

Teachers' inadequate support in the implementation of inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng Province

ABSTRACT

Little is known about the inadequate teacher support towards inclusive education in South Africa. This study was aimed at exploring the inadequacy of support regarding the implementation of inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng province. The ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner was used as a theoretical lens for this study. The main objective of this study was to explore the inadequacy of teacher support in implementing inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng province. Face-to-face individual interviews were carried out, whereby 15 teachers were interviewed. This study used a phenomenology design, underpinned within an interpretive paradigm, to gain insight on the inadequacy of support regarding the implementation of inclusive education. The data was inductively analysed using the thematic analytic methods that search for themes. The study used convenient and purposive sampling as an initial plan to select teachers that a researcher can easily access. Non-probability sampling was used as a sampling technique; thus, the sampling was unable to give all individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected. This study revealed that inadequate teacher support was prevalent in the district where this study was conducted. Teachers in this study mentioned that they struggled to implement inclusive education in schools, owing to insufficient support given to them. Teachers need to be empowered through continuous development platforms such as training and provided with guiding manuals. In addition, structures should be made accessible to accommodate all learners and resources and supports should be made available for use in the inclusive schools.

Keywords: Inadequate support, Challenges, Inclusive education, Ecological systems theory; Bronfenbrenner's theory

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of inclusive education in a global context remains a challenge in our societies (UNESCO, 1994). It has remained an unanswered question as to whether or not the predictive outcome of inclusive education in the education systems is thought to be successfully implemented or not (Miles, 2000). Inclusive education evolved from the many divergent practices in the education systems in various countries in the world and has moved away from a specific focus on disability towards a broader view of inclusion (OpenLearn, 2016). The rationale for inclusive education is based on the fundamental human right of treating all persons equally and as per their learning needs (National Council for Special Education (NCSE), 2010). For instance, education is a fundamental human right, as protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), and all children, regardless of their abilities have the same right to education, as emphasised by the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989).

Special education began before 1954, with the Board of Education. It continued with landmark court cases for the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens Commonwealth (1971) and Mills, Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972), which resolved that states must educate children with disabilities (Bruster, 2014). Although special education began in European countries, it later spread to other parts of the world. Some learners with disabilities were kept in hospitals and special schools, irrespective of their degree of disability (Tremblay, 2007) and they were not allowed in mainstream education to learn with other pupils. Previously, in South Africa, about 20% of children with learning disabilities were accommodated in special schools, but some were not accommodated in schools at all (DoE, Education White Paper 6, 2001). In the South African situation, the majority of learners between the age of 6 and 16, who were reported not to be attending schools in 2015, were mostly from majority groups such as the Black, Coloured, and Indian people and this was due to access barriers (UNICEF, 2015).

In South Africa, authorities moved towards inclusion for all learners in schools, by turning some of the special schools into resource centres, after the launch of the national policy in 2013 (MoE, Sector Policy on Inclusive Education, 2013). Similar trends have emerged in most parts of the world with special schools being changed to resource centres, where learners with learning disabilities could be accommodated

(Landsberg, 2011). The special schools as resource centres are expected to provide specialised and professional support with curricula, assessments and instruction to neighbouring schools (Ali, 2006). The support can be provided in the area of teachers' training, barriers to learning, management of inclusive classrooms, development of learning support materials, guidance to parents, early childhood intervention and development of life skills programmes (Landsberg, 2011). The indication is that only a few pupils with disabilities would benefit in special schools, mostly those from wealthier families that can afford this type of schooling. Learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds or societies, particularly in rural areas, would not enjoy that privilege (DoE, Education White Paper 6).

