induction. One participant revealed that only became aware of the policy from teachers from different schools during a written interview for a promotion post. When asked about the policy, the participant commented as follows:

I can't remember when the policy came into our school because I never received the policy if it is in our school. I only became aware of the policy when I was writing an interview test; there was a question about inclusive education policy which I failed. After the test, I asked other teachers about the policy and that's how I became aware of the policy.(Teacher G)

The above personal views of teachers show that they had different experiences of how they received the inclusive education policy at their respective schools. The findings reveal that at some schools, teachers were not informed about the existence of the policy and they came to know about it through other colleagues from different schools. At some schools, the policy was shared with all staff members in meetings and CPD training. However, all participants felt that the policy was not discussed or explained well for everyone to interpret it accordingly. This is in line with Catling (2013:2) who states "that teachers most of the time do not get enough training on policies and as a result, they learn by themselves".

Teacher A explained that even though the policy is in schools it is interpreted differently. She stated that she felt that if the policy was well explained to everyone then all teachers would refrain from treating learners with learning difficulties with a 'do not care' attitude. Further, teachers would know that they should give differentiated activities to their learners. Teacher D agreed that the policy is not well explained and as a result, learners with special needs are mistreated by teachers who are not aware of the objectives of the policy. He stated that these are teachers who never went to college or university but were trained through in-service training or are only grade 12 certificate holders and have, therefore not heard of the concept of inclusive education and if the policy could have been explained well, then the interpretation of the policy could be well understood by everyone in the school.

Moreover, teacher H expressed the view that the policy was received with mixed feelings as some teachers had questions of how to implement the policy or how to teach learners with learning difficulties. Many teachers felt that they did not have enough knowledge and were not trained to help learners with different abilities as the policy was never explained in detail. She continued adding that it was difficult to adapt to the policy because no training was given on how to handle special needs learners. However, after reading through the policy she came to realise that the policy is not difficult to interpret, it only requires reading with understanding. However, teacher F expressed the view that the teachers who were taught at university and colleges about inclusive education did not find it hard to understand the

content of the policy like other colleagues who only came to know about inclusive education when the copy was brought to the school. She stated that after reading the policy she began adapting her planning to involve all learners of different abilities to give them learning support. These views are supported by literature in chapter 2. Bricker (2000:45), who states that “a successful inclusive programme depends on the positive attitudes of the teacher as far as the special needs of children are concerned, it is important for a teacher to have an understanding of the philosophy of inclusive education and to be prepared to deal with the daily challenges that may come with teaching in an inclusive school context”. Therefore, some teachers felt that they were not prepared well regarding the inclusive education policy because no workshops were held, only CPD training and briefing meetings at some schools where the policy was shared among the staff members but not explained in detail at their schools to understand the content and implement the policy accordingly.

This study has shown that teachers have to read the policy of inclusive education on their own to familiarise themselves with the content of the policy. During the interviews, all the participants indicated that they familiarised themselves with the document by reading the document in their free lessons and some before being interviewed for the study because they wanted to know the content and objectives of the policy. Teacher I, A, E and B added that they adapted their teaching to the policy by identifying learners with different abilities and planned their lessons and activities to include these learners as well as by offering remedial classes in the afternoon. However, teacher G indicated that it was hard to adapt their teaching to the policy because of a lack of skills and knowledge on how to implement the policy. Teacher G and H stated that some teachers at their schools accepted the policy with mixed feelings and were complaining about having learners with learning disabilities in their classroom. These teachers felt that these learners should be taught at special schools and not in mainstream schools. Teacher E and D said that it was easy to adapt to the implementation of the policy of inclusive education because during their university training they were made aware of the inclusive education policy and so they found it easy to help learners with learning difficulties. These findings are supported by Mowes (2002) who states that “it is evident that the current curriculum being followed in mainstream schools in Namibia is not suitable for learners with special educational needs. The results show that the majority of educators teaching in Namibian schools have never undergone any training in special needs education”. Therefore, the findings show that educators require support services in the form

of social workers, psychologists and therapists to be able to help learners with special educational needs.

All participants in the study expressed the view that the lack of training in the inclusive education policy is a barrier to the effective implementation of the policy in Namibian schools. During the interviews, participants indicated that the policy of inclusive education was not taken seriously by teachers as they teach without considering learners with special educational needs. In line with the literature, the research findings on the reception and adaptation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools play a key role during the process of policy implementation. According to Mowes (2002), research indicates that “schools need to be modified to accommodate learners with special needs”. Likewise, within the Namibian context, as in developing nations, educators find it difficult to implement the inclusive education policy in their schools and classrooms due to various factors as mentioned by Mowes (2002). The results of this research show that teachers’ teaching experience, qualification and attendance of continuous professional development and workshops will influence how they adapt and implement the policy of inclusive education. Further, as stated by the participants, the lack of training and resources regarding the inclusive education policy is a barrier to the successful implementation of the policy in many schools, if not all.

4.4.4 The teachers’ views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy

The main objective of the present study as well as the main question of the study is to establish the views of teachers on the implementation of the policy in mainstream schools. The question posed to participants was to establish the extent to which the teachers in mainstream schools perceive the implementation of the inclusive education policy in their schools. It further seeks teachers’ views about the effectiveness of policy implementation among learners with different learning abilities.

Five participants in the study indicated that they are positive about the policy and they feel that the policy of inclusive education is necessary as they are passionate and eager to accommodate and embrace the diversity of learners. The policy helps learners with different learning abilities to mix with other learners and prevent discrimination. The participants also indicated that the policy is well received but that training is needed to implement the policy well in every school. In their responses, they stated that the policy is good because by

including learners with diverse learning needs in mainstream schools, inclusive education is fully implemented. Furthermore, they indicated that they support the policy because it affords learners with different learning abilities the opportunity to be educated together in one classroom without discrimination. They also stated that they are positive about the policy because the main focus of the policy is to give quality education to all learners irrespective of who they are and regardless of the learners' economic or social backgrounds.

Three participants in the study stated that they felt that the policy is good as it is in line with the constitution of the Republic of Namibia which states that as much as possible all school-going children must attend a school where they live. The participants feel that discriminating against learners with barriers to learning by sending them elsewhere or referring them to special schools is not acceptable and all learners should be accommodated in mainstream schools so that their diversities can be acknowledged and embraced by all stakeholders. They also indicated that not all parents may be able to afford to send their children to special education institutions elsewhere in the country; therefore, the policy makes it possible for learners with special needs to be educated in schools within their local environment. Furthermore, the participants added that the policy assists to reduce inequality in education and respond to the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture's goals of equity and access to education. However, as stated, the problem is that not all teachers are aware of the policy as the policy information is not disseminated well. As a result, schools have learners with different abilities, but not every teacher is aware of how to teach or help learners with special needs in their schoolwork and in most cases, the learners are left alone or not given enough attention.

One participant, however, indicated that although they were not against the implementation of the policy in mainstream schools, they felt that the policy is not properly monitored or executed as the government has not redesigned the school building facilities to respond accommodate all learners with different disabilities. The participant indicated that the ministry first needs to redesign school environments to accommodate learners with disabilities as well as ensure that these schools are well resourced. As stated by Teacher B:

My views about the implementation of the policy of inclusive education is that I am not against the policy but I do not see it is purpose because it is not properly monitored in schools and the government has not improved building facilities at many

schools to address and responds to the challenges and needs of all learners since there are no provision of teaching and learning materials for special needs learners.

Seven participants in their responses indicated that although they are positive about the policy, the policy is not effectively implemented in their schools because teachers were not provided with proper training and the necessary teaching and learning materials were not given to help learners with special needs. Participants felt that the ministry did not consider the schools' environments which in most cases are not ready to accommodate learners with disabilities due to not having enough resources. They further indicated that the policy is not effectively implemented because not all teachers are aware of the policy and not enough training on the policy has been given to assist teachers to understand how to manage learners with different learning needs as required by the policy. They also said that even though the policy document is in their files, they do not feel that teachers are thoroughly implementing it as there are still teachers who are unaware of the policy objectives and who are discriminating against learners in their classrooms.

One participant indicated that according to them the policy has not been implemented at all. The participant stated that the policy will only be effective if teachers are given information on how to implement it. The participant felt that in most schools the teachers are not implementing the policy; most teachers are just assisting learners with special needs to be among other learners. As stated by Teacher G:

I cannot say the policy is effective because to me the policy is not implemented, not at all, I think it was supposed to be effective if all teachers were given information and training on how to implement it.

Except for one participant, the majority of participants indicated that the policy is not effective or being implemented at all. One participant indicated that the policy is effectively implemented even though negative attitudes exist towards the policy. According to this participant, the policy is effective because children are being taught together in one classroom and teachers are required to prepare different learning activities for different learners in their classroom. Furthermore, it is effective because all learners are admitted to mainstream schools without discrimination. Teacher A stated that:

I can say the policy is effectively implemented whether there are negative attitudes towards it, children may not be accustomed to other children who looks and behaves

differently but teachers are always there to befriend learners with special learning abilities.

The above personal views of teachers show that they had different opinions in response to the question. Teachers seemed to feel that the policy will be effectively implemented in schools when teachers are given training on how to work with learners with different learning abilities. Thus, the majority of participants felt that only training will assist teachers to understand the inclusive education policy better. They felt that what they are currently doing is not enough regarding the effective implementation of the inclusive education policy.

4.4.5 The teachers' views on the importance and necessity of implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools

In this section, I provide perspectives on the importance of the inclusive education policy and whether the teachers feel that it is necessary for the policy to be implemented in mainstream schools. The teachers' views are presented below.

Five participants stated that the policy is very important because it creates opportunities for participation and collaboration and aims to reduce inequality in education and end discrimination found in previous education regimes. These teachers feel that the policy assists to develop new resources and approaches and end segregation with regards to academic performance, gender and race as it provides all students with the most appropriate learning environment and opportunities for them to achieve the best level of education. What the policy affords learners, therefore, is an education system that supports the diversity of learners by care and support. The participants felt that the policy is important because it promotes shared learning opportunities and instills a sense of self-confidence in learners with disabilities. Furthermore, the policy enables learners to integrate into learning with their peers without disabilities that may allow them to build self-esteem and confidence in their learning. They also indicated that the policy is important as it makes provision for every learner to have access to education this includes learners with learning difficulties or impairments as some parents may not have the means to send their children to special schools which are in different towns.

The participants further indicated that the policy is important because it has assisted the Ministry of Education to reach its objectives of equity, fairness and non-discrimination. As such the policy has helped many learners to access education as in the past many children

with learning difficulties stayed at home and did not attend school because special schools are very far from their homes. Now learners with learning difficulties can be enrolled in mainstream schools thus providing all learners with access to education.

Three participants in the study indicated that the policy is important because it helps all children in the same community to be part of a school and develop a sense of belonging and become better prepared for life in their community. They also said the policy is important as it provides better learning opportunities because it promotes an education system that is accessible, inclusive, equitable, and efficient to all learners. They further stated that the policy is important because it allows for all children, specifically vulnerable children and children with disabilities, to benefit from quality education. The three teachers also stated that the policy allows all learners to interact with one another and support one another. The policy also helps teachers to identify the needs of different learners in their classrooms and assist them in their learning through better interaction and observation.

One participant indicated that the policy might be important but felt that it is not treated as such in many schools because it is not well known by all the teachers. The participant felt that it is not good practice to integrate learners with special learning needs in the same classroom. According to this teacher, learners with special learning needs need to have extra time to learn in their own classrooms environments in order to achieve their competencies. The teacher felt that the ministry needs to come up with a programme for learners with learning difficulties within mainstream schools but in separate classroom settings with expert teachers. This would allow for learners with special learning abilities to be educated alongside other learners and be able to socialise with all the learners during break times. The participant felt that if the policy was implemented in this way it could better serve its purpose and importance. The participant felt that until such a time that all educators know what is expected of them regarding the inclusive education policy, the policy will not receive the respect it deserves from the teachers who are required to implement the policy. As stated by Teacher H:

Yes, I can say the policy is important but I am not confident enough to indicate so because not all educators are aware of the document, some have not heard about it, so how do you respect or treat something as important if you are not aware of it.

The teachers' views about the importance of the policy indicate that the policy is important, but according to the teachers, for different reasons. The key point made by the teachers is that the policy is aimed at reducing inequality in education and helping learners with learning difficulties to be educated in schools within their communities rather than having to travel far distances from their parents or caretakers to attend school.

In addition to discussing the importance of the policy, the participants also gave their views on the necessity of the inclusive policy implementation. All eight participants had the same view and stated that it is necessary to implement the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools because we have many marginalised children in our country who are now enrolled in schools because of this policy. These children did not have an opportunity for schooling in the past and the implementation of the policy also assists. They also stated that it was necessary to implement the policy as it helps parents who cannot afford the transport costs to take their children to special schools which are far from their communities. They further indicated that the policy must be implemented because it is ideal for social inclusion as it allows children of different learning abilities to play and learn together when they are in one classroom and develops opportunities for peer tutoring.

Furthermore, the policy is necessary so that children with special needs can also make a meaningful contribution in schools and not be seen as dependent and someone that always needs help. Rather, the policy promotes the talents of all children by encouraging their participation in school activities such as singing, dancing, cleaning and other chores. It also helps learners to learn from each other, help one another and receive the same quality education.

Although the majority of participants are positive about the need for the inclusive education policy to be implemented, one participant stated that it is necessary to implement the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in Namibia only if the government and Ministry of Education Arts and Culture make a better effort to make sure that the policy is implemented effectively in all schools by ensuring that monitoring and feedback are taking place. As stated by Teacher E:

Yes, it might be necessary to implement inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in Namibia, for as long as the government and ministry of education are

providing all schools with suitable learning and teaching materials for both learners including those with special needs and monitor everything.

