

**Using a Critical Analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) to
Explore Teachers' Inclusive Practices**

by

Matšelisó Alice Mohóebi

B.Ed. (NUL); B.Ed.Hons. (Wits); MED (Wits)

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a PhD degree

in the discipline

Policy Studies in Education

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STUDIES

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

BLOEMFONTEIN

June, 2023

Promoter: Dr Fumane P. Khanare

Co-promoter: Dr Gias T. Tsotetsi

Declaration

I, Matšelisio Alice Mohoebi, I declare that the thesis, **Using a Critical Analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) to explore teachers' inclusive practices** hereby handed in for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Free State, is my own and unaided work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other University/Faculty.

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Matšelisio A. Mohoebi

November 2022

Acknowledgements

I am most thankful to God for His guidance and for continuously strengthening and giving me courage during hours of self-doubt and fear.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisors, Dr Gias Tsotetsi and Dr Fumane P. Khanare, for their expertise, consistent support and for always being patient with me. Truly, I remain forever grateful for the generous way in which they openly shared with me their knowledge and experiences which shaped this study.

Further deserving my gratitude and appreciation are my friends for always being there for me throughout this journey, their encouragement, inputs and insightful comments on this study. To all the people who participated in this study, openly sharing their experiences, I thank you for your contribution to the completion of this study.

I am so blessed with a wonderful family which kept me motivated throughout this journey. They continuously provided a stimulating environment and moral support. I am grateful to all of you for always being there for me and for always believing in me. This study would not have been possible had it not been because of your support and motivation. We walked through this journey together and your prayers sustained me throughout this study.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my children; Letlotlo Mpooa Ramaboli and Bonolo Leseli Ramaboli and my mother; 'Mabonene Christina Mohoebi.

Abstract

Inclusive education has formed an important part of the agenda on the global educational development discourse. There are now greater exclusionary issues associated with migration, language and ethnicity, socio-economic status, infrastructure and resource mobility. The concept of inclusion has been introduced to bridge the gap that is visible in education and has widened to incorporate these broader issues of social diversity. Given the multifaceted nature of diversity of classrooms, we have a segregated education system of inequalities which *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* has undertaken to address towards achieving self-reliance and equal opportunities for all. The study explored how teachers in inclusive settings demonstrate their understanding of the LIEP 2018 policy. Using purposive sampling, data collection was done through collage group portrait discussions and focus group discussions with nine teachers and a semi-structured interview with one special education manager to explore how teachers' understanding of the LIEP 2018 policy and the Ministry of Education and Training support for the teachers in implementing the policy. The study used Florian and Black-Hawkins's Inclusive Pedagogy to inform teachers' inclusive practices within the framework of the interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative case study design targeting one regular secondary school in Lesotho. To analyse data, the study used thematic analysis informed by research questions to derive themes and trends that emerged from the data collected from the teachers' inclusive practices in the classroom and related implementation problems at school. The findings reveal the teachers' practices as being inconsistent with the expectations of the policy. The classroom practices have been found to be inclined towards teacher-centred approaches, typified by the rigid curriculum and assessment based on paper and pen examinations excluding visual teaching aids which could help learners to better understand the concepts in the classrooms. While the study acknowledges teachers' attempts at ensuring inclusive classrooms by dramatising and role-playing some of the activities, the Inclusive Pedagogy highlights lack of teachers' positive

attitudes towards and beliefs in the policy, lack of sign language interpreters and resources to achieve the objectives of the policy. The paper concludes that successful implementation of inclusive education depends on teachers' competencies in and attitudes towards inclusive teaching methods and human and material resources. The study thus proposes an inclusive teachers' practices model informed by the findings and the literature to help with the proper implementation of the LIEP 2018 policy.

Key Words: Inclusive education, Policy, Inclusive practices, Implementation

List of Abbreviations

AU – African Union

CPA – Critical Policy Analysis

CRC – Conventions on the Rights of Child

CRPD – Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

ECOL – Examination Council of Lesotho

EFA – Education for All

IP – Inclusive Pedagogy

LIEP – Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy

LNFOOD – Lesotho National Federation of Organization of the Disabled

LSEN – Learners with Special Education Needs

MOET – Ministry of Education and Training

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

SEN – Special Education Needs

TSD – Teaching Service Department

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN – United Nations

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1 Background to the Study

The education system of many countries has traditionally excluded individuals perceived as 'different', and Lesotho is no exception in that regard. This view is supported by Mariga and Phachaka (2003) who offer that care and education for children with special education needs in Lesotho have always been the responsibility of churches, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and individuals. Sometimes, financial support came from the private sector and donor agencies. Much of this exclusion was attributed to different community perceptions and attitudes towards children with special education needs. According to Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs (1995), a child born with special needs in a society is associated with many beliefs such as witchcraft, ancestral spirits and incest. The same beliefs have been noted for Lesotho. The religious and traditional perspectives assert that many countries regarded disability as God's punishment for a certain sin or sins that may have been committed by their parents or ancestors (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Retief & Rantooa, 2016).

This exclusion meant no schooling for children living with disabilities. Considering education for persons with disabilities, Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018) reveal that for a long time, there were many charity organizations that offered care and education support for people with disabilities and mostly, they were organized by religious bodies and eventually expanded by many different governments education systems. Such education has often opposed the view that fundamentally, education is a basic human right. Addressing this challenge, the United Nations (UN) in November 1989 developed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC spells out the different rights to which children are entitled to at different stages of their development globally. Particularly emphasising the right to education, Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

(CRPD) advocates the education of children living with disabilities. As a response to the international call, Lesotho signed the UN CPRD in 2008 (Ralejoe, 2019), following South Africa in 2007 (Department of Education, 2001; Ametepee and Anastasiou, 2015). The CPRD served as an international instrument protecting the rights of persons living with disabilities, thereby exhorting all the countries that signed the document to change their education systems, policies, resources and infrastructural designs. Lesotho established Special Education Unit in 1991 in the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2011 and the Education Act of 2010 advocate the rights of children living with disabilities to have access to education (Eriamiatoe, 2013). The Lesotho's Education Sector Strategic Plan (LESSP) 2005-2015 supports integration of learners into mainstream settings and advocates schools' environments that are child-friendly, healthy, tolerant, gender-sensitive and respect the rights of children. As the plan also puts, the government shall develop policy framework on inclusive education which focuses on integration of learners with special needs, indigenous language and religious minorities (MoET, 2005). This call concurs with the MOET's operation plan 1990's general policy statement on special education which indicates the ministerial aims as promoting and committing to integration of children with special education needs into all levels of the regular school systems. On the other hand, the Lesotho's Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2026 encourages a paradigm shift from integration to inclusion. In this way, such social identity markers as culture, language, socio-economic backgrounds, age, gender and other forms of human differences have been addressed. In the four districts, Lesotho has five special schools. Some cater for those with multiple disabilities, others with visually impairment while others cater for hearing impairments (MOET, 2018). Mariga and Phachaka (1993) argue that children with special educational needs are either formally excluded or often receive poor treatment compared to other children. The authors further equate special education with the education of the deaf, blind, physically disabled pupils and mentally retarded, thereby creating special schools and institutions which are irrelevant to the education system. Nonetheless, this idea

of separate special schools faced some challenges, with many people considering it to be ignoring the education of persons living with different disabilities or the community as a whole. As such, the approach was found to be disempowering and perpetuating stigmatisation (Aoife, Fiona & Joe, 2019). In their critique, Andrew, Walton and Osman (2019) conclude that the South African White Paper 6 rejects principles and practices of special education which are based more on medical-deficit approach to learner differences. This brings conflicts and confusion between inclusive and special education teaching methods and this negatively affects the implementation of inclusive education. To move from special education settings, Florian, Young and Rouse (2010) have argued that in some countries recently, the concept of inclusion incorporates broader issues of social diversity since there are now greater exclusionary factors associated with migration, mobility, ethnicity and language. Aoife, Fiona and Joe (2019) point out that the concept of inclusive education has widened to incorporate not only children with special educational needs (SEN) but all those who are at risk of marginalisation or exclusion. Thus, the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) challenges the ideas of special schools for not responding fully to the problems facing learners with special education needs (LSEN). Therefore, the policy advocates a paradigm shift towards inclusion emphasising that LSEN should learn under one roof with their peers. In this view, positive social relationships could forge full participation of members of the learning community (MOET, 2018).

Inclusive education is a commitment to creating equal societies and equitable education systems (Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart & Kitching, 2005). It aims to address the different learning needs of learners regardless of disabilities, gender, psychosocial, health and socioeconomic status (Mosia, 2014). Furthermore, Begun (2017) says inclusive education involves changing to policies, culture and practices that speak to diversity of learners. Inclusive practices also advocate complete changes of ethos, curriculum, teaching and assessment methods that are diversified to accommodate learners' individual needs and modification of the environment (Forlin, 2013). This argument suggests that inclusive

practices allude to pedagogical changes, acceptance and respect of differences in a school community.

Key to implementing inclusive education are teachers. Nel, Tlale and Engelbrecht (2016) argue that the effectiveness of teachers depends largely on teacher training programmes, pedagogical skills, attitudes, beliefs, dispositions and understanding of diverse learning needs. Yet, Engelbrecht *et al.*, (2005) point out that a shared ownership and responsibility among teachers, administrators and parents are crucial for achieving the goals of inclusive classroom practices. On this basis, policy makers should involve participation from grassroots so that all stakeholders are well informed and in order for this initiative to have the support of the majority of teachers, parents, children, the community and those who are directly affected by education (Mosia, 2011).

With the pressure from the parents, the organisation of the people living with disabilities – Lesotho National Federation of Organisation of the Disabled (LNFOD), the government of Lesotho through the MOET developed the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP) in 2018. Among the objectives, the policy aims to improve teaching and learning environment; strengthen capacity of education in support of LSEN; to enhance partnerships for implementation of LIEP; and adapting the national curriculum so that it conforms to inclusive education principles (MOET, 2018).

1.2 Problem Statement

The LIEP as the new policy marks the departure from the narrow focus to a more expanded vision of inclusive education. However, since this is a new policy in the education system of Lesotho, the literature remains relatively scarce on how teachers' inclusive practices demonstrate their understanding of the LIEP 2018 in mainstream settings. Through search databases such as Google Scholar, Research Gate and Education Source, few articles with regard to the implementation of special and inclusive education have been published prior to the enactment of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) (Eriamiatoe 2013; Khatleli

et al., 1995; Mosia, 2014; Mariga & Phachaka, 1993). However, to this end, two articles could be found. One that specifically focused on teachers' views on Inclusive Education for visually impaired learners in Lesotho (Ralejoe, 2019) and Mosia (2019) who views education as supporting services for LSEN. It is against this background that the study aimed to fill that gap, thereby attempting at understanding teachers' inclusive practices in the classrooms through the lens of the LIEP 2018. Thus there was a need to establish whether and the extent to which teachers could demonstrate inclusive practices in their classrooms.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework blueprints the entire study inquiry. It guides, builds and supports one's study. It further provides the structure to define how one will "philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole" (Osanloo & Grant, 2015: 1). In the same vein, Maxwell (2013), in Collins and Stockton (2018) mentions that the use of a theoretical framework assists to refine goals, how to develop research questions, determine methodology tools, identifying threats to validity and demonstrate clearly the relevance of the research.

The study was underpinned by Florian and Black-Hawkin's Inclusive Pedagogy (IP) theory to explore teachers' inclusive practices in a mainstream setting through the lens of the 2018 LIEP. IP has emerged from a study of the craft knowledge of educators who strongly believed in a classroom of diverse learners while at the same time, avoided stigmatisation of differences. Furthermore, it was developed out of a project which was fixed on IP in a postgraduate pre-service education programme for teachers in Scotland (Aoife, Fiona & Joe, 2019; Florian, 2010, 2015; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian & Spratt, 2015). IP addresses specifically three interrelated problems of inequality in education. These include

organisational strategies based on the bell curve distribution, the identification of additional support needs and the disproportional statistical representatives of particular minority groups in special education. The bell-curve subscribes to ideas

of sorting learners by ability and implies that what is ordinarily available will meet the needs of most learners while a few may require additional support (Florian & Spratt, 2015: 11).

According to Aoife, Fiona and Joe (2019), the IP theory identifies three key assumptions that teachers should have so as to implement an IP while at the same time, acknowledges the challenges that all learners face. First, teachers should believe in the concept of transformability which assumes that learners' capacity to learn depends on the choices and decisions made by teachers in developing teaching and learning, (Aoife, Fiona & Joe, 2019; Florian & Spratt, 2013). The second assumption fosters teachers' beliefs in being able to teach diverse learners and stresses that challenges in learning are not based on the learners, but are facing teachers. The last assumption relates to teachers' collaborative approach which is vital for inclusive schools. According to Florian and Linklater (2010), administrators, teachers, staff, other professionals, parents and the community must work collaboratively for the development of education that accommodates for all.

As alluded by these many scholars, inclusive pedagogy recognises diverse abilities, not standardised forms of abilities (Florian & Linklater, 2010; Florian & Spratt, 2013; Loreman, 2017). Additionally, it provides an option to the bell-curve thinking and replaces traditional instructional approaches to teaching diverse learners. Their argument is also based on the fact that such learners require different or additional approaches to learning which match learner characteristics than what is always ordinarily available for everyone (Florian, 2010, 2015; Florian & Spratt, 2015). On this basis, the inclusive pedagogical approach stresses participation in classroom activities (Florian, 2015). These arguments confirm that inclusive pedagogy rejects ability labelling as a fundamental premise for teachers' decisions on providing for 'all' by differentiating for 'some' learners (Florian, 2010, 2013; Florian & Spratt, 2013).

Teachers are responsible for translating educational policies into practice through teaching and learning, with the theory of IP viewing the teacher as key to inclusive education. Since the policy has been formulated to address problems of exclusion, Mugambi (2017) argues that inclusive education is faced with many challenges because curricula in schools is still built for a traditional student model which has posed challenges for many learners. Similarly, many researchers reveal that to translate theory into practice, there is a need for competent teachers (Majoko, 2019). John (2010) also points out that teacher knowledge and attitudes are important in responding to new educational policies on inclusion and impact their reactions to the implementation of the policy. In light of the arguments, this framework has positioned inclusive pedagogy as a suitable lens to analyse teachers' inclusive practices from the policy angle in secondary school settings. Here, their understanding of the knowledge and skills could enhance successful implementation of inclusive education and mitigate the implementation challenges. When they are fully skilled in inclusive pedagogy, teachers could consider the curriculum, teaching methods and aids and forms of assessment to use. Furthermore, they offer educational responses that are unique to the diverse classrooms. Classrooms are complex, teachers have to make decisions which are shaped by their competencies and approaches, values and attitudes regarding learners in the school community.

1.4 Research Question

The study set out with following main research question: How do teachers' practices demonstrate their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school?

The following sub-questions have helped to answer the main question:

- How is inclusive education conceptualised globally and contextualised in Lesotho?
- What is the Lesotho policy framework for inclusive education and the prominence of the *LIEP* of 2018 in this framework?

- What are teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the *LIEP* of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho
- What suggestions could be made to enhance teachers' inclusive practices with the availability and clarity of the *LIEP* of 2018?

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study sought to explore how teachers' practices demonstrate their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school.

To achieve this aim, the study had the following objectives:

- Unpack how inclusive education is conceptualised globally and contextualised in Lesotho.
- Discuss the Lesotho policy framework for inclusive education and establish the prominence of the *Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy* of 2018.
- Explore teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the *Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy* of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho.
- Establish and suggest ways of enhancing teachers' inclusive practices with the availability and clarity of the *Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy* of 2018.

1.6 Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study includes research paradigm and approach, problem statement, research questions and objectives, data collection tools, sampling of participants, data analysis and ethics considerations. Baskarada (2014) believes that a research design rationally links the research questions to the conclusions of the research through the steps followed during data collection and data analysis. Thus a qualitative case study design has been used for this study.

1.6.1 Research Paradigm

Research paradigm is described as a set of agreements of how problems can be understood, how we see the world and conduct research. According to Rahi (2017), a research paradigm is a set of beliefs that give guidance to our enquiries for a particular research. A paradigm encompasses systems of coordinated practices and perspectives which define to the researcher the nature of the enquiry according to four dimensions, namely ontology, epistemology, the methodology and axiology. These sets provide the direction of the action undertaken by the researcher during the study. This study is situated within an interpretive paradigm which is subjective and recognizes how individuals interpret and understand social phenomenon (Rahi, 2017). For Kawulich (2012), interpretive research focuses on understanding experiences of people and takes place in a setting of participants. The ontology of interpretivist claims that knowledge is socially constructed and studies the basic categories of things that exist and their relations (Kawulich, 2012; Kivunja & Kiyini, 2017). Epistemology of interpretivism assumes that knowledge is subjective and socially constructed (Kawulich, 2012) and methodologically, interpretivists seek an understanding of a phenomena from individuals' perspective (Creswell, 2012). In addition, the axiology of interpretivism considers the values attributed to different aspects of the research participants, the data and the audience regarding focal results of the study (Kawulich, 2012). In essence, it also defines, evaluates and understands right and wrong concepts of behavior that are related to research (Kivunja & Kiyini, 2017). Such philosophical assumptions underpinning this study have helped the researcher to understand teachers' inclusive practices in their real-life context and how their practices should cater for every individual's learning style. Also noted is teachers' pedagogy through the proposed data generation tools and responses of respondents. Further crucial are all ethical issues such as respect for privacy and individual's opinions, minimising harm and ensuring careful and accurate collection and reporting of the data.

1.6.2 Research Approach

The study has used a qualitative approach. A qualitative research focuses on obtaining new information and insights into current issues and situations, with an impetus from constructivist philosophical assumptions. As such, research relies on the subjects to understand the world through their eyes, by relying on the responses of the participants to understand social realities (Shah, Shah & Khaskelly, 2018). In addition, Yin (2011) clarifies that a qualitative research studies people's lives in their real-life situations and covers the contextual conditions such as the environmental, social, and institutional conditions. Therefore, a qualitative approach has helped the researcher to explore teachers' inclusive practices from their interpretation and understanding of what makes an inclusive classroom.

1.6.3 Qualitative Case Study

According to Shah and Al-Bargi (2013), a case study is selected because of its uniqueness, it is an approach that makes deep investigation into a social phenomenon (MacMillian and Schumacher, 2010) and it is designed to suit the research questions (Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift, 2014). Qualitative research approach involves various research designs, and for the current study, an exploratory case study (ECS) (Bhandari, 2020) was deemed to be suitable for understanding issues in real-life settings (Yin, 2014). ESC rigorously investigates social situations using various sources of data (Shah *et al.*, 2018). This may include written and visual texts with purposively selected participants. The study has involved purposively selected participants and employed semi-structured interviews, collage group portraits discussion to explore the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, the bounded case included respondents' understanding of inclusive practices as informed by the LIEP of 2018 at a target school, with various data collection methods used to obtain different but complementary data for the same topic.

1.6.4 Research Methods

To understand and gather information, the study used semi-structured interviews and collage group portraits discussions, focus group discussion and document analysis. Firstly, the first part of data collection came from the collage group portraits discussion and focus group discussion. This was a collaborative process with respondents to understand teachers' inclusive practices. The process was followed by the semi-structured interview with the Special Education Manager in the Ministry of Education and Training who helped to understand the support that the district office gives to schools for implementing the policy. According to Butler-Kisber (2008), collage is a visual arts-based method where people make use of available material such as pictures, papers, symbols and words to paint a meaning on a topic. It helps the participants to create, talk, think, reveal, discuss and ultimately learn, while semi-structured interviews allow for a more open-ended discussion. Creswell (2011) believes semi-structured interviews have greater depth and allows the interviewer to probe and clarify certain questions. The collage group portraits discussion was used with the teachers to obtain multiple voices, creating an inclusive space for respondents. Semi-structured interviews were also used to gather data from Special Education Manager. Lastly, I examined the LIEP 2018 policy for document analysis in order to check teachers' compliance with the policy. These data instruments were appropriate and feasible for this particular study because of detailed information collected from different sources.

Main research question	Research Methods
How do teachers' practices demonstrate their understanding of <i>the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)</i> in a secondary	

school?	
Sub-questions	Research Methods
How inclusive education is conceptualised globally and contextualised in Lesotho?	Literature review
What is the Lesotho policy framework for inclusive education and the prominence of the <i>Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy</i> of 2018 in this framework?	Document analysis and Critical Policy Analysis
What are teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the <i>LIEP</i> of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho?	Online semi-structured interviews, collage group portraits and discussions; and focus group discussion
What suggestions that could be made to enhance teachers' inclusive practices with the availability and clarity of the <i>Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy</i> of 2018?	Synthesis of the study

1.7 Quality Considerations

Ali and Yusof (2011) maintain that quality is important to the research process, from the development of a research question and collecting data to the presentation and analysis of research findings. Scholars view the quality of the qualitative research study as typified by trustworthiness; credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and triangulation.

1.7.1 Credibility

According to Twining, Rachelle, Nussbaum and Tsai (2017), credibility of qualitative research relies upon the consistency that exists between the theoretical stance, research questions, data collection techniques and analysis of data. In the same vein, Kortjens and Moser (2018) observe that credibility refers to the credence that can be established in the truth of findings; it further considers whether the research results represent information coming from the participants' original data. To ensure credibility for the study, I gave the transcribed data back to the respondents for clarification and verification to avoid any misrepresentation and misinterpretation.

1.7.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the research results which are not necessarily attached to a particular research setting, thereby having no particular implication beyond that setting, that is not being generalizable or applicable to a wider context (Morgan, 2007). In essence, transferability allows the findings of one study to apply to other situations. Thus, I provided a detailed description of how the study was conducted and the context in which it took place.

1.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is concerned with how stable research findings are over a period of time. Shenton (2004) sees dependability as yielding similar results from any replication of the research in the same setting using the same data collection methods and the same

participants. In this case, data from the findings could be accessible to anyone wishing to check the dependability of the study.

1.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that the findings are not the researcher's imaginations, but derived from the findings, thus reducing any bias. In addition, confirmability ensures that the researcher's results are not the preferences of the researcher but rather, the experiences and ideas of the participants, (Kortjens & Moser, 2018; Shenton, 2004). For this study, the original data collection tools have been safely kept for checking of the trustworthiness of the study.

1.7.5 Triangulation

Watson (2020) explains triangulation as using different tools and approaches within a single study, in order to capture the experiences and social patterns. By triangulating data, this produces credible results (Rapley, 2007). To triangulate the data, this study used collage group portraits discussion, focus group discussion and document analyses together with online semi-structured interview which helped to diversify the voices of the respondents.

1.8 District and School Sample and Selection

The study used a purposive sampling. MacMillian and Schumacher (2010: 48) describes purposive sampling "as a form of non-probability sampling where cases are judged as typical or some categories of cases are of research interest." Since inclusive education has become increasingly popular in the global space, schools are seemingly slowly adjusting to the idea. However, there are only five inclusive secondary schools in Lesotho (MOET, 2016), one of which has been used in this study. This particular school has learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. Of mention is that many studies have focused on Maseru as the capital town and other districts have been understudied. Studies have also examined visual impairment, hearing impairment and deafness settings. With the school also falling under

the church proprietor, it may have some support from the church. As indicated above, the churches have been instrumental in the education of LSEN.

1.8.1 Sample of Respondents

The respondents were selected based on their interaction with inclusive education. In this case, the study has used nine teachers – both males and females - as key policy implementers. Besides, one Special Education Manager provided understanding on the support for teachers for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

1.9 Data Analysis

The study used a thematic analysis. Liamputtong (2009) explains that thematic analysis identifies, analyses and reports on the patterns within the data. These patterns were helpful in answering the research questions. Thematic analysis analyses qualitative data by searching across a data set in order to identify, analyse and report repeated patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It also involves selecting codes and constructing themes in order to interpret the results (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021). Data analysis was informed by the multiple ways in which teachers responded to how they diversify their teachings to accommodate all learners in the classrooms.

The study also used Critical Policy Analysis (CPA) to analyse the LIEP of 2018. To understand the policy content, context and implementation of LIEP (2018), CPA has helped in interrogating the policy process, the space that exists between policy development and implementation, explored the silences by looking at the contents of the policy (Diem, Young, Welton, Mansfield & Lee, 2014). Furthermore, CPA recognises the challenging complex systems and contexts in which the policy is made and implemented, drawing on the policy framework. In my view, for teachers to understand inclusive teaching, they should understand the role of a policy in their teaching, considering CPA as exploring teachers' conceptualisation of inclusive practices within the policy framework.

1.10 The Value of the Study

Since inclusive education has become increasingly relevant on the global agenda, this study has highlighted the roles of all stakeholders (such as policy makers, teachers, MOET and learners) in inclusive education in relation to the successful implementation of LIEP. The study has helped to capacitate teachers thus increasing their knowledge and skills on inclusive environment. Besides, the study has attempted at informing policy makers for decision-making on enhancing the existing policy. The study anticipates additional contribution to the current discourses on inclusive education, both in the context of Lesotho and the global context.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethics protect research participants from encountering any harm by being involved in research (Suzan, Drew, Guillemin, Howell, Warr & Watcott, 2014). The aims of and all potential risks and benefits related to the study were communicated to the target respondents. The respondents were also informed of their consent and voluntary participation in the study; they were assured of having their responses anonymous and that they could withdraw from the study anytime, without any undesirable consequences. The study has followed all protocols, including an application to the Ethics Committee, requesting the Ministry of Education and Training for access to schools to conduct research.

1.12 Layout of Chapters

- Chapter One – Background to the study.
- Chapter Two – Literature review (Global conceptualisation of inclusive education) and Theoretical framework.
- Chapter Three – Research Methodology.
- Chapter Four – The Critical Policy Analysis of LIEP 2018.
- Chapter Five – Data presentation, discussion and analysis.

- Chapter Six – Conclusion and recommendations to enhance inclusive education practices.
- Chapter Seven – A proposed model for teachers' inclusive practices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study has explored how teachers' practices demonstrate their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* at a secondary school. This chapter presents objective one of the study and debates on the conceptualisation of inclusive education globally, and in the context of Lesotho. The chapter thus examines some key lessons of the literature on an inclusive classroom. As such, factors influencing inclusive practices in schools are discussed. Further considered is the legislative framework in the United Kingdom (UK) as a former colony of Lesotho and drawing on the experiences of selected African countries. Also, the study discusses the policy gap at the implementation level, concluding with the theoretical framework informing this study.

2.2 Background of Inclusive Education

The 21st century calls for education that articulates self-reliance and equal opportunities for all. Given the multifaceted nature of classrooms, inclusive education has become an important agenda in the global discourse. Muthukrishna (2018) mentions that the concept of inclusive education emerged from a well resourced rich model of support from developed countries for learners who have been historically marginalized by mainstream education. This became an important discourse in the global education development agenda. The idea of inclusion in education dates as far back as the 20th century, and many countries were struggling to acknowledge and develop the education of LSEN (Ireru, King'endo, Wangila & Thurania, 2020). For Walton (2018), many countries have developed inclusive education from a well-established foundation of special education systems. Muthukrishna, (2018: 13) further explains that "When governments in high-income countries began to take responsibility for the education of children with disabilities, it took the form of 'special

education' for those with 'special education needs' in a separate education setting, such as special schools." This form of schools focuses on medical-deficit and disregards other children with other social needs.

Nonetheless, this idea of separate special schools was not welcomed and slowly challenged by many scholars who considered it not addressing the best interests of people living with disabilities and society (Aoife, Fiona & Joe, 2019; Andrew, Walton and Osman, 2019). As a result, the idea was regarded to be disempowering such groups and encouraging stigmatisation. In their critique, Andrew, Walton and Osman (2019), conclude that South African White Paper 6 rejects conceptions and practices of special education which are premised on a medical-deficit approach to learner differences. Therefore, conflicts and confusion over ideas based on inclusive teaching and special needs teaching methods arose which negatively affected the implementation of inclusive teaching. To move from special education settings, Florian, Young and Rouse (2010) have argued that in some countries, the concept of inclusion has also expanded to issues of social diversity, resulting in many exclusionary pressures attributed to migration, mobility, language and ethnicity. This suggests that education should focus on diversity in a classroom to make every learner learn successfully regardless of their religious, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Aoife, Fiona and Joe (2019) view inclusive education as having moved beyond persons with SEN to all persons who are marginalised in society.

Internationally, the UN has made global influential declarations for inclusive education as it is supported by many international policy frameworks including Article 24 of the United Nations CRPD, Education For All (EFA) and currently, the Sustainable Development Goals 4 (SDGs). The concept of inclusion in education culminated in the adoption of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs in 1994 which states that children living with disabilities should be educated alongside their peers in regular schools. The Salamanca Statement is signed under the auspices of UNESCO and it is regarded as a

watershed moment in the history of inclusive education (Kamenopoulou, 2020). Since the Salamanca Statement and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006, there is a globally dominant discourse around inclusive education as a fundamental basic human right. As a result, inclusive education has become essential and prominent in the education agenda around the world, also visible in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015. The SDGs aims, “to ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, thus maintaining the importance of access and participation for all learners in education” (UNESCO, 2015: 3). From the Salamanca Statement in 1994, most European countries have declared that inclusive education is a significant tool to safeguard equal educational rights and opportunities for all persons with different special educational needs (Haug, 2017). Thus, inclusive education is premised on human rights since education is a basic human right, also enclosed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 2018). Under the UNCRPD, children living with or without disabilities are afforded the same rights to educational opportunities (Mugambi, 2017), thus inclusive education safeguards the right of every child to be part of the education system that is non-discriminatory nor biased (Mpu & Adu, 2019). Following such international frameworks, efforts and commitments have been made by many countries to work and change their educational frameworks and practices towards inclusive education. However, Ashwini *et al.* (2015) argue that several countries across the globe are committed to inclusive education through their legislative frameworks, though leaving questionable practices at schools.

The world’s conference on Education for All (EFA) commits that every person is entitled to educational opportunities that are specifically designed to respond to their basic learning needs (World Conference on Education for All, Thailand, 1990). EFA pronounces that every person has the right to education and remains a good venture to expand education in the 21st century and beyond (Majoko, 2019). Yet, Muller (2000) argues differently that given the contextual challenges of every country, EFA is still a distant dream. Also, Forlin (2013) states

that inclusive education embodies principles of human rights, promotes social justice, provides quality education and the right to basic education for all. It is thus important to conclude that although there may be contextual conditions to challenge the implementation, there is hope to change the education through international and local legislative policies.

2.3 Global Conceptualisation of Inclusive Education

Inclusion is marked by diversity in an inclusive society. In the context of education, it implies a complete change of schools in terms of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It also highlights important changes in the way learning and teaching are perceived. Yilmaz and Yeganeg (2021) point out that today, schools are supposed to accommodate learners with different languages, cultures, gender, as well as learning backgrounds. Thus, inclusive education is a key element in creating an inclusive society. Sharma, Sumaiya, Devi1, Raj and Saini (2021) note that a normal school classroom has children from diverse cultural backgrounds, socio-economic status and persons with disabilities. In this way, teachers should view the classroom space as a diverse academic and a social context for equality, discussion and development of an ecosystem for education (Sharma *et al.* 2021). Ireri *et al.* (2020) believe that inclusive education cross-examines the broad aims and purpose of education in schools, the curriculum, methods of assessment, and how the schools accommodate diversity. Furthermore, it advocates a complete change of schools in terms of adapting the goals, curriculum content and the school environment to the educational needs of individuals and the classroom (John, 2010; Tawanda, 2019; Westwood, 2013). In this view, inclusive education can be understood as placement of children with physical disabilities, behavioural or academic difficulties or social concerns under one roof in a regular school (Koskei, Egesa & Changach, 2020).

By the same token, inclusive education is defined as a process where mainstream schools settings are transformed so that all children get supported to overcome “their academic and social barriers in environment, communication, curriculum, teaching socialisation and

assessment at all levels” (Forlin, 2013: 10). Additionally, Brausteiner and Mariano-Lapidus (2014) believe that an inclusive school culture creates culture of tolerance, acceptance and respect for all learners. Raselimo and Mahao (2015) believe that education must involve teaching methods that develop independence, creativity and skills for survival for learners in contemporary society. This means changes in the professional attitudes, teaching methods, curriculum, assessment, environment and learner support – whether emotional, psychological, physical, financial and academic. To achieve an inclusive approach, Budiarti and Sugito (2018) argue for a practice of varied curriculum content, teaching methods and assessment. The schools should also make efforts to enable accessibility of facilities and infrastructure.

However, Walton (2018) emphasises that inclusion requires that attention should be paid to individual learning needs, without marginalising and stigmatising learners. On this basis, inclusion for practitioners should respect and respond equally to human differences (Florian, Young & Rouse, 2010). Such an educational environment should fully understand individual learning differences without labelling anyone with those differences. In addition, John (2010) states that inclusive education gives all learners access to any school of their choice regardless of their strengths, weaknesses and disability. For Engelbrecht *et al.* (2015), an inclusive classroom embodies and supports learning for learners of different ages; participation accommodates the experiences and identities of all learners in classroom activities. Thus, inclusive schools emphasise more on nurturing, belonging and providing education to all learners irrespective of their differences.

The notion of inclusive has been defined and implemented differently between and within schools in many countries (Haug, 2017). For Mugambi (2017), despite emphasising inclusive education, such inclusivity has many implementation challenges: many curricula in learning institutions draw on a ‘traditional’ student model, thus posing challenges for many learners; studies have shown teachers’ ill-preparedness for managing inclusive classrooms. Learning

environments fail to support different learners, whose assessment is unauthentic for achieving learning outcomes. Because of being multi-layered and challenging, inclusive education practices are not understood in schools (Irerer *et al.*, 2020). Also challenging about inclusive education is the inflexible and irrelevant curriculum, coupled with inappropriate instructional teaching strategies, and standardised assessment and examination approaches, poor teacher preparedness and insufficient support system for teachers (Mugambi, 2017). As Schuelka (2018) provides, barriers to inclusive education are marked by inadequate policy and legal resources and facilities, pedagogical techniques, a flexible curriculum, supportive leadership and cultural attitudes. Practically, research has shown implementation of inclusive teaching and learning as having many challenging factors such as inadequate support and resources for teachers, large overcrowded classrooms, negative teachers' attitudes and willingness (Kaur, Noman & Nordin, 2017). The intensive curricular demands and a large class size frustrate teachers who are already overwhelmed with creating learning opportunities for all in a diverse classroom (Samuels, 2020).

To strengthen implementation of inclusive education, the education system that favours inclusion should have laws, policies, governance, school curricular, personnel and infrastructure to enable an inclusive environment and change the content, approaches, structures and strategies. Educational policies should commit schools to designing, adopting and implementing educational strategies that support inclusive education (Irerer *et al.*, 2020). Adjusting the school systems means altering the atmosphere in order to encourage barrier-free school environments (Fullan, 2015). In Begun's view, "financial and technical resources, legislative frameworks, skilled teachers, allied professionals and traditions of parent advocacy can enhance inclusive education" (2017: 12). The whole education system should monitor education and school organisation (Unicef, 2017; Walton, 2018). For implementation, inclusive schools should develop various strategies. These strategies include developing a collective school inclusive mission and vision, independent school-based inclusive implementation plans, development of collaborative agenda and teams, as well as provision

of continuous professional development support to staff (Ileri *et al.*, 2020). Classroom dynamics have changed over time, providing space for children with different needs. Consequently, inclusive education advocates various teaching activities that accommodate learners with different learning abilities, knowledge and experiences. It is important therefore that schools should focus on educational practices that are inclusive and have respect for students' welfare, self-sufficiency, dignity and contribution to the society (Ileri *et al.*, 2020).

Nonetheless, in some countries embracing inclusive education, there has been infrastructural challenges, teachers are poorly trained to deal with the diversity of needs presented in their classrooms. For Mokoetle (2012), the principles of EFA are important for inclusive policy changes. They encourage upgrading of infrastructure; enhancing institutional development and support; and equitable distribution of educational resources. Although Lesotho has made some efforts in developing an inclusive education policy, in the process of moving away from special education, the MOET Education Strategic Plan (2016 -2026) has continued keeping special education for severe disabilities until the resources for inclusive education are available (MOET, 2016). International organizations have made many efforts to ensure that inclusive educational practices are implemented. However, many learners are segregated in special schools in many different parts of the world (Mokaleng & Mowes, 2020). Florian (2008) argues that in some contexts, teachers stick to former special education practices which undermine transition into real inclusion. In addition, accepting inclusive education practices has not necessarily made most mainstream classrooms inclusive; lack of resources, attitudes and actions of the educators in the classrooms have obstructed the implementation (Mpu & Adu, 2019).

2.3.1 Inclusive Education in the United Kingdom (UK)

The UK is a sovereign state comprising four nations, namely England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Norwich, 2017). Since Lesotho was colonised by the Britain (the UK)

between 1884 to 1966, it is interesting to review the literature in the UK, especially their legislative framework in relation to the context of Lesotho. Beaton and Spratt (2019) explain that successive government in the UK have aspired for a socially inclusive society by their ambitious international principles of inclusion. This motive was seen through the publication of the Warnock Report (Lauchlan & Greig, 2015). The Warnock Report 1978 suggests that all children should learn under the same roof, where everyone has the opportunity to learn the best way they can (Norwich, 2017). Furthermore, the Warnock Report 1978 supported the contents of the Education Act 1981 which discouraged special education to a more all-inclusive education system (Beaton & Spratt, 2019; Lauchlan & Greig, 2015; Norwich 2017). However, the Education Act 1993 made some changes in the Education Act 1981, which were consolidated in the Education Act 1996 (Back Up, 2014).

To assume an equal schooling and society, the UK developed the 2006 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) and Equality Act 2010 (Gibson, 2015; Wah, 2010). The SENDA emphasises the rights for children with special education needs for education in regular schools (Wah, 2010). The Equality Act 2010 governs all schools in Wales, England and Scotland regardless of how they are funded (Back Up, 2014). The UK governments' stance on inclusion was further endorsed in the Green Paper – Excellence for All Children 1997. The Green Paper offers a number of important practical steps to promote inclusion in mainstream schools for learners with special education needs (Wah, 2010). It further provides practical guide on policies and procedures to all relevant stakeholders (Lauchlan & Greig, 2015; Wah, 2010). Lauchlan and Greig (2015: 18) mentions that “the Green Paper 1997 was further extended by the Every Child Matters legislation in 2004 which focused on a multi-agency context, functioning as part of integrated children’s services and with an emphasis on the whole-community context rather than school-based.” Additionally, with a change of government in 2010 came modifications in the legislation. This is seen in the 2011 Green Paper which outlines plans to provide parents with a choice of their schools as well as special schools. In England, through the 1988 Education Reform Act, a common standardised

curriculum was introduced for the first time (Beaton and Spratt, 2019). Recently, in England, the National Curriculum policy for England and Wales was formulated to enable teachers to adapt their practices to the different needs of all learners in their classrooms. On the other hand, Scotland had introduced compulsory education earlier than other countries in the UK, and has remained the only country in the UK that continues offering free education. On this basis, they pride themselves in ensuring equal opportunities for all through education provisions (Beaton and Spratt, 2019). On a global level, the UK ratified both the UN CRC in 1991 and CRPD in 2009 which were enshrined in its law in the form of the Equality Act 2010 (Allan, 2021).

