

**EXPLORING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' PRACTICES FOR INCLUSION OF
LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN REGULAR SCHOOLS: A
CASE OF LIVINGSTONE DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

BY

DELPHINE MWEEMBA

SUPERVISORS: Dr Kalisto Kalimaposo

Dr Magdalene Simalalo

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION.**

The University of Zambia

Lusaka

2025

COPYRIGHT

All copyrights reserved. No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, recording, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise without prior permission in writing, from the author or the University of Zambia.

© 2025, Delphine Mweemba

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, Delphine Mweemba, do hereby solemnly declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that it has never been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or any other university.

Signature_____

Date_____

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This thesis of **Delphine Mweemba** is hereby approved as fulfilling the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education of the University of Zambia.

Examiner 1

Signature

Date

.....

.....

.....

Examiner 2

Signature

Date

.....

.....

.....

Examiner 3

Signature

Date

.....

.....

.....

Chairperson Board of Examiners

Signature

Date

.....

.....

.....

Supervisor

Signature

Date

.....

.....

.....

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother Moddy Mweemba for showing me the way to school and has remained as a source of inspiration in my academic and professional achievements; and to the memory of Mathews Mwanza, the father of my children, I shall forever cherish your love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the Almighty God for giving me the strength, good health and wisdom during the period of study. I thank Him for the many blessings on me without which this work would not have been a success.

I am sincerely grateful to my supervisor, Dr Kalisto Kalimaposo, and my co-supervisor Dr. Magdalene Simalalo for the academic and professional guidance they provided to me with dedication throughout this study. They were encouraging and coaching me, and were always available for me for guidance and consultation. I also thank all the individuals who provided data and other forms of support. I also thank the Livingstone District Education Board Secretary (DEBS)'s office for allowing me to conduct my study in the schools and all the participants who gave their time to respond to the questions during the study.

I also owe sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all the lecturers in the Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education (EPSSE) Department for their time and support throughout my study at the University of Zambia.

This acknowledgement would not be complete without expressing my sincere gratitude to my first daughter Wendy for taking the role of a mother and father to her sister in my absence. I also would like to thank my youngest daughter Enidy, who missed me the most, and when I was present busy writing my thesis, she would sit near me reading her own books. I really pray that one day her dreams will come true.

Abstract

This was a qualitative study of administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners. This study investigated administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in three selected regular schools. The objectives of the study were to establish school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, to assess how administrators' practices had helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs, to explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs, and to suggest a framework that can support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools. A qualitative descriptive case study design was used. The sample comprised 14 participants: 3 head teachers, 3 deputy head teachers, 3 senior teachers, and 5 class teachers. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions and observation checklist. Participants were selected through use of expert purposive sampling technique. Analysis of data was done thematically. The study revealed that the most common administrators' practices used by most participants were monitoring, coaching, sensitisation and enrolment of learners with special needs in the study schools. It was established that through monitoring, the administrators made sure that the needs of learners with special educational needs were met. Administrators also made sure that all learners were treated in the same way regardless of the individual needs, and also that the teachers used the right pedagogies when teaching, especially when it came to learners with special educational needs (LSEN). The study further, revealed that through administrators' practices there were high enrolment of LSEN in regular schools. Administrators were also modifying the existing infrastructure to become user-friendly for LSEN although the modification may not be up to the expected standards for such learners. Furthermore, the study revealed that to promote inclusive education school administrators regularly collaborated with other stakeholders. However, during enrolment of learners with special education needs, administrator never followed the right procedure of referring the children to the hospital for medical assessment, instead they just enrolled them based on the chronological age of the child. This led to wrong placement of the children in the school. The Government were funding regular schools to promote inclusive education. Short training courses in the form of continuous professional development (CPD) meetings, workshops and seminars in inclusive education were done to equip the administrators and teachers without knowledge in special education. To help learners with health conditions the government introduced health rooms within the schools where such learners were easily attended to. The study recommends that there is need for every school administrator to be trained in inclusive education so that they become competent on how to handle learners with special educational needs in their schools. There is also need for all the school community to be sensitised on matters concerning learners with special educational needs. There is need for teacher assistants in the schools to help the class teachers when they attend to learners when they are not feeling well.

Keywords:

Administrator, Practice, Inclusion, Learners and Regular school

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT.....	i
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	ii
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURE.....	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xi
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMYS	xiii
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	 1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Key Influence Underpinning Current Study	1
1.3 Background	1
1.4 Statement of the Problem.....	10
1.5 Purpose of the Study	10
1.6 Objectives	11
1.7 Research Questions	11
1.8 Significance.....	11
1.9 Delimitation	12
1.10 Limitations	12
1.11 Theoretical Framework.....	13
1.12 Definition of Key Terms	14
1.13 Chapter Summary	15
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	 17
2.1 Overview.....	17
2.1.1 School administrators’ practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in inclusive schools.	18
2.1.2 Administrators’ Instructional Supervision on Inclusion of learners with Special Educational Needs	21
2.1.3 Communication on Inclusion of Learners with Special Needs in Education	29

2.1.4 School Administrators' Coordination of Donor Support Services on Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs.....	31
2.1.5 Engagement of Teacher Assistants	33
2.1.6 Creation of Conducive Learning Environment on Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs.	35
2.2 How administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs.....	40
2.2.1 Professional Development	40
2.2.2 Advocacy	45
2.3 Support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special Education Needs.	54
2.3.1 Policies.....	54
2.3.2 Engagement by Parents/Community.....	63
2.3.3 Financial assistance.....	68
2.4. Summary.....	68
 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	70
3.1 Overview.....	70
3.2 Philosophical Assumptions.....	70
3.3 Research Paradigms	72
3.4 Justification of Choosing Interpretivism.....	73
3.5 Research Design.....	73
3.6 Population	76
3.7 Sample.....	77
3.7.1 Characteristics of the Participants.....	79
3.7.2 Administrators.....	79
3.7.3 Class Teachers	80
3.7.4 Sampling Procedure	80
3.8 Research Instruments	82
3.8.1 Interview Guide	82
3.8.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide	83
3.8.3 Observation Checklist.....	84
3.9 Rationale for the choice of instruments	84
3.9.1 Piloting of Instruments.....	85

3.9.2 Piloting the Interview.....	85
3.10 Data Collection Procedure	86
3.11 Trustworthiness of the Study	86
3.11.1 Credibility	86
3.11.2 Dependability	87
3.11.3 Transferability.....	88
3.11.4 Confirmability.....	89
3.12 Data Analysis	90
3.13 Coding of Participants.....	92
3.14 Ethical Considerations	92
3.15 Summary	93
 CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	 95
4.1 Overview	95
4.2 Biographical Profile of Participants.....	77
4.3 Emerged Themes	95
4.4 School Administrators Practices Towards Inclusion	96
4.4.1 Monitoring	96
4.4.2 Coaching	101
4.4.3 Enrolment of Learners with Special Needs	103
4.4.4 Sensitisation	106
4.5 How Administrators' Practices Have Helped Promote Inclusion in Regular Schools	109
4.5.1 Increased Enrolment	109
4.5.2 Adequate Teaching and Learning Materials	110
4.5.3 Conducive Environments.....	113
4.5.4 Collaboration.....	116
4.6 Support given to the school Administrators to Implement Inclusive Education for Learners with disabilities in schools	118
4.6.1 Short Trainings.....	118
4.6.2 Government Grants.....	120
4.6.3 Health Rooms.....	123
4.7. Summary.....	126

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	127
5.1 Overview	127
5.2 Establish school administrators’ practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools.	127
5.2.1 Monitoring	127
5.2.2 Coaching	129
5.2.3 Enrolment procedures	130
5.2.4 Sensitisation	131
5.2.5 To examine how administrators’ practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.....	132
5.2.6 Provision Adequate Teaching and Learning Materials.....	132
5.2.7 Increased Enrolment	133
5.2.8 Conducive Environment	134
5.2.9 Collaboration.....	135
5.2.10 To explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs.....	136
5.2.11 Government Grants.....	137
5.2.12 Short Trainings.....	137
5.2.13 Health Rooms.....	138
5.3 Chapter Summary	141
 CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 142
6.1 Overview	139
6.2 Summary of the Study	140
6.3 Summary of the Findings	140
6.4 Conclusion	141
6.5 Gaps in the study	142
6.6 How the Study Links to Theory.....	146
6.7 Contributions to the Body of Knowledge	147
6.8 Implications and Recommendations	147
6.8.1 Recommendations to the Ministry of Education	148
6.8.2 Recommendations to administrators.....	148
6.8.3 Recommendations to the teachers.....	149
6.9 Recommendations for Further Research.....	149

6.10 Constructed model to document and interpret the effective inclusion of learners in regular schools	139
REFERENCES	150
APPENDICES	170

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Research Design Matrix.....	74
Table 2: Profile of Head Teachers.....	92
Table 3: Profile of Deputy Head Teachers.....	93
Table 4: Profile of Senior Teachers.....	93
Table 5: Profile of Focus Group Discussion.....	93

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Permission Letter from DES Office
Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form
Appendix 3: Invitation to Participate (Interview)
Appendix 4: Focus Group Guide
Appendix 5: Protocol for Individual and Focus Group Discussion

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Classroom blocks	114
Figure 2: Health Rooms	115
Figure 3: Constructed Model	147

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CWD	Children with Disabilities
EADSNE	European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualised Education Programme
LSEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
LWD	Learners with Disabilities
MESVTEE	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Childhood
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEN	Special Education Needs
UDL	Universal Design Learning
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Chapter one provides the context within which this study was conducted. It provides the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, study questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations of the study, theoretical frameworks and ends with the definitions of key terms of the study.

1.2 Key Influence Underpinning Current Study

The key influence underpinning the initiation of this research relates to the researcher's prior experience of teaching learners with special educational needs in a special unit at a regular school. The different perceptions and attitudes of school administrators towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools prompted the researcher to conduct this research.

1.3 Background

According to UNESCO (1994) is an approach to teaching that values diversity and promotes the participation of the learners, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds or needs. It is all about creating a learning environment where every learner feels welcome, supported and challenged to reach their full potential. The establishment and maintenance of a social world where everyone experiences inclusive values and relationships is the pinnacle of inclusion (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). Inclusive education focuses on the processes of adjusting the home, school and society so that all individuals, regardless of their differences, can have the opportunity to interact, play, learn, work, experience the feeling of belonging and develop in accordance with their potentials (Ngugi & Kimanthi, 2007).

Further, inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increased participation in learning cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and outside the education system (UNESCO, 2008). Furthermore, Miles et al (2003) also define inclusive education as "the process of increasing the presence, participation, and achievement of all learners in their local schools with particular reference

to those groups of learners who are at risk of exclusion, marginalisation, or under-achievement”.

Inclusive education emphasises that every school should be able to cater for every learner’s diverse needs and disabilities (Clark, Dyson and Millard, 2018). This means that every child who is in school should actively participate in every school activity and be able to achieve academically. This was also emphasised by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 where it was declared that education is a fundamental right for all children regardless of the individual differences.

This right was further emphasised and affirmed as a plan of action at the World Conference of Special Needs Education held in Salamanca Spain (UNESCO), 1994). The Salamanca statement firmly called on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schools by implementing practical and strategic changes in schools.

The member states agreed on the provision of quality education for all children, including those with learning disabilities, in the schools near their homes. The guiding principle of inclusive education is that ordinary schools should admit all children irrespective of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other conditions. Flecha (2014) states that inclusion fosters institutional strategies to increase the participation and learning of children who are perceived to be vulnerable within the educational arrangement. This is done by mobilising appropriate human, physical and material resources for the transformation of such regular schools.

There are many benefits of inclusive education for both learners with and without disabilities. Some of these benefits are social/emotional growth, increased academic outcomes; strong relationships; a heightened acceptance of human diversity; enhanced self-image; increased empathy, caring, and understanding; peer models; and preparation for the “real world” for all learners (Garrick Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Ko & Boswell, 2013; Romanuck Murphy, 2017; Yssel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff, & Swart, 2007).

School administrators’ practices toward inclusion of learners with special educational needs affect teachers’ parent’ and learners’ attitudes toward inclusion in regular schools. They also affect school culture and climate, learner placement decisions, and a shared belief that all learners can and will learn (Cobb, 2015; Hack, 2014; Lynch, 2012; Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014). Therefore, it is imperative that school administrators reflect upon their

practices toward inclusion and understand the benefits of inclusive education for both learners with and without special educational needs.

The intention of inclusion is to provide children with special educational needs equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services in the general education setting with the appropriate support services. Educational programming for children with disabilities is based on the assumption that a variety of service delivery options must be available. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2022) mandates that children with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE), which is to be chosen from a continuum of alternative placements (CAP; Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006). Children with disabilities should be provided services in the setting that the child would be served if there were no disability. The IDEA and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legal instruments require schools to utilize a wealth of pedagogical adaptations and strategies to assist all children in attaining the highest standards of education (Sailor & Roger, 2005).

According to UNESCO-IBE (2013), education is the gateway to full participation in society and it is particularly important for children with disabilities, who are often excluded. Malungo (2013) posits that “education is critical in the enhancement of knowledge and skills to foster individual, family, community and national development”. Schools that provide inclusive education must have administrators and personnel who truly understand the learning needs of learners, especially those with special education needs. School administrators in regular schools that cater for children with special educational needs should understand the psychology of child development and the specificity of such learners. If school has an administrator without a special education background, then they must cooperate and work in collaboration with other administrators in special schools.

Learners with special educational needs require the right education and proper teaching. They should also socialise and get along with regular learners in the schools. Administrators in institutions that provide inclusive education should have a complete understanding of the concept itself. Inclusive education oriented schools should also routinely educate and train their teachers to maintain high standards with regards to pedagogical and professional competences. The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE 2013a) and the Ministry of Education (MoE 1996) observe the need for equity and equality in the provision of education for all citizens which has led to a rise in learners with special education needs (SEN) being enrolled in regular schools. In 2022, the Ministry

of Education policy implemented free a free education policy for all including learners with special educational needs aiming at increasing access to education for children from low income families. There have also reported increases in funding for schools, although some argue that the funding is still insufficient. The increase is attributed to the implementation of the free education policy. The MoE policy emphasizes the provision of quality, lifelong education for all, which is accessible, inclusive and relevant to individual, national and global needs. The policy also encourages the participation of local communities and private sector stakeholders in promoting access and quality in education especially to learners with special educational needs. Globally, there are two hundred and forty million children living with disabilities. One hundred and fifty millions of these are children of five years and below (UNICEF, 2023). According to Zambia National Disability Survey (2024) there are about 4.4% children living with disabilities and these children face significant barriers to access education and other essential services (Olusanya et al, 2022). This is because most regular schools in Zambia hardly cater for children with intellectual special needs. The ultimate goal of the government is to ensure that children with SEN are included in mainstream classrooms so that inclusive education can be fostered. Thus, in Zambia, inclusive education was perceived as an extension of special education, administered alongside the ordinary school system. (ibid)

Therefore, for inclusive education to meet the rights of pupils with disabilities in Zambia, it must uphold the premise that all learners have unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and particular learning needs, and learners with special educational needs must have equal access to and receive individual accommodation in the general education system (UNDESA, 2016). Studies have shown that learners with special educational needs experience difficulties in terms of social participation in regular education settings as compared to their peers (Schwab, Lindner, Helm, Hamel & Markus, 2022). As a result, their sense of belonging, self-image, motivation and overall performance in school and beyond can become negatively affected.

Education is the most critical ingredient in a country's development process (Chiuri & Kiumi, 2005). It is the main equaliser of the gaping inequalities in modern life, more so on the socio-economic facet (Mosoti, 2015). Therefore, there is need for inclusion in education to cater for all children. Despite significant progress, the goal of reaching full inclusion throughout the country has not been attained. There are significant challenges to ensuring that each individual obtains an equal opportunity for educational progress worldwide (UNESCO, 2019). The right to education for all children, including those with disabilities, is given full recognition through

the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which promotes the right to education and training for every child irrespective of one's physical status.

School administration on the other hand is a social process concerned with identifying, maintaining, stimulating, controlling and unifying, formally and informally, organised human and material energies within an interpreted system (Omenyi, 2018). The role of a school administrator is pivotal in creating and promoting inclusive school cultures (Sider & Maich, 2022; McGhie-Richmond & Haider, 2020).

In a regular school, an administrator fulfils such demands by developing specific plans and executing policies within a unified system related to the administrative task of making sure that all learners, including those with special educational needs, are benefiting academically. It is through administration that the energies of all the administrators, teachers and learners with and without disabilities, are brought together. School administration is therefore specifically concerned with learners, teachers, and rules, regulations and policies that govern the school system (Nwankwo, 2019).

In school administration the school head teacher, deputy head teacher and senior teacher must be of necessity to see themselves as a team working for the growth and development of school children including those with special educational needs. Thus, school administration should be guided by certain basic ideas, according to Nwankwo (2019) such as: a school's administration must strive to create a community of learners who are physically and mentally healthy, efficient, and responsible and whose behaviour is acceptable to society. This can only be realised by administrators' inclusiveness in their daily practices.

The school administrators in regular schools perform a wide variety of functions. These include interpreting the school policy, executing the curriculum, inducting and retraining staff. They also protect the welfare of all learners, including those with special educational needs, take care of the equipment they use, physical facilities and, finances and finally, maintaining effective school community relations. An administrator has to keep the trust bestowed on him by his employers and as a teacher he must be exemplary, efficient and resourceful.

Learners with special educational needs might confront many obstacles during the transition and adaptation processes in regular school settings. These learners need special care and treatment. Modified curricula and instructions result in several challenges for them, which might include having negative attitudes towards inclusion, lack of qualified teachers or those with insufficient training classes (Konza, 2008). Thus, in inclusive schools that integrate

children with disabilities with other learners, the role of learners remains critical and challenging for administrators even after the initiation of inclusiveness (Rishi, 2000).

A baseline study carried out by Kasonde-Ng'andu and Moberge (2001) on inclusive schooling in North-Western and Western provinces of Zambia indicated that the idea of inclusion of children with disabilities in the general education system was widely accepted. Some researchers have documented that teachers' attitudes are critical in the implementation of inclusive education, particularly as negative attitudes are a major obstacle to the education of children with disabilities (Prince, 2003).

Administrators are the most influential persons in making sure that education for all learners is achieved in school regardless of the different disabilities. They are responsible for identifying and articulating a philosophy or vision that reflects the belief that all children can learn and have equal rights to be educated with their peers in age-appropriate general education classrooms (Marzano, 2003). In so doing, administrators should ensure the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the regular schools with less difficulty. Administrators have significant responsibilities in maintaining the effective internal functioning of school systems, representing learning institutions in the community and implementing educational policies that improve the ethical and professional growth of teachers and other professional staff.

Administrators are likely to support, develop and even lead restructuring efforts that favour inclusion (Mcleskey and Weldron, 2000; Livingston, Reed & Good, 2001). Inclusion is the service delivery model in which learners with disabilities have their special education needs met in the regular schools to the maximum extent appropriate (Yanoff, 2003). Administrators' support may be the most influential factor in the effectiveness of any school programme, especially in the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

An administrator's role and attitude toward inclusive practices are key to the success or failure of inclusion in the particular school. They are faced the challenge of with deciding which learners with special education needs will benefit from inclusion and how the inclusion process should be implemented. As instructional leaders of their school, administrators have not only been key participants in the restructuring of regular education programmes, but also in leading special education initiatives for inclusion (Livingstone, 2001).

Ultimately, school administrators have an indirect but significant influence on children's learning by fulfilling their diverse needs, abilities and legislating as well as establishing school

systems and policies (Lethwood and Jantzi, 2008). They need to facilitate the creation of inclusive schools, writing a strong mission statement for the success of all children which relies on the administrators' sense of responsibility, which is an initial step toward fully realising such school. Cohen (2015) claimed that administrators are the most key agents of change in a school as they are the central actors who contribute to the creation and promotion of a successful inclusion programme.

School administrators' interactions with learners with special needs are often based on their (administrators') past experiences and perceptions of effective practices (Cameron, 2016). However, there can be a disconnect between educational policy, research-based practices and the implementation of these policies and practices in the work that school administrators do in supporting learners with special educational needs in their school environments (Jahnukainen, 2015). Further, the very ways in which school administrators support learners with special needs often serve as key factors in determining how well teachers engage learners in inclusive classrooms (Howell, 2016).

As the instructional leaders of their schools, school administrators have been key players not only in restructuring regular programmes but also on leading special education initiatives for inclusion. Administrators' must provide effective instructional leadership for learner achievement. Effective administrators may differ in their perceptions of appropriate placement for special education learners. Administrator's perceptions of inclusion and their overall visions of success for all learners have been key factors in shaping of implementation plans.

The Zambian education system has embraced the inclusive education policy. The country has been a participant in major international conferences such as the World Conference of Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain, that have highlighted the need for education for all, as well as the inclusion of children with special education needs in regular schools. At national level, Zambia has embraced inclusive education through the National Educational Policy (Educating Our Future, 1996), which has led to a significant rise in the number of children with SEN in regular schools.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education's (2003) 'Inclusive Schooling Programme' asserts that a school is the delivery point for Zambia's education policies and curricula, including the Inclusive Schooling Programme. Following the policy pronouncement in the policy document Educating our Future (Ministry of Education 1996) and Inclusive Schooling Programme (Ministry of Education 2003), some schools in several districts were adopted as inclusive

education piloting institutions in 2004 and 2016. Some senior education officials, head teachers and teachers also underwent sensitisation and training in inclusive education. A structure was also put in place to propagate and monitor activities pertaining to inclusive education. Structures were also put in place at ministry headquarters, provincial office, district level, zone level and at the school level (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2005).

After *Educating Our Future*, the Government of Zambia launched two specific inclusive education policies and guidelines, namely *Inclusive Education Policy Guidelines* (2017) and *Inclusive Education and Special Education Focus: Implementing Education Sector and Skills 2019-2023* (2019). Seventeen years after the landmark holding of the Salamanca Conference (UNESCO 1994) that ushered in our present-day conceptualisation of inclusive education, the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2011 seminal report on disability highlighted the stark reality that pupils with disabilities face.

In Zambia the Ministry of Education has assumed responsibility for educating learners with disabilities. Zambia's adoption of inclusion following the Salamanca Conference is similar to many countries that adopted the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). There are, specifically, three policies that have provided the foundation of current practices in special education and inclusive education in Zambia: the Education Reform Document (Ministry of Education, 1977), *Focus on Learning* (Ministry of Education, 1992), and *Educating Our Future* (Ministry of Education, 1996). The 1977 Educational Reform Document outlined recommendations for special education and specified the need for integration and adaptation of the general education curriculum to meet identified and specified individual needs of learners. Furthermore, the 1977 reform document outlined the need for adequate funding in order for special education to be more meaningful and beneficial.

The second major educational document, *Focus on Learning* (Ministry of Education, 1992), emanated from the declaration of education for all children at the World Conference on Education for All (1990), which stressed the importance of access to educational opportunities. Thus, in the 1992 policy document, the Zambian government reiterated that "every person—child, youth, and adult—shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs" (Ministry of Education, 1992).

Further, the 1992 policy stressed the mobilisation of resources for the education of all, including children with disabilities. Additionally, *Educating Our Future* (Ministry of

Education, 1996), focused on educational flexibility, responsiveness to educational needs, and enhancement of quality of education for all children. The policy is significant as it officially endorsed the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in general education settings and set the stage for inclusive education in Zambia (Chitiyo & Muwana, 2018). One action that reflects the priority given to inclusive education is that all pre-service teachers' colleges in Zambia are required to take a mandatory course on special needs (Teacher Education Department, 2016) with the Ministry of Education (2012) emphasising that "all student teachers shall be exposed to adequate skills in special education and guidance and counselling" so that they are able to handle learners with special educational needs in schools as they go to teach after deployment.

In regard to learners with disabilities, the policy emphasized equality of educational opportunity, provision of good quality education, and improvement and strengthening of the supervision and management of special education across the country (Ministry of Education, 1996). It also emphasized the decentralised services for the identification, assessment and placement of children with special educational needs as well as to integrate such into mainstream institutions and provide them with necessary facilities.

Educating Our Future (Ministry of Education, 1996), adopted after the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), marked an important advancement in special education in Zambia. This policy endorsed the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education settings and set the stage for inclusive education in the country. Commitments on quality inclusive education should be based and focused on ensuring that all schools and other learning institutions are physically accessible to all children with disabilities; all teachers, including those with disabilities, are progressively trained and equipped with skills to manage inclusion.

Learners with special education needs are ordinarily included within the mainstream school system. However, the many studies that have been conducted on inclusive education do not show the school administrators' inclusive education practices towards learners with special educational needs in inclusive schools. For instance, Mandyata (2015) focused on perceptions of parents and teachers in schools and community partnerships in inclusive education in Zambia. On the other hand, Muzata (2017) focused on the curriculum implementation for learners with special needs. Further, Muzata (2021) focused on special and inclusive education provision in Zambia.

However, all these studies on inclusive schooling are silent on issues pertaining to the school administrators' inclusive education practices regarding learners with special educational needs

in regular schools. It is against this background that this study was conducted in order to explore the school administrators' inclusive education practices towards learners with special educational needs in regular schools of Livingstone, Zambia.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that administrator's role and attitude toward inclusive practices is key to the success or failure of inclusion in their school (Algazo and Naggar Goad, 2004; Goad and Khad, 2007, Dukmak, 2013; Hussain, 2017; Badr, 2013; Fakin, 2019). The Zambian education system has embraced inclusive education and school administrators are obliged to take a leading role in ensuring that inclusive education becomes a reality in their institutions. School administrators are expected to ensure that education for all learners is achieved in their schools regardless of class, ability, culture or learning needs. They have a key role in establishing the vision of their school and in developing the organisational culture and managing structural and material conditions of inclusive education (Ricci, Scheier-Dolberg, and Perkins, 2020).

It has also been observed that at the introduction of the inclusive education policy in Zambia, negative attitudes, including those of school administrators, predominated the enrolment of learners with disabilities (Kalabula, 2005). However, most of the studies conducted on inclusive education have not focused on school administrators' practices for inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. Knowledge of such practices would enhance full inclusion of learners with disabilities and establish gaps that would help uplift administrators' practices to enhance full inclusion of learners with disabilities in schools.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore practices employed by school administrators in creating and promoting inclusive programmes of learners with disabilities in regular schools in Livingstone district, Zambia.

1.6 Objectives

In this study, the objectives were to:

1. Establish school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools.
2. Assess how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.
3. Explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.
4. Suggest a framework that can support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools.

1.7 Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, the research questions were:

1. What practices do school administrators employ to promote the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their schools?
2. How do the practices school administrators employ to promote the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools?
3. How are administrators supported to implement inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools?
4. What framework can work better to support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusion of learners with disabilities in schools?

1.8 Significance

The study could help shift the paradigms in the provision and support for inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools. The study targets administrators who form the lead support system for effective implementation of inclusive education. While Zambia has scored success in the area of inclusive education, support for school administrators would turn around any possible barriers to provision of a quality inclusive education system to learners with disabilities.

Admitting or enrolling learners with disabilities in schools is good enough but not adequate to ensure that these children are receiving the utmost support to fully participate in learning

and other school activities. This calls for support of school administrators. As such, this study could provide avenues to support school administrators so that they can provide best practices in the education of learners with disabilities. The study may therefore further enlighten the Ministry of Education to find ways of supporting school administrators in their endeavour to support inclusive education for learners with disabilities. It is further possible that this study may still unveil some factors hindering effective implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities, and it may raise awareness on the support required for school administrators to overcome barriers to the provision of quality inclusive education. Therefore, it would be necessary to use this study to address possible challenges that school administrators may be facing in the provision of education to learners with disabilities in schools.

1.9 Delimitation

Delimitation indicates the boundary of the study in the context of content and geographical coverage. It is used to address how the study will be narrowed in scope (Kombo and Tromp, 2006; Kasomo, 2007; Kasonde Ng'andu, 2013). The study was conducted in selected regular schools of Livingstone District of Southern Province in Zambia. In this study, the focus was on the head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers in the inclusive schools. According to this study teachers were selected so that they could confirm what the school administrators were saying during their interviews. The school administrators were selected based on their experiences of dealing with administrative issues in the inclusive schools.

1.10 Limitations

The study was conducted on a small sample in the selected regular primary schools of Southern Province. The restriction of the study to selected primary schools of Southern Province makes the findings applicable to the study schools only and would not be generalised to other schools in Zambia that may have similar learners and administrators. The other limitation was that some of the participants were known to the researcher and this may have brought some bias in the way they responded, maybe just to impress the researcher about the issues. To overcome this limitation, the researcher had to use more than one source of data. The researcher triangulated by using interview and focus group discussion. An observation

checklist was also used just to validate the information collected from the interviews and focus group discussion. Another mitigation strategy for this limitation was to give the participants their transcripts so that they could check and confirm what was captured in the interviews.

1.11 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the social model of disability which was developed by disability rights activists in the 1970s and 80s (Oliver, M, Finkelstein, V, and Hunt, P., 1983). The model highlights that society plays a major role in disabling people. Therefore, any meaningful solution must be directed at societal change rather than individual modification and rehabilitation. This model also suggests that, if societies were set up and constructed in a way that was accessible for people with disabilities, these individuals would not be restricted from full participation in the world around them (Oliver, 1983). The social model of disability views the origins of disability as the mental attitudes and physical structures of society. This idea changes how people typically think of disability by placing the burden of responsibility on society rather than the individual. This means that changing aspects of the social environment can change how individuals think about it. It is only right for society to design its physical and social infrastructure around this fact of life.

However, societal perceptions about defining people with disabilities have been changing over time and various supports have been offered in terms of policies such as the Salamanca statement from the conference of special needs education in Salamanca, Spain (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1994). In Zambia the Ministry of General Education has adopted a policy (Educating Our Future, 1996) that stipulates equal opportunities and participation of learners with disabilities in the mainstream activities of a school and society in general.

The social model in an educational system is the centre of attraction and is blamed for pupils' academic failure based on environmental inadequacy such as inaccessible physical space and inadequate teaching and learning materials. To this effect, children with disabilities need system change to fit their requirements. Grech (2009) argues that the social model of disability is pivotal to understanding disability. The model observes that it is often social barriers such as prejudice and stereotypes, the way things are organised and run, and/or poor or no access to information, buildings and transport, which cause disability, rather than the impairments themselves. In addition, Grimes et al. (2015) observe that the social model of disability, as

linked to education, implies including persons with disabilities in mainstream education rather than segregating them in separate institutions.

The social model of disability has been subject to ongoing critical examination, refinement and extension. The model has been recognized for its original strengths in highlighting societal barriers, but it has also been challenged to fully account for the unique experiences of people with disabilities who also face discrimination based in other identities like race, gender, and sexual orientation. The social model has been expanded to incorporate perspectives from areas like mad studies and neurodiversity, which acknowledge the broad spectrum of human experience and challenge the idea of a singular, 'normal' human experience.

The social model of disability has been subject to criticism for potentially homogenizing the experiences of disabled people and for its focus in individual agency, potentially neglecting the complexities of systemic inequalities.

Under the social model a child who has an impairment is disabled not because of the impairment, but because of the attitudes of society, poor teaching and learning materials, and poorly constructed physical and social environments. To help the learners with disabilities excel academically like their friends, there must be an improvement in their physical environments, like installing ramps in the buildings and giving them the learning materials including the braille paper and braille frames. Therefore, the social model can be a helpful tool for disabled people and their supporters to make positive changes in their lives, and for non-disabled people to understand more about disability. The social model of disability in this study on school administrators' inclusive practices towards inclusion helped to identify these practices and how they facilitate or hinder inclusion of learners in regular schools of Livingstone District. By applying the social model of disability, the school administrators can identify and address systemic barriers, promoting a more inclusive and equitable education system.

1.12 Definition of Key Terms

Administrator: This is a person whose job involves helping to organise and supervise the way an organisation or institution should functions.

Disability: A disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for a person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them

(participation restriction). Disability, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2010), is understood as the interaction between individuals with health condition and personal and environmental factors that affect their ability to participate fully in society.

Inclusive Education: Inclusive education means all children are in the same classrooms and in the same school.

Inclusion: It is placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms with those without disabilities who are also the same age (Reynolds & Fletcher Janzen, 2000).

Inclusive School: An inclusive school is about creating opportunities for all learners to participate and have a sense of achievement from a classroom or school situation. Inclusive school means all learners including students with disabilities are welcomed by their school and supported to reach their full potential. It is a social and fundamental issue which emphasises the rights not to discriminate and segregate children on the ground of their individual differences (a school for all, a school that celebrates individual differences, {UNESCO, 1994}).

Individualised Education Plan (IEP): This is a plan written for educating each child with a disability, prior to being placed in a special education programme (Reynolds & Fletcher, Janzen, 2000).

Mainstreaming: It is the inclusion of learners with special needs into general education settings or regular schools.

Regular School: A regular school refers to an institution other than a school for learners with special education needs

Practise: This is an act of doing something regularly or repeatedly to improve your skill at doing it.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the topic, “Exploring School Administrators’ Inclusive Practices for Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Schools’: A case of Livingstone, Zambia. The chapter identified a problem that was worth investigating: “What practices do school administrators employ to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in their schools? Learners with special educational needs are being ordinarily enrolled

in the regular schools without paying particular attention to the administrators' practices towards inclusion of such children. The chapter has also provided a detailed background of the school administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners in inclusive schools. The next chapter provides a review of the literature that informs the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Chapter two reviews literature related to the study. It reviews scholarly works related to the topic under study. In this literature review, the researcher surveyed other studies with similar focus on the school administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. Consequently, knowledge gaps were identified and filled up through this study. The literature review is guided by the title of the study, 'School administrators' inclusive practices for inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools.' It also looks at how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs as well as the support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of these learners.

Literature review in this context will look at different studies that have been conducted on the practices of school administrators to promote inclusion of learners with special educational needs in primary inclusive schools. Kombo and Tromp (2013) believe an effective literature review should provide a critical, organised and analytical orientation of a particular study and also be able to justify the need for one to study a particular topic or research problem. They state that a literature review helps to highlight the relationship between the past and the present study. While highlighting the importance of literature review in research in outlining academic knowledge and subject content relevant to a field, Mukherji and Albon (2015) define literature review as a critical analysis of related literature in a relevant field to that of the research being undertaken. A literature review illuminates the research and provides guidelines and comparisons between different contexts.

In the past a great deal of scholarly research focused on attitudes of teachers and parents towards learners with special educational needs. However, not much has been done on the school administrators' inclusive education practices towards the implementation of inclusion of learners with special educational needs in ordinary inclusive schools. The implementation of inclusive schools has been a goal in many countries. Inclusion is based on the concept of social justice, where all learners are entitled to equal access to all educational opportunities irrespective of disabilities or any form of disadvantage. School administrators are a critical resource for teachers and learners in every school.

School administration is a social process concerned with identifying, maintaining, stimulating, controlling and unifying, formally and informally, organised human and material energies within an interpreted system (Omenyi, 2018). A school administrator fulfils such demands by developing specific plans and executing policies within a unified system related to the administrative task. It is through administration that the energies of people and other activities are brought together for the smooth and effective running of an organisation which, in this case, is a school. School administration is specifically concerned with learners, teachers, and rules and regulations, and policies that govern the school system (Nwankwo, 2019). School administrators have the mandate to make sure that the teachers and learners adhere to the guiding principles of the institutions they manage.

2.1.1 School administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs in inclusive schools

School administrators should be transformative, systematically promoting academic achievement, family and community empowerment, democratic engagement and global citizenship (Shields, 2010; Kalimaposo, Simalalo, Mweemba & Hambulo, 2025). To be transformative in this case means that the school administrators should make sure that all the teachers and other support staff work towards making the learners with disabilities achieve academically in regular schools by maintaining a collective focus on school goals. The school administrators make sure that solutions are shared and applied school-wide by motivating, empowering and coordinating the work of teachers and school staff around shared goals. These values are always essential and are even more important in the context of inclusive schools. Despite the research that has been done on the role of teachers in supporting inclusive classrooms, only limited attention has been given to show how administrators support inclusive schools through their daily practices. Certainly, there is a significant body of literature which indicates that effective administrators are critical in supporting effective schools (Fullan, 2011). Administrators' administrative practices have a significant impact on the implementation of inclusive programmes in school.

Further, the effectiveness of administrators is widely considered to influence learner achievement and success in the classroom (Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi, 2010). However, the direct effect of school administrators on learners with special needs achievement is quite minimal (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Janntei, & Stenbach, 1999; Shin & Slater, 2010). Administrators have significant indirect leadership effects on learner achievement

through their influence on teachers' self-efficacy, commitment, and beliefs (Ross & Gray, 2006). They also have a responsibility of developing the schools' climate and cultures that eventually help motivate both the learners and teachers, leading to the creation of better teaching and learning environments which are more conducive to learners including those with disabilities. Despite these studies that have been carried out on the effectiveness of school administrators on learner achievement, limited attention has been given on the school administrators' practices to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular primary schools.