The above personal views of the participants of this study show that the inclusive education policy is important and it is necessary to implement it because it helps in the realisation of the goals of the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture which are access, equity and quality. If the inclusive education policy is implemented, all learners will have access to quality education and there will be equity and fairness in dealing with all learners.

4.4.6 The teachers' views on the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools

In this theme, participants were asked to give their views on how the policy is being implemented in their schools. Participants were asked to indicate the level of the implementation of the inclusive education policy in their schools.

Three participants shared their views that the inclusive education policy is being implemented as their school admits all learners without discrimination. They stated that their schools do not screen learners, neither do they give them aptitude test or interview them. All learners seeking admission are admitted if the school has space. All learners from different background, and especially marginalised learners, are admitted in the schools. Once the learner is admitted to the school there are learning support programmes in the schools. Even if the learning support is not effectively practised, the programmes are meant to help learners with learning difficulties in the afternoon to achieve basic competencies. The participants also indicated that teachers prepare lessons and activities to include all learners. Teachers identify learners with visual and hearing problems and place these learners in front of their classes so they will not be left out. They also stated that all learners in schools are taught to respect others' rights and school rules are inclusive and made in such a way that once all learners adhere to the rules there is no bullying of learners with disabilities.

In general, the participants stated that the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy is average because mostly all learners are admitted to schools when they apply. Only learners with severe impairments are not admitted because there are no facilities to cater for them. The participants described the adherence to the policy by teachers as average because not all teachers adhere to the policy objectives. Some teachers do not take into account learners with special educational needs in their classes. Written activities, tests or

examinations are set without considering the difference in their learners' abilities. Learners with special needs in many schools are just sitting in classrooms for as long as they are there and are pushed to the next grade as they are considered un-teachable. In addition, the participants stated that the majority of teachers have not read the policy and understood its primary objectives. The participants felt that many teachers do not have any understanding of the inclusive education policy.

On the other hand, five participants indicated that the policy is implemented at low-level because teachers are not trained and so they are not giving special needs and marginalised learners the attention they need to achieve their competencies. They also said that teachers do not consider that all learners in their classes are part of their lessons as they ignore learners with special needs. They also indicated that the policy is implemented at a minimal level because the teachers do not have information and skills on how the policy should be implemented and if they are supporting learners with disabilities, they are not doing it as part of the policy implementation. They further stated that the level of implementation is low because it is hard for teachers to fully include all learners with different special needs as they are not provided with the necessary learning and teaching materials and this makes it difficult to assess learners with special needs during assessment activities.

On the same topic, one participant indicated that they feel that the policy is well implemented in mainstream schools because it brings exceptional children into daily contact with non-exceptional children in one educational setting and teachers are also committed to a child-centred pedagogy where individual differences are accepted as challenges and not as a problem. The participant further said that the policy is being implemented by creating equal opportunities for all learners irrespective of their learning difficulties since they all have an equal right to education. Furthermore, all learners are taught in the same classroom and teachers are using suitable teaching methods and teaching aids to make sure that all learners are included and catered for in the classroom. As stated by Teacher A:

Yes, I can say the policy is well implemented at our school because all learners are admitted and exceptional learners are in a mix with non-exceptional learners, this means teachers plan lesson plans and learning activities including all children.

The above personal views of teachers show the different understanding of the level of implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools and how the

implementation of the policy differs from school to school. As some participants feel, admitting all learners without discrimination in schools is how they are implementing the policy or that this is the only way to implement the policy.

4.4.7 The teachers' views on the role of the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture and policy implementation in mainstream school

The researcher wanted to find out the teachers' views on the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture regarding the enforcement of the inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream schools in Namibia. I explored if the teachers feel that the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture has done enough to make sure that the inclusive education policy is being properly implemented in all schools.

In giving their views, some participants feel that the ministry has done enough to enforce the inclusive education policy, while other participants feel that the ministry of Education Arts and Culture has not done enough to enforce the policy implementation.

Four participants indicated that they feel that the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture has done enough and has tried their best by fully accommodating children with special educational needs in mainstream classes. The ministry has established many schools in the country which enables learners with disabilities from various backgrounds to be in schools. They further indicated that the ministry has introduced learning support programmes in the curriculum which all schools have to implement. The programme involves planned methods and materials that enable learners with learning difficulties and other special needs to reach essential basic competencies in the different subject areas. In addition, life skills as a subject makes use of a special teacher who deals with counselling learners and making referrals to other ministries regarding special need learners. The participants also indicated that the ministry has also improved some school buildings to accommodate all learners even those in wheelchairs as part of the implementation of the policy.

Furthermore, the participants indicated that the ministry has tried its best because it has introduced a module on inclusive education in Higher Education Institutions as well as offering in-service training in the form of workshops to provide teachers with information on how to integrate and assist learners with special needs into mainstream educational settings. The participants also indicated that schools with newly graduated teachers are better

positioned to manage the inclusive education policy because those teachers have been given the skills and knowledge of inclusive education during their training. Teacher E noted:

I think the ministry has done it is best to help enforce the implementation of the policy because the document is available and teachers currently at higher institutions are taught about inclusive education so when they start teaching they will implement the policy thoroughly.

Five participants stated that in their views the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture has not done enough to enforce the implementation of inclusive education policy. Apart from creating the policy document the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture does not monitor whether the policy is being implemented. They also said that many teachers still need training or workshops to refresh themselves on how to assist learners with educational needs. They also indicated that the ministry is not doing enough to provide the necessary infrastructure to support learners with special needs, especially in rural areas. Thus, the participants felt that in rural areas the lack of school infrastructure is hindering the enforcement of the policy. They also indicated that most of the school windows open outside which makes it unfriendly to visually impaired learners. Classrooms with steps cannot accommodate learners in wheelchairs and can be difficult for visually impaired learners. They also added that when the ministry does provide resources to schools, they do not provide specific material for learners with learning special needs.

Furthermore, the participants felt that the ministry is not doing enough because most teachers who are dealing with learners with special needs are not well trained to deal with these learners and therefore these learners are just transferred to the next grade without achieving any competencies in any of the grades they have attended. In most cases they are regarded as un-teachable or that their presence is ignored. They added that the ministry has failed to provide specialist teachers and a special curriculum in mainstream schools. Participants felt that the ministry has failed to create an enabling, supporting environment for all learners and teachers in all schools. Participants also indicated that the ministry still has to do a lot to enforce the policy implementation by sensitising all teachers to understand the importance of the policy and by sending officials to evaluate the policy implementation at schools to check whether everything is fine or if the school needs to improve somewhere. Teacher G noted:

I do not think the ministry of education Arts and Culture has done enough to enforce the implementation of the policy because the majority of teachers are not yet trained on the policy and teachers need to understand the policy objectives. Plus I never saw officials from the regional education office visiting our school evaluating the implementation of the policy.

The above personal views of the participants show two different views. Some participants have indicated that the ministry has done enough to enforce the implementation of the policy while the second group of participants feels that the ministry has not done enough to enforce the inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream schools.

4.4.8 The teachers' views on the challenges in implementing the inclusive education policy

The fifth objective of the study was to find out the challenges that teachers in mainstream schools are faced with in their attempt to implement the inclusive education policy. The researcher wanted the participants to describe what types of challenges they are facing in their schools in implementing the policy. Participants were also invited to discuss school situations where they are successfully implementing the inclusive education policy in their schools.

Five participants indicated that the main challenge that the teachers face is lack of knowledge as many teachers are not trained to facilitate the implementation of the policy. Teachers find it difficult to adjust or adapt their teaching to suit the inclusive education policy requirements. They also indicated that the lack of workshops to help teachers who are not trained to gain knowledge is also affecting the implementation of the policy. Teachers who are not well trained in policy implementation are struggling to support learners with educational special needs. Teachers felt that the issue of the lack of training concerning the implementation of inclusive education policy is the reason why many teachers are reluctant to involve themselves in applying the inclusive education teaching strategies in their classroom situation. Furthermore, they indicated that most teachers lack confidence in dealing with a variety of learner disabilities or special educational needs. Teachers are also challenged by overcrowded classrooms and the lack of resources in their classrooms. They feel that this is causing a low level of learners' achievement in numeracy and literacy which leads to high repetition in many classes. Teachers indicated that overcrowded classroom place additional

demands on the teachers as they have to ensure that all learners receive proper learning time or attention. The participants further stated that there is a challenge in identifying learners with special needs, making the relevant curriculum adjustments and adaptations as well as providing the necessary support services and specialised content on daily living skills. Lastly, teachers felt that the main challenge is located in the inability of the education policymakers to recognise that what is written and said are not necessarily being put into effect. As stated by Teacher A:

I think the main challenge is teachers as implementers of the policy but the majority are not trained on inclusive education and this has led to some teachers to have negative attitudes towards learners with educational special needs, but the main cause is lack of training.

Apart from teachers not being trained, it emerged from the findings of the interviews that school environments and learning resources are a challenge. Four participants indicated that their school environments are unfit for the implementation of inclusive education as the schools are not provided with learning and teaching materials that can support learners with special needs. For example, resources such as textbooks, talking books of Braille machines for the learners with visual impairments, and classrooms constructed using ramps to facilitate the movement of learners with physical abilities are not provided in most schools. The participants also stated that many of the schools are old buildings that cannot accommodate learners who are physically challenged and there is a shortage of equipment to assist learners with various other disabilities. They added that many schools in rural areas are not built with inbuilt boards where learners with visually impairments can learn by feeling the letters. They further added that the school environment and facilities pose challenges regarding the full implementation of the policy as many school environments only allow learners with no severe impairments to be admitted. Furthermore, the participants stated that another challenge in implementing the policy is the parents or the community's perception of schools. Many parents are not aware that they can send their children with disabilities to a school which shows the lack of awareness and information among the parents. Parents also send learners with learning difficulties to school but do not report their child's learning difficulty to the school during admission which makes it difficult for teachers in the classrooms to help them on time. They also noted that the distance between schools and some houses makes it a barrier for learners with disability to attend school as some parents do not have the means to

transport their kids to school every day. Additionally, some schools are surrounded by sand which makes it difficult for learners on wheelchairs to move around their school premises. There are also often no sports facilities that accommodate learners with special needs. Teacher D stated:

I think we have many challenges among them, resources, infrastructures, learning materials and mostly our school environment is supporting inclusive education especially if we want to include all learners even those on wheelchairs.

The above personal views of teachers concerning challenges facing schools in implementing the inclusive education policy indicate many challenges which are hampering the implementation of the policy. In summary, participants felt that the main challenges facing the implementation of the inclusive education policy are that many teachers are not trained in inclusive education, as well as school environments and infrastructures.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented a summary of the data of the interview conducted to determine the teachers' views towards the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. Their views were categorised and presented in seven themes. The next chapter analyse the findings as presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings of the data presented in the previous chapter. The current study aims to establish the views of teachers on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in selected mainstream schools of Oshana Region, Namibia. In this chapter, the findings from the interviews as presented in the previous chapter, are interpreted and discussed under eight themes which are derived from the objectives of this study as formulated in chapter 1. In this section the findings are discussed under the following themes: the teachers' views on the understanding of the concept of inclusive education policy and its implementation in mainstream schools; the views on teachers' training course and inclusive education; the views on the teachers' readiness, reception and adaptation of inclusive education policy; the teachers' views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy; the teachers' views on the importance and necessity of the inclusive education policy; the teachers' views on the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in schools; the teachers' views on the role of the Ministry of education and policy implementation; and the teachers' views on the challenges in implementing the inclusive education policy.

5.2 Discussion of Data

Data in this study is presented and analyzed using the existing literature.

5.2.1 The teachers' understanding of the concept of the inclusive education policy and its implementation in mainstream schools

This theme discusses the teachers' views and understanding of the concept of inclusive education and its implementation in mainstream schools. In this analysis, reference is made to the available literature on the topic as presented in chapter 2.

The study revealed that the most of the participants interviewed did not have a good understanding of the meaning of inclusive education policy but is clearer regarding the general concept of inclusive education. The findings revealed that the concept of inclusive education and the related policy was defined in a simple ways by the participants which resulted in different interpretations and implementation of the policy.

Teachers in most cases referred to the inclusive education policy as a policy that states that all learners should be educated within mainstream classrooms regardless of their different disabilities. These findings are supported by Ekins and Grimes (2009) and Westwood (2013) who suggest that “the concept of inclusive education is diverse which can contribute to either a fairly narrowed or broadened interpretation of the concept. The findings also revealed that teachers are aware of the concept of inclusive education but are not familiar with the policy documents”. This is in line with Westwood (2013) who indicates that “many teachers lack the knowledge and skills to ensure that the proper execution of the inclusive education policy takes place due to the teachers not being well informed about the policy”.

Further, in this study it is revealed that many teachers many felt that the inclusive education policy has increased the participation of all learners in mainstream classrooms irrespective of their disabilities. Armstrong and Barton (2008:2) note that “inclusive education refers to all students being allowed to attend their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes where they are supported in their learning and encouraged to contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. In order, therefore, for all schools to be inclusive of all learners, it is important that educators consider how they organise their classrooms, programs and activities so that all students have access to quality education and are supported to learn and participate equally”. In addition, UNICEF (Namibia, 2015) defines inclusive education “as creating a conducive learning and teaching environment for all children in mainstream schools, regardless of differences in socio-economic background, disability, race, color, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity, among others”. Similarly, Carreiro King (2003:2) defines inclusive education “as all students coming together in a school and being part of the school community regardless of their strengths, weakness or disabilities”. Thus, “all students are included and encouraged to develop a sense of belonging among other students, teachers and support staff in a school context” (Carreiro King (2003:2).

