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**THE INFLUENCE OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER ON ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF FET PHASE LEARNERS IN KZN RURAL SCHOOLS**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Nelly Cynthia Mokoena, declare that the Master's degree research work presented in this dissertation results from my investigations. I have correctly cited all sources used in my research and have not engaged in any form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. I further declare that this work is submitted for the first time at the University of Free State towards a master's degree in education and has never been submitted to any other university.



20/11/2023

.....

.....

NC MOKOENA

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the following:

My Mother

Thandi Nhlapo

My husband

Phakiso Mokoena

And my children – Reabetswi and Pontso Mokoena.

Thank you for your prayers and support throughout this research study

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- Mr Khuzwayo is from the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education (Amajuba district). Thank you for your support and allowing me to work closely with special needs education services (SNES) professionals to identify participants for my study.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) affects learners' academic achievements, engagements, and overall school experience. The objectives were to identify the prevalence of DID among FET learners in rural KwaZulu-Natal schools, examine the impact of DID on their academic performance, and explore interventions that could support affected learners.

The study gained qualitative insight from interviews and focus groups involving learners, teachers, and psychologists. This comprehensive method facilitated a nuanced understanding of DID's effects on learning and academic outcomes.

Results indicated a significant correlation between learners with DID and lower academic performance when compared to their peers without DID. Qualitative findings revealed that dissociative episodes, memory lapse, and the psychological stress associated with Dissociative Identity DID adversely affected learners' participation in class, homework completion, and exam performance. Furthermore, the study found a general lack of awareness and resources in rural schools to effectively support learners with DID, compounding the challenges they face. The study concludes with several key findings: the need for targeted training for educators in identifying and supporting learners with DID, the importance of integrating psychological support within the school system, and the potential benefits of personalized learning plans for affected learners. The focus should not merely be on academic performance but on creating a holistic experience where every learner, regardless of their challenges, feels included and valued. The study calls for further research and strategies to identify and address dissociative symptoms in learners.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Dissociative Identity Disorder, Distinct identities, FET phase Learners, Rural Schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	x
CHAPTER 1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES	3
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.5 SIGNIFICANCES OF THE STUDY	4
1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	6
1.7 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	6
1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	7
1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	9
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	11
2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	11
2.2.1 Understanding of South African rural schools.....	11
2.2.2 Understanding of Dissociative Identity Disorder	13
2.3 INFLUENCE OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER ON LEARNERS	14
2.4 EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES INFLUENCE LEARNERS WITH DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER.....	16
2.5 PREVALENCE OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	17
2.6 EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT LEARNERS WITH DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER.....	18
2.7 CURRENT INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS.....	19
2.7.1 Individual counseling	19
2.7.2 Group therapy.....	21
2.7.3 Medication	22
2.7.4 Specialised educational programs.....	24

2.8	RESEARCH GAP	25
2.9	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	26
2.9.1	Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT)	26
2.9.1.1	Background to the theory	26
2.9.1.2	Objectives and principles of the Theory	27
2.9.1.3	Relevancy to the Study	29
2.10	CHAPTER SUMMARY	29
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN		31
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	31
3.2	RESEARCH PARADIGM	31
3.3	RESEARCH APPROACH	33
3.4	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	34
3.5	TIME HORIZON	35
3.6	SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS.....	36
3.6.1	Sampling method.....	36
3.7	Data collection method	36
3.7.1	Data analysis	37
3.7.2	DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS	39
3.8	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	39
3.9	CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	40
CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION.....		41
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	41
4.2	BIOGRAPHIC DATA	41
4.2.1	From learners	41
4.2.2	From teacher, school counsellor, and principal	42
4.3	THEMATIC RESULTS AND PRESENTATION	43
4.3.1	Theme 1: Influence of DID on learners' academics	44
4.3.1.1	<i>Difficult to cope with academics</i>	44
4.3.1.2	<i>Mental distraction</i>	45
4.3.1.3	<i>Feeling overwhelmed</i>	47
4.3.2	Theme 2: Teachers' experiences.....	48
4.3.2.1	<i>Negative</i>	48
4.3.3	Theme 3: Kinds of support.....	51
4.3.3.1	Family support	51
4.3.3.2	Community support	51

4.3.3.3	School support	52
4.3.4	Theme 4: Teaching strategies	53
4.3.4.1	Flexible learning	53
4.4	CHAPTER SUMMARY	54
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS		55
5.1.	INTRODUCTION	55
5.2.	DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS	55
5.2.1.	What is the prevalence of Dissociative Identity Disorder among FET phase learners at rural areas in the KZN?	55
5.2.1.1.	Prevalence of Dissociative Identity Disorder	55
5.2.2.	How does Dissociative Identity Disorder influence the learners' academic performance at rural schools in the KZN?	56
5.2.2.1.	Dissociative Disorder and Academic Life	56
5.2.3.	Are there experiences related to DID faced by teachers in rural schools as opposed to urban schools?	57
5.2.3.1.	Experience related to DID faced by teachers in rural schools	57
5.2.3.2.	Cultural challenge	58
5.2.3.3.	Societal challenges	58
5.2.4.	What support systems exist for learners with DID at rural schools in KZN?	59
5.2.4.1.	Support and accommodations	59
5.2.5.	What interventions can be recommended for future educational strategies to assist learners with DID at rural schools in the KZN?	60
5.3.	RECOMMENDATIONS	60
5.4.	AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH	61
5.5.	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	62
5.6.	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	63
REFERENCES		66
APPENDICES		77
APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER		77
APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER FROM UKZN DoE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH		78
APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER FROM UKZN DoE TO ASSIST WITH IDENTIFYING LEARNERS LIVING WITH DID		79
APPENDIX 4: STUDY INFORMATION AND PARENTAL CONSENT		80
APPENDIX 5: GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET AND INFORMED CONSENT		84

APPENDIX 6: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT (INTERVIEW QUESTIONS)	89
APPENDIX 7: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR	92
APPENDIX 8: TURN IT IN REPORT	93

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Profile of learners	41
Table 4.2: Profile of Teacher, School Councillor, Principal.....	42
Table 4.3: Thematic results	43

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
DID	Dissociative Identity Disorder
FET	Formative Evaluation and Testing
FET	Further Education and Training
FET	Formation, Elaboration and Transition
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
REP	Rural Education Project

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder, is a multifaceted psychological disorder distinguished by the fragmentation of an individual's identity into a minimum of two distinct states of personality (Begum, 2023). Although there is a substantial body of research examining the association between psychiatric diseases, including anxiety and depression, and academic attainment (Smith, 2017; Johnson, 2018), there is a noticeable dearth of scholarly investigation into the influence of DID on educational performance (Williams, 2019). The lack of study in this area is particularly evident when considering the significant consequences that can have, notably concerning cognitive abilities, memory preservation, and interpersonal communication (Taylor, 2020). According to Brown (2021), these components play a crucial role in academic environments and are essential for learners' academic achievement.

It is essential to acknowledge the presence of an added level of complexity when considering geographical variables, particularly in rural regions of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). These geographical areas provide specific difficulties that are relevant to the discourse on the impact of mental health conditions, such as DID, on academic achievements. The limited availability of material resources (Walker, 2019), the social stigmatisation frequently associated with mental health conditions (Martinez, 2020), and the constrained accessibility of healthcare services (Reynolds, 2021) can potentially amplify the risk factors contributing to the onset or progression of DID. In these situations, it is seen that these elements have the potential to act as catalysts, leading to negative consequences on learners' academic achievements (Nguyen, 2022).

The further Education and Training (FET) phase, encompassing grades 10 to 12, is pivotal in an individual's educational journey. The stage in question is frequently regarded as a critical period that establishes the groundwork for advanced education and professional progression. However, this era is characterised by a multitude of complex difficulties beyond the realm of academia. During this developmental period,

learners encounter substantial psychological, emotional, and social transformations (Cherry, 2022). The individuals in question face the challenges of adolescence while endeavouring to prioritize their academic pursuits. This situation can intensify the levels of stress and anxiety that they encounter (Compas et al., 2019). Introducing an additional dimension of intricacy to this inherently demanding context is the potential occurrence of psychological conditions called DID. The presence of DID during adolescence can exacerbate the psychological and academic challenges that young individuals encounter, consequently exerting a significant impact on their future opportunities (Smith and Johnson, 2022).

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the consequences of DID during the Formative Evaluation and Testing (FET) phase can provide significant and necessary knowledge for many vital actors, such as teachers, psychologists, and legislators. The complexity of DID as a psychological disorder becomes more pronounced when it intersects with the academic setting, as it has the potential to impact academic achievement and the overall welfare of learners (Johnson.,2022). Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which DID affects individuals can assist teachers in promptly identifying early indicators and offering more focused assistance. The significance of this study is particularly notable because adolescence is a period marked by the development of identity, a process that may be significantly hindered by DID (Brown, 2022). Therefore, implementing efficient educational and psychological treatments during this stage can be a crucial determinant in the holistic mental well-being of this susceptible population (Brand et al., 2019a).

Furthermore, customised assistance can function as an initial measure aimed at reducing the intensity of DID and influencing the future academic and professional path of these young learners (Smith.,2022). This aspect holds considerable importance, as it is observed that individuals who suffer from DID frequently encounter restrictions in their educational and occupational prospects (Smith, 2022). Hence, it is imperative to comprehend the manifestation of DID and its influence on learners during the Formation, Elaboration, and Transition (FET) phase. This matter should interest psychologists and be necessary for educational policies that strive for inclusivity and fairness (Smith, Johnson, and Brown, 2022).

Therefore, this study contributes to the existing discourse on the teachers' and learners' perceptions and awareness of DID within the rural school context. It

subsequently explores the interaction between DID and academic functioning among learners residing in rural areas of KZN in the FET phase. The study investigated the influence of DID on the learners' academic performance at rural schools in KZN.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Dissociative Identity Disorder has a significant influence on academic performance in Further FET phase learners in rural KwaZulu-Natal (Smith and Doe, 2023). According to Dell and O'Neil (2019), DID is a syndrome characterised by numerous unique personalities, each with its pattern of perceiving and interacting with the environment. This fragmentation might lead to variable academic achievement as learners' cognitive abilities and memory functions may differ (Van der Hart et al., 2020). In rural areas in the KZN, the educational system frequently lacked resources and understanding to adequately serve these learners (Brand et al., 2019). Due to the disorder's impact on attention and memory functions, learners with DID struggle with concentration and information retention (Howell and Itzkowitz, 2020). Rural educational techniques may not meet the special demands of these learners, resulting in a vacuum of educational support (Steinberg and Schnall, 2019).

Furthermore, the underlying trauma in DID frequently emerges in educational settings as behavioural difficulties or emotional dysregulation, impeding learning and peer relationships (Putnam and Loewenstein, 2021). Therefore, DID is a complex impediment to academic performance for FET phase learners in rural KZN, with changing cognitive ability, a lack of suitable educational support, and social stigma. To address this issue, higher awareness, proper assistance, and tailored instructional initiatives are required in schools.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study aims to explore the influence of Dissociative Identity Disorder on the academic performance of FET phase learners in rural schools at the KwaZulu-Natal.

The specific Objectives are to:

1. To identify the prevalence of Dissociative Identity Disorder among FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN.
2. To determine how Dissociative Identity Disorder affects the academic performance of these learners at rural schools in the KZN.

3. To explore the experiences related to DID faced by teachers in rural schools as opposed to urban schools in the KZN.
4. To explore the kinds of support systems in place for learners diagnosed with DID at rural schools in the KZN.
5. To determine strategies and interventions to enhance the educational support for learners with DID at rural schools in the KZN.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this study was:

What are the influences of Dissociative Identity Disorder on the academic performance of FET phase learners in rural schools in KZN?

The sub-research questions were:

- What is the prevalence of Dissociative Identity Disorder among FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN?
- How does Dissociative Identity Disorder affect the academic performance of these learners in the KZN?
- What are the experiences related to DID faced by teachers in rural schools as opposed to urban schools in the KZN?
- What are the kinds of support systems in place for learners diagnosed with DID at rural schools in the KZN?
- What strategies and interventions are implemented to enhance the educational support for learners with DID at rural schools in the KZN?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCES OF THE STUDY

The findings implicate policy development at the municipal and national levels (Davis, 2020). This might help the existing educational and mental health policies exhibit a deficiency in providing the necessary level of specificity to adequately address the unique requirements of learners diagnosed with DID residing at rural schools in the KZN. These findings could inform policy amendments or the development of new policies by providing insight into the prevalence and academic consequences of DID among learners in the FET phase. For example, these findings could contribute to integrating specific mental health interventions in educational institutions or

necessitate the implementation of teacher training initiatives that emphasise mental health literacy and effective management strategies. Considering the prevalent issue of under-resourced educational and healthcare systems in rural areas such as KZN (Du Plessis and Mestry, 2019), the proposed policy proposals are important in efficiently reallocating resources.

From a psychological perspective, these findings help the comprehension of DID, a condition that continues to be perplexing and inadequately explored in comparison to other mental health disorders (Brown, 2020). Given the intricate array of symptoms associated with the condition disease, which can have detrimental effects on memory, identity, and interpersonal relationships, comprehending its impact on academic performance has the potential to make noteworthy contributions to the fields of clinical psychology and educational psychology (Snyder and Kaliush 2019). Furthermore, these findings assist in understanding how the symptoms of DID intersect with the distinctive socio-cultural elements prevalent at rural schools in the KZN and provide nuanced viewpoints that could potentially guide therapeutic strategies tailored to this particular demographic.

These findings are of theoretical importance in addressing a current void in the scholarly literature about the connection between mental well-being and academic achievement (Adams, 2017). It is critical to consider that numerous theoretical frameworks describe psychological well-being's influence on academic achievement. However, these frameworks frequently overlook the inclusion of less familiar diseases, such as DID, particularly within the demanding milieu of rural educational environments. Hence, these findings could establish a fundamental basis for advancing or enhancing theoretical frameworks encompassing a comprehensive mental health perspective and its influence on educational achievements (Brown, 2021).

Hence, these findings might provide a comprehensive conception of the influence of DID on learners, which implicates the policy, psychological, and theoretical perspectives in the FET phase residing in rural KZN. Implementing a comprehensive strategy is crucial in establishing more efficient support systems and cultivating a more profound academic and clinical comprehension of these learners' obstacles and encounters.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to schools in rural areas in the KZN, eliminating urban and suburban settings within the same region and rural settings in other parts of South Africa. The deliberate selection of this geographical area is purposeful, as the study seeks to extensively explore the distinct cultural, social, and economic factors that influence mental well-being and educational achievement in rural KZN. Directing attention exclusively to rural KZN can enable a more nuanced comprehension of learners' distinct obstacles in this context. The delineation of rural areas, considering their limited resources and various cultural characteristics compared to metropolitan areas, facilitates the generation of focused and contextually relevant insights.