School administration is generally characterised as the process of recruiting and managing the talents and energies of educators, learners, parents and other community stakeholders toward achieving shared educational goals. This view is what Lethwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006) refer to as the four broad categories of practices identified in research summaries. These are setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional areas, which are the teaching and learning programme. These categories set the tone for a school's culture and define, to a large extent, conditions through which the general health of the learning environment can flourish.

According to Neves et al., (2023) and Mtonga, Lungu, Kalimaposo & Manadyata (2021) conducted a study on head teachers and inclusion: Setting the tone for an inclusive school. Among their findings was that administrators can support their teachers and other staff to move towards inclusion by fostering new meanings about diversity, promoting inclusive training practices within schools and communities, and developing inclusive sustainable projects. They also noted that administrators' attitude is influenced by the knowledge and training they have obtained about inclusion and the best ways to implement it. However, this study did not show their inclusive practices towards learners with SEN in regular schools. School administration should encourage and provide for the professional growth of teachers through planned educational seminars, conferences and in-service education.

In other words school administrators must make sure that all teachers attend continuous professional development meetings (CPDs) meetings held within the schools in order to improve their knowledge and skills on how to handle learners with disabilities inclusively, as well as ensuring that their knowledge and skills are relevant to the current situation. Further, Bayrovaci et al.(2017) and Murphy, (2018) have shown that school administrators principally value the philosophy of inclusion but the problems are reflected in their knowledge, skills and

leadership styles of how to design inclusive organisations (Amin and Yasin, 2018; Carter and Abawi, 2018). This means that the administrators who are trained in inclusive education are more positive in implementing it because they have the knowledge on how to handle learners with disabilities in schools compared to those who were not trained.

The administrators' actions and behaviour affect the success of inclusion in schools. One of the largest indicators of successful inclusive education programmes is school administrators' positive attitudes toward inclusion (Bublitz, 2016; Chandler, 2015; Hack, 2014; Kalimaposo, Simalalo, Mweemba & Hambulo, 2025). From this perspective, it would be necessary for this study to look at the practices that school administrators employ to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools.

Cobb 2015: Kalimaposo, Simalalo, Mweemba, 2025) did a research related to special education leadership with school administrators ranging from elementary to secondary areas of responsibility. It is clear that there are interjurisdictional differences with the approaches that administrators take within special education leadership but also multiple similarities in disproportionate time allocated by administrators for supporting special education services. Cobb also noted that administrators are essential human resources in both interpreting and implementing policy, and their behaviours affect the behaviours of classroom teachers themselves as well as the front line of service delivery in schools. Administrators set the tone and expectations in a range of foundational processes, including inclusion and special education. Their leadership role in the field is a top issue. Cobb identified various domains and roles that administrators maintain in supporting special education inclusion in schools. From Cobb's findings it is not yet clear on how the school administrators' behaviour affects the teachers who teach learners with special education needs in inclusive schools.

School administrators navigate and support school-based inclusion in multiple domains involving various relationships, bodies of knowledge and practical skills, but they also rotate amongst several key roles and, therefore offer varied perspectives in each of these domains. It is clearly a set of complex knowledge, skills and values that administrators bring to this particular role which is only one among many roles that they play in their schools and beyond. Special education leadership is both multifaceted and complicated as they are expected to make sure that the needs of all learners are met including for those with special educational needs. (Cobb, 2015). School leaders are critical contributors to fostering inclusive school contexts where learners with special education needs are enabled and supported (Ainscow &

Sandill, 2010, Kalimaposo, Muzata & Zulu, 2024). On the concept of school administrators' administrative practices on inclusion of learners with special needs in regular schools, the practices include instructional and supervisory roles, communication, co-ordination of donor support services, involvement of parents, and creation of conducive learning environments. The following discussions will be on the different practices employed by administrators to promote the inclusion of learners in regular schools.

2.1.2 Administrators' Instructional Supervision on Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs

One of the practices employed by administrators is the aspect of supervision of all the activities in a school. School supervision or educational supervision refers to a process of evaluating, assessing and guiding teachers and staff toward improvement of everyday work. Supervision of instruction is a process of inspecting both what the teachers are teaching and what the children are learning. Under instructional supervision the administrators monitor both the teaching and learning activities. According to Ndungu et al. (2015), the aim of the monitoring system is to gather information about teachers in a given jurisdiction and training as compared to other jurisdictions. Additionally, monitoring aims to assess whether the achievement of the learning outcome in these jurisdictions is changing over time and determine whether there are in equalities in achievements among learners with different social-economic backgrounds. Omogbehin (2013) defined monitoring as the process of systematic, purposeful observation, gathering and recording information about a programme or project with the intent of using that data to refine the learning process.

Omogbehin (2013) further stated that effective monitoring relies upon a comprehensive, formative feedback system that provides timely feedback on student performance to staff at any given school. O'Neil (2014) alluded to the fact that monitoring ensures that both administrators and teachers remain informed and have an evidence base from which to make decisions about curriculum design. Therefore, monitoring helps teachers teach effectively, which aids in pupils' academic performance. Chuunga, 2013; Kalimaposo, Simalalo & Mweemba, 2025) linked the effective teaching of teachers to the close supervision by supervisors, who checked lesson plans before and after the delivery of lessons. He stated that checking teachers' planned work helps supervisors to see what and how the teachers are

teaching. The benefits of this would eventually make learners improve their performance in class activities.

A study conducted by (Kabeta et al., 2013; Mtonga, Kalimaposo & Mandyata, 2023) indicated that when instructional leaders monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning process, there were increases in teacher reflection and reflectively informed instructional behaviors, a rise in implementation on new ideas, greater variety in teaching strategies, more response to student diversity, lessons were prepared and planned more carefully, teachers were more likely to take risks and had more focus on the instructional process, and teachers used professional discretion to make changes in the classroom.

Instructional supervision is one of the processes by which school administrators attempt to achieve acceptable standards of performance and results among learners, especially those with special educational needs. It is the tool of quality control in the school system and a phase of school administration which focuses primarily upon the achievement of appropriate expectation of the education system (Peretomode, 2001; Kalimaposo, Muzata & Zulu, 2025). This guidance is based on the end goal of providing a higher level of learning engagement and improved learner outcomes. In the school system, it is the responsibility of the school administrators to develop and maintain teachers' competence through their daily instructional supervision.

The instructional supervisory activities by the school administrators include the following: checking of teachers' lesson notes, schemes of work, pupils' notes, teachers' punctuality, teachers' regularity in class, classroom observation, demonstration, conferencing, managing workshops, micro-teaching, moderation of examination question papers, and moderation of marking schemes, among others. To carry out these tasks, the school administrators must have supervisory capacity to enforce them and also encourage the teachers to utilise their talents when necessary so that at the end, instructions and instructional procedures can be improved.

Those in instructional supervision include head teachers, deputy head teachers, mentors, curriculum specialists and administrators (Douglas and Bents, 2013; Namunga, 2017), which is referred to as administrative monitoring. This means that it is the responsibility of the school administrators to make sure that teachers prepare fully for them to be able to deliver their lessons effectively in their teaching. Omaali (2021) posits that instructional supervision practice improves teaching effectiveness and that administrators have a variety of instructional

roles to fulfil and make inclusive education a reality in regular schools. Further, he observed that effective instructional supervision practice through classroom observations leads to professional development of teachers, thus confirming effective teaching. However, this study did not show how the instructional supervision practices promote inclusion of learners with SEN in the regular schools under study. Inclusive education can only become a reality when the school administrators become proactive in their instructional practices in the respective schools.

Administrators, as the instructional leaders, must take on new responsibilities. Instructional supervision is an important activity in promoting effective teaching and learning in schools. It results in the improvement of instructions and professional development of teachers. Douglas and Bents described instructional supervision as to oversee, to superintend or to guide and stimulate the activities of others with a view to improving all areas of their work. Marecho, (2012), Panigraph (2012) and Thankral (2015) further suggested that the concept of instructional supervision can be used in either academic or administrative functions of school administrators, educational administrators and all those who manage education at different stages and sectors.

Among the major causes of poor academic performance among learners, including those with special education needs, are ineffective instructional supervisory practices. Charles, Chris and Kosgei (2012) suggested that head teachers need to effectively supervise their teachers by ensuring that they are observed regularly, lessons are planned early and structured with an interesting beginning, there is revision of previous knowledge, teachers' use of voice variation and summary of major points at the end, teachers use backups/teaching aids properly, have a good relationship with their students, and that they strictly follow the curriculum.

Wambui (2015) disclosed that physical observation of lesson presentation is the only way a head teacher can gain an insight into the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Through this visit, the supervisor can have an insight into quality benchmarks and performance. Supervision of instruction through classroom visits include walk through and informal classroom observations. Wambui (2015) defines a walk-through as an observation interlude lasting a minute or two which provides a quick look at teacher performance and environmental factors in the classroom. This is a more appropriate method since it is impromptu, unlike the formal and informal activities which are planned and scheduled for by the supervisor and the teacher.

Ngipuo (2015, Kalimaposo, Simalalo, Mweemba,2025)) argues that a classroom visit is one of the most common forms of teacher evaluation, classroom visits involves observation of a teacher and analysing his or her class practices, the teaching/learning process, the teacher's personality, student-teacher interactions, lesson notes and presentation. However, the format of classroom observation varies in schools. For instance, a head teacher's evaluation can consist of a formal observation using a validated instrument, conducted at a predetermined time, coupled with pre-interviews and post -interviews with teachers and used for both formative and summative purposes

Effective instructional supervision aids head teachers in coordinating, improving and maintaining high teaching and learning standards in schools. Instructional supervisory practices also help the school heads assist in improving classroom instructions because teachers are made more competent and efficient and parents become satisfied with the performance of their children. Omaali et al. (2019) define the role of the head teacher in ensuring effective teaching as holding teachers accountable for what they do in class and ensuring better lesson planning and delivery, thereby promoting efficiency in the teachers in their endeavour to teach learners with special education needs.

Within the school there may be differences between the academic and administrative functions of supervision. But, all in all, academic goals of instructional supervision include tasks such as monitoring of an institution, guiding teachers to improve the teaching and learning process, assessment of children's learning outcomes, evaluating objectives of programmes, and ensuring prudent use of school facilities and resources (Thankral, 2015; Kalimaposo, Muzata & Zulu, 2025). This could be an aspect worth investigating to establish whether the practice of instructional supervision, guiding teachers teaching learners with special education needs and the assessment of learner's learning outcomes are carried out by school administrators in regular schools to enhance effective inclusion of such learners in these learning institution. .

The head (administrator) has the responsibility of promoting effective teaching in the school. It is his/her duty to ensure that his employer appoints qualified and competent teachers. Aja (2020) asserted that administrators must be highly competent and skilled in such things as modern techniques of instruction, human relations, delegation of responsibilities, and communication. The administrator is responsible for assigning tasks and duties to his staff. He has to ensure through supervision that each person is performing his or her duties satisfactorily. The administrators might decide to inspect teachers' lesson plans to see whether

they do actually prepare lessons before going to teach. Sometimes an administrator could sit in class while lessons are being delivered in order to evaluate the teaching process. To achieve the goals of improving the curriculum programmes, administrators must have a full understanding of their teachers' roles, and be prepared to work effectively with them.

Successful school administrators continually look for new ways to improve teaching, learning and achievement. An administrator should provide a safe environment for teachers so that they can try new models and alternative approaches that might be more effective through instructional supervision. The varying degree of instructional supervision focus is associated with more collaboration among teachers, more positive teacher–learner interactions and greater recognition of teacher innovation. The visible presence of administrators in schools is correlated with smooth running of institutions, and those in high performing schools check lesson books, schemes of work, records of work, attendance registers, class attendance records and clock-in and clock-out books frequently (Douglas and Bents. 2013; Marecho, 2012; Thankral, 2015; Muyabi, Kalimaposo, Mubita, Mulubale, Haambokoma, Milupi & Mundende, 2022). Careful assessment, instructional supervision and planning are a guarantee for the appropriate learners' curriculum and provide assurance that their needs are being met, especially when teaching those with special needs in regular classrooms. The administration should focus on supervision with regard to the learners' strengths rather than disabilities and weaknesses and ensure that the lessons is geared to maintain the strengths.

While supervising and assessing, the administrator should ensure that the individualised education plan (IEP) is carefully made and implemented for all special needs education learners in the inclusion programme with the help of the parents. It is during the process of supervision that the school administrators determine the need to foster supportive environments for inclusion such as staff training, continuing education, ongoing professional development opportunities and the need for in-service training that teachers' suitability for inclusive education.

However, there is some perceived ineffectiveness amongst the teachers especially their work output, which could be attributed to various factors such as failure of the school administrators to supervise the practices of educators while carrying out instructions and this can result into adverse effects to the system. This may result into poor quality of instruction especially in inclusive settings (Sule, 2015, Mtonga, Kalimaposo & Mandyata, 2021). A study by Peretomode (2001) concluded that for teachers to produce good results and be effective, a

school administrator must effectively monitor their lesson plans, schemes of work and lesson notes preparation. The school administrators must monitor their teachers frequently as planned so that they are always ready to teach their learners especially those with special educational needs. Peretomode (2001), Robertson (2000) maintained that if administrators carried out frequent supervision to the teacher's lesson notes, this would enhance their performance in the classroom. But what is not known is whether teachers who teach learners with special educational needs are regularly supervised by their administrators just like those who teach in the regular classrooms.

In every institution, it is the duty of the school administrator to develop and maintain the competence of teachers through monitoring them. The school administrator is expected to have supervisory skills to carry out the tasks and motivate the teachers to apply their skills, knowledge and attitudes appropriately when handling the learners in the inclusion programmes. This helps to improve the instructional procedures. Therefore, administrators can easily achieve desirable and acceptable standards of performance as well as results. The practice enhances quality control in the administration system (Peretomode, 2001; Sule, 2015 & Robertson, 2000; Kalimaposo, Muzata & Zulu, 2024). The school administrator is then expected to support the teachers as they participate in the implementation of instructional programmes through overseeing their interaction with the learners both those with special educational needs and the typical ones. It is not known whether the teachers who teach LSEN are supported in the implementation of inclusive education in the study schools.

Charles, Chris and Kosgei (2012) observed that poor results amongst the learners can be due to ineffective instructional supervisory practices. They suggest that school administrators need to effectively supervise to ensure that they observe teachers regularly, lessons are prepared promptly, there is assessment and remedial teaching, lessons have impressive beginnings, use of appropriate learning and teaching aids, IEP programmes are appropriate, and that there is good rapport between learners and the teachers. If instructional supervision is done effectively, it enhances the school administrators' skills in coordinating and maintaining high teaching and learning standards in regular primary schools that they lead (Sule, 2015; Mwanamwambwa, Kalimaposo, Mubita, Sikayomya, Muyangana & Haambokoma, 2021). Poor supervision by administrators leads to laxity amongst teachers at work, and results in poor performance of learners in examinations leading to low self-esteem and might result into school dropouts at various stages. Despite these findings it is not known whether the

performance of learners with special educational needs is monitored regularly especially when they are in examination classes in the regular schools under study.

Other research studies were done by Sule, Arop and Alede (2012) on principals' classroom visitation and inspection, and teachers' job performance, in Akwa-Iorn State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the strategies significantly influenced the teachers' job performance. More research work was done by Alimi and Akinfilarin (2012) on the impact of selected models of instructional supervision actions on learners' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. They found out that there was significant relationship of checking of learners' notes, class visitation or observation, checking of teachers' punctuality and attendance, as well as moderation of examination questions and marking schemes on learners' academic performance in schools.

Further, Oyewole et al. (2014: Mtonga, Kalimaposo, Mandyata, 2021) contend that conducting regular class visits to scrutinise teachers' work guarantees better performance by teachers. According to Dull (2003), 21st century head teachers' roles in promoting effective teaching include regularly visiting and observing teachers while they teach in class, holding meetings either individually or as a group to discuss ways of improving their pedagogical practices, organising demonstration lessons, inducting newly- appointed teachers and those transferred to the school, timely availing instructional resources, and promoting professional development of teachers. These findings support the intention of the researcher of this study to establish the administrators' administrative practices to promote the effective inclusion of learners with special educational needs in inclusive primary schools in Southern Province, Zambia.

Researchers (Wiles and Bond, 2011; Guckman, Garden & Ross, 2008; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Zepeda, 2007; Kalimaposo, Chidakwa; Mubita; Mulubale & Kaumba, 2023) redefined instructional supervision as that strategy or level of educational administration which concentrates on enhancing effectiveness, as both teacher and learners strive to get a service as individuals and groups. It is a means of giving specialised assistance in improving instructions. It is important to note that feedback from instructional supervision gives the best practices in the teaching or learning process, to control and enhance quality of learning by increasing academic achievement of learners. It is also important to note that feedback from instructional supervision practices is used to help teachers gain and apply modern teaching pedagogies, innovations and technology in and out of their classrooms. The administrators need to

constantly check whether the methods of teaching are in line with inclusive education or it is the ordinary methods. Feedback forms instructional supervision practices and helps teachers improve in work output as well as enhances professional growth and career development. Instructional supervision should always be followed by instructional coaching.

Instructional coaching is meant to build capacity to change and provide instructional improvement by providing learning opportunities necessary to facilitate change (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaches are master teachers who offer on-site and ongoing instructional support for teachers (Marsh, Sloan McCombs, Martorell, 2010). Instructional coaches should be “skilled communicators, or relationship builders, with a repertoire of excellent communication skills that enable them to empathise, listen, and build trusting relationships” (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaches need to be knowledgeable in their content area and they need the pedagogical knowledge to be effective (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). Research supports the fact that an effective instructional coach focuses on several instructional issues and shares a variety of effective practices that could address classroom management, instructional strategies, or formative assessment.

Coaching has the potential to support the development of teachers’ efficacy as they implement new programmes or strategies (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). It provides support for teachers as they gain mastery experiences with new techniques, and coaching is essential in enabling teachers to take risks and change their practice in significant ways. Effective coaches do not tell teachers what to do; rather, they use data from an observation, or comments made by the teacher, to provide feedback that is precise and non-judgmental.

Effective coaches are always open to the teachers’ point of view (Knight, 2007; Williamson & Education Partnerships, 2012). Research has informed the parameters of the coaching role and offers insight into how individuals learn to be effective coaches and/or are supported to refine their practice over time (Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010). Existing research on the professional development of coaches and how they learn to become coaches is sparse (Gallucci et al., 2010). Collaboration is as an essential element of teaching and coaching teachers, so teacher preparation programmes should include collaboration and consultation skills as part of the curriculum (Griffin, Jones, & Kilgore, 2006; Knight, 2007).

Kauffman et al. (2018) argue that most inclusive practices emphasise social integration to the detriment of the acquisition of content knowledge and skills when the goal of educational

programming is not only socialisation but the attainment of meaningful outcomes for all learners. Similarly, Lindsay (2007) claims that inclusion should go beyond mainstream, but should include meaningful participation in the education process. To this end, Lindsay (2007) proposes that learners with special needs should be identified and provided for appropriately. This can only be made possible with the efforts and positive attitudes of the school administrators towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in the regular schools. Florian and Spratt (2013) contend that using the inclusive pedagogy approach entails rejecting the labelling of learners based on ability. They also argue that diversity should be seen as a strength and not as a problem.

2.1.3 Communication on Inclusion of Learners with Special Needs in Education

Communication being one of the practices required by every administrator in any school is the act of conveying information and ideas through writing, speaking and gesturing. It bridges actual information and factual content. Communication removes the guesswork from any message and the advantage of transparency and accuracy (Leonard, 2018; MOEST (2006). Authors Adair (2003), Bennard (2000), Mbiti (2007) and Umoh (2013) posit that, he who communicates is he who leads. The administrator must make sure that there is effective communication with the teachers and the whole school community at large as this can help promote effective teaching and learning in the school.

Reyner (2007) concludes that inclusive educational management is praxis-oriented in that communities need to deliberate on the ideas behind inclusion and the means appropriate to a particular context. The administrators in this study should, hence, take a decision, influence people and get inclusion done smoothly, since the success of a leader, teacher or any professional depends on ability to communicate effectively. The administrator should be aware that communication failures, especially in a professional context, are costly because they can affect productivity, as expressed by Adair (2003). High productivity is highly dependent on effective communication because if administrators communicate the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers after monitoring, it means teachers are motivated by their strengths and there is room for improvements following the weaknesses found.

Communication is two-fold, generally: the understanding and support that professionals and parents need to create decisions about the learners' educational programmes. In communication, there is listening and speaking. The listening skill in communication is crucial

for it gives information and data that one can use in creating an appropriate programme for the learner. But the frequency of communication with the concerned groups is paramount (Eweke and Rodda, 2002; Strong, 2003). The major point in communication is the preparation and the willingness to get actively involved in the planning of one child's education, especially when it comes to planning the IEP of a learner with special educational needs.

Further, a school must offer an individualised education program (IEP) that is reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of their circumstances. Children with disabilities have a right to receive a free appropriate public education. Meaningful parental participation in the development of the IEP allows the school administrators and the teachers an opportunity to reach agreement as to what services will be provided to a child with special educational needs. An IEP cannot legally be changed without parental consent and a modified IEP must be uniquely designed by a qualified team, including a child's general and special education teachers and/or any service providers such as speech and language pathologist.

In the institution, the administrator is expected to enhance working together as a team in a public primary school and this can be supported through communication (Strough, 2003). An administrator should skilfully collaborate with other stakeholders on how to promote inclusive education in schools, especially when it comes to planning the work of learners with disabilities. This study therefore sought to find out whether there is effective communication between the school administrators, teachers and other stakeholders in teaching LSEN in regular schools.

According to Dubin (2018) and Mbiti (2007), administration is only possible when channels of communication through which the members of staff take part in the decision-making process are available and convenient. An effective administrator should involve teachers as well as parents in planning the activities of the child in the school, especially those with disabilities. The administrator is required to communicate the date and time for all staff meetings to all teachers at least two days in advance except for emergency cases and the agenda specified in writing. Parents' meetings that take place once in every term, according to the Ministry of Education guidelines, should also be communicated to them by the administrator. Otherwise, poor communication leads to misunderstanding between teachers, learners, parents and the administration. Teachers teaching learners with special educational needs are also supposed to take part in decision-making especially in matters that concern

their learners. In this regard, this study attempted to determine whether there was effective communication between the administrators, teachers, parents and other stakeholders in the planning of activities for learners with special education needs in regular schools so as to enhance effective inclusive education.

When the teachers communicate, the administrator plays a big role in the success of inclusion. The administrator has four aspects of an administrative role in inclusion: to communicate; vision and agenda; structure and organization, and staff training and provision of resources. Learners need to be communicated to with clarity on areas that make them uncomfortable for they are the key players in inclusion. Without the input of the learners on what exactly they need for them to perform effectively in school, it is very difficult for inclusion practice to be realised. When the administrator communicates to the learners, teachers and parents, there is teamwork and inclusion brings about unlimited benefits (Peter, 2006). It is very important to involve the learners in the planning of the activities that involve them. Despite these findings, it is not well established whether teachers and LSEN are involved in decision-making in the running of their affairs in inclusive schools. The other practice expected of administrators to employ in schools is the aspect of coordination with other stakeholders and this is discussed below.

2.1.4 School Administrators' Coordination of Donor Support Services on Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs

There are several factors that are responsible for variation in inclusion practices within and between countries (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education ([EADSNE], 2003). International cooperation among government and non-governmental, regional and inter-regional organisations can play a very important role in supervising the move towards inclusive schools. Donor support services are the types of aid and assistance that organisations, for example faith based organisations and community-based organisations, can donate to the needy or an institution. Donors do not locate themselves to institutions but they are invited by stakeholders and partners. Hence, in the regular primary schools with special needs education programmes such as inclusion, the administrator is responsible for coordinating the parents, stakeholders and interested partners to locate the donors available and solicit for support in funding renovations, adaptations and implementation of inclusion programmes, among others. The administrator should be proactive and have the skills of how

to lobby for funds from the donors so that the school should be assisted with the materials required for the effective implementation of inclusive education in the regular schools.

Donor support services range from local, regional and international. They may include, not limited to, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBO), faith based organisations (FBO), as well as individual significant others. Peter (2017) acknowledges that countries from the north, including, the United States, Canada and others in Europe have realised the essence to safeguard the educational rights of learners through legislative and policy frameworks that intensively address the programmes of inclusive education. There is the no Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in the United States, enacted in 2002, that creates provision to make sure that no child, in particular those with the highest learning needs, is excluded in the standard driven learning environment.

Mukuna and Obiakor (2004) looked into the differences amongst the developed and developing worlds in serving learners with disabilities, who are the main clients in inclusive learning and who greatly need donor support in the provision of appropriate learning environments. They further referred to Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa that, unlike the developed world, the schooling of learners with special educational needs in developing worlds is not yet addressed sufficiently, hence Eleweke and Rodda (2000) and Bayat (2014) express insufficient achievements in inclusion programmes in most developing countries. The developing countries depend much on donor support for effective implementation of inclusive education. Studies by Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA, 2015) show that in Malawi there is a non-state organisation called One Billion. Its initiatives include providing every public primary school with electricity in each classroom. Therefore, this study wishes to establish whether school administrators receive any donor support especially in the provision of the material and all the requirements needed for the promotion of inclusive education in the study schools.

International Organisations such as Save the Children in the United Kingdom (UK) have added advantage of being able to exchange more ideas and networks across national boundaries and influence government policy on the inclusion of learners with special educational needs within the framework of universal primary education (European Agency for Development in SNE, 1999). Therefore, school administrators have a special responsibility in promoting positive attitudes and interest throughout the school community and other interested partners to the institution. These partners may include research institutions and

curriculum development centres. If the administrators properly coordinate community involvement and donor participation, it may supplement school activities, provide help in doing homework and compensate for lack of family support.

Republic of Kenya (KOK, 2012) expresses the need to provide educational facilities, instructional materials, equipment, trained teachers, professionals and support staff to address the diversities in learners said to have special educational needs (SEN) at all levels; hence the need to partner with different organisations through the coordination of the institution's management. In addition, the Ministry of Education (1996) has shown commitment to the education of children with special needs. Its policy states that children with special needs shall be mainstreamed to the largest extent possible and provided for within the mainstream of education.

The school's administrator, therefore, has the responsibility to coordinate the donor support services from willing organizations to support the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in schools. The school administrator must uphold this trust through coordination. Recent developments indicate that coordinators have the role to inspire, advise and support, and not to make unilateral decisions. School administrators have the challenge to help the stakeholders appreciate that donor support services alone will not actualise the programme but their input is paramount (O'Toole, 2010). The next discussion is on the aspect of involving parents in the school affairs of their learners with special educational needs in the schools.

2.1.5 Engagement of Teacher Assistants

Using teacher assistants, sometimes also referred to as “paraprofessionals,” to support teachers in inclusive classrooms is an effective approach in many countries. In times where the specialist teachers are not enough in the inclusive schools, the head teacher can engage a teacher assistant to help teach the inclusive classrooms. Although teacher assistants' roles within the classroom may vary significantly by context, research has demonstrated that teaching assistants are most successful when assigned to support a classroom rather than assigned to an individual student because the latter may inadvertently increase the stigma associated with disability, isolate the student with a disability, and increase the student's dependency and/or reduce her/his interactions with the teacher or peers (Giangreco et al., 2001). In some exceptions, assigning a teaching assistant to a student who, for example, needs

support to communicate or who is medically fragile may be needed. Even in such cases, however, it is important that teacher assistants supplement and support teachers but not replace them as the primary source of instruction (Giangreco & Doyle, 2007). Therefore, school administrators should be resourceful in finding assistant teachers especially in times of crises in classes. Sometimes a child might be having seizures in the middle of the lesson and definitely the class teacher would need some assistance during that time. Teachers represent the most powerful resource in all educational systems, and the importance of continuously building their knowledge and skills cannot be overstated. Teachers may not have a formal training on explicit instructional techniques, and national standards for teacher training can vary significantly from country to country. In some countries, a short training course can qualify as training, whereas other countries require a long period of education degree (Global Campaign for Education, 2012). Where training does exist, the curriculum often does not include training related to the nature of disabilities and approaches for working with children who have disabilities. As a result, there is a severe shortage of teachers and teacher assistants capable of effectively supporting the individual needs of students with disabilities (WHO, 2011). Without building these skills and ensuring the positive attitudes of teachers toward disability, true inclusive education would be difficult to achieve.

Recommendations for successful approaches to preparing teachers include the promotion of successful inclusion in mainstream education and administrators need skills in collaboration (Boscardin 2005; Kauffman and Landrum 2009; Wagner and Katsiyannis 2010). Administrators in inclusive schools need to work effectively with professionals within schools including mainstream education administrators, counsellors, teachers in mainstream, bilingual, special and remedial education and para-professional, as well as those external to schools, including families and parents, community groups, social service agencies, universities and businesses (Bays and Crockett, 2007; Mahlo, Muzata & Kalimaposo, 2021; Theoharis, 2009; Wagner and Katsiyannis, 2010). Livingston, Reed and Good (2001) claim that administrators' personal experiences with learners with disabilities become a significant factor in the willingness of administrators to consider an inclusive placement.

The administrator's personal experiences with learners who have disabilities become evident when discussing their attitudes about inclusion (Moore, 2006). School administrators are expected to assume leadership in the area of special education even with minimal training and experience (Praisner, 2000). In order to be perceived as an efficient leader and to deal with the many challenges as highlighted by IDEA, school-based administrators should acquire

knowledge of special education law, programming, and support needed for successfully educating and including children with disabilities in the general education setting (McLaughlin & Nolet, 2004). Moreover, managing with the legal requirements, parental demands, and ethical thoughts of the inclusion effort has become a component of many administrators' job description.

Inclusive administrators need to work in collaboration with mainstream administrators to establish contextual factors that are conducive to the success of learners with disabilities who are included in mainstream classrooms (Crockett et al., 2009; Harris-Murri et al., 2006). When administrators from inclusive schools and those from mainstream schools collaborate, they share ideas on how to promote inclusive education in school. This involves collaborative roles such as working with mainstream education administrators and teachers to enhance access to the mainstream curriculum for learners with disabilities (Boscardin, 2005; De Valenzuela et al., 2006; Hawley and James, 2010). These roles require special education administrators to have solid foundation in the structure and function of mainstream education course of study (Diem and Carpenter, 2013; Harris-Murri et al., 2006; Shani and Ram 2015). The implementation of inclusive practices, or any new programme, relies heavily on the school site administration (Fullan, 2001). The challenge starts with developing a plan that will unite the two separate worlds of general and special education (Boscardin, 2005; Murphy, 2001). The next discussion is on the school administrators' creation of a conducive learning environment in order to promote effective inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular schools.

2.1.6 Creation of Conducive Learning Environment on Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs

A healthy child-friendly school environment, as indicated by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds, includes a learning environment that ensures a healthy, hygienic, and safe learning environment, with adequate water and sanitation facilities and healthy classrooms, policies and practices ((UNICEF, 2012). A child-friendly school should provide high-quality education, and the learning processes have to be appropriate for every child's level of development, learning style, and abilities. The learning methods have to be cooperative, active, and democratic. Such schools are inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, especially those with special education needs. A healthy child-friendly school ensures every child accesses an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling. One of the key principles of a child friendly school, as highlighted

by Çobanoğlu, Ayvaz-Tuncel and Ordu (2018), is to provide a safe, healthy and protective environment away from violence, stigma, discrimination, injury, abuse and neglect while guaranteeing that the discipline practices at school are for the sake of the child.

In 1990, the Western countries wanted to have a better programme of special education needs. They had to go through exclusion, segregation and were practising integration by then but wanted to adopt the inclusive setting curriculum (UNESCO, 2017). Udeme (2016) identified the parameters such as placing a child in age-appropriate grade place, having no special classes in schools and a cooperative learning practical where teachers can share ideas for improvement of the educational system. Ayondele (2011) stated that school management committees should adapt school facilities to make them responsive to learners with special educational needs, for example construction of ramps and widening entrances to buildings. Schools of inclusive education in supporting the learning process for children with special needs and regular children (normal) must provide school infrastructure that fits the physical needs of children. Learners with special educational needs should have access to school buildings, toilets and pathways, and this can only be done by improving and maintaining infrastructure in the school.

School infrastructure of the providers of inclusive education should be managed well from the identification of needs tailored to the type of special needs of learners with disabilities. Chirwa (2012), Muwana (2012), Madso (2013), Phiri (2013) and Riddell et al. (2005) suggest that inaccessible built environment is a major challenge in the implementation of inclusive education. Madso (2013) conducted a qualitative study in Livingstone, Zambia, to explore the experience of young persons with disabilities, with education and he reported that most learners dropped out of school because of inaccessible buildings. Learners with disabilities lamented, that some classrooms were upstairs and inaccessible to them as wheelchair users. Similarly, Phiri (2013) conducted a study on high school students with disabilities in Zimbabwe, and found that most students missed classes because some classrooms were upstairs and inaccessible to them. Inaccessible building is a major challenge in the implementation of inclusive education and has a bearing on social interaction and relationships between learners with and without disabilities.

Clark (2008) carried out a study on the perspectives of students with learning disabilities in an inclusive classroom in New York of Oswego. The purpose of his study was to find out if the students with disabilities felt accepted and included in the mainstream system. Among the

findings of the study was that the respondents stated that they felt included in the mainstream system. Hayat's (1994 cited Rasheed, 2003) study on mainstreaming of children with disabilities into the ordinary school system in Pakistan revealed that most children with SEN were interested in attending schools as they stated that it was amusing studying and playing with other students. They had a conviction that the more they interacted with other children, the less discrimination and stigma they would suffer.

A similar study by Noor and Khokhar (2002) cited Rasheed 2003) in the same country found that children with disabilities in an ordinary school were happy with the attitudes of the school authorities towards them at an ordinary school. However, their biggest challenge was accessing the school buildings since they were not user-friendly to them. Mitchell and Desai (2005) assets that many countries in Asia have legislations and policies in place that deal with issues of special education but now with the emphasis on inclusive education.

According to Sumane (2012), the learning environment is a purposefully organised physical, social and informative set of circumstances in which a learner forms and implements his or her experiences; knowledge, skills and attitudes towards himself or herself and the surrounding world. Schools need to be paved, ramps built, toilet facilities widened and doorways extended. All learners should find buildings accessible. When the teaching and learning environment is conducive, information is readily available and accessible in different formats, assessment is adapted, and teachers know and apply various teaching methods, opportunities for all learners to learn and thrive will be guaranteed (Andrews, Walton & Osman, 2019). These types of initiatives allow all learners, including those that live with different disabilities, an opportunity to participate and succeed like their peers in all educational settings. The school administrator should, therefore, at all times make sure that the school environment is conducive especially for learners with disabilities.

Riddell, et al. (2004) observe that depending on their particular impairment, most of the learners experience barriers in accessing education as it relates to the physical environment or teaching and learning at some point. In inclusion, Mutisya (2014) emphasises that school administrators should advise teachers to use locally available and improvised resources to support learning. This is because local materials are easily accessible, easy to make and can stay relevant over time. Therefore, this study investigated whether the administrators do advise and encourage teachers to use the locally produced materials.

A school administrator should use local artisans to make and repair the devices that can help minimise shortage in schools. The devices and learning materials for the learners with disabilities are usually very expensive and not locally available. For example, the braille materials for the visually impaired learners are not locally produced here in Zambia and they have to be purchased abroad. To caution for the larger expense, those that are locally available should be highly utilised. The researcher was uncertain if the inclusive schools in Southern Province, Zambia have the appropriate resources for all the learners in the inclusive programmes and whether they were also able to use the local materials.

Monoh (2010) and Lyons (2012) posit that material resources include textbooks, charts, maps, audio visual and electronic instructional materials the radio, tape recorder, television and video tape recorder. More instructional materials include paper supplies and writing materials like pens, erasers, exercise books, crayons, chalk, drawing books, notebooks, pencils, rulers, slates, work books and many more. They also observed a very strong, positive significant relationship between instructional resources and academic performance. Schools endowed with appropriate learning environments and resources performed highly compared with the less endowed ones.

Republic of Kenya (2009), OFID (2009), Fonseca and Canboy (2006) and MOEST (2009) observed that development and maintenance of physical facilities in public primary schools by communities, parents and sponsors had to be enhanced in the institutions. The physical facilities included administration blocks, lecture theatres, auditoriums, libraries, laboratories, workshops, playgrounds, assembly halls, staff quarters, learners' hostels, kitchen, cafeteria, special rooms like clinics and toilets, among others. The author posit that if all the mentioned facilities are available, they facilitate construction of a culture of success. But the researcher was uncertain as to whether the infrastructure found in the study schools were inclusively constructed, such as having ramps, rails and appropriate lifts, among others.