It is also noted in the Education White Paper that the segregation of learners in schools worldwide was previously based on race, colour, affordability and abilities, and admission was not based on the right, but rather on privilege (DoE, Education White Paper 6, 2001). In the Education White Paper 6, it was noted that although the learners with disabilities were isolated and kept in special schools, they were still categorised as per their race. To realise and acknowledge the basic rights of individuals, the National Disability Strategies condemn the segregation of learners with disabilities and suggest the inclusion of all learners in mainstream schools, provided that the learning support is considered (Education White Paper 6, 2001). The introduction of inclusive education in schools is largely supported by the international call for the fundamental human rights of individual learners and their accessibility to schools they choose to attend (UNESCO, 1994). Globally, UNCRC (1989) sets out children rights in respect of the representation of their wishes and views. The UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) calls all governments to give the highest priority to an inclusive education system at all levels in schools (UNESCO, 1994).

The study conducted by Ali and colleagues (2006) and Ali (2006) in Malaysia showed that inclusive education was first introduced in the mid-1990s as part of a reform initiative that was focused on students with special needs. Acknowledging the obstacles involved in the implementation process, the learners were either partly or fully included based on their level of ability to attain the basic competencies in the mainstream classes (Donohue & Bornmanhe, 2014). Inclusion of individuals with disabilities in mainstream schools, work or society, has been accepted in Western

countries, unlike in African societies (Ali, et al, 2006). Historically, like many other countries in the world, the Namibian Education System was challenged by apartheid ideology where segregation was involved and basic education was not the right of every child, but a privilege to individuals (MoE, Towards Education for All, 1992).

It is against this background that the inclusive education policy was developed and introduced in the South African education system to address various barriers to learning from different perspectives (MoE, Sector Policy on Inclusive Education, 2013). On strengthening the value of inclusive education, it was therefore declared to be one of the priorities in the Sustainable Development Goal that aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, promote lifelong learning for all and eliminate gender disparities (United Nations, 2015). The pre-observation reveals that there is still more to be done regarding the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. In viewing the complexity of inclusive education, Corbett (2015) claims that inclusive education is a political ideology which is based on values and beliefs, and it needs to be discussed broadly. Despite the challenges that may arise with the implementation of inclusive education, some factors contribute to the successful implementation of inclusive policies. These include teachers' personal characteristics, personal views on inclusion, their understanding and practices of inclusion (Thorpe & Azam, 2010).

RATIONALE

Learners with special education needs are less attended to in schools, and some of them are still kept at the special schools that have recently been renamed as resource centres. If teachers are provided with all the guidance on inclusive education, why not effectively implement them? We decided to focus on the benefits and challenges teachers encounter regarding the implementation of inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng. In our experience as ex-teachers, we learnt and experienced a lot with regard to teaching learners with different abilities, for whom the education system in South Africa inadequately caters, due to the fact that teachers do not have the capacity to teach children with different abilities. It is challenging to provide undivided support to all children, especially those with severe learning difficulties. In actual fact, learners come to schools with different learning abilities and difficulties, behaviour, learning styles, abilities,

exposures, and interests. These may interfere with the way they learn and perform. In addition, as teachers we also differ in the way in which we handle and perceive the learners.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the international paradigm shift with regard to the adoption of various policies for the realisation of inclusive education, the implementation moves at a slow pace. This was cited in various studies carried out in different countries, where the findings revealed the various limiting factors that are interfering with the implementation process. The Education White Paper 6 can be seen as a significant step towards the implementation of inclusive education, but it does not go far enough. Scores of teachers remain ill-equipped to teach learners with special educational needs. Training and development of such teachers remain problematic as their training is going at a snail's pace. It is hoped that this study would lead to a better understanding of the benefits and challenges teachers encounter regarding the implementation of inclusive education so as to improve the quality of care and support to these children.

RESEARCH GOAL, OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research goal

The main goal of this study was to explore the inadequacy of teacher support in the implementation of inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng.

Objectives of the study

Main research objective

To explore the inadequacy of teacher support in the implementation of inclusive education

Main research question

To what extent is teacher support adequate in the implementation of inclusive

education?