2.4 African Union: Inclusion Policies

The African Union (AU) serves as the embodiment of the collective will of the African countries and in its agenda; education is a national and regional responsibility. There are greater number of educational policies that have paid close attention to developing the educational rights of children living with disabilities in Africa. As envisaged by the AU and its 2063 Agenda, the African Union Commission has developed an African comprehensive ten-year Continental Education Strategy for the continent's sustainable development (African Union Commission, 2016). The AU's 2063 agenda is a comprehensive plan designed to transform Africa as adopted at the AU's golden jubilee summit in 2013 (Onuora-Oguno, Egbewole & Kleven, 2017). Under the auspices of the AU, a Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) was developed in which the African sector of education engaged in some consultations to discuss about Africa's post-2015 education agenda and amongst the ten top priority areas for the region, offering equitable and inclusive access to education for all children (African Union Commission, 2016). Concerning education, CESA 16-25 is guided by holistic, inclusive and equitable education with good conditions for lifelong learning and sustainable development (African Union Commission, 2015). In the CESA 2016 – 2025 conference, policy makers and partners engaged

to commit the African Union to ensuring that in all regions of Africa, children are supported to ensure access, retention and completion of education in child-friendly environments that enable both boys and girls to thrive and achieve their potential. The Commissioner further noted with satisfaction achievements of the AU member states regarding national inclusive education policies, thus making more children with disabilities access education (African Union Commission, 2017: 4).

Historically, the AU has failed to make the rights of people living with disability a priority of its human rights and development agenda (PACE, 2018). However, inclusive education for people living with disabilities has become dominant in the current global discourse. In its move to respond to the global outcry, the AU has developed the Continental Plan of Action for persons with disabilities (2010-2019), with emphasis on inclusive education as its priority areas. The priority action for member states of the AU is “to adopt full, inclusive, and accessible education policies, programmes and school systems that promote the education of children with disabilities including early childhood development to enjoy universally inclusive and accessible quality education for all” (African Union Commission, 2010: 2). The AU has also developed a Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of People with Disabilities in Africa. The protocol suggests an action plan for people living with disabilities that embodies inclusion and empowerment (African Union, 2020). The Education 2030 Framework for Action recommended a way forward towards achieving the ten targets of the educational goal. The plan was adopted in November 2015, guiding governments and partners on effectively turning commitments into actions (PACE, 2018). Such African strategies enable ownership of, shape and adapt the SDGs, particularly to the specific needs of the continent, by drawing on the previous education strategies.

In five African countries, studies have shown that although some countries had relevant policies and plans on inclusive education, implementation seems lacking because of problems

such as ill-preparedness of teachers and inaccessible schools (Tchombe, 2013). Further noted is that, these AU documents lack comprehensive policy plans that support state enterprises for developing inclusive education. There are also lack of financial and technical commitment to achieving broader inclusive educational initiatives across the African region. As such, to develop inclusive educational policies, the responsibility lies on African states to support education fully, and support from international institutions which will only come out as complementary.

2.4.1 Lessons from Other African Countries

This section looks at the development and implementation of inclusive education policies in other African countries and lessons Lesotho can learn for implementing inclusive education.

2.4.1.1 South Africa

South Africa gained freedom from the apartheid regime in 1994 after it held its first democratic elections (Dube, 2020). From 1994, the newly democratic South Africa aimed to change the education narratives, especially legislation and policies that articulate equal opportunities for all citizens. After 1994, “the education policy documents specifically drew on what was considered to be the best international practices at the time and set out a vision of what an ideal education system might look like based on the following sets of principles: equality and human rights and human resource development” (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smith & Van Deventer, 2015: 11). As Naicker (2006) states, the beginning of democracy in South Africa marked interesting changes in the South African context. Considering South Africa’s apartheid history, every policy intervention echoed human rights ethos. Inclusion was a befitting philosophical framework and relevant for restructuring the education system in order to address the inequalities of the past, particularly considering the country’s dark history.

In 1996, the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed. The commission and committee realized that the medical-model approach to special needs education and learners living with disabilities overlooked special learning needs (DoE, 1997). As Engelbrecht *at al.* (2015: 6) say “within the medical model, disability was seen as a departure from human normality with a resultant restriction in abilities to perform tasks.” Inclusive education developed with the rise of global civil rights pressure group in the mid-twentieth century which did not approve of special education. Special education attracted some critical review, and people opposed what was deemed a stigmatising and discriminatory education. Since then, equality of educational access grew (Magumise & Sefotho, 2020). The 1996 Constitution defines the South African government’s commitment to inclusive education as incorporating policies such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 (Mosito, Adewumi & Nissen, 2020). As a response to the Commission’s report, the government of South African developed Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in 2001. This policy document proposed a move from the idea of special education to adoption of the inclusion, which promoted recognition of and respect for diversity (Kern, 2020; Magumise & Sefotho, 2020; Makoelle & Malindi, 2015; & Naicker, 2006). The policy attributes learning barriers to intrinsic medical conditions such as disability and illness. Also, extrinsic factors are poverty, language, culture and socio-economic status (Naicker, 200). Additionally, the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and the Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) note that inclusion concerns physical presence in a specific setting, acceptance and access to, and participation in education (Kern, 2020). In 2001, White Paper 6 was published with a provision of policy guidelines for implementing inclusive education (Department of Education, 2001). White Paper 6 highlighted relevant principles of inclusive education which are exemplified by “social justice, human rights, a healthy environment, participation,

social integration and redress, equal and equitable access to education, community responsive and cost effectiveness” (DoE, 2001).

After 1994, the South African government implemented inclusive education in schools so as to make the education system responsive to the exclusionary issues experienced by learners (Makoelle & Malindi, 2015). According to Naicker (2006: 11),

what followed after were curriculum reforms to respond to a fractured education system. Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Framework Curriculum 2005 were introduced in 1996 as a counter hegemonic strategy to the apartheid curriculum which is described as dogmatic, authoritarian, teacher based, racist, sexist and doctrinal perpetuating the status quo. Learners within the old curriculum were separated into two streams, which included a regular education and a special education component. Curriculum 2005 was described as a single curriculum that was learner-paced, learner-based and of an inclusive nature.

Literature documents curriculum as the vehicle for creating the necessary conditions for inclusive education (Naicker, 2006). Nonetheless, policy developers and implementers observed several challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa (Naicker, 2006). Despite the policy’s position on the social differences, White Paper 6 still depends more on a deficit approach to learners’ support for diversity of educational needs. “It examines learners with low-intensive support, receiving support in mainstream schools, learners with moderate support, accommodated in full-service schools, and learners who require high-intensive educational support are being accommodated in special schools as resource centre” (Engelbrecht & Van Deventer, 2013: 16). Indeed, the vision of an inclusive education system in South Africa has grappled with achieving goals on implementing inclusive education (Engelbrecht *at al.*, 2015). As such, because of the apartheid legacy, many learners lack institutional resilience necessary for success in South African schools. These

incorporate learners living with physical disabilities, those with neurological and psychosocial problems and those with all the afore-mentioned factors. Such learners inevitably drop out of school unless they receive deserving support (Makoelle & Malindi, 2015).

2.4.1.2 Ghana

In Ghana, integration of children living with disabilities into regular schools goes back to 1960 soon after independence in 1957. The Education Act of 1961 and the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana state that, all learners shall have access to equal educational opportunities and in order to achieve that, basic education will be free, compulsory and available to all (Asempa, 2020). Ghana is amongst the first African countries which ratified the UNCRC. Looking back at the background of children living with disabilities in Ghana, Nketia (2019) reported that such children are often locked up in the houses, hidden from the world, abused, killed or excluded from society and education. This is because people consider children born with disabilities to be the work of evil power, resulting from the wrongs of particular family members.

Through legislations protecting the rights of people living with disabilities, Ghana recognises education as a universal human right for all children including LSEN (Agbenyega, 2007). Since Ghana's independence in 1957, different educational policy reforms have been introduced to address the educational needs of school age children (Vanderpuye, Obosu & Nishimuko, 2018). Consequently,

provision of basic education in Ghana was structured in two paralleled system: children with visible disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, blindness and deafness were enrolled in segregated special schools while those presumed to be without disabilities are enrolled in regular schools. Thus, this system appears to marginalize some children on the basis of their disability and segregate them from mainstream education (Vanderpuye, Obosu & Nishimuko, 2018: 17).

Given the status quo, Ghana signed the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Ministry of Education, 2015). Promulgating the Persons with Disability 2006 Act, the government also provided for the education of children with SEN. The Ministry of Education's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003-2015 and 2010-2020 also aimed to attain 100% inclusion of children living with disabilities into regular schools by 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2015).

In 2015, the Ghanaian Ministry of Education signed the inclusive education agenda into a policy. The policy involves diverse learners and requires all relevant partners in the education sector to work towards meeting the diverse needs of many learners in the education system (Ministry of Education, 2015). In particular, objective 4 of the policy addresses how to make inclusive education sustainable and designates its implementation as the responsibility and priority of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and its collaborating partners. The MOE is tasked with ensuring that teachers are properly trained and equipped with knowledge and skills of educational policies in order to respond to the needs of children with SEN. According to Okyere, Aldersey and Lysaght (2019), Ghanaian policies need to pay attention to inclusive teaching methodology and structural transformations to make inclusive education successful. Over two decades since the Salamanca Declaration, just a few schools have designated inclusive education facilities. Goals for inclusive education and policies on inclusion have not been very clearly defined in Ghana (Amatepee & Anastasiou 2015). This is because Ghana is a developing country which has faced challenges for implementing inclusive education policy in the traditional education classrooms. Given that schools are changing, teachers should acquire proficient skills necessary for working with learners who are academically and socially disadvantaged and also on how to accommodate these learners who have special educational needs (Mónico, Mensah, Grünke, Garcia, Fernández, & Rodríguez, 2018). Opoku, Aybenyega, Mprah, Mckenzie, and Badu (2017) argue for teacher training and support to adopt different instructional methods and styles to teach and support diverse learners at inclusive schools.

2.4.2.3 Botswana

Earlier to Botswana's independence in 1966, the educational needs of learners living with disabilities were a responsibility of NGOs (Boitumelo, Kuyini & Major, 2020). According to Jonas (2014), as with many African countries, in Botswana, children with disabilities were excluded from regular schools, they were hidden and isolated because they were regarded as a curse. The missionaries; the Lutheran Church and the Dutch Reformed Church, built many special schools in the country to accommodate children with disabilities at the time. Immediately after independence, two schools were formed. First, in Mochudi in 1967, a school by the Dutch Reformed Church was built for individuals living with visual impairment. This was followed by a hearing impairment school in Ramotswa which was formed by the Lutheran Church (Boitumelo, Kuyini & Major, 2020; Jonas, 2014; Mukhopadhyay, Nentyl & Abosi, 2012). Botswana developed its policy on education which was commonly known as *Education for Kgahisano* in 1977 (Government of Botswana, 1977). The policy mandated every child to have access to education despite their disability, culture, race, ethnicity or background (Government of Botswana, 1993). While the policy became inconsistent, it served as a reaction to progress from the British colonisation model of learning to a more inclusive education system (Makwinja, 2017).

Nevertheless, the policy failed to address the implementation of education of LSEN. This is because the Government of Botswana failed to take full responsibility for education of these learners at that time, instead, it left it to NGOs. This contributed to a new policy, Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) which was approved in 1994 (Mukhopadhyay, 2015). It promoted access to education for all learners, including LSEN, suggesting their social integration with other learners at regular schools (Government of Botswana, 1994). Chitiyo and Dzenga (2021) opine that the policy further accommodated more explicit provisions of special education needs. As a result, LSEN

were placed in three different school set-ups (special, integrated, and inclusive) in Botswana, depending on the type of impairments. For example, at the primary level, learners with hearing impairments are either placed in residential special schools or special unit of a mainstream school, while learners with intellectual impairments as well as visual impairments are placed in special units of mainstream schools. Additionally, learners with learning disabilities are placed in regular schools (Mukhopadhyay, 2015: 6).

LSEN have reportedly been struggling to complete 10 years of basic education in Botswana despite having such policies in place (McBride, 2010). To further encourage full participation of LSEN in the education system, the Government of Botswana adopted Inclusive Education Policy of Botswana (IEPB) in 2011. The policy required that all children, regardless of their disability, should have access to equal education in the regular education schools (Government of Botswana, 2011). Through Vision 2016 Agenda, Botswana is committed to providing education for all. Although inclusive education has gained attention in modern pedagogy, Botswana has not fully met the education needs of LSEN and addressed challenges facing children living with disabilities (Jonas, 2014). Further, Botswana has signed the international framework on education for all such as the Dakar Framework for Action and Jomtien Declaration. Surprisingly, the legal framework of Botswana is silent about the right of education as an important human right. Also, the Constitution of Botswana 1993 does not contain socio-economic rights in its Bill of Rights. As such, the right of children living with disabilities in education is not constitutionally guaranteed in Botswana (Jonas, 2014).

2.4.3 Lesotho Context

The growing concerns over the plight of children in education have given rise to the need for the country to provide legislative frameworks to safeguard the rights of children in education. This is evident in the Constitution of Lesotho which declares education as one of the basic human rights as enshrined in its constitution. According to Section 28 of the

Constitution, education will be made accessible to all and the government should adopt policies that are aimed at securing it (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993). For a very long time, there was no policy developed on inclusive education, but from 1989, Lesotho has made important developments in making education accessible to all. The policy statement of 1989 outlines the ministry's aims to promote integration of LSEN into regular school systems at all levels (MOET, 1989). This says that prior to 1989, many children with special needs have been formally excluded in the education system, a violation of their human right as provided in the 1971 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration states that all learners have the right to education which is provided according to their basic learning needs. In 1991, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) established Special Education Unit responsible for integrating learners with special education needs into regular school systems at all levels. This provision is supported by the Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan (LESSP) 2005 which refers to equitable access to basic education and encourages integration of learners with special needs into mainstream schools (MOET, 2005). The 2006 National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable children addresses the specific educational needs of vulnerable children; orphaned, abandoned, poor, children from remote rural locations and those marginalised by other social factors (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2006).

Lesotho is signatory to many international frameworks aimed at enabling access of education to all. This is exemplified by adopting and domesticating many international global policy frameworks. Thus, Lesotho ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008 (UN, 2008). Furthermore, Lesotho adopted the World Declaration on Education For All (EFA) by committing to Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2000 which was made compulsory (MOET, 2005). Moreover, Lesotho adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2000 and 2015 respectively. At the national level, the Education Act 2010 is the main legislative instrument tool which regulates the education system and compels the system to make education accessible to all in accordance with the provisions of Section 28 of the constitution. The 2011 Children's

Protection Welfare Act and the 2021 Persons with Disability Equity Act strongly affirm children's rights to education irrespective of the type and severity of disability that they may have (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2011; Kingdom of Lesotho, 2021). In the same vein, the 2011 National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy persuades the MOET to reform the national curriculum to include inclusive assessment of individual education programmes so as to integrate children and youth living with disabilities into a regular school (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2011). The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is also committed to making all educational services include children living with disabilities and those from ethnic minority groups (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013).

However, the Lesotho's Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2026 encourages "a paradigm shift from integration into inclusive provision of education, mental retardation to intellectual disability and special education to inclusive education. This shift caters for different learners with respect to disabilities, language, culture, gender, age and socio-economic backgrounds" (MOET, 2016). Its priority was also to develop an inclusive education policy. As guided by international global protocols and conventions, the government of Lesotho through the MOET developed the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP) in 2018 which reflected the government's commitment in providing quality and relevant education to all the citizens. The policy draws on the main global principles on human rights which treat all with humanity, respect, inclusion, tolerance, empathy, equity and non-discrimination (MOET, 2018). The LIEP presents six policy objectives as shown below:

- improving teaching and learning environment
- strengthening capacity of education providers in supporting learners with special education needs
- enhancing partnerships for implementation of Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy
- adapting the national curriculum to conforming with inclusive education principles
- enhancing governance and management capacity in inclusive education

- having laws and policies supporting inclusive education in Lesotho

(MOET, 2018)

With this policy, all learners irrespective of gender, religious and cultural backgrounds, biological composition, physical, mental and disabilities are catered for in the education system. The policy further offers a new era about the status of children from diverse socioeconomic status in our society.

2.5 Inclusive Practices

In this section, I discuss the factors influencing teachers' inclusive practices. Inclusive practices entail modifications in teacher pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and collaborative approach. For Guðjónsdóttir and Óskarsdóttir (2019: 5),

teachers are key to developing inclusive practices and pedagogies in schools because they are the ones who, based on their beliefs and knowledge, decide and choose the learning environment where pupils are meant to learn and work within the structures of the school system. Inclusive practices are based on the premise that education systems and schools assume responsibility for organizing curriculum and teaching around a diverse group of pupils in such a way that the learning environment is appropriate for the pupils' inherent resources.

Mbewe, Kamchedzera and Kunkwenzu (2021) indicate that inclusive education practices involve changing the content, strategies, and structures. According to Andrew, Walton and Osman (2019), through inclusive teaching, the ideas of inclusive education should be translated into inclusive classroom practices. Although there is no single recipe to be followed for success, the factors below are important in influencing teachers' inclusive practices.

2.5.1 Teacher Pedagogy

Teaching is becoming more compound as the world shifts more towards inclusive practices. This poses enormous challenges for teachers as they have to teach in an increasingly multi-cultural classrooms and integrate LSEN, thus equipping teachers with new pedagogical roles as facilitators of inclusion is important (Keppens, Consuegra & Vanderlinde, 2019). Once pedagogically equipped, teachers have a sense of responsibility, being committed to ensuring the well-being of all learners in their classrooms and work towards improving their educational opportunities. Besides, with requisite knowledge, skills, and experience, they would take the appropriate steps to meet the needs of and help learners to learn. Thus, adopting a more inclusive teaching pedagogy serves to benefit all learners (World Bank, 2019).

The educational literature explains the term pedagogy as the complex issues of the teaching profession and entails teaching methods and curricula (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2019). Ever since the emergence of inclusive education, Mpu and Adu (2019) argue that teachers' preparedness and teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms have received attention internationally. When teachers implement inclusive educational practices, they will be influenced by the systemic contextual factors, the atmosphere within their own schools, the wider educational system's attitude to inclusive education, but mostly, their interpretation of inclusive practices. Teachers should ensure that all learners in their classrooms participate in and manage their classrooms in such a way as to give learners access to learning by employing various teaching approaches and strategies (Sharma *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, inclusive teachers should be well-equipped for teaching and for understanding learners as well as their social, cultural and community environment in which learners grow up because these have a significant influence on students' learning (Sharma *et al.*, 2021). As Samuels (2018) says, teachers should be knowledgeable and appreciate diverse cultures, explore new ways of implementing equitable and inclusive practices in schools and reducing any barriers

that may exist. Similarly, Majoko (2019) reveals that when teachers are skilled and competent, they would translate theory into practice, considering learners and socio-cultural contexts of teaching and learning in inclusive education.

2.5.2 Teachers' Competencies

Nel *et al.* (2016) mention that the context and conditions in which teachers teach also restrict learner support in classrooms. This, coupled with inadequate teaching and learning materials such as books, teaching aids and syllabuses that are not relevant to the learner needs, and other resources obstructs effective learning (Koskei, Egesa, Changach, 2020). Sometimes, poorly trained teachers face challenges for effectively communicating and interpreting the subject content to learners, hence a barrier to learning. Because of poor instructions in many inclusive settings, the needs of diverse children are at stake (Kuyini & Mangope, 2011). It is evident therefore that inclusive education depends largely on teachers' competences. Inclusive practices call for change of educational programmes that discourage teacher-centred approaches, but encourage learner-centred instructions. Thus, research stresses teachers' competencies as crucial for professional knowledge and skills, instructional approaches, assessment, and behaviour management of LSEN in regular classrooms (Majoko, 2016). Therefore, properly trained and supported teachers at inclusive schools could not manage the demands of a diverse classroom (Forlin, 2013). Makoelle (2020) argues that when teachers have the ability to be critical and reflective of their own practices, this contributes to effective teaching. Most importantly, when they are given opportunities and spaces for reflection and interrogation of their assumptions, they are prepared better so as to promote inclusive and equitable classrooms (Samuels, 2018). Consequently, Mugambi (2017) asserts that successful inclusive education relies on the teachers' ability to respond to diversity in the classroom. Therefore, Mpu and Adu (2019: 7) propose that "teacher education programmes should incorporate a profound understanding of inclusive education and diverse learners, the necessary knowledge and skills for teachers to work closely with all

stakeholders. This will help teachers to be engaged in inclusive instructional planning so as to be prepared to expect and be responsive to high priority needs within regular schools. These measures would equip teachers with knowledge for proper teaching and learning in regular schools (Majoko, 2016). It can be concluded that inclusive education requires a new unique skills and competency for teachers to teach and be responsive to the needs of all learners in regular classrooms (Tawanda, 2019).

2.5.3 Teaching Strategies and Approaches

Given the multifaceted nature of diversity in schools, Awang-Haship, Kaur and Valdez (2019) assert that teachers' ability to plant inclusivity in teaching and learning approaches is acknowledging and addressing classrooms complexities. Teachers should make the teaching environment comfortable to all learners by providing multiple ways of lesson presentation and as well as varying the assessment methods without marginalising any learner (Ayaya, Makoelle & Merwe, 2020). To address inclusivity in regular classroom in the context of a demanding, relevant curriculum necessitates a move away from traditional whole-class approaches, and re-thinking what inclusive education aims at and the role of the teacher in that regard (Jarvis, Pill & Noble, 2017). When teachers regard learners as passive, they would assume responsibilities for communicating information to them. Such an approach empowers teachers to set the direction and determine content and methods of teaching the subject. In this way, there are chances that some learners might be excluded from the teaching and learning programmes (Mugambi, 2017).

Inclusive education assumes a different set of belief systems, assumptions and demands different practices in schools. These practices could entail extra-curricular activities that stimulate engagement of all learners, the learning environment that allows learners to be fully active in their learning and enjoy co-operative learning, planning and preparing lessons that incorporate various classroom activities to accommodate all learners irrespective of abilities and disabilities (Florian *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, Tawanda (2019) suggests that

important skills in inclusive classrooms entail co-operative learning, peer tutoring and the use of classroom aids. Majoko (2019) views peer tutoring as increasing opportunities for learners to respond, improve activity understanding and minimise behavioural problems. In addition, the important instructional skills in inclusive classrooms for teachers include curricular modification and instruction adaptation, and instructional technology (Oliver & Reschly, 2010). Using different teaching styles, strategies and techniques is critical to teachers in inclusive education, thereby enabling them to speak to the learning needs of individual children (Majoko, 2019). Therefore, in a successful inclusive learning environment, teachers' open-mindedness and the ability to commit to equitable education system is crucial. This means that when teachers are open, they will use individualised and adaptable and activity-based learning strategies for facilitation of teaching and learning of LSEN (Majoko, 2005) because they are regarded as pioneers of change and should confront any assumptions towards any children or groups. As such, Westwood (2007) asserts that effective inclusion depends largely on differentiation. Differentiation requires skills in "instructional strategies such as differentiated instruction, multilevel instruction, collaborative skills, co-teaching, and activity-based learning, to include children with special needs in regular classrooms" (Sledge & Pazey, 2013: 13). Nonetheless, research indicates that teaching and learning should engage the entire class with recognition of differences in learners, not focus on individual learners which is associated to separate special education (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012).

In Germany, Werning and Arndt (2015) name ten instruction and education criteria in inclusive schools. These include division of tasks into different steps, adapting tasks in relation to learners' needs and resources, giving varied learning materials, regulating performance steadily, administering regular content-based feedback, providing learners with learning strategies, offering exercises and repetitive work, using interactive forms of cooperation and giving additional exercises. Paseka and Schwab (2020) describe differentiation as using various methods in accordance with the needs of the learners and the

situation at hand. These could be using alternative methods, asking interesting questions or offering material that learners can enjoy. Equally important, teachers' competence of teaching and learning styles is key for achieving the aspirations of inclusive education. With such teaching and learning competencies, they will have appropriate skills to change the format of the lesson, alter group arrangement, change delivery of instruction, use different materials and provide different tasks (Westwood, 2007). Additionally, they could provide differentiated teaching when they acknowledge that students learn at a different pace (Griffin & Shevlin, 2011). To further facilitate inclusion, teachers should create a classroom environment for all learners' participation in order to encourage engagement of multiple voices in the discussions. All learners' voices are supposed to be largely represented in multiple contexts by using strategies such as open-ended questions which allow learners to engage in dialogues (Samuels, 2018). Further, Mpu and Adu (2019) provide that some of the strategies that teachers can use in regular classrooms include creating classroom activities that encourage participation, using peer collaboration methods and small group work that focus on individual learning, interdependence and development of interpersonal skills. Rabi and Zulkefli (2018) suggest that the required competence for teaching strategies are teachers' ability to modify assessments for learners, design classroom activities for all learners and use various instructional strategies effectively. Therefore, extra-time is also extremely important to process information and complete written work (Belayl & Yihun, 2020). For Gyamfi and Yeboah (2022: 4),

teachers should adapt instructional strategies by pre-teaching challenging terminology and concepts before the start of the lesson, task differentiation, frequent feedback to encourage slow learners to participate actively in lessons, encouraging peer teaching to ensure that no student is left behind in class activities; encouraging co-operative learning among learners to ensure that there is peer teaching, using various memorizing techniques to aid slow learners in remembering knowledge, such as the use of mnemonics.

According to Mariga, McConkey and Myezwa (2014), LSEN should be supported through identification of the challenges they face in learning and then draw up an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which helps in addressing these problems (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021). The IEP should offer the strategies that have assisted the learner to cope at school (Mariga *et al.*, 2014). Mpu and Adu (2021) regard IEP as one of the strategies that have been successful in working with students in inclusive classrooms.

2.5.4 Teachers' attitudes

Successful implementation and sustainable inclusive education depend on teachers. When teachers are supported with the necessary legislation and resources, they could effectively implement inclusion (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017). However, research has shown that teachers tend to develop negative attitudes towards learners living with disabilities, considering them a nuisance, disruptive and inappropriate, inconvenient, and disallowing such learners into regular classes (Mphwina, 2022). Thus, teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes to inclusive education are essential to the successful implementation of the inclusive education, all of which make them become readily available for change, thus benefitting learners with various learning needs (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Mugambi, 2017). Further, John (2010) points out that teachers' perceptions about and attitudes towards new policies on inclusion could affect its implementation (Angela, Chris, Kathy & Sofia, 2019; Florian, 2011). Angela *et al.* (201) note that the attitudes of teachers are very important. Mavropoulou, Mann and Carrington (2021) assert that achieving inclusivity lies in linking policy to practice, coupled with attitudinal changes. Besides, teacher training institutions should recruit teachers with disabilities and involve diverse cultural and migrant backgrounds so as to promote equal rights, unique expertise and skills for inclusive education (Brausteiner Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Unicef, 2017).

2.5.4 Collaboration

Collaboration is also very important in inclusive education (Forlin & Sin, 2010; Naicker, 2009). Teachers need aptitudes and competences in collaboration in order to improve their problem-solving and creative thinking. This is because LSEN require different teaching methodologies (Watkins, 2011 and Florian, 2012). Such collaboration could help with the subject matter, how it is delivered and the resources in inclusive education (Mugambi, 2017). Apart from this, teaching material and developed infrastructure are necessary although not enough for inclusion. It is important also to change any limitations amongst school professionals and in the wider school community, as these are important characteristics of making inclusive education successful (Polat, 2011). Besides, of paramount importance is school leadership for supporting teachers through structures, school-based policies and resources to teach inclusively (Walton, 2011). Budiarti and Sugito (2018) clarifies that the principal is key in shaping and fostering an inclusive culture and policy implementation within the school environment (Mokaleng & Mowes, 2020). Landsberg *et al.* (2011) highlighted the need for visionary leadership as important for influencing the attitudes, beliefs and values of teachers, with all aspects of the school assessed and evaluated for effectively enhancing inclusion in the whole school.

2.5.5 Inclusive Curriculum

One of the most important aspects in the successful implementation of inclusive practices is curriculum change. Inclusive curriculum incorporates the teaching and learning school environment, the course content material, the actual teaching and learning and the assessment practices approaches (Majoko, 2019). Mugambi (2017) defines curriculum as everything that is planned to allow the students' acquisition and development of the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. According to Andrew, Walton and Osman (2019), inclusive teaching incorporates curricula that are learner-centred, full of flexibility and easily accessible to LSEN. The curriculum should forge a relationship between learning and life

beyond the classroom, and prepare children to face life challenges. Mugambi (2017) suggests that curriculum should be relevant to children' needs, give well-planned learning experiences. For Mugambi (2017), a one-size-fits-all curriculum is challenging since it only benefits certain group of learners, while others are left behind.

Therefore, schools should shift to learner-centred curriculum which is based more on the strengths and weaknesses of the learners, with selected content material and teaching methods to meet individual learning needs (Mugambi, 2017). Teachers' role is to support learners to discover learning content on their own and solve problems (Mokoetle, 2012). A flexible curriculum should therefore provide for everyday survival skills and give all children an opportunity to learn and benefit from education (Mokaleng & Mowes, 2020). The curriculum must be adaptable enough and respond to the needs of individual learners, hence tailoring it to learners' needs in different circumstances. For Lindner and Schwab (2020), modified and tailored curriculum is essential for inclusive education. Samuels (2018) concurs that content should be aligned to learners' interests, incorporate differentiated learning modalities and instructional strategies by engaging learners. A flexible curriculum should offer different alternatives for teachers to be able to respond to differences in each classroom and structure a mixed-ability teaching, creating learning and multiple opportunities for a successful classroom (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2019). Furthermore, when the curriculum is based on multiple intelligence, it allows flexible learning intended to cater for diverse and unique needs of learners (Hall, Stengman & Meyer, 2009). As Schuelka (2018) put, the national curriculum and its assessment practices should be designed to respond effectively and efficiently to all learners and modify the curriculum for alternative forms of assessment.

Nonetheless, inclusive education is faced with a prescriptive and inflexible curriculum that is based more on the subject content, rigid timeframes which rely heavily on external assessment (Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2016). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2015) raised a concern over

curriculum constraints that prescribe inflexible timeframes, for they pose challenges for learners' needs. In addition, for Mokoetle (2012), the subject content and how it is taught has wider implications on the learners and their acquisition of knowledge. The curriculum is examination oriented; learners are expected to pass from primary, lower secondary, and high school levels (Okech, Yuwono & Abdu, 2021). Also, teachers who trained on special education cannot develop and make modifications to the school curriculum because it is centralised and prescribed on how teachers should teach (Okech, Yuwono & Abdu, 2021). Therefore, it is important for governments through education departments to develop a curriculum that develops unity and collaboration for schools in order to meet the diverse needs of learners (Brausteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014). Also, teachers are confronted with the task of adapting the curriculum to meet each learner's needs. Adapting the curriculum is probably the biggest challenge that teachers encounter when they create inclusive environments. Yet Yilmaz and Yeganeg (2021) claim that adapting the curriculum with individual needs and differences of learners in mind is key to inclusive education. Because of lack of support, teachers lack knowledge about instructing many learners in a single classroom (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). As such, teachers will fail to implement inclusive education if curriculum content is too loaded (Mokaleng & Mowes, 2020). Thus, Mokoetle (2014) warns against any restrictive curriculum to learning that overlooks diverse learner population for inclusive education.

Inclusive education stakeholders believe that teachers should be responsible for designing and implementing differentiated curriculum to allow learners living with disabilities to be successful in their learning (Mavropoulou, Mann & Carrington, 2021). In inclusive classrooms, learners should discover things together and teachers have to tailor the standard prescribed curriculum to learners' needs (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021). To make curriculum more inclusive and easily adaptable, policy makers should enable teachers to actively participate in curriculum reforms. The curriculum should balance both academic

and practical approaches, supporting LSEN to learn at their own pace, respecting their abilities, and examination-oriented systems should be revised (Okech, Yuwono & Abdu, 2021).

Many studies on deaf education affirm that there is a mismatch between national curriculum content and specific language learning needs of deaf or hard-of-hearing students (Darwisha, Harubn & Darmi, 2022). The most challenging issues regarding the mainstream curriculum in deaf and hearing impairment classes are the aims and objectives of the curriculum which do not speak to the linguistic growth of deaf children (Mdikanal, 2021). National governments should consider making Sign Language part of official languages to safeguard the interests and rights of learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. Learners who live with deafness can easily access education through a signed language. Such approaches are equitable and cost-effective in Sign Language schools where schools should offer all subjects through the medium of a signed language (Stemela-Zali, Kathard, & Sefotho, 2022). Nonetheless, sign languages and spoken languages are different from each other in all their aspects; from phonology and morphology to vocabulary and syntax, thus a communication gap between the deaf and non-deaf teachers arises naturally (Escudeiro, Galasso, Teixeira, Gouveia & Escudeiro, 2022). Musengi (2019) concurs that full inclusion of learners living with deafness can only occur when they use their preferred visualised language. Studies affirmed that overlooking language excludes deaf learners in education, hence challenges for their education (Jokinen, 2018). Inclusive education for deaf learners should ensure that education is provided in their first language by using suitable modes and methods of communication for the individuals and spaces. These should help to maximise their learning and growth generally (Jokinen, 2018). Therefore, Sign Language is crucial for teaching and learning because it maintains positive engagement and communication between learners living with deafness and the teacher in the classroom (Fuente, 2021). In most disadvantaged settings, totally deaf children begin primary school with no proper foundation for Sign Language as a mother tongue, thus education systems should introduce them to basic expression and communication skills in the early stages of their education

(Anne, 2022). In accommodating learners living with hearing impairment and deafness, the South African government made changes to the constitution to make South African Sign Language the 12th official language (Maqhina 2021). The other three countries recognising Sign Language as an official language are Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa (Anne, 2022).

2.5.6 Inclusive Assessment

To achieve the goal of inclusive education, assessment is crucial as it improves teaching and learning. With increasingly diverse and complex classrooms, teachers emphasise inclusive practices in teaching and learning to accommodate the educational needs of learners. Inclusive approaches to assessment could enhance accessibility, opportunities and relevance for all learners including the needs of specific groups (Kaur, Noman & Nordin, 2017; Majoko, 2019). For Mugambi (2017), inclusive assessment includes using various assessment strategies, providing preparation and information for assessment and giving different tasks and using formative approaches. Also important are assessment methods that suit individual children, noting their weaknesses and how best they can be assessed (John, 2010). This is because inclusive differentiated assessments provide for equal opportunities for every learner (Awang-Haship, Kaur & Valdez, 2019).

Waterfield and West (2010) define inclusive assessment not just as a set of coherent activities, rather as fairly assessing learning that achieves measurable learning results of a course and awarding grades, considering different learning styles and learner diversity. Morris, Milton and Goldstone (2019) assert that learners may feel like being positively supported during teaching and learning, especially when they are provided with various assessment methods. These methods of assessment could be presentations, oral examination, written assignment or written examinations. Other assessment methods in an inclusive setting involve peer and self-assessment strategies rather than grading systems designed by

teachers, while modified assessment includes additional time and uses support materials (Lindner & Schwab, 2020).

An adapted assessment helps learners to cope with curriculum and teaching methods. In other words, when an assessment in inclusive classrooms shows that learners are unable to perform particular tasks, it should diagnose causes so as to redesign the learning circumstances (Yilmaz & Yeganeg, 2021). Additionally, Mugambi (2017) suggests that although subject based academic performance indicates successful learning outcomes, learning achievement should denote acquisition of attitudes, values, knowledge and skills required for the modern day societies. Also critical to assessment is open authentic assessment that has potential beyond university life and it is meaningful and relevant (Morris, Milton & Goldstone, 2019). The Unicef (2017) advocates for an assessment that makes learners to focus on the progress they have made, rather than on the basis of a standard set of examinations.

However, learners are sorted, categorised and labelled by school assessment (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018). Brausteiner and Mariano-Lapidus (2014) argue that in the growing competitive world, learners' scores are standardized, thus high scores determine the worthiness of participation in our society. On the home ground, Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework (2009) asserts that although there have been curriculum and assessment reforms, examinations still influence the direction of the curriculum and to a greater extent, assessment still focuses on written examination aimed for selection and certification. This reliance on examinations pressurises learners, posing challenges for assessing the effective domains and the practical skills. The Framework advocates for inclusive methods that measure competences and practical skills of learners. Assessment should be aligned with what is taught and learned to avoid unnecessary and demotivating paper-pen nature of examination. Curriculum should draw heavily on student engagement and interaction with their own world of learning (MOET, 2009). A summative approach to

assessment excludes learners' progress, but facilitates a sorting process which targets learners' grading (Jarvis, Pill & Noble, 2017). Teachers' responsibility is to plan, design and implement different approaches to meaningful, authentic and informative assessments that include learners' skills (Kaur, Noman & Nordin, 2017). Majoko (2019) opines that teachers' competence in adapting and modifying assessments is important for inclusive education as it facilitates adaptation and modification of assessment methods accessible to all children. Therefore, it is crucial that assessment should focus on measuring progress and outcomes, considering the whole curriculum offered by the education system rather than just part of it as there is a relationship between assessment and curriculum, (Douglas *et al.*, 2016).

However, it is undeniable that assessment is critically challenging for teachers in classrooms with learners from various cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds (Kaur, Noman & Nordin, 2017). Rabi and Zulkefli (2018) state that although it is challenging for teachers to teach different learners, they can differentiate assessments by valuing all skills, exhibit assessment competency in identifying the specific needs of learners. As such, poor performance can result from inadequate understanding of inclusive assessment practices which exclude diverse learning experiences and comprehensive assessment opportunities for learners' mastery of the content.

2.5.7 Stakeholder Collaborative Approach

Inclusive education encourages a collaborative approach, and calls for all stakeholders such as teachers, parents, the community and the relevant ministries in implementing inclusive practices. Such stakeholders should identify and reduce any barriers to inclusive education. As Rabi and Zulkefli (2018) argue, teachers should partner with the parents and professionals such as specialist teachers and health personnel - psychologists, therapists, social workers - to successfully implement inclusive education. Inclusive education requires the help and support of a professional team. The composition of such a team differs given the type of learners in an inclusive class (Yilmaz & Yeganeg, 2021). In Lesotho, the 1989 policy

statement and the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015 have been silent about the roles of psychologists and occupational therapists in assessing LSEN for proper placement and support (Ralejoe, 2019). Forlin (2013) states that an inclusive approach requires prepared stakeholders. While inclusive education considers the role of different institutions in the development of an inclusive approach to education, incorporating the community is also crucial.

The community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations of people living with disabilities and parents' bodies are significant to supporting inclusion as part of the broader social transformation process of the government. Inter-ministerial collaboration as in social development, health, education and public service and administration becomes pivotal for service delivery aimed at supporting schools and communities towards an inclusive society (DoE, 2001: 39).