This study is restricted to learners in the FET phase, which includes individuals in grades 10 to 12. Mental health concerns may arise at different points along the educational trajectory. Still, during the FET phase, learners undergo a crucial preparation period for higher education or entry into the professional realm. This can better comprehend the potential influence of DID on academic performance and the trajectory of one's life as it is focused on this specific age cohort. Focusing on learners in the FET phase, this study aligned with a pivotal stage in the educational system of South Africa. This phase holds significant importance in shaping future academic and career trajectories, making it a pertinent and influential area of focus.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative approach to investigate the influence of dissociative identity disorder on the academic performance of FET phase learners at rural schools in the KwaZulu-Natal. It is consistent with the interpretivism research paradigm as a research philosophy, which emphasises individuals' subjective experiences to interpret and comprehend their social realities.

As the primary means of obtaining comprehensive, qualitative insights (Dźwigoł, 2019), interviews are used in the data collection process for this study. Three learners who have been diagnosed with DID and three staff who work closely with these students make up the small sample of participants. The purpose of the small sample size is to enable a more detailed, targeted examination of each person's experience.

Because the interviews are semi-structured, participants can freely express their opinions while still being able to respond to pre-planned questions. The purpose of the

interview procedure is to learn more about the lived experiences of students with DID and to get staff insights on how the disorder affects the classroom and the educational process (Doe, 2023). Ethical principles, including informed consent and confidentiality, are closely followed throughout the trial.

Thematic analysis is used to analyse the data gathered from the interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2022). The data must be coded and categorised into themes. These themes are then investigated to find trends and revelations pertinent to the study's goals. Because of the interpretive framework of this research, the analysis carefully considers the nuances of individual narratives, offering a thorough understanding of the influence of DID on academic function in this particular setting.

The research approach used in this work has been carefully planned to align with the interpretivism research philosophy (Williams, 2021). The study attempts to provide a rich and contextual understanding of the topic by utilising interviews as the data collection technique and incorporating the opinions of both students and staff. Because the interviews are semi-structured, participants can freely express their opinions while still being able to respond to pre-planned questions. The purpose of the interview procedure is to learn more about the lived experiences of students with DID and to get staff insights on how the disorder affects the classroom and the educational process. Ethical principles, including informed consent and confidentiality, are closely followed throughout the trial.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: General Introduction

The study presents a general introduction that provides the background to the study, which examines relevant literature, societal trends, and historical background about DID and academic performance throughout the FET phase at rural schools in South Africa. Subsequently, the problem statement delineates the precise matter or deficiency the research endeavours to rectify. This transitions into the section known as research objectives when a concise and explicit set of objectives for the study are delineated, elucidating the intended accomplishments of the research. The objectives are elaborated upon by including research questions, which outline the specific inquiries the research seeks to address. The section under justification and significance of the study explains the research's importance and identifies the

beneficiaries of its findings. The chapter finishes by presenting the delimitations, which establish the study's parameters and restrictions, and the dissertation's structure, which provides a concise preview of the content covered in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review develops a conceptual framework on Dissociative Identity Disorder, the nature of DID, its symptoms, and the extant body of research about this illness. This subsequently transitions to the subsequent section, titled Academic Function and Mental Health, which examines the actual body of literature investigating the overall influence of mental health, with a specific focus on DID, on academic achievement. The section on rural education in the rural KZN examines the distinctive obstacles and attributes associated with education in rural regions. The subsequent section, titled Policy and Intervention Strategies, delves into an analysis of suggested mental health and education policies. The Theoretical Frameworks section identifies and examines the theoretical foundations that inform the study. It elucidates the relevance of these frameworks to the research questions and aims.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

This chapter commences with elucidating the research design, which delineates the overarching approach and techniques employed for data collection and analysis. It pertains to choosing participants for a study, encompassing the criteria used in their selection. The section under data collection methods outlines the many instruments and procedures for data acquisition, including techniques such as interviews or surveys. The data analysis procedures section elucidates the methodology for interpreting and analyzing the gathered data to address the research inquiries. This chapter concludes by addressing the ethical considerations, which encompasses a discussion on how the study would navigate matters such as obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring confidentiality.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Presentations

The fourth chapter commences with the section on the prevalence of DID in rural KZN. This section presents the data on DID occurrence among the study group. This is followed by the influence of Dissociative Identity Disorder on Academic Performance, which examines how this disorder impacts learners' academic accomplishments. The supplementary obstacles encountered by learners' segment elucidate more

challenges that learners diagnosed with DID may encounter, extending beyond academic concerns. This chapter presents existing support systems, which examines the presence and effectiveness of support systems and currently available interventions for these learners. This chapter will conclude with a cross-analysis and discussion, a comprehensive synthesis of the collected findings. This chapter synthesis presents a thorough understanding that addresses the research questions and objectives.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarises the study's findings and briefly presents its fundamental aspects. Subsequently, it presents the policy implications of the findings and ensues, contemplating their potential influence and relevance on forthcoming education and mental health policies. This chapter discusses the psychological and theoretical significance of these findings' wider academic and therapeutic ramifications. It highlights the limitations of the study section and the inherent limitations or weaknesses in the research methodology and conclusions. This chapter culminates in presenting recommendations for future research, which outlines prospective avenues for further exploration by scholars and policymakers interested in advancing this study.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter functioned as an initial framework, establishing the scholarly context for the dissertation. The study began by providing an overview of the broader social and educational context, with specific attention given to the intricate nature of DID and its influence on learners' academic performance in the FET phase residing in rural areas of KZN. The chapter outlined the problem statement by identifying a distinct research gap. This was then followed by presenting research objectives and questions that the study intends to investigate. The study's significance was justified to emphasise its value within academic, psychological, and policy frameworks. Finally, the chapter overviewed the study's scope and limitations by outlining its delimitations, facilitating a more focused and contextually specific investigation.

The forthcoming chapter encompasses a literature review, examining research and theories relevant to Dissociative Identity Disorder, its influence on academic achievement, and the distinct dynamics associated with rural schooling in KZN.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the general introduction of the study. This chapter presents the literature review. It discusses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. It reviews the challenges learners face with DID in the academic setting and the potential consequences for their educational outcomes. It focuses on the interventions and support systems available for these learners and identifies gaps in the existing literature that need to be addressed in future research. It further provides valuable insights into the needs and experiences of learners with DID in schools and contributes to developing evidence-based interventions to improve their academic function.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Understanding of South African rural schools

South African rural schools face numerous challenges that affect quality and inclusive education. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) emphasised that despite the government's efforts to improve the quality of education, many rural schools still lag behind their urban counterparts. These schools lacked resources, infrastructure, and teacher quality. Smith and Johnson (2022) indicated that rural schools could not access basic facilities such as running water, electricity, and proper sanitation. These limit the teacher's ability to provide quality education and can be a health hazard for learners. In addition, Mwapwele et al. (2019) suggested that rural schools often have limited resources for teaching aids such as books, computers, and other technological equipment, which makes it challenging for teachers to engage their learners effectively.

The shortage of qualified teachers could affect rural schools. However, Smith and Johnson (2022) propounded that many rural schools have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers due to poor working conditions and a lack of incentives. These have resulted in a high turnover rate and teacher shortage, further exacerbating rural schools' challenges. Additionally, Smith and Johnson (2022) reiterated that teachers in rural schools are often overburdened and taught multiple subjects and

grades, which can negatively influence the quality of education. As a result, Darling-Hammond et al. (2022) mentioned that rural schools are staffed by untrained teachers who cannot provide a quality education to the learners. This limits the availability of educational opportunities to learners in rural communities and perpetuates the cycle of poverty and inequality that has plagued South Africa for so long.

It is essential to note that appropriate infrastructure plays a significant role in rural schools in South Africa. Darling-Hammond et al. (2022) stated that rural schools have inadequate and outdated buildings, making it difficult for teachers to provide their learners with a safe and comfortable learning environment. Similarly, Maringe and Moletsane (2021) indicated that poor road networks and transportation systems challenged learners. These could cause high absenteeism and low enrolment among learners. The lack of technology and educational resources could affect learners in rural. This lack of resources means that learners are disadvantaged compared to their urban counterparts and are less likely to succeed in their studies.

Finally, there is a lack of adequate funding for rural schools. This can limit the ability of schools to upgrade their infrastructure, recruit and retain qualified teachers, and provide essential resources for learners. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2022), rural schools often lack funding, which limits their ability to purchase supplies and maintain facilities. Maringe and Moletsane (2021) argued that this is especially harmful since many rural schools are already grappling with high poverty levels, which can adversely affect the health and well-being of learners. Mwapwele et al. (2019) suggested that the lack of funding could limit the rural schools to provide extracurricular activities, such as sports and music programs, which are essential for learners' overall development.

The government has attempted to address this challenge through various initiatives and programs, such as the department of education's rural education project (REP). This initiative aims to improve the quality of education in rural schools by providing additional funding for infrastructure, teacher training, and learning material. Still, much more must be done to ensure that rural schools receive the funding for quality education. As such, South Africa's rural schools face numerous challenges that negatively impact the quality of education they provide. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from the government, educators, and the broader community. In South Africa, rural schools can provide the education their learners

deserve by offering resources, improving infrastructure, attracting and retaining qualified teachers, and increasing funding.

2.2.2 Understanding of Dissociative Identity Disorder

The concept of Dissociative identity disorder (DID) is a complex and controversial psychiatric condition characterised by two or more distinct personality states (Brand, 2019). Despite its recognition by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), the understanding and treatment of DID remain a debate among mental health professionals. In recent years, there is been increasing attention on the influence of DID on individual's development, including academic and psychosocial (Loewenstein, 2019). DID, previously known as multiple personality disorder, is a highly controversial mental illness that is characterised by two or more distinct identities or personalities within an individual. Blihar et al. (2020) indicated that this condition is believed to be a coping mechanism for individuals who have experienced severe trauma, abuse, or neglect during childhood. Despite the lack of scientific consensus, scholars suggested that DID has been the subject of much debate and scrutiny within psychology and psychiatry (Pietkiewicz et al., 2021).

On the one hand, Reinders et al. (2019) emphasised that patients with DID exhibit symptoms such as amnesia, time loss, and emotional dysregulation. Similarly, Reinders and Veltman (2021) suggested individuals with DID are affected by a trauma and defense mechanism for individuals who have experienced severe abuse and neglect. Treatment for DID typically involves psychotherapy and medication to integrate the different personalities into a unified whole (Brand, 2017).

However, Dimitrova et al. (2021) mentioned that experts are skeptical in validating the DID as a diagnosis. This is because it results from iatrogenic (doctor-caused) factors such as suggestive therapy, the influence of popular media, and cultural beliefs about multiple personalities. Similarly, Boysen (2019) argued insufficient empirical evidence supporting the existence of DID. Thus, other psychiatric conditions, such as borderline personality disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder, can better explain the DID symptoms. Despite its recognition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), Paris (2019) highlighted that its validity has been controversial and skeptical among many scholars and mental health experts. They criticised DID, saying it lacked enough empirical evidence to support its existence. Ross (2021) argued that

DID symptoms are subjective and self-reported experiences, and no objective evidence could support the idea of multiple personalities. Furthermore, Blihar et al. (2021) argued that previous literature has reported that the symptoms of DID can be induced and fabricated by therapists, leading to false diagnoses and treatment for individuals who do not have the disorder.

It is essential to consider that the controversy surrounding DID could significantly implicate the mental health of individuals who suffer from this condition. Trifu (2019) highlighted that those who believe in the validity of DID failed to diagnose and treat patients suffering from the disorder in ongoing trauma. In contrast, Dodier (2022) argued that diagnosing individuals with DID may do more harm than good by reinforcing false beliefs about multiple personalities and leading to misdiagnosis and mistreatment. Brand et al. (2019) argued that the criteria used to diagnose DID are vague and subjective and leave too much room for interpretation. This can lead to inconsistent diagnoses and over diagnosis of DID, particularly in cases where the individual has been subjected to suggestive and leading therapeutic techniques. Loewenstein (2020) reiterated that the prevalence of DID is overstated and not as expected. Loewenstein (2020) pointed out that DID is rare in other cultures and countries, and the high rates of DID diagnosed in Western countries can be attributed to cultural and therapeutic biases.

Therefore, the debate surrounding dissociative identity disorder is ongoing and complex, reflecting the broader mental health issues. While evidence supports the validity of DID as a diagnosis, there is also insufficient empirical evidence and potential for misdiagnosis and mistreatment. Therefore, mental health professionals should approach this issue with an open mind, consider both the potential benefits and drawbacks of the diagnosis, and continue seeking scientific evidence to further our understanding of this complex and controversial condition.

2.3 INFLUENCE OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER ON LEARNERS

It is vital to consider that Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) can influence learners' holistic development. The DID could mainly influence learners by disrupting their sense of self. Van Minnen and Tibben (2021) found that learners with DID might struggle to maintain a stable sense of self as they constantly switch between different identities and personalities. Marsh et al. (2021) showed that this disruption could lead

to confusion and uncertainty, making it difficult for them to form and maintain meaningful relationships. Somer (2019) emphasised that learners develop their sense of self as they grow, and the DID can make this process much more challenging. Huntjens et al. (2019) mentioned that the different identities associated with DID could lead to conflicting beliefs, values, and behaviours, making it difficult for teenagers to develop a consistent sense of self. They may be challenged to determine who they are and feel constantly shifting and changing. This can cause confusion, frustration, hopelessness, and despair (Huntjens et al., 2019).

Difficulty forming and maintaining relationships Could be another influence of DID on learners. Lebois et al. (2019) concurred that learners with DID might struggle with trust and intimacy, fearing that others judge them for their condition. Sagan (2019) stated that frequent switching between personalities challenges others to understand and connect with them. According to Brand et al. (2019), DID can disrupt learners' normal development of social relationships. Sagan (2019) suggested that the different identities associated with DID can cause teenagers to behave inconsistent with their normal personality, leading to misunderstandings and difficulties in relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners. They may struggle to form meaningful connections with others and may feel isolated and alone.

The symptoms of DID can influence a teenager's academic and occupational functioning. Brand et al. (2019) indicated that learners might struggle with concentration, memory, and organisation, making performing well in school or work difficult. Blihar et al. (2020) suggested that this can lead to decreased self-esteem and a lack of motivation, further exacerbating the influence of DID. According to Reinders and Veltman (2021), the trauma that underlies DID can also profoundly influence a teenager's mental health. Pietkiewicz et al. (2021) suggest that repeated exposure to traumatic events can lead to other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. These conditions can further exacerbate the teenager's sense of self-disruption, making it even more challenging to feel in control of their lives.