According to Sussana et al. (2020), Stough (2003) and Ngugi (2007), many colleges and universities offer training for public and special needs education teachers, but questions are being raised regarding the adequacy of the programmes, teaching and learning resources. The researcher emphasises that the programmes tend to concentrate on the requirements of the learner and the major concern is the curriculum's provision requiring children to learn at their own pace. An appropriate learning environment would not be complete without other support services. These may include the services of the trained special education needs teachers since

the success of inclusion of learners with special education needs requires the involvement of professionals who can assist in identification, referral, diagnosis, treatment and provision of other appropriate educational and related services (Mutisya, 2004). This means that there is always need for teachers to possess some basic knowledge and skills in special education for them to be able to teach learners with special educational needs in classrooms. Therefore, this study determined whether the school administrators in the regular schools have teachers who have some basic knowledge and skills to teach learners with disabilities.

Stigmatisation, like stereotyping disability or any illness, degrades one's morale to participate in education (Muzata, 2019; Mahlo, Muzata & Kalimaposo, 2021). The school administrator is required to sensitise the other 'normal' learners to provide peer support such as peer tutoring, pushing wheelchairs and sighted guides. Chikopela and Mandyata (2018) noted the need for increased sensitisation on the plight of learners with SEN for them to benefit from what a regular school was able to offer across multiple dimensions to improve care and services. This is most worrying because most of the so-called normal learners are never sensitized to make them aware of the conditions of the other learners in the school, which makes it very difficult for the other to socialise with them and, because of this, the LSEN tend to be withdrawn and mostly have low self-esteem.

The school administrators should further provide for services like those offered by speech therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists according to the needs of the child. Because of lack of training in special education among the administrators, most of them do not even understand the need of such services. Guidance and counselling is a major component to assist learners in appreciating one another despite their diversities. A school administrator should organise awareness and sensitisation programmes for the community to make them help in adapting the environment, people, financial support, as well as transport of the learners with disabilities (LWDs) to and from school.

The researcher argues that bringing all these persons on board to support inclusion of learners' with SEN is a mammoth hurdle, hence a school administrator should use his or her administrative practices appropriately. Bearing in mind that creation of a conducive learning environment is an important factor in inclusion, which needs careful planning and approaches, the researcher is doubtful if the regular primary schools in Southern Province, Zambia, have such arrangements. Creation of a conducive learning environment may be impeded by factors such as poor time management, technological difficulties, missing social interaction, need for

self-discipline, and lack of teacher contact, among others. This study aims to establish the administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners in regular schools of Livingstone district in Southern Province, Zambia. The next section provides a discussion on how the administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners in regular schools.

2.2 How administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs

2.2.1 Professional Development

Professional Continuous Development (CPD) is the process by which teachers in every school try to reflect upon their competences, maintain them up to date and develop them further for the betterment of the learners. Professional development meetings in schools are used to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers as well as improve the delivery of lessons. It embraces the idea that teachers aim for continuous improvement in their professional skills and knowledge, beyond the basic training required during their pre-service training to carry out the job.

CPD involves all activities aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training and support (Coetzer, 2001). It is in these same meetings and workshops where teachers share what they learnt during their training, new methods, what they realised out of the meetings and workshops, as well as correcting each other's mistakes during lesson delivery in class. Additionally, CPD improves delivery of lessons by teachers. Part of the knowledge shared in CPD meetings and workshops is how pupils with special educational needs (SEN) can be helped in order to improve their academic performance in inclusive settings.

Bredeson (2003) proposes that for professional development to proceed successfully, CPD should be a continuous process and contribute to the general improvement of education. Personal development is also enhanced by the diversity of the teaching methods acquired during CPD meetings and workshops. Professional development does not only require the informal and spontaneous learning of teachers from one another but also relies on the prior knowledge, wealth of potential and experience of each teacher. Obtaining knowledge through sharing ideas and skills with others is a valuable tool for change and improvement. Therefore,

school administrators should make sure that programmes for CPD meetings and workshops cater for this diversity of needs of regular teachers, special education teachers and learners with special educational needs themselves.

Kennedy (2000) concluded that effective CPD meetings and workshops provided regular and special education teachers with the information about what to do in the classroom and the most specific information about the content they would be teaching and how learners learnt that content plus the methods to use. This made it easy for regular teachers to handle children with special educational needs in inclusive classrooms. Research by Joyce and Showers (2002) has shown that in order to achieve improvements in teaching and better learning outcomes for learners, teachers need to be engaged in CPD meetings that promote inquiry, creativity and innovation. Incorporating special education in CPD, coaching, mentoring, sharing and other forms of sustained professional learning have been shown to have positively affected teaching and learning outcomes (Joyce and Showers, 2002).

Watkins (2007) made recommendations for initial, in-service and specialist teacher training, stressing that teachers need information on the theory and rationale for inclusive assessment and preparation for using ongoing assessment as a tool for their work, which he said could be achieved through CPD meetings and workshops if it was not achieved during training.

It is through sharing of knowledge, ideas and techniques during CPD meetings and workshops that can make regular teachers aware of special educational needs. Inclusive education has consistently been found to have influenced educators either in a single course or through a content-infused approach, hence the need to include topics on special education in CPD meetings and workshops in creating awareness about special educational needs to regular teachers (Campbell et al., 2003; Cook, 2002).

Lancaster and Bain (2007) stated that in general, there was a positive change in educators after undertaking an inclusive education study, though not enough, and this was the case across a number of countries. It was suggested that with enough sensitisation during CPD meetings and workshops, regular teachers could become aware of special educational needs to enhance good delivery of curriculum to children with special educational needs. However, Molina (2006) found evidence to demonstrate that theoretical classes and reading are not sufficient to sensitise teachers so as make them aware of pupils with special educational needs, hence the need for sensitisation on special educational needs among pupils and regular teachers.

Loreman et al. (2007) concluded that if in-service teachers are going to develop positive attitudes towards special education, it has to be through sensitisation during CPD meetings and workshops. They also need opportunities for direct interaction with learners with special education needs or disabilities. This starts with acceptance of inclusion of topics on special education during CPD meetings and workshops by regular teachers. Therefore, instruction policy and legislation relating to inclusive education, and opportunities to gain confidence in practical teaching situations among pupils with special educational needs should be encouraged.

Naukkarinen (2008), while studying the Finnish primary school teacher education curriculum, realised that not much was being done regarding the sensitisation of mainstream teachers on issues of special education and went on to suggest that more effort was needed to integrate inclusive education content in CPD meetings and workshops. Some of the areas identified as key to CPD were that staff needed to clarify for themselves the concept of inclusive education with more opportunities for in-service training in inclusive education and more collaboration among all staff. The diversity of learners could have been introduced from the viewpoint of a primary school teacher and not as pathology or medical-based knowledge that is separate from a teacher's daily work.

Language use also had to be changed from the medical to the social model (Saloviita, 2005). As the majority of initial teacher education students came from a non-inclusive educational background, it was crucial to reduce or remove this 'experience-based barrier' to adopting the ideas of inclusive education. Teachers of education, multicultural studies and teaching practice should plan and teach more together; the solving of problems could bind together the central topics of the curriculum. There is need to have continuous professional development meetings and workshops quite often so as to educate and create awareness about special educational needs to regular teachers.

Administrators are considered key actors responsible for operating and directing all administrative functions of schools successfully and effectively. They have significant responsibilities in maintaining the effective internal functioning of school systems, representing the school in the community, and implementing educational policies with precision. Administrators also act as role models who improve the ethical and professional growth of teachers and other professional staff. Maich, Morvan and Sider (2017) investigated the role of school leadership in promoting inclusive education. The findings showed that

school administrators were not equipped with the critical skills needed for leading inclusive institutions. This study concentrated on inclusive skills required for learners with SEN. So, if leadership is not fitted to assist and support children with special needs and lead the process of inclusion at that level, the culture of inclusion will not be established.

Wyatt (2017) notes that administrators are responsible for fostering teacher professional growth by improving their skills through classroom observation, communicating high standards and ensuring that the school atmosphere is conducive to teaching and learning. Ultimately, administrators have an indirect but significant influence on student's learning by fulfilling their diverse needs, abilities, legislating and establishing school systems and policies (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Administrators also need to take on a number of roles to ensure that their schools are capable of offering the professional support required to teachers and other professional educators. With a focus on building all teachers' capacity to teach inclusively, Huber, Rosenfeld, and Fiorello (2001) imply a strong role for educational leaders when they define inclusive practices as training and curricula support in general education. It is the administrators' role to make sure that continuous professional development meetings are regularly held in schools to help teachers develop their knowledge and skills especially in issues pertaining to teaching learners with special educational needs. For inclusive education to be real, all teachers need to be equipped with knowledge and skills to teach and manage the challenges different learners exhibit in classroom situation (Kasongole & Muzata, 2020).

Deku and Vanderpuye (2017) recommended that teacher training programmes must have a component of inclusive education courses to enable them to acquire the skills needed to teach children with special needs. Many teachers do not feel equipped to meet the needs of learners with disabilities (Yell et al., 2004). Therefore, having short trainings within the school would enhance the teaching and learning of children with special needs in regular schools. Administrators can utilise professional development as a means to provide needed training for teachers, particularly in effective instructional and behavioural intervention strategies and collaboration skills that address the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities (Fisher et al., 2000; Idol, 2006; Katsiyannis, Ellenberg, Acton, 2000). Waldron (2002) notes that general education teachers often have to first experience inclusive teaching in order to acknowledge and identify areas where they need professional development.

Most teachers who teach in mainstream classes have little or no knowledge of how to teach learners with disabilities and, therefore, having short trainings within the school would really

help them implement inclusive education effectively. Thus, professional development for inclusive education should begin with providing teachers opportunities to gain new knowledge, practise learned skills, and receive feedback from trainers and colleagues over extended periods (Little & Houston, 2003; VanTassel-Baska et al., 2008). Having follow-up trainings or feedback is also important in making sure that the activities done during CPD meetings are being implemented in their daily delivery of lessons in terms of embracing learners with disabilities in schools.

The leadership role of school administrators has increased due to recent demands placed upon schools. Additionally, Idol (2006) indicated in her study that administrators need to assume the instructional leadership role by supporting their teachers in providing professional development in the area of special education. The administrator must understand the legal and technical aspects of special education, evaluate and support staff, provide needed support, services, and adaptations to children with disabilities. The role of the administrator is more complex and requires expertise in many areas when working to achieve school goals. Administrators must possess necessary leadership and interpersonal skills when working with their staff to accomplish school goals, supervising and communicating effectively with learners, parents, and the community.

The administrators' role has expanded to include monitoring curriculum and instruction, conducting teacher evaluations, coordinating district and state-wide testing, attending meetings for learners with disabilities, collaborating with the general and special education teachers with regard to students with special needs in the inclusive setting, and developing activities for staff development. Many studies have verified the significance of administrators' attitudes towards inclusive education. Positive perceptions and approaches promote appropriate policies and support necessary for successful inclusive education programmes.

Well-trained administrators are the key pieces to implementing the mandate of inclusion (Harris, 2009). They must have pedagogical, legal and cultural knowledge (Collins & White, 2001). Administrators must display a positive attitude and commitment towards inclusion as well as possess the skills and knowledge to lead staff in the development and creation of an inclusive learning environment (Harris, 2009). The more positive administrators are towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in schools, the more effective inclusive education is in the schools. A climate of acceptance for all learners is only created when administrators have a positive attitude towards inclusion. Administrators with positive attitudes are more willing

to provide opportunities for learners with disabilities to remain in a general education setting and the effectiveness of inclusion relies heavily on the administrator.

Attitude is imperative to the successful implementation of inclusion and administrator's attitudes are a vital part of an inclusive school environment to be their vision and leadership. A study by Villa, Thousand, Meyers and Nevin (1996) on administrators in the United States concluded that those who had more positive attitudes toward inclusion were directly associated with more experience with learners with disabilities, greater administrative support and more time for collaboration. As administrators grow old, they gain more experience and it brings a positive and constructive attitudinal change in their behaviours. Administrators have positive attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs if they possess some experience on how to deal with such learners.

2.2.2 Advocacy

Administrators in inclusive schools are the individuals who have been primarily responsible for advocating and ensuring both legal compliance and the implementation of instructional strategies that would be of benefit to individual learners with both mild and extreme differences. They have management qualities of flexibility, advocacy and collaboration. An administrator of inclusive school is a facile communicator, proficient manager and strategic planner. School administrators should consistently articulate a vision for inclusive communities and highlight and celebrate inclusive practices as a means to work against differentiating norms constructed and maintained through the duality of special education versus general education conceptualisations (Sapon-Shevin, 2008; Muyaba, Kalimaposo, Mubita, 2022). This means that an administrator should be a critical thinker who plans ahead for the betterment of the school in formulating the vision that should be followed by everyone in the school.

Zaretski (2005) posits that reform for inclusive practice requires understanding of inclusive theories in action. Unexamined notions of "natural limitations" and what is practical can be reinterpreted as school administrators help a community contest the limiting interpretations of disability and come to understand their own complicity in limiting the humanity of learners with disabilities (Ware, 2002). The administrator can share inclusive content to the community during parents and teachers' meeting to help them understand the value of education of their learners living with different disabilities, and that they can also excel academically just like

any other child in the school. White (2012) argues that too often learners with disabilities are continuously constructed as academic burdens and are compartmentalised as “special education” learners. She argues for the need to do the deep community-level work required to conceptualise the worth of all individuals as a moral stance in which all learners are recognised for the various ways they contribute to school communities.

In advocating possible services, empowering staff, acknowledging the needs of parents and collaborating with other administrators, the role of inclusive administrators is now shifting (Lashley and Boscardin, 2003). The parents of learners with disabilities are a valuable source of information about a child and, therefore, it is important for both parents and the administrators to work hand in hand in helping the child learn. Inclusive administrators are now at crossroads in the field of inclusive education. Their challenge is introducing flexibility to how the curriculum is conceptualised, advocating for access to be the general education curriculum and assessments with appropriate accommodation and modifications, and promoting collaboration between general and special education teachers and administrators to ensure that high-quality education programmes are accessible to all learners.

School administrators’ ability to articulate philosophical perspectives that underlie the debates around inclusion is important in order to guide school-communities deliberations around the purposes and vision for inclusive practices. Reyner (2007) concludes that inclusive educational management is praxis-oriented in that communities need to deliberate about the ideas behind inclusion and the means appropriate to a particular context. Hence, administrators may have a responsibility to make meaning of inclusive practices, engaging in “cognitive acts of taking information, framing it, and using it to determine actions and behaviours in a way that manages meaning for individuals” (Evans, 2007). Administrators should fully understand the inclusive practices for them to be able to sensitise others on the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

To ensure the success of inclusion, administrators exhibit conduct that will advance the integration, acceptance, and success of children with disabilities in general education settings (Praisner, 2003). Garrison-Wade, Sobel, Fulmer (2007) found that administrators lack minimum knowledge needed to implement inclusion such as knowledge of special education law, behaviour management, and specific topics that present authentic strategies and processes to support inclusion. Administrators are challenged to redefine their roles in ways that promote positive results for learners with disabilities through evidenced-based instructions. Many

administrators lack knowledge of special education legal issues, specifically in compliance and procedural requirements (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, Fulmer, 2007). The lack of special preparation for school administrators challenges their ability to implement inclusion in schools (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007). Schools that have administrators trained in special education implement inclusive education fully because administrators are there to provide the necessary materials for their learners in school.

The administration of special education policies and programmes had been the obligation of district level administrators in the past. Responsibility for administration for the programmes and support necessary for successful inclusion has moved to the school administrator (Patterson & Bowling, 2000). The achievement of these programmes is mainly dependent on the school administration (Praisner, 2000). The successful implementation of inclusive education greatly depends on how proactive the administrator is about inclusive education. School administrators are expected to assume leadership in the area of special education even with minimal training and experience (Praisner, 2000). In order to be perceived as an efficient leader and to deal with the many challenges reflected by IDEA, school-based administrators should acquire knowledge of special education law, programming and support needed for successfully educating and including children with disabilities in the general education setting (McLaughlin & Nalet, 2004). It is one of the requirements of an administrator of any inclusive school to possess some knowledge on how to handle learners with special educational needs. Moreover, managing with the legal requirements, parental demands, and ethical thoughts of the inclusive effort has become a component of many administrators' job description.

Creating Inclusive Environments

Ensuring disability-inclusive education can be transformative in bringing persons (children) with disabilities and other marginalised groups out of poverty (World Bank, 2021). However, inaccessible facilities, inadequate support in and outside of school, and cultural norms often limit children with disabilities' access to education. The environment and culture of school setting can have a direct impact on acceptance of all learners (Bennett et al., 2021). One of the roles of school administrators is to form an educational climate which provides learning opportunities for all learners, including those with disabilities.

The school environment and buildings are the responsibilities of the school administrators. They has to make sure that all school property is maintained and properly repaired and utilised. Supportive environments are created by promoting feelings of acceptance through a

welcoming school atmosphere and a school culture that accepts different kinds of behaviours. According to Shaffer (2002), inclusive education is the practice of merging education for special needs learners into regular classes. This is a better thing than putting them into separate specialised education. Therefore, school facilities and infrastructure is a contributing factor to the success of education and learning processes in schools.

Adequate facilities and infrastructure will make the atmosphere of education and learning to be 'live' and enjoyable. Inclusive education in public schools requires the readiness of facilities and infrastructure that support the inclusion of children's needs (special needs). For example, for blind children, schools should have the facility of books and reading using Braille letters. They also provide a friendly and convenient pathways for visually impaired students should (small rocky roads). Furthermore, for children with disabilities, schools provide a playroom to eliminate boredom and train the motor for physically mentally and disabled children. So, important supporting facilities and infrastructure for the continuity of education in schools, especially public schools, are defined as inclusive schools.

The positive social, emotional and academic development of children and adolescents depends, to a considerable degree, on whether the contexts in which they develop, including schools, are reliable sources of caring relationships (Noddings, 2002; Rauner, 2000). It is important for administrators to provide opportunities for all learners to participate in activities that allow them to understand societal expectations; to acquire the physical and social competences needed to function in their school, home, and larger community, as well as to gain an understanding of their strengths and interrelationships with others. Simovska and Sheehan (2000) reflect on the health promoting schools paradigm as a framework for building school environments which support mental and emotional health. The administrators can build a community of learners or allow classrooms, learners and teachers to act autonomously.

Positive attitudes lead to a less restrictive learning environment (Praisner, 2003). Addressing biases and stereotypes in the classroom is crucial for creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment. School administrators can do this by examining their own biases and stereotypes by engaging in professional development to increase their cultural competence and modelling inclusive behaviour. School administrators' attitudes, roles, relationships and visions are active parts of an inclusive school environment and administrators need to follow several steps to facilitate the creation of inclusive schools such as writing a strong mission statement for the success of all children, which relies on the administrators' sense of

responsibility, an initial step toward an inclusive school. Cohen (2015) claimed that a school administrator is the most key agent of change in a school, as he or she is the central actor who contributes to the creation and promotion of a successful inclusion programme. They play an important role in creating inclusive schools.

As Salisbury (2006) noted, schools that function inclusively do so for a reason and the administrators in these schools are the reason. School administrators shape budgets, distribute resources, provide professional development, hire and evaluate teachers and set expectations (Leithwood et al., 2008). However, school administrators can feel torn between creating inclusive schools when also dealing with restrictive distinct directives, resources deficits, teacher resistance and disgruntled parents (Frick et al., 2015). These challenges, coupled with lack of special education expertise, can prompt neglect of special education duties by school administrators (O’Laughlin & Lindle, 2015). If the above challenges are not dealt with it becomes very difficult for the school administrator to implement inclusive education effectively in regular schools. However, it is not clear how the administrators overcome the challenges that they face in this regard hence this study examines how administrators’ practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in the study regular schools.

Mariam Al Qubaisi indicated that inclusion is the responsibility of society and emphasized the significance of integrating learners with disabilities in schools and the opportunities that can be provided to them (Bell, 2015). For inclusive education to become a reality, all stakeholders are supposed to be fully involved. Despite significant progress, the goal of reaching full inclusion throughout the country has not yet been reached. There are significant challenges to ensuring that each individual obtains an equal opportunity for educational progress worldwide (UNESCO, 2019). Learners with special educational needs might confront many obstacles during the transition and adaptation processes in regular school settings. These learners need special care and treatment as well as modified curriculum and instruction that meet their needs and expectations.

The absence of these modifications results in several challenges for learners with special education needs, which might include having negative attitudes toward inclusion, lack of qualified educators, insufficient training courses, and large classes (Konza, 2008). Thus, in inclusive schools that integrate learners with special educational needs with other typical students, the role of administrators remains critical yet challenging even after the initiation of

inclusiveness (Riehl, 2000). School administrators have a unique and powerfully influential position from which to positively enact and maintain supportive environments

Much of the leadership literature focuses on how well prepared the school administrators create inclusive schools without consideration of race and other forms of learner identity. This approach is called leadership for effective inclusive schools which centres on school improvement, enhanced coordination of general and special education services as well as a focus on maintaining intervention and learner achievement results. A small but growing body of research focuses on administrators who form elements found in the first approach but centre their leadership on addressing multiple forms of exclusion and marginalisation.

Providing the needed support staff, providing a curriculum that meets the needs of the students, budgeting and teacher training are just a few of the problems that exist that the administrators must address before implementing an inclusive environment (Chesly & Calaluze, 1998; Roach, 1994). Usually there are tensions that may exist between special education teachers and regular teachers in dealing with the growing number of learners who are diagnosed with special needs. The school administrator should have the skill on how to deal with differences between the teachers in the school. The teachers who are trained in special education should work in collaboration with these not trained in same so that they can share knowledge and skills on how to handle learners with disabilities in the school. Another problem is the percentage of minority children who are placed in the special education programme. As a result, many members of minority groups are vocal support of inclusion and administrators need to be aware of the voice of the community in order to deal with this problem.

The school administrators seek to establish a shared sense of vision and actively promote the social acceptance of the included learners as well as actively involve parents in the implementation of inclusive processes. They also try to convince the staff, at all levels that inclusion is not just the responsibility of special education but for everyone. They establish mechanisms to more efficiently learn from the process as it unfolds and provide the staff with the necessary training to do the job. There are significant challenges to ensuring that each individual obtains an equal opportunity for educational progress world-wide (UNESCO, 2015).

Hoopey and Mcliskey (2013) and Mwanamwambwa (2021) have indicated that while policies call for inclusive education achieving this goal remains complicated and challenging for

administrators. To work toward that goal, they suggested that school administrators should be held accountable for not only managing and organising their schools but also promoting the inclusive learning of learners with special educational needs. Administrators of inclusive schools should be those with skills, knowledge and qualities to deliver effective leadership. Without the leadership and support of an administrator, a school would struggle to meet the challenging requirements of providing varied services that meet the needs of diverse student populations. Administrators are expected to consider inclusive practices and strategies to change the culture of inclusive schools and develop learning communities in the schools (Hoppey and Mcleskey, 2013). Administrators should provide opportunities for learners to practise and apply skills like self-awareness, empathy and decision-making in real-world contexts. By so doing administrators can create a more supportive and nurturing learning environment that promotes positive social and emotional development leading to improved academic outcomes of learners with disabilities.

Administrators as leaders need clear knowledge, skills and direction in leading an organisation including an inclusive education programme in an administered school. The administrator is in charge of curriculum and institution (Hoyle, 2006). In pupil personnel management, the school administrator is in charge of admission and attendance services, organising, classes, maintaining pupils' records, reporting pupils' progress, guidance and counselling, maintaining pupils' discipline and supervising their activities, among other duties. The school administrators have the role of overseeing the operations and maintenance of facilities, providing supporting services and materials. They must ensure that all the physical facilities in the school are available and well maintained.

The school administrator is the mediator and coordinator of school community relationship. He or she has the responsibility of coordinating administrative tasks including those to do with inclusive education. Practising inclusive schooling promotes access to education in schools by all learners regardless of their disabilities. Despite the efforts of the Ministry of Education through the inclusive schooling programme (INSPRO) to make schools conducive for inclusive education, studies on inclusive education in Zambia by Ng'andu (2001) and Mandyata (2002) indicate that most schools do not have facilities or resources conducive for inclusive education, thereby excluding a lot of children with disabilities from accessing education in schools. Education is a right for every child and administrators must make sure

that the school environment is conducive for every learner and no one should be excluded from school.

The accommodation of a wide range of learners in the same classroom gives rise to many challenges. Simple teaching resources that could normally be produced locally, such as maps, charts and other illustrative devices, are not available in many educational institutions in developing countries (Ewelle and Radle, 2002). The lack of facilities and teaching materials is a grave impediment to the implementation of inclusive education. To implement inclusive education in classrooms, it is important that administrators provide a conducive educational environment for all pupils. In addition, teachers' experience and their training significantly influence their attitudes (Meny, 2008). Teachers not trained in special education usually have negative attitudes towards inclusive education because they believe that it is for specialist teachers. According to Ndhlovu (2008), in Zambia the situation shows that a large number of persons with disabilities are also excluded from schools.

For learners with visual impairments, specialised materials and equipment are very important because the items almost act like a replacement for lost eyesight (Omede, 2015). Equipment such as recorded audio materials, talking books, optical aids, optacon, brailers and computers are essential for educational attainment. These educational items are not easy to come by and the available ones are grossly inadequate to meet educational requirements (Omede, 2015). The challenges of inadequate teaching and learning resources in schools were also noted by Mandyata (2002) who found out that, inadequate provision of specialised training and resources to equip teachers in handling children with special educational needs to ordinary classes was a hindrance to the implementation of inclusive education.

The lack of teaching and learning materials jeopardises teacher delivery of lessons in schools. One reason to explain the inadequacies in teaching and learning resources is lack of enough funding to purchase or update existing ones. According to Nimmo (2008), materials for learners with visual impairments are very costly and funding is usually insufficient to buy most of the resources. Lack of resources and equipment in teaching learners with disabilities was also cited by participants in a study done by Brown and Beamish (2012) where it was mentioned that teaching and learning resources were the biggest need in delivery of instruction for learners, especially those living with disabilities. Malakpa (2007) indicated that a lack of specialised resources can be explained to emanate generally from under-funding by the government to purchase materials. The role of government in the provision of teaching and

learning resources has been documented several times. In a study conducted by Korir (2015), the majority of teachers attested to the fact that it was the responsibility of government to provide teaching resources to support programmes.

Despite the fact that it is essential to staff inclusive classes with skilled and trained teachers, there is a shortage of inclusive teacher training programmes. This is a major problem to be solved if the quota of trained teachers is to be met (Hossain, 2004; Kibria, 2005). Overcrowding of classes is what Mandyata (2002) also reported to have caused some teachers to refuse accepting children with special educational needs in their classes. Teaching learners with special education needs requires a one-on-one approach. Teachers become overwhelmed when they have a learner with a disability in a class as they feel they waste a lot of time on just one child with a special need, hence it is the role of the school administrator to sensitise the teachers in the school.

Muhammad and Fatihi (2021) agreed that large class sizes are thought to be one factor affecting teaching and learning in schools. Lack of space also makes it unconducive for pupils with disabilities. Todd (2012) investigated the connection between class size and academic achievement. The results indicated that class size and grades had a substantial negative link, all the learners in all subjects had a substantial negative link; that is, those who studied in classes with widely diverse sizes in separate subjects. According to Obiakor and Oguejiofor (2020), there is a significant correlation between learners' attitudes and achievement and the effect that class size has on learners' achievement. On the other hand Muktar (2019) looked at how class size affected learners' academic performance. The study discovered that having a large class size has no discernible effect on the academic performance of the learners.

On the lack of a legal framework on inclusive education in Zambia, for instance, Kasonde Ng'andu (2001) cited lack of laws and policies in giving direction to all educationalists in the education system in relation to inclusive education. These and other issues pose a challenge to administrators in the implementation of inclusive education.

2.3 Support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational Needs

2.3.1 Policies

Inclusive education can only exist with strong support from the government and specific legislation (UNICEF, 2014). Fortunately, the general understanding that children with disabilities have the right to education is growing. Indeed, most countries currently have laws or regulations specifically designed to ensure that children with disabilities have equal opportunities to receive education (UNICEF, 2012).

The World Report on Disability shows that about 1.3 billion people, including children (approximately 16 percent of the world's population) live with some form of disability (WHO, 2023, World Bank, 2011). The report notes the disproportional effects which disability has on people and children in particular, from lower-income countries and those living in the poorest wealth quintile of the world's population. Many children with disabilities in these circumstances are excluded from education. This exclusion is further echoed in the 2013 State of the World's Children Report (UNICEF, 2016).

According to this report, while access to education for other children is improving, the same cannot be said for children with disabilities. They remain most negatively marginalised and excluded from education. They continue to experience dismissive attitudes, discrimination, and are largely invisible in official statistics used for education planning and programme implementation. Such discrimination and exclusion has a negative effect on their livelihoods (UNICEF, 2013). UNESCO (2013) further confirms this prevailing situation and argues that worldwide, there are still about 57 million children of primary school age who are not in school due to financial, social or physical challenges. More than half of the 57 million children out of school are in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, UNESCO (2015) posits that globally, around 100 million children do not complete primary education.

The right to education for all children, including those with disabilities, is given full recognition through international frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) that promotes the right to education and training of all children, including those with disabilities. UNESCO proposed the concept of inclusive education in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (Peters 2003). The subsequent World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, in 1994 passed the Salamanca

Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994), which, for the first time, formally adopted the concept of “Inclusive Education” and mandated all countries to implement inclusive education. The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) provided a framework for thinking about how to move policy and practice forward. It identified inclusive education as the means by which ‘education for all’ may be achieved (UNESCO, 2005). The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990) commits the curriculum, teaching and learning to be child-centred and to embrace diversity. The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993) underlines the importance of realising basic human rights of persons with disabilities who have been discriminated against.

UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) advances the principle of inclusion for children with special educational needs. This inclusive education policy framework was reaffirmed and ratified by the Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments Conference in Senegal (ActionAid, 2000). The conference proclaimed that every person has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs, and that “those with special educational needs must have access to regular education which should accommodate them with ‘a person-centred’ pedagogy capable of meeting those needs’ (Peters, 2003). The Dakar World Education Conference (2000) committed governments to ensure that their education systems are inclusive and specifically cater for the needs of disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised learners. The Flagship on Education for All (EFA) and the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities towards Inclusion are the other frameworks.

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) demands the provision of education for persons with disabilities in an education system that is inclusive and responsive to their needs. The UNCRPD states that, with a view to realising this right without discrimination on the basis of equal opportunity, states parties should ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning. In realising this right, states parties should ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education or from secondary education, on the basis of disability.

The international community through UNESCO, agreed on the post-2015 education agenda as informed by the Muscat Agreement (2014). The draft Muscat Agreement, adopted in May 2014 at the Global Meeting on Education for All (2014 GEM) in Muscat, Oman, outlines seven renewed post- 2015 global education targets and an overarching goal aimed at the engagement of the international community in supporting education. One of the seven targets in the Muscat Agreement looked at early childhood care and education. It states that by 2030, at least most girls and boys should be ready for primary school through participation in quality early childhood care and education, including at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

The other target was basic education; by 2030, all girls and boys should complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least nine years and achieve relevant learning outcomes, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalised. The third target looked at youth and adult literacy where it states that by 2030, all youths and at least most adults should reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient for them to fully participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women and the most marginalised.

The fourth target looked at the skills for work. By 2030, at least most youths and adults must have the knowledge and skills for decent work and life through technical and vocational, upper secondary and tertiary education training, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized. The fifth target looked at skills for citizenship and sustainable development; 2030, all learners should acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies, including through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development. Target six focused on teachers. The agreement states that by 2030, all governments should ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers.

The seventh target focuses on financing of education. By 2030, all countries must allocate at least 4.6 % of their gross domestic product (GDP) or at least 15.20% of their public expenditure to education, prioritising groups most in need; and strengthen financial cooperation for education, prioritising countries most in need. The overall plea to the global community is to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030. In order to reach, or get closer, to the proposed goal, the seven proposed global education targets are to address different agents and levels of education, relevant skills and

the so far most important driver or barrier to advancing education targets - funding. The proposed targets will be the basis of the framework for action, to be developed by UNESCO, in consultation with all EFA partners.

In all the seven areas the Muscat Agreement looked at equity and quality among inclusive education among learners while neglecting the school administrators' inclusive practices in regular schools. The Muscat Agreement was followed by the Kigali statement on education (2015), the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) for Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Common African Position. In addition, the Africa Agenda 2063, National EFA Reviews, initiatives such as the EFA 'Big Push' and the mid-term evaluation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa all are targeted at strengthening the inclusive education agenda. To this effect, the overarching goal of education is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015). In order to achieve this goal on education, one of the agreed targets is that by 2030 all signatories to this agreement, Zambia inclusive, will ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university (UNESCO, 2015).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) commits members of the African Union to realise the right of every child to education. The Charter states: "State Parties to the present Charter shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realisation of this right and shall in particular provide free and compulsory basic education. They should also encourage the development of secondary education in its different forms and to progressively make it free and accessible to all, as well as make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity and ability by every appropriate means. Further to take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

The charter furthermore states that special measures should be taken in respect of female, gifted and disadvantaged children, to ensure equal access to education for all sections of the community. The commitment to realise the right to education of learners with disabilities as stipulated by international frameworks and embraced by continental leaders, is further evident in the adoption of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (1999-2009) that has been extended to 2019 and the African Union (AU) Continental Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities. Among other things, the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (1999-2009) gives attention to the equalising of opportunities for people with disabilities in all areas of

society, including education. The extended African Union (AU) Continental Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities (2019) makes provision for special measures to be put in place towards addressing the needs of children with disabilities, including ensuring that they have access to all levels of the education system (Africa Union, 2010) .

The international and continental legal frameworks adopted by most SADC Member States demand that they create equitable inclusive educational systems that will allow all learners to learn and develop. In response to these conventions and instruments and others, SADC has developed regional Frameworks that are aimed at enhancing regional access to education for all children, including children with disability. These instruments include the SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) and the SADC framework and Programme of Action for Comprehensive Care and Support for Orphans, Vulnerable Children, and Youth in SADC (2008 -2015). The main objective of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) is to ensure that the rights and basic needs of all learners in the SADC region are fully met, enabling them to grow up well and realise their full human potential. Its main purpose is to integrate vulnerable learners as a priority in all aspects of the development agenda of SADC, at policy, legislative and intervention levels, with a focus on providing them with comprehensive services in a holistic manner. Children with disabilities are recognized as vulnerable children and targeted for specific attention.

Zambia is a signatory to several inclusive education-related international instruments and conventions such as the Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education (UNESCO, 1994). It has adopted a number of policy and legal frameworks aimed at enhancing the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in various social inclusion programmes (Matafwali, 2007). Inclusive education has its roots in the Salamanca Declaration. In an effort to adhere to international obligations in recognising, promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, the Zambian government ratified and domesticated the UNCPRD which has given effect to Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012. The Act protects rights of CWDs as stated in the UNCPRD, particularly articles 7, 16, 24, and 25 which demand that states parties to the Convention ensure that CWDs are protected from violence and abuse and that their rights to inclusive education are protected.

The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012 further stipulates that the Minister shall ensure that the education system is inclusive at all levels. This will result in the full development of human potential, sense of dignity and self-worth, personality, talents, and creativity through the

provision of an enabling environment. It therefore entails that the persons with disabilities are included in the education system without exception.

Among the various legal instruments enacted is the persons with disabilities Act of 1996, which forbids discrimination and stigmatisation of People with Disabilities. Then there is the National Policy on Disabilities, which was enacted with a view to ensuring full integration of persons with disabilities within the mainstream society. Other than that there is the National policy on education (Educating Our Future) of 1996 which recognises the importance of peoples' right to education regardless of their abilities. Above all the Constitution of Zambia Article 23(3) prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. It provides for just and fair distribution of social benefits to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

The above legal and policy frameworks are in line with international instruments that Zambia signed and ratified, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Salamanca Declaration on principles, policy and practices in special Education. However, the country does not have a policy specifically on inclusive education (Noyoo, 2000; Mubita, 2009). The Salamanca Statement also asserted that educational systems that take into account the wide diversity of persons' characteristics and needs are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (Peters, 2003). Although Zambia had made efforts to implement "integrated education" an initiative similar to inclusive education – before the Salamanca conference-the basic tenets of inclusive education were recognised immediately after this concept was presented.

Priestly (2003) asserts that within the framework of the rights and resources, issues of social inclusion of people with disabilities in the community's (social) activities have taken centre stage at the global level. He makes reference to Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) that articulates the need for the holistic well-being of a child. Other international instruments include the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), which aims at protecting, promoting and ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy all the basic rights irrespective of their abilities. The Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, on the other hand, aims at ensuring that all barriers to effective participation of Persons with disabilities, in social, activities

including education; are removed (UN, 1993; Guernesey, Nicoli & NINIO, 2007; Barrom & Amerena, 2007; Clement & Read, 2008; Croft, 2010).

The rights of children were envisaged at the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and it remains a landmark document, which comprehensively covers civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of children. It takes due consideration of the survival, development, protection and participation needs of children, these with SEN included. The UNCRC is reaffirmed by the UNCRPD, adopted in 2006 (UN, 2006), which states that “persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live”.