Also important is partnership between communities, NGOs and government agencies in promoting inclusive education (Begun, 2017). Ayaya, Makoelle and Merwe (2020) believe that to enhance inclusive teaching, the teaching communities concerned should be involved by understanding the problem at hand and providing solutions to assist in designing effective strategies. In Budiarti and Sugito's (2018) view, stakeholders in creating inclusive culture can be seen in engaging all parties concerned, including the school, parents and community. There should also be early identification and intervention initiatives to educate parents and communities in order to create an enabling teaching environment (Begun, 2017).

In South Africa, parental involvement has traditionally been limited in education. Parents have always been excluded from the education of their children despite the fact that they know their children better. Incorporating such knowledge would help in the placement and learning of their children (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2005). Although some parents may appreciate full involvement, Makoelle (2004) maintains that in South African schools, parents ignore their roles in their children's education because of illiteracy and lack of teachers' recognition.

However, when parents are not involved, this puts teachers in a challenging position, especially when they deal with learners' behavioural problems (Mokoetle, 2012). Yet national policies are very clear on parental involvement. White Paper 6 of 2001 and Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy state that involving parents in the teaching and learning process is integral to effective learning (Department of Education, 2001; MOET, 2018). Lesotho inclusive education policy is also very loud in its objectives in emphasising the importance of a collaboration approach (MOET, 2018). For Majoko (2019), collaboration with teachers in inclusive education facilitates working with other stakeholders such as parents to share support and assistance to meet the individual needs of all children and enable teachers to pull together home and school support so as to manage children's behavior successfully. In the case of Lesotho, Mosia (2019) encourages the Special Education Unit to engage with health-related personnel in supporting educational psychology. As such, teachers' support for learners is confined to their own skills, knowledge and resource (Nel *at al.*, 2016). To ensure proper implementation, active participation of different stakeholders such as teachers, parents, communities, ministries of education, social development and health are important to support LSEN by empowering and retaining them to complete their education in schools (Molbaek, 2018). This collaborative approach can create opportunities for more inclusive practices. The literature shows many challenges for inclusive education; besides the attitudinal change, teachers' development of skills, confidence of teachers and school leaders, the problem lies with collaborating with parents in the inclusive spaces (Mavropoulou, Mann & Carrington, 2021). To meet the education needs of children with SEN, special education teachers need support to provide equal opportunities for LSEN (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021).

2.6 Policy Implementation Challenges

While the literature offers consensus on what constitutes inclusive settings, inclusive education is an elusive and complex concept that is understood differently in different

settings. Examining different aspects of inclusive education, scholars argue from different psychological and social perspectives. My study advocates full inclusion of learners in the education system, whether they are marginalised because of disability or social needs since education is a right afforded to all as supported by international and local frameworks. Many countries developed their inclusive education from special education systems in separate settings, with time, their policies incorporated issues of social diversity. The implementation stage has had challenges where each country has executed its own mandate of inclusive education differently.

2.6.1 Policy Gap

Globally, many institutions have focused on making inclusive teaching and learning a national priority through policy, institutional and instructional commitment (Kaur, Noman & Nordin, 2017). But many problems in the implementation hinder the success of such policies. Muthukrishna (2018) alludes to the gap between policy goals and the practical realities in schools as learners experience barriers to learning due to lack of professional development, human, material and financial resources. Despite enacting and domesticating international laws on inclusive education, policy frameworks and inclusive practices still mismatch on the ground, with policy goals being ambitious and detached from contexts of schools. Schools should have systems related to inclusive approaches so as to tackle learners' educational needs, thus mitigating any barriers to the implementation of inclusive education (Ireru *et al.*, 2020). Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018) believe that socioeconomic inequalities affect education provision, this poses challenges to the development of resourced schools with provision of quality education for all learners. Therefore, "Southern African countries should consider their social, economic, political, cultural and historical developments, amid the problems faced by the implementation of inclusive education" (Mpu & Adu, 2021: 233). Also, Andrews, Walton and Osman (2019) believe that the historical and geographic exclusion is responsible for different problems facing inclusive education in

various contexts. The context influences how the school sets priorities and makes decisions although there is evidence that many countries borrow practices from other countries without considering the local realities and peculiarities of their own schools (Makoelle, 2020). Thus, people involved with inclusive education should understand the cultural and social settings of schools (Florian *et al.*, 2016). First, policies should be relevant to the context of implementation, coupled with a well-defined implementation plan (Sharma, Armstrong, Merumeru, Simi & Yared, 2019). In Jansen's (2001) view, policies in South Africa, are politically motivated, they are vague and lack practicality, and are often passed without any accountable implementation. At the same time, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2015) argue that implementation ignores the unique extrinsic contextual influences and factors that affect policy operations at schools. Without any support, implementation becomes problematic, overwhelming and frustrating to schools (Wildersmon & Nomdo, 2007). On the other hand, Engelbrecht and Muthukrishna (2019) lament the fact that teacher autonomy is restricted in policy and curriculum implementation since teachers have reported that subject advisors prescribe the curriculum to them, therefore, they fail to develop innovative context-based approaches to implement policy guidelines and to make the curriculum adaptable. All these issues have terrible effects on the implementation. Westwood (2013) believes that no single approach to inclusion suits all schools, advising schools to adopt flexible inclusive instructions by deploying available personnel and resources. Inclusive education policies also require the right political and policy environment that is open to change. Again, political will and judicious policy formulation are central to the implementation (Makoelle, 2020). When a policy overlooks the local context, implementation becomes problematic.

Mugambi (2017) explains that through the teaching learning process, teachers are the main agents in the translation of educational policies into practice yet teachers do not understand policy implementation dynamics given the limited training they receive (Awang-Hasip, Kaur & Valdez, 2019). However, poor contextual conditions have contributed to many gaps between policies and their intended agenda. Further, although an inclusive education policy

has been formulated to address problems of exclusion, questions arise from poor human and material resources. Learners with disabilities are excluded from learning because they often fall behind due to time constraints in their learning process. This further translates into high repetition rates (Mphwina, 2022). As Kumar and Varghese (2022) posit, actual learners results can include the chances of dropping out and poor learning levels.

Although countries like Lesotho have National Disability Policy 2011, the Education Sector Strategic plan 2005 – 2015 and 2016 – 2026 all geared towards achieving inclusive education, there exists a huge gap between the legal framework and in practice, implementation of inclusive education. Eriamiatoe (2013: 2) supports this argument by suggesting that,

Lesotho's self-proclaimed practice of inclusive education places learners in the mainstream classroom with inadequate facilities. An approach that reflects an integrated system requiring children with disabilities to fit into an inclusive system designed to meet children with various needs including disabilities.

Similarly, Ralejoe (2019) says curriculum does not allow inclusive teaching strategies because it is too rigid. The government's commitment to creating inclusive environments through provision of resources, support and capacity-building programmes for the educational sector is questionable (Eriamiatoe, 2013). Brausteiner and Mariano-Lapidus (2014) concurs that in South Africa, learners in regular classrooms with SEN continue to be taught separately inside the classroom, thus continuing segregation within inclusive classrooms. More so, Education White Paper 6 is non-specific nor detailed, but presents broad strategies with no guidance on how to implement this policy effectively (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). While articulating ways of teaching learners with SEN, policies overlook teachers' traditional beliefs and practices, the learning problems in the teaching and learning environment, teaching approaches, support skills, inclusive solutions which seem to mainly stem from experts who influence special education, which is dominant in inclusive debates in South Africa (Mokoetle, 2012).

2.6.2 Lack of Resources – both Human and Material

Ackermann, Casey, Collins, Hannon (2022) argue that although official policy documents advocate for access and inclusion in many countries, the principles are often neglected, poorly addressed or resourced in practice. The literature indicates that inclusive education is poorly funded in Southern Africa - there are lack of teachers and specialists in schools and limited district officers to support inclusive education (Mphwina, 2022). Further, there are no qualified teachers, support service, training programmes and relevant materials, funding and an enabling legislature (Suleiman & Isah Mfr, 2022). Indeed, Pappas, Papoutsis and Drigas (2018) identify lack of training, shortage of teaching and learning materials, and many pupils in classes, many contact hours per teacher and poor working environment as militating against proper implementation of inclusion policies. Besides increased workloads, lack of monitoring of the policy have been reported (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021). There are also unsuitable teaching and learning methods and support material which negatively impact the implementation of inclusive education. Lack of funding, teaching materials or aids and support structures constrain learning (Mphwina, 2022; Zwane & Malale, 2018). This overall lack of resources has caused overcrowded classrooms (Hummel & Engelbrecht, 2018). With government officials making no follow-ups on inclusive education practices at schools, officials' limited knowledge on inclusive practices, inclusive education has faced many challenges in Southern Africa (Mphwina, 2022).

For learners living with hearing impairment and deafness, most digital information and educational materials are provided in spoken languages; either in written or audio forms and it remains inaccessible to learners living with deafness (Escudeiro, Galasso, Teixeira, Gouveia & Escudeiro, 2022). Mdikanal (2021) claims that deaf learners also depend on visual learning materials. For instance, speaking, drawing and writing materials for hearing impaired learners should be used in their classrooms (Ullah, Rana & Habib, 2022). Learners with SEN must also be supported through provision of; hearing aids, picture boards and audio. These

are important resources since children with SEN learn efficiently by hearing and touching (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021). Fuente (2021: 102) advises that

for the successful inclusion of deaf learners, the classroom environment and teaching should be reorganised. School administrators should consider a hiring criterion for teaching positions in the non-board degree programmes, that those who are not teachers by profession should study units or complete professional teacher education subjects from teacher education institutions of their choice, to develop their skills in different pedagogies and methods in teaching.

Inclusive education is costly, and it needs funding and support. These include interpreters for advanced teaching and learning in the classroom (Mdikanal, 2021). Mbewe, Kamchedzera and Kunkwenzu (2021) concur that to cater for the educational needs of LSEN, a special education teacher is required. Subject teachers require the support of special education teachers to help in the provision of equal opportunities for all learners. Policy-makers should leave outcome-based policies that are designed to measure quality of students' outcomes (Kumar & Varghese, 2022).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by Florian and Black-Hawkins' 2011's theory of Inclusive Pedagogy (IP). Based on the inclusive education movement, IP defines what constitutes good practices in regular classrooms (Hove, 2022). For Vršmaš (2018), the conversations regarding the IP followed from research on inclusive education in the early 21st century. Fundamentally, IP highlights important changes in teaching and learning and emphasizes that inclusion must create learning opportunities for all learners not for some (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

The theoretical framework for conceptualising the IP draws on Alexander's notion of pedagogy which indicates that teachers must be knowledgeable and skilled in order to

develop different approaches to teaching (2004). Alexander's (2004) notion comprises knowledge and competencies possessed by teachers to inform and validate their decisions on teaching. He further sees pedagogy as clarifying experiences and exploring diversified proof to grow a professional knowledge base. For him, curriculum, teaching, and learning are fundamental components of any pedagogical discourses. Thus, Florian (2015a) view IP as shaped by the professional competences of teachers which influence the actions they take, their values and beliefs about teaching and learning and learners, as well as wider social environmental influences. In this way, Loreman (2017) argues that pedagogy is important to any practice. To have good foundation for inclusion, teachers must reflect on their work, knowledge, understanding and engage with others in order to develop proposed inclusive approaches.

2.7.1 The Development of Inclusive Pedagogy (IP)

Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) explain that IP developed from a study of the craft knowledge of teachers who supported the learning of all children in their classrooms, while avoiding stigmatization of differences. As a methodological stance, craft knowledge concerns teachers' practical wisdom on good effective teaching practices and how they understand things around them. Most importantly, it asserts that teachers are skilled and competent (Florian & Beaton, 2018). As Florian and Spratt (2013) observe, the IP draws on Susan Hart and her colleagues (2004), and seeks to eliminate limitations of what teachers expect by providing opportunities for all children to learn in a classroom that does not categorise learners about ability or disability. Hence, IP was developed to respond to questions such as how to support individual learners without making them feel differently from others (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Florian (2010) explains the notion of IP as allowing teachers to provide options for all learners in the classroom, instead of providing differentiated tasks for some (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Within the inclusive pedagogical approach, learner differences is regarded as strength

instead of a problem, allowing children to work and share ideas in their interactive learning environment (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Since IP emanated from studies on effective teacher support for all learners within classrooms in order to avoid stigmatisation (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011), it is believed that all children have potential to learn, and have opportunities based upon individual capabilities (Brennan & King, 2022). As Florian and Spratt (2013) clarify, IP problematises and replaces bellcurve, and considers the ideas of transformability and social justice by questioning the challenges of access and equitable education. According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), inclusive pedagogy focuses on teaching and its related discourses in schools. Therefore, it opposes habits that reflect fixed beliefs about students' capabilities (Florian, 2014). As such, the inclusive pedagogical approach suggests for ideas that accomodate everyone (Florian & Linklater, 2010).

A fundamental premise for the IP is to reject the historical ideas that have supported the structure of education that has been labeling learners as having fixed ability (Florian & Spratt, 2013). For Florian and Beaton (2018), IP is a pedagogical response to individual differences between learners and rejects marginalisation occurring in differentiation strategies designed for individual needs. It can be deduced that IP opposes practices that isolate and marginalize children through provision of support for those who have different experiences from others, hence social construction of disability (Guðjónsdóttir* & Óskarsdóttir, 2016). Additionally, IP rejects the idea that children have fixed ability and that a child's present performance in education predicts their future (Hart *et al.*, 2004). For Hart *et al.* (2004), inclusive pedagogy clarifies that intelligence cannot be construed based on test-based logical, mathematical and reasoning skills. Instead, IP assumes that every child's capacity to learn changes depending on what teachers do in the present which can change the learner's capacity to learn and ultimately change their future.

Proponents of IP exposes many variables as influencing IP. As an instructional approach, the IP allows educators to practise inclusion by ensuring support for all learners in their

classrooms and through deployment of instructional approaches suitable for all learners, and fostering a sense of community (Florian, 2014). For Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011), it is very important to involve teaching practices and programmes that respect, support and respond to learner differences in the classrooms.

The IP replaces old teaching methodologies which depend more on personalized teaching, thus having unexpected negative effects on individualisation. It further regards educational inclusion, and expects teachers and those interested in educational research to respond to the changing composition of modern day schools (Florian, 2015). Specifically, the IP demands that teachers are expected to extend what is ordinarily accessible so that it is attainable to all learners (Florian, 2010). This perspective gives an open-ended space of each child's ability to learn (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Moreover, IP improves the standard of mainstream education and helps schools to reduce inequality in learners' outcomes, as well as reducing discriminatory practices between different groups of learners (Florian, 2015).

2.7.2 Three key assumption of Inclusive Pedagogy

For Aoife, Fiona and Joe (2019), the IP approach identifies three key assumptions by teachers for them to implement IP while at the same time, acknowledges the difficulties of responding to all learners' needs. Firstly, teachers should believe in the concept of transformability which assumes that learners' capacity to learn depends on the choices and decisions made by teachers in developing teaching and learning (Aoife, Fiona & Joe, 2019; Florian & Spratt, 2013). The second assumption encourages teachers to believe in their ability to teach diverse learners and stresses that challenges in learning are not within learners but lies with the teachers to solve (Florian, 2014). The last assumption relates to teachers' collaborative approaches (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). The three key assumptions outlined in the IP are fundamental to positive dispositions which value individuals and work towards including all learners in the classrooms (Brennan, King & Travers, 2021).

2.7.2.1 The Concept of Transformability

Florian and Spratt (2013) explain that transformability assumes that the ability of learners to learn depends largely on the choices and decisions made by teachers in the classrooms. Transformability can be achieved by creating and enabling rich learning conducive opportunities for all children, instead of differentiated work and additional activities for learners who experience challenges (Brennan & King, 2022). Philosophically, IP is not based on fixed notions of learners' ability and cognitive development, instead, it replaces them with the concept of transformability (Spratt & Florian, 2014). When teachers understand IP, they do not label children according to their ability. Instead, they regard each child as capable in inclusive classrooms (Hove, 2022; Spratt & Florian, 2014). In this view, teachers should relate differences to humanity, knowing that learning is not a one-size-fits-all approach. They should vary the learning strategies, incorporate differentiated learning through choice, create diversity in their classroom groups instead of ability grouping, and value active participation based on social constructivism (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Livingston-Galloway & Robinson-Neal, 2021). Fundamentally, teachers should focus on teaching; ways of teaching, not who is to learn, while eliminating fixed assumptions of achievement. Again, all children should choose how they want to learn and be responsible for their own learning (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

IP is against bellcurve thinking and advocates for ideas of transformability which focus on social justice by questioning the challenges of access and equity in education (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Transformability values learners' capacity as dynamic, and based on their decisions and choices (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Florian and Spratt (2013) further argue that,

learning results from relationships within communities expressed through the key principles of co-agency, everybody and trust. The principles of transformability are valuable tools for inclusive pedagogy, because they provide a structure for students' understanding that predictions on students' scores often

place a ceiling on what teachers think pupils can achieve. Thus, learning is understood as inextricably linked to the choices and decisions made by teachers.

Florian (2014) warns that the supremacy of 'bell-curve' thinking brings a challenge to denying predetermined beliefs about ability. Yet, Florian (2015a) believes that IP offers a different option to the bell-curve thinking that is in support of traditional approaches to teaching. It minimizes the inequality that exists in education when learners are subjected to performance expectations which results from additional support needs. IP creates opportunities to learn and ensures that some learners are not marginalized by treating them differently from others (Florian, 2015a).

In conclusion, IP emphasizes that education in regular classrooms should not focus on some or most but on all learners (Hove, 2022). According to Klibthong and Agbenyega (2018), IP stresses available material to learners, regardless of their labels as SEN. Teachers should be supported in developing inclusive pedagogy which opposes hegemonic beliefs about diversity and inclusive practices. On this basis, evidence-based perspectives to changing teacher learning for IP are crucial (Brennan, King & Travers, 2021).

2.7.2.2 Teachers' Beliefs in Transformability

The second assumption of the IP refers to teachers' beliefs that they are able to teach all learners (Brennan, King & Travers, 2019). Brennan, King, and Travers (2019) further clarify that IP involves teachers' belief in transformability, the notion that children's academic performance is not set, and all children are capable of progressing and succeeding. That is, teachers must capitalise on the strengths of each learner and use strategies that promote working together without judging learners based on predetermined ability (Florian & Spratt, 2013). It is important to reject fixed beliefs. Teachers should have an open mind of each child's ability to learn without labeling them (Florian & Spratt 2013). Mokoelle (2014) states that, when teachers' beliefs and practices of inclusion are positive, this results in behavioural changes in the learner. In this way, inclusive teachers are expected to engage with all

learners and provide additional support (Rouse, 2009). Associated with the second assumption, in this context, teachers should be committed to supporting all learners.

To become an inclusive professional, Spratt and Florian (2014) suggest continuous professional development autonomy, being resourceful, practical and as well as working collaboratively with others. Likewise, Brennan, King and Travers (2019) encourage commitment to regular professional development to make teachers' practices relevant, current and effective for today's classrooms. When teachers are engaged in a reflection of their own work, this contributes significantly to their knowledge and produce results that maximize learners' educational experiences (Florian, 2009). Many studies have encouraged teacher efficacy for inclusive education since it affects teachers' behaviour towards LSEN (Forlin, Sharma, Loreman, 2014; Majoko, 2019; Mokoelle, 2020). Monteiro and Forlin (2021) warn that to prepare teachers for inclusive classrooms, schools require different approaches to teaching. Teacher education should focus more on equipping teachers with the skills to meet these demands effectively and manage changes put up by local governments (Monteiro & Forlin, 2021). Besides, they should use flexible approaches to teaching and learning, see learners' challenges as opportunities for growth. They must also be committed to personal and professional development, with dedication to holistic, community-based practices that support learning (Livingston-Galloway & Robinson-Neal, 2021).

2.7.2.3 Collaborative Approach

The third assumption proposes that teachers must be flexible and see challenges as professional challenges for them, not problems within the learners (Florian & Black-Hawkins 2011). Besides, teachers working with others could confirm the literature on teacher collaboration in implementing inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020; Florian, 2014). As a matter of fact, collaboration is one effective strategy for involving all learners since it offers a space to share challenges and find solutions together as a group (Ainscow, 2020; Ní Bhroin & King, 2020). The IP suggests that teachers should work together with other professionals in

the school and outside the classroom in the development of inclusive practices (Brennan, King & Travers, 2019). Also, professional collaboration could include professionals external to the school environment which may improve teachers' professional knowledge in meeting the individual needs of their learners in the context of inclusive classrooms (Brennan, King & Travers, 2019). Thus, in this assumption, teachers are encouraged to come up with new ways of using strategies that support all children, which include working in collaboration with other professionals outside the school (Brennan & King, 2022).

Also key to successful inclusion is proper communication channels amongst staff members in creating school environments that share ideas for effective inclusion (Brennan, King & Travers, 2019). When teachers engage and reflect on issues that constitute acts of teaching learners who experience difficulties, they develop the necessary conditions for inclusive education. In this way, working collaboratively and strategically is essential (Florian, 2015). Teachers should also develop new ways of relating and creatively engage with their learners, thus caring for, besides having them acquire knowledge. When they continually interact and communicate in their context, they exchange information and generate opportunities for collaborative learning amongst teachers. This will allow them to adapt their behaviour and develop collaborative strategies in locally relevant ways (Walton & Engelbrecht, 2022).

2.7.3 The Relevance of Inclusive Pedagogy to the Study

I used this theory for defining inclusive education and its practices in a classroom. Examining its three broad principles discussed above, I have found the IP theory as suitable to explore and understand teachers' inclusive practices in a mainstream setting through the lens of the 2018 LIEP, especially given the nature of the school. In other words, it is a regular school which has learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. The three key assumptions are dispositions towards including all learners in the classrooms and valuing differences. Inclusive education is based on the assumptions that education is a basic human right and a foundation for equal societies (Ainscow, 2020). Thus, the key concept of IP are the values of

fairness and equity (Livingston-Galloway & Robinson-Neal, 2021). For teachers, social justice is a call for action; teachers contribute to equality in education by opposing any exclusion and low achievement of vulnerable learners (Hannon & O'Donnell, 2022). In this study, teachers were expected to teach inclusively to address societal differences and inequalities as mandated by the LIEP policy. The policy acknowledges education as a basic right for all, regardless of their status in society; all learners should be provided with education that is suitable to their needs. The IP laid the foundation for teachers to respect diversity. To do that, their knowledge, skills, values and beliefs could respond to the challenges of the 21st century classrooms.

Livingston-Galloway and Robinson-Neal (2021) believe that today's classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, and look more like microcosms. When teachers understand every learner as different, they fulfill the theoretical starting point for the IP. As Florian (2015) observed, many socio-cultural components cause individual differences, while learning only takes place in social contexts through shared activities. The distinctive factor is that, IP is defined by how teachers teach, not the teaching strategies they use (Florian, 2015). Therefore, when teachers are flexible, they respond and commit to each learner. By using different teaching approaches, they create spaces to effectively teach a diverse group of learners given their resources, funds and knowledge (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2016). For inclusivity, teachers should respect that all learners bring valuable resources and experiences to the classroom as envisaged by the LIEP 2018 policy. These resources could be built upon their personal experience, knowledge and beliefs. Also, their talents, strengths and skills are equally important (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2016). Thus, the IP assisted teachers in their knowledge and skills to embrace such differences. Teachers who acknowledge their learners' abilities are best suited in directing their teaching to the skills and knowledge that learners bring to the classroom (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2016). Thus, teachers should consider everybody, seeing how they can collaborate in the class, rather than excluding some from others because of relative performance.

The literature has extensively indicated that IP refers to teaching methodologies, forms and assumptions that encourage participation of learners. Furthermore, the IP encompasses beliefs and understanding about inclusive teaching and learning (Makoelle, 2014). In conclusion, when teachers understand their fundamental roles as facilitators of inclusion in diverse classrooms, they can implement educational policies to achieve their objectives. The LIEP 2018 calls for access and equity in education, thereby urging teachers to use their knowledge and skills as envisaged by the IP theory on inclusive diversity. Considering a regular school with learners from different backgrounds and those living with hearing impairment and deafness, teachers should have adapted the curriculum and assessment tools to accommodate such inclusive classrooms. Also, they should have given support to learners in an effort to ensure that learners reach their optimum in their academic performance. As noted earlier, collaboration with other professionals outside the school, parents and communities, being premised on the LIEP 2018 policy, could help the implementation phase of the policy.

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to understand that the different contextual conditions account for different challenges of inclusive education. Therefore, countries should consider their different socio-economic climates when addressing issues of exclusion and inclusion in schools. Also, inclusive practices entail a whole system change; teacher pedagogy, curriculum development, teaching strategies and assessment methods. This chapter has reviewed the international and local literature on inclusive education, including the theoretical framework informing this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study explored how teachers' practices demonstrate their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* at a target secondary school. In this section, I discuss the research design I used and data analysis strategies. Research methodology is an important aspect of research used for an empirical study in exploring a phenomenon using scientifically accepted methods (Kumantongo & Muzata, 2021). Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) posit that methodology deals with the research strategy followed to undertake research, identification of the tools to be used that align with the outlined research strategy. Methods that feature methodology clarify the modes of data collection. Although methodology is not prescriptive of a specific method to be followed, it draws attention to the process followed to achieve the objective of the research procedures (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

3.2 Research Paradigm

Philosophies are usually used as the basis of research (Cresswell, 2013). In research, a philosophy signify the epistemological, ontological, methodological and axiological assumptions (Kumantongo & Muzata, 2021). This study has used the interpretive paradigm which focuses on people's action, how participants understand and make meaning from their everyday social activities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Such human actions and interactions are explained by human beings in daily social settings to generate numerous realities (Riyam, 2015). Central to the interpretivist paradigm is acknowledging people's subjective world, that is, human experience is external to them (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Kumantongo & Muzata, 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) further clarify that research taken under the interpretivist paradigm usually shows the social world as understood from individuals and only derived

from unavoidable interaction between the researcher and the researched. Here, knowledge is generated by the findings, being value-laden and context-dependent is important for understanding reality. Guba (1981) further argues that since the interpretivist researchers focus on complex, variable and contextual human behaviour subject to multiple realities, different results are reproduced. At best, the researcher can make conclusions typically influenced by the researcher's understanding. Such conclusions depend on the researcher's skills reflecting the findings from the research data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

With interpretivism paradigm, researchers usually better understand the phenomenon based on its context instead of generalising it to the bigger group (Creswell, 2007). Similarly, Hammersley (2013) emphasises that since many interpretations are created among humans, interpretivist researchers acknowledge various ways of experiencing the world in different cultural contexts to avoid the bias. In addition, researchers can use methodologies such as grounded case study to gain people's insights into the subjects to provide credible information connected to the research (Kumantongo & Muzata, 2021; Tuli, 2010).

Nonetheless, interpretivism has limitations and as such, interpretivists aim to deeply understand a phenomena in its context, not generalizing the results to wider a population and other different contexts (Cohen, Manion & Marison, 2011), therefore, with using scientific procedures, there are gaps in the verification of validity and usefulness of research outcomes (Pham, 2018). The second criticism of interpretivism is that, its ontological view is more subjective instead of being objective (Mack, 2010). For this reason, the researcher's own thinking, interpretation, belief system, and cultural preference affect the research results (Pham, 2018; Riyam, 2015). One other limitation is that, interpretivism targets current phenomenon and ignores problems that relate to empowerment of people and communities. Furthermore, it fails to address the political and ideological impact on knowledge and social realities (Pham, 2018). Interestingly, Mack (2010) adds that this theoretical lens overlooks key features of the society such as issues of power and agency. To

understand the social realities of teachers in inclusive classroom settings, this study adopted an interpretivist approach for its reliability as noted above. The study looked closely at how teachers teach; their teaching methodologies, how they adapted the curriculum to make it inclusive, and diversify their assessment to create multiple realities. The context has been the school with nine respondent teachers and one special education manager. The participants shared their experiences and demonstrated understanding of the LIEP 2018 policy. With such interactions, I could better understand inclusive education in the context where there are learners living with hearing impairment and deafness and the complexities of inclusion in real-life situations.

A paradigm comprises belief systems and practices, namely ontology, epistemology, methodology and the axiology. These sets informed the researcher in this study.

3.2.1 Ontology

Ontology deals with reality. It explains knowledge and beliefs about reality (Simui, 2018). Kelly, Dowling and Miller (2018) further note ontology for questioning reality. Ontology is the scientific study of being in which reality is produced and external to individuals and understanding (Kumantongo & Muzata, 2021). Ontology assumes that one's belief that any focal situation has multiple realities which can be explored for meanings made from human interactions between the researcher and the study (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Saunders *et al.* (2012) sees ontology through inter-subjectivity by considering meanings of social and experiences in research. Thus, the researcher's ontological stance is reflected in how one views the world considering the influence of such reality on shaping the understanding (Creswell, 2014).

Interpretivists adopt an ontology stance where a single reality can yield many explanations and there is no specific process by which the truth can be discovered (Riyam, 2015). That is, interpretivists aim to obtain profound understanding of the phenomenon and its unique contextual problem, without being generalised to the whole population (Creswell, 2007).

Additionally, interpretivists embrace a relativist ontology in which one phenomenon might produce different interpretations instead of determining the truth through measurements (Pham, 2018). The ontological stance reflects participants' lived experiences² and cultural influences, while also acknowledging the potential for multiple realities (Olson, 2006). Ontologically, the study sees inclusive education as created by multiple realities as shown by the participants' responses. I looked at how teachers implement inclusive practices with their multiple interpretations. Although the findings demonstrated deeper understanding of the teachers' practices, they are not generalisable.

3.2.2 Epistemology

The epistemological stance within the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges multiple realities. The term epistemology means knowledge. In simple terms, epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge and how we come to know (Krauss, 2005). As a theory of knowledge, epistemology describes how researchers come to know about reality and the beliefs they make about the acquisition and acceptance of knowledge (Selvam, 2017). As Creswell (2014) puts, epistemology takes into consideration creation of knowledge and how we learn about our world. This is important for shaping the methods selected for studying the research questions and explicate meaning. The epistemological stance within the interpretivist paradigm deals with both the subjectivity and inter-subjectivity (Weaver & Olson, 2006). For subjectivist, epistemology assumes that the researcher construct meaning of their data by interacting with participants and their own thinking (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). As such, the researcher would construct knowledge socially from personal real-life experiences in a natural setting (Punch, 2005). Epistemologically, interpretivists link research with research subjects, considering humans as attached to their knowledge and experience (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). To gather information on how teachers demonstrate their understanding of the LIEP 2018, I constructed this knowledge through my personal

experiences with the teachers in the school, employing suitable research methods for information of the study.

3.2.3 Methodology

Methodologically, interpretivists collect qualitative data using various methods such as discourses, interviews, text messages and reflective sessions (Riyam, 2015). The researcher observes the process (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Furthermore, Riyam (2015) mentions that interpretive researchers use a methodology that permits the researcher to carry out a study in its natural context. Methodologically, I used a collage portrait group discussion, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and focus group discussion to explore and understand teachers' inclusive practices in regular mainstream classrooms with reference to the availability of the policy.

3.2.4 Axiology

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) state that a balanced axiology assumes that the results that the researcher finds are a reflection of researcher's values, they present a balanced report of the data findings. Interpretivists assert that since reality depends on the mind and that knowledge is subjective, social inquiry is value-bound and value-laden (Riyam, 2015). The researchers are clearly influenced by their values, informing the chosen research paradigm, the topic to be studied, the methods for collecting and analysing data, how they make meaning and report on the findings (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). As an interpretivist researcher, one admits the value-laden nature of the study and reports their values and bias towards the topic under study that may influence neutrality. To avoid bias and uphold the value of the research, I have presented a balanced report of the respondents' responses.

3.3 Research Approach

The study used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research documents individual perspectives, experiences, thoughts and behaviors through interaction, observation and

getting into conversations with individuals and groups. It also considers how the factors surrounding their context may have influence on these perspectives and experiences (Jameel, Shaheen & Majid, 2018). Mohajan (2018) defines a qualitative research as a form of social inquiry which focuses on how people understand and make meaning of their experiences in order to comprehend better the social reality of people. For Kumantongo and Muzata (2021), qualitative studies aim to examine individuals' perception of a social reality. Qualitative research further provides specific understanding to a phenomenon based on the participant's experiences in situations where it might not be examinable through quantity or amount (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

Additionally, Creswell and Creswell (2018) view qualitative studies as often investigative, with researchers gradually interpreting a social phenomenon through contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the phenomenon. Mkandawire (2019: 23) notes that "qualitative design is a subjective method that assesses opinions, behavior, perceptions and social narratives to attain deep understanding of quality responses in specific exploratory case study." The study has narrated teachers' experiences, thoughts and behaviors in regular classrooms in line with the expectations of the LIEP 2018. It further looked at how the policy influences their actions and perceptions in order to explore the social reality of teaching and learning. It has been important to assess teachers' opinions on and attitudes towards inclusive practices, and their interaction with the school environment to better understand the policy.

3.3.1 Research Design

The study has used exploratory case study. Kekeya (2019) explains that case study approach is limited to a specific organization, group or unit, with the findings illustrating such a particular setting. Kumantongo and Muzata (2021) further clarify that there are many types of case studies. These can be descriptive, explanatory or exploratory. Typically relevant methods of gathering data and analysis may include interviews, observations and document

analysis and an emergent theory. The purpose of the current study was to explore secondary school teachers' inclusive practices, the phenomenon which is understood and perceived differently in different contexts. For this study, an exploratory case study was relevant. Exploratory case studies study any phenomenon which is an issue of interest to the researcher in a particular setting (Zainal, 2007). Yin (2003) claims that an exploratory case study is mostly relevant when a phenomenon under study does not have a clearly defined, single specific set of results. Most of the time case studies are qualitative, the research findings cannot be generalised to a bigger community in which the topic that is being studied is based. Rather, they are only generalisable to the unit studied since case studies help in understanding the whole unit (Kumantongo & Muzata, 2021). The study is a case of one regular secondary school in Lesotho which has learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. The school was selected for its uniqueness of being one of the few inclusive schools in the country. As such, it was suitable to explore and understand the phenomena under study.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

Data collection comprises the experiences of participants in qualitative research through words, phrases, concepts, themes and categories. (Jameel, Shaheen & Majid, 2018). For this study, I used an arts-based method called collage, focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews and document analysis as discussed below. The data collection was done between February 2022 and August 2022. The first part of data collection came from the collage group portraits discussions which was followed by focus group discussion. This was a collaborative process with respondents to understand teachers' inclusive practices. The semi-structured interview with the Special Education Manager followed these two processes to find out the support that the MOET gives to teachers in the implementation of the LIEP 2018.

3.4.1 Arts-based Method

Arts-based methods are gaining momentum as research methods in many disciplines, including education (Roberts & Woods, 2013). In the past two decades, qualitative research has grown to incorporate arts-based methods to represent stories and voices that have been historically silenced by data collection that is based on texts and language. It accommodates other devices such as visual art, story telling, performance, and folk art (Knowles & Cole, 2008). According to Knowles & Cole (2008), the term ‘visual arts-based’ proposes a number of formal and informal methods and strategies for data collection which can sometimes be visual, oral, or written. Through these methods, participants co-create knowledge about themselves. When visual arts-based approaches are used, participation becomes intense, especially in situations where words become limited to comprehensively articulate difficult issues (De Lange, 2012). For these reasons, an arts-based research design is valued because it is able to provide rich data when different voices from multiple participants are used (Simmons & Daley, 2013). However, there are limitations of arts-based research. One could be whether researchers are able to interpret and understand visual products that have been created and intended by the participants (Martikainen, 2019). Also, visual images are not transparent to participants’ lives and experiences; it is always important to ask participants to interpret their products (Clark & Morris, 2017; Mitchell, 2011). In Leavy’s (2018) view, it is unfair for the researcher to ask the participants to discuss and give guidance and reading of the images. This means they become research partners, not participants.

3.4.1.1 Collage

Collage is “taken from the French verb *coller* (to stick), it is the process of using fragments of found images or materials and gluing them to a flat surface to portray a phenomena” (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010: 2). In the early twentieth century, the ‘fathers’ of collage, Picasso and Braque, used it in their work to contrast the representational demands of a formalist art (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Gerstenblatt, 2013; Freeman, 2020). Their aim was to make

art easily accessible and used it to interrogate the political and social agenda of the times (Freeman, 2020). Collage as an art approach to research, has attracted a lot of attention, especially in qualitative research (Butler-Kisber, 2010). It is flexible enough to permit the researcher to work in a non-linear and intuitive way since the researcher can arrange image fragments that show insensible connections and understandings (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). Gerstenblatt (2013) posits that a collage challenges objective uniform reality, and repurposes objects to contextualise multiple realities. A collage works with the pictorial and verbal images and provides both visual and textual forms of evidence, an aspect that is frequently missing in other data collection methods (Khanare & De Lange, 2017). As Freeman (2020) says, collage can be used as a methodological framework in research as it entails using different methods to expound on a wider area of research.

Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) identify three attributes of collage in qualitative research; it allows the researcher to engage in a reflective process, elicitate, and conceptualize ideas. More broadly, when a collage is used, it creates a space for participants to reflect, think, create, talk, discuss, and learn (Norris, Mbokazi, Rorke, Goba & Mitchell, 2007). Collage has revealing potential because it uncovers things that participants cannot necessarily express in words alone since they are non-verbal (Culshaw, 2019). Furthermore, collage is advantageous in various ways; it is able to bring multiple methods together in one place to expound on a wide area of research rather than an exact one. Secondly, it allows greater flexibility and one can shift the focus of research. Again, a collage uses different multiple methods and each is able to provide a different fragment of information to explain a research area (Freeman, 2020). The participants use all possible available materials such as own written texts, they can cut or paste backgrounds and step out of the expected margins.

In a collage activity, those participating in research are provided with a collection of photos from newspapers, magazines, colored pencils, monthly journals, as well as equipment such as scissors, staplers, paste, for joining and linking that material (Khanare & De Lange, 2017;

Simmons & Daley, 2013). For collage, I anticipated 10 teachers with minimum of 3-5 years of teaching experience in mainstream classrooms. However, I had nine teachers who formed one group. This session was video-recorded with permission from the respondents hiding their faces. This session took approximately 1 hour 45 minutes. Phase one of the collage activity introduced and involved training the teachers on a collage and how to do it, before inviting them to make their own collages (Khanare and De Lange, 2017). Thereafter, I provided the respondents with examples of previous collages where they could ask questions for clarification. In the second phase, I distributed collage materials to the group (A4 papers, magazine, sketch pens, scissors, glue stick, markers and papers). The group created their own collages using pictures, words and drawings. They also made some brief notes on what they represented in their collage. The following prompt was used: “create collages showing classroom practices that demonstrate your understanding of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018).” The group took 20 minutes to present their collage. This was followed by respondents’ reflection on the whole exercise and they opted to do an individual written reflection on their feelings about the whole experience.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

Focus group interview is one of the important qualitative techniques for data collection (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). A focus group interviews many participants who share the same experiences at the same time and place. Information is elicited from how they interact, how they relate with one another, and their collective responses (Jameel, Shaheen & Majid, 2018). Focus group discussion is often used in qualitative research because it is best in helping to gain deep comprehension of social issues. The method obtains information from purposely selected group of people, not from a statistically representative sample of a big group (Nyumbal, Wilson, Derrick & Mukherjee, 2017). For Moser and Korstjens (2018), focus group discussions are useful to scrutinise different thoughts, perceptions, feelings and experiences amongst participants. Also, a focus group discussion brings people with similar

backgrounds and experiences to engage on a particular topic of interest to the researcher (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). In a focus group discussion, group discussion is not between the researcher and the participants but rather, between the participants (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Nyumbal *et al.*, 2017). Participants are encouraged to interact with one another and share experiences. They do not simply respond to the researcher. In this way, different complex attitudes and beliefs can emerge.