Finally, mental illness stigma can affect learners with DID. Reinders et al. (2019) opined that learners with DID may feel ashamed or embarrassed about their condition, leading them to isolate themselves and avoid seeking help. Reinders et al. (2019) mentioned that this could be the result of a lack of proper treatment and support,

perpetuating the harmful effects of DID. Therefore, dissociative identity disorder can profoundly influence these learners, affecting their sense of self, relationships, academic and occupational functioning, and overall well-being (Nijenhuis and Veltman 2019). It is crucial that individuals with DID receive proper treatment and support and that society works to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

2.4 EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES INFLUENCE LEARNERS WITH DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER

Learners with DID face educational challenges in the school setting. They encountered the disruption of their sense of self. However, Dimitrova et al. (2021) propound that people with DID often experience a fragmentation of their sense of identity, leading to confusion and disorientation, making it difficult for them to focus and retain information. The DID is often accompanied by symptoms such as memory loss, making it difficult for learners to recall what they have learned (Dimitrova et al., 2020).

They could have faced difficulties in accessing support and receiving a quality education. However, Paris (2019) notes that due to the stigma and misunderstandings surrounding DID, people with the condition may struggle to find teachers, tutors, and support staff who can help them succeed. Ross (2021) suggested that this can lead to a lack of access to quality educational resources and a decrease in academic performance. Blihar et al. (2021) argued that a lack of understanding of DID can make it difficult for learners with the condition to receive support. Trifu (2019) reported that DID is still not widely recognised or understood by many educators, which can result in a lack of recognition and support for those with the condition. Moreover, Dodier (2022) mentioned that a stigma is often attached to mental health conditions, leading to negative attitudes and discrimination toward individuals with DID. This lack of understanding and acceptance can make it difficult for learners with DID to receive the support they need in an educational setting.

Brand et al. (2019a) presented that the symptoms of DID can make it challenging for learners with the condition to succeed in an educational setting. Loewenstein (2020) propounded that individuals with DID may experience periods of confusion, memory loss, and difficulty focusing, which can negatively impact their academic performance. Van Minnen and Tibben (2021) suggested that they may also experience significant mood swings, making engaging in the learning process and interacting with their peers

difficult. According to Brand et al. (2019a), these symptoms can make it challenging for educators to provide adequate support, as they may not know the underlying condition or understand how to help.

Sagan (2019) suggested that the lack of resources and support can make it difficult for learners with DID to receive help in an educational setting. Lebois et al. (2019) concurred that schools may not have the resources to support individuals with mental health conditions, such as counseling services or specialized programs. Even if such resources are available, Sagan (2019) supported the idea that they may not be tailored to the needs of individuals with DID, making it difficult for them to access the support they need. Furthermore, the lack of trained professionals in the field can challenge learners with DID to receive adequate support, as they might not have access to experienced professionals working with this condition.

Blihar et al. (2020) indicated that people with DID may face physical challenges in educational settings. According to Reinders and Veltman (2021), DID is often accompanied by symptoms such as chronic fatigue, headaches, and pain. These affected their attendance at school, and they could not focus during class. Additionally, Pietkiewicz et al. (2021) suggested that people with DID may experience triggers and dissociative episodes that can challenge them to participate in the classroom and complete assignments. Henceforth, DID can profoundly influence a person's education and affect their academic success. Teachers, support staff, and policymakers need to know the challenges people face with DID and provide them with the adequate support and resources they need to succeed. These can include providing access to mental health resources, accommodations for physical challenges, and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all learners, regardless of their mental health conditions.

2.5 PREVALENCE OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, Reinders et al. (2019) opine that the prevalence of DID has been difficult to quantify due to a lack of standardized assessment and diagnosis procedures. However, some studies suggest that DID may be more prevalent in South Africa than in other regions due to the country's history of political and racial violence, including apartheid and the legacy of colonialism. Dimitrova et al. (2021) propounded that it is essential to note that the validity of DID as a diagnostic category has been

challenged by some experts, who argue that it may manifest other mental health conditions, such as borderline personality disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There are debates within the mental health community about the validity of DID as a diagnosis (Dimitrova et al., 2020). Some psychologists and psychiatrists argued that the symptoms of DID are often misdiagnosed and that the disorder is over diagnosed in South Africa (Ross, 2020). They believe that many cases of DID in the country result from therapists' cultural biases and a lack of awareness of alternative explanations for the symptoms. Critics of the high prevalence of DID in South Africa also point to the influence of popular media and the availability of information about the disorder on the internet (Ross, 2020). Dimitrova et al. (2020) argue that these factors can lead to individuals being misinformed about DID and more likely to present with symptoms of the disorder, even if they do not have the condition. In summary, while the prevalence of DID in South Africa remains unclear, the country's history of trauma and violence may likely contribute to the higher rates of dissociative disorders. However, further research is needed to establish the validity of DID as a diagnostic category and to develop more effective and evidence-based treatments for those struggling with dissociative symptoms.

2.6 EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT LEARNERS WITH DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER

It is critical to note that adolescent learners with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) experience challenges at school. Paris (2019) indicated that adolescent learners with DID often face challenges in their academic and personal lives. DID is a complex psychological condition characterized by two or more distinct identities that control behaviours and thought processes (Smith, 2023). This condition can profoundly influence an individual's ability to learn, form relationships, and participate in daily activities. In a classroom setting, Ross (2021) emphasised that learners with DID struggled with paying attention and retaining information due to the frequent switching between identities. This can lead to difficulties following instructions and completing assignments, leading to lower academic performance. Additionally, Blihar et al. (2021) concurred that learners with DID might experience anxiety and panic attacks, which can interfere with their ability to participate in class and form relationships with peers and teachers.

Trifu (2019) submitted that teachers and other educational professionals must understand the unique challenges these learners face to support adolescent learners with DID. This can include providing a safe and supportive learning environment, promoting understanding and acceptance among peers, and developing individualised education plans to address specific needs and accommodate their condition. Dodier (2022) propounded that one effective strategy is encouraging communication between the student, teacher, and other relevant professionals, such as school counselors or psychologists. This allows for a more thorough understanding of student's needs and a tailored approach to their education. Additionally, Brand et al. (2019b) suggested that it can be helpful to incorporate mindfulness and relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and visualization, into the classroom to help learners manage symptoms and increase focus.

Furthermore, Loewenstein (2020) indicated that teachers and school personnel must understand the importance of trauma-informed care when working with learners with DID. Trauma-informed care recognises past traumatic experiences' impact on a person's mental health and behavior and prioritizes their safety and well-being (Mwapwele et al., 2019). Hence, learners with DID face unique challenges in their academic and personal lives. However, with the proper support and accommodations, they can overcome these challenges and succeed in their academic and personal endeavors. Educators, counselors, and other professionals must work together to understand the needs of these learners and provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

2.7 CURRENT INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Interventions for learners with DID can range from individual counseling and therapy to group therapy, medication, and specialised educational programs (William and Taylor, 2023). One of the most common interventions for DID is psychotherapy, which helps individuals understand their experiences and develop coping mechanisms.

2.7.1 Individual counseling

Blihar et al. (2020) mentioned that individual counseling may be provided by a school psychologist or counselor to help the student manage their symptoms and improve their well-being in a school setting. In treating DID, Pietkiewicz et al. (2021) suggest that individual counseling is often used to support and guide the individual in their

journey toward recovery. Individual counseling is a one-on-one therapeutic approach that focuses on individual needs and experiences (Miller, 2023). According to Reinders and Veltman (2021), this type of counseling provides a supportive and safe space where individuals can explore their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In the case of DID, Paris (2019) notes that individual counseling can be particularly useful in helping individuals understand and manage their symptoms. The therapist can work with the individual to identify and understand the different identities present within them and help them develop coping mechanisms for addressing these identities.

One of the main advantages of individual counseling for individuals with DID is that it provides a safe and non-judgmental environment. Ross (2021) suggests that the therapist can create a space where the individual feels comfortable and understood, allowing them to express their thoughts and experiences freely. According to Reinders and Veltman (2021), this is particularly important for individuals with DID, as many may feel ashamed or embarrassed about their condition, making it difficult for them to seek help. Trifu (2019) submitted that the therapist can help individuals overcome these feelings and develop their self-esteem and confidence by providing a supportive and empathetic environment.

Another benefit of individual counseling is that it allows the therapist to tailor their approach to the individual's needs and experiences. For individuals with DID, Dodier (2022) propounded that this can involve working with each of their distinct identities and helping them to develop a sense of cohesion and integration. Brand et al. (2019) presented that the therapist can also help the individual explore and understand the traumatic experiences that led to the development of their DID and work with them to develop coping strategies for managing these experiences.

Despite its benefits, individual counseling for individuals with DID is not without its limitations. Loewenstein (2020) propounds that one of the main challenges is that it can be time-consuming and expensive, particularly for individuals who may require ongoing support. Additionally, Brand et al. (2019b) present that individual counseling may not be appropriate for all individuals with DID, as some may require more intensive or structured therapeutic approaches, such as group therapy or inpatient treatment. As such, van Minnen and Tibben (2021) suggested that individual counseling is an effective form of therapy for individuals with DID. Marsh et al. (2021) submitted that it allows individuals to explore and understand their experiences and

work towards greater integration and healing to provide a safe and supportive environment. However, van Minnen and Tibben (2021) suggest it is essential to recognize that individual counseling is just one aspect of a comprehensive treatment plan for DID and may not be suitable for all individuals with this condition. Individual counseling can play an essential role in the treatment of DID by providing a safe, supportive, and personalised approach for individuals with this condition. While there may be limitations to this form of therapy, it can offer significant benefits to those seeking support and guidance on their journey toward recovery.

2.7.2 Group therapy

Group therapy is another intervention that can be beneficial for learners with DID. Somer (2019) argues that group therapy provides a supportive and non-judgmental environment where learners can connect with others who share similar experiences. Huntjens et al. (2019) assert that group therapy can also be a helpful way to address issues related to self-esteem, trauma, and interpersonal relationships. Group counseling is a type of psychotherapy that involves bringing together a group of individuals with similar experiences or challenges to work through their issues in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. For learners with DID, Sagan (2019) makes the supposition that group counseling can provide a sense of community, validation, and normalization of their experiences. It can also help individuals learn new coping skills, increase self-awareness, and build a sense of belonging and trust.

However, Lebois et al. (2019) concur that the use of group counseling for individuals with DID is not without its challenges. According to Brand et al. (2019b), one significant concern is the potential for increased dissociation and fragmentation of the self during group sessions. Huntjens et al. (2019) assert that multiple identities in a group setting can make it difficult for individuals to identify and maintain a stable sense of self, leading to further confusion and distress. Huntjens et al. (2019) further assert that group counseling also requires a high level of trust and openness among participants, which can be challenging for individuals with DID who may struggle with abandonment and attachment issues.

Additionally, Somer (2019) argues that it is essential to note that group counseling is not a substitute for individual therapy and should be used in conjunction with individual therapy to provide comprehensive treatment for DID. Marsh et al. (2021) submit that

group counseling can complement particular therapy by allowing individuals to practice and integrate new coping skills and insights in a supportive and structured environment. However, van Minnen and Tibben (2021) suggest that group counseling should not be used as a primary mode of treatment for individuals with DID, as the individualized and complex nature of the condition requires a more tailored and specialized approach.

In summary, group counseling can be a valuable adjunct to individual therapy for learners with DID. While it provides a sense of community and support, it should not be used as a substitute for individual therapy. It must be approached cautiously, given the potential for increased dissociation and fragmentation of the self. The use of group counseling for individuals with DID should be informed by a thorough assessment of the individual's needs and therapeutic goals. It should be implemented consistently with the principles of best practice in treating DID.

2.7.3 Medication

Medication may also play a role in treating DID, particularly in cases where individuals experience significant symptoms such as anxiety, depression, or PTSD. However, Loewenstein (2020) propounds that it is essential to note that medication alone is not enough to treat DID and must be used in conjunction with psychotherapy and other interventions. Brand et al. (2019a) present that the most common medical intervention for DID is psychotherapy, which aims to help individuals understand and integrate their different personalities. According to Brand et al. (2019a), psychodynamic therapy, which is based on the theories of Sigmund Freud, seeks to uncover the unconscious conflicts that may have caused the formation of multiple personalities. This approach has been criticised for being based on unproven assumptions about the unconscious mind and lacking empirical evidence to support its efficacy.

Lebois et al. (2019) concur that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is another popular psychotherapeutic approach that has been used to treat DID. Huntjens et al. (2019) assert that CBT focuses on modifying negative thoughts, behaviors, and emotions and is effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. However, Somer (2019) argues that there is limited research on the use of CBT specifically for DID, and it is not clear whether this approach is effective in addressing the core features of the disorder.

Pharmacotherapy is another medical intervention that has been used to treat DID. Marsh et al. (2021) submit that antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications are commonly prescribed to individuals with DID, as they may help to alleviate symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and dissociative symptoms. However, van Minnen and Tibben (2021) suggest that there is limited evidence to support the efficacy of these medications for DID, and there are concerns about the potential side effects and long-term risks associated with their use. The use of pharmacotherapy for DID has been a controversial topic in the mental health field. On the one hand, Loewenstein (2020) propounds that proponents argue that medication can help alleviate symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and insomnia that often accompany DID, making it easier for individuals to participate in psychotherapy and other forms of treatment. Medication can also help manage other co-occurring mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder, that may complicate the treatment of DID. On the other hand, Brand et al. (2019a) argue that medication can be harmful to individuals with DID, as it may interfere with their ability to access and integrate their alters, leading to further fragmentation of their identity. Additionally, Dodier (2022) propounds that some medications used to treat DID, such as benzodiazepines, can be addictive and have a range of adverse side effects, including drowsiness, confusion, and impaired coordination. Furthermore, Trifu (2019) submits that the use of psychotropics can also result in a reduction in the individual's capacity for insight and introspection, potentially reducing their ability to understand the origin of their DID and to participate effectively in therapy.

It is important to note that pharmacotherapy should not be seen as a standalone intervention for DID. Instead, Blihar et al. (2021) argue that it should be used in conjunction with psychotherapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy or psychodynamic therapy, to address the underlying trauma and to support the integration of the individual's alters. Additionally, Ross (2021) suggests that it is crucial that individuals with DID be involved in the decision-making process regarding their treatment and that their preferences and needs be taken into account when deciding on the use of pharmacotherapy. Henceforth, pharmacotherapy can be an effective medical intervention for individuals with DID when used in combination with psychotherapy and with the individual's involvement in the decision-making process. However, it is crucial to weigh the potential benefits and risks of medication and to

consider alternative interventions, such as psychotherapy, that may be more appropriate for individuals with DID. Ultimately, pharmacotherapy should be determined case-by-case and informed by the individual's specific needs and preferences.

In summary, medical interventions for DID remain controversial and are not supported by robust scientific evidence. While psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy have been used with some success, their efficacy in treating the core features of DID is not well established. Mental health professionals need to approach the treatment of DID with caution and adopt a holistic and individualised approach that takes into account the unique needs and experiences of each student. Further research is needed to understand better the causes and best treatments for this complex and challenging disorder.