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study explored the inadequacy of teacher support in implementing inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng. This study's outcomes may be used by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa. The researchers believe that once the education officers become well-informed about the benefits and challenges regarding the implementation of inclusive education, they would be in a better position to support learners with special educational needs, that can inform inclusion policy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was informed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, by the theorist, Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), who explained how a child's environment affects how a child grows. This theory was used as a theoretical lens to this study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015) on how learners' environments affect their learning. The implementation of inclusive education would be successful if the ecological environments were made appropriate to provide maximum support. Therefore, Dreyer (2017), and Swart and Pettipher (2005) emphasise that schools should be organised into inclusive settings able to recognise and respond to the diverse needs, learning styles and pace of learning of the learners in schools.

Research paradigm (world view)

This phenomenological qualitative design is underpinned within interpretive paradigm. Paradigm originates from the word, *parádeigma* (Greek word), which means pattern (Durrheim, 1999). Paradigm refers to a particular belief about the nature of settings on what can be known and how it comes to be known (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015; Hammersley, 2012). It can further be defined as a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research (Mackenzie & Knipes, 2006). Paradigms are being influenced by theoretical frameworks and establish relationships among constructs, both locally and internationally (Mertens, 2005). Interpretivism refers to the natural world based on

past experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015).

Nature of study

This is an educational research in the field of inclusive education settings. Research refers to a scientific and systematic approach to search for specific information for the specific research topic (Kothari, 2004). However, this study will use a systematic approach or format when presenting and reporting the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Cohen et al. (2018), in order to answer research questions, qualitative data collection methods need to be employed to provide comprehensive data.

Research design and methodology

Research design refers to a research logic plan that shows how the research was conducted, by showing all major parts of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This means it is a logical set of procedures or structures that give directions from underlying philosophical assumptions to research design (ibid). On the contrary, methodology is a systematic, theoretical analysis of the procedures applied to the field of study and does not set out to provide solutions to the problem, but offers the theoretical underpinning for understanding which procedures can be applied (Kothari, 2004). The study employs interpretive qualitative approach. Interviews were audio or tape-recorded and then transcribed. The transcribed data was analysed, coded, organised into themes, and then presented narratively (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, Smith, 1983).

Interview method

The interview is a flexible tool for data collection, whereby a researcher uses multi-sensory channels i.e. verbal, non-verbal, spoken and hearing (Cohen, et al., 2018; Kothari, 2004). During interviews, the researcher follows specific questions as a guide that leads to research questions being answered and other constructive information (Maree, 2011; Trochim, 2008). In this study, the interview method was used to get an in-depth insight on the benefits and challenges towards implementation of inclusive education. Another reason for choosing the interview method was that it allows the researcher to probe for more clarity, which increases the comprehensiveness

(Cohen, et al., 2018). Although the interview method allows a researcher to probe, it was also criticised on the ground that it can be intimidating to the participants and may affect the intended data (Cohen et al.2007; 2011; 2018).

Interview participants

The research targeted 15 teachers from four different schools in Johannesburg East District, Gauteng, where each teacher was interviewed individually for 45 minutes.

Profile of the participants

Teachers who participated in this study were purposely selected for easy accessibility (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The teachers who participated in this study had different teaching experiences that ranged from novice teachers to well-experienced teachers. The teachers' profiles are summarised in table below:.

Table 1 The teachers' profiles

Teacher's Code	Teaching Experience (years)
T1	4
T2	4
T3	12
T4	5
T5	14
T6	3
T7	12
T8	9
T9	7
T10	14
T11	8
T12	2
T13	23
T14	5
T15	10

Interview structure

The semi-structured interview (with open-ended questions) was used as a flexible approach, whereby key questions were used to define the key area that the research aimed to explore (Kothari, 2004). Semi-structured interviews allow participants to express themselves thoroughly by giving their views and opinions, and share experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, it requires a participant to

answer a set of pre-determined questions and allow probing, and sometimes requires clarification from the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Maree, 2011).