The study findings are supported by Armstrong et al (2010:6) who state that “the call for all students to be included in mainstream schools began in the mid-1980s from parents advocating for all students regardless of ability should be given equal access to all schools”. In support of the above findings, Mitchell (2010:14) notes that “the focus on inclusive education has been broadened beyond students with special needs based solely on disabilities to include a consideration of other aspects of disadvantages and marginalization, such as gender, poverty, language, ethnicity, and geographic isolation”. Similarly, Leyden and Miller

(2002:10) define inclusive education “as the equal and optimal education of all learners within one school system where all learners are recognized as having diverse needs but are valued for their shared humanity. Within this system, all learners can be educated together and personal diversity is seen to be enriching”.

Lastly, it emerged from the current study that the policy of inclusive education is aimed at creating a supportive environment which is accommodating and ensures that all learners can be educated in a safe environment. This was confirmed in a study conducted by Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2006:36) which shows that “the hallmark of inclusive education is the teachers’ willingness to accept students with special educational needs and that their attitudes and knowledge about inclusive education are important to such willingness”. The study conducted by Swart (2001) states that “there is no single accepted interpretation of the concept of inclusive education- it has various meanings for people in differing times and contexts”. Moreover, Dyson (2001, as cited in Swart, 2001) “analyses definitions from different countries and suggests that each definition pertains to a particular group of learners, has a specific interpretation of what it means to be included, assumes a precise ideal of the society which it aims to build, and has varying implications for different schools”.

The next theme discusses the teachers’ views on teacher training and inclusive education.

5.2.2 The teachers’ views on teachers’ training and inclusive education

The discussion in theme two looks at teachers’ views on teacher education training in relation to inclusive education. The discussion of the findings of this theme addresses the sub-question based on objective 1 of this study which asked whether participants have received training on inclusive education during their teacher education training.

It emerged from the findings of the current study that most participants claimed that the training that they received during their teacher education studies was not enough and that they felt that they were not well prepared to implement inclusive education effectively. Teachers felt that even though inclusive education was mentioned in one of their subjects it was not adequate for them to be able to implement inclusive education in their schools. The findings revealed that teachers who took part in the study fall into two categories: teachers who taught before 2013 when the policy document was released by the ministry of education and teachers who have entered the education system after the inclusive education policy was released. This could be the reason why they differ in their knowledge of inclusive education. The finding of the current study confirms Materechera (2013:109) who states “that teachers

who trained as teachers before the implementation the inclusive education policy had minimal knowledge of inclusive education. These teachers did not complete any courses in inclusive education and have learned about inclusive education incidentally or during an in-service training program”.

The participants’ responses in this study are in line with literature by Zimba et al. (2007) as stated in Chapter 2. “In Namibia, although several children with disabilities are included in regular schools many teachers and their schools are perceived to be neither prepared for learners with disabilities nor provided with training and support to effectively teach them which implies that the implementation of inclusive education is ineffective. The lack of good training for teachers during their studies may have a negative impact on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools”. The findings of the present study confirm Eleweke and Londa’s (2010:43) perspectives which support the participants’ views by stating that there is evidence which indicates that “inclusive education is not being satisfactorily implemented in most developing countries. Factors such as the absence of support services, relevant materials, and inadequate personnel training programs, lack of funding, structures and the absence of enabling legislation are the major problems of effective implementation of inclusive education in developing countries”. The findings of the present study also confirm literature by Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2001:214) who state that “originally teachers had a negative attitude towards inclusive education due to the fact that they were not trained to cope with learners who experienced barriers to learning and their schools did not have the facilities or equipment needed by these learners”. Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001:256) support the teachers’ views in this study as they argue that “educators are under a lot of pressure and stress because they are not acquainted with the principles and management of inclusion. Furthermore, Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001:256) confirm the participants’ arguments by stating that educators are faced with serious challenges when teaching learners with diverse needs as they have to change their teaching strategies and create an environment that is conducive for all learners in the classroom and it is a challenge as they lack skills and knowledge”.

It further emerged from the current study that participants who attended their teacher training course at the College of Education after the policy of inclusive education was formulated have better knowledge on inclusive education because there was a special course on teaching visually impaired students and the teachers who took this course were placed in special schools across the country and not in mainstream schools. Furthermore, a Sign Language

course was offered voluntarily to students in the afternoon and most of the students who took this course are now teaching in special schools around the country. The study further revealed that “these teachers had clear ideas about inclusive education as a principle that included the education of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools” Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001:256). The findings of the present study are supported by Swart et al. (2002:177) who attest that “there is overwhelming evidence that educators are the key force in determining the quality of inclusion and therefore the effective implementation of inclusive education depends on the high quality of professional preparation of teachers at pre and in-service levels to equip them”. Furthermore, Walton (2002:29) attests to the research findings that “teachers who have had training in special education have more positive attitudes to including all learners and it is possible that those attitudes can be modified through in-service training”.

In the current study, it is noted that many teachers did not have adequate skills to teach in inclusive classrooms. The majority of teachers indicated that they needed to attend workshops to help them acquire skills needed to manage an inclusive classroom. The findings of this study are confirmed by Prinsloo (2001:346) who attest to the fact “that teachers’ lack of the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to understand and assist learners with special educational needs causes frustration and serious feelings of inadequacy”. A study by Bothma et al. (2000:204) therefore recommends that “teachers need to receive in-service education and training to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and values to cope with learners of varying abilities and with diverse needs”.

From the participants’ responses, it is clear that the majority of teachers who were trained in Namibian colleges and universities had some pre-knowledge of inclusive education. Even though teachers noted that they had some inclusive education training during their tertiary education studies they felt that the training that they had received was not adequate in supporting them to successfully implement the inclusive education policy in their schools. According to their responses, the teachers felt that they should have been as fully trained in inclusive education as those who were going to teach at special schools. The participants’ responses in this study are in line with literature by Zimba et al. (2007) as stated in Chapter 2. Apart from the challenge of the inadequate training received by the teachers, the teachers trained to teach Junior Primary indicated that they feel that they are better at handling inclusive education because during their junior primary teacher training there were modules such as Educational Psychology 1 and 2, child development, Childhood learning and in

Lower primary there was a topic called Developing an Inclusive Classroom Environment where teachers studied how to work with different learners with different special needs. These participants, therefore, felt that they were taught how to work with learners with special needs and were given tips on how to help learners with different learning abilities in their classrooms. Even though during their studies or training they did not get a chance to practice with these learners, when they started working, they were able to identify these learners in their classrooms and help them accordingly. The findings of the current study are in collaboration with Mowes (2001:113) who states that a perusal of the” syllabi shows that some aspects of special needs education have been integrated into the diploma offerings. However, this has been done only up to the level of awareness. Most of the special needs content needs to include more information on learners with special needs and equal education opportunities”. Mowes (2001:114) further notes that “a larger number of primary and junior secondary school educators prepared by colleges of education are not exposed enough to sufficient content and strategies for supporting the learning of learners with special needs”.

The findings of the current study further revealed that the teachers who were trained in junior primary were confident in the teaching of children with special needs, however, teachers trained in other grades were less confident and stated that they had not received appropriate training to teach learners with different learning abilities and this is the reason why they are not implementing inclusive education in mainstream schools. Mowes (2001:116) echoes these findings by attesting that “before independence teacher education was fragmented and uneven. Educators serving under different administrations did not follow the same preparation path. This confirms the participants’ views that teachers trained in junior primary are better in dealing with learners with special needs than secondary education teachers”.

The next theme discusses teachers’ readiness, reception and adaptation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

5.2.3 The views on the teachers’ readiness, reception and adaptation of the inclusive education policy.

This theme discusses the teachers’ views about their readiness, reception and adaptation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. In this discussion, reference is made to the existing literature on the teachers’ readiness when they received the policy and how they adapted to the policy. The theme discusses the data of the study in response to the study

objective 1, sub-question 2 which reads as follows: How were teachers prepared in receiving the policy of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

The study revealed that the majority of teachers who were already in the teaching profession did not feel that they were well prepared to implement the inclusive education policy. The study further revealed that in many schools when the policy was introduced by the Ministry, the school management did not make any effort to ensure that the teachers were ready to implement the policy. Instead, in many schools, the policy document was received and filed without being discussed according to some of the participants. In addition, some teachers felt that even though inclusive education was mentioned in one of their subjects as student teachers, this was not adequate for them to be able to implement inclusive education in their schools. They felt that further discussion and training should have been given. This is supported by a study by Sharma (2006) that “found that teachers have somewhat negative attitudes to inclusive education and that many teachers feel unprepared and fearful to work with learners with disabilities in mainstream classes and so display frustrations, anger and negative attitudes towards the inclusive education policy”. These findings are supported by Forlin (2010) who indicated that “although teachers were willing to implement the inclusive education policy it would still be a challenge as for teachers as inclusive education is complex and requires changes to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment”. Zimba et al (2013) also supported the teachers’ views above by advocating that “inclusive education policy knowledge needs to be disseminated to both novice and experienced teachers via teachers’ education institutions and in-service workshops respectively”. This will help ensure that teachers are prepared and ready to implement the policy. Furthermore, (2008, 2010) cited in Materachera (2013) state that “it is crucial for teachers to implement the inclusive education policy because this is what they are officially tasked to do”. Similarly, (Keanery & Kane, 2006; Liassidou, 2007, 2008) state that “it is important for teachers to be aware of the policy because their role in supporting inclusive practices in mainstream schools is outlined in the policy document”.

A further issue is that some teachers may not have any knowledge of the existence of the policy because information about the policy has not been disseminated to them. Some of the study participants stated that they came to know about the policy from colleagues at different schools. In relation to this Forlin (2010) emphasizes “that the success of the inclusive education policy implementation entails proper execution and depends on the availability and quality of the educational support offered in mainstream schools”. At some schools, the

policy was shared with all staff members in meetings and CPD training. However, all participants felt that the policy was not discussed or explained well for everyone to interpret it accordingly. This is in line with Catling (2013:2) who states “that teachers most of the time do not get enough training on policies and as a result, they have to learn by themselves”.

The study further reveals that the teachers who were taught at university and colleges about inclusive education found it easier to understand the content of the policy while other teachers, who only came to know about inclusive education when the copy was brought to the school, found it more difficult to read and understand what was expected of them. However, despite the lack of understanding and training in inclusive education it is expected of the teachers to read the policy and begin adapting their planning to involve all learners of different abilities and give them learning support. These views are supported by Bricker (2000:45) who states “that a successful inclusive programme depends on the positive attitudes of the teacher. It is important for a teacher to have an understanding of the philosophy of inclusive education and to be prepared to deal with the daily challenges that may come with teaching in an inclusive school context”. Some teachers felt that they were not prepared well regarding the inclusive education policy because no workshops were held, only CPD training and briefing meetings were provided at some schools where the policy was shared among the staff members. However, the policy was mostly not explained in detail at the teachers’ schools and them; therefore, felt that they did not fully understand the content in order to implement the policy accordingly.

The current study further revealed that the most teachers find it hard to adapt their teaching to the policy because of a lack of skills and knowledge on how to implement the policy. Teachers accepted the policy with mixed feelings and mostly complained about having learners with learning disabilities in their classroom. These teachers felt that learners with special or differing needs should be taught at special schools and not in mainstream schools.

However, the study also revealed that some teachers found it easy to adapt to the implementation of the policy of inclusive education because during their teacher training they were made aware of the inclusive education policy and so they found it easy to help learners with learning difficulties. According to Zimba et al (2013) research “results show that the majority of educators teaching in Namibian schools have never undergone any training in special needs education. Therefore, the findings show that educators require support services in the form of social workers, psychologists and therapists to be able to help learners with

special educational needs”. Armstrong et al (2007) confirm the findings of this study by “indicating that literature from other countries indicates that when teachers are inadequately prepared with skills and knowledge necessary to work with children with special educational needs, they experience difficulty in teaching such children when present in their class”.

The current study furthermore revealed that teachers’ lack of training in the inclusive education policy is a barrier to the effective implementation of the policy in Namibian schools. During the interviews, participants indicated that the policy of inclusive education was not taken seriously by teachers as they teach without considering learners with special educational needs. In line with the literature, the research findings on the reception and adaptation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools play a key role during the process of policy implementation. This confirms research findings by Mowes (2002) who indicates “that schools need to be modified to accommodate learners with special needs. Likewise, within the Namibian context, as in developing nations, educators find it difficult to implement the inclusive education policy in their schools and classrooms due to a lack of training and the school environment”.

It is further revealed in this study that teachers’ teaching experience, qualifications and attendance of continuous professional development and workshops have a positive influence on how they adapt and implement the policy of inclusive education. These findings are in line with literature by Zimba et al (2011) and Chitoyo et al (2015) who support these findings “by pointing out that all teachers need to be well prepared and trained in inclusive education approaches in order to facilitate learning for all learners and avoid developing and expressing negative attitudes towards learners with diverse /special educational needs”. These findings are also supported by Mowes (2002:279) who states “that teachers would be more willing to accept learners with special educational needs if they received training in special education. Data showed that significantly more educators from primary and combined schools compared to those from secondary schools agreed that all educators should be trained to educate learners with various special educational needs”.

The next theme discusses the teachers’ views on the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

5.2.4 The teachers' views on the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream school

The current theme discusses the teachers' views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. This theme discusses the finding of the study in response to the study's objective 2 in chapter 1 and this is the main question of the study which reads: To explore what teachers' views are regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in their mainstream schools and to explain why teachers hold these views on inclusive education and its implementation in their schools.