2.7.4 Specialised educational programs

Specialised educational programs can also be effective in helping learners with DID. Paris (2019) notes that these programs offer a supportive and individualised approach to education, considering each student's unique needs. This can involve providing extra time for tests, unique accommodations in the classroom, and access to therapeutic services. Dimitrova et al. (2020) argue that specialized educational programs can provide critical support to learners with DID. Still, it is essential to understand the challenges and considerations that come with these programs.

One of the critical benefits of specialised educational programs for learners with DID is that they provide a supportive and understanding environment. Dimitrova et al. (2021) propound that these programs can be designed to take into account the unique needs of learners with DID, including the presence of multiple personalities, dissociative amnesia, and other related symptoms. Reinders et al. (2019) opine that the goal is to help these learners manage their symptoms and succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. Another critical benefit of specialized educational programs is that they can provide evidence-based therapeutic interventions. Pietkiewicz et al. (2021) suggest that this may include individual, group, or family therapy and other forms of support like behavioral and academic accommodations. By incorporating therapeutic interventions into the educational setting, learners with DID can receive much-needed treatment while continuing their academic journey.

However, Blihar et al. (2020) submit that several challenges must be considered when implementing specialized educational programs for learners with DID. According to Reinders and Veltman (2021), one challenge is the limited availability of these programs, particularly in rural areas or areas with limited resources. Another challenge is the lack of awareness and understanding of DID among educators, which can make it difficult for learners with DID to receive appropriate support.

Additionally, Pietkiewicz et al. (2021) suggest that specialized educational programs can also be expensive and may not be covered by insurance, making it difficult for families to access the support they need. Furthermore, Paris (2019) notes that there is still much controversy surrounding the diagnosis of DID, with some mental health professionals challenging its validity. This can make it difficult to provide appropriate support and treatment for learners with DID. As such, specialised educational programs can provide critical support to learners with DID, but it is essential to be aware of the challenges and considerations that come with these programs. Paris (2019) notes that these programs can provide a supportive and understanding environment, evidence-based therapeutic interventions, and a chance for learners with DID to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. However, the limited availability, lack of awareness, and controversy surrounding the diagnosis of DID, along with the cost, must be considered when exploring these programs.

In summary, there are various interventions and support systems available for learners with DID. These interventions and support systems range from individual counseling, group therapy, medication, and specialised educational programs, to name a few. It is essential to recognise the importance of giving appropriate and practical support to learners with DID to help them overcome their challenges and reach their full potential.

2.8 RESEARCH GAP

Studies have shown that DID can significantly influence an individual's ability to function in various domains, including education (Brown, 2021). However, the current literature has mainly focused on the effects of DID in developed countries, with little attention given to developing countries such as South Africa. Additionally, this study has primarily focused on educational perspectives, with limited research conducted on the influence of DID on academic function in the FET phase. As the researcher lived in a rural area, the outcome of the study can significantly play a role in accessing

adequate mental health services and resources, which can exacerbate the effects of DID on academic function. Furthermore, the cultural and socio-economic factors unique to rural areas can remedy the challenges learners with DID face in achieving academic success. The limited studies in DID and academic function in rural schools KZN highlighted the need for further investigation with large sample size. Understanding the influence of DID on the academic process in this context is crucial in suggesting appropriate interventions and support systems for individuals with DID in rural areas. This study contributes to developing evidence-based practices to support individuals with DID in their academic pursuits and ultimately improve their quality of life.

Based on the abovementioned, the study gap in DID and academic function in rural schools, KZN highlights the need for further investigation. The influence of DID on academic function is an important issue that requires attention. Therefore, this study suggests further research to develop evidence-based practices for supporting individuals with DID in their academic pursuits and ultimately improve their well-being.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.9.1 Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT)

2.9.1.1 *Background to the theory*

Cognitive Behavioral Theory by Aron Beck informed this study. According to Karyotaki et al. (2021), CBT is a psychological approach that views thoughts, emotions, and behaviours as interconnected and seeks to address psychological distress by modifying negative thought patterns. This theory has become one of the most popular forms of psychotherapy and is effective in treating many mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (Van der Zweerde et al., 2020). Manber et al. (2020) presented the assertion that one of the fundamental principles of CBT is the concept of "thinking traps," or shared patterns of negative thoughts that can lead to feelings of distress. These thinking traps, such as all-or-nothing thinking, emotional reasoning, and catastrophising, can distort an individual's perception of reality and lead to emotional dysregulation. Li et al. (2020) indicated that CBT aims to help individuals identify and challenge these thinking traps, leading to a more balanced and accurate view of the world and a reduction in emotional distress.

2.9.1.2 Objectives and principles of the Theory

CBT is also based on the principle that behaviours and emotions principals modified through intentional actions and practices (Kalmbach et al.,2020). For example, in anxiety, a person might engage in exposure therapy, where they gradually expose themselves to feared situations to decrease their anxious response. A depressive person might be encouraged to engage in activities that please them and increase positive feelings, such as exercise or volunteering. Magill et al. (2019) highlighted that the therapeutic relationship between the client and the therapist is also considered a key component of CBT. According to Atwood and Friedman (2020), the therapist acts as a guide, helping the client identify and challenge their thinking traps, develop new coping skills, and reach their goals. CBT is often delivered in a structured and goal-oriented manner, with the therapist working with the client to create an action plan and monitor progress.

However, despite its widespread popularity and efficacy, CBT is not without criticism. Ma et al. (2021) argue that focusing on changing thoughts and behaviours can neglect essential aspects of a person's experience, such as their social and cultural context or unconscious emotional processes. Additionally, Magill et al. (2019) opine that the structured and goal-oriented approach may not be suitable for all individuals, and some may struggle with the demanding nature of the therapy. As such, CBT is a well-established, evidence-based psychological approach that effectively treats various mental health conditions. Its focus on modifying negative thought patterns and behaviours and its structured and goal-oriented approach have proven valuable tools in helping individuals manage emotional distress (Garcia, 2023). However, its limitations and the complexity of human experience suggest that it should be used with other therapeutic approaches to provide a comprehensive and holistic treatment plan.

Kalmbach et al. (2020) propound that personality disorders are characterized by persistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that deviate from cultural norms and cause significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning. According to CBT, the cognitive and behavioural processes that maintain these maladaptive personality traits can be identified and modified to help individuals overcome their difficulties. CBT posits that negative or distorted thoughts can lead to maladaptive behaviours, reinforcing negative thoughts (Li et al., 2020). For instance, an individual with a borderline personality disorder may engage in impulsive

or self-harming behaviours due to thoughts of abandonment or emptiness. Li et al. (2020) submit that CBT aims to alter the cognitive and behavioural patterns that maintain the personality disorder by modifying the maladaptive thoughts and behaviours.

The CBT approach is helpful in personality disorders because of its empirical support. Numerous studies have shown that CBT effectively treats various personality disorders, including borderline personality disorder, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, and narcissistic personality disorder. CBT is a time-limited and goal-oriented therapy that emphasises acquiring skills and strategies for managing maladaptive thoughts and behaviours (Manber et al., 2020). Additionally, van der Zweerde et al. (2020) opine that CBT is a collaborative process involving the individual's active engagement in the therapeutic process. This can benefit individuals with personality disorders, who often have difficulty trusting others and relying on others for support. By working with their therapist, individuals can learn to identify and challenge negative thoughts and replace them with more adaptive thoughts and behaviours (Li et al., 2020).

However, while CBT has many strengths, it is not without limitations. One critique of the CBT approach to personality disorders is that it oversimplifies the complexity of personality and human behaviours. Van der Zweerde et al. (2020) opine that personality disorders are often rooted in early life experiences, including childhood abuse, neglect, or trauma, and addressing these underlying issues may require a more comprehensive approach.

Furthermore, CBT may not be appropriate for all individuals with personality disorders, as some may have difficulty engaging in the therapeutic process or may have more deeply ingrained thought patterns that are resistant to change. Manber et al. (2020) assert that a more holistic or integrative approach incorporating other therapeutic techniques and modalities may be more effective in these cases. Li et al. (2020) submit that Cognitive Behavioral Theory is a valuable theoretical framework for studying and treating personality disorders. Its focus on the interconnection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours provides a practical perspective for understanding the development and maintenance of these disorders. However, its limitations should also be considered, particularly in cases with more complex or entrenched issues.

Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) is a well-established therapeutic approach that provides a robust theoretical framework for an assessment of the impact of dissociative identity disorder on academic function for FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN. Li et al. (2020) submit that the theory posits that individuals' thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes significantly shape their emotions, behaviours, and physiological responses. This approach treats various mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

2.9.1.3 Relevancy to the Study

CBT is relevant to the study as it provides learners with dissociative identity disorder with a valuable tool for understanding the relationship between their thoughts, beliefs, behaviours, and symptoms (Wright, 2023). For example, negative thought patterns, such as self-blame and low self-esteem, can perpetuate dissociation, intrusive thoughts, and physical symptoms. CBT can help these learners identify and challenge these negative thought patterns, which can help to reduce the severity and frequency of their symptoms.

CBT can help these learners develop coping skills and strategies that can help them manage their symptoms and maintain their mental health. For example, CBT can help these learners to develop positive self-talk, reframe negative thoughts, and learn stress-management techniques. These skills can be crucial in helping these learners manage their condition's effects during the pandemic and maintain their mental health and well-being.

In conclusion, CBT provides a robust theoretical framework for the influence of dissociative identity disorder on the academic performance of FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN. This theory can help these learners understand the relationship between their thoughts, beliefs, behaviours, and symptoms and develop coping skills and strategies to manage their symptoms and maintain their mental health.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, the literature review highlights the influence of dissociative identity disorder on the academic performance of FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN. The reviewed studies suggest that dissociative identity disorder can cause significant difficulties in academic performance, including absenteeism, decreased

focus, and decreased motivation. However, the studies also indicate that with proper treatment and support, individuals with dissociative identity disorder can still achieve academic success. It is important to note that the limited number of studies available and the lack of research specifically in rural KZN highlight the need for further research in this area. In light of this, educators and healthcare providers in rural KZN must be equipped to support learners with dissociative identity disorder in achieving their academic goals.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discusses the literature review of the study. This chapter presents the research methodology and design of the study. It discusses the study's research approach, paradigm, and design. This chapter critically introduces the research framework, explaining its key components, strengths, and limitations. Additionally, it demonstrates how the research framework was applied in the design of this study, highlighting the decisions that were made and the reasons behind them. Ultimately, it proves the rigorous and systematic approach to ensure the research results are reliable, valid, and trustworthy.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Lê and Schmid (2022) mentioned that research philosophy is the belief system that underlies the methods and strategies used in scientific research. However, Harris et al. (2019) noted that it encompasses the beliefs, values, and assumptions that guide researchers in their investigation and help them understand their work's purpose and meaning. This study adopted various research philosophies. Bougie and Sekaran (2019) opined that positivist philosophy (empiricism) dominates the natural sciences. Lê and Schmid (2022) suggested that this philosophy believes that the world can be studied objectively and knowledge can be gained through observation and experimentation. Liamputtong (2020) posited that positivist researchers aim to identify cause-and-effect relationships and make generalisations about the population based on a sample. Liamputtong (2020) further asserted that this approach focused on empirical data and an objective, value-free stance. Clark et al. (2021) criticised that it is impossible to study the world objectively, as all observations and measurements are inherently subjective. Moreover, Vaughn and Jacquez (2020) highlighted that this approach assumes the world is stable and predictable, which is not always true. In addition, positivist research often ignores the influence of culture, power, and other societal factors on the research process and the results (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

Another approach is interpretive philosophy, which is dominant in the social sciences. According to Strijker et al. (2020), the philosophy believes that the world is constructed

through an individual's perceptions and interpretations and that knowledge is subjective and relative. Similarly, Wilson (2020) highlighted that interpretive researchers must understand the meanings and interpretations of the individuals they studied to gain an emic perspective on their experiences and behaviours. According to Köhler et al. (2022), this approach is characterised by its focus on meaning and interpretation and its subjective and reflexive stance. Similarly, Köhler et al. (2022) criticised interpretivism as too subjective and lacking rigor and objectivity. In addition, the researcher's biases and perspectives may limit interpretivism research, and the results may not be generalizable to the larger population (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

A third approach is a critical philosophy concerned with understanding how power, oppression, and inequality are maintained in society. According to Wan (2022), this philosophy is based on the belief that the world is not neutral or objective but instead shaped by power relations and that research should challenge and transform these power structures. Critical researchers aim to examine how power relations influence study and to use their work to promote social change. Eden and Nielsen (2020) assume that this approach is characterised by its focus on power and oppression and its political and activist stance. Smith (2021) believes that critics of critical philosophy argue that this approach is too politically biased and lacks objectivity. In addition, necessary research may be limited by the researcher's political views and perspectives, and the results may not be generalizable to the larger population.

Therefore, the research philosophy that a researcher adopts profoundly impacts the research process, including the methods and strategies used, the questions asked, and the interpretation of the results. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses, and the choice of philosophy depends on the researcher's goals, values, and beliefs. Researchers must be aware of their philosophical stance and critically evaluate their choice's implications on their research process and results.

This study adopted an interpretive research philosophy. This approach is particularly well-suited to studying complex and nuanced experiences, such as the influence of DID on the academic function of FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN. This paradigm was advantageous because it focuses on subjective experience (Dźwigoł, 2019). DID is a complex and misunderstood condition that can profoundly impact individuals' lives, including their academic performance. This paradigm helps the

researchers gain insight into the subjective experiences of learners with DID, including how their disorders influence their academic functioning. This was important because objective grades and standardized test scores may not fully capture the complex and nuanced ways DID affects academic performance.

This was relevant in this study emphasising meaning-making (Atkinson et al., 2021). Individuals with DID often struggle to make sense of their experiences and lives. Interpretivist researchers can provide valuable insight into these meaning-making processes and help individuals with DID better understand and come to terms with their experiences. Additionally, the interpretive paradigm helps researchers understand how DID affects academic performance by exploring the subjective experiences and meaning-making processes of individuals with the disorder.

The paradigm was beneficially based on its flexibility. Unlike other approaches, such as positivism, does not prescribe a particular methodology or data collection technique (Williams, 2021). This paradigm allows researchers to be creative and innovative in their methods, tailoring them to their study's specific needs and goals (Biggs et al., 2021). In the case of a study assessing the influence of DID on academic function, interpretivism approaches may include qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, as well as quantitative methods, such as surveys (Bryman, 2020).

The interpretive approach is a practical approach to exploring the influence of DID on the academic function of FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN. Its focus on subjective experience, emphasis on meaning-making, and flexibility make it well-suited for a complex and nuanced topic like DID. By utilising the interpretive paradigm, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and meaning-making processes of learners with DID and how their disorder affects their academic performance.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study chooses a qualitative research methodology. This approach was advantageous because it provided rich and in-depth data on complex and sensitive topics, such as DID (Bryman, 2020). It can help researchers understand the lived experiences of individuals with DID and its influence on their academic function (Johnson, 2022). This is important in the case of DID, as the condition is often

associated with significant psychological and emotional distress and can lead to difficulties in academic functioning.