UNDER PEER REVIEW

Type of interview

Face-to-face interviews were used in this study. The researcher directly engaged in discussion or conversation with teachers and asked questions as per preparation of the interview guide. The individual interview was used instead of a focused group, because it allowed the researcher to observe the behaviours and non-verbal features of the participants. However, interview is criticised for causing inconvenience owing to the long distances a researcher may have to travel to reach the research site (Oltmann, 2016). A similar situation was experienced in this study, namely that it was challenging to conduct the interview as the researchers had to travel to the Johannesburg East District.

Interview sessions

The interviews were conducted during a convenient time for the teachers to avoid conflict with their school schedules. Some of the participants had time to listen to the conversation afterwards to rectify or clarify on the information provided. However, participants were satisfied with their responses. Only one interview session per teacher was conducted.

Interview site(s)

The study was conducted in schools situated in Johannesburg East District, Gauteng. Since Johannesburg East District is a vast district, the study targeted five schools, but eventually, only four schools were accessed for the study. Schools consisted of different phases as summarised in table 3.2, for in-depth exploration.

Table 2 Schools' Profiles

Schools' Code	Level / Phase offered	No. of participants
School 1	Secondary level <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Junior Secondary Phase (Grade 8-10)● Senior Secondary Phase (Grade 11-	3
School 2	Combined school <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Primary Phase (Grade: Pre-primary to	4
School 3	Primary School (Pre-primary to Senior Primary – Grade 7	4
School 4	Primary School (Pre-primary to Senior Primary – Grade 7	4

Sampling

The study used convenient and purposive sampling as initial plan to select teachers that a researcher can easily access (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Non-probability sampling and, thus, the sampling was unable to give all individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Bertram and Christiansen (2015) state that a researcher needs to be clear on how to select the site and participants, with justification for the selection.

Participant selection

Schools and teachers were purposively (non-probability sampling) selected from schools in Johannesburg East District. According to Cohen et al. (2018), the reason for selecting from different schools is to collect a wide range of data that represent a variety of ideas, views, opinions and experiences from teaching different grades or phases. As researchers, we used those criteria to find out if there is any connection between teachers' teaching experience and the grade being taught to understand the benefits and challenges towards the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

Data analysis

Since this research project was carried out qualitatively, inductive data analysis was used, whereby generalisation is induced from synthesising gathered information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). With inductive reasoning, the theory is developed from the ground up, or bottom up using the detailed particulars, rather than from the top down (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data to make sense of data (Cohen et al., 2018). A researcher organises what was collected from the teachers' interviews and makes sense of data (Bodner & Orgill, 2007). In short, the data collected in this research project was phenomenologically analysed and presented narratively.

Validity and trustworthiness of the study

Validity refers to strategies that researchers use to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the result findings (Creswell, 2014). The trustworthiness of the research is based on the following components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Devault, 2017). *Credibility* refers to internal validity, which accurately presents the particular context in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015; Mayan, 2001). To ensure credibility of this study, we involved 5 teachers from different schools to increase the validity of the data collected, referred to as triangulation (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015). *Transferability* refers to the case whereby data obtained is transferable to the other contexts (ibid). For that reason, we used a rich and thick description of participants by supplying clear and detailed information (Mayan, 2001) about teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of inclusive education. *Dependability* refers to the degree of assuring that the findings indeed reflect what transpired and are accurate (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Mayan, 2001). For the *confirmability* of data in this study, I used the member checking method; whereby participants listened to the audio recording and the transcript of data to rectify any error or give clarifications needed (Devault, 2017; Maxwell, 1992).

Ethical considerations

According to Fouka and Mantzorou (2011), ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the dynamics of decision-making about what is right or wrong when carrying out the study research and has to do with protecting the dignity of participants, institutions and publications of the research information. Before we collected data, all values and ethical considerations underlying this study were considered and informed the work of the researcher (Coe, Waring, Hedges, & Arthur, 2017). Ethical clearance from Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) was obtained. Afterwards, we obtained a research permission letter from the District Director and the HOD from the Gauteng Department of Education and from concerned schools. In order to respect and protect the identity of participants, codes

were used to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality. Teachers participated in this study on a voluntarily basis and their right to withdraw without any penalty was clearly exercised in this study. For instance, some participants refused to be recorded during interviews. We respected their decision, and proactively took notes of their interview responses and transcribed them immediately so as to easily remember what was said.