Compared to other methods of data collection, this data collection method is more economical since many participants are able to share their experiences about a topic in a specified time. For sensitive issues, a focus group discussion provides a comfortable environment for participants to share their experiences (Jameel, Shaheen & Majid, 2018; Moser and Korstjens, 2018)). Furthermore, focus group discussion provides immediate feedback and clarity on participants' responses, with the assistance of other group participants (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). As a result, rich data is collected quickly since focus group sessions only use moderate time commitment from the participants and researcher (Dilshad & Latif, 2013).

Given the nature of focus groups, Moser and Korstjens (2018) warn that in focus group discussion, there are always dominant people taking over the discussion and there are those who hardly interact because they find it difficult to share their feelings about sensitive issues and being observed. For the focus group discussion, I had the nine respondent teachers in the collage activity. All the discussion was audio-recorded with permission from the participants and it lasted for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The discussion grid comprised five open-ended questions with five themes: teachers' views about inclusive education, in particular, their beliefs about the LIEP 2018, their schools' inclusion policy and mission statements, their teaching practices for diverse learners and the related challenges.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

In semi-structured interviews, participants engage in an open-ended discussion through the researcher's facilitation. Face-to-face in-depth interviews help to elicit the participants'

experiences, perceptions, thoughts and feelings (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). There is an interview grid with questions that directs and guides the discussion in such a way that the discussion is suitable to the research questions. The questions are developed before the interview, however, when new questions arise during the interview process, they are included (Jameel, Shaheen & Majid, 2018). The semi-structured interview with the Special Education Manager allowed me to probe the respondent for further clarification, thus having in-depth understanding of how teachers are supported by the MOET through training and resources to teach inclusively in schools.

3.4.4 Document Analyses

Document analysis is a systematic research procedure that reviews and evaluate documents; they could be printed and electronic material that provide a means to track change in development. Documents verify the findings (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis documents processes and is useful in unraveling the policy content across time and geographies, it triangulates with interviews and other data sources. It also understands how information and ideas are presented formally and issues are framed (Dalglish, Khalid & MacMahon, 2020). In order to help researchers to understand the roots of specific issues for the past events, documents are useful in providing the background and historical information and show the conditions that may affect the phenomena under investigation (Bowen, 2009). However, document analysis is subjected to issues of validity, reliability, authenticity, and lack of representativity. These can be addressed through triangulation (Dalglish, Khalid & MacMahon, 2020). When information comes from many sources, this gives research findings credibility (Bowen, 2009). I used document analysis to analyse the LIEP 2018, using CPA. As such, I could understand problems that the policy intended to address through the goals and objectives. The policy document also helped in checking teachers' compliance with the expectations of the policy.

3.5 Rigour of the Study

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is explored in terms of credibility, dependability and transferability (Guba 1981; Rule & John, 2011; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Riyam, 2015). Trustworthiness for qualitative research, as explained by Rule and John (2011) and MacMillan and Schumacher (2006), can be enhanced by combining multiple strategies: numerous researchers, sustained fieldwork, varied plans, respondents' verbatim language and member check.

3.5.1 Credibility

In interpretivist paradigm, the criterion of credibility refers to the extent to which the collected data and the analysed data can be believable, trusted and truthful (Guba, 1981). When researchers are able to offer rich, nuanced analyses of the constructed multiple realities of participants and do justice to the experiences and responses of participants, credibility is easily assessed (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021: 33). Credibility is normally produced in agreement with participants. One other approach to check on how accurate the information is, there can be formal and informal member checks (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021). I transcribed and took the data back to the respondents for verification, to cross-check how the data reflected their responses, rather than misrepresenting and misinterpreting them.

3.5.2 Dependability

Dependability considers how stable data is over a certain period of time (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Guba (1981) offers that this criterion allows getting the same outcome using the same data collection methods. Guba (1981) argues that

because the interpretivist researcher deals with human behaviour which is continuously variable, contextual and subject to multiple interpretations of reality, they cannot reproduce exactly the same results. At best, the researcher can make inferences which in themselves are influenced by the researcher's own

construction of meaning. Those inferences and interpretation are dependable on the researcher's ability and skills to make sure that the findings truly emerge from the data gathered and analysed for the research.

For this study, data findings are accessible to anyone to check their dependability of the study. This says anyone who wishes to use the same methods and participants is allowed to do so and will definitely attain similar findings.

3.5.3 Confirmability

Confirmability is used by the interpretivist researcher to confirm the findings of the research by others in the field (Guba, 1981). Confirmability refers to the process of making sure that data, interpretation and results are embedded in the contexts of the people concerned (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The main goal of confirmability is to ensure that one's bias is minimal and eliminated from influencing the analysed data (Guba, 1981). Shenton (2004) observes that for the research to obtain this confirmability, the researcher must ensure that the findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the participants, not the preferences of the researcher. As per popia, the original data collection tools are safely kept so as to allow checking of the trustworthiness of the study.

3.5.4 Transferability

In Lincoln and Guba's (1985) view, in transferability, the researcher provides enough contextual data about their research so that other people who may benefit from their findings can relate those findings to their own different contexts. An interpretive research of quality can be transferred to other contexts for other people to benefit from (Riyam, 2015). For Guba and Lincoln (1989), transferability refers to generalising research findings which can be applied in different contexts. This can be achieved by providing rich data and detailed descriptions (Riyam, 2015). Transferability requires researchers to provide their data collection methods, the data they used and how they analysed so as to avoid replication of

the research by the larger research community (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021). Transferability is intended to allow those who are doubtful about the findings, the researchers and their scholarly communities to verify them (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021). When researchers document their work, they allow the research community to verify the research, identify mistakes, and help in finding new information into open data (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021). For this study, the research findings can be used in other contexts in different settings to improve on teachers' inclusive practices and inform the policy direction.

3.5.5 Triangulation

Watson (2020) explains that triangulation uses different approaches and tools in a single study to capture the social patterns and experiences of participants by using multiple qualitative methods. This helps to seek union and support through using different data sources and methods. For Rapley (2007), by triangulating data, the researcher provides joint evidence that leads to credible results. Additionally, when multiple methods are mixed in various combinations and across the methodological spectrum, diversity is established, there is robust data and verification in analysis (Watson, 2020). Triangulating is also helpful in verification of the findings across the collected data sets and reduces the possible bias that can exist in a single study. As noted earlier, I used collage portrait group discussions, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to bring in multiple varied voices as a way of triangulating my data.

3.6 Respondents Selection

Purposive sampling suggests selecting participants from the researchers' judgment and belief about the participants who will be good informants for the study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). I purposely selected the school and the respondents to obtain different but complementary information as discussed above.

3.6.1 District and School Sample and Selection

The study used a purposive sampling. MacMillian and Schumacher (2010) describe purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling where cases can be judged as typical or some categories of cases are of particular interest to the researcher. Since inclusive education has become increasingly popular in the global space, schools are slowly adjusting to the idea. However, there are only five inclusive secondary schools in Lesotho (MOET, 2016). The study has used one school in Leribe district. This particular school has learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. Many studies have focused on Maseru as the capital city and other districts have been understudied. Also, many studies have focused on visual impairment settings while hearing impairment and deafness has not been systemically researched. The school also falls under the church proprietor so I believe it may have some support from the church as indicated in the background that churches have been instrumental in the education of LSEN.

3.6.2 Sample of Respondents

The respondents were selected based on their interaction with inclusive education. In this case, the study used nine teachers – both males and females - as key implementers of the policy and Special Education Manager in order to understand the level of support for teachers for the proper implementation of inclusive education.

Profile of Teachers	
TEACHER	YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Respondent A	3
Respondent B	15
Respondent C	14
Respondent D	3
Respondent E	5
Respondent F	4
Respondent G	30
Respondent H	9
Respondent I	6

3.7 Data Analysis

Data collection was done between February 2022 and August 2022. The study used thematic analysis and Critical Policy Analysis to explore teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the LIEP 2018. Data analysis also incorporated the field notes which helped to provide details of the social interactions during the data collection processes.

3.7.1 Field Notes

During the collage activity and focus group discussion, notes were taken to provide details of social interpretations and describe all relevant incidents that occurred on the site. Stake (1995) states that field notes are important in the search for patterns in the data and they provide building blocks, which are assembled and reassembled to provide a logical and valid report. The study used field notes as evidence for meaning and helping to understand how

teachers demonstrate their understanding of the LIEP 2018 teachers' inclusive practices and how the LIEP 2018 influences their practices in the classrooms.

3.7.2 Thematic Analyses

Thematic analysis is a powerful analytical method for qualitative research data that permits researchers to summarise the data, highlight and interpret key features of data set (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021). As Kiger and Varpio (2020) note, thematic analysis is a flexible method for analysing qualitative data by employing various epistemological orientations. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe a theme as a patterned response obtained from the data informing the research question. When researchers engage in thematic analysis, they can identify themes regardless of the many times a certain idea related to that theme emerges from the data set (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021). The most globally accepted framework for conducting thematic analysis incorporates a six-step process: one needs to familiarise oneself with the data, develop initial codes, derive and review themes, define and give names to the themes. Then, the researcher must produce the report (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021).

I used thematic analysis to analyse the collected data. This involved bringing together all the data to form wider, more general descriptions and interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). On the same day of data collection, I transcribed the focus group discussions with the teacher respondents and interview with the Special Education Manager so as to capture their responses, feelings and reactions. Kvale (2007) explains that an interview transcription converts verbal discourses of participants into written discourses. The respondents used both English and Sesotho in their responses; so after the transcription, I translated the Sesotho discourses into English. After the transcription and translations, I began with data analysis. I used information from the collage activity with teachers, the field notes and the focus group discussion by repeatedly listening to the recorded conversations of the teachers which were transcribed for meaning and in-depth understanding. Also, the information from the special education manager was very useful to understand the extent to which the district office

supports the implementation of the policy at school level. I read the data, broke it down into large parts of the text into small meaningful segments in the form of sentences and individual words then looked through it to make meaning of its contents (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, I described teachers' perceptions on their inclusive practices in details. Data coding involved identification of themes that emerged. Such coding helped me to organise the data and make meaningful connections of the data for easy interpretation and discussion. To protect the identity of the participants and ensure confidentiality, I used pseudonyms (BERA, 2018). Participants are referred to in the findings by their transcription code as Respondents A, B and so on. Analysis of the collage activity and focus group discussion demonstrated that teachers' practices in their classrooms were not as inclusive as it is suggested by the policy.

3.7.3 Critical Policy Analysis (CPA)

The study further used CPA to analyse the LIEP of 2018. CPA critiques and questions various stages of the policy development. The study contends that for teachers to understand inclusive teaching, they should understand that policy informs their teaching. CPA offers great opportunities for identifying problems and possible solutions that respond to these contextual system problems (Diem, Young & Sampson, 2019). Diem, Young and Sampson (2019) view CPA as exploring the politics that exist in education at different levels; whether at the local, state and federal levels and promises broader, deeper and potentially more complicated educational policy issues. CPA has been viable for understanding policy content, context and implementation of LIEP (2018). CPA also helped to reveal the silences and omissions of the policy. Thus, CPA helped to explore how teachers conceptualise inclusive practices through the lens of the policy.

3.8 The Value of the Study

The study has contributed significantly to the global discourses on inclusive education, especially in Lesotho where such information is relatively scarce. For policy makers, it has informed their decisions in enhancing the LIEP 2018 for better implementation practices. While the study has assisted teachers to have a better view of the policy and by sharing their experiences, it has offered them an opportunity to reflect on their daily teaching practices and expand their knowledge on inclusive practices.

3.9 Demarcation of the Study

3.9.1 Scientific Demarcation

The study has been demarcated within Education Policy Studies and Inclusive Education. The study explored teachers' inclusive practices through an analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018). This is an educational policy developed and implemented by the MOET to address educational inequalities pertinent to the education system. Thus, the study focused on the implementation of the policy and whether teachers' practices could consider the expectations of the policy in addressing any such existing inequalities in education.

3.9.2 Geographical Demarcation

Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy that is landlocked by the Republic of South Africa. Administratively, the country is divided into ten districts (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2014). The study was conducted at one secondary school of Leribe district, Lesotho. Leribe borders three districts, namely Botha-Bothe district in the north, Thaba-Tseka in the south east and Berea in the south west. The district has an area of 2,828 Km² with the population estimated at approximately 337,500 in the year 2016 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2014). The rationale behind choosing this particular school is that it is easily accessible and remains the only high school in Lesotho which has learners living with hearing impairment and deafness.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics protect research participants from encountering any harm by being involved in research (Suzan, Drew, Guillemin, Howell, Warr & Watcott, 2014). To ensure trustworthiness in a research, it is important to use the principles of ethics (Humphreys *et al.*, 2021: 860). I followed all ethical protocols by applying for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee, ethical clearance number – UFS-HSD2021/1666/21 from the Faculty of Education, at the University of the Free State. Further, I applied for a clearance letter from the Leribe district Education Office in order to have access to the target school. In the letter, I communicated the aims of the study, all potential risks and benefits related to the study. The respondents were further informed of their consent and voluntary participation. Their identity was protected by using pseudonyms and the name, nor could the location of the school be revealed. For Oliver (2010), confidentiality and anonymity in research are important features of research ethics. Also important is that, the respondents could freely withdraw anytime from the study. The school principal also gave me a go-ahead to conduct the research at the school. There was a consent letter I gave to the respondents incorporating all the details discussed in the letter to the District Office. The letter was thus signed as an agreement for them to voluntarily participate in the research.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has provided detailed procedures of how the study was conducted. It has discussed the research methodology to understand better how teachers understand and implement the LIEP policy in schools. All the necessary procedures were followed in order to ensure that the respondents were safe.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICAL POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE LESOTHO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY 2018

4.1 Introduction

In chapter two, I discussed objective one and reviewed the literature on inclusive education globally, the international framework on inclusive education, referring to the United Kingdom (UK) on their policies on inclusion. I found it also interesting to look at what the African Union (AU) says about inclusion, drawing on some lessons from other African countries, before considering the Lesotho context so as to understand policies that inform teachers' classroom practices. In this chapter, I discuss objective two of the study; the Lesotho policy framework for inclusive education and establish the prominence of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy of 2018 by using document analysis to undertake a critical analysis of Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP 2018) to explore its implications for inclusive classroom practices. The LIEP 2018 policy document covers the background, guiding principles, the goals and objectives of the policy, thus, it is helpful since the important information of the policy and procedures for implementation are found in the document.

The study aimed to explore how teachers' practices demonstrate their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school. Document analysis has also helped to discuss the Lesotho policy framework for inclusive education and establish the prominence of *Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy* of 2018 in order see in the chapter for data presentation, if teachers' inclusive practices consider the expectation of the policy. Critical Policy Analysis (CPA) has helped me to explore the policy content, context and its implications for implementation. It has also unraveled the silences and omissions in the policy in relation to teachers' inclusive practices. My contention is that, I cannot critically

analyse the LIEP 2018 in isolation from other national policies on education, hence intertextuality (Taylor, Lingard & Henry, 1997). The Lesotho legislation and other macropolicy responses towards education for inclusivity have been considered.

4.2 Policy Analysis

Taylor *et al.* (1997: 15) explain that a “policy can be interpreted as a process, programme, output, purpose or proposal.” For Walker (2000), policies are the set of forces that are controlled by the actors within policy domain and they affect the structure and performance of the system. National governments use policies to control the system as well as helping to solve problems within the government and obtain benefits from it (Walker, 2000). Taylor *et al.* (1997) observe that policy goes beyond words in a document; it is a vibrant and collaborative work. Moreover, policies are value-laden, multifaceted, and exist in context (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Thus, Diem (2012) suggests that people develop and implement a policy because they respond to complex demands that are made by schools, local communities and societies.

Taylor *et al.* (1997) proceed from the assumption that since policies are mostly developed to bring change or improvement, it can be assumed that policy analysis is developing techniques for identifying alternative courses of action and estimating outcomes and goals. Arguably, Cardno (2018) believes that policy analysis is concerned with the background of the policy; the forces behind it, how it was constructed and how it is evaluated and monitored in the implementation to see if its working to achieve the stated objectives. Policy analysis investigates the nature of a policy so as to look at what lies behind and within it and the purpose of policy (Cardno, 2018). Hence, Walker (2000: 11) suggests

the first step to policy analysis as identification of the problem which sets the boundaries for what follows. It further involves identification of questions or issues involved, fixing the context within which the issues are to be analysed and

the policies will have to function, clarifying constraints on possible courses of action, identifying the people who will be affected by the policy decision, discovering major operative factors and deciding on the initial approach.

The second step is to identify the stated objectives of the policy. For Walker (2000), without policy analysis, important policy choices may yield regrettable results if they are based on hunches and guesses.

4.3 Critical Policy Analysis (CPA)

Critical Policy Analysis (CPA) emerged as a response to traditional policy analysis (Diem & Young, 2015). According to Young and Diem (2018), CPA aims to critique and offer alternative techniques for examining educational policy issues. Critical policy researchers critique, interrogate the policy process from the epistemological roots of policy work, examine the actors involved, and reveal policy constructions (Diem & Young, 2015). While Diem, Young and Sampson (2019) assert that CPA explores the education politics at different levels; the local, state and federal levels and issues the wider, deeper and possibly the complexity of understanding educational policy issues. Additionally, CPA differentiates between policy rhetoric and its reality, the roots and development of educational policy and how power and resources are distributed and who stands to benefit or not (Diem, Young & Sampson, 2019). Furthermore, CPA examines those who resist or engage in policy especially members of historically underrepresented groups (Young & Diem, 2017). Young and Diem (2017) argue that CPA scholars study the complex environments and systems for policy making and implementation. At the same time, CPA identifies underlying problems and alternatively, offers solutions to contextual and system complexities (Diem, Young & Sampson, 2019).

From different perspectives, CPA further explores policy processes, policy contexts, policy environments and policy impact (Diem, Young & Sampson, 2019). According to Apple (2019), CPA stresses the importance of understanding complex connections between education, dominant groups and subordinates in a given society, highlighting the movements that intrude such relations. CPA also focuses on the space between policy development and implementation (Ball, 1993). Scholars examine the emergence of problems to be solved by a given policy. Similarly, they further trace historical and contextual clues necessary for understanding policy changes, conditions and outcomes. Also important are policy processes and tools that facilitate institutionalisation of policy, as well as the distribution of knowledge, power and resources (Diem *et al.*, 2014). The unit of analysis may study the policy system, the context of implementation or beneficiaries of the policy at a certain time (Diem, Young & Sampson, 2019). As Diem, Young and Sampson (2019) point out, CPA reviews different stages of policy development, its motivation, and privileged voices. Thus, CPA helps to close the gap between policy and practice. Diem *et al.* (2014) opine that CPA is a means to reveal and critique the complex, subjectivity, and equity of policy as well as elucidating intended and unintended outcomes at the process of policy implementation. In this section, CPA has unmasked and unpacked the assumptions and foundational ideas that underpin the LIEP 2018 policy and how these effectively influence teachers' inclusive practices.

4.4. Critical Policy Analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy

Inclusive education is a global topical issue of inclusivity. The 2005-2015 education strategic plan included equitable access to basic education as a strategic goal in the education system with a plan to develop a policy guideline on inclusive education, integration of LSEN, orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), minority groups and religious minorities (MOET, 2005). By the same token, the 2011 National Disability promotes access and inclusion of persons with disability in the education system and training programmes (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993). Thus, the LIEP 2018 is a response by the Lesotho government to enable

education for all, by safeguarding the education of learners living with disabilities and those from minority groups. The adopted inclusive education policy upholds the educational rights of children with disabilities. It aims to change the general education into inclusive education system. The policy is the government's commitment in the provision of quality and relevant education for all citizens of Lesotho, as guided by ratification of international protocols and conventions (LNFOD, 2020). Consequently, this policy framework applies to all the MOET departments and education institutions that provide education to all learners from pre-primary to those of higher institutions of learning. In this section, I used CPA to explore the LIEP 2018 content, context and implementation. These have influence on teachers' understanding of inclusive education through their classroom practices. It is important also to make situational analysis to foreground the rationale for the framework for the LIEP 2018.

4.4.1 Policy Content Analysis

Policy content analysis is interested in the 'what' and the 'how' questions that may have possibly designated the targets, goals and objectives of a policy. It further scrutinises the assumptions that have probably provoked the development of the policy (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Mubarok, Zauhur and Suryadi (2020) explain that content analysis considers the policy content. It represents the dimensions that help to understand how the actors, contexts and processes support the content. For Fullan (2015), policy content is fundamental in creating the framework and plan for implementation. Therefore, the policy content communicates the problem and how it aims to solve it (Ireru *et al.*, 2020). The MOET has identified the problems of exclusion in education, with the content of the policy demonstrating teachers' practices towards a successful and equitable education for all.

4.4.1.1 Situational Analysis

Integration of LSEN into mainstream society and regular schools has had a minimal impact in responding to the challenges facing LSEN. There was a need to shift from integration to inclusion thus developing the LIEP. Lesotho's Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESP) 2016 – 2026 encourages transforming education from integration to inclusion, mental retardation to intellectual disability and special education to inclusive education. This shift caters for identity markers such as culture, language, gender, age, socio-economic backgrounds and other possible forms of human differences (MOET, 2016). The policy document points to poor coordination within the Special Education Unit (SEU) which has been negatively affected by the absence of guidelines and limited capacity, thus constraining implementation, monitoring and evaluation. On the Curriculum and Assessment level, LSEN have been subjected to a curriculum that is rigid, traditional and fails to respond to individual educational needs in terms of instruction, instructional materials and assessment tools. As the policy document posits, there is a need to change the curriculum. Additionally, assessment modes are standardised and traditionally operated and limit the participation of some LSEN. Given the terrain of the country, access to infrastructure is still problematic since most learners walk long distances to schools and inaccessibility to resources within schools poses a major challenge (MOET, 2018). The LIEP focuses on increasing enrolment rates of the LSEN and how they are retained within the education cycle and provided with high quality education (MOET, 2018). The policy therefore gives guidelines on how to fully achieve inclusion. The situation analysis foregrounds the implementation for teachers, the problems that have persisted in the education system regarding the traditional classrooms, the need for teachers to change classrooms set-ups through curriculum modification, assessment and instructional strategies.

4.4.1.2 Guiding Principle

The LIEP 2018 is premised on six global principles of human rights and freedom. These are inclusion, respect, empathy, tolerance, equity and non-discrimination. This tool coheres with the Constitution of Lesotho which compels the government to ensure that education is made available to all citizens, in accordance with fundamental human rights (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993). Supporting these principles, Section 4 (2) (a) and (c) of the Lesotho Education Act 2010 urges the MOET to give learners educational opportunities and facilities that allow them to learn under conditions of freedom and dignity, and they must be free from any form of discrimination (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010). The principles acknowledge diverse school environments that open access to opportunities to all in the society irrespective of differences – whether physical, emotional, biological, economical and otherwise. Globally, The UN has made influential declarations on inclusive education as it is supported by many international policy frameworks including Article 24 of the United Nations CRPD, EFA and currently, the SDG4. SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive quality education and encourages lifelong learning opportunities for all learners, thus maintaining education access and participation of all learners (UNESCO, 2015). Globally, inclusive education is regarded as the right of every child to be educated in a non-discriminatory and biased education system (Mpu & Adu, 2019). The world's conference on Education For All (EFA) commits that every person should benefit from educational opportunities that meet their basic learning needs (World Conference on Education For All, Thailand, 1990). In Lesotho, The Education Act 2010 seeks to provide education for all learners in accordance with section 28 of the Constitution (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010).

My exposition is that, through international and local legislative policies, the LIEP 2018's guiding principles have been derived from these frameworks, particularly the Lesotho Constitution which emphasises the rights of education for the citizens. More policy

frameworks supporting inclusion have been established to enable access of education for learners from all walks of life.

4.4.1.3 Goals

The policy aims to ensure that all LSEN participate in the Lesotho education system in order to work and live independently in the society, contributing to social and economic development. As such, the MOET will be restructured to create a conducive environment for implementing LIEP (MOET, 2018). The goal of LIEP 2018 is inclusivity in education. Section 28 of the Constitution of Lesotho declares that education is a human right and as preserved in the constitution, education will be made available to all and the government should adopt policies that support and secure it (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993). This is evident with the development of the LIEP 2018. Interestingly, LIEP 2018 also highlights changes concerning today's education, that is learning and teaching. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP 2009) also aims to address new educational issues that relate to new demands, practices and challenges of the world today (MOET, 2009). Thus, a complete change of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in schools is crucial.

4.4.1.4 Objectives

To address the existing gaps in the situational analysis, the objectives of the policy that appear in the policy document (MOET, 2018) are presented below:

- **Improving teaching and learning environment**

The LIEP requires schools to be conducive to teaching and learning to all learners and offer quality education; thus, the MOET plans to improve facilities of schools that already exist and construct guidelines for newly constructed schools to accommodate LSEN. Additionally, the ministry shall establish guidelines to ensure provision of reasonable accommodation to all learners and that they are protected against violence and other forms of abuse.

➤ **Strengthening capacity of education providers in supporting LSEN**

Successful implementation of LIEP could be by competent education teachers equipped with requisite skills and knowledge for effectively executing their mandate through facilitation of programme review at Institution of Higher Learning (IHL). The implementation should align with inclusive education principles at pre-service level and at TVET institution to integrate inclusive education. Furthermore, MOET will improve the existing TVET programmes and mobilise resources for providing inclusive education. Compulsory pre- and in-service training in inclusive education for teachers is also important.

➤ **Enhancing partnerships for implementation of the LIEP**

Involving relevant stakeholders with expertise and resources for efficient service provision such as screening and referrals is critical. Periodically co-ordinated joint reviews for policy implementation with stakeholders are also necessary. The MOET should establish inclusive education resource centres that are well-equipped and structured at regional levels with revision of inclusive education services periodically. To safeguard learners living with disability, there should be laws that protect them.

➤ **Adapting the national curriculum to conform with inclusive education principles**

Learners should have access to curricular content that is taught in suitable mode of instruction to cater for different educational needs of learners at all levels. Moreover, assessment will be modified according to each learners' needs. Learners who do not fully meet academic demands should be provided with skills-based education. For resource provision, appropriate instructional material and learning resources will be made available depending on individual needs for effective inclusion. Education should also promote active participation of learners in sports and recreational activities appropriate for individual disabilities.

➤ **Enhancing governance and management capacity**

To restructure the Special Education Unit (SEU) into Inclusive Education Department (IED), there is a need for rigorous research, monitoring and evaluation systems guiding LIEP implementation. There must be recommendations for quality assurance on inclusive education. The MOET will also collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure that LSEN enrol in schools with a multi-disciplinary team which will properly identify and assess LSEN for immediate intervention. Clear guidelines and transformation of special schools are important, with support services and appropriate resources for learners with profound disability.

➤ **Safeguarding implementation of inclusive education**

There must be laws and policies in place that support inclusive education in Lesotho. Legal officers in the MOET and education institution must be capacitated in order to advocate for inclusive laws and policies on inclusive education. It is also important to sensitize the members of the parliament about inclusive education.

The objectives of LIEP foreground the implementation process. Apparently, the success of LIEP depends largely on resource availability – both human and material. There is a need for well-resourced learning and teaching environments, skilled and competent teachers to carry out an implementation plan in their classroom settings. The policy also urges stakeholder collaboration for ownership, ensuring the success of the policy in achieving the goals. The Education sector plan acknowledges the rigid curricula for learners with special education needs. As such, curricula that are not aligned with inclusive education should be revised, especially in higher institutions (MOET, 2016). Similarly, the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment Policy provides principles and guidelines to reform the national curriculum and assessment tools to balance the two (MOET, 2009). Besides, the 2011 National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy advocates that the national curriculum be revised and reformed to include assessment and individual education programmes and integration of children with

disabilities into regular schools. This could include extending assessment time for persons with learning difficulties (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2011). The ministry aims to restructure the Special Education Unit (SEU) into Inclusive Education Department (IED). This would help to monitor the policy more effectively by ensuring that LSEN enrol in schools. Moreover, there are skilled and competent teachers who can properly identify and assess LSEN for proper intervention. It is also important to have the legislative frameworks that protects and supports inclusive education, both at the national and school levels.

4.5 Policy Context

Policy implementation also matters in terms of policy outcomes. The area of policy is consequential as a platform for policy implementation. Policy unfolds in different places and they shape the implementation outcomes through institutional patterns as well as current-day politics (Diem, 2012). Given the diverse tools used in addressing policies, modern-day policy designs are extremely complicated. Thus understanding policy implementation is important to the context within which it is implemented (Diem, 2012). Since a policy is a means for change, it requires engaging actively with a policy from its documentation to implementation. The policy context involves many stakeholders with different leaders at different stages of the policy process (Cardno, 2018). Apple (2019) explains that a policy is recontextualised at every level since it is received, reinterpreted and employed by local actors and communities. Furthermore, policies have to consider the socio-economic and geographic contexts because different actors involved in the policy process have different and conflicting interest which ultimately affect the choices and decisions made within the policy context. Thus it is important to pay attention to the role of policy context, the people concerned and their places because they contribute in the success of policy initiatives (Diem, 2012). Little (2008) adds that different actors have specific interests in policies and issue demands on allocation procedures, often coupled with conflicting demands. Rorrer and Skrla (2005) argue that since educational policies are ratified at the federal, state, and local levels,

they may be shaped and mediated positively or negatively in their implementation stage through complicated series of stages at the district, school, and classroom levels. Indeed, schools and district leaders influence the decisions on how these policies are translated on the ground. When actors are able to adapt policies to local context, this is the most valuable administrative skill, a necessary requisition for an integrated cohesive response to policy success (Rorrer & Skrla, 2005).

The success of LIEP depends on the roles of different actors, from the institutional level to school level. The implementation context considers the institutional roles and strategies of the actors involved (Mubarok, Zauhar & Suryadi, 2020). For LIEP 2018, there are a lot of factors determining the policy context. From the national level, to the district, to the school level, there are different people who are expected to interpret the policy intentions. As Alexander (2013) states, leadership takes different forms in education policy; from the policymakers at the federal and state level, school district, school board, the school's principal and teachers. They all require the skills that interpret and recognize the purpose and values that drive the policy, the critical elements of the policy, and competency in implementation, monitoring and evaluating the policy in practice (Cardno, 2018).

Context is significant for teachers to execute the mandate of the LIEP through teachers' inclusive practices. LIEP 2018 requires competent actors at different levels of the system. The different contexts should also be considered at the implementation stage as a one-size-fits-all approach cannot work. The implementers should consider the context of each school as an all embracing approach is multi-layered and challenging. Thus they should develop teaching strategies and design assessment methods that best suit the context of each school, the classroom as well as the learner.

4.6 Policy Implementation

The policy document acknowledges key factors to the effective and efficient implementation of LIEP as inclusive education financing model, ICT management and framework and monitoring and evaluation (MOET, 2018). These will help to ensure that all LSEN participate equitably in the school system. For Mubarok, Zauhar and Suryadi (2020), the policy implementation process must begin with the goals and objectives, activities that support implementation with enough allocation of funds to realise these goals and objectives in the implementation. The contents of the policy should consider the resources necessary for the achievement of policy goals. Mubarok, Zauhar and Suryadi (2020) view policy implementation as equally important towards achieving policy objectives. As such, policy implementation is concerned with putting policy goals into practice (Irerri et al., 2020). Even if a policy has been well arranged, its purpose would never be achieved if it is not implemented properly (Irerri et al., 2020).

Earlier scholars on policy implementation indicate that for policy to be implemented more effectively, those charged with the implementation should have good intentions, know what to do and be competent in carrying out the policy implementation (Edward, 1980; Grindle, 1980; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983). Edward (1980) emphasised that the success of policy implementation relies on factors such as proper communication channels, resources, trends and behavior of implementers and bureaucratic structures. Grindle (1980) further clarified that policy implementation success can be seen from how suitable the policy design and its implementation are and how the policy achieves its objectives and by analysing its effects on society. From the policy content and context, the policy can only be successfully implemented if the level of implementation is high.

Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) opine that policy implementation is influenced by three main factors; namely the problem, policy characteristics which refers to the structure of the

implementation process and environmental variables outside the policy which affect the implementation process. In addition, there is a triangle of policy analysis framework which highlights four major aspects; the policy content, context, process and actors. The context of policy focuses on characteristics of institution and regime, power issues, interests and strategy of actors involved, and compliance and responsiveness. The context of each school remains a priority to narrow the gap between the implementation and the policy objectives. Teachers should consider their unique classrooms in order to make teaching and learning inclusive through adapting the curriculum and tailoring it to the needs of the learners in those classrooms. For the successful LIEP 2018, a collaborative approach, monitoring and evaluation, with key departments strengthening the implementation process is crucial as discussed below:

4.6.1 Collaborative Approach

The success of inclusive education depends on the active participation of all stakeholders in identifying and overcoming any barriers to inclusion. As the LIEP (2018) states, learners should value their education and take responsibility for it. Most importantly, they should respect and support one another irrespective of their ability and disability. Parents should have positive attitudes towards inclusive education in their communities. This will ensure that all children with disability attend and complete school. Similarly, they must provide children with basic needs for survival and development, and protect them from unfavourable cultural practices which may negatively affect their welfare.

The community also plays an integral role in protecting the LSEN's rights, thus enhancing equal opportunities, and access to education facilities for learners. Added is an appropriate and equal care and support for LSEN. The mandate of IHL should design and execute pre- and in-service inclusive education programmes for teachers that ensure that learners receive skills that empower them to participate actively in economic development of Lesotho. All

programme activities should be inclusive and expand on units which offer support to LSEN. School proprietors should ensure inclusion of LSEN through deployment of qualified teachers in the school. They should rehabilitate the schools' infrastructure, develop and implement school-based policies that promote inclusive education. The success of inclusive education depends on the expertise and positive attitudes of teachers. Teachers should be empowered with requisite skills to eliminate any stereotypes on LSEN. Individual learner's needs should be assessed and identified for due intervention if necessary. Most importantly, they should design and offer the Individual Education Programme (IEP) to respond to different needs of all learners in an inclusive environments (MOET, 2018).

The LIEP 2018 alludes to collaborative approach. Inclusive education encourages a collaborative approach and this means all the stakeholders concerned; teachers, parents, the community and the relevant ministries should ensure the implementation of inclusive practices. Makoelle and Merwe (2020) believe that inclusive teaching involves the teaching communities to have deep understanding of the problem and develop effective strategies. For Budiarti and Sugito (2018), interaction of stakeholders in creating inclusive culture can engage all parties, forging partnerships between the schools, parents and community. However, the policy statement of 1989 and the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015 have overlooked the roles of psychologists and therapists in assessing learners with special education needs for proper placement and support. With such provision, teachers could work efficiently in education when they collaborate with other professionals.

4.6.2 Organisation role and Responsibilities

The policy document identifies key departments to strengthen the implementation of the LIEP. Departments such as the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) should offer technical support of curricular and instructional materials and ensure that they are accessible to LSEN. The Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL) should provide technical

support and inclusive accessible assessment packages while Special Education Unit (SEU) focuses on the provision of facilities for teaching and learning of LSEN in line with the implementation of inclusive education policy. Teaching Service Department (TSD) is responsible for hiring of teachers (MOET, 2018).

4.6.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy values a broad monitoring and evaluation procedures for successful implementation of LIEP. Stakeholders should provide shared sectoral reviews annually to trace progress at different levels of implementation. The data collection will come from relevant stakeholders in inclusive education; school boards, teachers, learners, parents and communities regularly, periodically and annually. This will assist the responsible team to account to concerned stakeholders. They must identify priority areas and gaps and come up with programmes for improvement on the policy. Additionally, they should help the MOET to work with current trends on inclusive education programmes across the world. The inspection should monitor the LIEP implementation through provision of information and regular reports. The policy reviews should be done in two ways; mid-term (two and half years) and end-of-term (five years). Monitoring and evaluation are important in the policy cycle to keep track of progress and identify any gaps and priority areas.

Different organisations within and outside the MOET have designated roles in attaining the policy goals, thus cohering with their mandate. Similarly, monitoring and evaluation are central to tracking the implementation on the LIEP 2018. According to Diem *at al.* (2014), the policy can actually accomplish its intended objective through monitoring and evaluation, despite any uncertainty arising from policy implementation (Walter, 2000). However, these factors can help to mitigate such uncertainties. The commitment to implementing the policy, coupled with the capacity of the implementers, the support of policy consumers, partners and other interest groups are crucial for the policy. As Ireri et al. (2020) noted, commitment

is a significant factor in achieving the policy objectives. Educational policy implementation literature offers that such factors interact to produce socioeconomic and racial diversity results that may work for or against the policy goals (Diem, 2012).

4.7 The Silences and Omissions

Silences and omissions are inevitable in a policy cycle. In this section, I explored both the silences and omissions of the policy as highlighted by CPA. Notable questions include who is not represented and why? Whose voices are included and not included? (Diem, Young & Sampson, 2019). Lavoie (2013) perceives silences in policy documents as that which is not being said or articulated. Similarly, Taylor *et al.* (1997) mention that although what is directly stated is crucial, it is also important to consider implications of the policy, that is inexplicit statements of the policy document. To this end, LIEP 2018 does not articulate clear comprehensive guidelines on the ways of achieving the stated objectives. Nor does it mention the timeframe for achieving such objectives. It only describes the conditions necessary for successful implementation. Also, there is no clear implementation plan for teachers' inclusive practices. Therefore, Rose (2003) warns that implementation depends not only on properly articulated frameworks, but also on the how which remains elusive most of the time.

As I was analysing the policy document in relation to the proposed research questions and through the use of Inclusive Pedagogy as the theoretical framework framing this study, to make teachers' practices inclusive, the policy reveals that curriculum should be modified to accommodate LSEN while assessment should move from examination-oriented standards. The policy overlooks an important facet in inclusive education, that is how teachers should teach inclusively in regular classrooms. It would thus be instructive for the policy to provide a clear trajectory on the influence of the context - whether rural or peri-urban context, on

teachers' practices. As such, teachers should have autonomy to enact their teaching based on the context and the learner at hand.