Lê and Schmid (2022) argued that an advantage of qualitative research is its ability to reveal participants' subjective perspectives and experiences. This is particularly important in the case of DID, as it is a condition that is often stigmatized and misunderstood by society. Harris et al. (2019) noted that qualitative research allows participants to tell their own stories and share their experiences in their own words. This helps to counteract the negative stereotypes and misconceptions often associated with DID and provides a more accurate picture of the condition's impact on academic function.

Finally, the qualitative research was suited for studying the influence of DID on academic function in the KZN region of South Africa. It allows for exploring cultural and contextual factors that may shape the experiences and perspectives of learners with DID (Thompson, 2021). Cultural and contextual factors can influence the development and expression of DID and how others perceive and treat the condition (Martinez, 2022). The qualitative research helps in providing valuable insights into the unique experiences of learners with DID in the KZN region.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopts a case study design due to its concentrated exploration of the influence of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) on Further Education and Training (FET) phase learners at rural schools in the KZN. This research design offers an in-depth contextual analysis, focusing on learners' unique educational challenges with DID. Integrating various dimensions, such as cognitive, emotional, social, and educational, within the rural context embodies the holistic and nuanced inquiry typical of case study research.

This research design is beneficial as it provides a rich and detailed description of the experiences and perspectives of individuals with DID and their impact on academic function (Dell, 2019). It allows the researcher to capture the individual's subjective experiences and deeply understand the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2018). In this study, a case study approach would provide an in-depth knowledge of the experiences of FET phase learners with DID and how it affects their academic performance.

This case study is suitable for exploring a phenomenon in its natural setting because it allows for an in-depth, contextual examination of complex issues within their real-life environment, making it an appropriate method for studying the impact of DID on academic function in a real-world context, using a case study approach in this study would enable the researcher to understand learners' experiences with DID in their natural environment, and how they navigate the challenges they face in the academic setting.

3.5 TIME HORIZON

In research, a time horizon refers to the time the research is conducted or the effects of an intervention are studied (Wilson, 2020). It refers to the period during which a particular study or project is planned or executed. The time horizon is a crucial aspect of research design, as it can influence the results of a study and determine the type of data collected and analysed (Köhler et al., 2022). In this study, a cross-sectional time horizon was adopted. According to Wan (2022), a cross-sectional study design simultaneously collects participant data. This design is handy for assessing a condition's prevalence or examining the relationship between variables in a population at a specific time. The study's cross-sectional time horizon was chosen for several reasons.

Eden and Nielsen (2020) suggested that a cross-sectional time horizon allows for data collection from many participants in a relatively short time. This is particularly important in the study, as DID is a relatively rare condition, and it may be difficult to recruit many participants over an extended period. The cross-sectional time horizon allows examining the relationship between DID and academic function in a sample of FET phase learners at rural schools in the KZN. This design enables the researchers to control for other variables that may affect academic function, such as socio-economic status, level of education, and access to resources. The cross-sectional time horizon is well-suited to the study of the impact of DID on academic function in a student population. The FET phase is a critical period for learners to prepare for FET or enter the workforce (Spaull, 2019). By assessing the influence of DID on academic function at this point, the researcher can better understand the challenges learners face with DID and inform interventions to support their academic success.

3.6 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

3.6.1 Sampling method

Dźwigoł (2019) noted that sampling in research refers to selecting a portion of individuals from a larger population to participate in a study. The sample aims to gain insights into the population of interest, as it is often not feasible or practical to study the entire population (Atkinson et al., 2021). According to Köhler et al. (2022), researchers can make inferences about the larger population by studying a representative sample. This study adopted a purposive sampling to select participants.

According to Wan (2022), purposive sampling is a method where the researcher intentionally selects the study participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research question. This sampling is often used when the researcher wants to study a specific, well-defined population and is particularly useful when the population of interest is small or difficult to access (Eden and Nielsen, 2020).

This study employed a purposive sampling method to select six participants, specifically chosen for their direct relevance to the research objectives. This included three FET learners diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) and three school staff members from the rural area in the KZN. The selection helped gain in-depth insights from those who directly experience and manage the educational impacts of DID (O'Neil, 2019). The learners provided first-hand accounts of their challenges and experiences in the educational setting, offering valuable perspectives on how DID affects their learning and academic performance. Meanwhile, including school staff members, such as teachers and administrators, was crucial for understanding the educational support systems, their effectiveness, and the staff's awareness and perceptions of DID. This balanced approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, allowing the study to capture a holistic view of the impact of DID on academic functioning in the FET phase.

3.7 Data collection method

This study uses semi-structured interviews to assess the influence of DID on the academic function of FET phase learners in KZN. This method is essential to provide valuable insights into these learners' experiences (Dell, 2019). Lê and Schmid (2022) suggest that semi-structured interviews allow for a flexible approach to data collection, as they provide a set of guidelines or questions but also allow for unanticipated or

spontaneous responses. This is especially important in the study of DID and its impact on academic function, as the experiences of these learners can be complex and may not fit into pre-determined categories or questions. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to follow up on essential themes or responses, gather more information, and explore the learners' experiences more comprehensively (Edwards, 2020).

The semi-structured interviews enable in-depth exploration of individuals' experiences, allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions, clarify responses, and delve deeper into the learners' experiences (Liamputtong, 2020). This is especially important in a study assessing the impact of DID on academic function, as these experiences are likely to be unique, and the researcher may need to probe further to understand the complexities and nuances of these experiences fully.

This study conducted semi-structured interviews were conducted with the six selected participants to gather detailed qualitative data. These interviews were designed to be flexible yet focused, allowing for in-depth exploration while remaining aligned with the research objectives (Holland, 2020). Each interview began with a set of predetermined questions that aimed to elicit information about the participants' experiences with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) in the educational context. However, the semi-structured format allowed the interviewer to probe further based on the responses, encouraging participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives (Edward, 2020). This approach facilitated a conversational flow, uncovering deeper insights that might not have emerged through a strictly structured interview. The interviews were conducted in a private and comfortable setting to ensure participants felt comfortable sharing openly. To maintain consistency, the same interviewer conducted all sessions, which were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis, ensuring that the data was captured accurately and comprehensively (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

3.7.1 Data analysis

Vaughn and Jacquez (2020) highlighted that data analysis systematically examines, cleans, transforms, and models data to discover useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision-making. Strijker et al. (2020) highlighted that data analysis is a crucial step in the research process as it helps researchers make sense of the data they have collected and answer the research questions they set out to address. Wilson

(2020) indicated that data analysis can involve various techniques, including statistical analysis, machine learning, and data visualization, depending on the type of data and the research question being addressed. According to Köhler et al. (2022), the goal of data analysis in research is to find patterns, relationships, and trends in the data that can provide insight into the phenomenon being studied and help to test hypotheses. According to Köhler et al. (2022), the results of the data analysis are typically used to inform the development of new theories, support or refute existing ideas, or make evidence-based recommendations for action.

In this study, data analysis was done using a thematic approach. According to Wan (2022), thematic analysis is a commonly used qualitative research method to identify, analyse, and report patterns or themes in data. In the context of a study assessing the impact of dissociative identity disorder on the academic function of FET phase learners in rural schools KZN, the use of thematic analysis can provide a valuable and insightful understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants. This technique is helpful; it can provide an in-depth knowledge of the experiences and perspectives of learners with DID in rural schools in KZN and its influence on their condition and academic functions. The researchers identified recurring themes in the data to gain insight into the challenges these learners encountered in their academic journeys, including the barriers to academic success. This can then inform the development of interventions and support systems to improve the academic outcomes of learners with DID (Wan, 2022).

Furthermore, the use of thematic analysis in this study can also provide a means of exploring the subjective experiences of learners with DID, including the impact of their condition on their emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Clarke, 2021). This information is essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of learners with DID at rural schools in the KZN and identify areas of intervention to improve their overall well-being.

Henceforth, the use of thematic analysis in a study assessing the impact of dissociative identity disorder on the academic function of FET phase learners in rural schools KZN is justified as it provides a valuable and insightful understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants, including the impact of their condition on their overall well-being. The information obtained through thematic

analysis can inform the development of interventions and support systems to improve learners with DID's academic outcomes and well-being.

3.7.2 DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS

When evaluating the trustworthiness of data, the study methodology, sample size, data collection techniques, and the potential bias of the researchers play an important role. The data collection methods need to be rigorous. Using standardized tools and ensuring data is collected consistently across all participants can enhance trustworthiness. Qualitative data, such as interviews or observations, should be triangulated with quantitative measures like academic records to provide a comprehensive view (Creswell, 2014). The context in which the data is collected should be considered. Factors such as the socio-economic background of the learners, the quality of the schools, and the availability of mental health resources can influence academic performance. They should be accounted for in the study. By ensuring these elements are in place, the trustworthiness of the data in such a study can be significantly improved, leading to more reliable and actionable insights.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are essential in research involving human subjects (American Psychological Association, 2020). This study considers various ethical issues for the well-being and protection of participants. Permission was granted by the ethics committee at the University of the Free State to conduct this study. Approval was obtained from the KZN Department of Education to access the schools, and principals' permission was granted to contact participants in this study.

The informed consent form was signed by the participants, who agreed to participate voluntarily in this study, and the purpose and methods of the study (Beauchamp, 2020). This is especially important for minor participants, as they may not fully understand the implications of their participation in the study. Therefore, obtaining informed consent from the learners and their parents or guardians is crucial to ensure they know the study's risks and benefits (Childress, 2020).

The study complied with privacy and confidentiality. This study ensures that the privacy and confidentiality of the participants are protected (Beauchamp, 2020). This means the study's results must not be shared with anyone outside the research team, and all identifying information must be kept confidential. Additionally, it measures

pseudonyms whereby codes are assigned to participants to mask their identities; these pseudonyms will be used in all records and publications to ensure that the participants are not at risk of harm due to their participation in the study.

This study ensured to protect participants from any potential harm as the DID can seriously affect mental health and well-being. This means the researchers must be trained in the appropriate methods for assessing and treating dissociative disorder. The participants must be referred for treatment if necessary.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, the framework has been selected as the methodology for this study due to its comprehensive and systematic approach to addressing the research questions. The framework provides a step-by-step guide for conducting research and helps to ensure that all critical aspects of research are considered. The outer layers of the framework, including the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques, will be developed in further detail in the upcoming chapters. Ultimately, this framework helps to provide a complete and thorough examination of the research topic and ensures that the findings of this study are valid and reliable.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Dissociative disorders, characterised by disruptions in memory, consciousness, identity, and perception, have been a topic of interest in psychology for decades. The nuanced ways they interact with an individual's daily life, particularly in academic functioning, are less understood. Given education's profound significance in personal and professional development, it becomes vital to address and comprehend the experiences of learners grappling with such disorders. This chapter offers an in-depth exploration of the narratives of six participants. Through qualitative methods, it unravels the multifaceted challenges, coping strategies, and support mechanisms these learners encounter. It sheds light on the lived experiences of these individuals, highlighting areas that require immediate attention and intervention from teachers, schools, and policymakers alike.

4.2 BIOGRAPHIC DATA

4.2.1 From learners

The biographic data of the present study offers a multi-dimensional view of the participants, encompassing various factors that intersect with their experience of dissociative disorders. While certain biographic groups appear overrepresented or underrepresented, it is crucial to approach this data cautiously due to the study's qualitative nature and small sample size. Still, the diverse participant provides rich insights and varied perspectives, essential for a holistic understanding of the research topic.

Table 4.1: Profile of learners

Participants	Age	Gender	Grade Level	Culture	Living with Guardians	Socio-economic Status
Participant 1	17	Male	10	Pedi	Single Parent	Low Class
Participant 2	18	Female	12	Zulu	Both Parents	Low Class
Participant 3	17	Male	11	Setswana	Guardian	Middle Class

a) Participant 1

Participant 1 is a 17-year-old male grade 10 learner at a transitional stage from adolescence to early adulthood, which is challenging academically and is frequently associated with the onset of dissociative symptoms. This learner belongs to the Pedi culture, living with a single parent and having a low socioeconomic status.

b) Participant 2

This participant is a female, 18 years of age. She is currently doing grade 12. This learner belongs to the Zulu culture, living with both parents and having a low socioeconomic status, which may suggest a link between early life stressors or adversities and the start of dissociative symptoms.

c) Participant 3

Participant 3 is a 17-year-old male learner in grade 11. This learner belongs to the Setswana culture, lives with a guardian, and has a middle socioeconomic status. There is a slight male preponderance, with two males and one female among the learner participants. This gender breakdown corroborates findings from more extensive research that point to a slightly higher prevalence of dissociative disorders in males, despite the limited sample size preventing broad generalisations (Dell and O'Neil, 2019). However, it is crucial to remember that the small sample size might not accurately represent broader demographic trends.

4.2.2 From teacher, school counsellor, and principal

Table 4.2: Profile of Teacher, School Counsellor, Principal

Participants	Age	Gender	Position in School	Years of Experience	Highest qualification	Teaching subjects	Culture
Participant 4	38	Male	Teacher	7	B.Ed. Degree	Life Orientation	Zulu
Participant 5	44	Female	School Councillor	10	Bachelor of Psychology	N/A	Zulu
Participant 6	50	Male	Principal	15	B.Ed. Degree	N/A	Coloured

Educational professionals are skilled persons of a wide range of ages and experience.

a) Participant 4

Participant 4 is a teacher with seven years of experience who is a 38-year-old Zulu male. He holds a bachelor's degree in education (FET phase) specialising in life orientation.

b) Participant 5

Participant 5, a 44-year-old female school counsellor, brings ten years of expertise. She has a masters in Bachelor of Psychology. She belongs to the Zulu culture and is pleased with her lasting impact on the learners.

c) Participant 6

Participant 6, a Coloured 50-year-old male principal, brings fifteen years of educational leadership experience. His years of experience and a range of responsibilities within the educational system provide them with a mature perspective that complements the perspectives of the learners and helps learners develop a more thorough comprehension of the subject.

4.3 THEMATIC RESULTS AND PRESENTATION

Exploring thematic analysis can reveal how researchers uncover hidden patterns and meaning in complex data, offering profound insights into human behaviours and societal trends (Braun, 2022). To arrive at specific themes in a qualitative research study, researchers typically follow a systematic process known as systematic analysis (Clarke, 2022). When developing the themes, the researcher was first immersed in the data collected by re-reading the collected data and noting down initial ideas. Secondly, the researcher systematically coded exciting features of the data across the entire dataset, enabling a further review of the themes by checking if the themes work with the coded extracts and the whole dataset, generating a thematic map. The next step was to define and name the themes and then produce the report, the final opportunity for analysis relating the themes to the research question and literature.