Inclusive education policies are designed to broaden access to education and to promote opportunities for all learners with special educational needs to realize their potential. Therefore, the school administrator must implement the aspects of the policy to make significant contribution to inclusion of learners with special educational needs by making sure that their practices towards them are inclusive in their respective schools. He or she should make sure that all stakeholders are involved by enabling them to have access to information and first-hand experiences of different forms of educational provision so that they can make informed choices (EADSNE, 2011).

The quality and details of these laws, however, vary significantly. Also, even where there are laws or provisions promoting inclusive education, these commitments have not yet necessarily been harmonised with general education planning (United States Agency for International Development USAID, 2010). Learners with disabilities might not grasp the concept at the same time with those without disabilities. Despite improvements in inclusive education over the decades, with governments adopting official policies on inclusion, children with disabilities are less likely to start or attend school than non-disabled children and they have lower transition rates to higher levels of education. This means that learners with disabilities would require more time and in the end the learners without disabilities would again feel their time is greatly lost.

Yuen et al. (2019) argue that a common curriculum following the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) should allow for teachers as well as head teachers to monitor the progress of all the learners. Flood and Banks (2021) suggest that UDL should not lose sight of the importance of monitoring learner outcomes. As much as possible no child should be left behind as we are trying to teach all learners together. Hutt (2020) Posit that all stakeholders

are committed to the inclusion of all learners in the curriculum renewal and implementation. For effective implementation of inclusive education, all stakeholders should be proactive and the school administrator should be the one to play a leading role.

In some countries, such as Egypt, laws simply state that children with disabilities have the right to education. Other countries such as Ethiopia are more prescriptive. In the case of Ethiopia, the National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities not only describes the rights of individuals with disabilities but also addresses outputs, activities and indicators associated with those rights (Ethiopia Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2012). This means that every child, regardless of gender, race or disability, is supposed to be in school. Administrators should make sure that every child is enrolled in school. The international legislation and frameworks, such as the CRPD, describe human rights principles and legal requirements upholding those principles. Studies have demonstrated that countries with ratified human rights treaties are associated with better or improved human rights practices (Hathaway, 2002). The international legislation and frameworks protect school administrators when it comes to enrolling learners with disabilities in schools.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that champions for improved laws and services advocate effectively for improved laws and services with their countries. For example, with the first four years of the CRPD, 91 percent of countries that had ratified the legislation had already adopted national laws for people with disabilities and 2 percent of these countries' laws included a definition of reasonable accommodation (Ruh, 2012).

There are policies that specifically promote inclusive education and one of them is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted in 1989. Article 23 of the Convention specifically addresses the rights of children with disabilities and states that children with disabilities should have access to and receive education in a 'manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development' (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights, 1989). The committee on the rights of the child further clarified that inclusive education, not segregated education systems, must be the goal of educating children with disabilities (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2007). Therefore, there is need for every child, including those with disabilities, to learn together with those without disabilities.

The Zambian government and the Ministry of Education's stance on inclusion has been influenced by the Salamanca statement and framework (UNESCO, 1994), to which Zambia

ascribes. As a result, the Zambian government has adopted a policy (Educating Our Future) that stipulates equal opportunities, non-discrimination, social justice, protection of basic human rights, and participation of learners with disabilities in the mainstream activities of school and society.

The Ministry of Education has increasingly placed emphasis on the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the education system. Additionally, the Zambian government continues to review all legislation relating to persons with disabilities and endorses relevant international conventions in order to facilitate efficient service delivery (Mung'omba, 2008). Zambia ratified the UNCRPD in 2010. The ratification of the UNCRPD came with responsibility, which meant that Zambia had to adjust its laws, policies and practices to ensure that they comply with the country's commitment to disability inclusion.

In Zambia, inclusive education is one of the several ways in which the Zambian education authorities have sought to enhance citizen rights for children with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2003). Therefore, most schools in Zambia are now supposed to welcome and accommodate children with special educational needs and the school administrators have the mandate to make sure that this becomes a reality. The Ministry of Education formulated a policy document *Educating Our Future* (Ministry of Education 1996), which clearly spells out the need for inclusive education as strategic for ensuring equality of educational opportunities for children with special educational needs. The document states, "To the greatest extent possible, the ministry will integrate pupils with special educational needs into mainstream institutions and will provide them with necessary facilities. However, where need is established the ministry will participate in the provision of new special schools for the severely impaired" (Ministry of Education. 1996).

According to the current Zambian educational policy (*Educating Our Future*), every individual, regardless of personal circumstances or capacity, has a right of access to and participation in the education system (Ministry of Education, 1996). To ensure attainment of full equality of access, participation and achievement for all learners, there is need to necessitate interventions at all levels to support those at risk of exclusion and this calls for adoption of inclusive policies and practices.

Despite improvements in inclusive education over the decades with governments adopting official policies on inclusion, children with disabilities are less likely to start school or attend school than non-disabled children and they have lower transition rates to higher levels of

education. Taking these facts into consideration, it is perhaps not surprising that the vast majority of the literature on the education of children with disabilities has focused on issues of access, participation and quality at the primary or lower levels of education as children with disabilities are less likely to attend and complete primary school (UNESCO, 2018). The focus on primary or lower levels of education for children with disabilities has been the reality in Zambia.

2.3.2 Engagement by Parents/Community

Collaboration is important for a reflection of practices and exchange of knowledge. An important component in collaboration when it comes to the inclusion of learners with special educational needs is parental involvement. Parents are key stakeholders in the education of their children with disabilities (Muzata, 2020). They are to be involved in almost all the school activities of their child. Their involvement in planning of the special education decision-making process is virtually important. Parents are major stakeholders of the Individualized Education Programme (IEP) that determines a learner's path. It has been used as a main strategy to generate creativity and innovation for creating effective educational programmes (Adams, 2005).

Teachers face great challenges and often find it difficult to effectively meet the needs of all students (Narinasamy & Mamat, 2013). The creation of effective inclusive schools requires a combination of teachers' and parents' knowledge and skills on instructional strategies and assessment practices (Friend & Cook, 2007; Kampwirth, 2003). Research by Ambrukaitis and Ruvskus (2006) stress that teachers often consider the interests and expectation of parents of a learner with a disability ill-informed or unrealistic. Hence, parents' desires and concerns remain unheard by teachers and are not included in the education process.

Collaboration in teaching learners with special educational needs has been found to be effective especially when it comes to inclusion. Among the positive outcomes is that possessing collaboration skills may support the induction and retention of special educators in the field (Hamilton-Jones & Vail 2014). Learning teams are an essential strategy in the education of learners with special education needs in regular schools. A learning team includes specialised teachers, ordinary teachers, parents, school administrators and health personnel. Learning teams plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes for learners (Alberta Education, 2006). Parents influence every aspect of the child's education, hence the need to

clearly state their role as collaborators. The bigger picture of parental involvement is where the family becomes directly involved in bringing their children to be enrolled in regular schools unlike keeping them at home. Research by Ncube and Hlatywayo (2014) established that parents and guardians have little involvement in classroom practices beyond enrolling their children in schools, hence their involvement needs serious guidance sometimes in form of legislation.

Many studies show that an inclusive school can be identified through its ability to work as a cohesive team (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). As the chief public relations officer of a school, the school administrator maintains good public relations with the parents including those with special educational needs and the community as a whole. The involvement of the parents in planning the activities of a learner with disabilities, especially the Individualised Education Programme, is very important because they are the ones who know the strengths and weaknesses of their child. For him to be able to carry out these tasks there must be well-developed routines, policies and procedures, which are actually the best techniques for efficient management.

Turnbull (2013) says teachers should implement collaborative conferences with families, communicate effectively with them, and evaluate collaborative activities. Forging such supportive, mutually respectful relationships between families and school professionals represents the cornerstone of collaborative partnerships (Blue-Banning, Summers, Nelson, Frankland, & Beegle, 2004) and makes a positive difference in the quality of a student's educational experience (Newman, 2003).

This situation calls for the school administrators to employ administrative practices, education policies, child rights and rights of children with disabilities to link the teachers and parents by involving the parents in the inclusion programmes. Administrators should do a need assessment to find out what participation opportunities the community needs or would like to see offered, as well as what learners want or what parents want for their children. This assessment should determine if flexible drop-in programmes would work better than requiring learners to sign up for a particular day or time.

Cassidy and Bates (2005) state: "We can't successfully work with kids unless we're working with their families because whatever's going on at home is affecting what is happening here". Similarly, Dominguez (2003) notes that educators must be prepared to understand and promote the diversity of family involvement as many parents do not feel that they have the

skills to help their children succeed at school. Parents who hear that the teacher took the time to get to know their children as individuals feel more comfortable with their children's experiences at school.

Parents are supposed to be aware of the activities planned for their child and this can be made possible only if they are involved in the planning. The school administrator has the responsibility to promote positive attitudes in education and this can be possible if all stakeholders are involved. In institutions where parental and teacher attitudes towards the education of learners with (SEN) appear to be largely determined by personal experiences, the school administrator should thus, spell out the educational policies that recognize these, attitudinal factors and incorporate strategies and resources to address them (European Agency for Development in Special Educational Needs, 2010). It is the duty of the administrator to sensitise the school community at large to embrace inclusive education of all the learners with special educational needs in school. It should be emphasised that inclusive education is a child's right and not a privilege.

According to EADSNE (2010), the school administrator should appreciate that the crucial area for the success of inclusive strategies is the role played by parents. Therefore, parents of public schools should not only be seen as clients but as partners in the inclusion process. EADSNE (2010) posits that in cooperation with the school, outside agencies and other professionals, parents should have a clear voice and be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the structure and content of their child's education, including the development of their child's IEP. Parents provide essential information regarding their child's strengths, weaknesses, needs, preferences and interests that are crucial to developing effective transitional components. The parents often are the key individuals who can articulate clear and realistic outcomes for the child's future.

The school administrator is deemed to play a significant role in the excellent implementation of government institutions' educational reforms. As in any reform endeavours, the school administrator goes through several complexities and challenges which are constraints to implementation of the policy. Such may include scarce resources as well as stakeholders renouncing their responsibilities, in addition to the top-down and centralized reform model of Kenyan policies which minimise the school administrator's innovative role (Kamunde, 2010). A strong school administration is a key ingredient to the institution's success, effectiveness and development (Ouma, 2009). With the foregoing according to Muuya (2000), the special

needs education policy implementation lacks any guidelines to enable stakeholders to do any innovative and proactive decision-making for them to contribute to promote inclusive learning for the learners with special educational needs in public primary schools. Therefore, this study establishes how far the parents are involved by administrators in the inclusion of learners with disabilities in selected inclusive schools of Southern Province, Zambia. The learners with disabilities require a very conducive environment for them to benefit at any inclusive school and this remains a sole responsibility of an administrator hence the discussion that follows is all about the school administrators' creation of a conducive environment of learners with disabilities.

Engaging parents with and without children disabilities is another key component in the establishment of successful inclusive schools. Teacher-parent collaboration is more difficult to promoting and maintain if teachers and parents work as separate units (Braley, 2012). Teachers and parents require active communication with each other for shared decision-making and ideas, to plan the IEP programme and to discuss ways of improving learner performance. School administrator should make sure that there is collaboration between teachers and parents and this can be done by close monitoring by administrators themselves. Communication between teachers and parents, therefore, needs to be in a variety of forms and should not only be one-dimensional (Taylor, Smiley, & Richards, 2009). Lee and Low (2013) note that administrators' communication with parents is important for them to collaborate and share information.

Effective communication between administrators and parents happens when both parties are honest and supportive of each other's responsibilities and roles (Unger, Jones, Park, & Tressel, 2001). Research shows that administrators and parents need to collaborate to adjust more effectively to their responsibilities, roles and actions to continuously improve learners' developmental outcomes (Bateman & Herr, 2006). The process of "coming together" in education requires a re-evaluation and recreation of roles, responsibilities, and relationships. The role of parents has always been an important topic in inclusive education practices (Braley, 2012; McDermott-Fasy, 2009). Parents always provide important information that is required for the education of their child.

It is not uncommon for parents of children with disabilities to resist school reforms that promote inclusive education because they fear that their children might not receive needed services in an inclusive setting (Daniel & King, 1997). These parents may also harbour

concerns regarding their children's safety; the attitudes of other learners, staff and programmes quality; and transportation. Through collaboration and sensitisation, those parents hiding their children would come out and bring them to school and administrators should plan for activities that would bring both parties together. However, parent engagement and partnership can lead to increased acceptance of disability, improved learning, and better classroom behaviours (Edutopia, 2000). Research has shown that, as inclusive education systems become more established, parents adopt a decisively positive view of inclusive education (Miller & Phillips, 1992). Additionally, evidence suggests that increased parent engagement and partnership in the special education process leads to improved learning outcomes for students with disabilities (Stoner et al., 2005). When parents are actively involved, their children become motivated to learn with their peers in inclusive schools.

Associations for parents of children with disabilities serve as helpful resources to build awareness and acceptance of these young people and to promote inclusive education. These groups are also well positioned to educate parents on their children's rights and advocate for improved education policies and legislation. Engaging these groups is critical in establishing inclusive education systems because they use their national network of members to support educational reforms and improved policies and also have unique and important insight gained through their lived experience. One study conducted in both high- and low-income countries showed that disability advocates and parents participating in and advocating for improved education services have led to distinct improvements in special education (Eleweke, 2001).

Community engagement is especially important to administrators in inclusive schools during times of transition or education reform. For example, research conducted within the United States found that parent-community ties constituted one of the five essential supports needed for schools to be effective (Sebring & Montgomery, 2014). This support develops when administrators and school staff reach out to the community and encourage them to participate in strengthening student learning (Epstein, 2001). As WHO (2011) states, "Approaches involving the whole community reflect the fact that the child is an integral member of the community and make it more likely that sustainable, inclusive education for the child can be obtained." When the community is involved in the welfare of the child, then it is very easy for him or her to progress academically.

2.3.3 Financial assistance

Provision of facilities and infrastructure to support the inclusive education learning process requires a lot of resources. Likewise with schools of inclusive education providers, governments should allocate budgets to accommodate the needs of inclusive children. The curriculum management should be tailored to the structure and curriculum content that can accommodate the needs of the learners with disabilities in inclusive schools. In addition, the school must also design a learning programme that can serve the needs of learners in accordance with the type of child so that learners feel comfortable in learning according to their individual learning needs. Learning and teaching support materials cannot be provided in different formats if there is not enough money to ensure their procurement.

Technological gadgets which are crucial in teaching and learning must be procured and maintained so that they could be used for longer periods. All these depend largely, if not entirely, on the availability of necessary funds (Asongu, Nnanna and AchaAnyie, 2020; Khumalo, 2014; Mantey, 2017; Mestry, 2013; Mestry, 2014). It is worth noting that it can be challenging to gauge the current priority given to inclusive education based on funding allocation as inclusive education and special needs do not have a dedicated budget line in the education budget (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2020).

This is echoed in a recent seminal report on financing of inclusive education in five African countries which concluded that inclusive education plans and strategies lack credible costing and that when costing it is not clear how these relate to actual spending or whether they are reflected in annual budgeting cycles (Action Aid et. Al., 2020). As such, it can be difficult to ascertain what resources and activities are being implemented as part of inclusion.

This is because inclusive education is funded under equitable and cross-cutting issues at every education level with actual funding allocation dependent on identified priorities by respective schools and education offices such as the end users. End users have the autonomy to decide how and which activity to support based on their needs and local circumstances which eventually have the effect of making inclusion less of a priority particularly in circumstances where they have a small number of pupils with disabilities and face budgetary pressures to undertake other activities.

2.4. Summary

In this chapter, an attempt was made to review the related literature on the school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special

educational needs and the administrators' practices that have helped promote the inclusion of these learners needs in schools. It also looked at the support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs as well as the frameworks that have been developed in areas of inclusion of such learners in inclusive schools. The next chapter discusses the methodology that was used to collect data for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The study sought to find out the school administrators' practices towards learners with special educational needs in inclusive schools. This chapter provides details of the methods of research used and the instruments of data collection utilised. De Marrais and Lapan (2004) explain that methodology is used to describe the theory of how inquiry should proceed, and that it involves analysis of the principles and procedures in a particular field of inquiry. Moreover, it describes the paradigm, sample size as well as the sampling procedures employed. Procedures for the collection of data and analysis and, finally, ethical considerations are also tackled in this chapter, which is organised under the following sections: research design, population and sample, sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, procedure for data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Philosophical Assumptions

There are three types of philosophical assumptions: ontology, epistemology and axiology. This study relied on the epistemological and ontological assumptions. Epistemology describes 'how' a researcher knows about the reality and assumptions about how knowledge should be acquired and accepted. Ontology is a philosophical belief system about the nature of social reality, what can be known and how it can be known. Axiology reveals the assumptions about the value system (Pathirage et al., 2008). Greenbank (2003) observes that when researchers are deciding what research methods to adopt, they are influenced by their underlying ontological and epistemological position.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) state that the ontological assumptions are those that respond to the question 'what is there that can be known?' or what is the nature of reality?' When using ontology, the researchers have to assume that the world they investigate is a world populated with human beings who have their own thoughts, interpretations and meanings. Greenbank (2003) observes that when researchers are deciding what research methods to adopt, they are influenced by their underlying ontological and epistemological position.

On the other hand, Creswell (2007) states that qualitative studies can be placed in philosophical perspectives based on the nature of reality (ontology) from the side of the researcher and participants. In qualitative research, the intention is to report the different realities from the perspectives of the researcher and participants to the reader of the research. The intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry are equally emphasised in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Kalimaposo, 2010). In other words, there is no single reality but it is made up of multiple realities as constructed by individuals or group perspectives. This reality is also unique to individual or group situations.

Another philosophical point is the relationship between the researcher (who is the knower) and what is known (researched) called epistemology (Creswell, 2007). It is assumed that when the researcher spends much time in the field, they get “to know”. Epistemological assumption brings a researcher closer to the participants of the study, of which in this study it was all about exploring the administrators’ practices towards inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular schools.

The epistemological and ontological view adopted in this study embraces the nature of reality to be subjective, socially constructed and only understood by examining the perceptions of the human actors. To this effect, reality is understood from multiple perspectives and it is holistic and contextual in form. The study is aligned to a growing body of researchers arguing against positivism, pointing out that social science deals with action and behaviour which are generated from within the human mind and so cannot be studied externally by the researchers and researched (Bryman, 2008). This is consistent with Merriam (1997) who argues that the key philosophical assumption of a qualitative researcher is that individuals interacting with their social world construct reality.

It is assumed that meaning is embedded in people’s experiences. Further, in this study, the axiological assumption stance taken considers the researcher’s values as a critical ingredient to the success of the study as values aid to determine what are recognised as facts and the interpretations thereof. To this end, the present researcher is actively involved with that which is being researched since she happens to be a practitioner of special and inclusive education in regular primary schools in Zambia. To avoid biasness from the participants the researcher used more than one source of data or triangulated the instrument. She was also able to dissociate herself from the study because the focus was mainly on how the school

administrators helped the learners with special educational needs be included in the regular school setting.

A qualitative approach was found to be suitable for this particular study. Looking at the nature of the procedures involved, the study relied heavily on qualitative techniques and the researcher was actively involved in the construction of the realities on the practices of school administrators towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. This was done by capturing the perspectives, experiences and opinions of participants through detailed interviews, focus group discussions and observation checklist of the school environment. Epistemology helped the researcher to be able to justify and bring to light why administrators perform in the manner they do.

3.3 Research Paradigms

A paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Guba, 1990). It is a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study. Others have called them worldviews (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Mertens, 2010); epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998), or broadly conceived research methodologies (Neuman, 2009). There are unique philosophies that have been developed to help human beings understand the world they live in. They search for knowledge and truth, create as well as interpret their study. Thus, a study is built around a certain philosophy or paradigm. Murkheji and Albon (2015) borrow Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) definition of a paradigm as a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts and propositions that orient thinking and research. Willis (2007) considers a paradigm as "a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field". According to Khan (2014), "a paradigm is a structure or a set of suppositions and ideas that provides a pathway to see what the world looks like when its scientific aspect is related to its assumptions".

Guba and Lincoln (1994) view a paradigm as a basic belief system based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. To Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimate or first principles. It represents a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do.

The paradigm which this study adopted was interpretivism. Interpretivism is a philosophical position and research methods that analyse events in society based on the specific value system of the society or culture they occur in. It is based on the assumption that reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed. That is to say we can only understand someone's reality through their experience of that reality, which may be different from another person's shaped by the individuals' historical or social perspective. More recent writers who have summarised this position are Lincoln and colleagues (2011), Mertens (2010), and Crotty (1998), among others. Interpretivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The goal of this research was to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. Interpretivist researchers often address the processes of interaction among individuals and focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants.

3.4 Justification of Choosing Interpretivism

The researcher decided to use interpretivism because this paradigm is in agreement with the adopted research design. By the use of this paradigm, the participants were expected to share their experiences and feelings in the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in their schools. The researcher then interpreted the information shared by the participants in line with the topic. For example, in this study the participants shared the roles, practices and challenges they face in the implementation of inclusive education in their schools. They also shared the strengths and weaknesses they have found in the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in their respective regular schools.

3.5 Research Design

This study used a descriptive case study design in its approach. A descriptive case study is a generic term for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon and highlights that the techniques used in investigation may be varied and may include the qualitative approach (Keeves, 1997). The distinguishing feature of the case study is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and not simply a loose collection of traits. A descriptive case study is applicable in studies with an in-depth thrust having clear boundaries (Creswell, 1998). In a case study, researchers gather extensive information from multiple sources of information. Descriptive case studies delve deep into the specific context of a

phenomenon, going beyond surface-level observations. They capture the complexity of the case, including the actions, thoughts and opinions of key individuals or groups. The contextual understanding helps researcher understand the ‘why’ behind observed patterns and relationships.

The basic purpose of this research was to get an in-depth understanding of the school administrators’ practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. A research design can be understood by different scholars to mean different things. According to Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark and Morales (2007), a design may refer to approaches to research that embrace formulating research questions and procedures for collecting, analysing and reporting findings. Yin (2011) states that a research design concerns logical plans and not logistical plans. It focuses on issues of data collection, methods and sampling techniques.

In order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the school administrators’ practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, a qualitative approach was deemed to be most appropriate. Qualitative study means that the kind of information collected is not numerical but words that express feelings, perceptions and attitudes of the participants. Kothari (2004) and Nolen and Talbert (2011) describe a qualitative approach as one that investigates the quality or kind of phenomenon. That is, it aims at discovering the underlying motives, small-scale narratives and desires of people using in-depth interviews to achieve this. It is concerned with subjective and emotional assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviours. Creswell (2007) agrees that, in the entire process of research, the researcher focuses on understanding the participants’ interpretation of the issue at hand.

Further, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) stated that one fact about all qualitative design approaches is that they are descriptive in nature and the protocols for data collection, data analysis and data representations lead to narrative data that is thick and descriptive in scope. The explanation for this is that the data collected takes the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.

According to Shuttlesworth (2000), qualitative research is research involving detailed verbal descriptions of characteristics, cases, settings, people or systems obtained by interacting with, interviewing and observing the subjects. Jones and Bartlett (2017) state that qualitative research is a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them

meaning. Khan (2014) defines qualitative research as a systematic and subjective approach to highlight and explain daily life experiences and to further give them meaning. Qualitative research allows researchers to deeply explore behaviours, different perspectives and life experiences to discover the complexities of the situation through a holistic framework (Khan, 2014).

Yin (1989) recommended six types of sources: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artefacts. In a case study, it is important for researchers to have contextual material available to describe the setting for the case and need a wide array of information about the case to provide an in-depth picture of it.

In this study the case study used was descriptive case study. Case studies in descriptive research involve conducting in-depth and detailed studies in which researchers get a specific person or case to answer questions under study. The goal is to arrive at a detailed description and understanding of the entity or the case. The descriptive case study design was selected for it helped to describe the real practices of school administrators regarding the inclusion of learners in regular schools.

Research Design Matrix

A research design matrix with research objectives, data type, data sources, data generation and data analysis was used to illustrate the data generation process as highlighted in the table below.

Table 1: Research Design Matrix

Research Objectives	Data Type	Source of Data	Data Generation	Data Analysis
1. Establish school administrators' practices towards inclusion of learners with SEN in regular schools.	Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Head teachers ➤ Deputy head teachers ➤ Senior teachers ➤ Class teachers 	Interviews (FDG) Observation Checklist	Thematic Analysis

2. Examine how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.	Promotion of inclusion by school administrators in regular schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Head teachers ➤ Deputy head teachers ➤ Senior teachers ➤ Class teachers 	Interviews FDG Observation Checklist	Thematic Analysis
3. Explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.	Support given to school administrators to promote inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Head teachers ➤ Deputy head teachers ➤ Class teachers 	Interviews FGD Observation Checklist	Thematic Analysis

3.6 Population

The main targets of this study were the head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers handling learners with special educational needs in the selected regular schools in Livingstone district, Zambia. The rationale for selecting these was that the researcher believes that head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers have sufficient knowledge and experiences in matters concerning learners with special educational needs in the regular schools to support the study. In this study there were three head teachers, three deputy head teachers, three senior teachers and five class teachers. The class teachers were included in this study because the researcher wanted to confirm whether what the school administrators were saying was true or not.

3.7 Sample

A sample can be said to be a smaller group or subject of the accessible target population. It has the characteristics of a larger group or population (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is carefully selected in order to be representative of the whole or entire population. Kasonde Ng'andu (2013) says a sample is a subset of the population taken to be representative of the whole study population. The sample size provides a response to the research questions. According to Neuman (2003), qualitative research works focus on non-probability or a non-random sample, which entails that they seldom determine the sample size in advance.

Sampling itself is a process of drawing a sample from a population. It is done in order to reduce the cost and time of doing a research. A sample also helps to reduce on the number of participants in the research by making it manageable as well as controllable on the part of the researcher (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

The study used purposive sampling which is one of the non-probability sampling techniques. Expert sampling technique was used to sample the teachers that were teaching learners with special educational need. Homogeneous sampling was used to sample school administrators in the selected regular schools. In this study, the sample comprised fourteen (14) participants, of whom three (3) were head teachers, three (3) deputy head teachers and three (3) senior teachers. The five class teachers were used in the focused group discussions. Three practising inclusive education schools were purposely sampled for the study.

3.8 Biographical Profile of Participants

The study had fourteen participants, of which nine were school administrators and five class teachers. Among the school administrators there were three head teachers, three deputy head teachers and three senior teachers. The school head teachers who participated in this study were all males and their profile is presented below.

Table 2: Profile of head teachers

Code	Gender	Age	Qualification	Years at current school	Work Experience
HT1	Male	52	B.ED.SP	2 years	28 tears
HT2	Male	50	MA. Applied. Psychology	10 years	28 years
HT3	Male	55	Sec. degree	8 years	32 years

The deputy head teachers were two males and one female. Their profile is presented below.

Table 3: Profile of deputy head teachers

Code	Gender	Age	Qualification	Years at current school	Work Experience
DHT1	Male	43 years	Sec. degree	2 years	19 years
DHT2	Female	48years	Pri. degree	2 years	23 years
DHT 3	Male	57 years	Sec. degree	10 years	32 years

The next profile is for senior teachers: two females and one male.

Table 4: Profile of senior teachers

Code	Gender	Age	Qualification	Years at current school	Work Experience
ST1	Female	53	Pri. Degree	1 year	25 years
ST2	Female	50	B.ED.SP	5 years	25 years
ST3	Male	53	B.Ed.SP	8 years	27 years

The table below shows the characteristics of the class teachers who participated in a focus group discussion.

Table 5: Profile of the focus group discussion participants

Discussant	CT1	CT2	CT3	CT4	CT5
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	43	54	42	38	46
Qualification	Pri. Diploma	Pri. degree	Pri. degree	Pri. diploma	Sec. degree
Years at current school	15 years	31 years	13 years	12 years	11 years
Work Experience	15 years	31 years	17 years	16 years	25 years

3.8.1 Characteristics of the Participants

3.8.2 Administrators

Nine administrators were interviewed and five teachers in a focus group discussion explained how they include learners with special educational needs in their schools. Head teacher 1 (HT 1) is a special education degree holder. He is fifty-two years old with thirty-two years of service at a combined school which has pre-school to Grade Twelve. Head teacher 1 (HT1) had been a head teacher for fifteen years and served for two years at his current school. Head teacher 2 (HT2) is fifty years old and a holder of a Master of Applied Psychology degree at a school which is piloting in inclusive school. He is twenty-eight years in service, ten years at the current school and he has been a head teacher for ten years. Head teacher 3 (HT3) is thirty two years in service, eight years at the current school and he has been a head teacher for seven years. He is a holder of a secondary degree at a regular school, which is combined from pre-school to Grade Twelve.

The other category of administrators interviewed were the deputy head teachers. Deputy head teacher 1 (DHT 1) is a secondary degree holder at a combined school from pre-school to Grade Twelve. He is forty-three years old and nineteen years in service. He has been deputising for five years and he is two years at the current school. Deputy head teacher 2 (DHT2) is forty eight years old and twenty-four years in service. She has a primary degree and has been at the current school for six years as well as deputising for the past nine years. Deputy head teacher

3 (DHT3) is fifty-six years old and thirty two years in service. He is a holder of a secondary degree and has been deputising for the past ten years.

Senior teachers were also interviewed under the category of administrators. Senior teacher number 1 (ST1) is fifty-three years old and twenty-five years in service at a combined school which begins from pre-school to Grade Twelve. She has a primary degree and has been a senior for one year. Senior teacher 2 (ST2) is fifty-four years old. He has a degree in special education at a combined schools. Senior teacher 3 (ST3) is forty-seven years old and twenty-four years in service. She has been senior teacher for the past eight years at a primary school and has a secondary school degree.

3.8.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers also had a focus group discussion. The class teachers who formed a focus group discussion come from one pilot school in inclusive education and the head teacher selected the five teachers who had learners with special educational needs. Class teacher 1 (CT1) is fifty four-years old and thirty-one years in service at a school piloting inclusive education. She has been at the current school for thirty-one years and she has a primary degree. Class teacher 2 (CT2) is forty-three years old and fifteen years in service. He has been at the current school for fifteen years and holds a secondary diploma. Class teacher 3 (CT3) is forty-two years old and seventeen years in service. She has been at the current school for thirteen years and has a primary degree. Class teacher 4 (CT4) is thirty-eight years old and sixteen years in service. She has been at the current school for twelve years and has a primary diploma. Class teacher 5 (CT5) is fifty years old and has a degree in special education at a combined school. She is twenty-five years in service and has been at the current school for five years.

3.8.4 Sampling Procedure

In terms of sampling procedure, the participants were selected purposively. The sampling technique used was criterion sampling because the researcher believes that the participants possess certain characteristics or have experiences in dealing with learners with special educational needs. Ghosh (2008) states that purposive sampling is the selection of a sample based on the judgement of the researcher. The concept of purposive sampling as used in qualitative research means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can inform the understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study

(Creswell 2007). Although sampling can change during a study and researchers need to be flexible, there is a need to identify a strategy beforehand. For this study, people with information about the practices of school administrators towards learners with special educational needs in regular schools are head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and the class teachers teaching such pupils.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), qualitative researchers are likely to choose purposive sampling to yield the best understanding of whatever they wish to study. Purposive sampling is known to be very useful in qualitative research because of the detailed descriptions of data it brings from the field. Lodico et al. (2010) say that the goal of purposive sampling is not to obtain a large and representative sample; the goal is to select persons, places, or things that can provide the richest and most detailed information that can help one answer the research questions.

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), purposive sampling is a method where the researcher purposefully targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study. For example, three head teachers, three deputy head teachers and three senior teachers from the three regular schools were purposefully sampled because of the experience of having learners with disabilities in their institutions. Five class teachers from a selected inclusive school were also purposefully sampled because of the past experience in teaching learners with disabilities.

Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel and Page (2011) define purposive sampling (also called judgmental sampling) as a type of sampling which involves selecting elements in the sample for a specific purpose. This type of sampling provides the researcher with the target from which to collect intended data, hence one can manage data collection in time and at a low cost. In studies where the researcher feels there is a critical need for key respondents, such sampling is crucial in collecting the desired data. The main goal of purposive sampling is to identify the cases, individuals or communities' best suited to helping answer the research questions and it works best when one has a lot of background information about the research topic.

This study used expert sampling. Expert sampling is used when the researcher needs to glean knowledge from individuals with particular expertise. This expertise is necessary during the starting phase of qualitative research because it can help highlight new areas of interest. This technique is usually used when research requires individuals with a high level of knowledge about a particular subject. In this study the researcher identified teachers who are trained in

special/inclusive education to answer the focus group questions on the practices of school administrators towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools.

The other sampling technique which was used in this study was homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling involves selecting similar cases to further investigate a particular phenomenon or subgroup of interest. Homogeneity is commonly interpreted as meaning that all the items in the sample are chosen because they have similar or identical traits. In this study the researcher identified administrators who are practising inclusive education in their schools to answer the interview questions based on the inclusive practices in their schools. The observation checklist was also used on the school administrators and the general school environment.

3.9 Research Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data and these were a focus group discussion guide, an interview guide and an observation checklist. The researcher used these instruments in data collection because of several advantages that they represent, ranging from explanatory powers, appropriateness, to ability in the data generated to support this kind of study (Cohen & Marion, 1998). In relation to explanatory powers of the instruments, the researcher refers to the instruments' ability to generate data capable of providing adequate explanations to questions which were raised in the study.

3.9.1 Interview Guide

The researcher used an interview guide in the collection of data from head teachers, deputy head teachers, and senior teachers. Hair et al. (2011) explain that an interview guide should specify the topics to cover, the questions to be asked, the sequence or topics and the wording of the questions (which is fixed), but there are no scales for measuring concepts. The interview involved the interviewer using oral questions during interviews and interviewees giving oral responses to the questions. The interviews involved dealing with one interviewee at a time. The interviewees were made to speak in their own words, which were recorded on an audio and then transcribed into written notes for the purpose of analysis. In some cases, the researcher took brief notes directly from the main points which were raised in response to a question during interviews.

Patton (1990) sees interviews as one of the qualitative research methods that enable a researcher to find out what is in another person's mind. It is an ideal method in that it is easy to capture one's feelings, thoughts and interests with it than other forms of research instruments. In this study, the use of an interview guide helped the researcher to understand what was in the participants' mind on the practices of school administrators towards learners with disabilities in their schools. Although the use of the interview guide in this study was time-consuming, it was effective in the collection of data in that it enabled the researcher to probe the responses for detailed information on a particular item covered in the interview guide (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

3.9.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide

A focus group discussion was used with the teachers who teach learners with special educational needs at a pilot inclusive school. A focus group discussion is a carefully planned discussion in a group designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. In a focus group discussion (FGD), participants hear from each other. As the discussion progresses, participants have an opportunity to refine and sharpen what they have to say and move to a deeper and more desired level of interaction (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The interaction of participants is useful in the generation of solutions or strategies to an issue because there is teamwork with less influence from the researcher. The FGD has been found to be good at providing a social context within which the phenomenon is taking place (Cohen et al., 2007). By responding to each other, participants reveal more of their own thoughts and experiences on the subject of study. In other words, FGDs shape people's views or reflections on social constructions as well as individual self-identity shared meanings (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003)

Furthermore, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) identified some forms that FGDs may take. They talk about the typical FGD which involves between six to eight participants who meet only once for a period of one or two hours. The second FGD form is where the constituted group reconvenes within one or two weeks after the first meeting mainly to report their experiences after an intervention or carrying out an assignment. An FGD may take the form of a workshop where a larger group meets for a longer session with a structured programme of activities. Small groups can be created with specific tasks assigned and later report to the larger group. Finally, FGDs may be presented as a consultative process. Cohen et.al (2007) state that

consultative panels can be conducted by drawing people together in a series of sessions to deliberate and this contributes to decision-making. The form or type of FGD used depends on the nature of the study and the data the researcher would like to be generated.

This study used the typical type of FGD where participants met once for about one hour. This type was found to be more viable because there was no justification to have follow-up discussions because there were no interventions put in place to warrant follow-ups. FGDs were relevant because they enabled the class teachers to listen to one another on the issues pertaining to how school administrators managed to include learners with special educational needs in the respective schools. They were able to agree and disagree on issues, thereby giving the study the complex and more accurate scenario on the ground.

A focus group discussion guide is chosen to address a specific topic in depth in a comfortable environment to get a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from a group of individuals who share some common experience relative to the dimension under study. One of its advantages is that not only does it disclose what is important to individual participants, but the group setting also attempts to create a synergistic environment resulting in a deeper, more insightful discussion (Anderson, 1998). A guide for focus group discussions was used for class teachers teaching learners with disabilities to collect in-depth data on beliefs of inclusive practices of school administrators towards learners with disabilities they have in regular schools.

3.9.3 Observation Checklist

An observation checklist is a list of things that a researcher is going to look for when collecting data. This list was prepared by the researcher before going in the field to collect data. It is a subjective method of gathering information as it depends on the researcher's sensory organs. The observation guide was used to collect data from the head teachers and the school environment at large.