The study revealed that teachers are positive about the policy and they feel that the policy of inclusive education is necessary as they are passionate and eager to accommodate and embrace the diversity of learners. The policy helps learners with different learning abilities to mix with other learners and prevent discrimination. The findings of the present study confirm Othman (2015:58) who states "that the inclusive education policy creates social interaction, removes discriminatory attitudes among the learners, and helps teachers and pupils without special needs to know the needs of learners with disabilities". In the same vein, literature by Doran et al. (2011:30) indicated "that diversity awareness and the implementation of inclusive education policy is critical in creating an inclusive culture within schools and that it promotes equality of educational access and participation of pupils with special educational needs". The participants further indicated that the policy is well received but that training is needed to implement the policy well in every school. In their responses, they stated that the policy is good, because by including learners with diverse learning needs in mainstream schools, inclusive education policy is fully implemented. Furthermore, they indicated that they support the policy because it affords learners with different learning abilities the opportunity to be educated together in one classroom without discrimination. They also stated that they are positive about the policy because the main focus of the policy is to give quality education to all learners irrespective of who they are and regardless of the learners' economic or social backgrounds. The participants' responses are in line with literature by Bricker (2000:45), as stated in chapter 2, who advocates that "a successful inclusive programme depends on the positive attitudes of the teacher as far as the special needs of children are concerned. It is important for a teacher to have an understanding of the whole philosophy of inclusive and to be prepared to deal with the daily challenges that may come with such a philosophy". The findings of this study also confirm the study findings by Ali, Mustaph and

Jelas (2006:36) which revealed that “the hallmark of inclusive education is the teachers’ willingness to accept students with special needs and that their attitudes and knowledge about inclusive education are important of such willingness”.

It further emerged from the present study that the policy of inclusive education is good as it is in line with the constitution of the Republic of Namibia which states “that as much as possible all school-going children must attend a school where they live”. This is in with the (MoEAC, 2013) which states “that discriminating against learners with barriers to learning by sending them elsewhere or referring those to special schools is not acceptable and all learners should be accommodated in mainstream schools so that their diversities can be acknowledged and embraced by all stakeholders”. They also indicated that not all parents may be able to afford to send their children to special education institutions elsewhere in the country; therefore, the policy makes it possible for learners with special needs to be educated in schools within their local environment. Furthermore, the participants added that the policy assists to reduce inequality in education and respond to the Ministry of Education’s goals of equity and access to education. This argument is supported by literature findings done in Malaysia by Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2006:23) which “shows that teachers in Malaysia have positive attitudes towards inclusive education. They agreed that inclusive education enhances social interaction and inclusion among the students and thus it minimizes negative stereotypes on special needs students”. This means that there are also teachers who understand the importance of implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. This study’s findings also confirm Naanda’s (2005) findings which “state that teachers’ views are crucial to a successful implementation of an inclusive approach in any given context”. (Forlin, 1995; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2000; Winzer, 1998; Zimba, et al., 1999) states that “teachers’ views have an effect on what they teach and how they impart knowledge to children”. These findings are also supported by Mowes (204:74) who states that “teachers with positive views regarding the policy of inclusive education are eager to implement the policy in their classroom and motivate learners with disabilities to interact with their external network”. The findings of this study support the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education in Namibia vision (2013) which states that “the policy paves the way for all children in Namibia to learn and participate fully in the education system, particularly in the schools commonly referred to as mainstream schools. In addition, this policy aims to create a supportive learning environment which is accommodating and learner-entered. This policy

ensures that all learners are educated in the least-restrictive education setting and in schools in their neighbourhood to the fullest extent possible”.

The findings of this study further revealed that, although teachers were not against the implementation of the policy in mainstream schools, they felt that the policy is not properly monitored or executed as the government has not redesigned the school building facilities to respond accommodate all learners with different disabilities. The participant indicated that the ministry first needs to redesign school environments to accommodate learners with disabilities as well as ensure that these schools are well resourced. Participants also indicated that schools have learners with different abilities but not every teacher is aware of how to teach or help learners with special needs in their schoolwork and in most cases, the learners are left alone or not given enough attention. These study findings confirm literature by Elias and Norwich (2010:9), as stated in chapter 2, who suggest that teachers’ views about implementing the inclusion policy “were found to be strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition of the children presented to them. Further, educational environment-related variables, such as the availability of physical and human support, were consistently found to be associated with attitudes to inclusion”. These findings entail that there are so many things that impact on teachers’ different views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Furthermore, these findings are supported by Mowes (2002) who shows that “educators are in need of support services in the form of social workers, psychologists and therapists. The results further indicated that schools need to be modified in order to accommodate learners with special needs, with these findings in Namibian context it reveals that teachers in Namibia like in any developing nations find it difficult to implement the inclusive education policy in their schools and classrooms”. The findings are further supported by Zimba et al. (2007:42) who advocated that, “in Namibia, although several children with disabilities are included in regular schools by default, many teachers and their schools are perceived to be neither prepared for learners with disabilities nor provided with support to effectively teach them”.

It further emerged from the present study that although teachers are positive about the policy, the policy is not effectively implemented in their schools because teachers were not provided with proper training and the necessary teaching and learning materials were not given to help learners with special needs. Participants felt that the ministry did not consider the schools’ environments which in most cases are not ready to accommodate learners with disabilities

due to not having enough resources. They further indicated that the policy is not effectively implemented because not all teachers are aware of the policy and not enough training on the policy has been given to assist teachers to understand how to manage learners with different learning needs as required by the policy. They also said that even though the policy document is in their files they do not feel that teachers are thoroughly implementing it as there are still teachers who are unaware of the policy objectives and who are discriminating against learners in their classrooms. The findings of this study confirm Malahlela (2017, citing Tchatchoueng, 2016:91) who stated that “in many developing countries of Southern Africa the implementation of inclusion is presently perceived as ineffective. While the physical placement of learners with disabilities and other learning barriers in general education classes is often emphasised, other aspects of effectively managing the inclusive education classroom are being inadequately implemented and still require attention”. The findings of the study also confirm the study findings by Mowes (2002:6) who stated that according to the research done in Namibia regarding inclusive education implementation by educators, “the findings show that, Namibia does not have a clear and implementable policy on the education of Namibian learners with special educational needs. The results showed that funds for education are not allocated in line with an explicit inclusionary policy. It is evident that the current curriculum being followed in regular schools is not suitable for learners with special educational needs. The results showed that the vast majority of educators educating in Namibian schools have never undergone any training in special needs education”.

The findings of this study revealed that the policy of inclusive education is effectively implemented even though negative attitudes exist towards the policy. Participants supported this claim, by stating that the policy is effective because children are being taught together in one classroom and teachers are required to prepare different learning activities for different learners in their classroom. Furthermore, it is effective because all learners are admitted to mainstream schools without discrimination. The findings of this study confirm findings by Zimba, Mufune and Likando (2007:50) who stated that “in Namibia the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream school has been reported to be effective in a few schools. Since the introduction of the sector policy on inclusive education was introduced in 2013, many schools have adopted the policy and accepted learners with minor impairment”.

The study further revealed that teachers show that they had different opinions or views regarding the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy. Teachers seemed to feel that

the policy will be effectively implemented in schools when teachers are given training on how to work with learners with different learning abilities. Thus, the majority of participants felt that only training will assist teachers to understand the inclusive education policy better. They felt that what they are currently doing is not enough regarding the effective implementation of the inclusive education policy. These findings are in line with Mowes (2004:77) who stated that “teachers have their views of the policy of inclusive education because some they feel that they have been compelled to make changes in which they have not had any substantive participation in policy decisions. Some educators’ belief and confidence in their own abilities to teach learners with special educational needs; fear and failure, as well as their concerns for the needs of regular learners in their classes, teachers’ past experience of teaching learners with special educational needs and their knowledge and conceptions of disability and learning difficulty”. These are some of the reasons why teachers are having different views regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

The next theme discusses teachers’ views on the importance and necessity of the inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream schools.

5.2.5 The teachers’ views on the importance and necessity of the inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream schools

The current theme discusses the teachers’ views on the importance and necessity of the inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream schools. The present theme discusses the findings of the study in response to the study objective 3, in chapter 1 which reads as follow: what are the teachers’ views on the importance and necessity of the inclusive education implementation in mainstream schools.

The study revealed that teachers perceive the policy as very important because it creates opportunities for participation and collaboration and aims to reduce inequality in education and end discrimination found in previous education regimes. These teachers feel that the policy assists to develop new resources and approaches and end segregation with regards to academic performance, gender and race as it provides all students with the most appropriate learning environment and opportunities for them to achieve the best level of education. The participants felt that the policy is important because it promotes shared learning opportunities and instils a sense of self-confidence in learners with disabilities. Furthermore, the policy

enables learners to integrate into learning with their peers without disabilities that may allow them to build self-esteem and confidence in their learning. They also indicated that the policy is important as it makes provision for every learner to have access to education this includes learners with learning difficulties or impairments as some parents may not have the means to send their children to special schools which are in different towns. The findings of this study confirm the research findings by Carroll, Forlin and Jobling (2003:76) who assert “that the inclusion or integration of learners can contribute to the personal growth of teachers, as well as their knowledge of individuals with disabilities, and provides a sense of maturity and confidence in teachers so that they are able to use it in their teaching of all students particularly those with special needs”. These findings are also supported by Konza (2008), who stated that “inclusive education policy seeks to completely remove the distinction between special and regular education, to provide an appropriate education for all students despite their level of disability and to completely restructure the educational system so that all schools could have the responsibility of providing the facilities, resources and an appropriate curriculum for all students irrespective of disability”. Furthermore, the findings are supported by Bui et al. (2010:3) who stated that “engaged time for typical learners is not negatively impacted by the presence of students with disabilities and that the presence of students with disabilities results in a greater number of typical students making progress compared to those in non-inclusive general education classes”. These findings are also supported by research findings of Berg (2004:27) who confirms that “when a student with a disability is put into a regular classroom, there are many positives that can come about for that student being provided with a more stimulating environment compared to the traditional special education classroom environment”. The current study findings are in line with literature in chapter 2 by the National Institute for Educational Development(2016), which states that “the Namibian curriculum of 2013 emphasises that in the Namibian context schools would be required to organise learning support programmes to meet individuals’ learner’s needs. In order to address such needs for individuals, inclusive education requires social acceptance of learners with impairments as equal members of the class and school, that they should be valued as individuals by all members of staff, learners in the class and school and all parents and guardians. The curriculum states that the success of each learner in an inclusive school setting will depend on the provision of enabling conditions for success, based on an understanding that all learners are equal, and that no-one should be left behind”.

The findings of the study further revealed that teachers indicated that the policy is important because it has assisted the Ministry of Education to reach its objectives of equity, fairness and non-discrimination. As such the policy has helped many learners to access education as in the past many children with learning difficulties stayed at home and did not attend school because special schools are very far from their homes. Now learners with learning difficulties can be enrolled in mainstream schools thus providing all learners with access to education.

They continued to indicate that the policy is important because it helps all children in the same community to be part of a school and develop a sense of belonging and become better prepared for life in their community. They also said the policy is important as it provides better learning opportunities because it promotes an education system that is accessible, inclusive, equitable, and efficient to all learners. They further stated that the policy is important because it allows for all children, specifically vulnerable children and children with disabilities, to benefit from quality education. The findings on the importance and necessity of the policy of inclusive education confirm the policy document *Towards Education for All* by the Ministry of Basic Education Arts and Culture (1993:126-131), which states that “the main strategy for addressing the needs of young people with physical or other impairments was to integrate them as fully as possible into our regular education programmes. Two reasons given is that in general all learners benefit from a heterogeneous learning environment and learners who do not see or hear well, for example, are likely to do better when they work with and are challenged by their peers. And secondly, this policy of inclusiveness and integration permits us to use our limited resources most effectively”. The policy requires the Ministry of Education to help schools and their staffs develop the sensitivity and skills to integrate learners with special needs into regular school classes and other activities and to provide supportive services and remedial education as necessary. For the most severely impaired, the Ministry pointed out that there should be special classes and institutions provided with appropriately trained staff. The Ministry envisioned the creation of an Institute for Special Education to lead, guide and coordinate these efforts. In support of these findings, the Ministry of Education (2013) indicated that it believes “it has the obligation to eliminate all barriers to learning and to restructure educational policies and practices for the benefit of all Namibia’s children, especially the educationally marginalised children”. And in its response, a policy on inclusive education policy was disseminated in all schools for implementation in 2013.

It emerged from the findings of the study that some teachers perceive the policy as less important and it is treated as less important in many schools because it is not well known by all the teachers. These teachers indicated that learners with disabilities need to have extended time to learn in their own classrooms environments in order to achieve their competencies. Furthermore, the ministry needs to come up with a programme for learners with learning difficulties within mainstream schools but in separate classroom settings with expert teachers. The participant felt that until such a time that all educators know what is expected of them regarding the inclusive education policy the policy will not receive the respect it deserves from the teachers who are required to implement the policy. The findings on the non-importance of the policy of inclusive education confirm the study findings by Malahlela (2017:101) who indicated that educators perceive inclusive education policy as not important and not necessary because “normal learners in their classes would be disadvantaged and neglected as a result of all the time and attention needed by and expanded on learners with barriers to learning. Furthermore, this would make it difficult for educators to do justice to their work or to deliver an equitable and quality education for all learners”. These findings also confirm Haihambo et al (2013:16) who attest that teachers have negative attitudes towards the policy and perceive it not important because teachers in regular schools end up teaching learners with visual impairments by default and without adequate preparation and support for this task. The desired outcome for the provision of children with special needs, and especially those with visual impairment, is for them to be included in well-resourced and functional inclusive schools. Teachers in mainstream schools feel that they need to be prepared well in order to accommodate well learners with special needs in their classroom, they found it difficult to implement the inclusive education policy due to lack of training in this regard. Furthermore, Konza (208:43) confirms these findings by indicating “that many educators struggle with the tension between accommodating the special needs of some learners and disadvantaging other learners and that some educators believed that the integration of learners with disabilities and those without was unfair on learners without disabilities”.