When a policy of this nature is made, there is a need for buy-in at grassroots level. Although consultation is acknowledged in the policy document, teachers and communities are not part of the technical group which developed the policy. While teachers form part of the people who are supposed to make the implementation successful, consultation with them is minimal. Inputs from all stakeholders are instrumental in informing the implementation. Schools are situated in the communities which the policy document mentions as part of stakeholders to identify and overcome barriers, though without indicating any consultation, hence questions such as; are communities well aware about the existence of the policy? Still, there is no mention of how communities were lobbied and sensitised to encourage ownership because when these learners leave schools, they return to their societies which should embrace inclusion. Thus, policy makers should evolve grassroots' participation to have all stakeholders well informed, thus enjoying the support of many teachers, parents, children, the community and other related stakeholders in education (Mosia, 2011). It is however surprising for learners, such an important group in education, to have been excluded from the development of the policy. Learners are the direct beneficiaries of policies; it is thus important to involve them in every stage of the policy development. Learners are central to the daily schooling experience thus their voices are important in informing policy processes (Leiding, 2014). When learners are consulted about their perspectives on their learning (Cook-Sather, 2014), learners would feel recognised. Since they have unique direct perceptions of school culture and climate, they can provide an alternative source of knowledge and expertise (Bland, 2011). To determine whether a policy or practice can be effective in practise, it is important to communicate with the learners who are affected directly (Keefe *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, they must be allowed to engage in conversations so that their voices are incorporated into the school's policies and practices (Cefai & Cooper,

2010). Interestingly, the policy does not acknowledge the contextual realities of schools such as socio-cultural contexts in which implementation is expected to take place. Issues such as poverty may affect the implementation negatively. Thus, the policy should have clearly indicated how the government would finance the education of LSEN to ensure that they have reasonable accommodation given the socio-economic status of these learners. The policy ignores social barriers that mitigate implementation factors for education.

The policy requires changes in practice so as to achieve the objectives, are those charged with implementation equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet these demands? Inclusive curriculum requires skilled trained teachers. The policy framework gives direction for teachers to make their classrooms inclusive through modification of curricula and use of differentiated teaching approaches that support learner-centred approach for diverse needs of learners in inclusive schools and provide instructional resources in accessible formats. The policy does not show how teachers should go about teaching inclusively which may result in teachers struggling with adapting the curriculum to make it inclusive. Teachers who are not equipped to execute diversified curriculum along with individualised assessment modes need intensive training on pedagogical skills, with a teacher training timeframe. A once-off training can never help teachers to fully become more inclusive as they need inclusive pedagogy for teaching different abilities. While the policy demands teacher education institutions to review and align their programmes with the policy, the question remains for those who are already in the system and were already deployed before implementation of the policy, they are going to be greatly challenged. Teachers need support to use more inclusive pedagogies and ensure that they are trained to identify LSEN, together with strategies to use in the classroom to reduce these difficulties (Mattingly, 2020).

The policy ensures that LSEN should be placed after they have been properly screened by professions. Although the policy does acknowledge collaboration with relevant stakeholders,

it is not specific to the ministries in government. The policy omits the roles of the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health in proper screening and intervention. The policy also overlooks who and how to identify LSEN. The MOET could be expected to liaise with the Ministry of Social Development and Health to identify and diagnose the severity of such learners. When teachers are tasked with such, LSEN will be misplaced with no support. A roadmap is not well established for identification and placement of LSEN and the support for such learners.

In Section 1.5 of the policy document, key critical factors for implementation are stipulated as they determine direction that could be taken to ensure equitable LSEN participation in the Lesotho school system. However, that is where it ends. The extent of the roles is not clearly articulated. In the midst of financial constraints and scarcity of resources, the policy overlooks how it will go about it. The capacity of SEU is questionable as it is understaffed since it has twelve officers to oversee activities pertaining to inclusion. Therefore, execution of the mandate would be hindered, resulting in poor implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the progress.

In other words, the policy is inclined towards learners living with disabilities. Special schools remain despite concerted efforts through legislation that LSEN should be included into mainstream schools. Otherwise the policy encourages their integration into regular schools to avoid any discrimination of leaving learners out of these schools. Referring to the current global trends, the ESP 2016-2026, the MOET through the SEU,

has recognised the need to shift from old pedagogies, for instance, the transition from integration to inclusion, mental retardation to intellectual disability, special education to inclusive education. The shift also includes catering for learners with diverse abilities, language, culture, gender, age, ethnicity and other forms of

human differences. In the process of shifting from special education to inclusive education, the MOET continues to maintain special education for severe and profound disabilities until the resources (for e.g. inclusive curriculum, qualified teachers, appropriate teaching and learning materials, national assessments) are available for inclusive education (MOET, 2016: 95).

4.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, LIEP 2018 could be effective for the government of Lesotho in addressing issues of exclusion in schools. Cohering with international standards in education, with the initiative, learners from all societies could access education regardless of their backgrounds, abilities or disabilities. However, for achieving the objectives of this policy, the MOET should train teachers and resource, monitor and evaluate schools properly. The findings from the policy document have foregrounded the expectations of what teachers' inclusive practices should look like in practice as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The study has explored how teachers' practices demonstrated their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school. In this chapter, I present objective three of the study which is to explore teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the *Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy* of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho. I report on the findings generated through collage portrait group discussions and focus group discussions from nine teachers, six females and three males, and a semi-structured interview with Special Education Manager. The respondents were purposively selected because they work in an inclusive school with learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. Therefore, they could be expected to be knowledgeable about what constitutes good inclusive practices and the policies governing their work. For the Special Education Manager, the study sought to find out the support that the MOET district office gives to teachers in the implementation of the LIEP 2018. In chapter 4, I analysed the LIEP using document analysis and CPA. The findings from the policy document set the expectations of what teachers' inclusive practices should look like as discussed in this chapter.

5.2 Conceptions of Inclusive School among Teachers in Selected School in Lesotho

Before presenting the main themes, this section provides the context of the school where the data was generated. Following the established rapport with the respondents, I was overwhelmed by their responses during the discussion which helped me to find rich data that formed the basis for the findings as presented below.

Falling within the church proprietorship, the school was established in 1979. Currently, the school has 386 learners with 108 living with hearing impairment and deafness. The school

has 29 teachers and 8 sign language interpreters. To understand the first arrival of learners living with hearing impairment and deafness in the school, Respondent I indicated that *the first learner arrived in the early 80s. The learner was just under the care of the church (through the nuns). They did not have anything to offer in terms of education but at the same time, they did not want to lose him. During the late 90s, the number of learners with hearing impairment and deafness increased. Around 2010, the principal at the time began to take a lot of them in and they were schooled. However, there were no Sign Language interpreters. When teachers went to their classes, they would say 'baea classeng ea bane basa utloing' (loosely translated as 'we are going to class of the deaf'). As the number increased, we soon asked the deaf learners from our primary school to come and interpret for our high school learners because they were placed in the classrooms with other learners without sign language interpreters. And later, there was arrival of Sign Language interpreters. At the moment, there are many deaf learners in the school. There are classes where there are deaf learners only.*

The school embraces inclusive education through its policies, mission statement and vision. Teachers become part of people who develop such policies so as to feel ownership. The LIEP 2018 policy, Section 4.5, states that educational initiatives should be endorsed and supported by school proprietors as main partners for ownership and successful implementation of LIEP. In this case, schools should develop and implement inclusive education school-based policies (MOET, 2018). For this particular school, teachers are knowledgeable about the mission statement. However, they all found the mission statement in the school, only one respondent was involved in developing it back then in the early 1980s. Thus the mission statement reads ***"Strength of the weak."*** There are no school policies that articulate inclusion.

Respondent A – *we found the mission here, we were not involved in developing it. But in line with what it implies, we help nurture the child physically, spiritually and mentally so it touches a bit on inclusive education although it was formulated before we got here.*

Almost all respondents – *we were all not involved because we were not all here when the mission statement was formulated.*

Asked about the things that the mission statement considered, Respondent G acknowledged to have been part of the people who developed the mission statement. She observed: *I was part of the people who were there when the mission was formulated and we considered many vulnerabilities that learners have from their different communities and families to become part of our community. Every child should have space in our education system. No matter the disability, background or any form of differences.*

Given the mission statement, Respondent C reported that the school admits all learners irrespective of their differences. *Even those who are pregnant are afforded space in our school. They come even during their last months of pregnancy, even after immediately giving birth. The principal who was in charge at that time took in every child, whenever she saw school age children loitering on the streets during school days and hours, she would take them regardless of whether they would have uniform, books or not. She is the one who initiated inclusiveness. That is why those who are rejected by other schools are admitted here, irrespective of the time of the year* (Respondent A).

In addition, the mission statement alludes to inclusion, though without any buy-in and ownership from the teachers as it has been developed many decades ago. Besides, there are no policies and vision to realise the mission statement for teachers' daily work. With the introduction of policies such EFA and Inclusive Education, it would be necessary to reformulate the mission statement and develop school policies relevant to the mission of the school. If available in an inclusive school, such policies could serve as a constant reminder for an affordable education to all through a conducive environment, teaching strategies and support. The findings contrast with the existing literature which alludes to the necessity of having inclusion policies at a school level. As Sharma, Armstrong, Merumeru, Simi and Yared (2018) posit, lack of inclusive education policy at a school level hinders inclusion in a

school environment. To make school environments responsive to inclusion, Ohba and Malenya (2020) advise that inclusive education expects schools and those providing education to change strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners. Inclusive education requires schools to make changes. Similarly, inclusive education requires redesigning school environments, activities and rules within those schools to cater for diverse needs of learners in their school communities (Gyamfi & Yeboah, 2022). As the literature in 2.2.3 indicates, for implementation, inclusive schools should adopt various strategies. These strategies encompass a clear inclusive vision and mission, school-based independent inclusive implementation plan and developing collective goals and team work (Ireru *et al.*, 2020). Also, school leadership and strong administrative support that promote a climate and supportive culture of inclusion are central to attaining effective inclusion (Loreman, 2014). Key to implementing inclusive education includes school reviews and plans, school and classroom implementation, teacher training and support, and supporting school leadership to develop an inclusive vision for the schools (Kumar, 2020). The ideas of inclusive education are also specified in Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which emphasizes the need to meet the educational needs of all children (UNESCO-UIS 2018b). In particular, Target 4.5 advocates for equal access in education for vulnerable groups, including learners living with disability (UNESCO-UIS 2018b). Target 4.A also stresses the need to develop and improve education infrastructure and facilities to address diverse needs (UNESCO-UIS 2018b). Thus, all governments and the international community have the responsibility to offer fair access to and quality education for learners living with disability (Ohba and Malenya, 2020) through school policies that embrace inclusivity. The truth is, inclusive schools require diverse approaches compared to traditional modes of education (Al-Shammari, Faulkner & Forlin, 2019). However, at some schools, leadership has accepted changes that emanate from new policies, where the school community members work together to make an inclusive school system (Engelbrecht and Muthukrishna, 2019). When inclusive education is developed from a rights-based philosophy, implementation requires modifications in the

ethos of school principals and teachers (Al-Shammari, Faulkner & Forlin, 2019). The LIEP 2018 should have school-based policies whose objective is to achieve inclusion. From the literature, these policies facilitate effective inclusion guided by strong leadership.

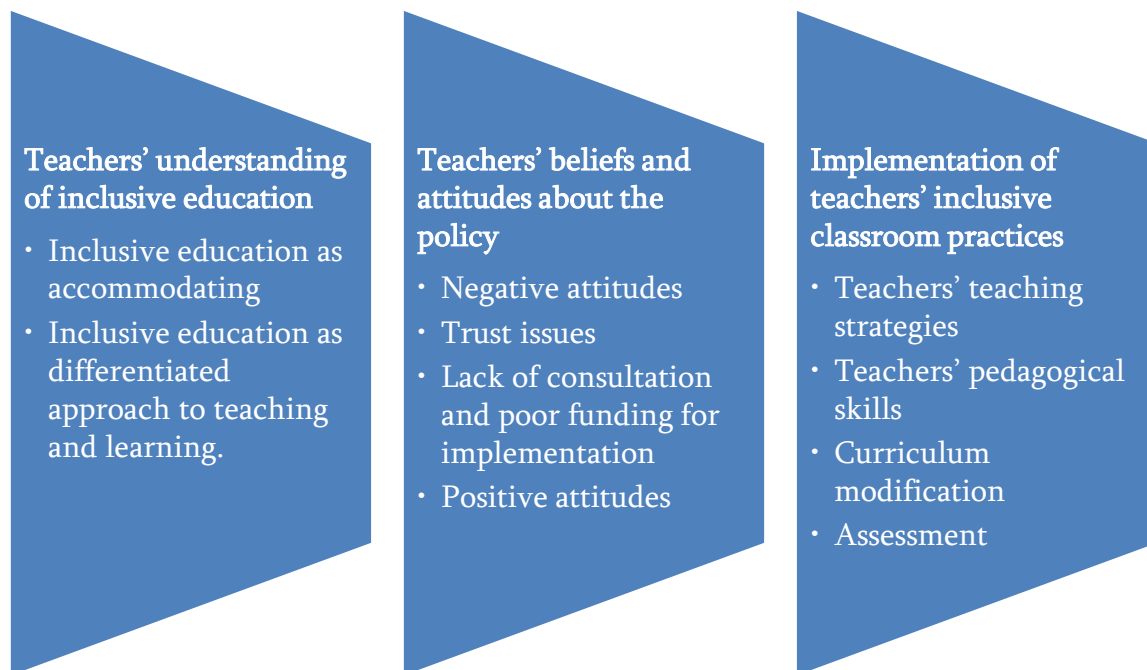
5.3 Presentation of Findings and Analysis

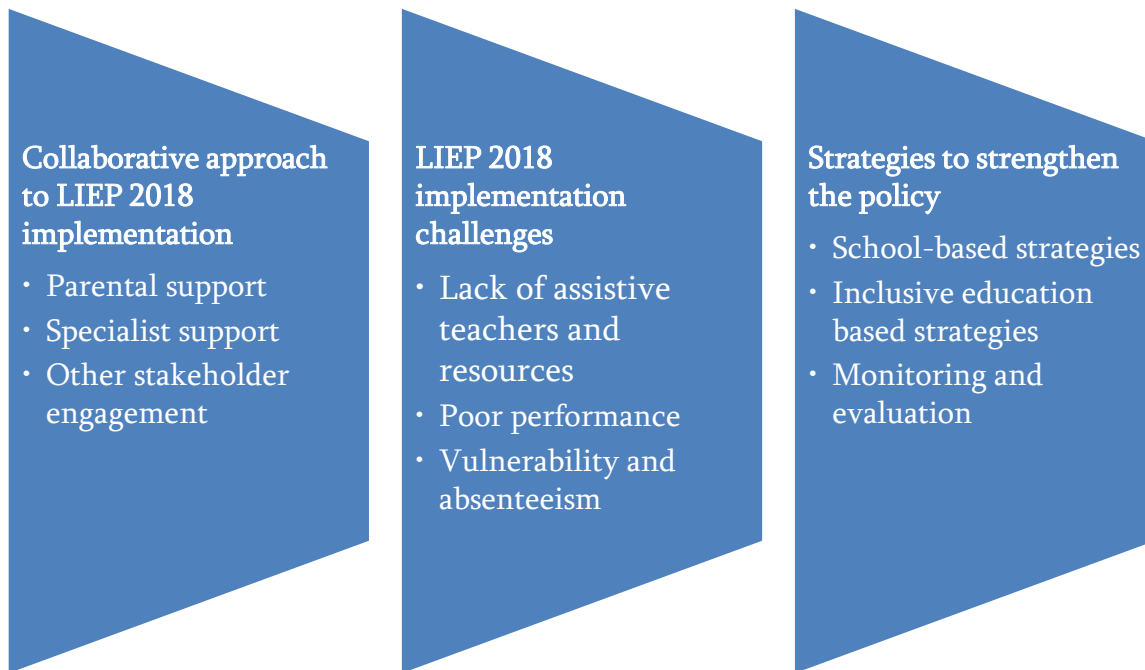
This section presents the themes that emerged from the data generated from one inclusive school in Lesotho. Data collection was done through the collage activity and the focus group discussion with teacher respondents, while semi-structured interview was conducted with the Special Education Manager. The collage activity was followed up by one hour and 30 minutes focus group discussion. The questions were categorised as such as teachers' views about inclusive education, their awareness of the existence of LIEP 2018 and their beliefs about the policy, the inclusion policies, mission statement and their involvement in developing them, the teaching approaches, curriculum and assessment methods and related challenges. The semi-structured interview with the Special Education Manager focused on the support by the district office to the school for proper implementation of the policy. The main question for the collage portrait group discussion was "create collages showing classroom practices that demonstrate your understanding of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018."

As such, six themes emerged: teachers' understanding of inclusive education with two sub-themes; inclusive education as accommodating and inclusive education as differentiated approach to teaching and learning. Theme two is teachers' beliefs and attitudes about the policy with four sub-themes; negative attitudes, trust issues, lack of consultation and poor funding for the implementation. The third theme relates to teachers' implementation of inclusive classroom practices; and in connection with this theme, four sub-themes came out. These include teachers' teaching strategies, teachers' pedagogical skills, curriculum modification and assessment. The last three themes address a collaborative approach with the following three sub-themes: parental support, specialist support and other stakeholders'

engagement, the challenges facing the school in implementing the policy effectively and with three sub-themes; lack of assistant teachers and resources, poor performance, vulnerability and absenteeism. The last theme involves strategies to strengthen the policy which gave birth to the following sub-themes: school-based strategies, inclusive education based strategies and monitoring and evaluation.

Figure 5. 1: Themes that emerged





5.3.1 Theme one: Teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education

In this section, I present teachers' responses that were generated from the focus group discussion and two sub-themes came out; inclusive education as accommodating and inclusive education as a differentiated approach to teaching and learning. As noted earlier, the LIEP 2018 policy document sees inclusive education as

a process of addressing and responding to diverse needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It aspires for the conducive environment that best corresponds to learners' requirements and preferences, thus maximising academic and social development. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of an appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (MOET, 2018: 1).

5.3.1.1 Inclusive Education as Accommodating

From the findings, teachers understand inclusive education as accommodating all learners irrespective of their backgrounds, language and disability. Respondent H says *inclusive education is good because it accommodates all learners irrespective of their strengths and weaknesses so that they learn alongside their peers. They should not be segregated. Again, within inclusive education, learners are given support that they need in order to reach their optimal to reach the core aspects of the curriculum.* Similarly, another respondent pointed to the fact that inclusivity in education goes beyond disability; other social factors must be considered. Yet the reality does not match the principles of inclusive education. *For me, when something is inclusive, we do not look at the disability point of view only, there are other learners who have other vulnerabilities. Among other things, my understanding is that, I have to be taught in my mother tongue so I could understand better yet the medium of instruction remains English. As Basotho, we come from the rural areas so when I am taught something foreign that I am not familiar with, I cannot even visualise it. I have to be taught in a language that is accommodative for me to be able to relate to what is being taught. We should not look at inclusivity from the disability perspective only, but also things like language which is a very big challenge for our learners* (Respondent A). With Respondent F, *the problem lies with us, we do not read. Even our administration is doing nothing, we preach inclusion but we do not adhere to its principles. Our country says it supports inclusion but practically it does not do. In the whole country, we have one community school for learners living with hearing impairment and deafness but no one cares about what is happening in this school; our practices, resources, support and so on.* The teachers' responses cohere with Jia, Tan and Santi's (2022) in that, for most teachers, inclusive education is a value that should be implemented in school. They speak about provision of education for everyone. In chapter two, the study by Yilmaz and Yeganeg (2021) in (2.2.3) explains that schools should consider learners who speak different languages, cultures, and learning backgrounds. Also, Koskei, Egesa and Changach (2020) in (2.2.3) state

that inclusive education should place children with physical disabilities, behavioural, academic difficulties or social concerns in one classroom. The teachers' responses and the literature indicate that inclusion means respect for every learner's diversity and acknowledges potential, accepts differences not as a limitation but as a facilitator for learning.

5.3.1.2 Inclusive Education as a Differentiated Approach to Teaching and learning

The Special Education Manager understands inclusive education *as an open process to fill the education inequalities that exist in education, it is a process to address the discrimination and stigma that exist in education and in order to address these gaps, we open opportunities for learners to access education. Inclusive education includes diversity, learning together under one roof and leaving no child behind. This means teachers should modify the curriculum content, strategies and approaches to education in order to create and open opportunities for all.* The Special Education Manager's responses echoes the same sentiment with the UK's stance on inclusion (2.2.3.1) in The Warnock Report 1978 which suggests that all children should learn under the same roof, where everyone has the opportunity to learn as best as possible (Norwich, 2017). Similarly, the findings corroborate Mbewe, Kamchedzera and Kunkwenzu (2021)'s views in chapter two (2.2.5) that inclusive education means altering the subject content, teaching structures and methods. Inclusive education is key to achieving EFA goals which were embraced in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. It considers that education is a human right and a basis for a just and equal society (Mbewe, Kamchedzera and Kunkwenzu, 2021). Since inclusive education embodies principles of humanity, it emphasises making welcoming communities and developing an inclusive society and doing away with discriminatory attitudes, (Ohba and Malenya, 2020). Hence, when teachers understand inclusion as a human right, they try by all means to include children with various disabilities in their classrooms and this requires national governments to provide educational opportunities that are accessible and adaptable for all learners (Mphwina, 2022).

The findings in the two sub-themes reveal interesting debates on inclusive education from the respondents' responses. Their responses indicate individual and collective understanding of inclusive education which is characterised by complex indivisible factors such as differentiated approach to teaching and learning, resources, learning environment and a paradigm shift to inclusion. They have different understanding of inclusive education which is critical in influencing the decision they make in their classrooms. Inclusive education is a complex phenomenon and there is no single definition to it but when people understand it, it influences their perceptions and attitudes. Teachers acknowledge the importance of mother tongue in order to accommodate these learners. Using their mother tongue in the curriculum delivery, teachers are being accommodative and understanding inclusive education as modifying teaching strategies and easily implement inclusive practices. The teachers and the Special Education Manager apparently understand inclusive education and its principles. Their responses further consider factors for implementing inclusive education. However, my exposition on their responses indicates quite a distinct understanding on the part of the Special Education Manager over and above teachers' responses as she emphasized the need to address the disparities that exist in education. I believe that teachers' responses show lack of training on teaching inclusively, thus demonstrating their limited understanding of inclusive education. Clearly there is misalignment in terms of training for teachers to understand inclusive education. Problems to inclusive education range from factors such as resources, language and lack of support to enable proper execution of inclusive education as indicated by the teachers. Inclusive education embodies diversity. Teachers consider inclusive education as a way to give all learners the same chance to education. In line with the Inclusive Pedagogy theory, teachers' concept of transformability is evident. Their responses support the principles of the Inclusive Pedagogy. Inclusive Pedagogy asserts that teachers should believe in the concept of transformability which assumes that learners' capacity to learn depends on the choices and decisions made by teachers in developing teaching and learning (Aoife, Fiona & Joe, 2019; Florian & Spratt, 2013). Teachers should create learning

opportunities for all learners. They must not provide differentiated work and strategies for those that they think experience problems in learning (Brennan & King, 2022).

5.3.2 Theme Two: Teachers' beliefs about and Attitudes towards the LIEP 2018 Policy

In this section, I present the findings on the beliefs that teachers and the Special Education Manager have about the LIEP 2018 and whether they think it works. There are four sub-themes that emerged: negative attitudes, issues of trust, lack of consultation and poor funding towards the implementation and positive attitudes. When teachers believe in the policy, it becomes easier for them to commit to making it a success. According to LIEP 2018 policy, teachers are responsible for educational initiatives in the school context, therefore, for IE to be successful, teachers' expertise and attitudes directly influence their efficiency (MOET, 2018). The findings indicate that all teachers are aware of the existence of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018. However, in their responses, they do not believe in it, thinking it cannot work given the poor capacity of the education system.

5.3.2.1 Negative Attitudes

Teachers have negative perceptions and attitudes towards the LIEP 2018. They point out the practicality of the policy as a challenge. Responded H indicated that *I do not believe in the policy because I know it is just theoretical, not practical. Yes, the contents of the policy are good for the perceived inclusive education but in practice, they are not going to be implemented. Indeed, the policy supports inclusive education that we know of, but I do not believe in it because it can never be implemented the way it is expected.* Responded C also agreed that she does not believe in the policy at all, *I also do not believe in the inclusive education policy. It is still written by the people who write inclusive education yet are incompetent in implementing it. Those responsible do not care whether in practice it happens, they do not follow up.* Indeed, all teachers agreed that it must have been like that. Donohue and Bornman (2014) also concur that any successful implementation of inclusive education anywhere in the world should consider educators' positive attitudes (2.2.5.3).

Angela, Chris, Kathy and Sofia (2019) argue that research has debated inclusion and pertinent attitudes among the education personnel. For Mavropoulou, Mann and Carrington (2021), processes can be legislated for, excluding beliefs and values. It is important to take note of the attitudes of teachers in the achievement of implementation goals. Positive attitudes have a direct influence on how teachers may work towards achieving the objectives, while negative attitudes can result in poor implementation of inclusive education (Okech, Yuwono & Abdu, 2021). Thus, when teachers are willing to educate learners living with disabilities, this leads to the successful inclusion of LSEN in the general education system (Gyamfi & Yeboah, 2022).

5.3.2.2 Lack of Consultation and Poor Funding Towards the Implementation

The respondents also point to lack of consultation and poor funding for the policy. The teachers' responses indicated their awareness of the existence of the policy, though they had not been consulted for developing the policy. There were no consultations; they were just as surprised as anyone when they saw their school's name on the policy document. The teachers who work in inclusive settings were not part of the development of the policy. Yes, it is true one of teachers in their school was mentioned in the policy document but they were not aware or heard anything like that. *We are surprised indeed that one of us was involved or represented us* (Respondent H). Respondent I concurred that *I believe that even though one of us appears in the policy document to have represented us or our school or inclusive schools, I suspect she was not even informed properly, she was only told to come for a workshop. Otherwise she would have said and gathered our views to inform the policy. I do not even think she has a say or what she said mattered. If she had any platform or say, she could have made consultation with us to present our views on what the contents of the policy should be.* For Respondent B, *I think they have it written but it is packed somewhere by the government and its officials, there will not be any follow up on whether the stated objectives are achieved.* Another response suggested that *maybe if we were included in the*

policy development, people who understand inclusion and are hands on in implementing it, then we could say it could work (Respondent C). Respondent B revealed that *we already know that government is doing nothing in terms of budgeting for this policy, maybe by hiring qualified teachers or even training teachers to fully understand the policy and how they should go about it in schools, we are on our own*. Since teachers play a front role in the implementation of inclusive education, it is important that their attitudes are positively influenced (Loreman, 2014). According to Loreman (2014), training programmes should be geared towards teachers' specific concerns and their teaching context. This will be helpful in encouraging changes in teachers' practices. For successful inclusion at the school level, there is a need for support from the teaching staff, as well as the other members of an organization.

5.3.2.3 Issues of Trust

Also evident from the respondents is trust between the teachers and the MOET. For other respondents, inclusive education is just a theory on paper, in reality, the implementation is very fragmented. According to Respondent F *inclusive education is just a theory our country is preaching because they do not support it. They encourage all learners to go to school regardless of their disability, but when the learners get to school, there are no resources, no assistant specialists, nothing. All the challenges we face are not attended to*. Respondent I declared, *what I see as inclusive education, I don't think it is good, I don't support it the way it is existing. But if I could find another side of inclusive education, maybe I could support it; if it happens exactly like what I have read and come to know. I wish special schools were still there from the foundation phase to secondary schools so that learners could have options if inclusive schools do not work for them. But now, we have only one thing which is inclusive education or schools. It is a burden to these kids who are already vulnerable. Like it or not, it does not work for them, they just stay there because they have no other option. In that regard, I do not support it*. Teachers are skeptical about the policy success, Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018) in chapter two (2.2.2.1) state that this could be a result of the gap

between policy agenda and practical realities in schools as well as ministries of education and government showing lack of political will. They ignore systemic conditions in the education system, schools and communities that work against inclusion. Similar findings in Nigeria report that, because of lack of political will, the education system has suffered greatly. There should be re-structuring and repositioning of the system backed by enough funding, qualified teachers and facilities (Suleiman & Isah Mfr, 2022). Mdikanal (2021) also concurs that inclusive education needs to be supported by institutions of civil society and the political will for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Indeed, there are inconsistencies and misalignment between inclusive policy agendas and their implementation practices across the globe (Mavropoulou, Mann & Carrington, 2021).

5.3.1.4 Positive Attitudes

Although teachers expressed negative attitudes towards the policy, the Special Education Manager holds different views from teachers. She says she truly believes in the policy because it safeguards the interests of learners living with disability and other social needs. She said, *Yes, I believe in the policy because it is a guiding tool, it is a commitment of the Ministry of Education and the government in general. As the ministry, we want to be committed to inclusive education through this legal framework. The Education for All (EFA) has limitation thus the inclusive education policy fills that gap. I believe so much in the policy because without it, anybody can say I will teach inclusively. So the policy becomes mandatory for the school, for teachers as well as every stakeholder. Really, without the policy, we can never have commitment. The policy commits us to doing our roles; the ministry, teachers, parents and learners to participate in education.* Regarding teachers' comments about being excluded in the policy development, the Special Education Manager disagreed with teachers that they were not consulted as follows: *the policy has been passed on and disseminated to all stakeholders. From the beginning, we invited all stakeholders, we worked together with higher institutions of learning such as Lesotho College of Education*

and others to ensure that all their education programs are inclusive, teachers and organization of the disabled, Lesotho National Federation of Organization of the Disabled (LNFOD) which ensures that learners living with disabilities receive their needs such as walking sticks and hearing aids. So it is a group work. We used international frameworks on inclusive education that no child should be left behind to back up our policy and to show that the world is moving towards inclusion, our country should also move along with the global village. Even within the Ministry of Education, we worked with all different departments such as Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC) and National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) because they are concerned with curriculum, the curriculum also has to change and be flexible enough to cater for all learners. The Ministry of Social Development, as a main stakeholder, was also represented since they have to give bursaries to pay for their tuition fee and other related school expenses. The Teaching Service Department was also involved as they are charged with the responsibility of hiring teachers, sign language interpreters and braille technicians in the schools. For parents, we expect them to release learners so that they attend school. It is only learners who were excluded, but their representation came through LNFOD.

The Special Education Manager further indicates that to address teachers' attitudes which may influence their work, they must be offered training. She says, *in our training, we also focus on teachers' attitudes because most of the time teachers tell us they were not trained on inclusive education so we should not expect them to do what they do not know. But once we train them, they see what is happening and become understanding; many factors are both positive and negative.* When teachers have positive attitudes, they become readily available to change and adapt their work to benefit learners of various learning needs (Mugambi, 2017) in (2.2.5.3). Angela, Chris, Kath and Sofia (2019) further emphasise documented links between teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and its successful implementation. Such attitudes are key to creating an inclusive environment (Losberg & Zwozdiak-Myers, 2021).

Nonetheless the collected data contradicts the concerns about attitudes of teachers for successful implementation of inclusive education in chapter Two (2.2.5.3) that teachers' attitudes and emotions regarding inclusive education are essential for successful implementation of the inclusive education. Positive attitudes are crucial for implementing this educational change (Mdikanal, 2021). The collected data show conflicting responses from the teachers and the Special Education Manager. From the teachers' responses, negative attitudes towards and beliefs about the success of the policy are important. There are a number of factors contributing to teachers' negative attitudes towards the LIEP policy. This range from lack of support by the Ministry of Education to schools, lack of political will by the government to fully fund policies of this nature and the fact that the MOET overlooks their inputs in developing the policy that is supposed to be implemented by them. Nonetheless, there is a glimpse of hope on the part of the MOET. The Special Education Manager thinks otherwise, she believes strongly in the policy and disputes that teachers were not consulted in the development of the policy. Teachers' denial that they were consulted in the policy development also raises interesting concerns about the operations of the MOET. Why would teachers vehemently deny to have been consulted when their school is even present in the policy document? Could it be the MOET just simply ticked the box of the procedures to be followed for policy development while in practice, it may not have happened? My contention is that, had teachers been engaged and informed about the workshop that their colleague attended, they could probably have shared with their representative their views and experiences in shaping the policy process. It should have never come out as a surprise for them. Consultations encourage meaningful ownership for the successful implementation. At the same time, it is interesting how teachers blame the MOET and the government for the fragmented implementation; thus, one may wonder why so much negativity around the policy – could it be a burden on them, issues of resources and or do they feel like sinking deeply into something they do not believe in? Nevertheless, in

many situations, educational reforms have failed because of not paying attention to present practices and the demands of teachers (Gyamfi & Yeboah, 2022).

Analysis of the teachers' responses from the focus group discussion demonstrates that teachers have negative attitudes towards implementing the LIEP 2018 policy which does not align with the second assumption of the Inclusive Pedagogy theory; teachers' belief in transformability, teachers believing that they are capable of teaching all learners (Brennan, King & Travers, 2021). Teachers' voices are very important in informing the policy. Any policy implementation should start with teachers' beliefs and attitudes, without which implementation becomes problematic. Similarly, where there is any mistrust between the MOET and the teachers, compliance becomes challenging.

5.3.3 Theme three: Teachers' Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practices

In this section, I present data from collage activity and focus group discussion about teachers' pedagogical practices. There are four sub-themes such as teaching strategies, teachers' pedagogical skills, adaptation of the curriculum and assessment. Objective four of LIEP 2018 (MOET, 2018) states that the LIEP 2018 aims to modify the national curriculum so that it matches the inclusive education principles. Inclusion can be achieved by having learners access curricula content conveyed appropriately. Considering that, the MoET shall in Section 3.4 (a) of the policy, proposes that the policy shall ensure changes and modification of the curriculum so that it caters for different educational needs of learners at all levels of the learning system, while Section 3.4 (b) aims to alter assessment standards so that they are representations of individual learners' needs. Section 3.4 (d) stipulates provision of relevant teaching methods, resources that cater for individual needs for effective inclusion (MOET, 2018). The Special Education Manager mentioned that *the policy has to a larger extent influenced teachers' practices especially in schools where we have trained them. They understand they have to change their teaching methodologies; a lot of schools are teaching inclusively, since inclusive practices are there. In some schools, they have gone as far as*

changing their environment by rehabilitating them through construction of ramps around the school to enable those with physical impairment to move around freely. It is quite encouraging. We encourage schools to practically live inclusion, they must not be told what to do but rather come up with strategies on how to make it possible.

5.3.3.1 Teachers' teaching Strategies

Given the nature of their classrooms, teachers demonstrated through the collage activity that they use both teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches in their respective classrooms. Some argue that they use group work where they expect learners to present their work and discuss. Others use role-plays for better understanding. In many instances, they rely on lecture method where the teacher teaches and gives notes to learners as demonstrated in Figure 5.2.

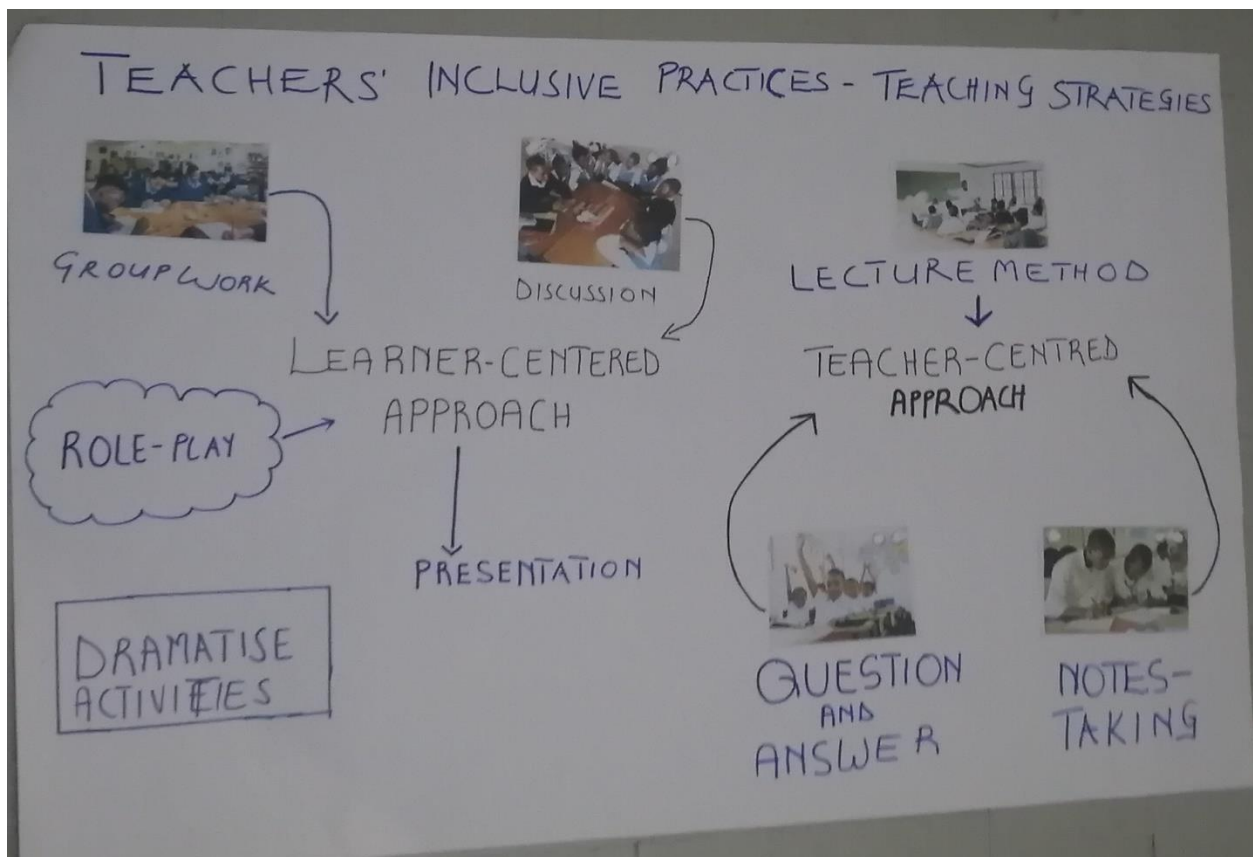


Figure 5. 2: Teaching strategies collage

Further noted is Respondent F's statement, *we still teach in a traditional manner, we teach, they write*. For Respondent H, *we use teacher-centred approaches and in a few instances, we use learner centred approaches. We teach them, ask them questions and the learners are expected to answer. Most of the time, it is teacher-centred than learner-centred in the class. The teachers speak more than the learners*. In the cases where they use learner-centred approaches, Respondent I said, *there are classes where they are mixed in one class. In other classes, deaf learners are on their own. In the mixed classes, we sometimes dramatize some activities to make our classrooms interesting*.