3.10 Rationale for the Choice of Instruments

This section explains the rationale for the choice or the number of the instruments used in the collection of data for this study. The choice of the instruments is based on the theory of triangulation. The theory dates back to the 1970s when Denzin developed a systematic approach of triangulation for social research (Flick, 2014). The use of multiple methods in the

collection of data for the same purpose is called methodological triangulation. Keeves (1997) defined triangulation as the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Triangulation is a very important tool in research. It adds depth and breadth of data to be collected and the practice was adopted in this study. This study collected data using an interview guide, a focus group discussion and observation checklist. This was out of an understanding that no single method can collect all the data required in a study, hence the use of triangulation.

3.10.1 Piloting of Instruments

A pilot study tests an instrument intended to collect certain information before actual administration of that instrument. Piloting is a very important undertaking before research tools are administered as it helps to ascertain the validity of the instruments. It helps to give prior knowledge of whether the instruments designed would collect the intended data for the study. Piloting also helps to check the reliability of the instruments once administered on the actual sample. If the piloted instruments fall short of reliability, they need to be revised.

Two of the objectives of a pilot study are the development of some questions and the exclusion of others which prove ineffective (Pole and Lampard, 2002). A pilot can therefore help the researcher improve the intended data-collection instruments. The researcher would easily evaluate whether the questions asked in an interview are clear or ambiguous to participants. Pilots also provide a picture of the nature of information the researcher wishes to collect from the intended study. Pole and Lampard (2002) say that a pilot study can be viewed as a piece of research in its own right. The researcher can gauge whether the study being undertaken would yield the desired results or not.

3.10.2 Piloting the Interview

The interview was piloted with one school involving one head teacher, one deputy head teacher and a senior teacher. The responses they provided demonstrated that the data the researcher was going to collect would be reliable although the researcher saw the need of adding some more questions to be able to yield all the information required. For instance, they were able to provide their personal perspectives on the practices that they are using in the implementation of inclusive education. Basically, the questions for the three administrators

were the same and the researcher also gained confidence in the nature of information that was provided.

3.11 Data Collection Procedure

The ethical clearance letter was obtained from Director of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS) to enable the researcher to carry out the research. Other letters from Provincial Education Office of Southern Province and the District Education Board Secretary's office from respective districts were collected to enable the researcher to collect data in the nine schools. Interviews involving head teachers were administered by the researcher during school time because it was the only opportunity to get hold of the participants. Similarly, interviews involving deputy head teachers and senior teachers were administered during working hours of the weekdays within their convenient time. One focus group discussion involving five class teachers handling learners with special educational needs at a pilot inclusive was conducted during school hours.

3.12 Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness was ensured by conducting a pilot study and member checking for feedback and confirmation of the findings by the participants. Their views were incorporated in the report. According to Williamson, Radford & Bennetts (2003), trustworthiness requires that the argument is complete, allowing the reader (or reflective designer) to follow and understand it without unexplained leaps from argument to conclusion. In qualitative research, generalisability is not the aim. What is important is to enhance the trustworthiness by following the trustworthiness of the study (Mashele, 2003). Internal validity was ensured by the logical connections from the topic, objectives, research questions, purpose of the study, research design, research instruments, data analysis and description of findings.

3.12.1 Credibility

Triangulation can assist the researcher in identifying both convergence and divergence in the emerging data. This study used a number of methods to collect data. Triangulation encompasses the application of diverse methods, such as observation, focus group discussions and individual interviews, which form the major data generation strategy for qualitative research. This study employed the data generation approaches such as individual interviews,

focus group discussion and observation. Such an approach in data generation helped to complement the strengths and shortfalls inherent in each of the various data generation tools applied.

Member checking was another strategy which helped to make the study credible. According to Boblin et al. (2013) and Punch (1998), member checking involves taking data and interpretations back to the participants so that they can confirm the credibility of the information in the transcript. The scripts were sent to the participants to confirm information as some of them had made adjustments. The researched data was equally recorded on a digital recorder and the field notes complemented the capture of non-verbal data from the participants. The recordings were listened to repeatedly to ensure that the transcripts were correct. Another strategy used to ensure credibility is the prolonged engagement and persistent observation of participants in the field (Creswell, 2007). This helps to create trust between the researcher and the participants and helps the researcher to get greater understanding of the context and allow for checking for misinformation. The more time the researcher spends, the more experience he or she gains and the more chances there are of collecting accurate and valid data. In this study, the researcher remained in the field conducting interviews, particularly at the university and the teacher training college.

Researchers such as Shenton (2004) and Smith (2006) recommend reflexivity as another means to enhance and strengthen the credibility of qualitative studies. Both credibility and dependability relate to all aspects of the research design, including the focus of the research, the context, participant selection, data collection, and the amount of data collected, all of which influence how accurately the research questions can be answered (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004).

3.12.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research process (Sandelowski 1986, Polit et al., 2006; Streubert 2007). Regarding dependability in qualitative inquiry, researchers must endeavour to enable future researchers to repeat their study (Shenton, 2004). Dependability is an instrument of maintaining quality achieved through detailed reporting at all the stages in the entire process of the research from data collection through analysis to interpretation (Yin, 2009).

Detailed coverage of the methodology and methods employed allows the reader to assess the extent to which appropriate research practices have been followed (Shenton, 2004). Researchers should document research design and implementation, including the methodology and methods, the details of data collection (e.g. field notes, memos, the researcher's reflexivity journal), and reflective appraisal of the project (Shenton, 2004; Polit et al., 2006; Streubert 2007). Reflexivity can reduce bias and increase dependability by increasing transparency of the research process (Guba 1981; Malterud, 2001; D'Cruz et al. 2007; Tong et al., 2007). In this study the researcher employed dependability by making the research instrument reliable by conducting a pre-testing or pilot study.

3.12.3 Transferability

Transferability is a type of external validity which refers to the degree to which the phenomenon or findings described in one study are applicable or useful to theory, practice, and future research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Transferability can be critical to the application of research findings because policy and management can rely on data, conclusions, and recommendations from a single or small number of research projects, often relying on evidence from a range of contexts that can be different to the one in which applications could be made.

Qualitative researchers are reluctant to generalise findings because the context of cases differs in which qualitative studies are conducted and are unique, thereby making generalisation a challenge (Yin, 2002). However, to overcome this challenge, the inquirer needs to select representative cases to include in the qualitative study. Further, Yin (2003), cited in Creswell et al. (2007), states that a multiple-case design uses the logic of replication where the procedures are replicated for each case. Case studies are best generalised to a theory where the results of the findings are analysed in terms of a broader theory to see how well they fit.

According to Morrow (2005) and Shenton (2004), findings of a study are transferrable if other researchers are able to generalise them to the given setting. This can be achieved through boundary setting of the study. Thus, it is crucial that researchers clearly state the extent to which findings may or may not be relevant to other contexts. Transferability can also be achieved if the researcher provides thick, detailed descriptions about the research processes, and the relationship between the researcher and the participants. This way, readers can decide whether the findings can be generalised in other contexts (Morrow, 2005).

Qualitative research studies, however, are not typically generalizable according to quantitative standards because qualitative research findings often relate to a single or small number of environments or individuals (Maxwell, 1992; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Instead, the purpose can be to identify, and begin to explain, phenomena where a lack of clarity prevents it from being, as yet, clearly defined. The methodology and analysis of the qualitative research must show why the research can be clearly related (transferred) to the original theory. Transferability in this study was ensured through contextualising with other studies in which similar information was found and new information was added on to the body of knowledge. This study further endeavoured to meet this criterion of transferability by including school administrators of regular schools with learners with special educational needs and also by checking the findings with the class teachers of the same learners in the respective schools.

3.12.4 Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability entails that findings are as a result of the experiences of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004; Smith 2006). To achieve confirmability, researchers must demonstrate that the results are clearly linked to the conclusions in a way that can be followed and, as a process, replicated. Its relevance to application is similar to credibility, where confirmability has particular implications for studies that provide policy recommendations.

Morrow (2005) elaborated that confirmability is based on the perspective that integrity of a study is dependent on how the researcher puts together the data from the analysis process and the results of the study to make it easy for the reader to confirm that the findings are adequate. One way of ensuring confirmability is through a process known as audit trail. Shenton (2004) affirms that we can ensure confirmability through triangulation of data sources.

In qualitative research, the philosophical and epistemological position of the research were determined by both the problem and the predisposition of the researcher, in terms of their way of categorising “truth,” for example (Moon and Blackman, 2014). Thus, the researcher needs to report on the steps taken both to manage and reflect on the effects of their philosophical or experiential preferences, where necessary. Miles and Huberman (1994) highlight that reporting on researcher predisposition, beliefs, and assumptions is a major criterion of confirmability and should be clearly reported on in qualitative research. Such reflexivity does not necessarily demonstrate a removal of bias, but does help explain how the researcher’s

position can manifest in the research findings while still yielding useful insights. By providing a detailed methodological description, the researcher enables the reader to determine confirmability, showing how the data, and constructs and theories emerging from it, can be accepted (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the findings were presented in verbatim way in order to enhance the confirmability quality check.

3.13 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning in data which can be communicated to others. Hatch (2002) states that analysis means organising and interrogating data in a way that enables the researcher to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships and make interpretations or generate theories. The researcher has to be actively engaged intellectually to go through the data to realise these detailed elements of the process.

In this study data was analysed thematically under qualitative approach. Flick (2013) defines qualitative data analysis as the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it. This was possible because interview guides were prepared on the objectives of the study. Data analysis in qualitative research is not a one-off exercise but it is custom-built and an iterative process. It involves collection of data, data analysis and report writing. All these are interrelated and often occur simultaneously. In other words, data analysis has three general but distinct stages of preparing and organising data, reducing the data into themes through coding and condensing codes and finally representing the data as figures, tables or discussion (Creswell, 2007).

It should be noted that data processing begins during fieldwork or data collection. Below is a detailed explanation of how the data was analyzed. The first stage was data preparation and organization. All interviews conducted with the administrators and class teachers were audio-recorded and transcribed in verbatim to ensure accurate representation of their narratives. The transcripts were read multiple times to gain a holistic understanding of the data and identify emerging themes or patterns. Notes were taken during this process to document initial impressions. Transcripts were organized systematically and coded using qualitative data analysis manually.

Second stage involved setting aside the researcher's biases (bracketing) to focus solely on the participants' experiences. This step was critical to ensure that the findings reflected the

participants authentic perspectives, not the researcher's preconceptions. Attention was given only to the participants' accounts, stripping away unrelated or external contexts to concentrate on their personal narratives.

The third stage was coding and thematic analysis. Initial codes were developed based on significant statements or phrases from the transcripts that captured the administrators and teachers' experiences in dealing with learners with special educational needs. Thereafter related codes were grouped into categories or themes to reflect broader ideas.

The fourth stage involved horizontalization which ensured that every significant statement from participants was given equal value during analysis. This process involved identifying meaningful units (quotes or phrases) from the transcripts and assigning meaning to these units while avoiding redundancy.

Fifth stage was textural description focused on what the participants experienced. This stage synthesized the significant statements and themes to describe the explicit experiences of dealing with special educational needs learners in regular schools. The final step was synthesizing the textural and structural descriptions to identify the core essence of the phenomenon the universal elements that defined the experience of teaching and managing learners with special educational needs. The other stage was validation of findings. The participants were invited to review the findings to ensure their narratives were accurately represented and the analysis process and findings were reviewed by colleagues or experts in qualitative research to enhance credibility. The results were presented as detailed narratives supported by direct quotes from participants. Themes were explained with rich descriptions and contextual insights, providing a vivid portrayal of the participants.

The second stage was to identify the themes to be used in coding the data. According to Clarke and Braun (2013), researchers are at liberty to express emerging research themes in various ways. The data was coded accordingly from the sources reviewed and across each site case. Identification of emerging themes or categories preceded coding of information.

In the second stage of coding, called axial coding, the researcher reviews the database to provide insight to categories (Creswell, 2007). Having identified the codes and grouped them in line with the research objectives, the researcher had to begin the coding process which involved going through each script and code information on the identified themes. This was done manually where the researcher had to repeatedly refer to the transcripts. Sub-categories

or themes also emerged. These were coded under the main themes. The quotations that made up themes were analysed to arrive at significant findings. The last stage of coding, known as the main focus, was to organise information into figures or coding paradigm where interrelated information was put together to generate propositions. In this stage the researcher was able to interrelate data from different respondents on specific themes.

This holistic analysis of data was done in order to understand the issues in the study. It also helped to identify emerging concepts and connect different phenomena to come up with propositions. Besides, thematic analysis aided understanding of the complexity and relatedness of the issues related to school administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools.

The questions employed in the interview formed the central themes on which the analysis was based. The responses of each question were grouped according to the emerging themes or sub-themes that emerged from the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) asserted that qualitative researchers use semiotics, narratives, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, as well as statics, tables, graphs and numbers. Participants' responses were taken and explained using words. The views of the participants were described in a verbatim state and according to their understanding and conclusions which were drawn from the available data. The frequency of certain responses was taken into consideration as a basis for drawing certain themes and conclusions. The interpretation of data was done using descriptions and explanations of participants' responses. Responses were coded into themes. Major themes and sub-themes were identified and data were grouped according to the identified themes.

3.14 Coding of Participants

For easy identification of participants and their contributions to the study, codes were assigned as follows: Head teacher 1 (HT1), head Teacher 2 (HT2), head teacher 3 (HT3), deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1), deputy head teacher 2 (DHT2), deputy head teacher3 (DHT3), and class teacher 1 (CT1). class teacher 2 (CT2), class teacher 3 (CT3), class teacher 4 (CT4), class teacher 5 (CT 5).

3.15 Ethical Considerations

Hatch (2002) and Creswell (2007) advise that researchers must take measures to protect participants in research from any kind of harm or loss of dignity. In this study, ethical

guidelines and procedures, according to the ethical guidelines of humanities and social sciences of the University of Zambia, were applied. Participants were not coerced into participating in the study.

The researcher explained to the participants the procedures and objectives of the research and obtained permission from them to have interviews audio-recorded. The participants were informed of confidentiality and assured them that the information they would give was going to be used for academic purposes only. The real names of the participants were not to be used in the final report or any scripts which were generated from the data; instead, identification codes would be used so that the information given would not be directly linked to them.

Participation was voluntary and the participants could withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences to themselves or the school. Each participant was given a consent form to sign to ensure confidentiality. No physical or psychological risks or discomforts were expected from the study. However, if participants indicated some anxiety when recollecting events, counselling was provided. All information collected was treated as confidential, and anonymity of participants was assured, including that of the school. In as much as qualitative research intrudes in the lives of the participants, the researcher respected the privacy of the participants by conducting interviews in neutral places and endeavoured to ask questions that did not bring emotional or psychological harm to the participants. Participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the study by means of a participation information sheet, and written consent was obtained from each participant to take part voluntarily in this study.

Further, the ethics committee cleared the research proposal as provided for in the university regulations. The ethical clearance reference for this study was IORG No. 0005376 HSSREC IRB No. 00006464 REF NO. HSSREC-2023-NOV-033. See attached ethical clearance in appendices

3.16 Summary

In this chapter, a description of the methodology that was used to collect the required data has been discussed. The chapter provided highlights on the philosophical assumptions, research paradigm, research design, population, sample and procedure used to generate the information required to support the study. A justification and description of the research instruments, data collection procedure and how data was analysed was given in order to help the reader

understand how the findings of the study were arrived at. The issues of validity and reliability have been conceptualized as they relate to qualitative research. The equivalent terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as used in qualitative research have been given and the researcher has explained how these relate in order to enhance trustworthiness of the study. The chapter ends by providing ethical considerations and trustworthiness which was made in relation to this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

Chapter three focused on the methodology applied in this research that culminated in chapter four on the findings of the study. Chapter four presents the main findings of the study. The first part gives biographical information of participants. The section on findings follows and is presented according to themes which emerged from data gathered from all participants. The findings are supported by many verbatim quotations from the participants.

As a recap, there were four key research questions addressed that guided this study.

1. What practices do school administrators employ to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in their schools?
2. How do the practices school administrators' employ enhance or promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools?
3. How are administrators supported to implement inclusive education for learners with special educational needs in schools?
4. What framework can work better to support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusion of learners with special educational needs in schools?

The four research questions above formed the reflection point throughout chapter four and chapter five, as demonstrated by the themes that subsequently emerged. The findings have been presented according to the research questions while presentation of findings under each research question and discussions also followed.

4.3 Emerged Themes

The researcher spent close to two months interacting with the participants from the three regular schools practising inclusive education in Livingstone district in Southern Province. After the interactions with the participants on the practices of school administrators towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, the following themes emerged: (i) Monitoring (ii) Coaching (iii) sensitisation and (iv) Enrolment of learners with special education needs. On how the administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs, the following themes emerged: (i)

Provision of adequate teaching and learning materials (ii) Increased enrolment (iii) Conducive environment and (iv) collaboration. On the support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs the themes that emerged were: (i) Government grants (ii) Short training on inclusive education and (iii) Introduction of health rooms.

4.4 School Administrators' Practices Towards Inclusion

One of the objectives of this study was to establish school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. The question asked in order to establish the existing practices of administrators towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools was to describe the practices school administrators employ to promote the inclusion of such learners in their schools. After the researcher's interactions with the participants, the study established a number of practices of administrators towards the enhancement of inclusive education in regular schools. One of them was monitoring of the teaching and learning of learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms. The responses were as shown below:

4.1.1 Monitoring

School head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers were asked whether they monitor the learning and teaching of learners with special educational needs in their schools. In response the head teachers, the deputy head teachers and senior teachers said they did monitor the teaching and learning of learners with special educational needs in their classrooms. This was done by checking their schemes of work, lesson plans, class registers and the progress chart of every learner. When they were asked to give details on their areas of focus when monitoring they indicated that during monitoring the administrators' areas of focus were the academic delivery, pedagogy, teachers' preparedness, syllabus interpretations, how learners' individual needs were met, the school and classroom environment in general, and the teachers' well-being.

In support of this view, the following submission was made by one head teacher (HT1) who had this to say:

'When I go to monitor I monitor a lot of things. First of all I monitor academic delivery and through that I have to monitor the pedagogy, how

do they apply their methodology, how do they do syllabus interpretations and how do the individual special needs of learners get met. I look at their preparedness, environment in the school and the class, including the teachers' state of being, I monitor all that.'

In the same vein a deputy head teacher (DHT 2) also had this to say:

'To begin with we normally look at the planning of a teacher. Are they really planning for the syllabi because in education we have situations where teachers mainly use the textbooks but the objectives from the syllabi are not even met. We also look at how they are delivering the lesson and how the learners are participating in the lesson activities because there are some learners whose hands are constantly up and what about those whose hands are always down, how does the teacher bring those ones on board? And normally that's where our learners with disabilities fall. So we normally encourage our teachers to include them, especially giving them responsibilities when it comes to group work. Learners with disabilities should always be given chance to say something. We also check in the books of the learners, especially those that are slow. If they got some questions wrong, what are the comments? And if the comments are not that good then we discuss.'

Class teacher 4 (CT4) also had this to say:

'The main part of monitoring which they consider the most is on the teaching methods/pedagogy, which is mainly their area of interest and how they actually make sure that even the slow learners or probably the visually impaired participate in class.'

From this finding it is clear that the administrators monitored the learning process of the learners with special needs as they see to it that the teacher follows all the teaching processes required by the teaching fraternity.

Another head teacher (HT2), during the interview, indicated that he monitored all the learners although he was quick to say that when monitoring he does the monitoring without special attention to those with special educational needs as he regards every learner to be equal. In his submission he had this to say:

'Yes, and again without special interest. We don't go to them as special children. We monitor them like any other child because the learning in classes is based on objectives and so when we go to class we try to see whether these children meet the objectives that the teachers would have stated in their lesson plans and if they are responding, then we are okay with that!'

In a focus group discussion teachers teaching learners with special educational needs were also asked to give an account as to whether the school administrators came to monitor their teaching and they had the following responses:

Class teacher 1 (CT1):

'Maybe I can simply say, here at this school we don't have the profound but we have those with mild disabilities incorporated in the mainstream. So that means these learners are treated like any other child because here we treat every child the same in exception of those with visual problems that's when teachers would pay attention. We don't have any machinery which a disabled child can use and we don't have expert teachers that can handle the profound, so now even when they do the monitoring, they monitor like any other classroom. Maybe they may point out to say that child was not paying attention and this one did not write very well.'

Senior teacher 3 (ST3) also said:

'We do monitor them knowing that the type of children that we have are not those with severe problems. The type of materials that they use are the same materials from the mainstream which are offered with the same curriculum. Our areas of concern are to see how teachers prepare, or how they plan for these children with disabilities. We would want to see the progress of our learners and whether, as teachers, as they prepare they consider the progress in our learners with disabilities!'

This clearly shows that the learners with special needs are somehow neglected as they are expected to move at the same pace with their peers without special needs. Teachers expect every learner to achieve the set objectives of the day forgetting that some learners with disabilities may be very slow and unable to move at the same pace with the colleagues in class. The children with special

educational needs may seem as though they are slow learners and cannot perform because of competing with the so-called 'normal' learner within the same stipulated time. Equally, the head teachers' concern is to ensure that the objectives stated for the lesson by the teachers are met regardless of the learners' individual needs not being met.

In another revelation another head teacher ((HT3) indicated that his monitoring was based on making sure that the learners with special needs were progressing academically. The other concern of the head teacher was to make sure that the sitting arrangements for the learners were very conducive for every learner by making sure that they sat near the board and those on wheelchairs did not obstruct other learners' view during the learning process in class. The head teacher also makes sure that whenever a new teacher is given to these learners, he or she is sensitised on how to go about teaching these particular learners. He makes sure that the activities given to these particular learners are appropriate.

In line with this deputy head teacher 3 (DHT3) had this to say:

'We monitor our teachers every week. As a head teacher I monitor the teachers per week. In the areas of focus, since we have the physically challenged learners, one is on the wheelchair and the other one was burnt at eight months and is not able to see properly. This one who has low vision is always placed near the board so that she is able to see properly and take the instructions from the teacher without missing any. We also always make sure that the teachers that go there are told that this one should be placed near the board. The other one who is on a wheelchair we ensure that the wheelchair is placed in such a way that it is not obstructing other pupils in class. We also look at the activities that are given to the learners because what I have observed is that the performance of these two learners is not too good and sometimes they are given assignments that are equivalent to their level of performance so that they catch up with their colleagues.'

Deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) stated:

'We make sure we monitor once in a term and we look at the preparedness of a teacher, conduciveness of the learner, whether they have the materials to use, we do also assess the books where the learners write and ask if all the learners with special needs are progressing to higher grades.'

Similarly, the senior teachers were also asked the similar question and had the following to say:

One senior teacher (ST1) noted that:

'Yes I do monitor the learning and teaching at least three times per term for both the teacher and pupil. My area during monitoring sessions is to see the class management, preparation part, the teaching itself and how these teachers handle the learners generally. Do they consider the ability of the learners with special educational needs?'

In another revelation, class teacher 3 (CT3) also had this to say:

'I can just say monitoring is done every day but one-on-one monitoring is done every term. Sometimes it is done by them taking part in the learning process.'

This was echoed by class teacher 5 (CT5), who had this to say:

'Yes, they do. Every term we are monitored by the school administration. They want to look at the teaching methods as well as the progress in the children because they are aware that these children have been in the school maybe for a year. So within a year, what is it that the child has achieved from the past year to the following year? They will compare what the child was doing in the first term by checking children's work termly.'

This clearly shows that the school administrators have keen interest in making sure that the learners with special needs are progressing to the next level and at the same pace with the other learners. On the other hand, from this finding the researcher feels it is not enough to do the monitoring once per term as the main concern is with the progression of the learners with special education needs in regular classrooms who may be slow in grasping the concepts.

In an interview with deputy head teachers it was also established that they also monitored the planning of the teachers, their pedagogies, conduciveness of the environment and whether the teachers have the materials required for use.

One deputy head teacher (DHT3) indicated that his main interest was whether the learners with disabilities such as spinal bifida had comfortable chairs since they were expected to be

in class from 08:00 hours to 12:00 hours. He also mentioned that his interest was to see whether the content was appropriate for the learners with special educational needs or not.

In support of this, he had this to say:

‘Basically I look at whether the content that the learner is taking up appropriate for himself or herself. I will mention the environment, for example; a child with spinal bifida, you know, they will stretch their back like that and expected to be seated on these usual desks that we have and I don’t know how they manage to sustain themselves from 08:00 hours to 12:00 hours. So all that we check and sometimes demand that teachers do alternative seating arrangements where the children move away from the floor and go outside so that they are not in one position for a longer time.’

Another senior teacher (ST2), responding to the same question, had this to say:

‘Ah, we have a system of monitoring where all the administrators would come and observe our teaching. We also encourage peer-to-peer monitoring. A lot of information comes out from those monitoring activities that we do. Of course we go there not only to look at the child but we are also comparing the content and how the teacher is teaching. So there is a teacher, there is a child and there is content that is being covered.’

It was established from the study that all the head teachers, deputy head teachers and the senior teachers do monitor the teaching and learning of learners with special education needs regularly. They also made sure that these learners are progressing to the next level.

4.4.2 Coaching

Participants were asked whether they do coach the teachers after every monitoring. In response to this, the head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers said every monitoring, is followed by coaching.

In line with this, head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

‘Every monitoring is followed by a talk. After monitoring we make appointments at an ideal time when they are not in class and I am also free because lessons cannot be interrupted. We go through what we saw together. Some of my observations which I think are also areas of concern

the teachers clarify them and I understand why they did what they did, why I think I need to advise in terms of what should be done I dispense that myself.'

On the other hand, head teacher 2 (HT2) also had this to say:

'We have coaching programmes that are in school. So when we see the ailments from our teachers we do advise, we do tell them what is expected of them, so we do coach them.'

This was echoed by head teacher 3 (HT3), who said:

'Yes, we do coach them. We sit down with them and we look at the lesson. We make observations and the teachers will also explain and then we agree.'

Deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) also had this to say:

'For lower primary coaching is a requirement. We do sit them down and discuss on the lesson especially on the participation of the learners because sometimes the learners may not be getting anything. We coach and also share strategies and methods/pedagogies to at least cater for those who cannot understand the methods the teacher may be employing in class.'

On the other hand, senior teacher 1 (ST1) also had this to say:

'That is part of coaching I can say we sit and have a one-to-one talk with the teachers about how the lesson went.'

Senior teacher 3 (ST3) also had this to say:

'In fact that is our custom as a school or it is a school policy. When we monitor our teachers we sit down and evaluate the lesson and then look at the strengths and weaknesses so that the next lesson there should be some improvements.'

This was supported by class teacher 1 (CT1) who also had this to say:

'The one-on-one, the person who has monitored you will call you to the office after the lesson and talk about the weaknesses and strengths of the

lesson. After that they give you a critique, which is then filed in the teacher's file but the one whereby it's spontaneously done, there is nothing written and there is no verbal warning but would just say I wish you could improve here and sometimes they would not say anything.'

Class teacher 5 (CT5) had this to say:

'We do sit after each monitoring. There could be areas they feel we need to do better. They could be areas also they want to understand something more especially where they noticed something whilst the lesson was in progress. There is that communication after the lesson and we sit one-to-one with the monitoring tool. They are also able to check where we need to improve, so we actually have that mutual discussion after every monitoring.'

Overall, the results showed that there is always a discussion after every monitoring of the teaching and learning of learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms.

4.4.3 Enrolment of Learners with Special Needs

When participants were asked whether there are procedures they follow when enrolling learners with special education needs in regular schools, their responses varied as shown below:

In response to the question, head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

'I will be sincere with you because you are a teacher of special needs. That is one area we need to properly attend to. Currently we just enrol them as they come. When we refer them to the hospital the information that comes from the hospital has very little information to do with placement. So our placement is based on the availability of the candidate, that is if we were to assess from our own rough assessment. If it's the child we can handle and we have a place, then we go ahead, otherwise that rigorous procedure of assessment here we do not have.'

In another revelation, head teacher 2 (HT2) had this to say:

'Yes. Grade One we do oral interviews with the parents. Then apart from that we also carry out just interviews with the child to see if they are responding to certain stimuli, then they also bring the under-five card which shows their growth and what could have been happening to their critical years of their early years of their life. So that gives us information of how we can enrol, but then besides that there is a form that we send to other institutions, for example Ministry of Health where they do a thorough check and make recommendations whether a child fits in inclusion or should go to a special school. We also collaborate with the other teachers in special units to also write something and recommend that the child should be taken as an included child with a disability. '

Contributing on the same, head teacher 3 (HT3) noted that:

'What we do is when the parents come or when we identify the learners with disabilities, we give them a form which they take to the hospital. The hospital would also do an assessment on the levels of the disability so that we get to know and then after that we enrol them into the school.'

This view was supported by a deputy head teacher (DHT1), who said:

'The parents will come and we would request for a medical report from the hospital. After that we refer them to the teacher in charge to do the assessment and after the assessment that's when we are able to enrol them.'

This observation was supported by deputy head teacher 2 (DHT2) who said:

'I think to start with we have a criterion where we need to have assessment documents that come from the hospital and that is our first thing that we look at before we can subject the child to preliminary educational assessment. This is done so that we are able to determine the level at which the learner is or which level the learner can fit in well and we pick it up from there.'

In the same vein, deputy head teacher 3 (DHT3) had this to say:

'Things that we consider when enrolling learners of course is the appropriate age, we also consider the history of a learner if at all that learner had a problem so that we know how to handle that learner. We also consider the vulnerability of a learner such as the orphans so that we see how we can come in as a school to help such a learner!'

Contributing to this, senior teacher 1 (ST1) had this to say:

'The procedures we normally follow are when the parents bring the child I would assess the child and then tell them to formalise with the head teacher or I would also recommend. As a school, we do assess the child orally and see if the child fits in the particular grade depending on how they read or how they answer questions orally.'

In a focus group discussion class teacher 1 (CT1) had this to say:

'Anyway, I can simply say general assessment is done and even when a new pupil has just come we do general assessment. So we may not be able to call for practitioners but just the general assessment is done. A certain procedure which we carry out whenever we are enrolling a new pupil in classes is: there is a form where we just make a follow-up to find out how many have disabilities and how many have no disabilities.'

In another vein, class teacher 4 (CT4) had this to say:

'No, for the other grades the administrators don't use that tool where they go to the hospital but they only administer that tool for the pupils who are already in school whom they already know. In some cases pupils are enrolled in Grade One not knowing that they have a disability and when that is identified as they go along then they administer to those particular pupils.'

The findings showed that when enrolling learners with disabilities in the regular schools, some administrators had to ask for the recommendations from the health personnel allowing the child to be enrolled in regular schools, while others just enrolled them as they came without requesting for any recommendations from the hospitals. This made the learners with special

educational needs to be put in wrong grades or classes as the administrators just considered the chronological age and physical appearance of a child without considering the mental age of the child.

4.4.4 Advocacy and Sensitisation

When head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers were asked to mention the measures they have put in place to make sure that learners are not stigmatised in their classrooms and in the schools, their general responses were that they usually sensitise the learners and the general school community during assemblies. Due to increased sensitisation many parents were able to bring their children with disabilities to learn together with the so called normal children because there was less stigma in the schools and the communities where they came from.

In response to this, head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

'We sensitise the learners, teachers and the school community so that all of us can attain some levels of acceptance and know that these are our children, brothers, sisters and also know that anyone can be in that state any time. Our state of being right now is temporary because the causes leading to special needs are many and they can manifest any time, so sensitisation is key. We make sure that everybody accepts and therefore help integrate the learners with disabilities within the school community and beyond.'

This was echoed by head teacher 3 (HT3), who said:

'We talk to the pupils on assemblies because most of these, when they report for school, they are assisted by their parents. So normally what we do, we ask the parents to leave them by the gate as some of them would want to bring them up to the door. We advise them to leave their children at the gate so that we see how free they are in school. Sometimes we ask these others to say can you escort him up to the rooms where they are supposed to be, so like that we eliminate stigma. From these other pupils of course stigma would be there but we always talk to them.'

Deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) also had this to say:

'We do sensitise everyone from the mainstream not to segregate the learners with disabilities because they are just learners like them. We tell them that if you see somebody has been beaten, come in and help and where they need help also help. We also engage them in school activities like sending them at times if we need something so that they feel loved. They also do activities like raking, watering and sweeping.'

Deputy head teacher 2 (DHT2) had this to say:

'Teachers have a task and have been talked to, embrace learners with disabilities. So our pupils from the mainstream have accepted these pupils as part of this school. To the pupils the issue of stigmatisation to me I don't really see it because they are their friends at the same time. Children are always sensitised about their friends that it's not their fault that they are like that so they understand.'

In support of this deputy head teacher 3 (DHT3) had this to say:

'We don't entertain stigma by making sure that our teachers are alert, the pupils themselves, whether special or not special, are alert that anybody who bullies them, anybody who speaks malice to them or about them they report.'

This was echoed by a senior teacher 1 (ST1) who said:

'We have done a lot of sensitisation and we have engaged the community in so many ways. During PTA meetings we make sure that when we have such meetings there is a portion where we can talk about inclusive education and different disabilities that we have in the school.'

This was supported by senior teacher 2 (ST2) who said:

'In fact that one we are doing a very good job because the guidance teachers have been taught that every assembly they should talk to all the learners to say we are just one and we are all created in the image of God despite our friends having challenges. So we should at all times embrace them and not practise stigma, otherwise this can lead them to have low

self-esteem. So it is a thing that we do every assembly and I would say that it is working because they are not stigmatised. At break time when it is time to eat we see them sharing the food with their friends. Class teachers have also been talked to, to embrace learners with disabilities and embracing should not just end at teacher level, but it should be extended even to the learners.'

Senior teacher 3 (ST3) had this to say:

'Especially those that we have reintegrated in the mainstream I think the message has been heard. We are one when we talk about inclusiveness and we are not supposed to look at our different abilities. What we need to focus on is what one is able to do. If one is able to write within five minutes and achieve, then let the five minutes be availed to them so that they too can be given that opportunity to learn.'

Class teacher 1 (CT1) in a focus group discussion had this to say:

'We have talks within the classrooms and sometimes by the parade. We talk to the learners as departments. We would pick a topic that would involve everyone. So when we are talking to the learners it means we are trying to educate them on knowing that everyone has rights just like they do. Everyone, whether disabled or able-bodied should be able to enjoy the rights and no one should segregate each other based on their condition or maybe exclude them from certain school activities because of their condition. So they are given that opportunity and we are happy because our learners have time to engage in sports where they also participate at that level. So the school actually has been sensitised at different times to educate them on issues of disability and on how best we can be inclusive to our friends.'

Class teacher 2 (CT2) had this to say:

'Sensitization is actually done in many ways. There is a first place where sensitisation is done, which is during PTA meetings when we talk to the parents. Another place is at assemblies where the learners are taught and the guidance teacher holds talks with them. We have a policy where every

Wednesday is a tutorial Wednesday where class teachers are given thirty minutes before teaching time to just talk to the pupils about challenges and many other aspects that actually they cannot find in normal teaching, and in those same tutorials that's where such matters of disabilities are actually talked about to sensitise the pupils. So it has become a school policy to sensitise the pupils every Wednesday.'

In another vein, class teacher 4 (CT4) had this to say:

'Yes, the parents are aware and they have been sensitised. The fact that they come to school on their own to bring their children to learn when they hear 'oh', there is inclusiveness at this school, it means they are aware of the programme.'

After the discussions with participants on the measures they had put in place in making sure that the learners with special needs were not stigmatized, it was established that there was always sensitisation at assemblies and during PTA meetings on matters concerning different disabilities and inclusive education as a whole.

4.5 How Administrators' Practices Have Helped Promote Inclusion in Regular Schools

The head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers were asked how the administrators' practices have helped the promotion of inclusive education in regular schools. In response to the question: Are the parents willing to have their children with disabilities enrolled in regular schools? The head teachers, deputy teachers, senior teachers and class teachers said there were a lot of learners, including those with special education needs, in classrooms because of the introduction of inclusive education.

4.5.1 Increased Enrolment

In line with this, one head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

'Ah, coupled with inclusive and this free education, I will tell you that our classes are loaded. So like for me the classes are never full as long as there is a desk where a child can sit. It means the class can take the child, although the contact that the teacher will have with each individual child, is what is of concern for us when it comes to learners with special needs.'

In support of this, head teacher 2 (HT2) had this to say:

'Yes, they do but there are high enrolments because they have been given a chance to be in school. If it were those days without inclusive education, they would have been at home. They are now in school and they can interact with the so-called normal. These learners have fitted in nicely and also the teachers themselves have also fitted in well in the inclusive programme.'

This was echoed by class teacher 1 (CT1) from a focus group discussion who also had this to say:

'With the coming of free education we have a serious challenge. As you heard, the numbers that we have given you clearly show that we don't have enough infrastructure, but then it's very difficult for us to turn away the learners and so we have brought in as many as they can fit in a classroom.'