Limitation of the study

As has already been indicated, this study was conducted in one education district, namely Johannesburg East, in the Gauteng province. Therefore, the data cannot be generalised to represent the views of all South African teachers and Gauteng teachers specifically.

Delimitation of the study

Initially, the researchers had planned to collect data from five schools in the region, and interview 15 teachers in total (three teachers per school). However, the researcher managed to collect data from four schools that responded positively and interviewed 15 teachers as planned. The main challenge that contributed to this was the vastness of the district and the distance researchers had to travel from school to school. During the structured interviews, two participants were not willing to be recorded. To overcome such challenges, we as researchers took notes of their responses during the interviews. Despite the challenges experienced, the research journey was a productive learning experience and positively contributed to my own personal and professional growth. The whole process went so well, and we could obtain the data needed to answer the research questions.

Reflection on data collection process

The researchers initially planned to collect data from five schools in the region, and interview 15 teachers in total (three teachers per school). As a result, the researcher managed to collect data from four schools that responded positively and interviewed 15 teachers as planned. The main challenge that contributed to this was the

vastness of the district and the distance between schools. Despite the challenges experienced, the research journey was a productive learning experience and contributed positively to our own personal and professional growth. The whole process went so well, and we could obtain the data needed to answer the research questions.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The participants and schools were given codes to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality, as has already been discussed. For instance, teachers were coded as Teacher 1 (T1), Teacher 2 (T2), and so on. Schools were coded as School 1, School 2; and so on. Below, the themes that emanated from the data analysis are discussed.

Parental support

It emerged from this study that some parents were not involved in the education of their children and did not support them. One of the teachers said that some of the learners did not receive enough support and were neglected by their parents; some of them live with their grandmothers who are old and unable to take proper care of them. Teachers revealed that learners were staying in houses with poor structure, that they survive with little food and suffer noise pollution from the nearby shebeens. Ladbrook (2009) noted that most of the parents did not understand the implications of inclusive education, the role of teachers and their roles as education partners. There is also a need to engage the community people in teaching and learning, as shared responsibilities ensure learners are grounded in their local communities (Phasha et al., 2017). Community and parental involvement in the education of children may affect the learners' attitudes towards themselves and others (Swart & Pettipher, 2005) Engelbrecht and Green (2007) pointed out that parents have an important responsibility to screen, identify, assess and support their children. In this case, successful implementation of inclusive education requires parental involvement (Shourbagi, 2017) and this would connect a child to his or her home and school as part of their social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978;

Swart, 2005). This may improve their attitude, behaviour, attendance and mental health (Christenson, 2004).

Schools' support

Participants indicated that they had little knowledge and experience of how to provide the necessary support to their learners due to insufficient knowledge on how to identify children with learning difficulties or disabilities. One of the participants indicated that teachers, who had studied in the past 10 to 15 years, had some background in inclusive education. This is in contrast to teachers who have been in the service longer, because inclusive education was not common in most countries such as South Africa at that time and was not part of the local higher institutions. As a result, those teachers had little or no background as far as inclusive education is concerned.

Teacher 4: Uuh! No recent training, the workshop I attended was only done within three days. So, the workshop is needed. There are no documents showing teachers how to go about inclusive education.

This indicates that there is little support in schools to help teachers cope with the implementation process. One of the participants (T11) stated: *Mhh, it is very difficult because to provide support to all learners, you need an Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) for each learner.*

The IEP is a plan that indicates the comprehensive support needed by a learner and what is to be done to assist that particular pupil in coping with the subject content. Consequently, if a teacher has no idea about IEP, then the vision of inclusive education is being compromised. Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue that teachers expect to accomplish the task of tailoring the curriculum to suit each learner's particular needs and pace of learning. According to Kaplan and Lewis (2013), the training manuals contain superficial information and dwell mostly on the challenges that are likely to be faced during the implementation process.