It emerged from the findings of this study that some teachers perceive the policy as not necessary; they felt that it is not good practice to integrate learners with special learning needs in the same classroom. These findings confirm Mowes (2004:74) who revealed that some teachers believed that learners with disabilities are “incapable of benefiting from what is provided to normal learners and they fear accepting learners with disabilities in their

classroom which results in non-implementation of inclusive education policy, this refers to the negative views of teachers and if teachers are having negative views about the policy this may affect the policy implementation”. In addition, these findings further confirm Gidlund (2018:11) who did research in Sweden and results reveal that teachers in mainstream show frustration and insecurity about how to organise education for inclusion and diversity. This shows that it is not easy to enact the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools, as at the beginning there were two types of schools, the special education and mainstream schools, that divisions between schools have caused much confusion and many rejections among educators when the inclusive education has been introduced. Elias and Norwich’s (2010:9) findings also confirm this study’s findings by stating that teachers’ views about implementing inclusion policy “were found to be strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition of the children presented to them. Further, educational environment-related variables, such as the availability of physical and human support, were consistently found to be associated with attitudes towards inclusive education policy”.

The next theme discusses the teachers’ views on the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

5.2.6 The teachers’ views on the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools

The current theme discusses the teachers’ views on the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. The present theme discusses the findings of the study in response to the study objective 4, in chapter 1 which reads as follow: To explore how inclusive education policy is being implemented in mainstream schools in Namibia.

It emerged from the findings of the current study that the inclusive education policy is being implemented in mainstream schools because schools admit all learners without discrimination. They stated that, their schools do not screen learners, neither do they give them aptitude test or interview them. All learners seeking admission are admitted if the school has space. All learners from different background, and especially marginalised learners, are admitted in the schools. Once the learner is admitted to the school there is learning support programmes in the schools. The participants also indicated that teachers prepare lessons and activities to include all learners. Teachers identify learners with visual

and hearing problems and place these learners in front of their classes so they will not be left out. The findings of this study concur with Zimba, Mufune and Likando (2007:50) who revealed that in Namibia “the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream school has been reported to be effective in few schools, ever since the introduction of the sector policy on inclusive education was introduced in 2013, many schools have adopted the policy and accepted learners with minor impairment”. Similarly, the study conducted by Subban and Sharma (2006:4) in Malaysia, revealed that “teachers in inclusive schools are expected to rise to the challenges of an increasingly diverse classroom, adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate varying learning styles, and to be psychologically and practically prepared to take on the dynamic role of inclusive educators”. Furthermore, the study findings confirm Munandu (2011:16) who states “that Uganda is leading the way in its commitment to integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schooling as a step in the process towards inclusion”. The findings regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy concur with Daren (2017:1) who in his study conducted in the USA revealed “that today students’ throughout the United States take advantage of full or partial inclusion in multiple school systems and that such schools offer partial inclusion and allow students with disabilities to participate in classrooms with students without disabilities”.

It also emerged from the current study that the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy is average because learners with severe impairments are not admitted because there are no facilities to cater for them. The participants described the adherence to the policy by teachers as average because not all teachers adhere to the policy objectives. Some teachers do not take into account learners with special educational needs in their classes. Written activities, tests or examinations are set without considering the difference in their learners’ abilities. Learners with special needs in many schools are just sitting in classrooms for as long as they are there and are always pushed to the next grade as they are considered un-teachable. The findings of this study confirm Zimba et al. (2007:42) who revealed that “in Namibia, although several children with disabilities are included in regular schools by default, many teachers and their schools are perceived to be neither prepared for learners with disabilities nor provided with support to effectively teach them which implies that the implementation of inclusive education is ineffective”. The findings of this study on how the policy is being implemented also confirm the findings of the study made by Malahlela (2017, citing Tchatchoueng, 2016:91) who revealed that “in many developing countries of Southern Africa, the implementation of inclusive education policy is presently

perceived as ineffective. While the physical placement of learners with disabilities and other learning barriers in general education classes is often emphasised, other aspects of effectively managing the inclusive education classroom are being inadequately implemented and still require attention”. The findings of this study also coincide with the research findings by Dart (2007:17) in Botswana who attest “that implementation of inclusive education policy as being less effective as much of classroom practices assumed teacher-centred and whole-class teaching, student listening and doing silent deskwork, little time being spent by teachers working with individuals or groups, and teachers ignoring incorrect student responses and not offering additional support”. The findings of this study also concur with the research findings done in Lesotho by Jonhstone (2007:29) who revealed “that the implementation of inclusive education was perceived as being ineffective as he established that there was no provision in national law that requires that students with disabilities receive their education in regular schools or that these students be provided with appropriate services”. Similar findings were revealed by Mosia (2014:279) who stated that “the implementation of inclusive education in Lesotho was perceived as ineffective since the Ministry of education and Training (MOET) could not successfully provide quality education for all learners”. Another research finding which concur with the current study findings are made in Zimbabwe by Chireshe (2013:226) who posited “that the shortage of resources, the high teacher-pupil ratio which left teachers with no room to cater for children with disabilities, and insufficient funding were revealed as contributory factors towards the implementation of inclusive education being ineffective in that country”.

The current study findings also revealed that the policy is implemented at low-level because teachers are not trained and so they are not giving special needs and marginalised learners the attention they need to achieve their competencies. They also said that teachers do not consider that all learners in their classes are part of their lessons as they ignore learners with special needs. They also indicated that the policy is implemented at a minimal level because the teachers do not have information and skills on how the policy should be implemented and if they are supporting learners with disabilities, they are not doing it as part of the policy implementation. The current study findings are in line with the literature in chapter 2 by Mowes (2002) whose research findings revealed that there is evidence “that the current curriculum being followed in Namibia regular schools is not suitable for learners with special educational needs. The results showed that the vast majority of educators educating in Namibian schools have never undergone any training in special needs education. The results

further indicated that schools need to be modified in order to accommodate learners with special needs, with these findings in Namibian context it reveals that teachers in Namibia like in any developing nations find it difficult to implement the inclusive education policy in their schools and classrooms”. Since the research of Mowes (2002) was done in many schools across the country it shows genuine results that almost every school is affected, in Namibia, there are schools called special education schools which show that inclusive schools are not yet built or only a few in towns are functioning.

The next theme discusses the teachers’ views on the success or challenges of implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

5.2.7 The teachers’ views on the success or challenges in implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools

The current theme discusses the teachers’ views on the challenges faced in implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. The present theme discusses the findings of the study in response to the study objective 5, in chapter 1 which reads as follow: To find out the success or challenges experienced in implementing inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

The present study findings established that the main challenge that the teachers face is lack of knowledge as many teachers are not trained to facilitate the implementation of the policy. Teachers find it difficult to adjust or adapt their teaching to suit the inclusive education policy requirements. They also indicated that the lack of workshops to help teachers who are not trained to gain knowledge is also affecting the implementation of the policy. Teachers who are not well trained in policy implementation are struggling to support learners with educational special needs. Teachers felt that the issue of the lack of training concerning the implementation of inclusive education policy is the reason why many teachers are reluctant to involve themselves in applying the inclusive education teaching strategies in their classroom situation. The findings on the challenges of implementing inclusive education policy in mainstream schools concur with the literature in chapter 2 by Dana & Juan (2014:29) who reveal that “many countries have struggled with bringing inclusive education policy into practice. To successfully implement inclusion anywhere in the world, educators must have adequate training, sufficient support and positive attitudes. Teachers need assistance regarding the implementation of inclusive education in their classrooms; it could be facilities

or training to be able to implement the policy of inclusive education”. These findings also concur with the study findings conducted in Swaziland by Thwala (2015:497) “who revealed that the educator-participants showed that Inclusive Education was stressful to them as they generally lacked competencies and knowledge to teach in inclusive classrooms. The study further revealed that the discrepancy that resulted from the lack of teacher training when they pointed out that most of the teachers who did not have adequate training on handling both the learners with disabilities and the learners without disabilities in one class, had negatively affected the understanding and performance of the learners with disabilities, which was continually perceived as being poor due to the inadequate teaching skills and abilities of the teachers”.

The findings on the teachers’ inadequate training and lack of knowledge and skills on how to implement inclusive education policy as one of the main challenges concur with Chireshe’s (2011:16) “who revealed that in-service teacher trainees in Zimbabwe believed that not all educators could handle an inclusive class because, according to their views, regular class educators had problems adapting their programmes to accommodate and include special needs education children. As a result, it was further revealed that children with significant disabilities have been turned away from schools in Zimbabwe because teachers perceive themselves as untrained and ill-equipped to assist them. Teachers perceive themselves as unprepared for inclusive education policy because they lacked appropriate training in the area of inclusive education”. Furthermore, the findings of this study concur with the study findings by Malahlela (2017:107) who conducted a study in South Africa in secondary schools of Polokwane. The study revealed that “educators who were formerly trained during the apartheid era and are still present in mainstream schools could not identify or develop strategies to meet the needs of learners with barriers to learning and development”.

The current study further revealed that teachers are also challenged by overcrowded classrooms and the lack of resources in their classrooms. They feel that this is causing a low level of learners’ achievement in numeracy and literacy which leads to high repetition in many classes. The study further revealed that overcrowded classroom place additional demands on the teachers as they have to ensure that all learners receive proper learning time or attention. The findings of this study are in line with the literature in chapter 2 by Malahlela (2017:110) who indicated that “there is a challenge of overcrowded classrooms, which ultimately affected the recommended numbers of learners to be accommodated in classrooms

especially in mainstream public schools. The study further revealed that teachers worked under stressful conditions due to overcrowded classrooms which made it difficult for them to manage their classrooms. Furthermore, the overcrowded classrooms prohibited the educators from giving learners with barriers to learning the necessary individualized attention because the educators could not move freely in the classroom, let alone allow for the possibility of free movements for learners in wheelchairs. Therefore, educators could only pay attention to those learners who seemed to be active in the classroom and they had to neglect those who never raised their hands during classroom activities”. The findings on the challenges of overcrowded classrooms are also confirmed in a study conducted in Uganda by Isingoma (2014:71) who revealed “that teachers could not function successfully where there were no additional inputs, such as a sound curriculum, appropriate textbooks, a workable management system, adequate supervision and support, due to overcrowded or large classes, and that over-enrolment compounded the problems of inadequate materials and infrastructure”. The findings of this study also confirm the findings of a study conducted in Algeria by Tayeg (2015:15) who indicated “that teachers face difficulties in controlling their students in large-sized classrooms where there is a lot of noise, especially when learners have to do activities or finish before the others, and that many teachers as well as learners, may find themselves uncomfortable when teaching/ learning in an overcrowded class”.

The study further revealed that teachers face the challenge of unfit school environments and learning resources. They indicated that their school environments are unfit for the implementation of inclusive education policy as the schools are not provided with learning and teaching materials that can support learners with special needs. For example, resources such as textbooks, talking books of Braille machines for the visually impaired, and classrooms constructed using ramps to facilitate the movement of learners with physical disabilities are not provided in most schools. The participants also stated that many of the schools have old buildings that cannot accommodate learners who are physically challenged and there is a shortage of equipment to assist learners with various other disabilities. They added that many schools in rural areas are not built with inbuilt boards where visually impaired learners can learn by feeling the letters. They also added some schools are surrounded by sand which makes it difficult for learners on wheelchairs to move around their school premises. There are also often no sports facilities that accommodate learners with special needs. The findings of this study concur with the research findings of the study conducted in South Africa Gauteng Province by Mahlo’s (2011:172) who revealed “that the

infrastructural resources in most of the schools were not yet disability-friendly, and the physical environments were not accommodative of learners with barriers to learning in almost all schools in South Africa". These study findings are similar to study findings in Shiselweni District of Swaziland which were revealed by Adebayo and Ngwenya (2015:249) who indicated "that schools in that district were characterized by inadequacy in basic facilities, such as the necessary assistive devices for learners with disabilities and those without. The above conditions were reported to have limited the enrolment of learners with disabilities in regular schools and negatively affected the success of the implementation of inclusive education policy". The findings of this study also confirm Malahlela's (2017:108) study findings which revealed "that many teachers were entirely dissatisfied with their schools' environments, which were perceived as unfit to accommodate learners with disabilities. The teachers in some of the schools reported that they worked inside school buildings that needed renovation and adaptations to accommodate the physically challenged learners and those with visual impairments and other disabilities. It is also revealed that many schools were operating in environments that were not ready for the implementation of inclusive education policy. In the majority of public schools there is an absence of ramps, signage, pavements and toilets to accommodate learners with disabilities and school furniture's could not accommodate learners in wheelchairs".

The findings of this study reveal another challenge which teachers' faces in implementing the inclusive education policy are the parents or the community's perception of schools. Parents send learners with learning difficulties to school but do not report their child's learning difficulty to the school during admission which makes it difficult for teachers in the classrooms to help them on time. They also noted that the distance between schools and some houses makes it a barrier for disabled learners to attend school as some parents do not have the means to transport their kids to school every day. The findings of the current study concur with Mpya (2007:117) who revealed "that many teachers do not know the background of the learners that they teach, they are also unaware of the family structure and the problems learners and their community encounter on daily basis. Teachers felt that parents need to fully participate in the education of their children who are intellectually and cognitively different. It is revealed that no teacher effort or school programme, no matter how elaborate, can succeed without the cooperation, involvement and support of the parents". Furthermore, these findings are supported by Diego (2015:88-89) who revealed that "teachers claimed that majority of parents or community members do not know about inclusive education policy and

do not know how to go about it. Teachers revealed that inclusive education will not be materialised unless communities become aware of it”.

5.3 Summary

The current chapter analysed and discussed the findings of the study data as presented in chapter 4 on the teachers’ views on the understanding of the concept inclusive education, teachers training and inclusive education policy, teachers preparedness and readiness to implement in inclusive education policy, teachers views on the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools, the importance and necessity of the inclusive education policy implementation, the level of the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools and the challenges of implementing inclusive education policy in mainstream schools of Oshana Region, Namibia. The current chapter analyses the findings of the study based on the objectives of the study as stated in chapter 1.