In support of this, class teacher 2 (CT2) had this to say:

'Because of high enrolments we put our learners in groups. We have established groups in all the classes and then we do more of learner-centred methods of teaching so as to manage these large populations in our classrooms.'

It was established that there were high enrolments in the schools as parents were more than willing to bring their children, including those with disabilities, in regular schools because of the introduction of inclusive education. Because of high enrolments there is a challenge of regular contact between teachers and the learners, especially the learners with special educational needs who greatly benefit on a one-to-one interaction with the teachers.

4.5.2 Adequate Teaching and Learning Materials

The participants were asked whether they provide the learning and teaching materials to learners with special educational needs in their classrooms. Responding to the question, the head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers had the following to say:

Head teacher 1 (HT 1) had this to say:

'Yes, we are managing to buy materials such as books, crayons, pens, pencils, manila paper and other stimulating materials from the government fund for teachers, to use in their teaching. Then in terms of usage it's the same teachers so they will get this resource and that resource and it becomes abundant. So teachers are provided with enough materials to use.'

To the contrary head teacher 2 (HT2) had this to say:

'The materials, they have one or two gadgets like the computers that are used by all the learners' but when you look at the pace of our friend, they need the equipment specifically made for them. So those are some of the issues that we want our donor friends or government to come in and help us with.'

In support of this, head teacher 3 (HT3) had this to say:

'Just as I said on the funds that they may not be enough but teachers are in a space where they can plan and get what they need.'

On another hand, senior teacher 1 (ST1) had this to this:

'In the mainstream I would say the materials are not enough because most of the learning and teaching aids are made by teachers and then the buying of LTAs to help those with visual impairments, I have not seen the school coming in to buy for them. Otherwise maybe I would say they are trying but teachers are coming up with their own materials.'

Senior teacher 2 (ST2) had this to say:

'With the grant now I think we have no excuse but it's up to us to actually procure what we think we need as a department. So this can be in material form. If it is for an activity for daily living we need to purchase the pots, we need to get a stove so that we teach them how to cook. When it comes to academic aspect we buy the books, get books probably that we don't have we are able to purchase and get to print out to them what we need for their teaching.'

Senior teacher 3 (ST3) had this to say:

'The teachers have that liberty to sit and plan. So when they come with those budgets, of course we give them guidelines to say this money is for the learners so that they are given the best education. So now when those budgets are brought to us, we go through them, especially when I see that our learners have not been considered too much I add what is needed for them and then we approve the budget. We make sure that every learner is considered.'

Class teacher 4 (CT4) had this to say in response to the question on whether the administrators do provide enough materials for their teaching:

'The word enough is a relative term but materials, yet, we do have, but they could not be enough. In inclusive trainings we learnt that resources can be generated and made available just within the school. Probably those are some of the points that we got from inclusive education because we do not worry so much about how many books one has. We were taught actually how to make materials available for teaching and learning for the pupils.'

This was echoed by class teacher 1 (CT1), who had this to say:

'I think we cannot say that materials can ever be enough especially because even classrooms, desks and boards fall in the category of materials. So when you want to include everyone I feel there is a lot more that is needed in terms of material generation. It is not every material that can be generated. Some of the materials need to be bought and they need to be manufactured from a source and these materials are then distributed to schools. We are trying our level best but we do not reach the standard which can be acceptable. There are other materials that cannot be generated locally and those are the ones we are lacking.'

In support of this, class teacher 3 (CT3) had this to say:

'And in addition because we do not really deal with severe cases when it comes to impairment, so probably we are not going to talk about braille or hearing aids and so on but these other materials, yes they do provide.'

In the same vein, class teacher 5 (CT5) had this to say:

'I think it's a provision of what is required when we look at our learners. You know we are dealing with children with intellectual disabilities. I think I will support my head here that he always gives us from the grant for special education that we are entitled to from the big chunk that comes to the school, meaning whatever we would need in terms of accessing materials for children which they need they provide.'

The school administrators indicated that they provide most teaching and learning materials required for teaching and learning of learners with special educational needs although others said they had challenges when it came to procurement of some materials such as the braille materials as they are not procured locally.

4.5.3 Conducive Environments

Participants were asked whether they had enough infrastructure and whether the school environments were friendly enough for the learners with special needs in their schools. In response, the participants said they were trying their best in making sure that they accommodated every learner and they made sure that the learning environments of learners with special needs were user-friendly.

In line with this one head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

'Yes and no. We are glad we have been receiving a grant which we are using to try and modify the infrastructure and the environment, but you know when you are modifying you don't get the best out of that infrastructure, but we are trying to modify. Currently we are just waiting for someone who is coming to work on a toilet for the children that are on a wheelchair so that they can also do something.'

In support of this, head teacher 2 (HT2) had this to say:

'Some of it yes and some of it is no but what we have done is we have made it easy for them by putting up a toilet for them because some of them may not be able to move around because the toilets are far. But those that are able we encourage them to use the other toilets together with the other

pupils and those that do not manage we let them use the one we have put for them.'

Head teacher 3 (HT3) had this to say:

'That is where we have a bit of a problem when it comes to special education pupils. We do not have 100 percent infrastructure that is user-friendly. An example, probably, are the toilets where they are supposed to have their own toilets but they are using the same toilets with the other pupils which may not be use-friendly.'

In support of this, a deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) had this to say:

'No, it is not. We are planning to make ramps because they use the stairs, which are not very user-friendly for them. We are planning to improve and make the environment user-friendly to the disabled learners.'

In support of this a senior teacher (ST1) had this to say:

'No, in terms of the environment it is not user-friendly because we don't have ramps, we don't have toilets appropriate to the different disabilities. Actually it is not an inclusive environment, I would say, because a lot needs to be done here at this school for it to be inclusive.'

Senior teacher 2 (ST2) had this to say:

'To an extent I would say yes and no. In terms of infrastructure we need to put up ramps out-side the classrooms because, as you can see, there is a lot of sand, so if our learners were to access the ablution blocks and other places in the school, there would be need for us to have pavements that is, a cement one so that the wheel-chair can be easily moved to be able to access the toilets. Even the one that is using crutches can also access that.'

Senior teacher 3 (ST3) had also this to say:

'No, it is not friendly enough and we need to build some more, especially when it comes to this learner who is wheelchair-bound the infrastructure is not friendly enough. We are struggling to build some more because even the toilets it's a challenge for her to access the facilities like the toilets.'

In line with this, class teacher 1 (CT1) from a focus group discussion had this to say:

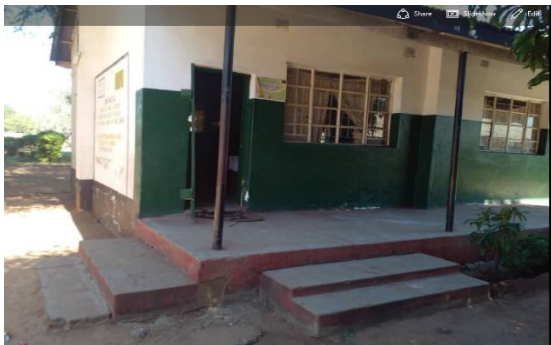
'Yes, they are friendly. If you check the front of our administration, sometime back it had a lot of bumps here and there, so when resources were found they made sure that they levelled that area so that learners with visual impairment were able to walk freely. Again, if you go to the primary section you will find that doors have got different colours. You will find that one is red, another one is in green just to help the learners to find their classroom by mastering the colour of the door.'

Class teacher 2 (CT2) had this to say:

'Again if you went behind the administration block you are going to find the walkways and those are in fact the marking and are for the learners with disabilities so that they can also know to say "okay I usually pass through this path as I go to the toilet." They are not just decorations but for the person who does not know would wonder to say I don't know what these people were trying to do, are these decorations or what, but those are road maps.'

Class teacher (CT3) also had this to say:

'If you check where we had stairs, the stairs have been levelled and now we have ramps where learners with crutches and wheelchairs would easily slide. Even the lighting also like the toilets they are painted so that there is enough light. They are painting right now again because we want a school that has remarkable toilets and so we decided to make sure that our toilets are well painted and they are conducive for learners.'



Before modification



After modification

4.5.4 Collaboration

Participants were asked whether they do collaborate with their fellow professionals in neighbouring schools on how to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs in their schools. In response to the question, all the participants indicated that they do collaborate with others for the smooth running of inclusive education in regular schools. The administrators whose schools have special units collaborate with those without special units on how to teach learners with special educational needs.

In line with this, head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

'Yes, we have a school in the neighbourhood and most of the challenges that the school is facing we ask the neighbouring school. We constantly have an engagement with all the many other schools that do inclusive education, such as (names of schools) so we do collaborate very well but even for these other schools that do not practise inclusive education sometimes they will call us just for a CPD and we are able to share one or two things about inclusive education for those that are willing of course.'

In support of this, head teacher 2 (HT2) had this to say:

'Yes we do. We make consultations of one another. If there is something you want to find out you call your colleague, how about this, how do you go about this, let them tell you. Of course we haven't had meetings of late but we do collaborate.'

Head teacher 3 (HT3) had this to say:

'Yes, our teachers also do collaborate not only with teachers in other classrooms but also with expert teachers elsewhere. I will tell you for those teachers that have handled these children have also been given them some incentives, some went to Belgium because of their teaching SEN learners and in Belgium they went to interact with highly specialised special needs teachers and some of the premise of choosing who to go to Belgium was based on that kind of arrangement. Already now next month again another teacher who taught this child who had cerebral palsy, as a way of saying thank you. She is going to Belgium for exchange visit where we have a partner school. So we are adding value every other time where the head

should go and learn and benefit, a teacher may be assigned so that they go and get more knowledge, skills, values and abilities on how best to handle this.'

Deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) had this to say:

'The collaboration is there because teachers from the mainstream do take their pupils who are slow to be helped by specialist teachers at the unit for them to receive special care and once they catch up they bring them back to the mainstream.'

In line with this senior teacher 1 (ST1) had this to say:

'When I am not clear of certain things I do ask, how do you go about this? How do you handle such issues, and information has been given to me.' Also when it comes to placement of learners into appropriate grades we engage the medical personnel to help in the assessment of the child.

Senior teacher (ST3) had this to say:

'Yes, because this school is a zonal centre. So we usually meet every three months unless otherwise when there is an urgent issue. Every quarter we meet for planning and resume.'

In support of this, class teacher 2 (CT2) had this to say:

'We do collaborate in terms of teaching. We are actually encouraged to work together, plan together, especially if you are teaching the same grade, even assessing together common assessment if we have a challenge among ourselves. We would consult to say "please come and help me teach this topic, maybe you can teach it better". Where I am not sure and don't feel confident I will just ask my friend to come and teach. How have you handled that lesson in your class and the colleague will be able to come in and help. They really encourage us to do that.'

It was established that the participants do collaborate with their fellow professionals when it comes to issues pertaining to the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. The class teachers also confirmed that they are encouraged to work together by their administrators.

4.6 Support given to the school administrators to implement inclusive education practices

4.6.1 Short Training Courses

Participants were asked whether they received any trainings on inclusive education. The question that they were asked was: how are you supported by the government and other stakeholders to enable you to implement inclusive education for the learners with disabilities in your schools? In response to the questions, the participants said they all received some basic training in inclusive education either during workshops, seminars and continuous professional development meetings sponsored by the government or other stakeholders like the non-governmental organisations.

In response to this, head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

‘Yes, we have had a number of local trainings, awareness trainings organised by various NGOs including CBR although lately it has not been very common, and part of the reason is obviously some of the schools have been identified as inclusive schools and those of us who are not in that catchment there are times when we are not part of those activities.’

This view was supported by head teacher 2 (HT2), who had this to say:

‘Well, the recent meeting that we had last week was sponsored by USAID. Some of the trainings we have attended were sponsored by the Norwegian Association for the Disabled (NAD). But there were also independent trainings done by CBR and we have had some with response network and these local organisation and so on. Also, just the interaction with the Ministry of Education that we have had as specialist teachers and sometimes we have people from headquarters who had come to talk about disabilities and so on.’

Head teacher 3 (HT3) also had this to say:

‘Yes I attended. I think it was a two-day workshop where we met and discussed issues concerning the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. The sponsors were World Vision.’

In support of this, deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) had this to say:

'A lot of them. From the beginning I think under CBR when they were advocating for inclusive education, I think we were the first team that got trained to look at what inclusive education is. I think I remember our SESO (name) retired now, I think that group also brought about an element of inclusiveness and I think we were trained fully. From there different organisation have come advocating for the same, we have been involved I think over the years.'

Deputy head teacher 2 (DHT2) also had this to say:

'I would say it's a training where it takes maybe five days where we were looking at the components, what inclusive education is, where did it start from, what model of inclusive education are they talking about? So we had different organisation I would say that had different perspectives or rather models of inclusive education where at least we had a privilege to be invited for a workshop for the full trainings as well as the CPDs.'

This view was supported by deputy head teacher 3 (DHT3) who also had this to say:

'Yes, I did. It was a workshop and I think it was three days only. It was sponsored by the people from Lusaka although I can't remember them but they were NGOs. So it was sponsored by the same NGOs.'

In line with this, senior teacher 1 (ST1) had this to say:

'Yes, I attended a sensitisation for one to be equipped on how to take care of the children with special needs and this was kind of seminars in the field of special needs. They were not long. These trainings were for two to three days. Both, they were CPDs and workshops because they made us be aware of how to handle our children with special needs, so to me it's both.'

Senior teacher 2 (ST2) had this to say:

'Yes, the trainings lasted a week. In fact we have been having the trainings in inclusive education often. When the programme just came in when I was at my formal school (name). We used to train often like once per term. These trainings were about inclusiveness in the school and how we can

include these pupils with special needs and the environment. How do we make the environment conducive?’

In support of this, class teacher 1 (CT1), from a focus group discussion, also had this to say:

‘Yes we looked at what makes up inclusive education. Inclusive education does not only look at disability but it also looks at the vulnerability of the children. There are so many aspects to look at when it comes to inclusive education. It is not only the physical disability that we are able to see, and so because of those elements now we have come to understand that children come from different homes and cultures. We have now come to terms with their social background, religious background, and also the distance from where they are coming from. We have put all these together to find a solution so that all children can fit in the school.’

Class teacher 2 (CT2) had this to say:

‘We had workshops segmented probably weekly like five days but once per term. They were sponsored by NAD in conjunction with community-based rehabilitation (CBR).’

All the participants indicated that they have basic knowledge when it comes to the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools because of the short trainings they received during the workshops and short seminars sponsored by different organisations. The challenge they faced with these trainings were that they just ran for a short period of time with no much follow up after the training.

4.6.2 Government Grants

Participants were asked whether they receive financial assistance from the government to help them implement inclusive education in regular schools effectively. In answering the question, participants’ responses varied.

In response to this, head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

‘Yes, we have a slot under special education. There were funds for all the children, including special needs children. And as we went on I will tell you that the current situation this year, for example, we have received

funds, the special education grant. Going forward, we will be having special education grant. That alone does not mean that the children with special needs cannot access the other grant. There is a grant for the school within which all categories of the school have to benefit and as we plan we consider every category of the school, including the special education learners.'

Head teacher 3 (HT3) had this to say:

'The money that we receive is for special education only and inclusive education there is no funding. When government started funding, the funding was very little, but as from 4th quarter of 2023 and 1st quarter of 2024 there has been a very big drastic improvement and it comes quarterly.'

To the contrary, to this another head teacher 2 (HT2) had this to say:

'We are funded just like special units but unfortunately we were audited last week as auditors from Ministry of Education said no, inclusive education has nothing to do with disability, so we are going to withdraw that money.'

Contrary to this, deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) had this to say:

'Yes, special education we do receive and the latest funding was big, you people have lobbied so much. Yes, so we want as much as possible that money to benefit the intended learners for whatever, we should be there to ensure it goes to the intended purpose.'

In line with this, deputy head teacher 2 (DHT2) had this to say:

'We actually get the grants from the school that comes specifically for the special needs learners and this grant is mainly coming from the government. Currently I think it's the government providing us with that resource. I think it's enough because we stopped struggling nowadays and we are able to get most of the materials for the learners to benefit. We always purchase whatever is needed for our learners with special educational needs to learn.'

In contrast to this, deputy head teacher 3 (DHT3) had this to say:

'Currently the government is funding. There are times when they give specific amount for special education learners, yes. The government does fund although it is not enough, and looking at the equipment needed by learners with special needs, the funds are not enough. We have people that are also donating one or two equipment, but the government is also trying its best by funding the schools.'

Senior teacher 1 (ST1) also had this to say:

'We do receive money for special needs learners in the mainstream and in the special unit that comes quarterly, but at least we buy the basics that we can from the government grant.'

Senior teacher 3 (ST3) said:

'Yes, we are receiving support from the government. In fact this time even if it is not enough we cannot compare with what we used to receive in the past. This time it is coming on time and with proper planning it can do a lot in the school, like in our school previously we had no power but the government brought the poles and the school has power now. It is because of the resources that we are receiving in the school we have that we managed to have all the classrooms electrified, including all the teachers' houses and now we are working on the infrastructure to suit the learners especially, those with challenges. So on funding we cannot complain too much.'

Class teacher 1 (CT1) from a focus group discussion had this to say:

'I can simply say it was for special education and it's like they made a follow-up and want to collect that money back. They have not yet collected the money but they are yet to collect, which means that there is no special funding for inclusive education. They said we do not have special education here and we have inclusive education, so there is no funding for inclusive education but for special education.'

Different stakeholders should be sensitised on the issue of inclusive education so that there is no misunderstanding of who qualifies for special education grant. Inclusive education is not just about learners with disabilities but there are also other categories like the orphans, child headed homes, those who move long distances and they find that their friends have already learnt, all these categories qualify for inclusive education and so people should understand the term inclusive education fully.

Class teacher 2 (CT2) had this to say:

‘Yes there was funding that came last time and it was used to make ramp and walkways for learners with mobility problems to be moving freely with less difficulties.’

4.6.3 Health Rooms

School administrators were asked how they help the teachers when learners have seizures and other episodes like hyperactivity during teaching and learning in class. The question which they were asked was: how do you help your teachers when they have a child having seizures or hyperactivity episodes during a lesson in class? In response to this, the head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers said they were privileged in that the government provided them with health rooms where they took such children when they had such a crisis.

In response to this, head teacher 1 (HT1) had this to say:

‘This school has ten trained school health teachers, and apart from the ten trained all the other fifty teachers were sensitised in the health matters. To cap it as a school, we have what we call a health room for health interventions for such situations we are trying to describe and so it’s not only the children with special needs but its every pupil. If any pupil has a health condition that they are going to manifest when they are in class, we have a starting point of a health room where they are screened and are given first aid depending on the findings in the health room. The decision will be made whether to refer them to the hospital or just attend to them just there in the health room.’

This was echoed by head teacher 2 (HT2), who had this to say:

'We are lucky because we have what is called health point in school. We have a mini-clinic. If there is such a thing, quickly the child is removed from the classroom to the health room and immediately the nurses who are just about 500m metres away from here are informed. So they will either rush here or rush the child there and then that is handled at least, but of course teachers also know the basics of allowing the child to settle down and rest and just help out. You know sometimes we use traditional methods where the child is given something to bite so that he doesn't bite the tongue and so on. So those small, small things we have learnt. Remember we are not medical experts, so we can only go as far as trying to provide first aid.'

In line with this, deputy head teacher 2 (DHT2) had this to say:

'To me it is a blessing that they have a health centre or health rooms within the school, so when we experience those problems we usually take our children to the health rooms for assessment and they are assessed by our teachers who have undergone some training or sensitisation in health issues.'

In support of this, senior teacher (ST 1) had this to say:

'If a child has a seizure, you know a teacher is always trained to be a counsellor and a caretaker of her or his class. If such a situation happens we usually encourage the teachers to be calm and help the child who has a seizure. We are lucky in the school that we have got a health room and some teachers have been trained in school health programmes. We can also engage these teachers to take the child to the health room, calm the child down and then usually if there is any need we call the parents although sometimes we make referrals to the clinic before the parents come.'

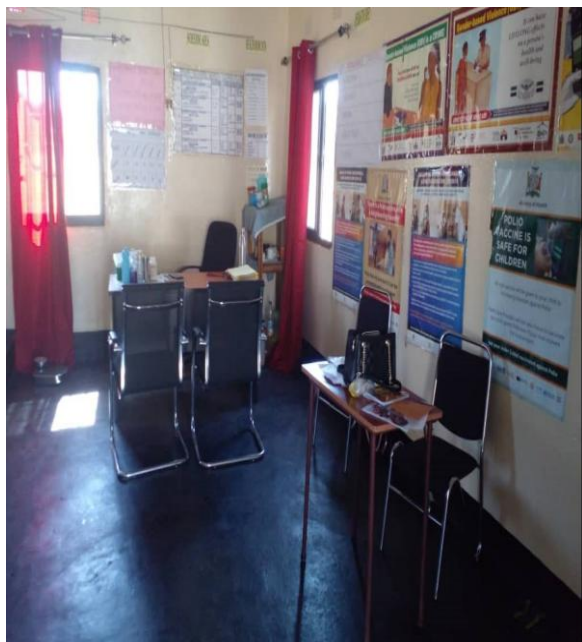
Class teacher 1 (CT1) also had this to say:

'Yes, they do. We just thank God that we have a health room whereby if a child has such kind of issues we take them to the healthy room and then

they make referral then the facility that is connected to the school is called to help out and learners are always keen to help.'



Outside appearance of a health room



Inside the health room

In another revelation deputy head teacher 1 (DHT1) had this to say:

'A good question. You are reminding me of my former school (name)..... We had a big boy, I think he was 19 years but in Grade 7 and he had those ma seizures. When it started all the children scampered, the teacher was

also somehow scared, so I was always at hand. We summoned the parent and he understood. Whenever he would have seizures I would be there personally, so for here I have never had any experiences in these classes, but when it happens I am always there and ready regardless of the grade as long as I am informed I would go there.'

The results showed that the learners with seizures, hyperactivity and other conditions are given first-aid treatment in the health room when they have a crisis whilst in school.

4.7. Summary

The chapter presented the findings of the study on school administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, how their practices have helped promote the inclusion of such learners and the support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners these children. The findings on the administrators' practices towards inclusion of learners with disabilities include: monitoring, coaching, sensitization and enrolment procedures of learners. On how the administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs, the following were the findings: provision of adequate teaching and learning materials, increased enrolment, provision of conducive environments and collaboration with other stakeholders. On the support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs, the following were the findings: government grants, short training on inclusive education and introduction of health rooms in the schools.

From the above findings it is clear that the learners with special education needs are benefiting as they learn in the ordinary schools. The school administrators have shown acceptance of these learners in their schools through the practices portrayed although there are some grey areas in some parts like, when it comes to enrolment, attention given to learners with seizures and hyperactive episodes and on the teacher to learner ratio as learners with special educational needs have a one-to-one interaction with the teachers. The next chapter will look at the discussion of the findings as presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

In chapter five, the researcher builds on the previous chapter by discussing the findings of the study. The chapter revisits the various themes that emerged in chapter four and weaves other researchers' findings conducted in various settings worldwide. The discussion anchors on the following objectives: (i) To establish school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, (ii) To examine how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs, and (iii) To explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

5.2 Establish School Administrators' Practices Employed to Promote the Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational \needs in Regular Schools.

The study established a number of practices that characterise the implementation of inclusive education by school administrators in regular schools. To establish the existing practices of school administrators in the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools the head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers were the main targets of this study. Guided by objective one, the researcher investigated the existing practices in the inclusion of learners with special educational needs by the administrators in regular schools. The following were the findings:

5.2.1 Monitoring

Academic success of learners with special educational needs in regular schools was greatly influenced by the practices of their administrators and one of the practices is monitoring. The school administrators indicated that in order to make sure that the learners with special educational needs were effectively benefiting from regular schools, they monitored the teaching and learning activities of these learners at various levels in their respective schools in terms of checking their lesson plans, schemes of work, class registers and progress charts of the learners especially those with special educational needs. The findings revealed that the focus of the head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers during monitoring was

on academic delivery, pedagogy, teachers' preparedness, syllabus interpretations and how learners' individual needs were met.

The findings of the study further revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between instructional supervisory practice of classroom observation and academic achievement of the learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms. This is corroborated by the view of Charles, Chris and Kosgei (2012) who suggested that head teachers need to effectively supervise teachers by ensuring that: they are observed regularly; lessons are planned early; lessons are structured with an interesting beginning; there is revision of previous knowledge and teachers' use of voice variation and summary of major points at the end; teachers use backups/teaching aids properly; teachers have a good relationship with their students, and teachers follow the curriculum strictly. It was further observed that poor results amongst the learners can be due to ineffective instructional supervisory practices. School administrators need to effectively supervise to ensure that there is assessment and remedial teaching, use of appropriate learning and teaching aids, IEP programmes are appropriate, and that there is a good report between learners and the teachers.

This finding agrees with Douglas and Bents (2013), Marecho, (2012), Panigraph and Thakral, (2015) who also noted that the visible presence of the school administrators in schools is correlated with smooth running of institutions and they reveal that the administrators in high-performing schools check lesson books, schemes of work, records of work, attendance registers, class attendance records and clock-in clock-out books frequently. Furthermore, a study by Peretomode (2001) concluded that for teachers to produce good results and be effective, the school administrator must effectively monitor their lesson plans, schemes of work and lesson notes preparation regularly.

The school administrators also indicated that as part of their supervision, they made sure that the school and classroom environment where the teaching and learning took place were very user-friendly for every learner, including those with special educational needs. This finding was in line with Thankral (2015), who observed that academic goals of instructional supervision include tasks such as monitoring of institution and evaluating objectives of programmes. The goal of supervision also focuses on effective administration of school facilities and resources. On the contrary, some head teachers also revealed that during their supervision they monitored the teaching and learning process of the learners without paying much attention to whether needs of the children with disabilities are met or not. This, to some

extent, makes the researcher feel that the needs of the learners with special educational needs are not fully met as they may need more time to grasp the concept compared to their counterparts in class.

The class teachers during their focus group discussion also indicated that administrators visited their classrooms regularly to monitor their teaching and evaluate the learners' participation in class and sometimes would just pass through the corridors whilst making sure that the teachers were also in class teaching. This finding was in line with Sule, Arop and Alede (2012) on principal's classroom visitation and inspection and teacher's job performance, which revealed that the strategies significantly influenced the teachers' job performance. During the focus group discussion some teachers indicated that administrators would get the learners' books as they visit their classrooms to check whether they are progressing from when they started in the lower grades to their current grade.

Punctuality is another area where the school administrators monitored the teaching and learning process during their supervision as indicated by one teacher during the focus group discussion. In the same vein another teacher also said that during supervision the school administrators check their schemes of work just to make sure that they all prepare regularly before going to teach. The administrators made sure that the teachers used the right pedagogies to suit learners with special educational needs. These findings were in line with Alimi and Akinfilarin (2012) who found out that there was significant effort in checking of learners' notes, class visitation or observation, checking of teachers' punctuality and attendance, as well as moderation of examination questions and marking schemes on learners' academic performance in schools.

5.2.2 Coaching

From the findings, sitting down and discussing how the lesson was between the administrators and the class teachers was a common practice that happened in the schools to make sure that there was effective implementation of inclusive education in the study schools. The participants always coached the teachers after every monitoring session. During the coaching session the administrators discussed the strength and weaknesses of the lesson especially when it came to whether learners with special educational needs were benefiting from the lessons or not. The administrators gave guidance on how the lessons for learners with special needs should be conducted. This was done in order to guide and try to correct the teachers where

necessary. This finding was in line with Knight (2007), who noted that instructional coaching is meant to build capacity to change and provide instructional improvement by providing learning opportunities necessary to facilitate change. Further, Cantrell & Hughes (2008) observed that coaching has the potential to support the development of teachers' efficacy as they implement new programmes or strategies.

The teachers in the focus group discussion, on the other hand, also confirmed that they do sit down with their administrators to try and clarify some issues that the latter might not have understood during the lesson presentation in class. This finding is in line with Thankral (2015), who observed that academic goals of instructional supervision include tasks such as guiding teachers to improve the teaching and learning process as well as assessment of pupils' learning outcomes. Coaching should always be done as it helps the teacher to know where she or he has some strengths and be able to improve on the weaknesses.

5.2.3 Enrolment procedures

During the study it was established that when enrolling the learners with special educational needs in regular schools, the participants enrol the learners as they came without really following the right procedures of referring them to the hospital for recommendations for them to be enrolled in the regular inclusive schools. Learners with special educational needs are supposed to be screened and assessed being placed in any grade. Some administrators and the class teachers indicated that they didn't have the knowledge on how to assess the learners with special educational needs. Some administrators had to refer the learners with special educational needs to specialist teachers who know how to assess and place them in the rightful grades. This finding was in line with Mutisya (2004), who asserted that an appropriate learning environment would not be complete without other support services like those of the trained special education needs teachers since the success of inclusion of learners with special educational needs requires the involvement of professionals who can assist in identification, referral, diagnosis, treatment and provision of other appropriate educational and related services.

It was evident that the administrators that had some knowledge in special education followed the procedure of assessing the learners and referring them to the hospital before enrolling them and those without knowledge just enrolled them without really following the rightful procedures. The researcher feels this could not be very effective when it comes to learners

with special educational needs as they may end up being wrongly placed. In most cases, for the learners with learning difficulties, the chronological age does not match with their mental age, and if the administrators just focus on the physical appearance and the chronological age of the child, then they risk placing the children in the wrong grades. It is most ideal for the learners with special educational needs to go to hospitals so that they are fully assessed and be able to be placed in the correct grade.

5.2.4 Sensitisation

After the interaction with the participants on how they manage the issues of stigma in their schools, the findings were that the participants did sensitise the learners, teachers and the whole school community about the issues of disabilities. Sensitisation is an important aspect of creating an inclusive community. It involves raising awareness and educating people about the needs and rights of persons with disabilities, who are often stigmatized in the communities they come from. Learners with special educational needs also suffer stigma in the regular schools where they are included for learning.

The administrators said that they made everyone in the school be aware about different disabilities that were in the schools through increased sensitization and how to help the learners with special educational needs whenever they needed help. This finding is in line with that of Chikopela and Mandyata (2018) who noted that there was need for increased sensitisation on the plight of learners with SEN for them to benefit from what a regular school was able to offer across multiple dimensions to improve care and services. Reyner (2007) also concludes that inclusive educational management is praxis-oriented in that communities need to appreciate the ideas behind inclusion and the means appropriate to a particular context.

Further, it was also indicated that some sensitisations are done during the parents and teachers' meetings where the administrators would deliberately talk about the different disabilities found in the school and the benefits of bringing their children with disabilities to school. Teachers also conducted some home visitations, during which they also talked to the parents and the other people who might have hidden their children in homes. This has made many people to change their attitude towards persons with disabilities in the community. Sensitization makes it possible for those parents who hide their disabled children in homes to start bringing them to school.

5.3 To Assess How Administrators' Practices Have Helped Promote the Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs

After assessing the administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, the researcher was concerned about how these practices have helped in the promotion of inclusion in the study schools. All participants provided information on how the administrators' practices have helped in the promotion of the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools.

5.2.6 Provision Adequate Teaching and Learning Materials

The important role of materials and equipment in any academic undertaking cannot be overstressed as learners and teachers cannot do without them. From the findings, it was established that in order to enhance the implementation of inclusive education of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, the administrators provided the teaching and learning materials such as manila paper, chalk, pens, crayons, books just to mention a few in the study schools. The teachers during focus group discussion, said that the administrators encouraged them to use the locally available materials rather than waiting for those that need to be procured.

They further said, during their trainings in inclusive education workshops, they learnt that they should use the locally available materials to the greatest extent possible rather than waiting for those that need to be procured by the school. This finding is similar to the one by Mutisya (2014), where it was found that school administrators should advise teachers to use locally available and improvised resources to support learning. This is because local materials are easily accessible, easy to make and can stay relevant overtime.

To the contrary, one head teacher felt, it was very difficult for him to procure the materials like the braille papers, braille frames and the styluses as they were very expensive to buy because they were not locally produced. Most schools lack braille materials because of being and not locally produced and vial impaired learners usually encounter challenges when it comes to braille materials. He further said it was very difficult to teach learners with visual impairments as they entirely rely of braille for them to write and read. This finding was in line with Omede, (2015) who noted that for learners with visual impairments, specialized materials and other equipment are very important because the items almost act like a replacement for lost eyesight. Equipment such as recorded audio materials, talking books, optical aids,

optacon, brailers and computers are essential for educational attainment but these educational items are not easy to come by and the available ones are grossly inadequate to meet educational requirements.

However, the school administrator reported everything possible to try and provide the braille materials that they procure from the grant that they receive from the government. He also noted that, the materials procured were usually not enough as they were very expensive to buy from the same grant that had to cater for other learners with special needs in the school. It was also evident that class teachers had enough learning and teaching materials in exception of braille materials which requires huge amounts of money to be procured as they were costly and not locally procured.

5.2.7 Increased Enrolment

From the findings it was established that since the introduction of inclusive education coupled with free education there has been overwhelming numbers of children coming to be enrolled in regular schools. Parents of children with disabilities are now bringing their children to school because they know that their children would be interacting with the other so called normal children in the schools. Unlike in the past when they used to hide them in homes in fear of being stigmatized. Mukuna and Obiakor (2004), observed that unlike the developed world, the schooling of learners with special educational needs in the developing world is not yet addressed sufficiently, hence Eleweke and Rodda (2000) and Bayat (2014) express insufficient achievements in inclusion programmes in most these countries.

Further, UNESCO (2019) says there are significant challenges to ensuring that each individual obtains an equal opportunity for educational progress worldwide. It was evident that learners, including those with special educational needs, were enrolled in regular schools in high numbers although the concern was on the contact of the individual learner with the teacher as learners with special education needs benefit more on a one-to-one interaction with the teachers. Including LSEN in regular schools may be motivating and challenging for them to succeed. It also helps them to develop the social skills because a natural environment is provided in the regular classroom and related to the real world in the future.

5.2.8 Conducive Environment

The school environment refers to the set of relationships that occur among members of a school community that are determined by personal and structural factors of the educational institution which provide distinctiveness to schools. It also refers to a variety of factors such as the physical environment, instructional environment, learner wellness and discipline practices. This is in agreement with Sumane (2012), who noted that learning environment is a purposefully organised physical, social and informative set of circumstances, in which a learner forms and implements his or her experiences; knowledge, skills and attitudes towards himself or herself and surrounding world.

The study therefore, established that the administrators were trying by all means to make sure that the school environments were user-friendly for learners with special educational needs in the study schools. The administrators during interviews indicated that most of the infrastructures found in the schools have staircases which made the learners with mobility problems to be having a challenge to move from one place to another within the school. They confirmed that they were modifying all the infrastructures that had staircases to have ramps. This finding is in line with Ayondele (2011), who stated that school management committees should adapt school facilities to make them responsive to learners with special educational needs. For example, the construction of ramps and widening entrances to buildings were some of the modification done to the existing infrastructure in the schools.

The teachers in the focus group discussion indicated that the buildings whose walls had dull colours were painted with bright colours. They also mentioned that the doors in the schools were painted in different colours to help the learners with low vision identify their classrooms. By so doing, it helped the learners with visual impairments be able to go to their classrooms with less difficulties. In the present study, findings were, however, in agreement with Andrews, Walton & Osman (2019), who observed that, when the teaching and learning environment is conducive, information is readily available and accessible in different formats, assessment is adapted, teachers know and apply various teaching methods and opportunities for all learners to learn and thrive will be guaranteed.

It was evident that the school administrators, despite not having modern infrastructure in their schools, were making every effort to make the environment user-friendly for the learners with different disabilities in the study schools. For the learners that were physically challenged the infrastructure were being modified so that they could easily access all the school facilities.

Although the school administrators were making every effort to modify the existing infrastructure, they could not be up to the expected standards.

5.2.9 Collaboration

During this study it was established that there was need for the school administrators to be working in collaboration with their fellow professionals so that there is effective implementation of inclusive education of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. During the interviews the school administrators indicated that they collaborated with other stakeholders such as the parents, health personnel as well as neighbouring school administrators on how to implement inclusive education effectively. They further said whenever they had challenges they would inquire from the administrators whose schools had special units on how to handle learners with special needs. This finding is in line with the assertion by Strough (2003), who observed that an administrator is expected to enhance working together as a team in the public primary schools and this can be supported through collaboration.

An administrator should skillfully collaborate with other stakeholders on how to promote inclusive education in schools, especially when it comes to planning the activities of learners with disabilities such as planning the IEP.

Collaboration is an essential element of teaching and coaching teachers, so teacher preparation programmes should include collaboration and consultation skills as part of the curriculum, as noted by Griffin, Jones, & Kilgore (2006) and Knight (2007). It was also established that the administrators, teachers and parents work together when it came to the education of a child with special educational needs. The parents would provide valuable information about the disability of the child so that the teachers can be aware and know how to handle and plan for him or her whilst at school. This finding was in line with Alberta Education (2006), who observed that learning teams plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes for learners. As such, parents influence every aspect of the child's education, hence the need to clearly state their role as collaborators.