Table 4.3: Thematic results

Themes	Subthemes	Categories
Influence of DID on learners' academics.	Difficult to cope with academics	1. Unaware of surroundings 2. Feeling disconnected
	Mentally distraction	1. Cognitive block 2. Forgetfulness
	Feeling overwhelmed	1. Difficult to learn new material

		2. Exams become stressors
Teachers experience	Negative	1. No specialised training 2. Lack of resources
Kinds of support	Family support	1. Provide emotional support
	Community support	1. Community groups and online forums
	School support	1. Additional time for assessments
Teaching strategies	Flexible learning	1. Individualise education plans 2. Collaboration with support services

4.3.1 Theme 1: Influence of DID on learners' academics

4.3.1.1 *Difficult to cope with academics*

a) *Unawareness of surroundings*

The transcripts from the participants' interviews indicated that unawareness of surroundings could be a factor in DID's impact on the academic function of FET phase learners at rural schools in KZN. This idea is about not being aware of what's happening around you, including in the classroom. This makes it harder for learners to pay attention and learn new things. It makes it harder for learners and teachers to talk to each other and understand what they are being taught. It also leads to feelings of isolation and withdrawal, which can make it hard to get along with other people and work on group projects in school.

"At times, I find myself completely lost during lessons, surrounded by a cloud that makes concentration tough" (Participant 1).

"I feel disconnected, especially during lessons" (Participant 2).

"I find myself lost as if enveloped in a fog. I am physically there but mentally miles away" (Participant 3).

Unawareness of surroundings in learners living with DID manifests in several ways. They may experience dissociative amnesia or identity switching. Dissociative amnesia is where individuals have difficulty recalling information during identity switching, and individuals may feel detached from reality or have difficulty perceiving their

environment (Wilson, 2023). During these switches, the individual may not remember what occurred when another identity was in control. The unawareness of surroundings in learners living with DID could be a result of the complex nature of the condition (Wilson, 2023). By promoting empathy and understanding and providing appropriate support, teachers can help create an environment that supports the unique needs of these learners.

b) Feeling disconnected

Not being aware of your surroundings can also cause a disconnect in the classroom, which shows up as not paying attention or getting distracted. This could cause them to miss important parts of lessons or fall behind on tasks, which could hurt their grades. This ignorance is appalling during formative reviews and assessments when paying attention is essential. Notably, the lack of understanding can lead to emotional disconnection, making the learner's life even more complicated by making them less empathetic and more challenging to build social support networks, which are essential for doing well in school. The extracts from two participants illustrated these.

"The disorder deeply impacts my academics. It is like observing myself from a distance, especially during practical classes" (Participant 3).

"Many days, I feel disconnected from class because I've become so good at masking my condition. I tried to explain to my tutor, but it's hard when they've never even heard of dissociative disorder" (Participant 2).

Participant 3 highlights the often unseen coping mechanisms employed by learners with DID. The act of 'masking' their condition speaks to the more profound pressures they face to fit into academic norms (Tylor, 2023). This could have long-term repercussions on their mental well-being. Their struggles to communicate their condition to teachers underscores the need for more professional development and school training to recognize and accommodate learners with DID (Smith, 2021). Furthermore, teachers can take the initiative to educate themselves about the condition; this can help them better understand the experiences and challenges these learners face.

4.3.1.2 Mental distraction

a) Cognitive block

The transcripts from the participants' interviews indicated that mental distraction could be a factor of DID influencing the academic function of FET phase learners at rural schools in KZN. Some might find themselves unable to recall what they studied the previous day. At its core, mental distraction is a cognitive block that makes it hard to focus on schoolwork. This distraction is not just temporary; it can last long, blocking out the brain processes needed for learning and remembering. For example, learners may be unable to remember what they learned the day before, which is a big problem for their academic growth.

".....I often blank out despite studying" (Participant 1).

"It was difficult to concentrate during exams. I wished for separate rooms or extra time" (Participant 2).

"I have become very good at masking my condition, but many days I feel completely disconnected" (Participant 3).

When experiencing cognitive block, individuals struggle to concentrate, have decreased mental clarity, and find it challenging to generate ideas (Harris, 2023). It is prominent in Participant 1 and Participant 2 testimony that mental block is standard in learners living with DID, but. It is important to note that each individual with DID is unique, and the impact of the cognitive block on learning can vary (Mitchell, 2023). Participant 1 experienced blanking out during exams even though he had studied, whereas Participant 2 experienced a lack of concentration, but both relate to cognitive block. Teachers can approach each situation by creating an inclusive environment.

b) Forgetfulness

This forgetfulness and lack of focus can hurt academic success in many ways. If learners can't pay attention in class, finish tasks, or even study well, their grades and academic standing could be damaged. The distraction also makes it hard for learners to pay attention in class, often making them passive observers instead of active participants in the learning setting. In subjects like math and science that require learning over time, these distractions could cause the learner to fall further behind, making the gap between them and their friends even bigger.

"Despite being physically there, mentally I am miles away. This affects my notes, understanding, and even how I engage in group projects" (Participant 1).

"I feel disconnected, especially during lessons" (Participant 2).

“People would say I did things I did not recall” (Participant 2).

It is important to note that forgetfulness is a common experience for individuals with DID and has long-term effects beyond academics (Jones et al., 2021). Constant mental distractions as a result of the switching of identities or dissociation amnesia can result in lower self-confidence, making it less likely for a learner to take academic risks like taking advanced classes or joining in academic activities outside of school; they may also experience a sense of emotional numbing and perceive the world as distorted. To support learners who experience forgetfulness, creating a supportive and understanding environment with clear and established routines is essential. The abstracts of two participants mentioned these.

4.3.1.3 Feeling overwhelmed

a) Difficult to learn new material

In the classroom, this feeling of being overwhelmed can make it hard to learn new material or participate in class discussions meaningfully. This could make people less likely to join in, affecting their grades and how the group works on projects. Also, learners may be less likely to ask for help from teachers or friends, worsening their academic problems and keeping them in a cycle of not doing well in school.

“Homework seems insurmountable; like a mountain, I cannot climb. I often have to reread texts multiple times because my mind drifts away” (Participant 2).

“.....This exhaustion is palpable when doing assignments or studying” (Participant 1).

“It’s an uphill battle trying to focus in class” (Participant 3).

Being overwhelmed can also affect your emotional health, like making you more anxious or depressed, which can make it harder to do well in school (Brown, 2023). In the worst cases, it could cause a learner to stop attending school or even drop out. The extracts from two participants said these. It is important to note that while learning new information may be complicated for individuals living with DID, it does not mean they are incapable; with the proper training of teachers and necessary resources, individuals with DID can develop strategies to manage and enhance their learning abilities.

b) Exams become stressors

The transcripts from the participants’ interviews demonstrate that feeling overwhelmed could be a factor of DID influence on the academic function of FET phase learners at

rural schools in the KZN. This can show up in different ways, like being unable to handle time well or putting assignments in order of importance, which can lead to a cycle of putting things off and feeling stressed. The sheer amount of schoolwork can be overwhelming, causing a mental block that makes it hard to learn and get things done.

“Exams become a stressor” (Participant 1).

“It was difficult concentrating during exams. I wished for separate rooms or extra time. Once, a teacher thought I was lazy, but I was just having a hard episode. Yet, I found solace in a support group within the school, which made a huge difference” (Participant 2).

“There has been a noticeable decline in my grades” (Participant 3).

Participant 2's experiences shed light on the logistical challenges learners with DD face, especially during examinations (Smith, 2022). The desire for separate examination rooms or extra time resonates with existing literature on the unique needs of learners with mental disorders. Furthermore, their experience of being misconstrued as 'lazy' by a teacher reaffirms the necessity for greater awareness. On a brighter note, their experience with the school support group underscores the therapeutic value of social support (Walker, 2022).

Therefore, these qualitative results illuminate the multifaceted challenges learners with dissociative disorder encounter in an academic setting. From the need for schools' flexibility and awareness to the importance of social support and the perils of masking, there's an urgent call for schools to be more inclusive and understanding. Aligning academic practices with the recommendations from research can pave the way for a more supportive educational experience for all learners, irrespective of their mental health status.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Teachers' experiences

4.3.2.1 Negative

a) No specialised training

Some schools might have protocols to ensure teachers and staff are informed and trained to understand and accommodate learners with such needs. Awareness campaigns can also be instrumental in dispelling myths and stereotypes about dissociative disorders, fostering an inclusive environment. Not having specialised

training to support learners with DID can present challenges for teachers. They may not understand the unique experiences of learners with DID, which can impact their ability to support these learners.

"There is a dire need for professional development around this topic. It feels like we're left to fend for ourselves without guidance. Specialised training shouldn't be a luxury; it's a necessity" (Participant 6).

"It complicates the learning environment considerably. Students with dissociative disorders may struggle to keep up with the lesson or cause disruptions. Lacking specialized resources makes it even more challenging to handle these situations" (Participant 6).

"Unfortunately, teachers are generally not well-equipped to assist these learners. As mentioned, we need more consistent resources and training to handle such cases" (Participant 4).

The qualitative response from the participants underscores the significant lack of support and training in identifying the needs of learners with this condition, especially in rural schools (Smith, 2021). Untrained teachers often find it challenging to offer the essential accommodations and support strategies required to meet the unique needs of learners with DID (Brown, 2023). This makes it challenging for learners to engage in learning or access the curriculum. Learners with DID may experience dissociative episodes or switch between identities, which can disrupt the classroom environment; without specialised training, teachers may struggle to manage these situations appropriately and provide the necessary support (Brown, 2023).

b) Lack of resources

The limited availability of support systems was stressed, especially in outlying regions. For teachers, the prevailing concern was the absence of proper training and resources. Teachers who have learners with DID require specific resources and support to create a conducive learning environment for these learners. Insufficient specialised materials and resources are designed to support learners with this condition. Teachers do not have access to sensory tools, visual aids, or specific educational programs that cater to the needs of learners with dissociative identities. Many are ill-equipped to identify dissociative signs in learners.

"Even as a counsellor, my tools are limited because we lack the specialized training needed" (Participant 4).

"Our countryside school often lacks the tools to meet particular needs. Without proper training, we're in the dark. Some kids act out, but it is more than just behavioural issues. I wish I knew how to help. I have seen colleagues miss clear signs because we do not know better" (Participant 6).

"We need more consistent resources in these areas. Why are there no more resources allocated for rural schools? I sometimes feel so helpless, knowing I cannot provide the support some learners need. Dissociation in learners is real and more common than we think. We need the skills to address it" (Participant 4).

A broader theme from the participants' responses is their concerns about preparedness to identify and support learners with dissociative disorder. This theme reveals sub-themes:

Participants 1 and 3 voiced that being "in the dark" about identifying dissociative signs indicates the urgent need for professional development. The call for training is supported by past studies, which suggest teachers often feel unequipped due to a lack of training (Brown, 2023). Early identification and intervention can significantly influence the affected learners' well-being and success (Green, 2023).

As highlighted by Participant 2, the shortage of resources for rural teachers is alarming (Brown, 2023). The raised question about the disparity of resources for rural schools emphasizes broader debates regarding urban vs. rural educational differences (Jones, 2023). This lack can heighten the struggles of learners with dissociative disorder if they miss out on essential therapeutic interventions.

Participant 3's sentiment of being "left to fend for ourselves without guidance" suggests a systemic issue where schools lack top-down support for learners with dissociative disorders.

Participant 2's assertion about the prevalence of dissociation in learners corresponds with research indicating dissociative symptoms might be more common than previously assumed.

As the academic landscape evolves, it becomes crucial to ensure that all teachers, regardless of their geographical location, are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and resources to support every learner, including those with dissociative disorders.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Kinds of support

4.3.3.1 Family support

a) Provide emotional support

Outside of the academic institution, students diagnosed with dissociative disorders might seek or benefit from various external support systems. These include family, friends, community groups, medical professionals, and therapists. Families can play a vital role in supporting their loved ones by creating a safe and supportive environment where they feel accepted and valued. This could be achieved by learning about their triggers and avoiding making assumptions or judgments about their experiences.

“My brother keeps a schedule of my school work and reminds me of assignments that need to be completed” (Participant 1).

“My family acts as a pillar during episodes” (Participant 2).

“I feel less alone and understood” (Participant 3).

The role of family and close friends can be invaluable, providing emotional support and understanding (Johnson, 2023). Participant 3 narrates that having his family's support makes him “feel less alone and understood.” Participant 2 further explains that her “family acts as a pillar during episodes”. Emotional support from family members helps the participants navigate their daily routine, reminding them of assignments or even just offering a listening ear (Kim, 2023). On the other hand, therapists and medical professionals can provide specialised guidance, coping strategies, and medication where necessary.

4.3.3.2 Community support

a) Community groups and online forums

Community groups and online forums dedicated to individuals with dissociative disorders can offer a sense of belonging and understanding. Here, learners can share experiences, challenges, and victories, learning from one another and realising they are not alone in their journey. This theme understands the significance of these support systems, their effectiveness, and how they complement the support provided by the institutions.

“The group therapy sessions have made a world of difference to me” (Participant 1).

“Online forums reduce feelings of isolation while remaining anonymous” (Participant 2).

“Group therapy provides a safe space for self-expression” (Participant 3).

The sentiment from Participant 1 about the transformative power of group therapy suggests the therapeutic value of communal sharing and support (Brown, 2023). This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the benefits of group therapy, explicitly fostering feelings of belonging, mutual understanding, and support (Harris, 2023). Such interventions reduce feelings of isolation experienced by those with psychological disorders. Therefore, the qualitative results from this study illuminate the importance of group therapy for those with dissociative disorder.

4.3.3.3 School support

a) Additional time for assessments.

Schools must provide support and make accommodations for learners with health challenges. For those with dissociative disorders, this need is pronounced. The type and level of support can vary significantly, from providing additional time for assignments and exams to offering counselling and therapy services within the school. However, not all institutions might be adequately equipped or proactive. This theme delves into how learners perceive the support they receive from their schools and the gaps, if any, that exist.

“My principal was kind enough to understand my condition and provided extended deadlines for my tasks. However, I wish the school had run more awareness campaigns. It is hard when others cannot comprehend my struggles. Some of my peers think I am making it up, which is disheartening” (Participant 1).

“.....I did find a support group within the school that has been very helpful” (Participant 2).

“Therapy sessions with the school counsellor are quite helpful” (Participant 3).

The testimony of Participant 1 underscores the pivotal role that educational leaders play in catering to the needs of learners with DID. The extended deadlines offered by the principal provide much-needed flexibility. Yet, the need for more school awareness points to a systemic gap. The challenges this participant faces due to peers' lack of understanding and disbelief echo findings of stigmatisation from prior research (Parker, 2023).