Also, we give some group work here and there to encourage engagement and discussion for all the learners in the class (Respondent E). Respondent H added to say, *yes, in some classes there are presentations where they research about a topic before it is discussed in the classroom*. However, Respondent I argued differently to say, *but discussion is rare. It is because teachers feel like they waste a lot of their time which they could use to cover the syllabus*. Respondent H had this to say, *it is lecturing, we lecture them because it is still surprising that we received an award for an inclusive school but we are not*. Respondent I concurred that *indeed the practices are still normal like in any other school. It is lecturing and teacher-centred*.

Teachers point out many challenges for their classrooms, thus hindering principles of inclusion. One respondent stated, *although the expected teacher learner ratio is 1:40 or 1:35, in our situation when we talk of deafness, one learner is equal to ten learners (1:10). There are many learners in each class. In a class of 23 deaf learners, the teacher-learner ratio is 1:23. There should also be distance that should be maintained between the learners and the interpreter which is 3 meters. That distance is not maintained. We have only one secondary school for deaf learners but we proclaim education for all. We are expecting the whole Lesotho, every learner to come in this school. This is why it is very difficult to maintain the teacher learner ratio. We remain with very big ratios in classes. Again, they are not supposed to be very far from their homes and communities. Besides, some of our colleagues are not*

knowledgeable about inclusive education, nor do they know how to handle diverse learners. They have not done inclusive education. For learners' support, they sometimes give them extra time when they give them work. They just think the presence of interpreters is enough, they can just simply teach like in a normal classroom or school (Respondent F).

To militate against this large teacher-learner ratio, Respondent G suggested that *for inclusion to be practical, at least in every district, there must be one primary and one high school for deaf learners in order to avoid this crowd we are talking about. By the look of things, we are expecting more learners. In two years to come, this school is going to turn completely into a deaf school. So their education is not going to be productive and effective because they are going to crowd in those classes without proper support and resources. We are going to fail dismally to maintain the distance.*

When asked about the kind of teaching aids they have in classrooms, the teachers responded as follows as in Figure 5.3:

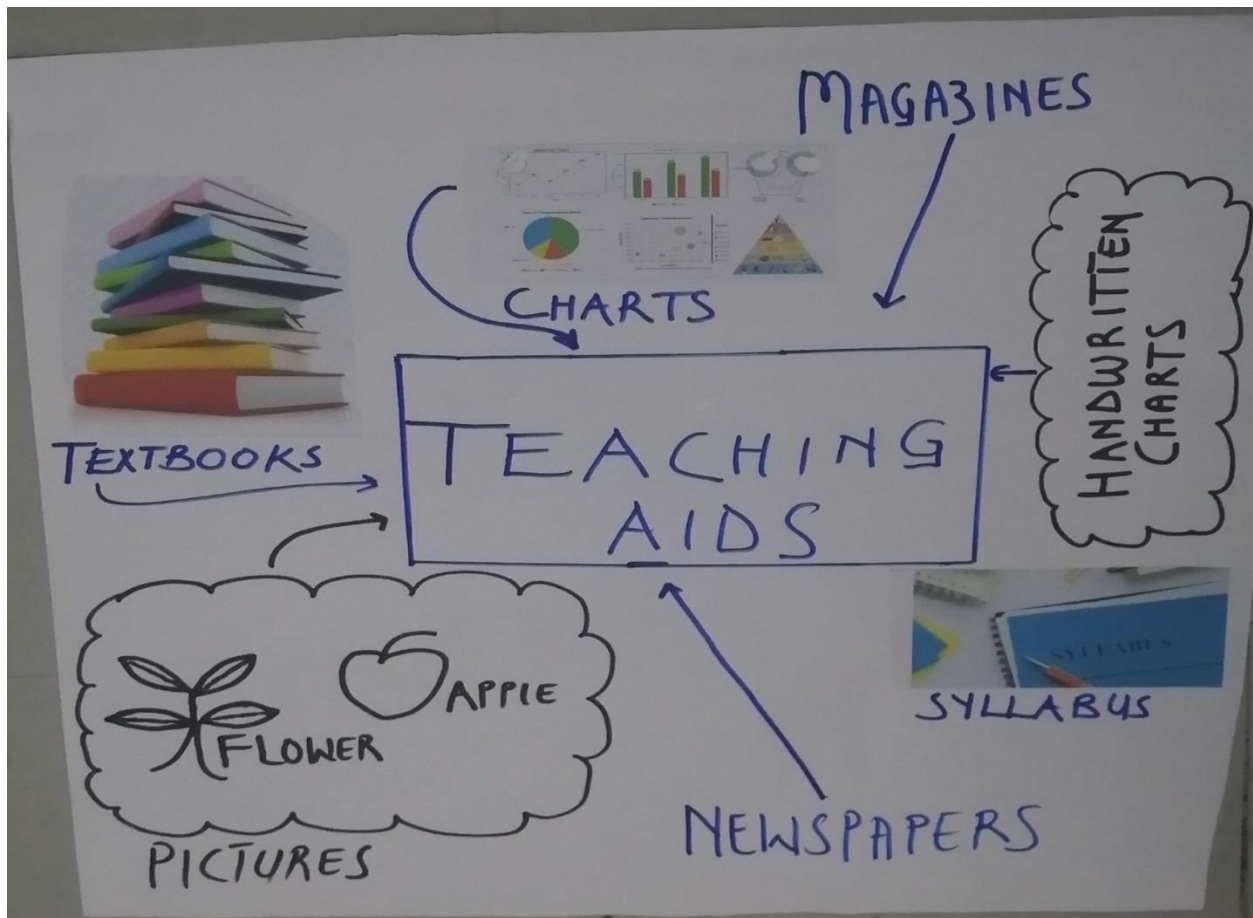


Figure 5.3: Teaching aids collage

Some classrooms have and they are few, some do not (respondent D). Respondent A indicated that, although they are there in some classes, they are not communicating because they are handwritten. One would expect that if they are meant for deaf learners, they must communicate in drawings and pictures. So most of them are written on a chart. They explain concepts in words rather than pictures. According to Respondent E, we rely more on the syllabus and textbooks for support material. Some try to bring in magazines and newspapers and write on the charts as teaching materials. Nevertheless, they do not communicate much to the learners as they are handwritten and are limited in number. Given the nature of the learners we have, one would expect a colourful classroom with pictures and words describing concepts for the deaf learners' better understanding. Asked if they have an individual

education programme, teachers demonstrated that, *we do not have them, we can never manage to do that because of time constraints and the pressure to complete the syllabus.*

From the above extracts, the teachers have been found to not fully adhere to the principles of inclusive education policy as stipulated by the policy. There are few instances where a learner-centred approach is used and learners are given platforms to construct knowledge for themselves. In some cases, they could diversify their teaching strategies to meet the needs of their learners in the classrooms by dramatising and role-playing some class activities, although rare. These are indeed positive strides that encouraged learners' participation. Further emerging is that, their classrooms are teacher-centred with learners as passive actors and receivers of information. Again, the school was awarded and recognised as an inclusive school while teachers claim not to deserve such an applause. Teachers could be seen as not appreciating their school's ability to accommodate learners living with disability, which is a step in the right direction. The Special Education Manager has emphasised inclusive education as a process, not an overnight thing. This recognition acknowledges their school for taking a step towards inclusion which many schools have not done. Teachers have also complained that they do not have teaching aids with pictures. One may wonder; who is responsible for providing the aids? The teachers or the MOET? My deduction on this matter is that, it is rather unsettling for teachers to expect everything from the MOET, standards have been set for them to follow, what they could do in this case is to improvise. This is quite surprising and inappropriate for learners living with hearing impairment as they learn better by seeing and forming pictures in their minds. All these make education inaccessible for these learners and remain segregated in the classrooms. The long term effects of these discriminatory practices are often high failure rates and ultimately, dropout. As stipulated in chapter two (2.2.5.3), when learners are segregated in the classroom, this automatically contributes to high repetition rates. This indicates a systematic exclusion of LSEN from the learning process (Mphwina, 2022). Brausteiner and Mariano – Lapidus (2014) concur that in South Africa, learners in the regular classrooms with special education needs continue to be

taught separately inside the classroom, thus being segregated within the walls of the inclusive classroom. Eriamiatoe (2013) supports this argument by pointing out that in Lesotho, the practices of inclusive education focused mainly on placement of learners in the mainstream classroom with no resources. This is an integrated system that requires LSEN to fit in an inclusive system.

My interpretation of their responses therefore lies on the fact that teachers do not believe in the LIEP policy, their attitudes play an integral role in making classrooms accommodative of all. It is true a lot of factors militate against proper teaching such as resources and lack of training in inclusive education which further leaves some learners living with disabilities excluded in education. Yet, international policies on education such as EFA and SGD 4 state that no child should be left behind when it comes to education. The LIEP 2018 has the mandate to making education accessible for all. Thus, there appears to be a gap between policy intentions and practices. Inclusive education serves as a means of education in which the learner is not schooled in a rigid environment and overcomes their challenges in learning and development (Joseph & Thomas, 2022).

The growing body of literature echoes the same sentiments that teaching learners living with learning disabilities using mainstream approaches segregates the learner in an inclusive class (Zwane & Malale, 2018). When teachers rely more on top-down approach in teaching and learning, their practices make classrooms to remain traditionally unresponsive to the modern day classrooms. Since inclusive classes incorporate learners with different educational needs, there is a need for different teaching practices within inclusive schooling (Paseka and Schwab, 2020). Mugambi (2017) in 2.2.5.2 of the literature review proposes a shift to student centered teaching which acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses of the learners, with a view to select different content and teaching strategies to respond to individual learning needs. This will also give learners the power to determine how they should learn. Where learners do not have a say in their learning and the teacher directs the teaching and learning

process, other learners could be excluded. Mokoetle (2012) in 2.2.5.2 emphasizes that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the process while learners discover the learning content and solve problems for themselves. In order to practise inclusivity in schools, as in (2.2.5.1), Werning and Arndt (2015) highlight good inclusive instructions in schools as dividing tasks into several steps, offering differentiated materials, giving feedback, providing learning styles, offering exercises and repetitive work, and giving additional exercises. Therefore, an extra time allowance is also extremely important to process information, and complete written work (Belayl and Yihun, 2020) as stated in 2.2.5.1. For Gyamfi and Yeboah (2022),

teachers should adapt instructional strategies by pre-teaching challenging terminology and concepts before the start of the lesson, task differentiation, frequent feedback to encourage slow learners to participate actively in lessons, encouraging peer teaching to ensure that no student is left behind in class activities. Encouraging co-operative learning among learners, ensure peer teaching, using various memorising techniques to aid slow learners in remembering knowledge, such as the use of mnemonics.

While teachers think that each learners' individual plan will probably waste their already limited time for teaching, what they do not realise is that, the plan is helpful in tracking each learner's work. It is essential to provide assessment and remedial work that speak to the learners' performance. I think teachers need to think deeply about what they really want for their learners. Teaching should not be so much about chasing the syllabus completion, but rather, what learners have learnt. Mariga, McConkey and Myezwa (2014) and Mpu and Adu (2021) in the literature review (2.2.2.5.2) state that learners with SEN can also be supported by teachers through identification of the challenges that the child faces in learning and then draw up an Individual Education Plan (IEP) on how to address such challenges. The LIEP 2018 document also emphasises that for teachers to effectively execute their mandate, they should develop and use the IEP (MOET, 2018). In a classroom with learners living with

hearing impairment and deafness, to make classroom more welcoming and responsive to inclusion, Fuente (2021) reveals that learners living with deafness should be allowed to take the front rows since some could lip-read what teachers are saying in class discussions.

In line with the Inclusive Pedagogy theory, teachers should employ teaching methodologies that help to stimulate participation of all children, as well as those who have special educational needs and might require additional support to maximize learning outcomes (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Florian and Spratt (2013) advise that inclusive classroom practices should reflect strategies that focus more on how to include LSEN, and exclude learners who experience difficulties in learning. This will definitely engage learners in the teaching and learning process so that they feel valued and regarded as partners in the whole process. Classrooms should be organised in ways that offer learners choices without relying solely on ability grouping. Using inclusive pedagogy (IP) to analyse the situation, a synopsis of the literature on IP indicates that IP encompass teaching methods and principles that work on learners' participation. Thus central to this approach is to teach inclusively. Furthermore, IP also assumes conceptions and beliefs of teachers regarding what constitutes inclusive teaching and learning (Makoelle, 2014). Thus, teachers understand that inclusive practices recognise learners' individual differences and acknowledges the complex challenges of everyday classroom experiences (Black-Hawkins, Maguire & Kershner, 2020).

5.3.3.2 Teachers' pedagogical Skills

According to the LIEP policy document, Section 3.2 (MOET, 2018), implementation of LIEP requires skilled and competent education providers equipped with required skills and knowledge to properly implement their mandate. As Section 3.2 (f) of the LIEP document indicates, co-ordination of provision of compulsory pre- and in-service inclusive education training for teachers is necessary. The teachers reported to have no training on teaching learners living with hearing impairment and deafness and also those from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Respondent D pointed out that *we have never been trained on how*

to teach deaf learners, when we come in this school, we just join those who are already there and teach, no training whatsoever. Respondent F said, most of us are fresh from universities or colleges, when we get here, we go straight to class, nobody prepares us for the challenges that we meet in the classrooms. While for Sign Language interpreters, they are not knowledgeable about subjects content material; they lack the jargon of other subjects for translation. To clarify this, the Special Education Manager observed, teachers were trained after the development of the policy. We made the implementation plan and trained all Heads of Programmes and District Education Managers in all the districts of Lesotho. After that, we trained teachers in terms of their roles in schools. Our focus was based more on how teachers should develop positive mentality; that now we use a social model, not a medical model. Our training is based more on changing perspectives so that they review their teaching methodologies. It is true teachers have to be trained on pre-service, but we offer in-service when they are already at work, we are saying to teachers, be aware that now that the policy says learners with disabilities should come to schools and study along with their peers, you need to accept them, look into your methods of teaching, teach inclusively. We train them on multiple intelligences so that they become aware that kids are different according to their special needs. The Special Education Manager further explained that they also equip teachers with skills on identifying such learners. She said teachers know that when we train them, we also train them on how to identify the learners and to assess them in order to properly place them. Placement could take different forms; it could be in a class where there is a learner with physical disability who is supposed to be in a classroom in the second floor thus they cannot access the classroom. Our training encourages teachers on how best they can accommodate these learners by changing classrooms with a teacher who does not have the same case in their classrooms. If they are aware, they do not need to call the ministry for such an arrangement that best suits the learner.

The findings concurs with the literature in 2.2.2.5.3 that teachers require professional knowledge and skills of assessment, instructional methodologies and managing behaviour of

children including those with disabilities in regular classrooms (Majoko, 2016). The government needs to invest more on continuous in-service training for these teachers to be able to practically change their teaching strategies. There are contradictions on the participants' responses which suggest that the training could have been once-off in the initial stages of the policy implementation. Now there are concerns about new teachers coming from schools, fresh from institutions of teacher education training, without training on teaching these learners. Having teacher-centred strategies, they still teach traditionally despite the presence of the LIEP policy guidelines.

Adopting inclusive education policy has necessitated the need to restructure teacher education programmes to equip teachers for inclusive classrooms. The LIEP 2018 in section 3.2 (a) raises similar concerns that the LIEP document aims to review teacher education programmes at IHL so that it is consistent with IE principles at a pre-service level (MOET, 2018). While Lesotho has developed and endorsed the inclusive education policy, the reality is somewhat different. Teachers still teach traditionally without considering the diversity of their classrooms. In contrast with teachers' views about inclusive education, the implementation is fragmented as it looks from the practices of the teachers and this leads to practice gap (Brennan & King, 2022). Makoelle (2020) advises that for inclusive education policy to succeed, the right mix of political and policy context is very important for implementation. The political will and judicious policy formulation are important for proper implementation. In particular, inclusion is reflected in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) and the Education 2030 Framework for Action which speak about inclusion and equity for quality education for all under SDG 4 (UNESCO, 2016; Brennan & King, 2022).

According to Mokoelle (2020), the extensive literature on inclusive education indicates that teachers are often challenged on how to teach and facilitate learning in inclusive classrooms. This inadequate preparedness of teachers and effective tools and support have also been

noted as some of the contributory factors failing inclusion of LSEN in regular schools (Bibigul, Alpysbayeva & Nietbaeva, 2022) in 2.2.5.1. Similar to the study which aimed to find the insights of teachers regarding inclusion in Zimbabwe, teachers reportedly lacked skills in handling learners with disabilities (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021). As discussed in chapter two, 2.2.5.1, this incompetency comes as a result of poor teacher preparation programmes that do not adequately prepare teachers for inclusive education settings (Duncan, Punch & Croce, 2021).

In schools where there are learners living with hearing impairment and deafness, as stipulated in the literature review in 2.2.5.1, many teachers are not exposed to continuous in-service training and professional development programmes suitable for teaching deaf learners (Darwisha, Harubn & Darmi, 2022: 162). As thus, this study makes a proposition that teachers should be skilled in Sign Language for provision of proper learning experiences to deaf learners in an inclusive classrooms (Ainscow, 2016). Fuente (2021) and Mdikanal (2021) in 2.2.5.1 advise that teachers who have not specialised in special education should go through Sign Language training to learn the basics of the language because it is essential for communication with deaf students, and changing teaching methods so that they cater for their learning needs. From the findings, in line with IP's third assumption on teachers' professional knowledge and development, the study raises questions about the knowledge and skills possessed by teachers to teach inclusively and teacher preparedness for inclusive education. With teachers lacking training on teaching inclusive classrooms, teacher education and professional continuous development could be at stake. It is true legislations and policies are important in the promotion of inclusive education, however, policy agendas should be supported by competent teachers (Asamoah, Ofori-Dua, Cudjoe, Abdullah & Nyarko, 2018). The success of inclusive education depends on adequate knowledge and skills of teachers.

5.3.3.3 Adaptation of the Curriculum

The LIEP 2018 policy document 2.4.3 clearly stipulates that LSEN face many challenges because the curriculum is traditional, rigid and fails to cater for individual educational needs in terms of pedagogy, instructional materials and assessment strategies (MOET). Thus, one of the objectives of the policy is to reform the national curriculum so that it aligns with inclusive education principles for diverse educational needs of learners at all levels of learning system. In this way, inclusion in education is only attainable when curricula content is taught in suitable styles of instruction (MOET, 2018). In their responses, teachers revealed that they do not in any way tailor the curriculum to learners' needs. Respondent I said, *the curriculum is the same, the adaptation is only the pace in which they teach*. Arguably, Respondent A also agreed that *just like other teachers say, the curriculum does not accommodate them as well as the resources. At foundation phase, the children are taught with their mother tongue or first language which is Sesotho then the second language is English which becomes prominent at intermediate phase. So for the deaf learner, their mother tongue is Sign Language. When they get to school, they are taught Sesotho which is not their first language. That means we no longer follow the prescription of the curriculum that they should be taught with their mother tongue* (Respondent I). As with other teachers, Respondent H added saying *that means they are taught in a second language which they are not perfect in. Already they are not perfect in the first language because even at home, parents fail to communicate with them using Sign Language. In that case, we ignore their mother tongue or first language, and teach them Sesotho which is their second language yet they do not have base of their first language. We must bear in mind that second language should rely on their first language. They are taught Sesotho yet there is no foundation of Sign Language. They are also introduced to third language which is English*. Respondent E explained that *because the curriculum recognises two official languages which are Sesotho and English, the expectation is that, I sign the exact English but sometimes we code switch when we pick from their facial expressions that they are lost*. As a result of not

accommodating Sign Language, Respondent I concluded that *these kids go through the foundation phase and intermediate and when they get to high school, there is reflection that there is no base for Sign Language. We try to sign the exact English because it was developed over poor foundation.* Respondent A suggested that *they must be assessed orally using Sign Language because it is signed not written. Curriculum does not accommodate them. At least if they struggle in these other languages, Sign Language will compliment them.*

The above data indicate that when the curriculum remains traditional in an inclusive classroom, problems arise in the implementation of the policy. As it is, the curriculum fails to cater for each learner's educational needs in terms of teaching approaches, instructional materials and assessment methods. Monteiro and Forlin (2021) advise that one of the important resources for inclusive education is a flexible curriculum that prepares teachers for proper teaching. The collected data echo the literature in that, a curriculum that fails to reflect a diverse and multi-cultural society contradicts and compromises the principles of inclusive education (Arday, Belluigi & Thomas, 2020). Hence curriculum should facilitate implementing ideas of inclusive education (Makoelle, 2020). Teachers should understand the context in which they teach and contextualise the curriculum to respond to the different learners in the classrooms. An easily adaptable curriculum with different options offers teachers an opportunity to address differences in each classroom. The classroom and the teaching should be arranged in such a way that permit mixed-ability teaching with different options and many opportunities for success (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2016). All learners should benefit from a differentiated curriculum and learner-centred learning (Ullah, Rana & Habib, 2022). The data confirm the literature in that, Mugambi (2017) point out that many challenges face the implementation where many curricula serve 'traditional' students, posing challenges for different learners in learning institutions. Many challenges are a result of rigid curriculum, inappropriate teaching approaches to assessment and examination, poorly prepared teachers and inadequate teacher support (2.2.2.3). Similar to Lesotho, South Africa experiences a stringent curriculum in chapter two (2.2.5.2), Engelbrecht *et al.* (2015)

highlighted that curriculum is restricted by imposed standards to complete the curriculum and inflexibility which add more on the challenges in addressing learners' needs, causing implementation problems for inclusive education (Makoelle, 2020). More so, Education White Paper 6 lacks specific clear details as it focuses more on the broad strategies and fails to offer guidance on how to effectively implement the policy in schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014) in 2.2.2.6.

The transformation of education and new curriculum changes emphasise renewed teaching and learning practices (Makoelle & Burmistrova, 2021). Therefore, the adoption of inclusive education in Lesotho demands that IHL train and produce teachers who can develop an inclusive curriculum and teach inclusive classrooms (Makoelle & Burmistrova, 2021). A clearly defined inclusive education curriculum means that inclusive education remains rhetorical. This places challenges in attaining the objectives that have been outlined in the policy document. Indeed, educational policies need to also focus more towards improving quality. When quality improvement is ignored, this will result in low school enrolment which will become a burden to the central and state governments (Kumar & Varghese, 2022).

Teachers highlighted that learners living with hearing impairment and deafness should be taught in their mother tongue – Sign Language – in order to accommodate them. In education, language is important for imparting knowledge (Stemela-Zali, Kathard, & Sefotho, 2022: 2). “Spoken languages are linear; sign languages are visual and explore spatial dimensions. A deaf student who used to communicate in sign language, cannot read a spoken language fluently, as much as people who are used to communicating in a spoken language cannot understand its sign counterpart” (Escudeiro *et al.*, 2022: 1286). This is because Sign Language has its own grammar that is different from the spoken language (Jamaluddin, Saidin, Broome & Jamaluddin, 2022). In Zimbabwe, scholars like Musengi (2019) argue that if deaf people use Sign Language for communication, therefore it is only fair that they are

allowed to receive education in Sign Language. When they are not afforded that chance, they are discriminated against through 'audism', and this affects their educational paths and career opportunities (Stemela-Zali, Kathard, & Sefotho, 2022).

In 2.2.5.2 of the literature review, many studies on deaf education note that the general curriculum content does not match the specific language learning needs of deaf learners (Darwisha, Harubn and Darmi, 2022). This is because the aims and objectives of the curriculum speak against the linguistic development of deaf children (Mdikanal, 2021). Deaf learners can fully access education when they are offered a chance to use their first language, Sign Language, in all subjects. In this way, their educational needs can be effectively and equitably met (Stemela-Zali, Kathard, & Sefotho, 2022) in 2.2.5.2. As shown in the literature (2.2.5.2), South Africa has made an effort to accommodate learners living with hearing impairment and deafness by approving the South African Sign Language as the 12th official language (Maqhina 2021). Anne (2022) mentions that in 2.2.5.2, countries such as; Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe, recognise Sign Language as an official language. Lesotho is still way behind its counterparts. Thus, deaf learners are socially excluded through language and face challenges in their education (Jokinen, 2018). The school for learners living with hearing impairment has already been there for more than a decade now, making learners learn in a language unfamiliar to them is posing challenges. The government of Lesotho should consider Sign language as one of the official languages. Many children who are totally deaf in poor settings begin their primary schools with no proper foundation of Sign Language, this affects their provision of education. This is because Sign Language as a mother tongue plays an essential role as it introduces them to basic expression and communication skills and opens paths for progress in formal education (Anne, 2022) in 2.2.5.2.

5.3.3.4 Assessment

Objective four of the LIEP 2018 (MOET, 2018) state the LIEP 2018 in Section 3.4 (b) aims to change assessment standards by suitable representations to meet individual learners' needs. Section 3.4 (d) stipulates that there must be provision of relevant instructional methods, material and learning resources in suitable sizes in line with individual needs for effective inclusion (MOET, 2018). From the findings in Figure 5.4, teachers align their assessment methods with the standard pen and paper examination. Assessment is still done through home works, individual class work, group work, quarterly tests and final national examinations that are under the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL).

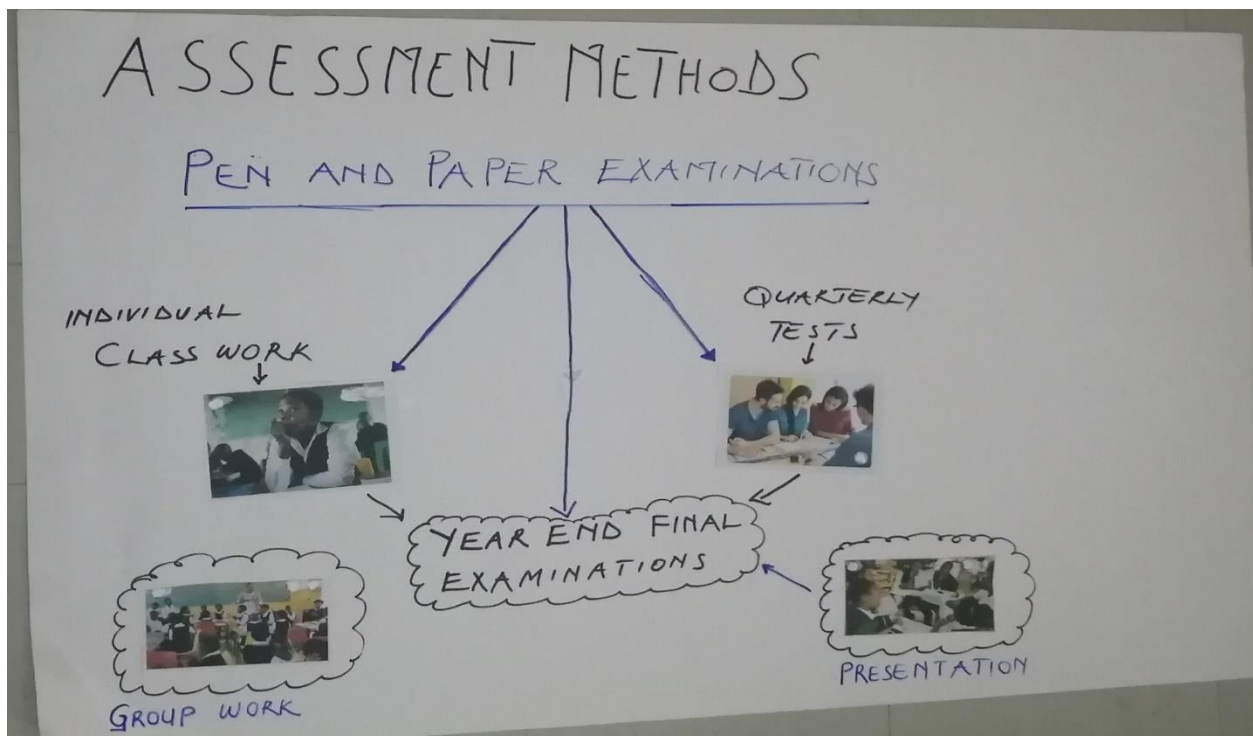


Figure 5. 4: Assessment methods collage

Respondent I highlighted that *assessment is still pen and paper examination like the Exams Council (ECOL). Just like in a normal school.* Similarly, all respondents indicated that *assessment is pen and paper and it is still quarterly like in other schools. It is continuous. One*

would expect that they have oral examination where they use Sign Language. Respondent F complained that *the learners fail not because they do not know. If for example, you ask them what religion is, they can be able to tell or respond by signing. The problem comes when you ask or instruct them to write that down. They know but the problem comes with writing that down.* On the same note, Respondent B said *what is right to do is to mark them on what they say. We teach them using English as a medium of instruction, a verbal language, we speak. In fact, we teach them with a signed language which is visual but we expect that they are assessed in a written language. That is contradiction. Therefore assessment is not inclusive at all.*

What is even shocking according Respondent I, *medium of instruction is Sign Language, it is signed but assessment is expecting them to write. They acquire the information by signing but they are expected to respond by writing which is different from what they received. The subject teacher is delivering in English but an interpreter uses Sign Language for them. English and Sign Language are two different languages with different grammatical features. But when they are assessed, they are assessed in English. We are expecting them to write the exact English, yet they received information through Sign Language. Their assessment is normal as if it is a normal classroom.*

To address these problems of assessment, respondents mentioned that they have advised on many occasions to those concerned to have these learners assessed orally but those in authority have not heed their call. *We have suggested on several occasions to MOET (Special Education district office) to have these learners have oral assessment. The MOET feels that we would make them feel segregated. They want them to be inclusive/included. We feel those tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that inclusive education happens, are also not well versed with it* (Respondent H). Similarly, both Respondents A and G agreed that *it is important that Sign Language is recognized by our curriculum developers. It should be the third official. When their language is there and they fail to be competent in these other two*

languages, they get to be taught and assessed using their own language because it is signed not written. The Special Education Manager clarified that as the Ministry, we have advocated for learners with disability to have their own markers at the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL), people who are competent in Sign Language grammar, and mostly, these are special education teachers. That is how ECOL has accommodated them because of us. The school reports and submits names of learners living with hearing impairment and deafness who are to sit for the national examinations to Special Education Unit which then submit their names to the ECOL. For those living with visual impairment, we have bought the talking calculators. For those with low vision, we request the ECOL to print question papers with a certain font size. We cannot have these learners do oral examinations. Just because they speak a different language from the hearing world, they must not write; the world expects them to write; nor can we exempt them as teachers may suggest. Remember Sign Language interpreters do not sign each and every word, they sign only what they can visualise, things that they can have a mental image of, they interpret only the key words. When they write, you will realise they only have the subject and the object but do not have words like articles 'a' 'an' 'the' or helping verbs 'is' 'are' because you cannot visualize them. Their language is based on visualizing and imagining, they only know words they can make a picture of or as a teacher, you can show them or finger spell. There should be a connection of the image and the word. That is why they do not like Sesotho; it is full of tiny words they cannot visualise. Sesotho is a third language to them, they understand English better.

In 2.2.5.1, teachers should create welcoming teaching environment to all learners through variation of assessment methods without marginalising any learner (Ayaya, Makoelle & Merwe, 2020). This is because inclusive differentiated assessments provide for equal opportunities for every learner, (Awang-Haship, Kaur & Valdez, 2019). While Morris, Milton & Goldstone (2019) assert that when a wide range of methods of assessment are made available, learners feel positively supported during teaching and learning. These methods of assessment could include; oral examination, presentation, or written examinations. Other

assessment methods in inclusive settings could be peer and self-assessment strategies rather than grades systems. Similarly, other assessment characteristics could be additional time, and using support materials (Lindner & Schwab, 2020).

Additionally, Mugambi (2017) suggests that subject-based academic performance should not be used as an indicator for learning outcomes, learning achievements should focus on learners to acquire values, attitudes, as well as knowledge and skills for the modern day societies (2.2.5.3). In 2.2.5.3, the Unicef (2017) suggests that learners should be assessed on the progress they have made for themselves, not on the basis of a standard set of examinations or tests. Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework (2009) asserts that although there have been curriculum and assessment changes, examinations still influence the curriculum and to a bigger extend, assessment is still mainly on selection and certification. This absolute reliance on examinations puts pressurize on the learners, thus fails to assess the effective domain and the practical application of skills. The framework advocates for inclusive methods that measure competencies and practical skills of learners. It motivates that assessment should be aligned with what is taught, learned and assessed to avoid the necessary paper-pencil nature of examinations. Therefore, the curriculum should draw heavily on learners' engagement and interaction with the world they live in (MOET, 2009). A summative approach to assessment does not capture learners' progress; instead, it facilitates a sorting process with a purpose to tank learners for grading (Jarvis, Pill & Noble, 2017).

Shown in the responses above, assessment modes remain standardised and generally administered traditionally, using pen and paper, which restricts the participation of some LSEN. The suggestion by teachers to have oral examination could also be helpful. Learners still go through the pen and paper examinations which grade and label learners in different categories that undermine what inclusive education stands for. However, as the Special Education Manager highlights, there are some positive strides in making education accessible

for these learners. The arrangement made by the Special Education Unit with the ECOL is quite commendable to ensure that they obtain fair reasonable treatment. A study by Mphwina (2022) shows that inclusive education is obstructed by unfavourable school practices. Because many schools are exam and result oriented, this leaves inequalities unaddressed.

Proponents of inclusive education theory highlight a fundamental premise of the inclusive pedagogy as rejecting ability labelling, because of its deterministic overtones, that is having fixed abilities that have traditionally promoted the composition of education (Florian & Spratt, 2013). For Florian and Spratt (2013), teaching should not categorise learners as different types of learners, thus the inclusive pedagogy approach challenges some traditional notions of professional knowledge and responsibility, especially where learning support and specialised provision is concerned. Inclusive education becomes ambiguous when learners are exposed to assessment methods which require sorting, categorisation and labelling in their education (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018). Internationally, many education systems offer standardised assessments through national examinations and tests at educational levels (Gyamfi & Yeboah, 2022). As Adzanku, Attia & Agbetorwoka (2021: 2) say,

realistic inclusion requires novelty in assessment practices to foster the participation of learners and regular class teachers' assessment practices that alienate learners with special educational needs. As a result of these educational practices, learners with special educational needs feel uncomfortable, and turn to be truant and finally drop out of school.

In this way, teachers should deviate from the performance-oriented perception of assessment when they work with learners who have learning difficulties. When curriculum is not inclusive, teachers use assessment methods that fail to pay attention to the needs of LSEN in their classrooms (Adzanku, Attia & Agbetorwoka, 2021). As a result, states and educators are

encouraged to adopt flexible assessment options for LSEN through modification and alternative assessment strategies such as performance-based and portfolio assessments (Adzanku, Attia & Agbetorwoka, 2021).

5.3.4 Theme four: Collaborative Approach to LIEP 2018 Implementation

In this section, I present the findings which were generated from the focus group discussion with teachers. These are the sub-themes that emerged: parental involvement, specialist support and other stakeholder engagement. Inclusive education advocates stakeholders' involvement in all areas. Schools cannot work in isolation; they are situated in the communities and accommodate learners from different walks of life. Thus, the LIEP 2018 policy indicates that for inclusive education to be successful, there must be participation of different role-players who work together to identify and reduce any obstacles to inclusion (LIEP, 2018). As identified by the policy document, these are; learners, parents, the community, IHL, proprietors and teachers. For instance, in Section 4.2 of the policy, parents of LSEN are regarded as equal partners in the education of their children and should decide on their assessment, referrals and placements. They should positively promote attitudes towards the education of Children with Disabilities (CWD) within communities by ensuring that all children with disability are enrolled and retained in school. They should be provided with basic needs that safeguard their survival and development. In section 4.3, the policy further clarifies that quality education for every Mosotho child needs support from the family members to a larger community (MOET, 2018). Therefore, parents and communities should be responsible for ensuring inclusive education as expected.

5.3.4.1 Parental Involvement

Teachers indicated that they try their best to involve parents in their education of their children, but parents are not interested; they consider them to have some negative attitudes towards their children, treating schools as 'dumping sites' and completely forgetting about them. In an effort to make their work a bit manageable and comfortable, they have tried to

involve other stakeholders to relieve them of the burden but in vain. Respondent F mentioned that *normally after every parents' meeting, parents of the learners living with hearing impairment and deafness stay behind. Parents always express the inability to communicate with their children because they do not know Sign Language. That is where the challenge begins. They cannot even comprehend what their children say when they ask for something.* However, the teachers claimed that even when they call them to inform them about their children's needs, they always promise to send them but never do. She further expressed concerns that parents desert their children to an extent that they treat school as a centre where they are provided with all their basic needs. *Even when the school closes, they do not even send money for transport. Teachers even go to an extent of giving them money for transport when they are supposed to go home which they are never refunded* (Respondent F). All teachers agreed anonymously that parents of these learners hate them. As Respondent B said, *we always call parents to share their children's performance but parents do not come, they feel relieved when their children are not at home.* Suleiman and Isah Mfr (2022) explain that implementation of inclusive education requires collaboration of parents and communities. Parents are also frustrated by their own children; there is poor communication between them which could be another factor. This inadequacy in Sign Language alludes to poor foundation of their first language as pointed earlier in the discussion. The literature points to the same findings that parents' involvement in their children's learning is limited and they fail to follow up on how they progress, and this frustrates teachers (Mphwina, 2022). This poor parental support works against achieving some of the objectives of implementation (Pappas, Papoutsi & Drigas, 2018). Also, there exists poor relationship amongst parents and teachers (Sharman *et al.*, 2019). Mavropoulou, Mann and Carrington (2021) concur that when it comes to the implementation of inclusive practices, the facilitation of collaboration with parents in the inclusive process is also challenging. In the South African context, parental involvement has always been very minimal; they were excluded from the education of their children, yet they best know their

children. This feature could be helpful for recommending school placement and learning support for their children (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2005) in 2.2.5.4. In order to make cooperation mechanisms effective in inclusive education interventions, there must be co-operation between school, family, teachers, parents of learners living with and without disabilities, and school administration (Aktan, 2021). Maria and Bwoi (2015) believe that some of the implementation strategies of inclusive education requires involvement of parents and families, the community, state and local government. When all stakeholders are involved, schools become welcoming and accessible to all learners. It is time for teachers to work with parents in developing the culture that encourages and cultivates collaborative working across the school (Glenys & Linda, 2021). It is important also that parents are offered an opportunity to undergo training in Sign Language (Mdikanal, 2021) for proper foundation of Sign Language for their children. This collaborative approach of teachers, parents' involvement and learner support will help to create a learning environment for all the learners (Joseph & Thomas, 2022).