The next chapter will present the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I provided an analysis and discussions of the findings of this study as presented in chapter 4. This is the final chapter which concludes the study by indicating an overview of the different chapters, a summary of the findings, limitation, contribution and conclusion of the study, as well as recommendations from the study findings.

6.2 Summary of Chapters

In chapter one, I provided a rationale for the study's focus which is on the teachers' views on the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools. I also provided the purpose of my research which was to understand how teachers feel about the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. I also provided sub-research questions which directed this research, namely;

- 1) How do teachers understand the meaning of the inclusive education policy and its implementation in mainstream schools?
- 2) What are the teachers' views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in their schools?
- 3) How are the teachers implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in Namibia?
- 4) What are the successes and challenges experienced in implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools?

In chapter two I provided a detailed literature review by focusing on literature relevant to my research study. In this chapter, I included literature on national and international research relating to the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools. This chapter looked at research that has been done in inclusive education internationally, Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Namibia. The chapter also highlighted the history of inclusive education in Namibia as well as the teachers' perspectives and views about the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools of Oshana region, Namibia. This chapter

highlighted how teachers are implementing the inclusive education policy worldwide. This chapter, therefore, sets the scene for the study and provided an understanding of the teachers' views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

In chapter three I provided a discussion on the methodological orientation of the study and the methods that I used to collect data for the study. The study employed a qualitative approach which described the teachers' views regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. Semi-structured individual interviews with nine teachers from three different schools provided an understanding of the teachers' views on the implementation of the policy of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

In chapter 4, I presented the data collected from the nine teachers in the three selected mainstream schools in the Oshana region. The data presented in this chapter helped me to understand how different teachers feel about implementing the policy of inclusive education in their schools.

In chapter 5 I analysed the data as presented in chapter 4 in response to the main research question and sub-questions of the present study. I then used the literature to analyse the data of each theme presented in the chapter.

6.3 Summary of the study's main findings

This section provides a summary of the main findings of this study as presented in chapter 4. Within Namibia, the Ministry of Education has put more emphasis on promoting inclusive education for marginalised children with learning disability through the sector policy of inclusive education. This requires teachers as professionals to implement the policy of inclusive education in mainstream schools by integrating all children into their classrooms without discriminating against them in any way. This study has provided a snapshot of teachers' views on how they are implementing the inclusive education policy at three schools of the Oshana region, Namibia. From the study, five themes emerged as the main findings. They are briefly summarised below.

6.3.1 The teachers' views on the understanding of the concept of inclusive education and teachers' training course on inclusive education.

The study revealed that teachers, in most cases, referred to the inclusive education policy as a policy that states that all learners should be educated within mainstream classrooms

regardless of their different disabilities. Furthermore, inclusive education is about recognising and respecting differences among learners, as well as including all pupils in the education system or mainstream schools irrespective of their special educational needs. Teachers also defined inclusive education as education that accommodates all learners with or without a disability. This study revealed that teachers have an understanding of the concept of inclusive education which they state is an inclusive education model where both physically able and learn together in the same classroom environment in order to address the diverse needs of all learners.

Further, the study revealed that the teachers felt that the training in inclusive education has not been sufficient and that as teachers they were not well prepared to implement inclusive education effectively. The teachers felt that even though inclusive education was mentioned in one of their subjects at tertiary institutions, it was not adequate for them to be able to implement inclusive education in their schools. The teachers felt that inclusive education should have been a specific module that they studied during their training so that they could be better equipped with the knowledge and skills regarding how to handle learners with different needs and abilities. The study also revealed that teachers who received teacher education from Colleges of Education have basic knowledge of inclusive education as there was a special course on teaching students with visually impairments. Furthermore, a Sign Language course was offered voluntarily to students in the afternoon and most of the students who took this course are now teaching in special schools around the country.

6.3.2 The teachers' views on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

The study revealed that teachers have positive views about the policy and feel that the policy of inclusive education is necessary and they are passionate and eager to accommodate and embrace the diversity of learners. The policy helps learners with different learning abilities to mix with other learners and prevent discrimination. The study further revealed that the policy has been well received but that training is needed to implement the policy well in every school. In their responses, the teachers also stated that they feel that the policy is good because by including learners with diverse learning needs in mainstream schools, inclusive education is fully implemented. Furthermore, they indicated that they support the policy because it affords learners with different learning abilities the opportunity to be educated together in one classroom without discrimination. They also stated that they are positive

about the policy because the main focus of the policy is to give quality education to all learners irrespective of who they are and regardless of the learners' economic or social backgrounds.

6.3.3 Teachers' views on the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in schools.

The results of the study revealed that the inclusive education policy is being implemented as most schools are admitting all learners without discrimination. Schools does not screen learners, neither do they give them aptitude tests or interview them. All learners seeking admission are admitted if the school has space. All learners from different backgrounds and especially marginalized learners are admitted in the schools. There are learning support programs in schools to support learners with learning difficulties. Even if the learning support is not effectively practised, the programs are meant to help learners with learning difficulties in the afternoon to achieve basic competencies. The participants also indicated that teachers prepare lessons and activities to include all learners. Only learners with severe impairments are not admitted because there are no facilities to cater for them. The participants described the adherence to the policy by teachers as average because not all teachers adhere to the policy objectives.

6.3.4 The teachers' views on the importance and necessity of the inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream schools.

The study revealed that the teachers perceive the policy as very important because it creates opportunities for participation and collaboration and aims to reduce inequality in education and end discrimination found in previous education regimes. The teachers felt that the policy assists to develop new resources and approaches and end segregation with regards to academic performance, gender and race as it provides all students with the most appropriate learning environment and opportunities for them to achieve the best level of education. In addition, the participants felt that the policy is important because it promotes shared learning opportunities and instils a sense of self-confidence in learners with disabilities. Furthermore, the policy enables learners to integrate into learning with their peers without disabilities that may allow them to build self-esteem and confidence in their learning. They also indicated that the policy is important as it makes provision for every learner to have access to education

locally, including learners with learning difficulties or impairments, as some parents may not have the means to send their children to special schools which are in different towns.

6.3.5 The teachers' views on the challenges or success in implementing the inclusive education policy.

The results of the study revealed that the main challenge that the teachers face is lack of knowledge as many teachers are not trained to facilitate the implementation of the policy. Teachers find it difficult to adjust or adapt their teaching to suit the inclusive education policy requirements. They also indicated that the lack of workshops to help teachers who are not trained to gain knowledge is also affecting the implementation of the policy. Teachers who are not well trained in implementing the inclusive education policy are struggling to support learners with special educational needs. Teachers felt that the issue of the lack of training concerning the implementation of inclusive education policy is the reason why many teachers are reluctant to involve themselves in applying the inclusive education teaching strategies in their classroom situation. Furthermore, they indicated that most teachers lack confidence in dealing with a variety of learner disabilities or special educational needs. Teachers are also challenged by overcrowded classrooms and the lack of resources in their classrooms. They feel that this is causing a low level of learners' achievement in numeracy and literacy which leads to high repetition in many classes. Teachers indicated that overcrowded classroom place and additional demands on the teachers as they have to ensure that all learners receive proper learning time or attention are the two factors that are impacting most on the teachers. Participants indicated that some of their school environments are also unfit for the implementation of inclusive education as the schools are not provided with learning and teaching materials that can support learners with special needs. For example, resources such as textbooks, talking books or Braille machines for the visually impaired, and classrooms constructed using ramps to facilitate the movement of learners with physical abilities are not provided in most schools.

6.4 Recommendations

Arising from the study findings, recommendations can be made with the hope that this will help with the implementation of inclusive education policy in Oshana region in order to meet the goals and aims of 'Education for All' and Universal Primary Education philosophy of integrating all children with disabilities in mainstream school without practices of exclusion. In the first place, teachers need to have a basic understanding of the Sector Policy of

Inclusive Education. This policy document carries the important message of inclusive education and, therefore, all teachers need to have a copy of the policy document. Each school management needs to make sure that this document is printed and handed to teachers just like other curriculum documents. Secondly, teachers need to be trained in acquiring and implementing inclusion skills and knowledge to competently face the challenges of implementing the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. It is important that all teachers in mainstream schools are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge so that disabled and marginalised children are not left behind by the exclusive practices of mainstream schools. It is recommended that skills and knowledge about inclusive education policy be taught to both experienced and new teachers. In addition, pre-service teachers' need to be given these skills during their teacher education training. It is also recommended that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes need to be strengthened as per strategy seven of the policy. Experienced teachers should also be trained in inclusive education skills in in-service training such as workshops and free courses provided by the ministry of education. Another recommendation is that teachers training institutions need to provide the practical component of inclusive education rather than only a theory component so that teachers are well equipped with skills and knowledge for dealing with children with varying disabilities in their regular classrooms. Thirdly, the ministry of education needs to evaluate all schools annually to evaluate how successfully the policy is implemented and to offer assistance where necessary as per strategy 8 of the policy. The ministry also needs to improve the infrastructure of schools to be able to accommodate learners with different disabilities, especially learners in wheelchairs or learners with sight or hearing impediments.

6.5 Recommendations for further research

This study has provided just a snapshot of the views of the teachers on the implementation of inclusive education policy on three mainstream schools of rural areas of one region in the country. This may suggest that not every mainstream school is experiencing the same challenges. Comparative studies which include other regions in the country may be carried out to reveal if the same situation is being experienced in other regions. For this reason, further research is needed on the following issues:

- A study that encompasses a wider range of schools in the rural area in the same region to consider an overall picture of inclusive education policy implementation.

- A study that encompasses all schools in the urban area in the same region to consider an overall picture of inclusive education policy implementation.
- A study that encompasses at least five schools from each of the 14 regions of the country to compare the implementation of inclusive education policy across different regions.
- A research study that examines the views of school principals and policymakers regarding the unfolding challenges that they face regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy.

6.6 Implication of the study

Although this study only gives a snapshot of a few teachers' views in implementing the inclusive education policy in Oshana region, it also gave a general overview of inclusive education in relation to other countries. What the study found, was that the findings in the Oshana region in Namibia are more or less the same as the findings of other developing countries mostly in Africa. It is found that the exclusion of children with disabilities in education is found to be a practice that is experienced in both developing and developed countries globally. Although the international attention focuses mostly on achieving goals such as Universal Primary Education (UPE), this study finding shows a gap in relation to the implementing the policy of inclusive education policy through teachers as role players at a school level. It is my hope that, as a result of this research, attention will be re-directed to teachers, principals, special schools, inclusive education departments and the ministry of education to take steps towards improving the current situation regarding the implementation of the inclusive education policy.

6.7 Limitation of the study

This study was limited to three schools with nine participants. The findings of the study cannot be assumed to be replicated in similar schools of the region or the country. A qualitative approach to data collection was applied for the empirical study which might have limited the data gathering. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data in the study, however, a mixed-method design may have generated more data than the single method used. The findings of this study support other similar studies previously conducted but further research is needed to clarify the views of all teachers in the region or country about the implementation of inclusive education policy.

6.8 Concluding comments

This study has successfully established the current situation concerning the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools of Oshana region, Namibia, by investigating the views of teachers through interviews. Teachers in three mainstream schools shared their views on how they understand the concept of inclusive education policy, how they were trained regarding inclusive education, their views on the implementation of the policy in mainstream schools, their views on the level of implementation of inclusive education, their views on the importance of inclusive education policy and the challenges that they are faced with on everyday basis when implementing the policy.

There are many things that need urgent attention from the ministry of education as indicated by the participants of this study such as lack of training, knowledge and skills, in order to develop the confidence of teachers to teach children with diverse learning abilities. The school's teaching and learning environments, which lacks relevant infrastructures and equipment was also identified as critical factors which may have contributed to the unsuccessful implementation of the policy in mainstream schools. Despite the challenges highlighted in the study, possible solutions have been suggested to bring about improvement in the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

Semi-structured Interview schedule for teachers at selected mainstream schools.

Purpose and instruction

In my letter requesting for this interview, I have indicated to you that I am busy with a research project on the teachers' views regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools. You have agreed (consented) to this interview. I would like to reiterate that the aim of this interview is to obtain your views and experience regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy. The information obtained will be used only for research purpose and no names of participants, schools or any identifying data regarding the school will be made known in the report.

The following questions will be asked during the interview schedule.

1. Teachers' biography, education and preparedness to implement inclusive education

A. Teachers biography and education background

[I] describe your educational background from primary school?

[II] Where did you go to school, how many schools did you attend?

[III] Where are those school located, tell me the school conditions, what type of teachers did you have?

[IV] Was school enjoyable, did you like going to school, were you a diligent student, explain your answer?

[V] What motivated you during your schooling?

[VI] Describe your tertiary education, where did you go to college or university?

[VII] Tell me the conditions of your college or university, what type of lectures did you have?

[VIII] When did you decide to become a teacher, who or what motivates or inspires you to become a teacher?

[IX] Are you enjoying teaching, is teaching career what you expected it to be?

B. Teacher training course and training on how to implement inclusive education policy.

[I] describe your teacher training course, describe how you were trained?

[II] Describe your curriculum, the subjects you did, phase of teaching trained on, how did this training equip you to be an inclusive teacher?

[III] Could you please tell me about inclusive education training given during your teacher training course?

[IV] Did you learn about inclusive education while in college, was there any subject or subjects in which inclusive education mentioned or any sort of topic related to inclusive education?

[V] what kind of training did you receive regarding inclusive education, did it equip you with appropriate training to teach children with special educational needs?

C. Appropriate training to teach children with special educational needs

[I] explain what do you understand by children with special educational needs?

[II] Do you have some children with special needs in your school, how are they being treated, what support is given to them, how are they adapting to your teaching?

[III] Do you think you have had the appropriate training to teach children with special educational needs? Explain your answer.