Further, this finding was also in line with Friend & Cook (2007) and Kampwirth (2003) who observed that the creation of effective inclusive schools requires a combination of teachers' and parents' knowledge and skills on instructional strategies and assessment practices.

Furthermore, Narinasamy & Mamat (2013) noted that teachers face great challenges and often find it difficult to effectively meet the needs of all learners. To this effect, the parents of the learners with special educational needs play an important role in the inclusion of their children in regular schools.

On the other hand, Bateman & Herr (2006) noted that administrators and parents need to collaborate to adjust more effectively to their responsibilities, roles and actions to continuously improve learners' developmental outcomes. Turnbull (2013) also says teachers should implement collaborative conferences with families, communicate effectively with them, and evaluate collaborative activities. Furthermore, Blue-Banning, Summers, Nelson, Frankland, & Beegle (2000) also agree that forging such supportive, mutually respectful relationships between families and school professionals represent the cornerstone of collaborative partnerships and makes a positive difference in the quality of a learner's educational experience. Further, Newman (2003) and EADSNE (2010) note that the school administrators should appreciate that the crucial area for the success of inclusive strategies is the role played by parents.

Contrary to this assertion Ambrukaitis and Ruvskus (2006) showed that teachers often consider the interests and expectation of parents of a learner with a disability ill-informed or unrealistic viewpoint, hence parents' desires and concerns remain unheard by teachers and are not included in the education process.

It was evident that school administrators consulted each other when it came to matters concerning learners with special educational needs in the study schools. Teachers were also encouraged to consult each other on how to handle such learners.

5.2.10 Support Given to Administrators to Promote the Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs

To explore the existing support given to school administrators in the promotion of inclusion of learners with special educational needs, the head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers were the main targets of the research findings in this study. Guided by objective three, the researcher investigated the existing support given to administrators in the regular schools to help them implement inclusion. The following were the findings:

5.2.11 Government Grants

The study revealed that the Zambian government had made significant efforts to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in providing equitable access to quality education by all learners, including those with special educational needs, by supporting the schools financially in form of government grants which are received quarterly. During interviews some administrators said they received enough funds to help them implement inclusive education in their schools. They further indicated that funds were used to purchase materials for learners with SEN such as the braille materials (braille frames, stylus, etc) for learners with visual impairment and other stimulating materials for learners with learning difficulties. This finding was in agreement with Asongu, Nnanna and AchaAnyie (2020), Khumalo (2014), Mantey (2017), Mestry (2013) and Mestry (2014) who observed that technological gadgets which are crucial in the teaching and learning processes must be procured and maintained so that they could be used for longer periods and all these depend largely, if not entirely, on the availability of necessary funds.

On the contrary, one head teacher said the money they received from the government was withdrawn from them because it was meant for special education and not inclusive education. This is supported by the Government of the Republic of Zambia (2020), which posits that it is worth noting that it can be challenging to gauge the current priority given to inclusive education based on funding allocation as inclusive education and special needs do not have a dedicated budget line in the education budget.

Another head teacher also said despite receiving some grants from the government, the money is very little for them to use especially when it came to modification of the infrastructure and procurement of teaching and learning materials which the learners with special needs require. It was evident from the study that the school administrators are receiving funds from the government to help them implement the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in schools although there are claims that the money received is not enough to manage all the individual needs of the learners, and other inclusive schools do not receive funding for inclusive schooling because of not having special units in their schools.

5.2.12 Short Trainings

In order to achieve the strategic goal of providing quality education to learners with SEN in regular schools, the head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and class teachers were asked whether they had received any training. In response, most of the participants

indicated that they received short trainings in form of seminars, workshops and continuous professional development (CPD) meetings sponsored by either the government or organizations such as Community Based Rehabilitation. This finding is in agreement with Fisher et al. (2000) Idol (2006), Katsiyannis, Ellenberg, & Acton (2000) who noted that administrators can utilise professional development as a means to provide needed training for administrators and teachers. This can be realized particularly in effective instructional, behavioural intervention strategies and collaboration skills that address the diverse learning needs of learners with disabilities.

Additionally, Idol (2006) indicated in her study that administrators need to assume the instructional leadership role by supporting their teachers in providing professional development in the area of special education. Yell et al. (2004) also noted that many teachers do not feel equipped to meet the needs of learners with disabilities, therefore, having short trainings within the school would enhance the teaching and learning of children with special needs in regular schools.

It was evident from the study that the school administrators and class teachers in the study schools received short trainings on inclusive education in trying to make the programme a reality in their schools. Despite having CPDs in schools, teachers still feel incompetent when it comes to teaching learners with special educational needs as the CPD trainings are short and they rarely have them in schools.

5.2.13 Health Rooms

Participants were asked during interviews and focus group discussion how they were helped when it came to learners who had seizures and hyperactivity conditions whilst in school. The study revealed that the government had introduced health rooms in the schools. The health rooms in Zambian schools are spaces where learners can receive care for minor illnesses and injuries and connect with the higher healthcare system. A health room serves as a first point of care for minor illnesses and injuries, ensuring that health issues are identified and addressed promptly to minimise, school absenteeism and support the overall well-being of learners.

When a child had an episode of seizures or is hyperactive, he or she was rushed to the health room where they received medication provided by the teachers who were trained on how to attend to such children whilst at school. If it is a condition they could not handle, they quickly take such cases to the nearby hospitals and clinics. This finding is in agreement with Mutisya (2004) who noted that learners with special educational need require the services of trained

special education needs teachers since the success of inclusion of these learners requires the involvement of professionals who can assist in identification, referral, diagnosis, treatment and provision of other appropriate educational and related services.

It was also evident that the lessons were sometimes interrupted when the class teachers attended to learners in crises since they had no assistant teachers to help them when such a situation occurred. Giangreco & Doyle (2007) noted that it is important that teacher assistants supplement and support teachers but not replace them as the primary source of instruction. This would greatly help the class teachers when they are attending to learners who are not feeling well during lesson time. Further, WHO (2011) noted that in the training of regular teachers, the curriculum often does not include training related to the nature of disabilities and approaches for working with learners who have disabilities and, as a result, there is a severe shortage of teachers and teacher assistants capable of effectively supporting the individual needs of learners with disabilities.

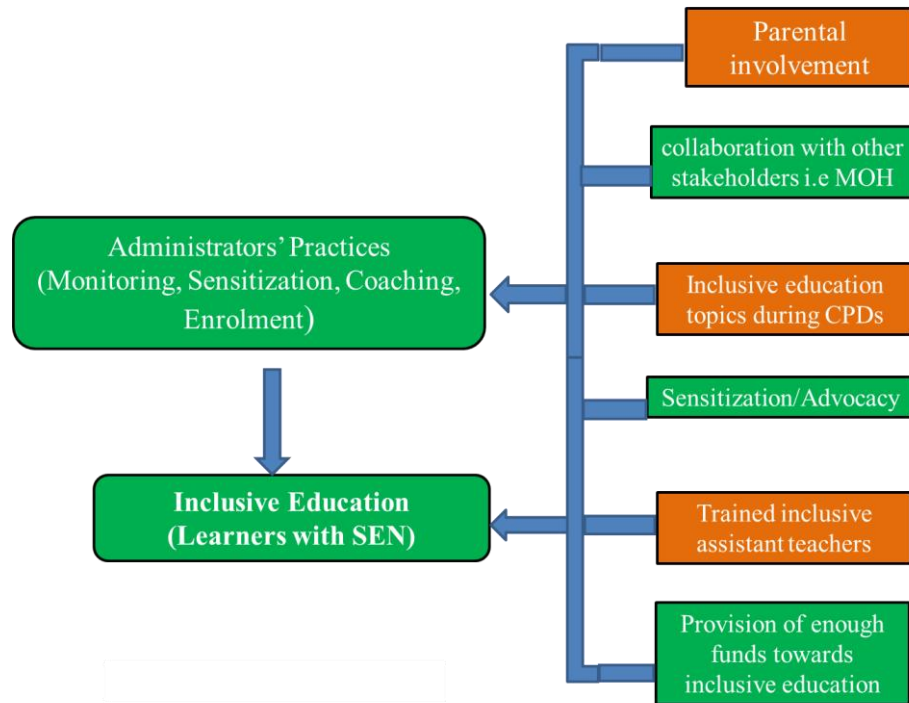
5.3 To suggest a framework that can support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools.

Suggested Model on School Administrators' Practices for inclusion of LSEN

This section is an extension of the chapters on findings and discussion and responds to the last research objective focused on developing a model for documenting and interpreting the effective model towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. The emergent model is a result of four months of deep interactions with school administrators and class teachers implementing inclusion of learners with special education needs in the regular schools. The model consists of three segments, namely: (i) Documentation, (ii) Analysis, and (iii) Interpretation. The model proposes a collaborative approach in the promotion and implementation of inclusive education where all aspects are of equal importance to the success of the process.

Constructed model to document and interpret the effective inclusion of learners in regular schools

DCM FRAMEWORK



For school administrator to be able to implement the effective inclusive education to learners with SEN they need to have knowledge and skills and these can be acquired through CPD meetings. They need to include inclusive education topics as they meet as administrators. During these meetings they discuss diverse needs such as disabilities, cultural differences and this helps raise administrators' awareness on how to develop inclusive policies that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

Most learners with special educational needs have health conditions. Therefore, collaboration with the Ministry of Health is of great importance. The Ministry of Health can offer training and professional development opportunities for administrators and teachers on inclusive practices. They can provide services such as screening, counselling and mental health professionals to support children with disabilities.

Parents are to be involved at all levels especially when it comes to formulation of the IEPs of the learners. Parents can also help create a supportive and inclusive school environment that benefits all learners by sharing ideas on how to create an inclusive environment such as accessible physical spaces. As parents bring their children they provide valuable information

about their child's needs, strengths and challenges helping administrators develop effective inclusion strategies.

There is also need for continued sensitisation and advocacy as inclusive education is not fully realised by some stakeholders. Sensitization can shape the school culture, influence the attitudes and behaviours of administrators which can lead to ultimately affecting inclusive management. It can also increase awareness and understanding of disability issues, reducing stigma hence promoting inclusion of LSEN. Currently there are no assistant teachers to help the class teachers during the learning process and this possess a challenge to the teachers as they strive to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs. Assistant teachers also provide individualised support to learners with diverse needs as support system to achieve the good practices for inclusive education work.

As schools strive to promote inclusion, there is need for provision of enough funds to procure the equipment and materials needed by the learners with SEN in the schools. School administrators need funds to enable them purchase materials and equipment such as assistive technologies as well as for modification of the existing infrastructure to make it inclusive.

5.4 Chapter Summary

Participants did everything possible to make sure that inclusive education became a reality in their respective schools through their daily practices. For instance, where the infrastructure is not user-friendly to the learners with physical disabilities, the administrators were working hard to make sure that the infrastructure was modified so that the environment became friendly for every learner in their schools. They were also providing the necessary materials for the individual learners, especially those with disabilities. Through monitoring the administrators made sure that the needs of every learner were met. Collaboration was also key to the realisation of the inclusive education in regular schools. Currently, collaboration is not well-coordinated and effective as administrators are busy with their administrative duties.

CHAPTER SIX:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

This chapter provides the purpose of the current study, a short recap of the findings and, thereafter, a set of recommendations are also presented. Added to the recommendations are the proposed areas for further research. The study was guided by the following questions:

- Establish school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools.
- Assess how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.
- Explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.
- Suggest a framework that can support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools.

The aim of this chapter is to present the summary, the findings, conclusions and further makes recommendations of the study.

6.2 Summary of the Study

This study consists of six chapters. In chapter one the background to the study was provided as well as an exploration of school administrators' practices towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs. In the background the gaps were identified which culminated in the formulation of the statement of the problem in regard to school administrators' practices towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs. Motivation of this study was explained in this same chapter having being teacher of learners with special educational needs, the researcher seeing how they were being treated by the said administrators. The research objectives were also outlined in the same chapter, followed by the research questions of the study. Other highlights of the chapter were the purpose, significance, delimitation, limitation, theory of the study as well as the definition of key terms.

Literature review was discussed in chapter two. Under literature review is where the school administrators' practices were discussed in detail in relation to other scholars who looked at

similar studies. The review of literature mainly focused on the school administrators' practices specifically the instructional supervision, communication in the school community, co-ordination of donor support, engagement of teacher assistants and how they make the school environment conducive for learners with special educational needs. The other focus was how administrators' practices enhanced the inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular schools and these were professional development in the schools and advocacy for learners with disabilities. The third aspect that was discussed was how school administrators were helped for them to implement inclusion in their schools. These included the different policies that supported inclusion, engagement of parents where they provided valuable information of their children with disabilities and financial support from different stakeholders.

Chapter three was all about methodology and research design. The focus was on exploring the qualitative case study design and placing it in a phenomenological philosophical perspective in order to get a better understanding and also give a justification for its selection. The research site and selection of participants were described in detail. Procedures and methods used to collect data were interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires and policy documents. Methods used in data analysis were presented, giving all the steps and strategies employed. Ways to ensure that the study remained trustworthy were identified and presented in this chapter. The main principles under trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Finally, ethical issues and how they were upheld were also presented. The findings of the study were presented and discussed in chapters five and six respectively.

6.3 Summary of the Findings

Participants acknowledged that they implemented instructional supervision through monitoring the teaching and learning of the children with special educational needs by checking their lesson plans, schemes of work and the children's progress chart. Coaching the teachers after every monitoring session was also done by sitting the teacher down and discuss the strength and weakness of the lesson and guide the teacher where necessary. During coaching the strength and weaknesses during the lesson were discussed afterwards. The other administrative practice which the participants acknowledged implementing in the schools was sensitizing of the so-called 'normal' learners, teachers and the whole school community. They also enrolled the learners with special educational needs who came to their schools.

The other findings was that due to the positive practices that the participants implemented in the schools they were able to increase the enrolment of learners with special educational needs in their schools. They also provided the teaching and learning aids of all learners, including those with special educational needs to enhance the implementation of inclusion in the schools. They also made sure that the learning environment was conducive and use-friendly, especially for learners with special educational needs. They made walkways and painted the classrooms which had dull colours with brighter colours so that those with low vision could easily locate their classrooms. There was also effective collaboration between the trained administrators in special education and those without the special education background.

The government helped the administrators to implement inclusive education by giving them grants to procure the necessary learning materials. For the administrators without the special education know-how, the government introduced the continuous professional development meetings in the schools where teachers shared ideas, skills and knowledge on how best to teach all learners, including those with special educational needs. There was also an introduction of health rooms where learners with health conditions were being attended to within the school.

6.4 Conclusion

The study has revealed that due to the positive practices exhibited by the school administrators learners with special educational needs were being enrolled in high numbers in regular schools.

The study established that through monitoring, the school administrators make sure that the needs of learners with disabilities are met. Administrators make sure that all learners are treated in the same way regardless of the individual disabilities. The administrators make sure that the teachers use the right pedagogies when teaching, especially when it comes to learners with special educational needs. Administrators make sure that the learners have enough teaching and learning materials during their learning process. Most of the regular schools have got traditional infrastructure with no ramps, no rails, no inclusive toilets and walkways. It was therefore established that most of the administrators are trying by all means to modify the infrastructure in the schools by putting up ramps, walkways and painting the buildings to try and create some light in the classrooms. However, despite all these efforts, the infrastructure

and environment are still not user-friendly as the modification is not up to standard to suit learners with disabilities.

School administrators are able to collaborate from time to time in trying to give each other ideas on how to implement inclusive education effectively as most of them are not trained in special education. It was also evident that the collaboration is not done regularly due to their busy schedules in their administration. There is an introduction of health rooms in the schools where administrators and the teachers are trained how to give basic treatment to the learners when they become sick whilst in school. Hence, this has helped the administrators in that the learners who has seizures and hyperactive episodes whilst in school are helped in the health rooms, unlike in the past where they used to be sent back home until they recovered. This has also helped the teachers in charge to have confidence in handling learners with special needs as they have acquired the basic knowledge from the same trainings which they had. It was also evident that the learners only received first aid in the health rooms.

Schools are receiving more money towards learners with special educational needs which makes it possible for the administrators to be able to procure learning materials such as braille papers, braille frames and styluses, among others, although it is usually not enough to procure all the equipment and materials required. It was also evident that since the introduction of inclusive education there is increased enrolment of LSEN in inclusive schools as more parents are bringing their children to inclusive schools because they feel that there is no more stigmatisation in the schools. The administrators and teachers have been receiving short trainings on inclusive education. This has made them to change their attitude towards learners with disabilities in the schools and almost everyone has embraced these learners.

Despite the positive practices of the school administrators towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs, there is need for the administrators to be more sensitive to the needs of the learners with disabilities in that they need more time to grasp any concept compared to the ‘so called normal’ children. They need more specified teaching and learning materials which suit their disabilities. The administrators regard all the children. As such, the needs of learners with disabilities are not met. When it comes to the teaching and learning aids, there is little attention given to the learners with special educational needs. Since they are treated like any other child in the school, they are forced to use the same materials regardless of their individual needs.

6.5 Gaps in the study

Among the challenges that emerged from the study was the fact that some schools that were practising inclusive education were not being helped financially, with the belief that inclusive education has nothing to do with special education. The schools without special units, though practising inclusive education, do not receive funds for inclusive education, hence there are challenges when it comes to procurement of materials for learners with SEN. This is because some people do not understand inclusive education and they need to be sensitised on issues of pertaining inclusive education. Some administrators also lamented that they were not fully trained in special education and, as such, they face challenges when it comes to enrolment of the learners with special needs as they are not knowledgeable about the procedures of how to enrol such children in a school. They further said that they enrol the learners as they see them physically without really considering the mental age of a particular child, which makes him or her to be wrongly placed and causing more harm to their education.

The study schools lack teacher assistants to help the class teachers when attending to a child who has episodes of seizures, for example, during learning hours. In terms of infrastructure although the participants were trying to modify the traditional infrastructure, the modification may not be up to the required expectations of the learners with disabilities in the schools due to lack of enough funds.

6.6 How the Study Links to Theory

This study was guided by the social model, which suggests that if societies were set up and constructed in a way that was accessible for people with disabilities, these individuals would not be restricted from full participation in the world around them. For instance, if the administrators can make sure that the school environment for the learners with special educational needs user-friendly by modifying the infrastructure to suit the learners' needs then such learners would be comfortably accommodated although the modification is usually not up to the required standards. The provision of the necessary materials and equipment to the learners with special education greatly benefit the learners and this makes them feel included although some learners lack the required equipment such as the visual impairment and this make them feel excluded in the regular school setting. Further, if the administrators could continue to sensitise the whole school community about issues of disabilities, so that there is no stigma in the school and everyone is treated equally, then that way the learners with special educational needs can fit in the institutions without difficulty.

6.7 Contributions to the Body of Knowledge

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge and covered certain gaps. This study provided a platform for participants to analyse their practices towards the inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular schools. Every school administrator needs these practices as they all handle learners with special educational needs in their respective schools.

The study further explored how school administrators' practices help in the implementation of inclusive education in regular schools. It revealed that there is increased enrolment of learners with special educational needs in regular schools compared to the past years although the participants had no knowledge of how to assess these learners for them to place them in the right grades. Due to high enrolment the participants lamented on not having enough infrastructure to accommodate all the learners especially those with disability who might need enough space for them to fit in nicely.

There is also more financial assistance from the government towards learners with special educational needs compared to the past years. Despite the government funding given to inclusive schools for smooth running of school activities some participants complained of not receiving funds to run inclusive programmes because of having no special units at their schools. Some participants felt no support for inclusion while others funding was available. Health rooms have been introduced in schools. These are spaces where the learners with health conditions such as epilepsy and hyperactivity were easily attended to within the schools although all the teachers attending to such learners only possess the basic knowledge in health related issues.

6.8 Implications and Recommendations

In view of the findings for this study, it is important to reflect on several areas of weaknesses and improve our practices to improve the quality of education for learners with special educational needs in regular schools. This study had four research objectives. These focused on school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools, how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of these children, support given to administrators to promote their inclusion and suggest a framework that can support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools. The recommendations from this study have therefore been tailored to address the aching issues regarding the four research objectives.

6.8.1 Recommendations to the Ministry of General Education

1. MoE should ensure that all school administrators are trained in special and inclusive education administrative and management practices.
2. MoE should provide adequate funds specifically towards inclusive education
3. MoE should always provide the necessary equipment and materials needed by learners with special needs.
4. MoE should employ teacher assistants to help class teachers. .
5. MoE should ensure that existing infrastructure and facilities are upgraded to comply with the norms and specifications as stipulated by international agreements such as the International Standard for Building Construction.

6.8.2 Recommendations to administrators

1. School administrators should strengthen their collaboration with other administrators from other schools as they may not have same categories of children with special needs in their respective schools.
2. School administrators should advocate for more provision of improved infrastructure and the provision of the right materials for all the different categories. Despite the efforts made by the school administrators currently, the modification of the current infrastructure may not completely suit the different categories of disabilities in the schools.
3. School administrators should continue sensitising the school community about inclusive education, extending it to the communities where the children with disabilities come from.
4. School administrators should make sure that the CPD training programmes for the administrators and class teachers in regular and inclusive schools are intensified.
5. Parental engagement should also be strengthened as most often teachers and parents do not recognise each other as partners in the education of learners with special educational needs, especially in inclusive schooling. Teachers should take a leading role in making sure that, this relationship becomes viable. Parents are to be involved at every level of their children's education. There is need to have deliberate programmes developed (individualised plans) where the role of parents in teaching specific skills is clearly spelt out and the school should engage them as key collaborators.

6.8.3 Recommendations to the teachers

1. Teachers advocate for inclusion in their respective schools
2. Teachers should sensitise the other learners in the mainstream classes on the issues of special education.
3. Teachers should take a leading role in making sure that their relationship with parents becomes viable so that they collaborate effectively.
4. There is need to have deliberate programmes developed (IEP) where the role of parents in teaching specific skills is clearly spelt out and the school should engage them as key collaborators. Most often teachers and parents do not recognise each other as partners in education of learners with special education needs.

6.9 Recommendations for Further Research

- An investigation on the government grants towards inclusive education
- An investigation of parents' perception on inclusive education

REFERENCES

- Achola, P., P., W. (1990). Implementing Educational Policies in Zambia, World Bank Discussion Papers Africa Technical Department Series, Washington.
- Alberta Education (2006). Special programs branch: essential components of educational programming for students who are blind and visually impaired. (3rd ed.). Edmonton: Alberta Education.
- Alghazo, E, and Nagga Goad, E. E. (2004). General Education Teachers in the United Arab Emirates and their Acceptance of the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities. B.J. Special education. 31, 94-99. Doi: 10.1111/j.0952-3383.2004.00335.x
- Alimi, O. S. & Akinfolarin, C. A. (2012). The impact of selected modes of instructional supervision activities on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Education Research Journal, 2(1), 1-6.
- Ambrukaitis, J., & Rusks, J. (2002). Children with Special Education Needs in General Education Schools: Identification of Education Quality Criteria. Special Education. 2(7), 61-72
- Action Aid. 2000. 'Final Draft: Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments'. World Education Forum, Report of the Futures Group, Dakar, April, 28.
- Ainscow, M. (2005). Developing Inclusive Education Systems: What are the levers for change? Journal of Educational Change.
- Ainscow, M., & Sandill, A. (2010). Developing inclusive education systems: The role of organisational cultures and leadership. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14(4), 401-416.
- Aja, S. O. (2020) The School Principal Ship: published by immaculate publishers Uwani, Enugu.
- Alghazo, G.M. and Naffah Goad, E.E. (2004). General Education Teacher in the United Arab Emirates.
- Andrews, D., Walton, E., & Osman, R. (2019). Constraints to the implementation of inclusive teaching: A Culture of Emirates and Their Acceptance of the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities. BR. J. Special Education 3 L 94-99.

Armstrong, D. (2005). Reinventing 'Inclusion'; New Labour and the Cultural Politics of Special Education. *Oxford Review of Education*.

Anderson R. J., Decker R.H. (1993). The Principal's Role in Special Education Programming National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Avissar; G., S. Reiter, and Y, Leyser (2003). Principal's Views and Practices Regarding Inclusion: The Case of Israeli Elementary School Principals. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*.

Avramidis, E., P. Boyliss, and R, Burden (2000). A Survey into Mainstream Teacher's Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs in the Ordinary School in One Local Education Authority, *Educational Psychology*.

Ayondele, J. A. & Vandiver, B. (2011). The Impact of School Facilities on the Learning Environment. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Capella University.

Badr, H. M. (2019). Exploring UAE teachers' attitude towards the successful implementation of the general rules in the "School for All" initiative. *JLTR* 10, 92–102. doi: 10.17507/jltr.1001.11

Barrett. M. (2006). Practical and Ethical Issues in Planning Research in *Research Methods in Psychology*, ed. G. Break Well, S, Hammond, J. Smith and C. Fife-Schow, 24-29, London: Sage.

Barnett C. Manda – Amaya L.E (1998). Principals' Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Inclusion, Remedial and Special Education.

Baron, T. & Amerena, P. (2007). Disability and Inclusive Development. London: Leanard Cheshire International.

Boblin, S.L., Ireland, S., Kirkpatrick, H. & Robertson, K. 2013. 'Using Stake's qualitative case study approach to explore implementation of evidence-based practice', *Qualitative Health Research* (2010): 1-9.

Bradshaw, K., L., Tennant, and S. Lydiatt (2004). Special Education in the United Arab Emirates: Anxieties, Attitudes and Aspirations. *International Journal of Special Education*.

Braley, C. (2012). Parent-teacher partnerships in Special Education. Honors Projects Overview. Paper 65. http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/honors_projects/65.

- Brown, L. A. (2007). *Attitudes of Administrators toward Inclusion of Students with Disabilities* (Doctoral dissertation, Mississippi State University, 2007)
- Boscardin M.L. (2005). *The Administrative Role in Transforming Schools to support Problem-solving Based Assessment*. In R. Brown Chidsy (ed), *Problem Solving Based Assessment for Educational Intervention*. New York. Guilford publishers.
- Bredeson, P. V. (2003). *'Designs for Learning: A New Architecture for Professional Development in Schools'*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Cameron, D. L. (2026). Too much or not enough? An Examination of Special Education Provision and School District Leaders' Perceptions of Current Needs and Common Approaches. *British Journal of Special Education*, 43(1), 22-38.
- Cant, H. (1994). *Inclusive Education: The Alberta Experience*. Australian Association of Special Education National Newsletter.
- Cantrell, S. C., & Hughes, H. K. (2008). Teacher efficacy and content literacy implementation: An exploration of the effects of extended professional development with coaching. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 40(1), 95-127. doi: 10.1080/1086296080207044.
- Cassidy, W., & Bates, A. (2005). Drop-outs and push-outs: Finding hope at a school that actualizes the ethic of care. *American Journal of Education*, 112(1), 66-102.
- Chandler, T. L. (2015). *School Principal Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University, Minneapolis).
- Charles, T., Chris, K. K. & Kosgei, Z. (2012). The influence of supervision of teachers' lesson notes by head teachers on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bureti District, Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(3), 299-306.
- Chikopela, R. & Mandyata, J.M. (2018). An Exploration of Play Environments for Learners in Inclusive Schools. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Research (IJSSIR)*, 7 (6), 19-25 ISSN 2277-3830 June 2018.
- Chirwa, Matsauso. (2011). "Inclusive Education: A Study of Opportunities and Challenges for Children with Disabilities a Case of Zambia." Linnaeus University.0971591471.

- Chitiyo, M., and Muwana, F. C. (2018). Positive developments in special education in Zambia and Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 14(1), 93 – 115.
- Chiuri, L. W & Kiumi, J. K. (2005). *Planning and Economics of Education*. Nairobi: Pangolin Publishers Ltd.
- Clark, C., Dyson, A. Millward, A. and Robson, S. (1999). 'Theories of inclusion, theories of schools: deconstructing and reconstructing the "inclusive" school', *British Education Research Journal*, 25 (2), 157–177.
- Clark, L. R. (2008). *Inclusive Education in Secondary Schools: Perspectives of Students with Disabilities*. New York: State University.
- Çobanoğlu, F., Ayvaz-Tuncel, Z. & Ordu, A. (2018). Child-friendly schools: An assessment of secondary schools. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 6 (3), 466-477. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1171397.pdf>.
- Cobb, C. (2015). Principals play many parts: a review of the research on school principals as special education leaders 2001–2011. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19, 213–234. doi:10.1080/13603116.2014.916354.
- Coetzer, J. A. (2001). 'A Survey and Appraisal of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in South Africa with Reference to Progressive Education in America.' *Educare* 30: 73 – 93.
- Cohen, L, Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. 6th edition. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Council for Development and Reconstruction (2005). *National Inclusion Project: Disability Thematic Area. Thematic Social Assessment Report*. Beirut: Council for Development and Reconstruction.
- Creswell J. W. & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Method Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W., Hanson, W.E., Plano Clark, V.L. & Morales, C.A. 2007. 'Qualitative research designs: selection and implementation', *The Counselling Psychologist* 35(2): 236-264.
- Deku, P., & Vanderpuye, I. (2017). Perspectives of Teachers Regarding Inclusive Education in Ghana. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 13(3), 39–54

Denzin, N.K and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks. Sage.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2008). *The landscape of qualitative research*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dominguez, C. (2003). Involving parents, motivating students. *Principal Leadership*, 4(4), 43-46. Edwards, C. H. (2001). Moral classroom communities for student resiliency. *The Education Digest*, 67(2), 15-20.

Dukmak, S. J. (2013). Regular classroom teachers' attitudes towards including students with disabilities in the regular classroom in the United Arab Emirates. *J. Hral* 9:26.issv.

Dyal, A. Flyn, W. and Bennett-Walter, D. 1996). *Schools and Inclusion: Principals Perception* Clear House 70, 32-35. doi:

Ezeugbor, Carol, O. (2014) *An Appraisal of Leadership Roles of Secondary Schools in Anambra State*. Ghana Journal of Education and Teaching. Published by City Publishers Accra. Vol. 1, No 1, Pp. 125— 129.

Eleweke C. J & Rodda, (2002). The Challenges of Enhancing Inclusion education in Developing Countries. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 6(2). 113-126 Doi10.1080/136031110067/190.

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010. *Teacher education for inclusion – International literature review*. Odense: European Agency for Development in Special Needs.

Fatihi (2021). Are Inclusive Education or Special Education Programmes more likely to Result in Inclusion Post School? *Education Sciences* 11(6) 304.

Flecha, R. (2014). *Successful Educational Actions for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe*. Springer.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Fisher, D., Sax, C., & Grove, K.A. (2000). The resilience of changes promoting inclusiveness in an urban elementary school. *The Elementary School Journal*, 100, 213-227.

Florian, L. & Spratt, J., (2013). 'Enhancing Inclusion: A framework for interrogating inclusive Practice; *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 28(2), 119-135.

Fraenkel, J.R. & Wallen, N.E. (2003). How to design and evaluate research in education. (5th ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Friend, M. and Cooks, L. 2(009). Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals (5th ed). Boston: Pearson Education.

Fullan, M. (2011). Change Leader: Learning to do what Matters Most.: San Francisc., C: Jossey-Bass.

Garrick Duhaney, L. M., & Salend, S. J. (2000). Parental perceptions of inclusive educational placements. Remedial & Special Education, 21, 121.

Garrison-WADE, Sobfer and Fulmer (2007). Inclusive Leadership: Preparing Principals for the Role.

Giangreco et al. (2001). Teacher Engagement with Students with Disabilities: Differences Based on Paraprofessional Service Delivery Models: Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handcups, 26: 75-86.

Giangrecco et al. (2001). Paraprofessional Support of Students with Disabilities: Literature from the Past Decade: Exceptional Children. 68: 45-63.

Goad, E. and Khan, L (2007). Primary Mainstream Teacher's Attitudes Towards Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs in the Private Sector: A Perspective from Dubai Int. J. Spec. Education 22, 9 5-109.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2017). Education and Skills Sector Plan 2017 – 2021. Lusaka: Ministry of General Education and Ministry of Higher Education.

Government of the Republic of Zambia Budget. (2020). Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure (Activity Based Budget) for the period 1st January 2020 31st December 2020, Volume I, p.311 - 326.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2017).Wales, Alberta and Finland. Journal of Education Policy, 26(2), 263-288 Special Education Focus, Implementing Education Sector and Skills 2019-2023.

Government of the Republic of Zambia (2017). Seventh National Development Plan 2017– 2021: Accelerating Development Efforts Towards Vision 2030 Without Leaving Anyone Behind, Volume II. Lusaka: Ministry of National Development Planning.

Government of the Republic of Zambia (2012). Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012. Lusaka: Government Printers of Zambia.

Graham, L., & Jahnukainen, M. (2011). Wherefore Art Thou, Inclusion? Analysing the Development of Inclusive Education in New South.

Grech, S. (2009). Disability, Poverty and Development: Critical Reflections on the Majority World Debate. *Disability society*. 24, No. (6).

Guernsey, K. Nocli, A. & Ninio, A. (2007). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Its Implementation and Relevance for the World Bank. S.P. Discussion paper No. 0712. New York: World Bank publication.

Hair, J.F., Celsi, M.W., Money, A.H., Samouel, P & Page, M.J. (2011). *Essentials of business research methods*. (2nd ed.). New York: Sharpe.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the Principal's Contribution to School Effectiveness: 1980-1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9(2), 157-191

Hamilton-Jones, B.M and Vail, C.O. (2014). 'Preparing special educators for collaboration in the classroom: pre-service teachers' beliefs and perspectives', *International Journal of Special Education*, 29(1): 76-86.

Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany: State University of New York.

Hayat, R (1994). *The Attitudes of the Physically Disabled Students and their Teachers Towards Integration of Disability in School for Normal Children*. University of Punjab. Unpublished

Hemming, P.J. 2008. 'Mixing qualitative research methods in children's geographies', *Area* 40 (2): 152-162.

Hoppey, D and Mcleskey, J.A. (2013). A Case Study of Principal Leadership in an Effective Inclusive School. *J. Special Edu.*46, 245-256.

Howell, G. L., (2016). *The relationship between School Leaders' Behaviour and Teachers' Perceptions of their Value in Promoting a Culture of Inclusive Education* (doctoral dissertation). Paper 3822. Retrieved from Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/3822>

Huber, Rosenfeld & Fiorello (2001). The Differential Impact of Inclusion and Inclusive Practices of High, Average and Low Achieving General Education Students.

Hussain, A.S. (2017). UAE Preschool Teacher's Attitudes towards Inclusion Education by Speciality and Cultural Identity. Doctoral Dissertation. Walden University.

Individual with Disabilities Education Act of 1990.

Hutt M. (2022). Placing Inclusion at the Heart of Things Inclusive Pedagogies for Early Childhood Education (1st ed).

Jackson L, Ryndak D. and Billingsley, F. (2000). Useful Practices in Inclusive Education: A Preliminary View of What Experts in Moderate to Severe Disabilities are Saying: J Asso. Pers Sev. Handicaps.

Jahnukainen, M. (2015). Inclusion, Integration, or what? A Comparative Study of the School Principals' Perceptions of Inclusive and Special Education in Finland and in Alberta, Canada. *Disability & Society*, 30(1), 59-72

Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). 'Student Achievement through Staff Development (3rd Edition). Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kabeta, R; Manchinshi, P. C and Akakandelwa, A (2013) Instructional Leadership and its Effects on the Teaching and Learning Process: The Case of Head teachers in Selected Basic Schools in the Central Province of Zambia in *International Journal of science and Research (IJSR)*. ISSN (online): 2319-7064 Index Copernicus Value (2013): 6141/ Impact Factor (2013):4438.

Kalimaposo, K., Simalalo, M., Mweemba, D. & Hambulo, F. (2025). 'Experiences of school administrators in providing support for inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools: A case of Livingstone District, Zambia.' *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies*. Volume 5. Issue 2. Pp: 214 – 224. ISSN: 2770-2790.

Kalimaposo, K. (2010). 'The impact of curriculum innovations on pre-service primary teacher education in Zambia.' *PhD Thesis, University of Zambia*.

Kalimaposo, K., Chidakwa, F., Mubita, K., Mulubale, S, & Kaumba C. (2023). 'Pedagogical experiences of student teachers and teacher educators on teaching practice in selected colleges of education in Zambia.' *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research*

Studies. Volume 3. Issue 6. ISSN: 2770-2790. Pp: 1110 -1116.
<https://doi.org/10.55677/ijssers/V0316Y2023-17>

Kalimaposo, K., Muzata, K.K., & Zulu, B.B. (2024). Experiences of teachers in teaching learners with DeafBlindness at Bauleni Special School in Lusaka, Zambia.' *European Journal of Special Education Research*. Volume 10. Issue 8. Pp: 41 – 53. ISSN: 2501- 2428.
www.oapub.org/edu

Kalimaposo, K., Muzata, K.K., & Zulu, B.B. (2025). 'Challenges faced by teachers in teaching and managing learners with Deaf Blindness at Paka School for learners with special needs in Lusaka, Zambia.' *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies*. Volume 5. Issue 2. Pp: 179-187. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55677/ijssers/V05102Y2025-07>

Kalimaposo, K., Simalalo, M. & Mweemba, D. (2025). 'Exploring school administrators' practices for inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools: A case of Livingstone District, Zambia.' *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. Volume 9. Issue 1. Pp: 2708 – 2720. ISSN: 2454-6186. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9010218>

Kasonde-Ng'andu, S., and Morbeg, S. (2001). Moving Towards Inclusive Education: A Baseline Study on the Special Educational Needs in North-Western Provinces of Zambia. Unpublished Report, Ministry of Education.