Regional office support

The data revealed that some of the teachers were trained on inclusive education by the regional office, which include some Life Skills teachers, Heads of Departments and principals. It also emerged that during the time of this study, the District Office had no school counsellor, which created a further challenge to train more teachers. Teacher 1 suggested that South Africa should put all the mechanisms in place regarding facilities, skilled persons and training of staff members for successful implementation. The inadequacy of professional development was also revealed in a study by Wearmouth and colleagues (2000), who found that it affects the teachers' contribution to inclusive education. Giving teachers continuous support by training would help them to improve their practices (ibid).

Curriculum issues related to inclusive education

The curriculum emerged as one of the issues which interfere with the implementation of inclusive education. Policies such as the curriculum and other legislative documents should be recognised and used as prescribed (Donnelly, 2013). The National Curriculum for Basic Education stresses the necessity of its implementers, taking ownership with a commitment to ensure quality education for all that reflects the demands of the society (MoE, NCBE, 2010). Participants felt that the implementers of the curriculum should be well familiarised and oriented adequately to provide sufficient and diversified support to all learners. It emerged from this study that all schools in South Africa use the same curriculum.

Teacher 14: *We've to use the curriculum that's for the mainstream schools and the learners are the learners that otherwise that would not able to perform academically at all.... So we have to make use of normal curriculum and then [teach] it in our way to enable to teach learners with learning disabilities.*

Teachers added that learners in all schools are expected to write the same examinations unless there are special considerations regarding poor vision, writing difficulties or disabilities, and an oral examination can be provided. Another issue that emerged during interviews was that the teacher-pupil ratio was a problem in the existing mainstream schools, because there were too many learners for support to be provided.

Teacher 8: *We have the problem that ratio in these big classes is difficult, and we do have learning support classes for those learners. But this is a big town and learners are not able to come back to school for classes because they have to get into taxis; an issue with money as they have to be transported two times a day.*

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) stresses the teacher-learner ratio and network support as an important means to successful inclusion (DoE, Education White Paper 6, 2001). However, schools should consider how best they can have a manageable number of learners without compromising the quality of teaching and learning (DoE, Education White Paper 6, 2001). The data that emerged from the current study contradicts the aims of the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2010) that says schools would provide maximised support in inclusive schools by 2030. In some countries in the world learners with disabilities are still kept in special schools, regardless of the introduction of inclusive education (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). To understand inclusion, it is necessary to examine practices at the micro-level (schools and communities) and other levels of interaction in societies (Peters, 2004), as deliberated in the ecological theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Differences in exposure have affected learners differently, resulting in varied learning difficulties and disabilities (Zulfija et al., 2013).

Variances in learning difficulties and disabilities

It emerged from this study that children have unique differences in learning needs, which affect how teachers perceive learners with disabilities. According to participants, this poses challenges regarding the implementation of inclusive education, because not all teachers are prepared or knowledgeable on how to deal with learners with diverse needs. Phasha and colleagues (2017) believed that the differences among individuals are as much a source of strength as commonalities. Therefore, the emphasis should rather be on how well teachers can be assisted to provide support to diverse learners (Zulfija et al., 2013). This means insufficient information regarding inclusive education was provided in schools. The study by Kaplan and Lewis (2013) conducted in Japan confirmed similar findings, namely that training materials contained insufficient information and sometimes only emphasised challenges likely to be faced

during the implementation process. Teachers acknowledged that they have learners with different conditions, which they believed contributed to why inclusive education could not be implemented successfully. These include learners with physical disabilities, those in wheelchairs, some who are partially blind, have deformed legs and mental disabilities.

Participants felt that these challenges were very serious and interfered with everyday practice and hampered progress to the inclusive education implementation process in Namibian schools.