4.3.4 Theme 4: Teaching strategies

4.3.4.1 Flexible learning

a) Individualise education plans

Teachers develop individualised education plans that address the specific needs and challenges of learners with DID. These plans outline the accommodations, modifications, and support services required for learners' academic success. Accommodations include providing extra time for assignments or assessments, offering preferential seating, using assistive technology, or providing alternative formats for material. Modifications involve breaking down large assignments or tasks into smaller, more manageable parts and giving clear instructions and expectations.

“Maintaining a calm and structured classroom environment can help. Techniques such as mindfulness or grounding exercises can also be beneficial” (Participant 4).

“We have found that a structured, predictable classroom environment helps minimize triggers” (Participant 6).

It's important to remember that individualised education plans require collaboration and ongoing communication between teachers, parents, and other professionals involved in the student's education (Thompson, 2023). By tailoring the educational experience to meet the unique needs of each learner, teachers can create an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Williams, 2023).

b) Collaboration with support services

Regular communication and collaboration are essential, and teachers work closely with school counsellors, psychologists, and other support services to ensure that the learners receive appropriate emotional and psychological support. Support services maintain regular check-ins with the learners to assess their well-being and offer support; this is done through one-on-one meetings or by incorporating everyday reflection activities into the classroom routine.

“On a day-to-day basis, it's about maintaining open lines of communication between the teachers, the student, and me, and trying to provide a consistent, safe environment for the student” (Participant 5).

“Open communication between teachers and students can sometimes alleviate some of the anxiety that may lead to dissociative episodes” (Participant 5).

Collaboration with support services in schools is crucial for the well-being and academic success of the learners. In an educational setting, collaboration with support services can involve regular communication between educators and support service providers (Johnson, 2023). The school counsellor explains that communication between teachers and the support service providers assists in creating a consistent environment for learners living with the condition (Kim, 2023). This collaboration can help understand the learner's specific needs, implement appropriate accommodations, and provide necessary support in the classroom.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter Four embarked on the crucial task of presenting and analysing the data garnered from our research participants. Through meticulous thematic analysis, several poignant themes emerged that revolve around the participants' experiences with dissociative disorders and their impact on their academic lives.

The chapter opened with the "Teachers Experiences" theme, revealing diverse diagnostic timelines and treatment pathways among the participants. This was followed by the "Influence of DID on learners Academic Life" theme, where consistent struggles with concentration and task management became evident. Many of our participants reported academic disruptions directly attributable to their disorder.

The latter half of the chapter delved into the available "Institutional Support and Accommodations," juxtaposing it against "External Support Systems." While some found solace and assistance within their schools, others leaned on external therapies and support groups. Yet, a glaring gap in awareness and resources, particularly in rural schools, was unmistakably evident.

The voices of teachers, primarily from rural settings, echoed a sentiment of unpreparedness and resource scarcity, reiterating the importance of specialized training to handle cases of dissociative disorders in educational settings.

In culmination, this chapter illuminated the multi-dimensional challenges faced by learners with dissociative disorders, laying the groundwork for subsequent discussions, conclusions, and policy recommendations in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Having comprehensively presented the lived experiences of learners diagnosed with dissociative disorders in the preceding chapter, the researcher focuses on findings and broader implications. This chapter synthesises the core elements from our qualitative data, situating them within the larger academic and clinical discourse. The chapter addresses the inherent questions raised by the present study, contextualizes them within the existing literature, and provides actionable recommendations, ensuring a brighter academic future for learners facing such challenges.

5.2. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

5.2.1. What is the prevalence of Dissociative Identity Disorder among FET phase learners at rural areas in the KZN?

5.2.1.1. *Prevalence of Dissociative Identity Disorder*

A recent study by Johnson et al. highlights that the incidence of DID in rural areas may be underreported due to a lack of mental health resources and awareness. The study suggests that in rural schools in KZN, where educational and health services are often limited, the identification and treatment of DID can be particularly challenging. This is compounded by cultural stigmas surrounding mental health, which can prevent learners from seeking help. Moreover, research by Smith and Mbambo indicates that the high levels of poverty and violence at rural schools in KZN communities contribute significantly to the prevalence of trauma-related disorders among learners. This environment can be a breeding ground for the development of DID, as learners exposed to such conditions are more likely to experience the kind of intense trauma that can lead to dissociative disorders.

An intriguing point raised by Ndlovu is the role of traditional beliefs and practices in the perception and treatment of DID within these communities. In some cases, symptoms of DID may be interpreted through the lens of spiritual or cultural beliefs, which can both obscure accurate diagnosis and offer unique pathways for understanding and managing the disorder.

This study is qualitative, with a small sample size, and thus it is not designed to provide robust statistics on the prevalence of DID among FET phase learners in rural areas of KZN. However, the interviews conducted do suggest that DID is a concern within this specific educational context. It may align with broader research that often associates dissociative disorders with environmental stressors, which can be prevalent in rural areas due to limited mental health services and educational resources. For a more accurate prevalence estimate, larger-scale epidemiological studies would be required.

5.2.2. How does Dissociative Identity Disorder influence the learners' academic performance at rural schools in the KZN?

5.2.2.1. *Dissociative Disorder and Academic Life*

The findings reveal a clear link between dissociative disorder and academic disruptions, mainly related to concentration and task completion. This aligns with previous studies highlighting the cognitive effects of dissociative disorders. The intricate interplay between mental health and academic success has been investigated extensively. In dissociative disorders, research is unequivocal about its profound impact on educational accomplishments, especially in concentration and task completion. A recent study discovered a discernible connection between dissociative disorders and hindrances in the academic sphere. This discovery sheds light on individuals with this disorder's academic challenges and emphasises the importance of a supportive educational environment. Wilson et al. (2020) corroborate this view by demonstrating that learners who showed symptoms of dissociative disorder were more likely to face academic disruptions, predominantly concerning concentration.

The cognitive impacts of dissociative disorders have long been the topic of psychological and educational studies. When someone experiences dissociation, they might feel disconnected from themselves, their environment, or both. This can understandably hamper the cognitive processes that underpin effective learning. In a landmark study by Taylor et al., the results echoed the previously mentioned correlation. Participants with pronounced dissociative symptoms consistently displayed issues related to focusing and finishing tasks in an academic setting. Another study conducted by Jackson and Lewis revealed that individuals with dissociative disorders exhibited cognitive difficulties that directly affected their

academic progression. This included problems with memory, attention, and executive function - all vital components for academic success.

However, it would be an oversimplification to suggest that the challenges are limited only to concentration and task completion. As Roberts and Peters (2020) outlined, the scope of academic disruptions in the context of dissociative disorders is broad. Learners may grapple with feelings of detachment, making absorbing new information or participating in class discussions a monumental challenge. These hurdles aren't solely academic; they are intertwined with the social and emotional aspects of learning. For example, Brown discussed the psychological toll of dissociative disorders, noting that the emotional strain often overlaps with and exacerbates academic challenges. When learners constantly wrestle with feelings of dissociation, they may also face barriers in forming study groups, seeking help, or even just attending classes, further underscoring the multifaceted impact of the disorder.

In drawing parallels with past research, the findings resonate with earlier studies focusing on the cognitive implications of dissociative disorders. Patterson underlined that the effects of dissociative disorders are not just confined to the individual. Instead, they ripple outwards, affecting academic settings and even wider societal structures. This is a clarion call for schools to be more accommodating and understanding. It suggests the need for more research, tailored support, and perhaps modifications in teaching methodologies to cater to this group of learners. After all, education is a right, and every student, irrespective of their mental health challenges, should be afforded every opportunity to succeed.

5.2.3. Are there experiences related to DID faced by teachers in rural schools as opposed to urban schools?

5.2.3.1. *Experience related to DID faced by teachers in rural schools*

Teachers in rural schools often face significant challenges in identifying and understanding DID due to a lack of awareness and training. According to a study by Johnson et al., many educators in rural areas have limited knowledge about dissociative disorders, which can lead to misinterpretation of symptoms. For instance, behaviours associated with DID, such as sudden mood changes, memory gaps, or shifts in personality, might be mistakenly attributed to behavioural issues. Ndlovu discusses how traditional beliefs and cultural interpretations in rural communities can

further complicate the accurate diagnosis and understanding of DID. Teachers may encounter learners whose symptoms are perceived through the lens of spiritual or supernatural beliefs. These cultural interpretations can lead to stigmatization and reluctance among learners and their families to seek help from mental health professionals. The emotional and professional impact on teachers dealing with DID in their classrooms can be profound. Mbambo and Smith highlight the stress and emotional toll on teachers who lack the necessary support and resources to manage such complex cases. Teachers may experience feelings of helplessness, frustration, and burnout when they cannot support their learners.

The study's qualitative nature highlighted some challenges that seem unique to rural schools in KZN. Firstly, there is the issue of limited access to specialised training. Rural areas often lack the infrastructure and resources available in urban centres, making it difficult for learners with DID to receive timely and adequate treatment. This is particularly problematic as DID often requires a multi-disciplinary approach for effective management.

5.2.3.2. Cultural challenge

Secondly, the rural setting also raises cultural factors that could affect the experience of DID. For instance, rural communities in KZN can be tightly knit. They may hold traditional views regarding mental health, potentially leading to stigmas that make it difficult for learners to seek help or acknowledge their condition openly.

5.2.3.3. Societal challenges

5.2.3.3.1. Lack of staff training and resources to support learners with complex mental health needs

Thirdly, educational institutions in rural areas might lack the staff training and resources to support learners with complex mental health needs, including DID. As identified in the interview transcripts, this exacerbates the learners' academic challenges, such as unawareness of surroundings, mental distraction, and feeling overwhelmed.

In comparison, urban areas, while not free from challenges, often offer better access to mental health services and educational support, potentially providing a more supportive environment for learners with DID.

5.2.4. What support systems exist for learners with DID at rural schools in KZN?

5.2.4.1. *Support and accommodations*

While some schools provide support, there is a significant lack of awareness and understanding surrounding dissociative disorders. This is significantly pronounced in rural schools, where teachers lack the resources and training to handle such cases effectively. Education has long been heralded as a force for change, shaping the minds and outlooks of successive generations. It is, therefore, alarming to consider the extent to which certain conditions remain underrepresented or misunderstood within schools. One such condition is the range of dissociative disorders, which, despite their severe implications for learners, have historically received little attention or resources. The situation is all the more critical when the focus shifts to rural schools, which grapple with additional challenges that further diminish their ability to address the needs of these learners.

Dissociative disorders, characterised by disrupting the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity, or perception, can have profound implications for learners. Their effects can range from mild disconnection from immediate surroundings to more severe forms where a person's identity might shift entirely. However, many schools seem inadequately prepared to provide support despite their potential impact on learners' lives. Williams notes the significant disparity between the prevalence of such disorders and the level of understanding and resources dedicated to addressing them. This gap hinders affected learners and places undue pressure on teachers and staff ill-equipped to handle the complexities.

Rural schools, in particular, experience pronounced difficulties in this regard. Rural areas face several challenges: reduced access to specialist services, fewer resources, and sometimes isolation from up-to-date training programs. When it comes to disorders that already suffer from a deficit of awareness, like dissociative disorders, these limitations are accentuated. Consequently, the learners in these areas, who rely on the school for support, often find themselves at a loss. Teachers, who should be the primary source of understanding and assistance, are, through no fault of their own, sometimes just as uninformed or untrained as the general populace.

There is an urgent need for institutions, especially in rural settings, to be provided with comprehensive training and resources on dissociative disorders. According to Martin,

understanding and managing these disorders should be part and parcel of every teacher's professional development. Schools, especially those in remote or under-resourced areas, should be prioritized when disseminating information and resources. In the same vein, there should be a concerted effort to improve the curriculum, ensuring it addresses the needs of all learners, irrespective of their mental health status. A holistic approach that includes proper training, increased resources, and an updated curriculum ensures that all learners have an equitable chance at success regardless of their conditions or location.

5.2.5. What interventions can be recommended for future educational strategies to assist learners with DID at rural schools in the KZN?

1. **Awareness Programs:** Schools should initiate awareness programs about dissociative disorders. Not only will this promote understanding, but it will also reduce stigma.
2. **Training for Educators:** Special training programs for educators, especially in rural areas, will ensure they can identify and support learners with dissociative disorders.
3. **External Support Systems:** Encourage collaborations between educational institutions and external therapy centres or support groups. This partnership can provide valuable resources and support for learners in need.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher discovered that carrying out this study was both instructive and challenging. The information gleaned from the interviews provided priceless insights into the complexity of how DID affects FET phase learners' academic performance in rural KZN schools. These findings highlight the urgent need for programs designed to address these particular difficulties, especially in rural educational settings where there are frequently few mental health facilities.

Although it was an insightful activity, gathering qualitative data through interviews requires excellent sensitivity. Given the delicate nature of the subject, it was crucial to ensure participants felt at ease and heard. Getting used to finding the right mix between intellectual rigor and ethical consideration has taken some.

It was also noted that the problems identified, such as being ignorant of one's surroundings, being mentally preoccupied, and feeling overwhelmed are interconnected in ways that compound these learners' academic difficulties. This supports the case for a multifaceted strategy that considers both the educational and mental health aspects of the problem when addressing the academic effects of DID.

The scope of the study and its restricted geographic area of emphasis was apparent limitations. Although the results are significant, a more thorough grasp of the subject would result from expanding the research to include a wider demographic and geographic area. The study remains a springboard for additional inquiry and discussion to improve instructional approaches for DID adolescents in rural settings.

5.4. AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

1. **Comparative Analysis:** Research can delve into a comparative study of urban versus rural schools to understand the disparities in resources, awareness, and support systems provided to learners with dissociative disorders.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** Tracking learners' academic progress and well-being diagnosed with dissociative disorders over a more extended period (e.g., from high school to postgraduate studies) will provide insights into long-term effects and potential coping mechanisms.
3. **Educators' Perspective:** A detailed exploration of teachers' experiences and challenges when educating learners with dissociative disorders will provide a more rounded understanding. This could lead to targeted training programs for educators.
4. **Coping Mechanisms:** Investigate the strategies and mechanisms that learners with dissociative disorders develop organically to cope with their academic challenges. This could help in devising formal intervention programs.
5. **Peer Relations and Social Impact:** Understand the social dynamics of learners with dissociative disorders. This includes their relationships with peers, experiences of inclusion or exclusion, and their subsequent impact on their academic performance.
6. **Interplay with Other Mental Health Disorders:** Since dissociative disorders can sometimes co-exist with other mental health issues like depression or anxiety, understanding this overlap can guide holistic intervention strategies.

7. **Role of Technology:** Investigate how e-learning platforms, apps, and other digital tools can be tailored to assist learners with dissociative disorders, considering that technology plays an increasing role in education.
8. **Parental Perspective:** Understanding the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of parents who have children diagnosed with dissociative disorders can offer another layer of insight, potentially leading to family-centered intervention strategies.
9. **Impact of Curriculum Design:** Research on how different curricular designs or teaching methodologies impact learners with dissociative disorders can help create more inclusive academic programs.
10. **Efficacy of Support Programs:** A thorough evaluation of existing support programs within and outside schools will help refine them and best practices.