Kasongole, G. & Muzata, K.K. (2020). Inclusive Education for Learners with Learning Disabilities in Two Selected Primary Schools of Kabwe-Zambia: A Myth or Reality. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, 7, (1), 1- 16

Kauffman, M., Hallahan, J.P., Pullan, D.C. & Badar, J. B., (2018). Special education: What it is and why we need it, (2nd ed) Routledge, Milton.

Keeves, J.P. (1998), Educational Research, Methodological and Measurement: An International Handbook, (2nd ed). Cambridge University Press. U.K.

Kennedy, M.M. (2000). 'Form and Substance in Mathematics and Science Professional Development.' America: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Khan, S.N. (2014). Qualitative Research Method – Phenomenology. *Asian Social Science*; Vol. 10, No. 21:298-310.

- Kibria, G. (2000). Inclusion Education and the Developing Countries: The Case of Bangladesh. *Journal of the International Association of Special Education*, 6, 43-47.
- Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Kombo, D. K., and Tromp. D.L.A. (2014). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Konza, D. (2008). Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in New learning Times eds P. Kell. W. Vialle, D. Konza. and Gvogl (Walongong: University of Wallongong).
- Korir, B.C. (2015). 'The perception of students and teachers on the integration programme of students with visual impairment in secondary schools: A case of Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County', *Kenya Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (12).
- Kothari, C.R. 2004. *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
- Kustantini, D. I. (1999). *Attitudes of Parents, Teachers and Administrators towards Mainstreaming of Children with Special Educational Needs in Beirut Schools*. MA. diss., American University of Beirut.
- Kuknor & Bhattacharya (2022). *Inclusive Leadership: New Age Leadership to Foster Organisational Inclusion* Symbiosis Institution of Business Management Pune, Symbiosis Institute of International Business, Symbiosis International University, Pane, India
- Kuyini, A., and Dessai, I. (2007). Principals and Teachers' Attitudes and Knowledge of Inclusive Education as Predictors of Effective Teaching Practices in Ghana. *Journal of Research in Special Education Needs*.
- Lancaster, J. and Bain, A. (2007). 'The Design of Inclusive Education Courses and the Self Efficacy of Pre-service Teacher Education Students.' *International Journal of Disability Development and Education*, 54 (2), 245-25.
- Leithwood, K. Day, C. Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2006). *Successful School Leadership: What it is and how it Influences Student Learning*. Research Report 800. London, England: Department for Education.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lindsay, G. (200). 'Educational Psychology and the Effectiveness of Inclusive Education/Mainstream; The British Journal of Educational Psychology 77(1), 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.1348/0007009906x15688>.

Livingston, M., Reed T. and Good, J.W. (2001). Attitudes of Rural School Principals toward Inclusive Practices and Placements for Students with Severe Disabilities; Valdosta.

Little, M.E., & Houston, D. (2003). Research into Practice through Professional Development. Remedial and Special Education, 24, 75-87. Doi: 10.1177/07419325030240020301.

Mahlo, D., Muzata, K.K. & Kalimaposo, K. (2021). 'Effective strategies to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices in different sectors of the society on inclusive education.' In Magjuvhe, M., Thobajane, H.R.M and Malahlela, M. (eds.) (2021). '*Strengthening inclusive education from ECD to post-school education.*' Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers. Pp: 63-76. ISBN: 978 0627038259.

Malakpa, S.W.G. (2007). 'Problems and Prospects in Employment and Job Retention of the Blind and Visually-Impaired in the United States: a Future Concern of Special Education', International Journal of Special Education, 22 (1): 53 58.

Malungo, R.S. (2013). Strategies to Integrate 'Excluded' and Disadvantaged Students at Institutions of Higher Education in Southern Africa: The Case Study of the University of Zambia, University of Malawi, University of Namibia and University of Western Cape (ZAMANAWE) project. Journal of Humanities, 2: 1–5. Lusaka. UNZA Press.

Mandyata, J. M. (2002). Teachers' Views in Inclusive Practices: A case of Basic Schools in Kasama District, Zambia (Dissertation) University of Zambia.

Marsh, J., Sloan McCombs, J., & Martorell, F. (2010). How Instructional Coaches Support Data-Driven Decision Making: Policy Implementation and Effects in Florida Middle Schools. Educational Policy, 24(6), 872-907. Doi: 10.1177/0895904809341467

Marzano, J. S (2003). Classroom Management that Works Research Based Strategies for every Teacher.

Matafwali B. (2007). ECCD Evaluation Report. Lusaka. UNICEF Publication.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach. California: Sage publications.

Mclaughlin, M. J., & Nolet, V. (2004). What Every Principal Needs to Know about Special Education. Thousand Oaks, C A: Corwin press.

Miles, S., Ainscow, M, Kangwa P. Kisanji, J. Lewis, I. Mmbaga, D and Mumba P (2003). Learning from Difference: Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education. Research report to the UK DFID. Manchester: EENET.

Ministry of Education .1977. Education Reform Document. Lusaka, Zambia.

Ministry of Education (1992). Focus on Learning – Policy paper on Zambian education, Lusaka, Zambia.

Ministry of Education (1996). Educating Our Future: National Policy on Education. Lusaka:

Ministry of Education. Ministry of Education (2003). Inclusive Schooling Programme. School Sensitization Level, Lusaka: Zambia Education Publishing House.

Ministry of General Education. (2016). Teacher Education Curriculum: Special Education and Guidance and Counselling. Lusaka: Teacher Education and Specialised Services

Ministry of General Education. (2018). Zambia Educational Bulletin 2018, p.3. Lusaka: Directorate of Planning and Information.

Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (2012). The Zambian Education Curriculum Framework. Lusaka: Curriculum Development Centre.

Ministry of Education. (1996). Educating our Future: National Education Policy. Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing House.

Mitchel, D. & Desai, I. (2005). Diverse Social Cultural Context for Inclusive Education in Asia. In Craft. A. (2010) Including Disabled Children in Learning Challenges in Developing Countries: CREAT Pathway to Access Research Monograph No.33 June, 2010. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/outputs/impAccessRPC/PTA36.pdf> Accessed 19/03/11

Molina, S. (2006) ‘Teacher Education Students’ And First Year In-Service Teachers’ perceptions about their Initial Education. In Gash, H. (ed.) Beginning teachers and diversity in school: A European Study.’ Instituto olitécnico de Bragança Report of research undertaken within Comenius Project 94158-CP-1-2001-FR.

Monor P. (2010). Effects of Instructional Resources in Secondary Schools on Students performance in West Africa School Certificate Examination (WASCE), Lagos, Nigeria.

Moore (2006). School Administrators' Attitudes Towards Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in General Education Classroom

Morrow, S.L. (2005). 'Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counselling psychology', *Journal of Counselling Psychology* 52 (2): 250-260.

Mosoti, A. (2015, March 3-15). Extreme Pressure on Education is Detrimental to Personal Growth. *Education News*, 146, 6.

Mukhtar, Z. (2019). The Effects of Class Size on Students' Achievement in English Language Class: Teachers' Perspective. Unpublished Master of Education Submitted to Institute of Business Management, Pakistan.

Muhammad, A. Mohammed, K., & Fatihi, A. (2021). Relationship between Class Size and Students' Academic Performance in English Language. *Journal of CUDIMAC (J-CUDIMAC)*.9(1), 10-18.

Mukherji, P. & Albon, D. (2015). *Research methods in early childhood: An Introductory Guide*. London: Sage.

Mung'omba, J. (2008). Comparative Policy Brief: Status of Intellectual Disabilities in the Republic of Zambia. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 5, 142-144.

Muwana, F. C. & Ostrosky, M. O. (2014). Factors Related to Pre service Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion: A Case for Zambia. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, (18) 763-782.

Muyabi, P., Kalimaposo, K., Mubita, K., Mulubale, S., Haambokoma, N., Milupi, I & Mundende, K. (2022). 'Parental involvement in reducing learner absenteeism in selected primary schools of Kazungula District in the Southern Province of Zambia.' *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. Volume 6. Issue 4. ISSN: 2454-6186. Pp: 207-214 www.rsisinternational.org

Muzata, K.K. (2017). *Curriculum Implementation for Learners with Special Education Needs: The Case of Selected Inclusive and Special Schools in Zambia* (doctoral dissertation).

Muzata, K.K. (2019). Terminological Abuse versus Inclusion: An Analysis of Selected Terms Used to Describe Persons with Disabilities in Luvala. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*. Vol 3 (1), PP 1-32.

Mtonga, T., Kalimaposo, K. & Mandyata, J. (2023). 'Classroom experiences of learners with Albinism in selected regular and special education schools in Zambia.' *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies*. Volume 3. Issue 1. Pp: 120 -129.

Mtonga, T., Lungu, E., Kalimaposo, K. & Mandyata, J. (2021). Exclusion in inclusion: Experiences of learners with Albinism in selected mainstream and special schools in Zambia.' *European Journal of Special Education Research*. Volume 7. Issue 1. Pp: 162 – 180. ISSN: 2501 – 2428. www.oapub.org/edu

Mwanamwambwa, V., Kalimaposo, K., Mubita, K., Sikayomya, P., Muyangana, A. & Haambokoma, N. (2021). 'Homework policy implementation in selected primary schools of Kalabo District in Western Province of Zambia: Prospects and Challenges.' *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. Volume 5. Issue 10. Pp: 101- 108. ISSN: 2454-6186. www.rsisinternational.org

Narinasamy, I., & Mamat, W. H. W. (2013). Caring teacher in developing empathy in moral education. *The Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Science*, 1(1), 1-19.

Naukkarinen, A. (2008). 'Developing inclusive primary school teacher education: Experiences of Department of Teacher Education at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland Paper presented at: Cross-National Invitational Symposium on Teacher Education for Inclusion,' University of Aberdeen, 2–4 November 2008.

Ncube, A.C. and Hlatywayo, L. (2014). The provision of special education in Zimbabwe: realities, issues and challenges. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (19) 8.

Ndhlovu, D. (2008). Challenges faced by Pupils with Disabilities in Accessing Education in Selected Inclusive Schools in Chongwe District. *Zambia Journal of Education*, 2 (2), 12-20.

Ndungu, B., Gathu, A. and Benett, J.E. (2015) Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation by Principals on Effective Teaching and Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Githunguri District In *Journal of Education and Practice*. ISSN 2222-1735(paper) ISSN 2222-288X. Vol 6, No.

Neves, C. N. (2023). Head teacher and Inclusion Setting the Tone for an Inclusive School

Neuman, W., L. (2003). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (5thed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ejesc/article/viewFile/65384/53078>.

Ngipuo, B. E. (2015). Influence of Head Teachers' Instructional Supervision Practices on Pupils' Performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, Kakuma Refugee Camp Schools, Kenya. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

Ngugi, J. & Kimanthi, K. (2007). Education for Social Reconstruction. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Nimmo, S. (2008). Examining the factors of successful inclusion of students with vision impairment: A review of the literature. Unpublished course paper, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia.

Noor, N, Khokhar, S. (2000). The Study of the Problems Faced by the Physically Handicapped Students in the Normal Educational Institutions, Master's Thesis, University of Punjab-unpublished.

Nwankwo Isaac .N. V. N Nwogbo, E. A. and Nwachukwu (2019) Principals' Communication Strategies for Teachers' Effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Anambra State: Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies 10 (3).

Noyoo, N. (2003). Social Welfare in Zambia. Lusaka. Zambia.

Obiakor, M. I., & Oguejioffor, C. N. (2020). Impact of Classroom Size on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Enugu North Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies, 1(1), 51-59.

O'laughlin & Linde (2015). Principals as Political Agents in the Implementation of IDEA'S Latest Restrictive Environment Mandate.

Omaali, D. (2021). Instructional Supervision Practice and Effective Teaching in Uganda Secondary Schools. International Journal of Education and Research. Vol.9 (3).

Omede, A. (2015). 'The Challenges of Educating the Visually Impaired and Quality Assurance in Tertiary Institutions of Learning in Nigeria', International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, 7 (7): 129-133.

Omenyi Ada, S. (2018). Public Relations in Educational Administration, in: Fundamentals, Innovations and Issues in Education, Chapter 31. pp,

Omogbehin, E. (2013) *The Principal's Role in Monitoring Students' Progress at the Middle School Level*. San Diego: San Diego State University

Oyewole, B.K & Ethinola, G. (2014). Relevance of Instructional Supervision in the Achievement of the Principal as an Instructional Supervisor. *Global Journal of Commerce & Management Perspective*, 3(3), 88–92.

Patterson, J., Marshall, C. & Bowling, D (2000). Are Principals Prepared to Manage Special Education Dilemmas? *NASSP Bulletin*.

Patterson J., Bowling D., Marshall C. (2000). Are Principals Prepared to Manage Special Education Dilemmas? *National Association of Secondary School Principals*.

Punch, K.F. (1998). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: Sage.

Peretomode, V.F. (2001). *Introduction to Educational Administration, Planning and Supervision*. Ikeja: Joja Research and Publishers Ltd.

Peters, S.J. (2003). 'Inclusive Education: Achieving Education for All by including those with disabilities and special educational needs'. A Paper prepared for the disability group: The World Bank, 13 April

Phiri, M. P. (2013). *Voices, disability and inclusion: a case study of students' narrated learning experiences. Focus on service provision and support for disabled students in higher education in Zimbabwe*. The University of Hull (Dissertation Doctor of Education).

Praisner C.L. (2000). *Attitudes of Elementary School Principals toward the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in General Education Classes* (Doctoral Dissertation, Lehigh University, 2000)

Praisner, C.L (2003). *Attitudes of Elementary School Principals toward the Inclusion of People with Disabilities*. *Exceptional Children*.

Priesley, M. (2003). *Disability: A Life Course Approach*. Oxford: Polity press.

Reyner S.G (2007). *Managing Special and Inclusive Education*. SAGE PUBLICATIONS

Ricci, L. A., Scheier-Dolberg, S.B and Perkins. B.K (2009) "Transforming Triads for Inclusion: Understanding Frames of Reference of Special Educators, General Educators, and

Administrators Engaging in Collaboration for Inclusion of all Learners.” International Journal of Inclusive Education.

Riddell, S., Weedon, E., Fuller, M., Healey, M., Kelly, K., Georgeson, J., Hurst, A. & Peelo, M. (2007). ‘Discourses of Disability, the Idea of Fitness to Practice and the Negotiation of Identity’. British Educational Research Association Conference. London Institute of Education, 6-8 September.

Riddell, S., Tinklin, T. and Wilson, A. (2004). Disabled students and multiple policy innovations in higher education. Final report to ESRC, Edinburgh: Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh. www.ed.ac.uk/ces/Disability/publications.htm.

Riehl, Carolyn J. (2000). The Principal’s Role in Creating Inclusive Schools for Diverse Students: A Review of Normative, Empirical, and Critical Literature on The Practice of Educational Administration. Review of Educational Research Spring Vol. 70, No. 1, pp. 55 - 81.

Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (2003). Qualitative research practice. A guide for social science students and researchers. London: Sage.

Rizic, M. F. (2007). The Difficulties that Mainstream Schools in Lebanon Face as a Result of Including People with Disabilities in the Kindergarten and Primary Stages of Education. MA diss. University of St Joseph, Beirut.

Roberson, (2000). Instructional Supervisory Practices and Teacher’s Role Effectiveness in Public Schools. Journal of Education and Practice. ISSN 2222-1735.

Salisbury C.L (2006). Principal’s Perspectives on Inclusive Elementary Schools

Saloviita, T. (2005) ‘Erityisopetus opettajankoulutuksen sisältöalueena. [Special education as a content area of teacher education].’ In Jakku-Sihvonen, R. (ed.) Uudenlaisia maistereita. Keuruu: Otava 339-351.

Sapon-Shevin, M. (2008). Learning in an inclusive community. Educational Leadership, 66(1), 49-53. Seashore 0976776118

Sailor, W., & Roger, B. (2005). Rethinking inclusion: School wide applications. Phi Delta Kappan, 86(7), 503-509.

Schwab, Lindner, Helm, Hamel and Markus, (2022). Social Participation in the Context of Inclusive Education: Primary School Students Friendship Networks from Students and Teachers Perspectives. *European journal of special needs*. Advance online publication <http://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2021.1961194>

Shenton, A.K. 2004. 'Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects', *Education for Information*, 22: 63–75

Shields, C. (2010). Transformative Leadership: Working for Equity in Diverse Contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(4), 558-5589.

Sidhu, K.S. (2014). *Methodology of research in education*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

Slee, R. (2004). Social Justice and the Changing Directions in Educational Research: The Cade of Inclusive Education in Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education: Major Themes in Education, ed. D. Mitchell.

Smith, D.D. (1998). *Introduction to special education: Teaching in the age of challenge*. (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Subban, P., and Sharma U. (2006). Primary School Teachers' Perception of Inclusive Education in Victoria, Australia. *International Journal of Special Education*.

Sule, M. A., Arop, F. O. & Alade, F. O. (2012). Principal's classroom visitation and inspection, and teachers' job performance in Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(11), 106 111.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2012). Child-friendly school environment. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html.

Turner, D.W. (2010). 'Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators', *The Weekly Qualitative Report* 3 (2): 7-13.

United Nations. UNDESA (2016). *Toolkit on Disability for Africa: Inclusive Education*.

UNESCO (2019). *Inclusion in Education*. Available at <https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education> (accessed March 12, 2020).

UNESCO (2018). *Global Education Monitoring Report Summary on Disabilities and Education*.

UNESCO (2017). Barriers to Inclusive Education. Bangkok: UNESCO.
<http://www.unescobkk.org/education/inclusive-education/what-is-inclusiveeducation/barriers-to-inclusive-education>.

UNESCO (2015). Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenge, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNESCO (2014). Education Strategy 2014–2021. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNESCO (2013). Making Education a Priority in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Available:<http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/GMR/pdf/gmr2013/oosc2.jpg>

UNESCO. (2005). Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All. Paris:

UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, Paris France, UNESCO.

UNESCO. 1994. Final Report; World Conference on Special Education; Access and Quality (Salamanca Declaration and Jomtien Framework for Action). Paris; UNESCO.

United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Geneva: Department of Public Information.

UN General Assembly (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106. Retrieved at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=61>.

USAID (2010). Inclusive Education In Pakistan: Experiences And Lessons Learned From The Engage Project. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

VanTassel-Baska, J., Feng, A., Brown, E., Bracken, B., Stambaugh, T., French, H., McGowan, S. Worley, B. Quek, C., & Bai, W. (2008). A study of differentiated instructional change over 3 years. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 52, 297-312. doi: 10.1177/0016986208321809.

Villa, R. Thousand, J. & Nevin. Differentiated Instruction Around World. A guide to Co-Teaching practices. Tips for Facilitating Students Learning Thousand Oaks. CA (USA). Corwin press.

Watkins, A. (ed.) (2007) ‘Assessment in Inclusive Settings: Key issues for policy and practice. Odense: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. American

Federation of Teachers.’ “Shared Governance in Colleges and Universities.” Policy Statement, 2002. Retrieved 27/04/13.

Wayne, A.J., Yoon, K.S., Zhu, P., Cronen, S., & Garet, M.S. (2008). Experimenting with teacher professional development: Motives and methods. *Educational Researcher*, 37, 469–479. doi: 10.3102/0013189X08327154.

White, J. (2013). Worth, burden, and control: The rejection of personhood and the most dangerous assumption. In L. Burrello, W. Sailor, & J. Kleinhammer-Tramill (eds.). *Unifying educational systems: Leadership and policy perspectives* (pp. 173-200). New York: Routledge.

World Bank. 2021. “Global Practice for Urban, Resilience, Land (GPURL) Guidance Note on Disability Inclusion.” World Bank, Washington, DC.

World Health Organization & World Bank. (2011). *World Report on Disability*. Malta: WHO Press.

Wyatt (2017). *The Principal’s Role in Fostering Collaborative learning Communities through Faculty Study Group Development*.

Yell, M. & Katsiyannis, A. (2004). Placing students with disabilities in inclusive settings: Legal guidelines and preferred practices. *Preventing School Failure*, 49, 28-35. doi: 10.3200/PSFL.49.1.28-35.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Yuen, M., & Westwood, P. (2001). Integrating Students with Special Needs in Hong Kong Secondary Schools: Teachers' Attitudes and their Possible Relationship to Guidance Training. *International Journal of Special Education*, 16(2), 69-84.

Zaretsky, L. (2005). From practice to theory: Inclusive models require inclusive theories. *American Secondary Education*, 33(3), 65-86.

APPENDICES

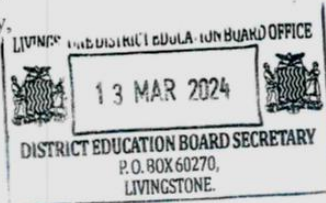
APPENDIX 1: Permission letter from DEBS Office

56

The University of Zambia,
EPPS Department,
School of Education,
P.O Box, 32379,
Lusaka, Zambia.
13th March, 2024

The District Education Board Secretary,
P.O Box 60270,
Livingstone.

Dear Sir/Madam,



*Permission
Granted
DEBS*

REF: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATION RESEARCH

Refer to the above captioned subject matter above.

I am a Philosophy of Education (PHD) student in the School of Education under the department of Educational Psychology Sociology and Special Education at the University of Zambia, majoring in special education and a teacher in your district.

I do hereby request for permission from your office to conduct research. The topic of the study is 'Exploring School Administrators' Practices for Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Schools: A Case of Livingstone District, Zambia'. The purpose of this study is to explore practices employed by school administrators in creating and promoting inclusive programmes of learners with disabilities in regular schools of Livingstone district, Zambia. The objectives of the study are: establish school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular schools, examine how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs, explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs and to suggest a framework that can support school administrators' propensity to promote inclusive education for learners with disabilities in schools.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Great East Road Campus | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka 10101 | Tel: +260-211-290 258/291 777 Fax: (+260)-211-290 258/253 952 | E-mail: director.drgs@unza.zm | Website: www.unza.zm

APPROVAL OF STUDY

IORG No. 0005376
HSSREC IRB No. 00006464
REF NO. HSSREC-2023-NOV-033

29th February, 2024

Ms. Delphine Mweemba
The University of Zambia
P.O. Box 32379
LUSAKA

Dear Ms. Mweemba

RE: "EXPLORING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' INCUSIVE PRACTICES FOR INCUSION OF LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES IN REGULAR SCHOOLS: A CASE OF LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA"

Reference is made to your submission of the protocol captioned above. The HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

REVIEW TYPE	ORDINARY REVIEW	APPROVAL NO. HSSREC:- 2023- NOV - 033
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 29 th February, 2024	Expiry Date: 28 th February, 2025
Protocol Version and Date	Version - Nil.	28 th February, 2025
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	☐ English.	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version - Nil	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil
Other Study Documents	Questionnaire.	
Number of Participants Approved for Study		

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.
- All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.
- Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled "late submissions" and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.
- When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.
- In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.
- Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on projects. Note that some funding agencies and sponsors require a notice of closure from the IRB which had approved the study and can only be generated after the Closing Report has been filed.

APPENDIX 2:

CERTIFICATE OF INFORMED CONSENT

Invitation to Participate (Interview Guide)

CERTIFICATE OF INFORMED CONSENT

I have been invited to participate in research about school administrators' inclusive practices for inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools.

(This section is mandatory)

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant A.M

Signature of Participant [Signature]

Date 13.03.2024

Day/month/year

If illiterate ¹

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness _____ Thumb print of participant

Signature of witness _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent: DELPHINE MWEEMBA

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent [Signature]

Date 13.03.2024

Day/month/year

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS (Names, addresses and phone numbers of the following):

1. **Principal Investigator (Must be a local person and a Zambian).**

Names: DELPHINE MWEEMBA

Phone: 0977458562

E mail: delmeemba@gmail.com

Physical address: MC 80, 4TH STREET MARAMBA, LIVINGSTONE.

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

INSTRUMENTS

Exploring School Administrators' Practices for Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Schools: A Case of Livingstone District, Zambia

Interview Guide for Head teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

- 1 I am a postgraduate student doing Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education from the University of Zambia. I am trying to establish the school administrators' practices towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. I am also trying to examine how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs and to explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. Thank you in advance for the support and cooperation.

A. Socio-economic background

1. Gender:
2. Location: (low, medium, high density)
3. Type of school and size, primary or secondary
4. Age:
5. Highest Qualification:
6. How old are you in service?
7. For how long have you been at this school?
8. How long have you been a head teacher?

B. School administrator's practices to promote inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools

9. How many teachers do you have at this school?
10. How many learners do you have in total
11. Out of these learners, how many have special educational needs?
12. Which categories of disabilities do you have at this school?
13. What procedures do you follow when enrolling learners with disabilities in your school

14. Do you monitor the teaching and learning of learners with SEN?
15. What are your areas of focus during monitoring?
16. Do you coach your teachers after monitoring, if yes how do you do it?
17. Are your teachers practising and fully implementing inclusive education or are you satisfied with their teaching in inclusive classrooms?
 - (a). If yes, what makes you say so?
 - (b). If not, explain
18. How do you help the teachers when they have a crisis with a child in class, e.g seizures?
19. Do you communicate/interact with learners with special education needs?
20. Do your teachers teaching inclusive education collaborate with other teachers in the school? Explain

C. How administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

21. Do you have any knowledge on how to handle the learners with special education needs?
22. What activities have you put in place to ensure that learners with disabilities are also involved in your school? (school policies/guidelines/rules/activities)
23. What measures have you put in place to make sure that learners with disabilities are not stigmatised by their peers?
24. Are all the learners receiving the same curriculum without any modification?
25. Do you have enough infrastructure for all your learners in school?
26. Is your infrastructure friendly enough to cater for the different disabilities in the school?
27. What measures have you put in place to help the differently-abled learners in school?
28. Generally, how do your school community perceive learners with disabilities?
29. Are the parents aware of inclusive education and its benefits to the learners with disabilities?

D. Support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs

1. Have you attended any training on inclusive education/special education?
2. if yes what type of training (pre-service or workshop)
3. Who sponsored the trainings?
4. How long were the trainings?

5. Are the teachers teaching inclusive education trained in inclusive education/special education?
6. If yes how were their trainings? (Pre-service, in service, or CPD)
7. Does the school receive any funding from the government and donors to support the implementation of inclusive education? If yes, how often and is it sufficient? If not, how are you managing?
8. Do teachers have enough materials to use in the implementation of inclusion?
9. Are the parents engaged in the implementation of inclusive education of their children? if yes what is their role, and if not, why?
10. Do you work in collaboration with other head teachers from mainstream schools and other stakeholders?
11. If yes, in which ways do you collaborate?
12. In your own opinion, do you think that learners with special needs are benefiting from the inclusive setting or they should be in the special schools or units?
13. What are your recommendations on inclusive education?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX 4: Interview Guide for Deputy Head teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

- 2 I am a postgraduate student doing Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education from The University of Zambia. I am trying to establish the school administrators' practices towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. I am also trying to examine how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs and to explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. Thank you in advance for the support and cooperation.

A. Socio-economic background

1. Gender:
2. Location: (low, medium, high density)
3. Age:
4. Highest qualification:
5. How old are you in service?
6. For how long have you been at this school?
7. How long have you been a deputy head teacher?
8. Type of the schoolprimary or secondary

B. School administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools

9. How many learners do you have at this school in total?
10. How many learners with special educational needs do you have at this school?
11. Which categories of disabilities do you have at this school?
12. As a deputy head teacher, do you have any class that you teach?
(a) if yes are there any learners with special needs in your class
13. Do you have any knowledge on how to handle the learners with special educational needs?
14. Do you monitor the learning and teaching activities in inclusive classrooms? if yes how often, and if not, why?
15. What are your areas of focus during monitoring?
16. Are you able to coach your teachers after monitoring?
17. Are your teachers fully implementing inclusive education
18. Do you visit classes which have learners with disabilities? if yes how often and if not, why?
19. I understand you are the one in charge of learner enrolment in the school. So how do you enrol learners with special needs?
20. How do you help the teachers when they have a crisis with a child in class, e.g seizures?
21. Generally, how do your school community perceive learners with disabilities?
22. In your own opinion, do you think that learners with disabilities are benefiting from the inclusive setting or maybe they should be in the special schools or units?

C. How administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs

23. Have you attended any training on inclusive education/special education?
24. if yes, what were the trainings all about ?
25. How long were the trainings?
26. Were there any challenges during the trainings?
27. Are the teachers teaching inclusive education trained in inclusive education/special education?
28. What activities have you put in place to ensure that learners with disabilities are also involved in your school?
29. What measures have you put in place to make sure that learners with disabilities are not stigmatized by their peers
30. Do teachers have enough materials to use in the implementation of inclusion?
- D. To explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs**
31. Do you receive any funds specifically for implementation of inclusive education?
 - (a) If yes how often and is it sufficient?
 - (b) If no, how are you managing?
32. Are the parents involved in the activities of learners with special needs in the school?
 - (a) If yes, how are they involved?
33. Is your school environment inclusive enough to accommodate the learners with diverse disabilities?
34. In your own opinion, do you think that learners with disabilities are benefiting from the inclusive setting or they should be in the special schools or units?
35. What are your recommendations on inclusive education?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX 5: Interview Guide for the Senior Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a postgraduate student doing Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education from the University of Zambia. I am trying to establish the school administrators' practices towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. I am also trying to examine how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs and to explore support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in regular schools. Thank you in advance for the support and cooperation.

A. Socio-economic background

1. Gender:
2. Location: (low, medium, high density)
3. Age:
4. Highest Qualification:
5. How old are you in service?
6. How long have you been a senior teacher?
7. For how long have you been at this school?
8. Type of the schoolprimary or secondary

B. Establish school administrators' practices employed to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular schools

- C. How many learners do you have at this school in total
- D. How many learners with special educational needs do you have at this school?
- E. Which categories of disabilities do you have at this school?
- F. As a senior teacher do you have any class that you teach?
 - (b) if yes, are there any learners with disabilities in your class
- G. Do you have any knowledge on how to handle the learners with special educational needs?
- H. Do you face any challenges when it comes to teaching learners with disabilities in the class?
- I. Do you monitor the learning and teaching activities in inclusive classrooms? If yes how often, and if not, why?
- J. What are your areas of focus during monitoring?

- K. Are you able to coach your teachers after monitoring?
- L. What procedures do you follow when enrolling learners with disabilities in your school?
- M. How do you help the teachers when they have a crisis with a disabled child in class e.g seizures?
- N. Generally, how do your school community perceive learners with disabilities?
- O. In your own opinion, do you think that learners with disabilities are benefiting from inclusive setting or maybe they should be in the special schools or units?
- E. How administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.**
- A. Have you attended any training on inclusive education?
- B. if yes what were the trainings all about?
- C. How long were the trainings?
- D. Were there any challenges during the trainings?
- E. Are the teachers teaching inclusive education trained in inclusive education?
- F. Do you monitor the learning and teaching activities in inclusive classrooms? if yes how often, and if not, why?
- A. What are your areas of focus during monitoring?
- B. Are your teachers fully implementing inclusive education?
- C. Are you able to coach your teachers after monitoring?
- D. What activities have you put in place to ensure that learners with disabilities are also involved in your school?
- E. What measures have you put in place to make sure that learners with disabilities are not stigmatised by their peers?
- F. Do teachers have enough materials to use in the implementation of inclusion?
- G. I understand you are the one in charge of material distributions in the school. How often do you give the materials to the inclusive classrooms?
- H. Do they have all the materials that they require according to the diverse disabilities?

E. Support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs.

- I. Do you receive any funds specifically for implementation of inclusive education?
 - (c) If yes, how often and is it sufficient?
 - (d) If not, how are you managing?

- (e) Is your school environment inclusive enough to accommodate the learners with diverse disabilities?
- (f) Are the parents involved in the inclusive activities of the learners with special needs in the school?
- (g) If yes how are they involved?
- (h) Are you able to communicate with parents/community concerning transitioning of the child?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Teachers

A. Socio-Economic background

1. Gender:
2. Location: (low, medium, high density)
3. Age:
4. Highest qualification:
5. How old are you in service?
6. How long have you been teaching?
7. For how long have you been at this school?
8. Type of the schoolprimary or secondary

B. Establish school administrators' practices to promote inclusion of learners with special education needs in regular schools

1. How many learners do you have in your classes?
2. Do you have learners with special educational needs in your classes? If yes, how many are they?
3. Which categories of disabilities do you have in your class?
4. Do your administrators know the categories of disabilities in each of your classrooms?
5. What guidelines or procedures do administrators follow when enrolling learners with special educational needs?
6. Does your administrators have any knowledge on how to handle the learners with special education needs
7. Do administrators monitor the learning and teaching activities in your classrooms? If yes, how often, and if not, why?
8. What are their areas of focus during monitoring?
9. Do you receive any coaching after the monitoring? if yes, how is it done?
10. Do you receive any help from administrators when you face challenges when it comes to teaching learners with disabilities in class?

11. Do your administrators encourage you to collaborate with other teachers teaching other classes which have learners with disabilities?
12. In cases where you have a crisis in class, e.g seizures or hyperactive learners, do you receive any help from administrators?
13. Are the administrators making efforts in ensuring sure that the school environment is conducive for learners with special educational needs? If yes, how are they doing it?
14. Generally, how do the administrators engage the parents in the inclusion of learners with special needs?
15. In your own opinion, do you think that learners with special education needs are benefiting from the inclusive setting or maybe they should be in the special schools or units?

C. How administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs

1. Have you attended any training on inclusive education?
2. If yes, what were the trainings all about?
3. How long were the trainings?
4. Did the administrators have any input in these trainings?
5. What activities have the administrators put in place to ensure that learners with disabilities are also involved in the school?
6. What measures have the administrators put in place to make sure that learners with disabilities are not stigmatised by their peers?
7. Do you receive any support from administrators to enable you to implement inclusive education? If yes what kind of support? If not how are you managing?
8. Do you have enough materials to use in the implementation of inclusion in your daily lessons?

D. Support given to administrators to promote the inclusion of learners with special education needs

1. Does the school receive any funding from the government and donors to support the implementation of inclusive education?
2. Is your school environment inclusive enough to accommodate the learners with diverse disabilities?
3. Are the administrators engaging the parents in the transitioning of the learners with special educational needs? If yes how?

Appendix 6:

OBSERVATION GUIDE

S / N	Objectives	Area Of Focus	Comment
1	Establishing school administrators' practices towards inclusion	i).Welcoming	
		li). Management and supervisory skills.	
		iii) Knowledgeable on inclusion	
		iii) Skill on inclusion	
		iv) Interested on the topic	
2	Examine how administrators' practices have helped promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs	i)Availability of inclusion topics in the Continuous Professional Development Plan	
		ii) Availability of trainings on inclusion attended in the SIR Book	
		iii) Inclusion of pupils with disabilities in extra & co-curricular activities	
		iv) Availability of learners with disabilities in the school	
		v) List of learners with disabilities included in the school.....	
	2 Explore support given to administrators to	i)Transparency in distribution of resources	
		iii).Availability of monitoring and coaching reports	

promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.	iv) Creativity and initiative in sourcing for funds and resources to support inclusion	
	v) Innovativeness in implementing /supporting inclusion	
	vi) Is the school environment conducive for all disabilities	
	a) gate	
	b) Path ways	
	c) Landmarks	
	e) doors	
	f) Floors	
	g) Classrooms	
	h) Ablution blocks	

PUBLICATIONS

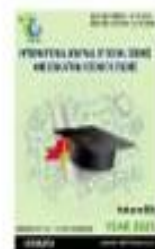
International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies

ISSN(print): 2770-2782, ISSN(online): 2770-2790

Volume 05 Issue 02 February 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55677/ijssers/V05I02Y2025-12>, Impact Factor: 7.573

Page No : 214-224



Experiences of School Administrators in Providing Support for Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Schools: A Case of Livingstone District, Zambia

Kalisto Kalimaposo¹, Magdalene Simalalo², Delphine Mweemba³, Farrelli Hambulo⁴

^{1,2,3,4} University of Zambia, School of Education

ResearchGate

Search for research, journals, people, etc.



OR Discover by

Article

Exploring School Administrators' Practices for Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Schools: A Case of Livingstone District, Zambia

February 2025 · International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science ·

IX(0):2708-2720

DOI: [10.47772/IJRIS.2025.0010218](https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRIS.2025.0010218)

Delphine Mweemba · Kalisto Kalimaposo · Magdalene Simalalo

Overview

Citations

References