2. Teachers' reception of the policy and implementation readiness

- a. When was the policy of inclusive education came in your school, how did you became aware of the policy of inclusive education in your school, when did the policy became known to everyone, who gave you information about the policy, how was it made available to you?
- b. Describe how you were prepared in receiving the policy of inclusive education in your school, what was done in your school before given the policy and what was done after the policy was given, what preparation was done for everyone to receive and accept the policy?
- c. How did you receive the policy of inclusive education, did you accept the policy, do you like the policy, what was your reaction towards the policy of inclusive education when it was introduced in your school?
- d. Describe how you familiarise yourself with the policy of inclusive education when it was introduced in your school, what is the content of the policy, what are the aims of the policy, what did you do after receiving the policy?
- e. Explain how did you begin to adapt to the implementation of inclusive education policy in your school, after adaptation what happens afterwards regarding the policy, did you implement the policy how did other teachers adapt or are adapting to the policy?

3. The explanation of Inclusive education policy implementation

- a. Briefly explain how you understand the concept of inclusive education?
- b. Explain how do you understand inclusive education policy?
- c. What do you understand by policy implementation in school?
- d. What do you understand by inclusive education policy implementation in your school?

4. Teachers' views regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools

- a. What is your view regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools in Namibia?
- b. What is your view about the effectiveness of the implementation of inclusive education in your school amidst of learners' diversity?

- c. What is your view about the ministry of education regarding the enforcement of inclusive education policy implementation in regular mainstream schools of Namibia?
- d. Do you think it is necessary to implement inclusive education in mainstream schools in Namibia? Please support your answer.
- e. What is your view on the possibility of including learners with special educational needs for example wheel chair, hard-hearing, visual with normal learners in your mainstream school? Do you think it is working?
- f. How important is inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream school? Please explain your answer?

5. The implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream school Namibia

- a. Can you please tell me how you are implementing inclusive education policy in your school?
- b. How far do you believe inclusive education policy is being implemented in your school? Please explain more.
- c. How does the school or classroom environment allow students with educational special needs to attend school?
- d. Can you please tell me the kind of teaching strategies that are available to support learners with special educational needs in your school?
- e. Tell me about your confidence to teach learners with special educational needs together with normal children in your school?

6. The success/ challenges of implementing inclusive education in mainstream school

- a. Please explain how successful the policy of inclusive education is implemented in your school?
- b. Did the ministry of education provide resource to your school towards the implementation of inclusive education policy? Explain your answer.
- c. What challenges do your school face with regards to the implementation of inclusive education policy?
- d. How does your school environment for example infrastructure such as buildings, facilities etc pose a challenge towards the implementation of inclusive education policy or allow the successful implementation of inclusive education policy?

- e. During your teacher training have you received training in dealing with special need children? If yes, how did this training affect your implementation of inclusive? If No, how serious do you think this affected you in implementing inclusive education policy in your school?

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear colleague

My name is TaimiSheetheni and I am currently enrolled for the masters of Education program at the faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled: **An exploration of teachers' views regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in selected mainstream schools in Namibia's Oshana region.**

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

The intended study is designed to explore your views as a teacher who is implementing the IE policy at your school. It is anticipated that this research will show how the IE is being implemented in your school and how you have implemented it. This research is very important as first it will add new knowledge from what will be gained in this study through teachers views in Namibia's Oshana region to what already exist in the literature about inclusive education known in other parts of the world. Secondly, this study will inform the stakeholders in our education system to be aware of the current situation of inclusive education policy implementation in mainstream schools.

The research is guided by the following objectives:

1. To explore what is meant by inclusive education policy in respect of its implementation in schools.
2. To explore what teachers' views are regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in their mainstream schools.
3. To explain why teachers hold these views on inclusive education and its implementation in their schools.
4. To explore how inclusive education policy is being implemented in mainstream schools in Namibia.
5. To find out the success and challenges experienced in implementing inclusive education policy in mainstream schools.

In this study there might be negative experiences such as talking about how you handle special educational need children or disable children as part of implementing inclusive education policy, you might be uncomfortable talking about special needs children since the topic is a bit sensitive. Feel free to tell me that you are uncomfortable answering a certain question and I will skip it.

This is an opportunity for you to share your views as a teacher implementing our government's policy on inclusive education. You will be asked to give your views during a scheduled interview. You will agree to the arrangement of the interview so that your teaching session will not be disrupted. You will benefit from this study indirectly by giving your views on the policy of IE which will be published in my thesis and your views may change the current situation of the policy I our schools and benefit the society at large, a copy of the finished thesis will be sent to your school to be made available to you.

There is no payment, incentives, remunerative or lucky draws for participating in this study.

Any information you share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected. This will be done by recording your voice during interview to which you have to consent first with a tape recorder which will be stored at my house in the safe and I will be the only one with access to the tape recorder.

All information that you will share with me will be private and confidential, the data will be saved in my USB, hard drive and also locked in a safe at home. During interview you will not be required to mention your name and participants will be given codes instead of using real names. I will be the only with access to all the information shared during the interview. The data may be shared with the university if it is required for verification process. The information which will be shared and collected here is very useful and it can be used for future publication.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact TaimiSheetheni at 0812755182/ 0814624200, or my supervisor Prof Fataar Aslam at +27793007843.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact MsMaléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

You have right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the attached Declaration of Consent and

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I agree to take part in a
research study entitled.....

.....and conducted by (Name of
Researcher)

I declare that:

- I have read the attached information leaflet and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.
- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed on

.....

Signature of participant

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the participant*][*He/she*] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*English*] and [*no translator was used*]



APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

24 October 2019

Project number: EPS-2019-9312

Project title: An exploration of teachers' views regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in selected mainstream schools in Namibia's Oshana region.

Dear Miss Taimi sheetheni

Your REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form submitted on 8 June 2019 was reviewed by the REC: Humanities and approved with stipulations.

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
24 October 2019	23 October 2022

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING STIPULATIONS:

The researcher may proceed with the envisaged research provided that the following stipulations, relevant to the approval of the project are adhered to or addressed:

1) The researcher is reminded to upload final proof of permission from the Oshana Regional Council and the School principal before recruitment and data collection may commence. [ACTION REQUIRED]

HOW TO RESPOND:

Some of these stipulations may require your response. Where a response is required, you must respond to the REC within three (3) months of the date of this letter. Your provisional approval will be withdrawn automatically should your response not be received by the REC within 3 months of the date of this letter.

For instructions on how to respond to these stipulations, please download the FAQ on how to edit your application and follow the steps carefully: [HOW TO RESPOND TO REC FEEDBACK](#).

Where revision to supporting documents is required, please ensure that you replace all outdated documents on your application form with the revised versions.

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (9312) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

APPENDIX C

Appendix C

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Data collection tool	interview schedule questions	25/02/2019	
Default	Consent letter for participants	25/02/2019	
Informed Consent Form	Consent letter for participants	25/02/2019	
Research Protocol/Proposal	December research proposal final draft	06/06/2019	
Default	letter for the region to conduct research	08/06/2019	
Default	principal letter for research	08/06/2019	
Default	Participant information sheet	08/06/2019	
Information sheet	Participant information sheet	08/06/2019	
Data collection tool	interview schedule questions	08/06/2019	

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

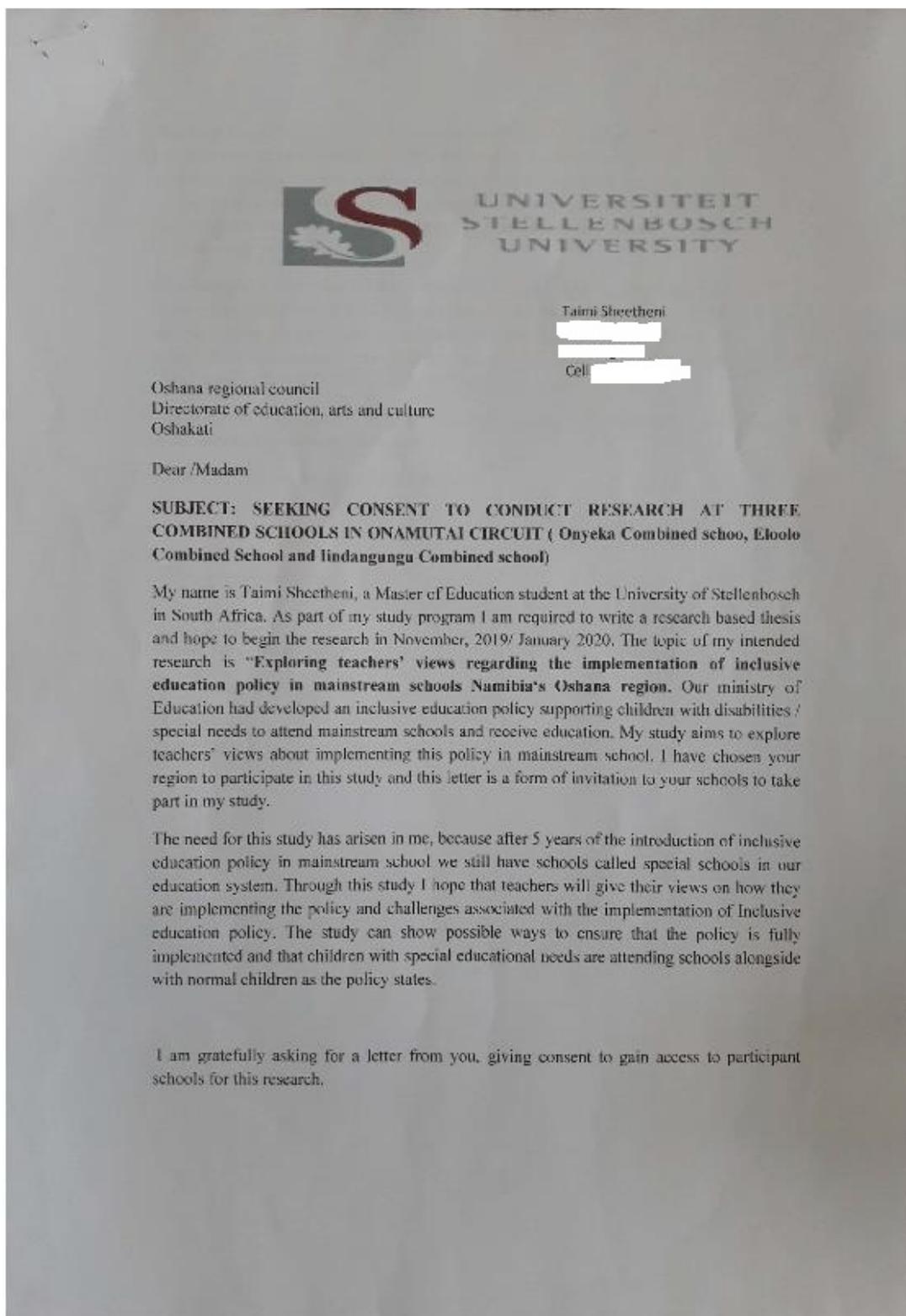
Charissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC), registration number: REC-050471-032.
 The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No. 61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013), and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D 1



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APPENDIX D 2

Please be assured that during the research process, the confidentiality of the schools and the research participants involved would be fully respected. That means the name of schools or participants will not be mentioned in any part of my thesis instead, a code name will be used. To fulfil requirements for being given permission to undertake this study by the University of Stellenbosch Education Ethics Committee, one finished copy of my thesis will be sent to your office for your information.

Even though I am studying via South Africa, I am a Namibian residents and I am willing to come and get the response letter at your region. Please let me know at your earliest if you are willing to give me permission to conduct this study in your region telephonically. If you require further verification regarding this research, you may contact my supervisor on his cell-phone number + [REDACTED]. Email: [REDACTED]

Attached is my approval letter from the Ethical committee, which approves that I can now start collecting data after your approval as well.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. .

Yours Faithfully

[REDACTED]
Taimi Sheetheni
Master of education student

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
Aspiring to excellence in Education for All

Tel: 065 229800 Fax: 065 229833
Enquiries: Gerhard S. Ndafenongo
E-mail: ndafenongogs@gmail.com
Ref no: 13/2/9/1

906 Sam Nujoma Road
Private Bag 5518
Oshakati, Namibia

Ms Taimi Sheetheni
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms Sheetheni

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH AT ONYEKA CS, ELOOLO CS AND IINDANGUNGU CS IN ONAMUTAI CIRCUIT, OSHANA REGION, REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

1. With reference to the caption in the subject line, your letter undated is hereby acknowledged;
2. Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted to conduct the study entitled: **"Exploring teachers' views regarding the implementation of inclusive education policy in mainstream schools Namibia's Oshana Region"**. The selected sites are [REDACTED]. You are hereby requested to represent this letter of approval to the principal of a selected school to illustrate that the research is authorised, authentic and procedures are adhered to.
3. This permission is subject to the following strict conditions: (i) There should be minimal or no interruption on normal teaching and learning, during a class or scheduled afternoon session, (ii) Ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity should be respected and retained throughout this activity i.e. voluntary participation, and consent from participants, and (iii) the permission is valid for remaining part of the academic year 2019/2020.
4. Both parties should understand that this permission could be revoked without explanation at any time.
5. Furthermore, we humbly request you to share with us your research findings with the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture, Oshana Region. You may contact Mr GS Ndafenongo, the Deputy Director: Programs and Quality Assurance (PQA) for the provision of summary of your research findings.
6. I wish you the best in conducting your study.