5.3.4.2 Specialist Support

Another issue relates to lack of support staff such as health personnel and psychologists to help to identify and diagnose these learners and the severity of their conditions. They could provide the psychological and emotional support. *There are no psychologists to help these learners and the teachers as well. The teachers are the psychologists, nurses, doctors and social workers, everything. And yet they are expected to teach at the same time* (Respondent G). Asked on how they are placed in the school, whether there is professional assessment done on these learners. Respondent B said *No. when they get here, they go straight to class. They are just assessed by the school in a normal manner. Interpreters are better at identifying the severity of the disability. They are able to say who is still able to produce sounds or not. We do not have professional support from other relevant ministries such health and social development. Interpreters identify them as early as grade 8. Interpreters are*

able to identify even other disabilities beyond deafness such as dyslexic. It is surprising though that the policy speaks of a team for proper identification but that is not evident in the teachers' responses. Objective five of the policy states that for LIEP to be sustainable, there must be by well-organised governance and management systems. In particular, section 3.5 (b), the policy aims to develop proper guidelines for the establishment of multi-disciplinary team which will be responsible for proper identification and assessment of LSEN for intervention (MOET, 2018). Mpu and Adu (2021) advise that the well-trained personnel as well as the other stakeholders outside the school are essential. Yet in this particular school, the teachers seem to be on their own. With their teaching skills, they go as far as identifying these learners before they put them in the classrooms. Again, there are no specialists for proper identification and placement of LSEN. This means that correct formal diagnosis of disability are not always possible because specialists are not available (Angela, Chris, Kathy & Sofia, 2019). This is the same in Nigeria, as the literature points out, there are no specialists and experts who can help in the screening of LSEN and there is no plan in place to identify children who have special learning disabilities (Suleiman & Isah Mfr, 2022). For Suleiman and Isah Mfr (2022: 34),

the way forward for the successful implementation of inclusive education involves early screening of special needs individuals and learning disabled, training of specialist teachers on handling these individuals, involving parents and community members. Specialists should be employed to screen students and identify their needs and disabilities.

The literature in 2.2.5.4 further indicates that it is surprising though that the policy statement of 1989 and the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015 have always been silent about the roles of occupational therapists and psychologists in assessing LSEN so that they are properly placed and supported (Ralejoe, 2019). In the case of Lesotho, Mosia (2019)

encourages that the Special Education Unit should be built up of a mix of health-related personnel as part of central support and professionals in educational psychology (2.2.5.4).

5.3.4.3 Other Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure the proper implementation of inclusive education, teachers explained that in trying to involve all stakeholders, *we have been everywhere, we have knocked in every office. But as it is, those who are tasked with inclusive education are not knowledgeable about it; nor do they understand it. In our positions as teachers, there is nothing to do to change the status quo* (Respondent H). In the same way, Respondent I stated that *we have been everywhere to get help. We went to the education office, village councilor, parliamentary constituency representative, the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL), National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and Teaching Service Department (TSD). Name them. We tried inviting all stakeholders to have their buy-in and see how we are operating at a school level.* Majoko (2019) in 2.2.5.4 emphasises that collaboration is the essential competency for teachers in inclusive education since it helps them to facilitate team work. This enables them to pool support and assistance to respond to the individual needs of all learners. As such, this would allow teachers to synchronise home and school support strategies to successfully manage the behaviour of learners by liaising with parents. However, all teachers should learn to work with local NGOs and collaborate with special schools in order to learn how to teach and support learners who have diverse learning needs (Sharma *et al.*, 2019). Also important, according to Begun (2017), community partnerships with government agencies and NGOs are instrumental in the promotion of inclusive education.

The findings confirm many barriers external to the schools in helping the policy realise its objectives. The theoretical framework clarifies that inclusive practices should depict collaborative actions, relying on the experts without abandoning responsibility for teaching all learners (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Therefore, it is important to work together with other staff members to conquer professional challenges within the classroom (Florian & Black-

Hawkins 2011). The teachers' responses indicate otherwise, in that, they try to bring parents into the education of their children, though with little success. Forlin (2013) points out that to successfully implement an inclusive approach, it requires appropriate preparation of all stakeholders. Also, an environment where teachers, district officials, principals, parents and learners work collaboratively (Zwane & Malale, 2018). Apparently, there is a need to sensitise parents and the communities about inclusive education and potential significance of their participation in the education of their children as immediate families.

5.3.5 Theme Five: LIEP 2018 Implementation Challenges

This section addresses the fifth theme that emerged from the respondents, pointing to the implementation challenges that the school faces in the implementation of the policy. Three sub-themes emerged as lack of assistant teachers and resources, poor performance, vulnerability and absenteeism. Teachers complain about many issues affecting their daily work at school. The school is frustrated by these issues as both their human resource and materials are not enough to accommodate them. At the same time, teachers are psychologically affected given the circumstances in which they work, with no one to care for their well-being. Learners struggle academically, failing to achieve the objectives set by teachers for their lessons. To the surprise of teachers, Respondent F commented that *this particular school is the only inclusive mainstream in the 10 districts of Lesotho, with learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. It is as if the MOET does not know that there is such a school with this particular range of learners. The problem again is that, our government does not listen, we are named as an inclusive school but we are not. The government is very proud and boastful that they have an inclusive high school in the country while in essence, it is not* (Respondent F). According to the Special Education Manager, *as Lesotho, we have taken a step, there is a policy in place, there are few resources in place, we have trained teachers and they are well equipped. All these things are moving*

towards inclusive education. Yes, it is true we are not there yet because our policy is very clear that this is a process.

5.3.5.1 Lack of Assistive Teachers and Teaching Materials

The LIEP 2018, Section 5.1 states that to strengthen the implementations of the LIEP, many departments within the government system are key to the full realization of the achievement of inclusive education. This could be done through proper budget allocation and technical support. Section 3.5 (f) stipulates that the MOET will develop extensive guidelines on transforming special schools by ensuring that there is provision of appropriate support services and resources that best align with learners' requirements and preferences especially those with extreme disability (MOET, 2018). The policy document also speaks of recruitment of teachers to enable smooth implementation of the policy. Section 4.5 says for implementation of educational initiatives to be successful, ownership and endorsement of school proprietors are necessary. As main partners in education, they must deploy qualified teachers and provide requisite support for efficiency (MOET, 2018). Also, the Teaching Service Department (TSD) should recruit and place teachers and provide resource persons who are qualified in inclusive education. It must also modify and change employment processes of resource persons (MOET, 2018). Yet, the teachers claim that the only support they have is the presence of Sign Language interpreters. What is visible is the presence of interpreters in the classrooms. There are two teachers; subject teachers and an interpreter. Although the policy stipulates that the implementation requires additional teacher supply and teaching and learning materials but there was no supply of teachers and infrastructure development that followed post-2018 when the policy was developed and given green light to be implemented. These result in poor lessons as teachers are overwhelmed by these learners, especially Sign Language interpreters who have to be in class the whole day with no breaks. Respondent F had this to say, *you see, this government through MOET does not support us as they have stipulated in the policy document. They have abandoned us, we are*

on our own. They do not even support us in terms of training to see how far we have gone in our practices as teachers. They fail even to supply enough Sign Language interpreters. We get tired, we are not enough. We have to work without rest. This has a huge impact on the content that the learners get. It is affected negatively and gets distorted. Despite what the policy says, the teachers' salary structure does not acknowledge the presence of assistant teachers/Sign Language interpreters. Respondent F claimed that they do not have grants allocated to them because they are not recognised by the TSD. She said, *you may wonder why grants were taken from other departments. The MOET says in the hierarchical structure of teachers, Sign Language interpreters are not included yet the MOET preaches inclusive education.*

Because of lack of supply of teachers, Respondent C concurred that *Sign Language interpreters are swamped with work, unlike subject teachers, they do not break, they go to classes throughout the day. They can break only for 20 minutes when it's break time. That means they have limited time for rest and lunch. When the alarm goes off, they are expected to be in class because subject teachers are already in class waiting for them.* Respondent B added saying, *sometimes I feel like we may be putting a lot of pressure on interpreters. When I, as the subject teacher, wants to push the syllabus, I ask the learners to come earlier than the normal school time, say 7am, before classes officially begin, or even come on Saturdays and Sundays. That means the interpreters have to be there.* Respondent F – *A big challenge is not so much about coming to school earlier than normal; it is the time arrangement on the part of interpreters. When the teachers allocate extra time for their subjects, they forget one interpreter has to fit in their schedule which becomes strenuous on them. The teachers can freely attend to their families and personal issues while an interpreter has to stay throughout the day for all those different teachers.* Respondent D – *Some schools are able to have classes in the afternoon after working hours or on Saturdays. For us, it becomes challenging as subject teachers because we cannot come on our own, we need interpreters and when they have personal matters to attend to, it means the deaf learners are left behind or get excluded*

from the lesson. During our normal lessons, we have to go back to include them because the interpreter is present. This discourages us to offer extra lessons during weekends or beyond the designated school hours. All teachers stated that there is no support offered to them by the ministry to constantly train them on their duties so that they are well-equipped to deliver lessons that are inclusive, everyday is a struggle, there are no trainings to equip us, we are on our own. The teaching resources are not there, we are really struggling (Respondent D).

All teachers reported no supply of teachers and resources following the implementation of the policy. Respondent C highlighted that *there has never been extra supply of teachers to make up for the increase of deaf learners and diverse learners. What is even worse is that, teachings grants were taken from other departments especially from the language department to hire sign language interpreters because they were not there. First, they took interpreters from the primary school and when the work became strenuous to them, they took grants from other departments to increase the number of interpreters especially the language department. That means the language teachers are loaded, one teacher teaches all the streams in the school. Our grants were converted into Sign Language interpreters grants. Four interpreters were taken from the neighbouring primary school because they were granted. However, they were not replaced and this left a huge gap in the primary school as well* (Respondent G). Respondent C also agreed that *the primary school transferred their interpreters into the high school because of the need for such. Teaching had problems because of the absence of interpreters so here, our Heads of Departments had to decide on how to donate some of their grants to interpreters and the language department was hugely affected. The load is too much on our department.* Respondent A concluded therefore that *this means inclusivity is not so much practical here. We are supposed to have assistive staff members yet we do not have such things/people here. There is only one interpreter per class, who assists all the subject teachers who come in that class throughout the day. Remember they also have a certain concentration span, which after a certain period of time, they*

become tired. Remember these learners rely on me as an interpreter. That means the information can never be as effective as when the subject teacher said it. Not even intentionally, so this will definitely affect the results of the learners.

Because of the limited number of interpreters, *the interpreters become very tired because of having to work throughout the day* (Respondent G). As a result, according to Respondent A, *as an interpreter, you have to think very fast. Everything that the teacher says you must remember it. So there is a problem of language barrier or lack of vocabulary or jargon for particular subjects. So that means as an interpreter, you have to finger spell the word. So when you are busy finger spelling, the subject teachers continue to speak leaving you behind. Then you have no choice but to stop the teachers and ask them to go back and repeat what they said and in the process, time is wasted. So it becomes very difficult and challenging to meet the requirements of the curriculum and complete the syllabus. This is because all day long your role as an interpreter is to receive, convert, breakdown the information and pass it on to the learners. It becomes very challenging to pass on the content exactly the way the subject teacher has it. Through their facial expressions, you pick when they do not understand or they start complaining* (Respondent D). Thus, *because of the shortage of interpreters, teaching becomes hugely affected when the interpreters are absent from school; teaching does not happen; we only give notes or do note-taking* (Respondent C).

Respondent A suggested that *so if the MOET was supportive, it would be very wise for people who specialise in specific subjects to also couple their specialties with Sign Language. This would make it very easy to know the jargon of that particular subject.* Similarly, Respondent G concurred that *it would make things easier if all departments would have their own interpreters who have studied those departmental subjects. At the moment, the interpreters that we have are specialists for other subjects, some have not even done teaching. For example, they are social workers but did interpreting out of interest.* Respondents stated that even tertiary institutions do not offer sufficient training for teachers.

Respondent B indicated that *for those who have enrolled for special education, they do only basics of Sign Language through a semester course, so you can imagine. They are not really fully equipped with it. This is not in line with what the policy says.* In support of this, Respondent A highlighted that *it is still a challenge because higher institutions of learning in the country do not offer Sign Language. It only comes in such a short course, as a semester course. Even those charged with teaching, they know only the basics of the language.* Yet Objective 3.2 sub-section (a) states IHL should review teacher education programmes that are in line with IE principles at a pre-service level and 3.2 (f) alludes to coordination of compulsory pre- and in-service inclusive education training for teachers (MOET, 2018).

The Special Education Manager reported having experienced some challenges with TSD in terms of teacher recruitment because the TSD indicated that their policy as a department is to hire subject teachers. *But with the presence of the inclusive education policy, we have managed to convince them that the LIEP policy talks of modifications and adjustments so that they make reasonable accommodation. The policy mandates them as TSD to change or adjust the regulations and policies in such a way that they deploy teacher assistants. For instance, if we have a teacher living with visual impairment, there must be an assistant hired to help that teacher. Assistants do not have to be qualified teachers.* When teachers complained that TSD does not acknowledge the Sign Language interpreters, The Special Education Manager disputed this, saying that *it was not arrangement of the school to transfer teachers from the primary to high school; it was the Ministry of Education through the office of the special education in the district who had made such arrangements. It is because this inclusion began in the primary school. Our office convinced the TSD to release four grants from the primary school and they did. When these learners proceeded to high school, it was not supposed to be automatic. We did not have interpreters in the high school, we went into negotiations with the TSD to have some of the interpreters move into high school because the TSD indicated that they could not have a budget for that. Again, many teachers in the primary level were now knowledgeable in Sign Language. After that, some of the Sign*

Language interpreters were hired by the TSD. They do not all come from the primary school. All the stakeholders now understand, we are not saying change your policies completely, we are simply saying be flexible enough to adjust.

The LIEP 2018 policy clearly stipulates that in Section 3.2. (d), MOET will mobilise resources for provision of IE (MOET, 2018), while in Section 3.4. (d), MOET aims to provide suitable instructional materials and learning resources that are in accessible modes for effective inclusion of individual needs (MOET, 2018). Respondent E raised a concern over lack of teaching and learning materials. *There is lack of teaching materials and aids. We need things like wifi and laptops to enable learners to watch things instead of just talking about them. This is because deaf learners learn better when they see instead of listening. As a science teacher, we do experiments a lot but you will find that still, the next day when you ask them, they have forgotten. So I believe that we can have something stored on computers to compliment the experiments we have done.* The Special Education Manager pointed out that *the resources are still a challenge but this year alone, the Ministry was able to source funds from UNICEF and bought all primary and secondary special and inclusive schools equipment such as white boards and some technological devices. Even in schools, we advocate pictures in the classrooms because they learn by visualising. Teachers should make visual aids and use videos. Learners should not only rely on the interpreters, they must see what is being taught. It makes it even easier for them to understand/comprehend. It is impossible to have many Sign Language interpreters because of funding. We have encouraged them to share their lesson plans with interpreters ahead of their lesson so that they prepare themselves and understand the concepts. Lawfully, there should be two interpreters per class but it is challenging to have many because funds do not permit. Rehabilitation of schools is there. It is even there in our MOET sector strategic plan 2016-2026 that we need to rehabilitate our schools to make them inclusive. Our Ministry has Education Facility Unit (EFU) which is responsible for infrastructure development. As special education unit, we have already*

requested that when they build schools, they must be built in such way that they are inclusive, having ramps and pavements.

The literature acknowledges that the main challenges facing inclusive education are lack of competent teachers, support services such as teacher training programmes and relevant materials, inadequate teaching personnel and funding structures and enabling legislature in Nigeria (Suleiman & Isah Mfr, 2022). Besides, there is an increased workload, without any monitoring of the policy (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021). Indeed, lack of training, shortage of teaching and learning materials, overcrowded classrooms, many contact hours per teacher and poor working environments mitigate against proper implementation of inclusion policies (Pappas, Papoutsi & Drigas, 2018), along with a need for training and employment of interpreters (Mdikanal, 2021).

Literature shows using inappropriate teaching and learning methods and support material affect the implementation of inclusive education negatively (Gyamfi & Yeboah, 2022; Zwane & Malale, 2018). Also, official policy documents speak of inclusion in the countries where members work, but the principles of inclusive education are frequently ignored, poorly addressed or resourced (Ackermans, Casey, Collins & Hannon, 2022). Lack of teaching materials or aids and support structures often lead to educational gaps for learners (Mphwina, 2022). This is because inclusive education funding in Southern Africa is poor. This is evidenced by inadequate number of teachers and specialists in schools and district officers to support inclusive education as well as overcrowded classrooms (Hummel & Engelbrecht, 2018; Mphwina, 2022). Again, there are no follow-ups on schools by government officials to check if inclusive education practices are followed (Mphwina, 2022). In some cases, the government officials are not knowledgeable on inclusive education and most of the time they learn from the teachers, instead of providing support to the teachers. In cases where they pay visit to schools, they only do it as a front for donors (Mphwina, 2022).

In terms of teaching aids, the literature says in 2.2.6.2, most digital information and educational materials are accessible in spoken, written or audio forms. However, such information has remained inaccessible to deaf students (Escudeiro *et al.*, 2022). Deaf learners also depend on visual learning materials (Mdikanal, 2021), thereby having various learning materials such as speaking, drawing and writing for hearing impaired children to be used (Ullah, Rana & Habib, 2022) in 2.2.6.2. For the successful inclusion of deaf learners, the classroom environment and teaching itself should be reorganised. School administrators should consider hiring teachers in the non-board degree programmes, and for those who are not teachers by profession, they should study units in special education. (Fuente, 2021). Mdikanal (2021) in 2.2.6.2 proposes employment of interpreters while Mbewe, Kamchedzera and Kunkwenzu (2021) encourage deployment of special education teachers in order to meet the needs of inclusive education.

5.3.5.2 Poor Performance

The school also experiences pressure from the MOET to perform like other schools yet they are faced with different challenges. Respondent B said, *other schools have a chance to select the kind of learners they need through aptitude tests. Even when their learners fail, they expel them and some are rejected. We admit them, whether they are in grade 8, 10 or 12, we absorb them. And by virtue of our school, we admit all deaf learners, we do not have any selection process. And the challenge comes where we have this learner who has been expelled, rejected because they could not cope in those environments, and they have failed. Then there is a deaf learner who comes in the school without resources matching his/her disability. So when they come in this environment, it is very challenging. Teachers have to work very hard to help them to cope, but still, the results do not reflect that input, they are terrible.* Respondent C concurred that *the MOET needs good results from us, we also need them forgetting the kind of learners we have admitted. Because of the pressure from the ministry, we also end up putting pressure on the learners. We also fight as teachers as*

everyone wants to have extra classes. We work very hard and strive to be better-performing school but in the end, the results become worse. All teachers agreed that they want good results but when things go wrong, they blame ourselves and forgetting that they gave it their all. The pressure is too much because the ministry expects good results from us, regardless of the conditions we work with. They keep reminding us that we are not performing to the expected standard yet they forget the circumstances that we work with. We end up blaming ourselves and accusing one another of poor performance (Respondent F).

Respondents lamented the fact that they admit every learner regardless of their abilities. Therefore, they attribute the poor performance of learners to factors such as inability of learners to understand what is being taught. Respondent E pointed out that *one of the challenges is that, we fail to achieve our objectives in the classrooms as stated in the lesson plan. We spend a lot of time explaining a concept especially to learners living with deafness which would otherwise have taken a shorter time in a normal classroom.* Respondent B – *Some of them when they are supposed to write tests, they re-write the questions and submit without having responded to those questions. They are very good at copying what is on paper but it is surprising that they fail to write a full sentence on their own. Some pass while others fail and repeat. Sometimes we promote them to the next grade to enable them to get the matric certificate. However, before the introduction of the current syllabus when we still had Junior Certificate (JC) examinations, they used to pass and that surprised us.* Similarly, for Respondent A – *another challenge that I think is going to drive me crazy is, when you have taught a concept today, the next day they have forgotten it, when you ask them about it, they have completely forgotten it. You have to go through it again which takes most of our time.*

The findings indicate great pressure on the teachers to complete the syllabus and produce good results for the learners and school. Most of the time, the government through the MOET have pressurised the teachers with big targets and expectations for implementation,

without due support for meeting such targets. Any pressure that comes with coverage of curriculum content affects inclusive practices. This also curbs the teachers' capacity to individualise learning experiences for each student. Also, there is lack of time, the pressure to increasingly perform and the fear of poor learner attainment outcomes, and this affects performance (Klibthong & Agbenyega, 2018). In addition, schools are few and widely apart, resulting in an increasing drop-out rate, especially of children with disabilities (Mphwina, 2022).

5.3.5.3 Vulnerability and Absentism

The school is non-discriminatory, with many learners coming from very disadvantaged families. They struggle with other hidden costs of schooling such as uniform, books and transport. Such conditions contribute to poor daily attendance at school, and they are left behind and ultimately drop out. Respondent A confirmed this that *from the mission statement of the school, the school admits very vulnerable learners, most of them come from poor households and obviously, they have many problems. I have personally observed as a teacher that their impoverished backgrounds affect their school's performance. This results in a lot of absenteeism and as a teacher, time and again, you constantly have to go back and repeat what has been taught to accommodate those who were absent. Through assessment, you realize that they do not know anything because they were absent from school when the concept was taught. At the end, it becomes very challenging to cover the syllabus and achieve the stated objectives.* According to Respondent D, *because of this vulnerability, the learners do not have books. In Grade 8, they write all the subjects in one book. As a teacher, when you have given assignments or you want to mark, the book has been submitted for another subject.* All teachers said that *most of the time the learners who do not have learning materials such as books are deaf learners since their parents do not care of their well-being.*

The Special Education Manager admitted that many of the learners living with deafness are financially challenged as they come from poverty-stricken families, that is why they have

other ministries to help in their designated areas. She said, *deaf learners are struggling financially, many of them can only afford public schools. That is why we have Ministry of Social Development as the main stakeholder to help these learners with bursaries and other related school expenses such as books to avoid dropping out. Also, one of the challenges is bullying in schools. It may not necessarily affect learners living with disability only but some learners drop out because of their physical differences. So we really need to continue to sensitise learners about inclusion; it can never be an overnight thing, but it is a process.*

Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018) believe that socioeconomic imbalances shape provision of education and are a major barriers to developing resourced school environment that provide quality education for all learners. “It is important that Southern African countries consider their social, economic, political, cultural and historical singularities in responding to the challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education” (Mpu & Adu, 2021: 233). First, it is critical that policies consider the context, and secondly, each policy should have a clear articulated implementation plan (Sharma *et al.*, 2019). When a policy fails to consider the local context, it has limited chances of success. This is seen when children with disabilities often fall behind because they are constrained by time in their learning process. As a result, there are high repetition rates which indicates exclusion of children with disabilities from the the school system (Mphwina, 2022). As Kumar and Varghese (2022) state, these outcomes can result in learners dropping out.

5.3.6 Theme Six: Strategies to Strengthen the LIEP 2018 Policy

In this section, I present the findings that were generated from the semi-structured interview with the Special Education Manager. The sub-themes that emerged are school-based strategies, inclusive education-based strategies and monitoring and evaluation.

5.3.6.1 School-based Strategies

The Special Education Manager observed that *our plan is to visit the school boards in other districts. From heads of programmes to school boards to schools. We also have a plan to make learners understand inclusive education by engaging them in activities that promote inclusivity. For instance, at pre-school, learners should recite poems, at a primary level, they should make dramas while at secondary level, they should write essays. We can have a few schools to pilot, we are in the process, even the LIEP policy says it's a process. We are going through the implementation plan so that learners, as recipients, understand it. We want to continue to make people aware and speak to the people because when people understand, they will be able to implement the changes. The implementation plan should reach all different sectors because it affects all people, we cannot leave anybody behind. We need to strengthen our implementation plan by including the learners.* As discussed earlier, the MOET policy 2018 acknowledges participation and involvement of role players and amongst them, learners are expected to be responsible for their education, have mutual respect for other learners regardless of their ability/disability and should support one another (MOET, 2018). Yet the learners were never involved in the dissemination of the policy. The learners have been marginalised from conversations regarding their education. Barraclough (2021) concurs that most of the time learners are overlooked and undermined, this leads to disengagement and possible failure of policies. Therefore, young voices are critical because they reflect a different social, cultural, political and academic environment than those tasked with developing the policy (Gopalakrishna, Christmann, Pashkevich & Puttick, 2022).

Many students' voices are excluded from decision making because they are believed to be immature to effect important changes (Brasof & Mansfield, 2018b). Yet, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959) is foundational to the UNCRC (UNCRC, 1989); it recognises that learners are capable of formulating their own views about what affects their lives, therefore, they should be granted the right to express their views. Furthermore,

the UNCRC acknowledges that learners' views should always be respected and afforded due weight in proportion to the learner's age and maturity (Article 12(1)). Thus, honouring learners' voices is crucial in educational spaces to inform and shape education reforms (Brasof & Mansfield, 2018a).

5.3.6.2 Inclusive Education-based Strategies

To strengthen inclusive education, the Special Education Manager further indicated as follows: *we also have Open Distance Learning (ODL) which is going to incorporate inclusive education. We have discouraged education from focusing on the formal system only. Even those who are not in the conventional schooling should have access to quality education. A classroom and a teacher should not hinder them from attending school. Even those in remote areas who cannot access formal education because of the terrain, they must study through ODL wherever they are. The MOET advocates ODL as one of the strategies to enable inclusive education. We should not force learners to necessarily go to classrooms. There is also Education Transformation which includes the use of ICT in schools for learners where there is no need to train teachers but bring resources to learners. Learners should move to ODL and ICT. We have talked to Lesotho Communication Authority (LCA) to erect network towers everywhere in the country and data should be made accessible and affordable to learners. I have personally raised funds by having a non-vocal communication day in all Leribe district schools where our office was encouraging people to learn to communicate using simple words such as 'hello' using Sign Language. To communicate further, they must write, not speak. If they spoke, there was a certain amount paid by both the learners and the teachers. We were able to raise the funds to buy things like hearing aids. Despite raising funds, this was done to raise awareness in our communities in order to strengthen the policy. To the general public, we advocate total communication. When you meet a deaf person and you cannot sign, take a paper and pen and write down what you want to say or a phone, and they will also respond by writing. You can also use a picture to communicate. Open distance*

and digital education provides flexible, accessible and special educational opportunities for all learners thus in a globalized economy, the 21st century demands that education be personalized and provide collaborative experience for learners (Bozkurt and Zawacki-Richter, 2021). It further provides educational spaces to learners beyond traditional paper-based education (Zawacki-Richter & Naidu, 2016). Thus, it is important that the education system should provide appropriate and relevant educational devices to accommodate all learners. Similarly, Zawacki-Richter and Naidu (2016) suggested that online educational technologies is open and offers education broadly, and speaks to the EFA agenda. ODL creates learning opportunities and promotes a learning society (Zhu and Chikwa, 2021). The world is moving towards inclusion and the global society is characterized by the spread of technology devices. As such, learners are exposed to new learning opportunities and access to learning resources that are available everywhere and anytime without requiring physical presence. This has changed the roles of teachers in the traditional learning classroom (Appolloni, Colasanti, Fantauzzi, Fiorani, and Frondizi, 2021).

5.3.6.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

The LIEP 2018 policy document specifies that this policy values comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes for implementation. Inclusive Education Department will

develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system that will ensure availability of up-to-date data for successful implementation of Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy and produce routine and periodic reports as well as joint annual and sectoral reviews to track progress at different levels of implementation. The office will further collect data from different sources such as Education Management Information System (EMIS), affiliated stakeholders in IE, learning institutions, learners, teachers, school boards, parents and communities through routine, periodic and annual data collection. Inspection should monitor the implementation process of LIEP and provide information/reports regularly. There

will be a mid-term (two and half years) and end of term (five years) policy review (MOET, 2018: 18).

According to the Special Education Manager, *although we have insufficient funds; from January to June, we were able to train teachers in three districts but we have not gone back to see how far they have gone. There is no specific tool or a standardised tool to evaluate teachers' work in schools, we suggested an assessment tool to see how schools have gone in implementing inclusive practices but it is yet to be developed. The only standardised tool is the ER42 form which is helpful in monitoring learners living with disabilities in schools. Since we are still in the implementation, we have not done any policy review. Plus the resources are not permitting us to do so. The funding from MOET is very limited, most of the time we get funding from the UNICEF. So the policy has not gone too far because we are still in the process but I believe we have made some significant steps.* Chapter four of the Critical Policy Analysis (4.4.4.5) states that lack of monitoring affects implementation (Mbewe, Kamchedzera & Kunkwenzu, 2021). The Special Education Manager admitted to have not done any evaluation of the policy although the policy document promised mid-term (2 and half years) and end of term (5 years) policy review but to this end, nothing has been done. She also attributed failure to monitor teachers to lack of funds. Also concerning is that five years down the line, the MOET and partners cannot track the progress of the policy and identify gaps in the implementation. The literature review in 4.4.5 appreciates monitoring and evaluation of the policy in practice as good principles and elements of the policy implementation (Cardno, 2018). As such, the policy can accomplish its intended objective through monitoring and evaluation (Diem *at al.* (2014) in 4.4.6.3. As indicated in chapter four in 4.4.7 that the capacity of SEU is questionable and understaffed, only twelve officers to oversee activities pertaining to inclusion. Such a situation would hinder execution of its mandate, resulting in poor implementation to monitor and evaluate the progress.

5.4 Conclusion

To conclude, the findings have revealed that teachers demonstrate some understanding of the LIEP 2018 policy in their classroom practices by dramatising and role playing some of the activities in class. However, there are many problems at the implementation stage, resulting in poor performance and absentism of learners with special education needs. Also, the policy is poorly capacitated with no resources, both human and material in schools. Finally, the MOET has reportedly failed to monitor, nor has it offered the necessary support for teachers' practices.

CHAPTER SIX

TEACHERS' INCLUSIVE PRACTICES:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, my motivation for this study emerged from personal and professional experience as a teacher. Personally, I have always been concerned about the educational inequalities that exist in different educational contexts – rural and peri-urban contexts. Over the years, I have observed how teachers' practices contribute immensely to such inequalities, especially in schools with LSEN. Inclusive education policies are very important in narrowing this divide and bridge the gap. Thus through this study, I considered how teachers, through the lens of the policy, taught inclusively in order to respond to issues of exclusion in contemporary societies. Since this is a new policy in the inclusive education sphere in Lesotho, I expanded on the literature to explore and understand these practices in schools. I was also able to establish whether teachers demonstrate inclusive practices in their classrooms. Therefore, the primary purpose of this thesis was to explore how teachers' practices demonstrate their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school. These are the four critical questions that the study addressed.

- How is inclusive education conceptualised globally and contextualised in Lesotho?
- What is the Lesotho policy framework for inclusive education and the prominence of the *LIEP* of 2018 in this framework?
- What are teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the *LIEP* of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho
- What suggestions could be made to enhance teachers' inclusive practices with the availability and clarity of the *LIEP* of 2018?

In the following sections, I reflect on the research process and critically reflect on the findings, present the recommendations/implications drawn for the findings and conclude the thesis.

6.2 Review of Chapter One

Chapter one introduced the study, outlining the background to, rationale for and significance of it as well as the research design. A great concern for Lesotho has always been the absence of the inclusive education policy to inform teachers' practices in regular schools. Globally, in Sub-Saharan and in Lesotho as the context of the study, problems of exclusion have been there and LSEN have always been excluded from mainstream education because of societal discrimination. When they were afforded opportunities in educational spaces, they were put in special schools which stigmatised and disempowered them. Later when they were integrated into regular schools, the exclusion continued to exist thus there was a need for paradigm shift to inclusion. Internationally, the UN in November 1989 developed The CRC to address these challenges. Emphasising the right to education, Article 24 of the CRPD specifically advocated for the education of children living with disabilities. More recently, the SDGs by the UN in 2015 aim to ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, thereby maintaining learners access to and participation in education (UNESCO, 2015). At the national level, the Education Act of 2010 firmly supports the rights of children living with disabilities to have access to education, the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) challenges the ideas of special schools. Aoife, Fiona and Joe (2019) argue that inclusive education is no longer about persons with SEN but covers all people who are marginalised and excluded in the society. The LIEP as the new policy marks the departure from the narrow focus to a more expanded vision of inclusive education posing many challenges for teachers' inclusive practices and competences, attitudes, accessibility and the availability of resources for policy implementation. As a new policy in the education system of Lesotho, the literature had remained relatively limited on

the extent to which teachers' inclusive practices could demonstrate their understanding of LIEP 2018 in mainstream settings. On this premise, the study aimed to fill that gap, thus understanding teachers' inclusive practices in the classrooms through the lens of the LIEP 2018. Also worth considering was to establish whether teachers could demonstrate inclusive practices in their classrooms.

6.3 Review of Objectives

This section summarises the three objectives of the study as derived from the research questions.

6.3.1 Global Conceptualisation of Inclusive Education and its Contextualisation in Lesotho

In Chapter Two, I reviewed studies on inclusive education as conceptualised globally, including in Lesotho. Inclusive education is a global concern, with its complexity which made it receive a lot of backlash. Inclusive education remains a complicated and difficult phenomenon because inclusive practice in schools is misunderstood (Ileri *et al.*, 2020). Internationally, the UN has made global influential declarations for inclusive education as it is supported by many international policy frameworks including Article 24 of the UN CRPD, EFA and currently, the SDG4 (Kamenopoulou, 2020). The policy review shows that inclusive education policies are top-down interventions and are not context-based leading to uneven implementation guidelines. Although there is an agreement on what constitutes inclusive education, the implementation challenges point to the policy gaps; the policy intentions and system and context of implementation. Most often, the policy goals are too ambitious and the implementation is fragmented as they may be irrelevant to the contextual realities of schools (Ileri *et al.*, 2020). Some of the challenges of inclusive education result from an inflexible and irrelevant curriculum, inappropriate instructional teaching methodologies and standardised strategies to assessment and examination, poor teacher preparedness and teacher support (Mugambi, 2017). Schuelka (2018) also adds that some of the problems to inclusive education

include inadequacies in the policy frameworks, resources and infrastructure, pedagogical techniques, rigid curriculum, and cultural attitudes. To address these classroom complexities, the literature shows that teachers' inclusive practices – as a phenomenon for this study – requires competence in teachers' pedagogical skills and how this influence their practices in curriculum modification and how to work collaboratively with other stakeholders.

Teaching is becoming more compound as the world shifts more towards inclusive practices. This shift poses enormous challenges for teachers who should teach in an increasingly multi-cultural classroom and integrate students with SEN. As such, teachers should be equipped pedagogically in their new roles as facilitators of inclusion (Keppens, Consuegra & Vanderlinde, 2019). When teachers are equipped pedagogically, they will be responsible for their teaching and commit to the well being of all learners in their classrooms and work towards improvement of their educational opportunities. Moreover, when teachers have the required knowledge, skills and experience, they would take the necessary approaches in meeting the needs of and enable these learners to learn. Thus the adoption of a more inclusive teaching pedagogy serves to benefit all learners (World Bank, 2019). Studies also confirmed the challenges facing inclusive education in Lesotho schools. Despite the development of inclusive education policies by governments, many learners are still left behind and excluded from education by many factors such as teachers' inability to teach inclusively. This results in the gap between the policy expectations and implementation.

Drawing on the literature, the study is lensed through Inclusive Pedagogy theory. Inclusive pedagogy stresses the factors that constitute good practices in the regular classes. IP is derived from studies concerned with teacher support and focuses on discourses around teaching and encourages teachers to respond to the demands of demographic composition of today's schools. The IP emphasises changes in teaching and learning which involves a rich learning community which creates learning opportunities for all learners (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). This can be done by using varied teaching approaches that are beneficial to

all learners and no one should be excluded from educational opportunities based on their abilities. IP approach identifies three key assumptions that teachers should have in order to implement IP while also taking note of the difficulties of responding to the needs of all learners; teachers should value the concept of transformability, foster teachers' beliefs in their ability to teach diverse learners and stress that difficulties in learning are not within learners, but they are problems for teachers to solve with teachers engaged collaboratively. These three assumptions have become important dispositions in exploring teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the LIEP 2018.

6.3.2 Lesotho Policy Framework for Inclusive Education and Establishing the Prominence of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy of 2018

In this objective, I engaged CPA of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018. I discussed in detail the situational analysis, the policy content, context, implementation and the silences and omissions in the policy. By using document analysis of the LIEP 2018, I used CPA to explore its implications for inclusive classroom practices. The study established that the LIEP 2018 policy document covers the background, guiding principles, the goals as well as the objectives. CPA was useful for policy processes, the content and its implications for implementation by paying attention to the cultural context of schools in which the policy is rolled out. The LIEP 2018 aimed to solve issues of exclusion that come as a result of disability, location and other social needs. In recognition of intertextuality (Taylor *et al.*, 1997), I reviewed the Lesotho legislation and other macro policy responses to education.

The situational analysis in 4.4.4.1 acknowledged that the curriculum is rigid to address diversity and assessment methods are standardised and traditionally administered thus the objectives of the LIEP 2018 speak of improvement of a teaching and learning environment, capacitating teachers to have requisite skills for inclusive education so as to enhance

partnerships for implementation of LIEP 2018 in the form of expertise and resources. Also important is to make changes to the national curriculum to conform to inclusive education principles, enhance governance and management capacity. And to safeguard implementation of inclusive education, there must be laws and policies that support inclusive education in Lesotho. These objectives have foregrounded the implementation process. The study highlighted the important roles of different competent actors at different levels of the system. The policy further acknowledges proper financing model, ICT management framework, collaborative approach, monitoring and evaluation as key ingredients for effective and efficient implementation. The study further revealed the silences and omissions of the policy in 4.4.4.7. As such, the LIEP 2018 does not clearly articulate a comprehensive implementation plan on how to achieve the objectives. Teachers' involvement in developing the policy was minimal, thus lagging behind in sensitising communities to the nature of the policy and their critical contribution therein. Hence, Mbewe, Kamchedzera and Kunkwenzu (2021) argue that for a policy to succeed, it relies more on how it is disseminated, interpreted and understood by the stakeholders. In order to successfully implement a policy, people should understand the contents in the policy, without which implementation becomes challenging. The policy omitted the roles of the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health. Even more intriguing is the omission of learners in the development of the policy, despite being the direct beneficiaries of such a policy. As Cook-Sather (2014) says, when learners are afforded the spaces and opportunities to share their experiences on how they should learn, they provide alternate sources of knowledge (Bland, 2011).

From the analysis, the policy covers the broader spectrum of education, the goals are broad, and through the objectives, the policy has outlined in detail how the policy could address the problems of exclusion. The policy document has indicated that there would be modified curriculum and assessment in order to influence teachers' practices. Teachers are responsible for designing and implementing classroom practices through curriculum and assessment. When curriculum is flexible and adaptable, teachers could design their classrooms in such a

way as to have inclusive practices dominate the teaching and learning. There are shortcomings in the policy relating to issues of context, the policy covers the whole of Lesotho; there are no district-based and school-based policies to contextualise the LIEP, thus obstructing teachers' inclusive practices. The implementation cuts across the different contexts: rural, peri-urban and urban, while on the practicality, the implementation is silent. Besides, the objectives reflect provision of resources for implementation but given the complex nature of inclusive education, yes we can have all the resources in place, but when teachers are not properly trained, it becomes a futile exercise.