Teacher 5: *The challenge as I see it, is that the implementers do not have a clear idea on how to implement inclusive education. So, I would say that, giving them a workshop before the implementation of this inclusive education would make it easier to implement because, the difficulty stems from the fact that they do not have enough or thorough knowledge on inclusive education.*

Inadequate provision of training on inclusive education

To explore the training given to prepare teachers for the implementation, the following guiding interview question was used:

Have you received any training or guidance regarding the inclusive education policy and its implementation process? Tell me more.

The findings revealed that some teachers were trained on inclusive education, and some were not. Teachers 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 15 all said: "...not attended any training yet..."

Teachers indicated that they were not prepared for the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers also said that it poses challenges, because they might not provide assistance to learners according to their needs. According to Mngo and Mngo (2018), teachers with inadequate information owing to the lack of training become less supportive in mainstream schools. Although some teachers did not receive training,

others said they were exposed to some experiences which helped them to adapt to teaching in schools with diverse learners.

Teacher 2: *No! No! No! No training. I was helped through my study and the past experience I had from working in HIV/AIDS Programmes with NGOs.*

Teacher 5: *I didn't receive any training on the inclusive policy or its implementation. But what I know about inclusive education I studied when I was at UNAM. The fact that we studied inclusive education is all knowledge I have.*

Teacher 12: *No training yet. I am just using my experience.*

Teacher 15: *Not yet, only the courses I did during my study.*

Some teachers acknowledged that they received training or guidance to implement the inclusive education policy. Teachers reported on this as follows:

Teacher 13: *Yes, I did attend training, I only do not have a Diploma, but I have attended many workshops.*

Teacher 3: *Yes! Basically, assessing school readiness to identify learners who can be referred to special schools.*

Teacher 9: *I remember, if I am not mistaken, that was 2013/2014 somewhere there. They actually gave training, unfortunately to Principals and Heads of Departments that received the training on inclusive education; and Life Skills teachers. But, I actually read documents on inclusive policy at school.*

It can be seen from these comments that the Ministry of Education employed some strategies to prepare teachers for the implementation, although not all the teachers could be catered for. Consequently, teachers who were trained implement inclusive education with confidence and positive attitudes and this is likely to result in improved practices (Woodcock et al., 2012).

FURTHER RESEARCH

Since this study was aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng, this study could be extended with an intervention that would contribute positively to the educator support in the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools. A similar study can be done to explore the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of inclusive education in schools. A comparative study would also be required to explore the effectiveness of incorporating the inclusive education framework into the reformed/ revised curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This study was aimed at exploring teachers' inadequate support towards the implementation of inclusive education in the Johannesburg East District. This study was informed by the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979), which emphasised the uniqueness of the child as influenced by ecological environments such as home, school and society. Like any other country that forms part of United Nations, South Africa had signed an "agreement" to transform to inclusive education. As a result, South Africa launched the Education White Paper 6. In order to answer the research questions, 15 teachers from different schools were interviewed individually. The findings revealed that teachers had different views and knowledge about inclusive education. Despite the differences in understanding the concept, a majority of teachers commonly pronounced inclusive education as an unbiased learning approach. Therefore, learners' diverse needs are accommodated and acknowledged irrespective of their learning abilities or disabilities or backgrounds. Some teachers demonstrated inadequate understanding about inclusive education, which revealed inadequate exposure to such policy. Teachers perceived inclusive education implementation differently. Those with positive perceptions support inclusive education and expect it to result in improved education. However, those with negative perceptions felt that inclusive education would never work and is not beneficial to learners with disabilities. Some teachers with mixed feelings, thought that in cases where challenges are resolved, inclusive education may work to the benefit of all learners. Therefore, the findings revealed some benefits and challenges experienced towards the implementation of inclusive education.

Therefore, teachers need to be empowered through continuous development platforms such as training and provided with guiding manuals. In addition, structures should be made accessible to accommodate all the learners and resources and supports should be made available for use in the inclusive schools. Therefore, the participants emphasised the need for frequent training in order to be equipped with all the relevant and updated strategies so that they could provide appropriate and adequate support to all learners. The findings were summarised and the recommendations were provided for improving the education system, and also for further research.

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