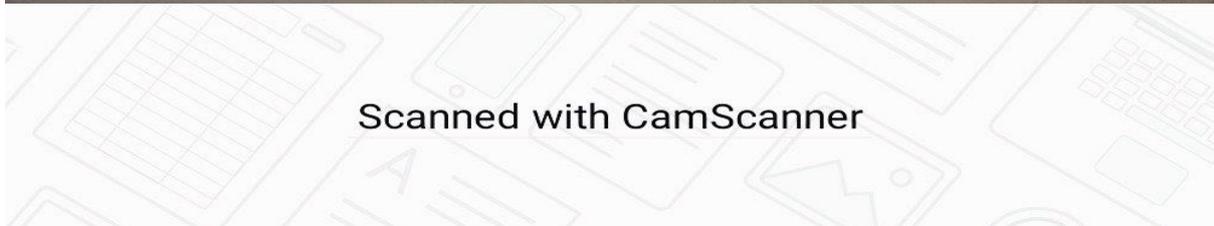
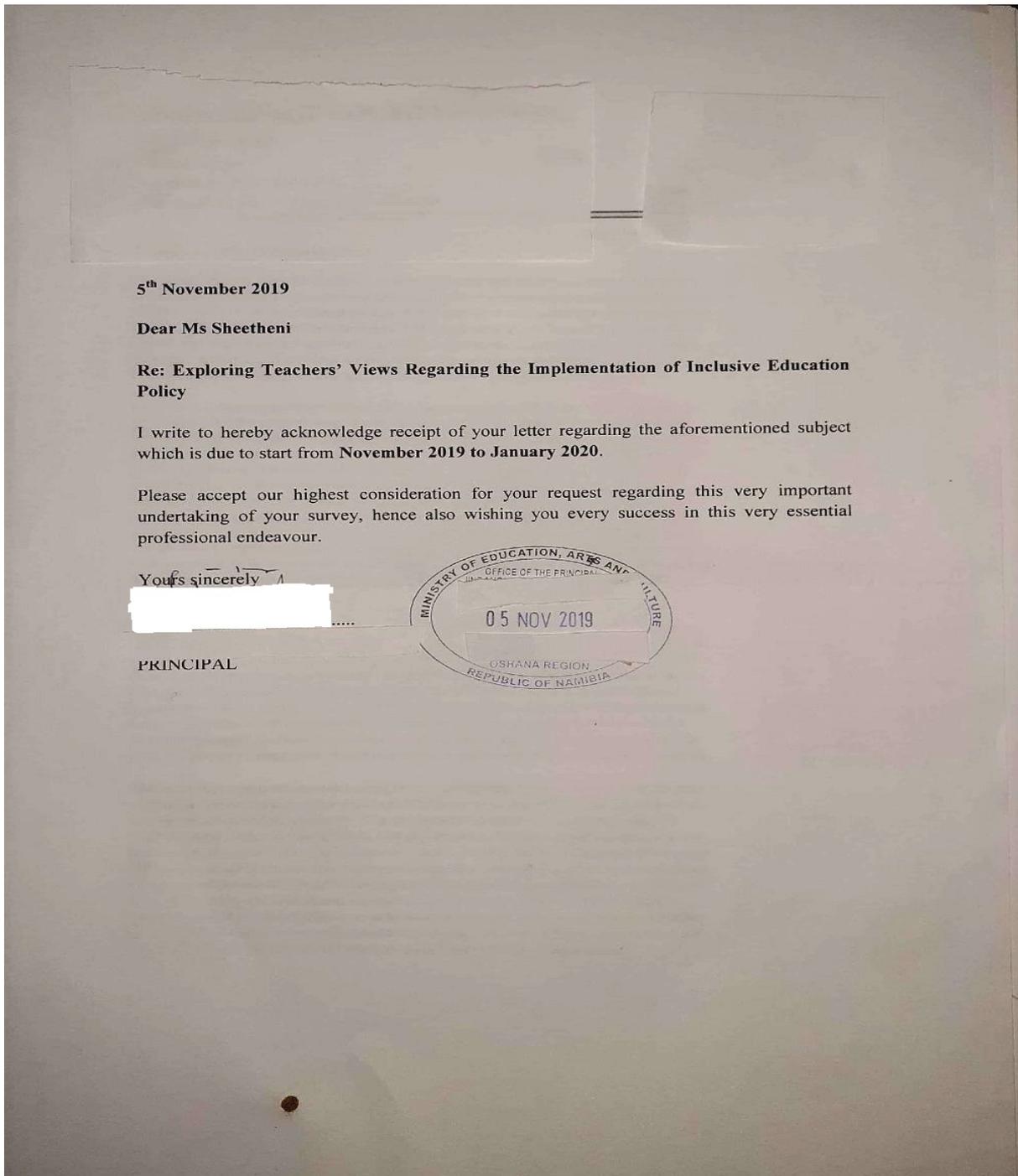
Yours Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

HN ENI M. AMUKANA
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

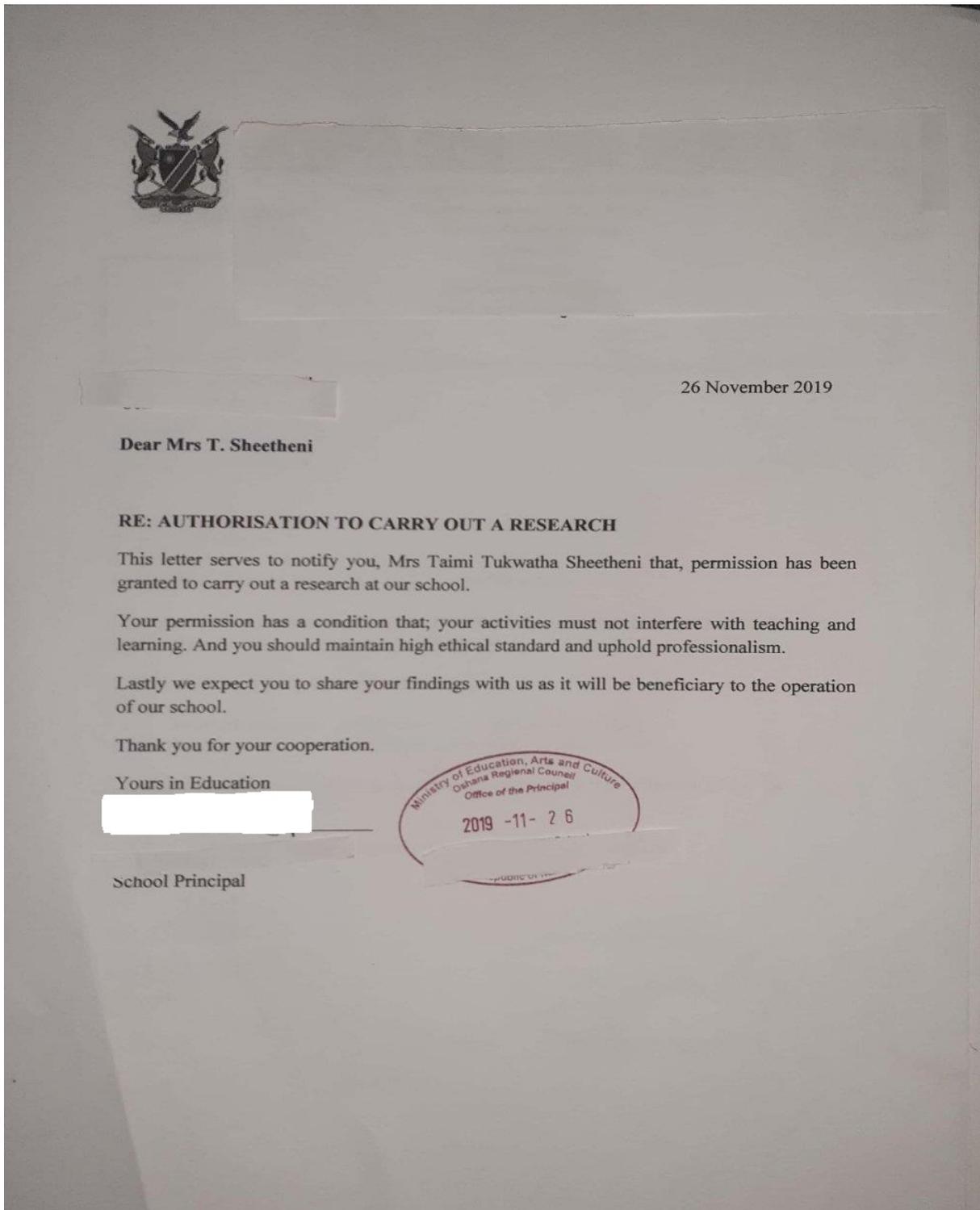


All correspondence should be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer

APPENDIX F



APPENDIX G



26 November 2019

Dear Mrs T. Sheetheni

RE: AUTHORISATION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH

This letter serves to notify you, Mrs Taimi Tukwatha Sheetheni that, permission has been granted to carry out a research at our school.

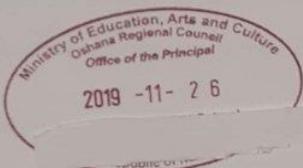
Your permission has a condition that; your activities must not interfere with teaching and learning. And you should maintain high ethical standard and uphold professionalism.

Lastly we expect you to share your findings with us as it will be beneficiary to the operation of our school.

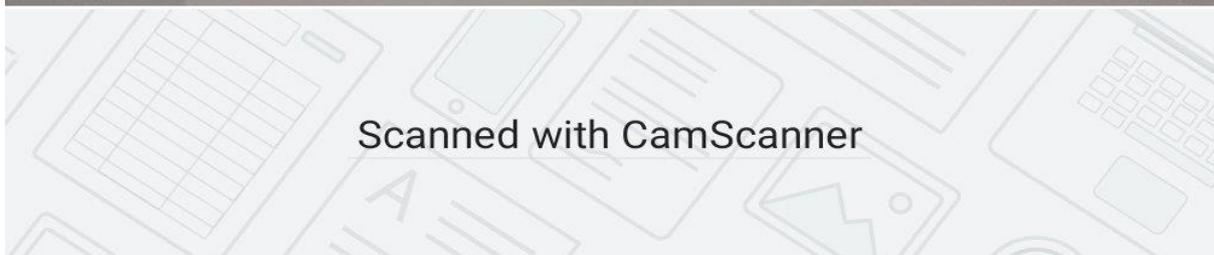
Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours in Education

[Redacted Signature]

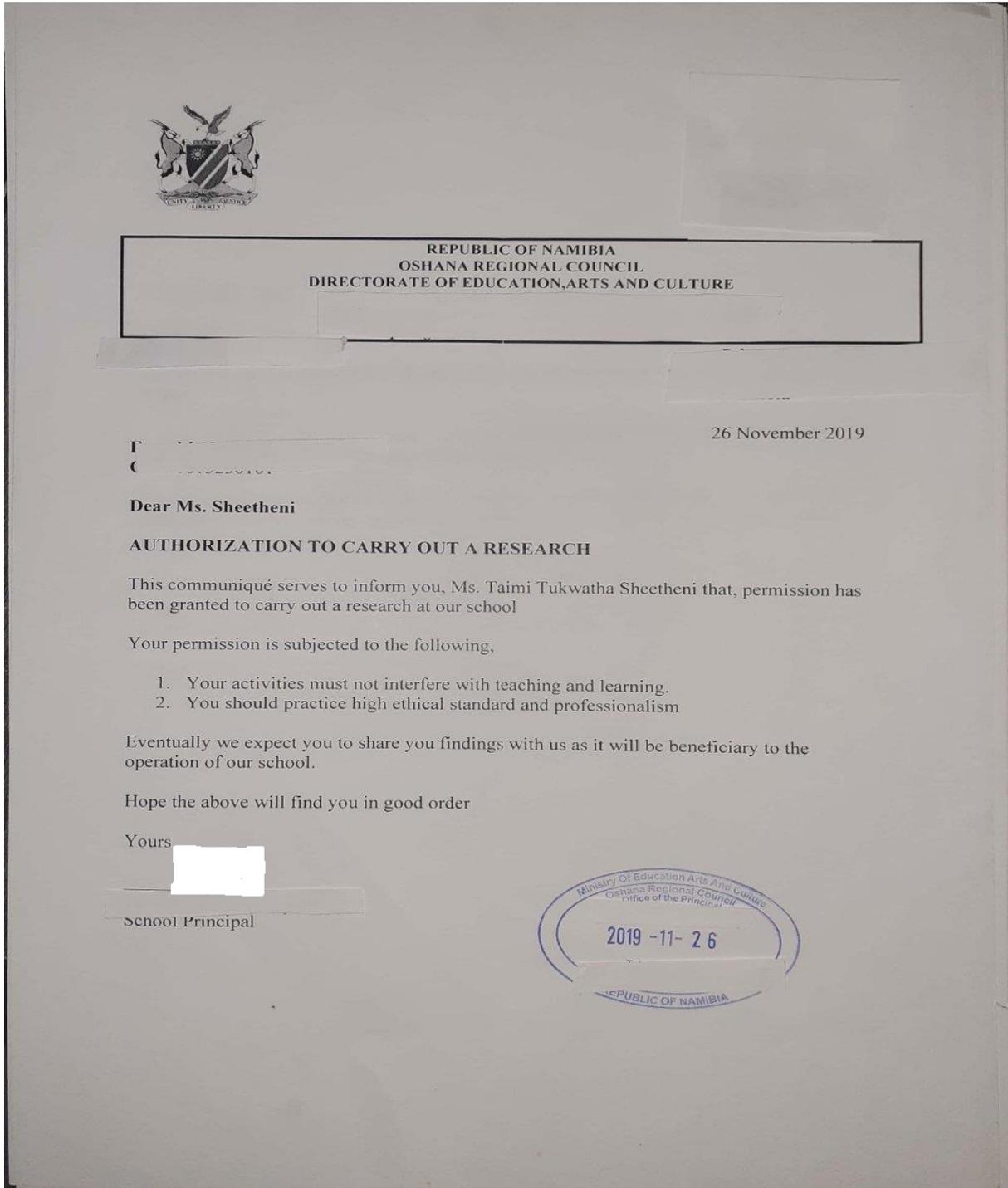


School Principal



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APPENDIX H



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