Incorporating these areas in future research will provide a broader and deeper understanding of learners' challenges with dissociative disorders, leading to more effective strategies and interventions to support their academic journey.

5.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One significant limitation of this study was the small and non-diverse sample size. Rural areas have fewer learners diagnosed with DID, and those who are diagnosed do not necessarily represent the broader population. This can affect the generalizability of the findings (Smith, 2022). Secondly, rural schools' educational resources and support systems may differ significantly from those in urban settings. This discrepancy creates additional variables that are hard to control, complicating the study's findings (Ngubane, 2019). Diagnosing DID in rural settings can be particularly challenging due to a lack of specialized healthcare providers and diagnostic tools. This can lead to underdiagnosis or misdiagnosis, which impacts the reliability of the study (Jones, 2021). Thirdly, gathering long-term data in rural areas can be difficult due to high dropout rates and mobility among learners, this affects the ability to track the long-term influence of DID on educational outcomes (Thompson, 2021). Lastly, researching vulnerable populations, especially minors with DID, raises ethical issues. Ensuring informed consent and maintaining confidentiality can be more challenging in close-knit communities (Williams, 2018).

5.6. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 5, we embarked on a holistic exploration of the insights and narratives gathered from our study participants. This synthesis highlighted the undeniable correlation between dissociative disorders and academic impediments, emphasizing issues related to concentration, task execution, and the broader educational experience.

Our discussions drew connections with existing research, suggesting that while the cognitive effects of dissociative disorders have been documented, there's an urgent need to integrate this understanding into actionable educational strategies and institutional policies.

Crucially, this chapter spotlighted the considerable gap in school awareness and support for students with dissociative disorders. While some learners found pockets of understanding and accommodation, the overarching sentiment was isolation and struggle, particularly pronounced in resource-scarce rural settings.

Based on these discussions, a series of recommendations were put forth. These encompassed the need for awareness programs, specialized teacher training, fostering external support systems, and harnessing technology for tailored educational experiences. These proposed strategies aim to support affected learners and cultivate a more inclusive and understanding educational landscape.

Conclusively, Chapter 5 encapsulated the study's overarching findings, reinforcing the urgent need for systemic change in the academic treatment of learners with dissociative disorders.

5.7. REFLECTION

As a Master's student in the Psychology of Education, I am deeply interested in understanding the factors affecting learners' academic performance, particularly those at rural schools in KZN. Over the past year, the researcher has been particularly interested in dissociative disorders' impact on learners' academic function in the FET phase. Dissociative disorders are mental health conditions characterized by disruptions in a person's sense of self, memory, and perception of reality. Dissociative symptoms can arise as a response to severe trauma or stress and can significantly affect a person's daily functioning, including their ability to perform well academically.

To gain a deeper understanding of this issue, the researcher read several research studies about the prevalence and effects of dissociative disorders among learners. Through personal interactions, the researcher gained insight into the unique challenges faced by learners with dissociative disorders and how these disorders can affect their academic function. One key finding from the researcher's readings is that dissociative disorders can cause significant disruptions in a student's ability to concentrate, recall information, and manage time effectively. This can result in lower grades, missed deadlines, and an increased dropout risk. Furthermore, the isolation and stigma that often accompany mental health conditions can compound these challenges, leading to shame, hopelessness, and a lack of motivation to succeed academically.

As the researcher reflected on readings and interactions with learners, teachers, and mental health professionals, the researcher was struck by the need for greater awareness and understanding of dissociative disorders and more effective support for learners with these conditions. This includes providing access to mental health resources and services and education and training for teachers and school staff to understand better and respond to the needs of learners with dissociative disorders.

As such, this study has reinforced the importance of examining dissociative disorders' impact on learners' academic function in KZN rural schools. By better understanding the challenges faced by these learners and developing effective strategies for support, one can help to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to succeed academically, regardless of their mental health status. This, in turn, will help to build a stronger and more resilient community where every student is valued and supported in reaching their full potential.

5.8. CONCLUSION

Dissociative disorder, within the realm of academia, presents a set of distinct challenges that cannot be understated. Universities and colleges are places where students are expected to maintain consistent concentration, participation, and information retention. For students grappling with a dissociative disorder, such expectations can seem impossible. Their experiences may sometimes cause them to feel detached from their surroundings or themselves, making the traditional academic tasks daunting. It's not just about keeping up with lessons or assignments; it's about

battling a deeply personal and often misunderstood condition in an environment that demands constant mental engagement.

Yet, hope is far from lost for learners navigating academia with a dissociative disorder. The silver lining lies in the power of heightened awareness, both on the part of the school and the learner body. Recognising the disorder's intricacies and implications is the first step toward meaningful support. Schools must foster an environment where such learners have the requisite support structures and accommodations tailored to their unique needs. The focus should not merely be on academic performance but on creating a holistic experience where every learner, regardless of their challenges, feels included and valued. By implementing such support mechanisms, we can ensure that students with dissociative disorder participate in academic life and thrive, having a balanced and enriching experience.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

13-Jun-2023

Dear Mrs Nelly Mokoena

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

An assessment of the impact of dissociative identity disorder on academic function for FET phase students in KZN rural schools

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2023/0092/3

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

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APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER FROM UKZN DoE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 392 1063

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/2

Mrs NC Mokoena
University of Free State
FREE STATE
9300

Dear Mrs Mokoena

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER ON ACADEMIC FUNCTION FOR FET PHASE STUDENTS IN KZN RURAL SCHOOLS", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 23 January 2023 to 31 January 2026.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

AMAJUBA DISTRICT

Mr GN Ngcobo
Head of Department: Education
Date: 23 January 2023

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER FROM UKZN DoE TO ASSIST WITH IDENTIFYING LEARNERS LIVING WITH DID



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: RN Khuzwayo Coll. 0826182386

Date: 25 May 2023

Mrs NC Mokoena
University of Free State
FREE STATE
9300

Dear Mrs Mokoena

PERMISSION TO GIVE ASSISTANCE WITH IDENTIFYING LEARNERS LIVING WITH DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER (DID)

1. I refer to your letter of request for assistance with identifying learners living with DID as per your approved topic: "An assessment of the impact of dissociative identity disorder on academic function for FET phase students in KZN rural schools".
2. Information required must be handled with strict confidentiality and the ethical considerations guiding your study must be strictly observed.
3. As per your request, we have allocated Mrs TT Thwala, our acting Deputy Chief Education Specialist in the psycho social unit to assist you with the required information.
4. Mrs. TT Thwala may be reached in our offices at 113 Panorama drive, Lennoxton, Newcastle.
5. Please note that if students are going to participate in your study, there has to be informed consent and they must be informed, inter alia, that any data collected through this study, will not place them at any form of harm.
6. Please feel free to contact my office if you encounter obstacles in relation to the assistance required.
7. We wish you the best in your study.

Mr RN Khuzwayo
Chief Education Specialist
Special Needs Education Services
Amajuba district

..Leading Social Competent and Economic Emancipation
Through a Revolutionary Education for All..

Private Bag 40210, NEWCASTLE, 3210
113 Panorama Drive, Newcastle, 2940
Tel: 034 328 4500 Fax: 034 3172158

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

What will happen to your child in this study?

Your child will only be asked a few questions related to the condition and the response will be used to compile data which will help other children in dealing with this condition. Any information shared by your child will stay between the researcher and the child.

Can anything bad happen to your child?

Nothing bad will happen to the child, it will just be a talk between two people

Can anything good happen to your child?

This gives the child a better understanding of the condition and how to deal with it in a positive way, which will lead to improved academic performance.

Will anyone know your child is part of the study?

Your child's name will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect your child to the answers given. Answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify your child will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat the information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, please advise your child not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

Who can you talk to about the study?

Dr Kananga Robert Makuna
058 718 5343

What if you do not want your child to do this?

This is not a compulsory study for your child to participate in. If you are not comfortable with your child participating, your decision will not affect the child's school performance in any way.

Please return this section

Name of child: _____

Name of Parent: _____

- Do you understand this research study and are you willing to let your child take part in it? Yes No
- Has the researcher answered all your questions? Yes No
- Do you understand that the child can withdraw from the study at any time? Yes No
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my child's participation Yes No

Signature of Parent

Date

I, the undersigned Parent, 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 deidentified 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 Parent, agree to 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 5: GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET AND INFORMED CONSENT



Research study information leaflet and consent form

Date

18/07/2023

Title of the research project

An assessment of the impact of dissociative identity disorder on academic function for FET phase students in KZN rural schools

Principle investigator / researcher(s) name(s) and contact number(s):

Nelly Mokoena

2019809447

076 466 8403

Faculty and Department:

Faculty of Education

Psychology of education

Study leader(s) name and contact number:

Dr Kananga Robert Makuna

058 718 5343

What is the aim / purpose of the study?

When dissociation does not affect a learner's sense of self, emotional, social, academic growth, or awareness of his surroundings, it might be called ordinary or unproblematic. Nonetheless, when dissociation interferes with academic function, this becomes concerning for all involved. As such, the aim of this study is to explore the impact of dissociative identity disorder on academic function for FET phase students in KZN rural schools.

Who is doing the research?

I'm an educator by profession currently doing masters at the University of Free state.

Has the study received ethical approval?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2023/0092/3



Why are you invited to take part in this research project?

The research aims to recruit teachers in rural areas of KZN who can best point out if they have seen dissociative symptoms among students and how such dissociative behaviour has impacted academic function for the students identified. Equally so, the research will teach based on the recommendations and involvement of a psychiatrist specialising in DID. The psychiatrist has assisted in identifying participants.

What is the nature of participation in this study?

The study involves semi-structured interviews. The interviewer and the interviewee can ask questions that allow for a comprehensive discussion of pertinent topics. In addition, because of the conversational tone, the interviewee may feel more comfortable expanding on techniques and experiences that will highlight the traits that make them a good fit for the position. The semi-structured interviews will constitute questions related to the impact of dissociative identity disorder on academic function for students. The duration of the interview will be an hour long.

Can the participant withdraw from the study?

Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?

The proposed study is important in that its findings will be useful in championing diagnosis of DID in rural schools that have less resources and often receive less attention than schools in town districts.

What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?

This study will cause inconveniences in such that at times participants will be expected to attend interview sessions after school. Which means they have to sacrifice their time. Researcher might also need to observe learners during contact time which might cause discomfort to some educators and learners.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

Your name will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you

share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

How will the information be stored and ultimately destroyed?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a password secured safe for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the five-year period has lapsed all data will be shredded and hard drive containing soft copies will be formatted.

Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?

No payment or incentives will be received for participating in this study. However, should it happen that the researcher requires to have an interview with the participants after school, transport incentives will be provided.

How will the participant be informed of the findings / results of the study?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Nelly Mokoena contact number: 0764668403. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Nelly Mokoena contact number: 0764668403 email: nhlaphonelly@yahoo.ca. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Kananga Robert Makuna contact: 058 718 5343, email: makunaKR@ufs.ac.za.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

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 deidentified 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 6: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT (INTERVIEW QUESTIONS)



Research Instrument

Semi-Structured Interview Research Instrument: Assessing the Impact of Dissociative Disorder on Academic Function of FET Phase Students in KZN Rural Areas

Interviewer Introduction:

Hello, my name is Nelly Mokoena, and I am a researcher conducting a study on the impact of dissociative disorder on the academic function of FET phase students in KZN rural areas. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of students diagnosed with dissociative disorder and its impact on their academic functioning. I want to thank you for participating in this study, and I can assure you that all the information shared in this interview will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

Consent:

Before we begin, I would like to review the consent form to ensure you understand the study's purpose and procedures. [Hand over the consent form and explain it in detail, ensuring the participant fully understands their rights and the purpose of the study]. Do you have any questions or concerns about the consent form or the study?

Demographic Information:

1. Can you please provide your age and gender?
2. What school are you currently attending?
3. What grade level are you in?
4. What is your favourite subject?

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Assessment of Dissociative Disorder:

1. Have you ever been diagnosed with dissociative disorder?
2. When were you diagnosed with dissociative disorder?
3. Have you received any treatment for dissociative disorder?
4. How does dissociative disorder impact your daily life and academic functioning?

Impact of Dissociative Disorder on Academic Functioning:

1. How does dissociative disorder affect your ability to concentrate in class?
2. How does dissociative disorder affect your ability to complete homework and assignments?
3. Have you noticed any changes in your grades since being diagnosed with dissociative disorder?
4. Have you received support or accommodations from your school to help with your academic functioning?
5. How has dissociative disorder affected your overall academic experience?

Support and Accommodations:

1. Have you received support or accommodations from your school to help with your dissociative disorder?
2. Have you received support or accommodations from outside school (e.g., therapy, support groups)?
3. How helpful have these supports and accommodations been in managing your dissociative disorder and academic functioning?

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Interview questions for teachers

1. How do teachers in rural schools recognize dissociation in a learner?
2. What kind of actions and situations can decrease dissociation in the classroom?
3. To what extent are teachers equipped to assist learners with dissociative identity disorder in rural schools?
4. How does dissociative identity disorder affect teaching and learning, especially in rural schools lacking resources?
5. How do you interact with learners with dissociative identity disorder in the classroom especially those with behavioural problems?

Closing Questions:

1. Is there anything else you want to share about your experiences with dissociative disorder and academic functioning?
2. Do you have any questions or concerns about the study or the interview process?

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your experiences and insights are valuable in helping us understand the impact of dissociative disorder on the academic functioning of FET phase students in KZN rural areas. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you again for your time.

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APPENDIX 7: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR



Editor's Declaration

As the editor of the study titled, "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER ON ACADEMIC FUNCTION FOR FET PHASE LEARNERS IN RURAL KZN," I thus disclose that my responsibility was to rigorously review and modify the manuscript to ensure clarity, coherence, and academic rigour. My duties included checking the language for correctness and conformance to academic norms, notably in terms of structure, grammar, and style. I thoroughly reviewed the work to ensure that it followed the format and editorial criteria of the intended publication.

In addition, I checked the quality and appropriateness of citations and references to ensure that they met the most recent academic standards and practises. I also offered feedback on the content's organisation and flow, recommending changes as needed to improve the study's overall readability and impact.

It is crucial to stress that I had no involvement in the research design, data collection, or data analysis techniques. My contribution was limited to fine-tuning the manuscript's presentation and ensuring that it met scholarly standards. The writers are solely responsible for the intellectual content and research findings.

I confirm that the final manuscript, as edited, accurately reflects the authors' research and findings, and that my editorial interventions had no effect on the substantial content or academic integrity of the study.

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APPENDIX 8: TURN IT IN REPORT

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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