6.3.3 An Exploration of Teachers' inclusive Practices through the Lens of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy of 2018 in Secondary Schools of Lesotho

Through the use of the collage portrait group discussion and focus group discussion, I explored how teachers' inclusive classroom practices demonstrate their understanding of the *Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy* of 2018 at secondary schools of Lesotho. Further, I engaged the Special Education Manager in a semi-structured interview to understand the support that the MOET gives to teachers in the implementation of LIEP. This section is a summary of the themes that emerged under this objective. These include teachers' understanding and attitudes, teachers' implementation of inclusive classroom practices and implementation challenges as consolidated in some themes.

6.3.3.1 Teachers' Understanding and Attitudes of Teachers

This section summarises the themes that emerged from the findings in teachers' understanding of inclusive education and teachers' beliefs and attitudes about the LIEP 2018. I have consolidated them because, I believe that when teachers have understanding of what inclusive education is, this influences their perceptions and attitudes in decision making. Their understanding will most likely influence modification of the strategies to meet the demands of inclusive classrooms.

Teachers' understanding

From the findings, the participants showed that they understand inclusive education, seeing it as accommodating all learners irrespective of their differences, whether physical, emotional or social. Their responses outlined the factors to consider for implementation. However, the Special Education Manager's responses were more distinct as she emphasised the need to avoid stigmatisation of learners, thus having them learn under one roof and leaving no child behind. This perception showed understanding by the manager and connotes the possibility of insufficient and misalignment of teachers' training. Thus, the study proposed on-going professional development programmes for teachers, intended for Inclusive Pedagogy theory's concept of transformability which is limited to having teachers create rich learning opportunities for everyone.

Teachers' beliefs and attitudes

Teachers have also shown negative attitudes towards the LIEP 2018, believing that it cannot work given the poor capacity of the education system. They reported the government to have failed to capacitate them with proper training and a budget for inclusive education and the ability to follow up on the implementation. Neither were there consultations when the policy was developed, hence a top-down policy for which they were not ready for. However, the Special Education Manager rebuked this and said the policy dissemination was done and they have focused more on working on teachers' attitudes to help them understand the policy process. Nonetheless, teachers' negative attitudes is a clear demonstration that consultation became more of a compliance tick box, their inputs were overlooked thus this frustrated and overwhelmed them to effectively implement the policy given the limited resources to capacitate them. The data contradict the literature that teachers' attitudes are essential to the implementation of inclusive education. Nor do the findings align with the IP theory that teachers' belief in transformability is lacking, thus rendering them incapable of teaching learners with differences (Brennan, Kings & Travers, 2019).

6.3.3.2 Teachers' Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practices

In relation to theme three of the research findings and analysis, this section presents the consolidated sub-themes that emerged. These include curriculum, the teaching strategies and teaching aids, assessment, teachers' competencies and collaboration.

Curriculum, teaching strategies and teaching aids

The study found that through the collage activity and focus group discussion, curriculum is still rigid, inflexible, inadaptible, without accommodating multiple intelligence as learning is teacher-centred. English as a language of instruction is also problematic, without having Sign Language. Sign Language is visual with complex grammar which is different from the spoken and written language. Thus, a mismatch between the general curriculum and the language of learners living with deafness has been noted (Darwisha, Harubn & Darmi, 2022). In some cases, learners engaged in role-plays and presented their work. Classroom teaching has been observed as teacher-centred and as such, non-communicative teaching aids with drawings or pictures are used, some are written and explain concepts in words on a chart. Many studies have benchmarked against inclusive education, teachers ought to provide visual aids. Teachers cannot wait for the MOET to provide them with the resources, especially those that are within their reach. When there exists a gap between the policy goals and implementation, education becomes inaccessible to learners who continue to be segregated within the classrooms, causing poor attendance, high failure rates and ultimately, drop outs. The school was also recognised for an inclusive school, though with teachers not acknowledging the award. This is probably because teachers are overwhelmed and frustrated by teaching in an environment with no proper support. The award means they have taken a step in meeting the goals of the policy. Teachers further suggested that the national government should make Sign Language official. The policy encourages adapting and

modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners and provide an assessment that represents individual learners, providing appropriate material and learning resources, though in a fragmented implementation. The IP theory assumes that teachers need to employ teaching approaches that increase participation and good performance of all learners (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Assessment

The study found that assessment is still traditional, standardised and geared towards selection and certification. It is largely paper and pen examinations. While learners know what they have learnt, they cannot write that down. For this, teachers proposed an oral examination to accommodate such learners. Proponents of inclusive education highlighted that a fundamental premise of the IP theory is rejection of ability labelling, categorisation and sorting of learners through the national examination (Gyambi & Yeboah, 2022; Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018). This theory, therefore, contradicts the findings.

Teachers' competencies

The study revealed that teachers' failure to teach inclusively resulted from poor training on the teachers to teach learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. Even Sign Language interpreters are not knowledgeable about the subject content, and sometimes translate incorrectly. Although the Special Education Manager insisted on having properly trained teachers, the teachers' practices denote the opposite. Apparently, the training has been inadequate to effectively translate teachers' skills into inclusive practices. The findings established that teachers needed competences in professional knowledge, assessment as well as inclusive instruction techniques.

Collaboration

The study revealed that parents have abandoned their roles in their children's education and treat schools as dumping sites for children. From the findings, parents have been found not knowing how to communicate with their children. Thus for proper foundation, parents

should be trained on Sign Language for effective communication with their learners. Also emerging is poor parental support which was reportedly non-amenable to inclusive education. Since schools cannot work in isolation, they need other departments such as the Social Development for providing bursaries to LSEN, and the Ministry of Health for identifying and screening these learners to offer the necessary psychological support. Besides, parents and the communities should collaborate with schools to make these learners attend schools daily, stay at schools and complete their education. The findings speak against the IP theory, which indicates that teachers' inclusive practices should reflect actions that are collaborative and draw on the expertise of specialists (Florian and Spratt, 2013).

6.3.3.3 Implementation Challenges

Theme five of the research findings and analysis revealed that given the multi-faceted nature of inclusive education, the challenges are complex. We can have good inclusive education policies and resources but if teachers are not trained, the policy intentions cannot be realised. It has emerged from the findings that the implementation of the policy is met with many challenges, lack of assistive teachers and resources, coupled with lack of consultation and training for teachers. Consultation has been minimal, lacking in compliance thus leaving teachers on their own and resulting in their negative attitudes towards the policy. Ownership of policy implementation is critical for success. Moreover, teachers are poorly trained and lack the necessary skills to change their classroom methodologies to effectively implement the curriculum. Nor do they have the core skills and competencies to vary the lesson presentation for participation of all learners. Also, teachers do not receive enough support such as training and additional supply of subject teachers and Sign Language interpreters from the MOET and are stuck with many learners in the classrooms who are pressurised to do well in the national results.

Besides teachers' pedagogical skills, what is evident from the finding is also lack of resources to support and accommodate a range of learners in the classroom thus they become excluded within the school environment. Learning materials remain inaccessible to learners living with deafness as they are in the spoken written language yet they rely on visual learning materials. Parental involvement is also lacking because these learners do not live in close proximity of the school. They could only see their children once every quarter since they stay in the boarding facilities of the school. All these problems compromise the quality of education as this points to the whole restructuring of the education system, from IHL to review programmes down to the school level where the MOET should deploy skilled teachers and give sustainable on-going training for them. Furthermore, many of these learners are vulnerable since they come from very poor households. This contributes to poor attendance as they do not have transportation to schools, books and uniforms and ultimately drop out. Resources and support should target very vulnerable children to assist them with the costs of schooling for attendance and good performance. The policy further should consider the context of the policy implementation.

6.3.3.4 Strategies to Strengthen the LIEP 2018

In theme six of the findings and analysis, the research established that the MOET has strategies to further strengthen the policy. Amongst others, they want to promote inclusive education by raising further awareness through learner activities at school and district level by engaging them in writing essays, poetry and performing drama. They are attainable when they have strengthened the implementation to include the learners. They also plan to have Open Distance Learning (ODL) within inclusive education for those who are not in the conventional schools. Further, the MOET plans on Education Transformation (ET) which encourages the use of ICT in schools. Although the LIEP document speaks of mid-term (two and half years) and end of term (5 years) (MOET, 2018), there has not been any policy review to monitor and evaluate the progress. This implicates that MOET cannot track the

progress of their work, thus restricting any successes and the challenges in order to close the gap between the policy objectives and the implementation. Florian's Inclusive Pedagogy advocates collaborative efforts. Teachers should work together in and outside the classroom to address any complexities of inclusive practices. To strengthen the policy, teachers should monitor and evaluate their practices and work with external professionals to effectively monitor progress.

6.3.4 Conclusions of the Findings

This chapter has summarised the findings. While the study acknowledges some positive strides made by teachers in making their classroom practice inclusive, full implementation of the policy has been restricted. The findings reveal a fragmented education system, thus urging the MOET to restructure the education system. With the new policy, the MOET should expedite the processes towards providing resources and integration of learners' voices. For teachers, teacher training institutions should strengthen the training programmes for pre-service teachers and offer continuous professional development for in-service teachers.

6.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Drawing on the findings emanating from this study as well as critical engagement with the literature, the study's recommendations have been developed to inform teachers' inclusive practices and for the policy makers in the MOET. The findings indicate the implementation of the LIEP policy, though leaving a gap between the policy intentions and implementation. Considering the analysis, the study recommends the following for policy implementation:

6.4.1 Teachers

The study recommends that teachers should develop inclusive strategies and develop school-based inclusion policies.

Inclusive strategies

Teachers should consider the context of their classrooms and individual learners in their classrooms and devise inclusive strategies suitable for the complexities and composition of their classrooms.

Development of school-based inclusion policies

In order to develop inclusive school cultures, a departure point should have been translating LIEP 2018 into school-based policies which incorporate destigmatisation, discrimination and full inclusion. All aspects of the school life, the environment, classroom teaching and ethos should reflect school-based policies. Such initiatives would help LIEP 2018 to realise its mandate with many structures placed to support its vision, hence equal opportunities for all.

6.4.2 Policy Makers

The study recommends that the MOET should develop a clear implementation plan, offer professional development to teachers, resources, curriculum reform, stakeholder engagement and policy reviews.

Implementation plan

For the MOET, there is an urgent need for a clear implementation plan and a useful roadmap to guide teachers' practices, supported with a sufficient budget for implementation. The MOET should also provide detailed monitoring and evaluation.

Professional development

Inclusive classrooms require a multifaceted approach. Teachers' competencies inform teachers' attitudes towards implementing inclusive practices. The MOET should focus on teachers' pedagogical skills that target participation of all learners. In-service training and systemic continuous support for teachers could develop more inclusive teaching techniques

for lesson presentation. This would also help teachers to effectively carry out the mandate of the education system.

Resources

Lack of resources poses significant challenges for education. The MOET should ensure appropriate different teaching and learning materials to support inclusive teaching and learning. Accessibility to learning resources is key to effectively teach inclusive classrooms. Additionally, the MOET should secure more funds to turn many regular schools into inclusive ones so that these learners live in close proximity of their school. This would help teachers to collaborate better with their parents to improve their school performance.

Curriculum reform

Curriculum reform is necessary to allow flexibility and adaptation for inclusive classrooms and balance it in terms of academic and practical approaches. In this case, the national government should consider making Sign Language part of the official languages in Lesotho.

Stakeholder engagement

Policy makers, in this case the MOET, should have engaged all stakeholders in sharing the vision. Also, learners' inputs are very crucial to shape the policy process especially at school level. Continuous awareness of inclusive education in order to change the attitudes of those charged with the implementation across the system to encourage understanding and ownership is essential. The MOET should further work collaboratively with the Ministry of Social Development to mobilise resources to pay other hidden costs of school and the Ministry of Health to ensure that these learners attend schools and complete their education.

Policy review

The MOET should engage in a short- and long-term policy review to track the progress of the policy. This will probably help the ministry to identify any gaps, how best they can support teachers and find ways of helping these learners to attend schools effectively and complete their education.

6.5 Contributions of the Study

Despite the narrow scope of the study, the research has contributed significantly to the existing body of knowledge in the field of policy studies in education and inclusive education. Given the complexity of today's classrooms, inclusive education discourses deal with exclusionary issues in school. As such, policies in inclusive education safeguard the interests of LSEN. To effectively implement LIEP 2018, a comprehensive guideline is needed. The policy has outlined aspects to be done as stated in the policy objectives, without necessarily considering the context of learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. In response, this study designed a Teachers' Inclusive Practices Model that provides guidelines on teaching inclusively. The model draws on the theoretical framework which guided this study. While the model has not been tested, it appraises the theory and the LIEP 2018, thus closing the gaps as identified by the study. The proposed teachers' model reflects a holistic approach to inclusive education in a context of these learners.

Methodologically, this is the contribution of the study to the literature on inclusive education as the data were generated using the arts-based method, in this case, collage portrait group discussions. The study acknowledges that through visual dialogues, the study proposes visual literacy for learners living with hearing impairment and deafness.

6.6 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited because of its scope as it was conducted using only one secondary school. While the findings could not be generalised, they point to the trends on the implementation

of LIEP 2018. With the findings neither being transferable to other schools of learners living with different disabilities and the policy still being at an infancy stage since 2018, had the policy been reviewed, the implementation trend could have been analysed effectively. Lastly, had the study included learners as direct beneficiaries of the policy, the role players would understand the best ways of teaching them. Nonetheless, despite such limitations, the study has presented a solid foundation for a potentially more refined future research as discussed in the next section for further research.

6.7 Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of the study, further research is recommended on the following areas:

- Based on the limitations of the study, further research can be conducted on a larger scale with more schools with learners living with different disabilities in order to explore how they implement LIEP 2018 in those contexts.
- Another aspect of learners' voices on how best they want to be taught can be explored. This will give a better perspective of inclusive education through the eyes of the learners.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed and summarised the background, the literature review, the findings and recommended for policy and practice. The chapter has further outlined the limitations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TEACHERS' INCLUSIVE PRACTICES MODEL

7.1 Introduction

The study aimed to explore teachers' inclusive practices using a critical analysis of Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018). Based on the literature, theoretical framework and the findings, the study proposes a model for teachers' inclusive practices for effective implementation of the LIEP 2018 policy. This model would help to guide teachers on their classroom practices to effectively facilitate inclusion and narrow the educational inequalities existing in schools.

Figure 7.1 Summary of the Findings

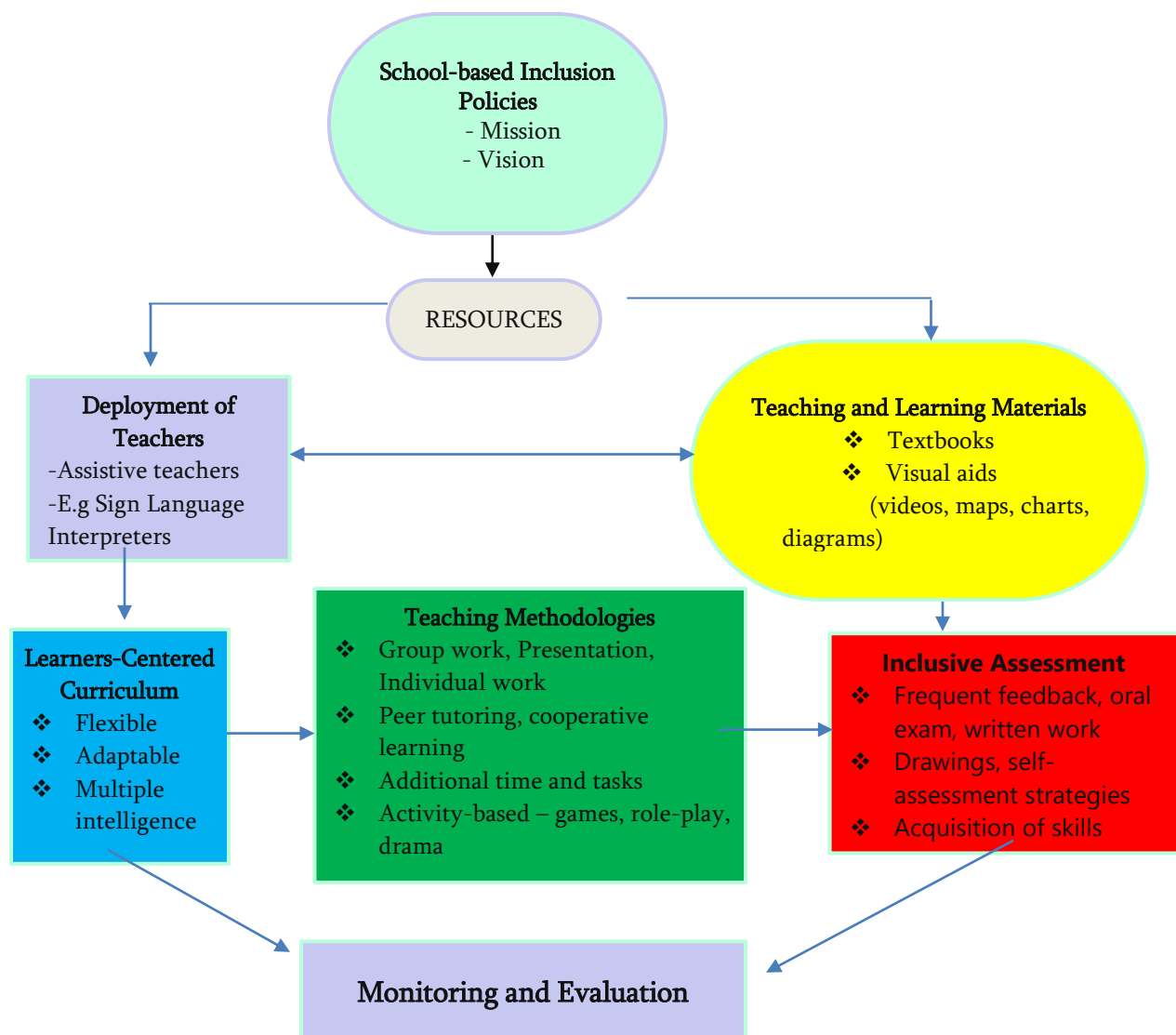


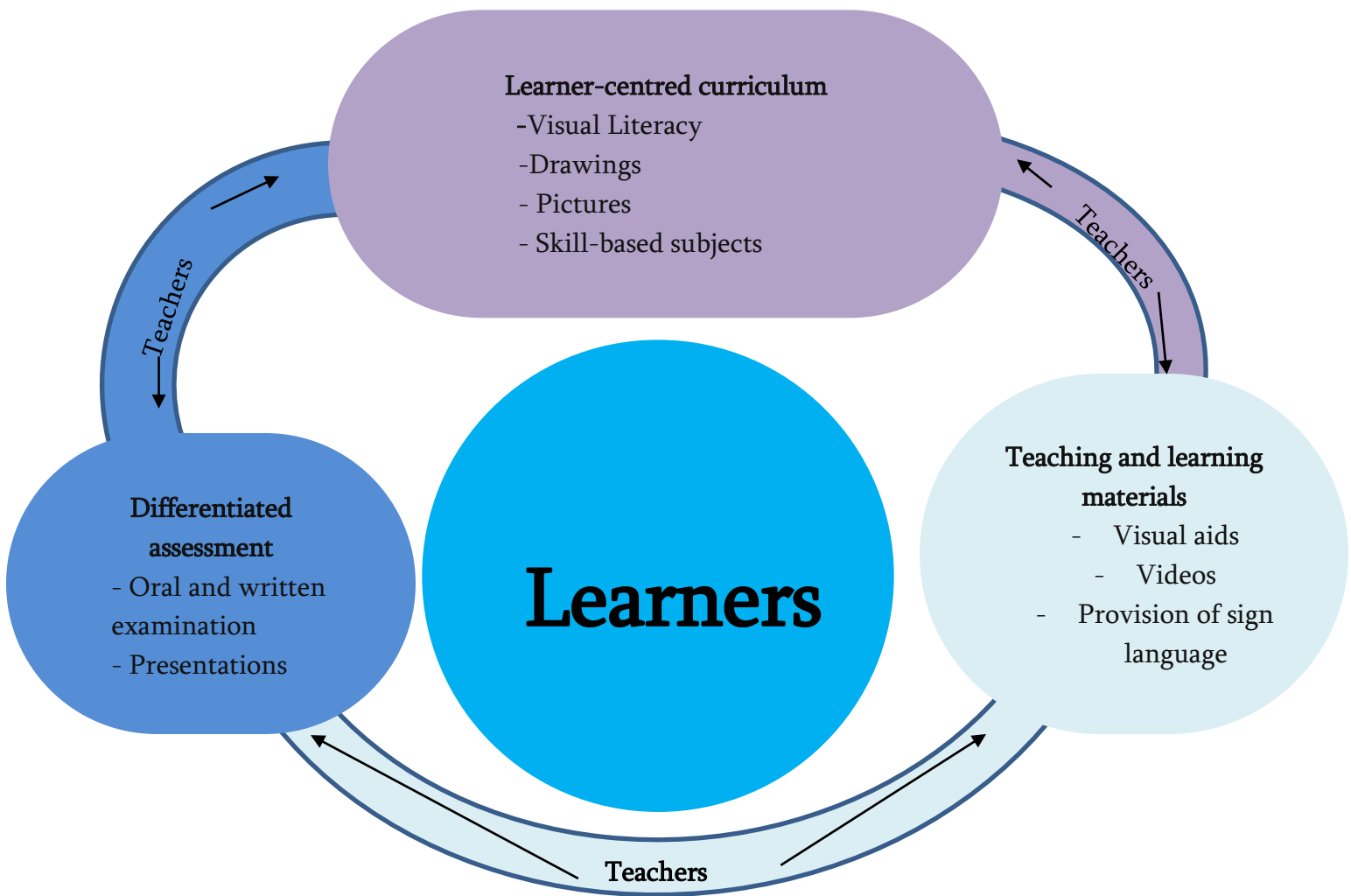
Figure 7.1 summarises the findings, the literature review and the theoretical framework. The findings as well as the literature review in Figure 7.1 establish a need for school-based policies on inclusive education to encourage ownership and buy-in. This will further facilitate sharing of the vision and mission of the policy. Teachers should also be pedagogically competent as facilitators of inclusion, with their knowledge displayed as part of the initial and continuing professional development programmes in the LIEP 2018 policy framework. The government, through the MOET, should also provide additional teachers to reduce large classes, hence a reduced teacher-learner ratio. Providing sufficient Sign Language interpreters, coupled with teaching aids, as in visual information; videos, maps, charts and diagrams is critical.

An inclusive curriculum should be learner-centred, thus being flexible, adaptable and offers an alternative for multiple talents. Inclusive classrooms require a multifaceted approach. The model proposes that in order to provide multiple ways of classroom engagement, teachers can employ group work, presentations and individual work. For increased participation, teachers should provide platforms for peer tutoring, co-operative learning, activity-based (games, role-plays or drama). Group work should be accompanied by different types of learners to avoid stigmatisation, thereby encouraging meaningful participation of all learners. Further, additional tasks and time for slow learners to process information and complete work, followed by frequent feedback to measure progress could be helpful. Also important is to allow open-ended discussions, dialogues and pre-teach challenging terminology and concepts. Assessment should avoid the grading system at all time, that is labelling, sorting and categorisation which are geared towards selection and certification. Learners should be provided with spaces to express what they have learnt in different ways because they differ in expressing what they know. Such skills can be oral, written or non-verbal as in drawings, including self-assessment strategies. Assessment should also accommodate acquisition of skills as opposed to the subject-based academic performance. Lastly, monitoring should be

done both at the district and school level. The district-based support should monitor teachers' practices and offer on-going training for compliance. At a school level, teachers should have spaces for reflection on their work for equitable education.

In conclusion, Figure 7.1 drew on the research findings, and the theoretical and empirical literature, and has indicated the focus of inclusive education in practice. This finding further serves as a guide for the proposed teachers' model for teachers' inclusive practices.

7.2 The proposed Teachers' Inclusive Practices Model



The proposed model in Figure 7.2 has four interactive components. These are the learners, being responsible for constructing their own learning while the teacher is the facilitator of

the learner-centred curriculum, visual learning materials and inclusive assessment. These components are complimentary, enhancing a proper inclusive learning environment for learners living with visual impairment and deafness. The findings revealed that the education system does not accommodate these learners, where teaching and learning remain a top-down approach with a rigid traditional teacher-centred curriculum. Mugambi (2017) argues that where learners are passive, the teacher is responsible for transmitting knowledge to them, hence having more power to determine the content of the subject and ways of teaching. There is high possibility that some learners could be excluded during both teaching and learning processes, while written teaching aids could compromise learners' engagement and understanding. With its interactive components, the model suggests learner-centred support as allowing them to learn in their own way, that is owning their learning and constructing their knowledge. The model views teachers as facilitators in the classroom, agents of change, who are responsible for curriculum and planning and designing differentiated assessments. They coordinate these four integrated components in the best interest of the child. Mokoetle (2012) in 2.2.5.2 emphasises the role of the teacher in supporting learners to discover the learning content and solving problems. Thus the proposed components are geared towards opening equal opportunities for these learners in this particular context. These proposed components can be better understood through the Inclusive Pedagogy theory which advocates equal opportunities for all irrespective of learners differences. This study lays the foundation on the complexities of inclusive pedagogy. Inclusive pedagogy could be understood differently and many factors such as context and underlying philosophical assumptions influence its conceptualisation. These variables influence approaches to teaching and learning. These teaching approaches should focus on and provide the learner with the opportunity to be part of the teaching and learning processes. Thus Inclusive Pedagogy influences how learning is facilitated.

7.3 Conclusion

On the basis of the findings, the literature and theoretical review, the proposed teachers' inclusive practices model encourages inclusive classroom practices for effective implementation of the LIEP 2018, especially in the context of learners living with hearing impairment and deafness. The LIEP aims to reduce the educational inequalities that exist in the educational context by improving on accessibility and participation. The existing policy lacks practical implementation.

This study has revealed inclusive education as a multi-faceted phenomenon requiring an implementation plan, thus posing challenges. The policy goals are always ambitious and ambiguous, resulting in a complex and fragmented implementation. This fragmented implementation is characterised by lack of resources, lack of teachers' pedagogic skills and teachers' attitudes and beliefs, thus constraining measurement of outcomes against the policy expectations. The classroom practices are detached from the policy stipulation; they are more teacher-centred and disregard learner differences, further exacerbating the segregation and marginalisation.

Consequently, there is poor attendance and performance and ultimately, disallowing learners to complete the school cycle. There are also shortcomings of the LIEP 2018 relating to context. A one-size fits all approach to inclusion distorts the policy goals. As such, the policy should be understood in different contexts and work on teachers' attitudes and beliefs. When teachers understand inclusion, this automatically influences their attitudes and perceptions and the decision made in their classrooms. If understood, the policy would be easily implemented. Also, consultation is very important to tap into teachers' skills and knowledge which shape the policy process. Inclusive education has been subjected to many criticisms. Inclusive education needs teachers for policies and mobilising resources. Without trained teachers, policy intentions become frustrating and overwhelming. Through the lens of the

inclusive pedagogical theory, inclusive education requires the support of the broader spectrum of society: parents, teachers and the government. Finally, we need a more integrated system which includes learners' voices.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

08-Dec-2021

Dear Ms Matseliso Mohoebi

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Using a critical analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) to explore teachers' inclusive practices.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2021/1666/21

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

205 Nelson Mandela
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401
9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za



Appendix B: A request letter to the MOET district office to conduct research

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

POLICY STUDIES IN EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education and Training of Lesotho

Senior Education Officer

P.O. Box 12

Leribe 300

Lesotho

17 August 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

A REQUEST TO CONDUCT A PHD RESEARCH STUDY IN ONE SCHOOL IN LERIBE DISTRICT.

My name is Matseliso Mohoebi (student number-2009125895), a PhD student in the Division of Policy Studies in Education at the University of the Free State, School of Education Studies. I wish to request your permission to collect data from one secondary school in the Leribe district for my PhD research, whose topic is: **Using a critical analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) to explore teachers' inclusive practices**".

This research will be based on two research instruments: collage group portraits and discussion with selected teachers to understand how they demonstrate inclusive practices in their classrooms and online semi-structured interviews with inclusive education personnel at the Ministry of Education, Leribe district, which will consist of the District Resource Teacher, Special Education Regional Inspector, Special Education Unit (Maseru –

headquarters). The collage group portraits discussion will take approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes and each interview will take 45 to 60 minutes. The main criterion in selecting these participants is their knowledge of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018; their expertise in inclusive education and because they are charged with implementation of the policy thus their contributions will add value to my study and help me achieve the aim of this thesis.

The aims of the study will be communicated and all potential risks and benefits related to the study. The participation in this study is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time should they feel that they cannot continue. Data collected from the respondents will be treated anonymously and all information obtained during the course of this study will be kept strictly confidential; no names will be mentioned in the research findings.

If you have any queries or questions you want to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me at **+266 62210200** or email me at **mohoebi@gmail.com**.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Matseliso Mohoebi

Appendix C: Ministry of Education and Training Research Approval Letter



**LERIBE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICE
P.O. BOX 12, LERIBE 300**

24 September 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir / Madam

Data Collection for PhD Research Study

This is serves to confirm that Ms Matseliso Mohoebi studying is for her PhD with the University of the Free State and has been granted permission to collect data in schools of her choice in the district of Leribe. Kindly be of assistance to her.

Thank you.

Sincerely

Motlatsi Mosoang (Mr)
District Education Manager – Leribe



TELEPHONE: 22400210/22401360

FAX: 22400022

Appendix D: A letter of request to the Principal to conduct research

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

POLICY STUDIES IN EDUCATION

The School Principal

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTION LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Matseliso Mohoebi, a PhD student in the Policy Studies in Education Division at the University of The Free State. I wish to request your permission to collect data from your school on the research study entitled: **“A critical analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)” to explore teachers’ inclusive practices.**

This research will be based on two research instruments: collage group portraits and discussion with selected teachers to understand how they demonstrate inclusive practices in their classrooms and online semi-structured interviews with inclusive education personnel at the Ministry of Education, Leribe district, which will consist of the District Resource Teachers, Special Education Regional Inspectors. The collage group portraits discussion will take approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes and each interview will take 45 to 60 minutes. The main criterion in selecting these participants is their knowledge of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018; their expertise in inclusive education and because they are charged with implementation of the policy thus their contributions will add value to my study and help me achieve the aim of this thesis.

The participation in this study is voluntary. Data collected from the respondents will be treated anonymously and all information obtained during the course of this study will be kept strictly confidential; no names will be mentioned in the research findings.

If you have any queries or questions you want to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me at **+266 62210200** or email me at **mohoebi@gmail.com**.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Matseliso Mohoebi

Appendix E: Information sheet for participants

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

POLICY STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Dear Research Participant,

Information about a PhD research study

My name is Matseliso Alice Mohoebi, a PhD student in the Policy Studies in Education at the University of the Free State. I am doing a research entitled: **“A critical analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) to explore teachers’ inclusive practices.”**

This research involves collage portraits group and discussion and interviews with selected participants in your school and Ministry of Education. My main criterion to select participants is their knowledge of the inclusive education policy and are charged with its implementation.

I am kindly requesting permission to conduct this research study in your school where I will conduct, for a period of between one and three months, collage portraits group and discussion with the teachers and Ministry of Education inclusive education staff members and therefore would be grateful if would agree to participate.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name and identity and that of the school will be kept completely confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

DATA

All data will be stored in a safe place and will follow all the University’s policy and guidelines on how to keep the data safe.

RISKS AND BENEFITS/PAYMENT

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. You will not be paid for participating in the study. Any information picked up by the researcher during the research will not have any impact on your work. Benefits of the research will be a contribution to the current discourses on inclusive education, globally and in the context of Lesotho while for teachers, the study will help to expand their knowledge and skills of what makes an inclusive environment through exchange of ideas while at the same time inform the policy makers in their decisions and enhance the existing policy.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any concerns about participation, or any questions that you would like to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me here: Mohebi@gmail.com OR OR 00266 62210200

Appendix F: Consent form to the participants

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, the undersigned,

_____ (*participant's full names to be included*), (the "**Participant**")

Confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the

_____ (the "**Study**") in
relation to

and which Study is being conducted by

(*insert the name of the researcher*), (the "**Researcher**").

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that—

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;

2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and de-identified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the *insert specific data collection method*.

Full Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant: _____ Date:

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s):

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date:

Appendix G: Collage activity for the teachers

The purpose of this session is to introduce the participants to a collage activity before inviting them to make their own collages related to the research focus.

The collage activity involves the participation of **10** teachers with 3-5 years of teaching experience in mainstream classrooms and the session will take 1 hour 30 minutes:

Phase 1: Brief introduction of the collage

In this session, the participants are introduced to;

- What a collage is?
- How to do a collage.

The researcher then shows the participants examples of previous collages and allows them to take few minutes to ask questions, seek clarity and make comments.

Phase 2: Set up for small group collage activity

The researcher give participants instructions for forming two groups of (5) teachers.

The researcher will distribute collage materials to the groups (A4 papers, magazine, Sketch pens/pencils, scissors, glue stick, markers and note pad)

Phase 3: Creating the collages

Each group makes a collage using pictures, words or symbols from the magazines provided.

They are also encouraged to create their own pictures or use own words to create their collages as well as making a brief notes on what they are trying to represent in the note pad provided.

The following prompt is used: **“Create collages showing classroom practices that demonstrate your understanding of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)”**

Phase 4: Sharing collage

The researcher gives instructions to the participants groups to share the collages that they have made.

Groups reassemble and invite another group to explain their collage to the other and each group takes 10 minutes to present their collage.

Then interchangeably, each group responds to questions or comments from the other group through the facilitation of the researcher.

Phase 5: Reflection on the collage (could be oral or written)

The purpose of this exercise is to allow the participants to reflect about the sessions they participated in such as collage.

They are given 10 minutes to reflect on their participation and the researcher as the facilitator could use the following prompt: **“Write down what comes to mind about your participation in the collage activity”**

The following guidelines will also be used to guide the participants’ reflection.

- Write about today’s session
- Write about how you felt
- Write about your experiences
- Use ‘I’/my’ language, for example, “In today’s session, I...”
- “Today I have experience....”
- Please write in language of your choice.

(Adapted from Khanare 2015: 434)

Thank you very much for your participation.

The main research question for the study is;

- How do teachers’ practices demonstrate their understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school?

The following sub-questions will help answer the main question:

- How is inclusive education conceptualised globally and contextualised in Lesotho?
- What is the Lesotho policy framework for inclusive education and the prominence of the *LIEP* of 2018 in this framework?
- What are teachers’ inclusive practices through the lens of the *LIEP* of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho

- What suggestions could be made to enhance teachers' inclusive practices with the availability and clarity of the *LIEP* of 2018?

Appendix H: Focus group discussion with teachers

This discussion is infused in the collage processes thus the purpose of this activity is to have discussion with 10 teachers in one selected mainstream secondary school in the Leribe district before we discuss how a collage is used to explore classroom practices that demonstrate teachers' understanding of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018).

This is a 1 hour and 30 minutes session which will incorporate the following activities:

- a. Welcome remarks
- b. Ground rules
- c. Questions to be asked

a. Welcome remarks

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study to share your experiences and insights on how your practices demonstrate your understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school. I am Matseliso Mohoebi, PhD student at The University of Free State.

b. Ground rules

- There are no wrong answers, just different views
- Our answers will differ, we must feel free to share those different activities, all answers are helpful for the study, whether negative or positive
- The activity will be video recorded to capture all responses
- To ensure confidentiality, names of participants will not be used in study, pseudonyms will be used to mask identity of participants. The nature of a focus group is that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. However, as a research, I will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data and ensure participants understand issues of confidentiality. That is, they must maintain confidentiality of the research data and respect the privacy of their fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.
- Your names are place on the name cards for purposes of remembering each other as we go through this activity together.
- The participants will then introduce themselves following these prompt: **“Tell us your name, the class you and your teaching experience”**

c. Questions to for discussion with teachers:

Objective 3: What are teachers' inclusive practices through the lens of the *LIEP* of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho?

- What are your views about inclusive education?
- Are you aware of the existence of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)? If Yes, What is your belief about the policy? If not, (the researcher will explain the policy and its implications). Then a follow up question: What do they think about the policy? Do they think it will work?
- Does the school have the inclusion policy? Does their mission statement incorporate inclusion? How involved are you in the formulation of these?
- What teaching approaches and assessment methods do you use for the diverse learners in your classrooms? How do you adapt the curriculum to be inclusive of all?
- What challenges do you experience?

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

Appendix I: Interview questions for the Special Education Manager

The purpose of this interview is to have discussion with the Special Education Manager in the Leribe district to understand the level of support that the MOET office gives to teachers for implementation of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018).

This is a 1 hour and 30 minutes session which will incorporate the following activities:

- a. Welcome remarks
- b. Ground rules
- c. Questions to be asked

a. Welcome remarks

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study to share your experiences and insights on how your practices demonstrate your understanding of *the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)* in a secondary school. I am Matseliso Mohoebi, PhD student at The University of Free State.

b. Ground rules

- There are no wrong answers, just different views
- Our answers will differ, we must feel free to share those different responses and experiences, all answers are helpful for the study, whether negative or positive
- The activity will be voice recorded to capture all responses
- To ensure confidentiality, names of participants will not be used in study
- The participants will then introduce themselves following these prompt: **“Tell us your name, your position and experience in the same position”**

c. QUESTION TO BE DISCUSSED:

Objective 3: What are teachers’ inclusive practices through the lens of the *LIEP* of 2018 in secondary schools of Lesotho?

- What is your belief about the policy?

- Has the policy been passed on and explained to all stakeholders? How does their involvement help teachers in the implementation? Who else is/not involved and why? What are their roles?
- What kind of support do teachers get in the implementation of the policy? Any continuous professional development to help them in teaching? Any resources that schools get to help in implementing the policy effectively?
- In what way does the policy and support provided help teachers' inclusive practices? If there are any resources in place, like infrastructure, teaching aids?
- How does the LIEP 2018 inhibit the teachers' inclusive practices?
- What strategies do you have in place to strengthen policy and teachers' inclusive practices?
- Any there any other ideas about how the LIEP 2018 can/should inform teachers' inclusive practices, especially in this secondary school where you have learners living hearing impairment and deafness?
- Are there any policy reviews on the LIEP? If yes, what do they implicate?

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix J: Language Editing Certificate

The National University of Lesotho

Telephone: +266 22340601

Fax: +266 22340000



P.O. Roma 180

Lesotho

Faculty of Humanities

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited the manuscript with the title: *Using a Critical Analysis of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) to Explore Teachers' Practices*.

I am an English language practitioner, a professional editor and proofreader with academic writing and editing skills as well as scholarly peer-reviewing experience, based at the above-mentioned institution. Should there be any queries, please feel free to contact me for clarity.

I look forward to your usual co-operation, thus thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully



Mokhoele Aaron Hala-hala (PhD)
Senior Lecturer and Co-ordinator of the Communication & Study Skills Unit
The Department of English
The National University of Lesotho
P. O. Roma 180
ma.hala-hala@nul.ls
mokhoeleahalahala@gmail.com
Cell +266 58403924/63832503

