

**AN INVESTIGATION ON PRINCIPALS' KNOWLEDGE AND
PERCEPTIONS REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE
CAPRIVI REGION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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BY
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ABSTRACT

An overview of learners with special educational needs both internationally and nationally has been discussed. Initially, learners with special educational needs were catered for in special institutions. This situation seemed to discriminate against learners with special educational needs. With the call for human rights, there emerged the move toward inclusive education, which is based on a social justice paradigm of equal educational opportunities for all learners within the same classroom.

To achieve the objectives of the study, a quantitative research approach was used. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to a stratified sample of 43 primary, combined, and secondary school principals in the Caprivi region.

The findings of this study have provided some evidence that principals in the Caprivi region indeed hold a variety of perceptions towards inclusive education. They expressed the need for effective training in order to be equipped with abilities and strategies that would enable them to support and nurture the learning of learners with special educational needs. They also indicated that the current curriculum used in regular schools is not suitable for learners with special educational needs. Principals were also of the opinion that the necessary facilities, infrastructure and other resources be put in place before inclusive education is implemented. Principals further suggested that a departure from traditional instructional practices to a variety of practices could utilize diversity in the teaching and learning process to ensure that different needs are met. Finally, principals were of the opinion that parents should be involved in the inclusive education process.

It is clear from the above-mentioned information that the majority of principals in the Caprivi region do have specific needs regarding the implementation of inclusive education. It is therefore imperative that the Namibian government takes note of these perceptions and relate them to the development and implementation of an effective inclusive education system.

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This thesis is dedicated to the fond memories of my dearest mother, the late Clarina Mayumbelo, who invested so much in my upbringing, and enabled me to obtain the education I have today. Her love, wisdom, and integrity will always serve as a source of inspiration to me.

DECLARATIONS

I, Brenda Manga Mayumbelo, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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APRIL 2006

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

HIV and AIDS	Human Immuno Virus and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
LSEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
MBEC	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
ME	Ministry of Education
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Special education has a long history that reflects many changes in attitudes towards and perceptions of people with disabilities. It has been shaped by changing social and political beliefs. Many diverse groups have contributed to this change process including parents, educators, psychologists, physicians, clergy, researchers and persons with disabilities themselves (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

As it exists today, it has been influenced by a number of different factors. According to Fulcher (as cited in Naicker, 1999), there are four main discourses, which have constructed the field of special education. They are as follows: the medical discourse, the charity discourse, the lay discourse, and the rights discourse.

- *The medical discourse*

According to this discourse impairment is linked to disability. For example, in schools for the physically disabled, learners are constructed as disabled and the disability is conceived of as an objective attribute, not a social construct. In other words such a person is excluded from mainstream social and economic life because of a disability that is thought to be a natural and irremediable characteristic of the person. Those who are blind or deaf are excluded from regular education schools and such exclusion immediately resulted in the perception of such people as inadequate human beings who were unfit to be included in mainstream economic and social life.

- *The charity discourse*

In this discourse, those with a disability are viewed as in need of assistance, as objects of pity and eternally dependent on others. As a result they were seen as underachievers and people who were in need of institutional care (Naicker, 1999). Education for children with disabilities was seen as a religious duty. For a long time a number of children who were deaf, blind, or intellectually impaired were educated in religious schools reserved for them (Zimba, Haihambo & February, 2004).

- *The lay discourse*

This discourse relates to prejudice, hate, ignorance, fear, and even paternalistic tendencies. Much of this has to do with the isolation of people who deviate from the normal physical appearances (Naicker, 1999). This discourse demeans people with disabilities.

- *The rights discourse*

This is a discourse that is committed to extending full citizenship of all people. It stresses equal opportunity, self-reliance, and independence (Naicker, 1999).

The first three discourses imply that the existence of special education requires and justifies exclusion from the mainstream of education, social and economic life. They accordingly represent a mind-set whereby people believed in the institutionalisation of persons with disabilities as a solution to the 'problem'. The rights discourse, on the other hand, is one that

recognises the rights of people with disabilities and therefore their full inclusion and integration into society (Naicker, 1999).

The above discourses explain a series of socio-economic and cultural transformations in education. For example, Engelbrecht, (1999) states that mainstreaming in the 1970s and 1980s selectively integrated learners with special needs into mainstream classes on a case-by-case basis, depending on the needs of each learner and the demands of the specific class. Another transformation was that of integration. This approach involved the provision of educational services to learners with special needs in a special class, in a typical regular school. Special education services were usually provided in special education classes (Aefsky, 1995).

The last transformation of inclusive education has become central to the educational policies of many developed and developing countries, and has emerged as an important aspect of international discussion about how best to respond to learners who experience difficulties in school (Engelbrecht, 1999). This approach implies that instead of requiring special needs learners to adapt to the classroom, as was the goal in mainstreaming, the classroom is re-organised to fit the learning needs of all learners (Du Toit, 1996). This means that learners with disabilities are taught together with those without disabilities in the regular classroom.

The concept of inclusive education operates within the framework of rights. The focus is particularly on those learners who have been excluded from regular schooling and the restructuring of schools in order to respond to the needs of those learners (Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht, 1999).

Many factors affect and influence the development of inclusive education. One of the major arguments that have often been used in the debate about the inclusion of learners with special educational needs has been the perception of the principals toward inclusive education. Sage (1997) is of the opinion that we should recognise that inclusive education calls for major system changes. He further states that “strategies for promoting inclusive practices in schools primarily involve the facilitation of change, and the actions in administrators must be guided by identified needs in order to change existing attitudes and practices.” This means that the principal of the school, in most cases, should spearhead these strategies. These strategies required for inclusive education are, according to Sage (1997), those that promote opening oneself and others to the possibilities of change, that model taking of risks, and that reinforce any attempts at creating an inclusive climate for learning by all learners. Principals should also foster a school culture that values inclusion. Therefore, the principals’ knowledge and perceptions regarding inclusive education in this case appears to be critical determinants of the success of inclusion reforms, as they are the ones who determine the policy and school-level resource allocation.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Principals are very important as instructional leaders in schools since they are the ones who establish and communicate the goals of the school to teachers. Andrews (1991) states that the principal’s vision of what the school could be, is likely the single most salient factor affecting the school norms. As instructional leaders of their schools, principals are key players not only in restructuring regular programmes, but also in leading special education initiatives for inclusion.

The instructional leadership of principals impacts initial school placements and the subsequent achievement of learners with special educational needs. According to Cross and Villa (1992) administrative support and collaboration stand out as the most powerful predictors of teachers' and principals' perceptions towards inclusive education. The results of this study suggest that teachers are more willing to include and accommodate learners with disabilities in their classrooms when they perceive that their school administration fosters a supportive climate and when the school encourages teaming and collaboration. Principals are key figures in providing appropriate support and education to their teachers. The availability of that support directly influences the opinions and perceptions teachers hold.

The support and leadership of principals has been documented as integral for successful school change and successful inclusion (Fullan, 1991). As such, the principal is expected to initiate change, facilitate it and implement it. As school site administrators and policy leaders, principals influence reform implementation decisions, control resource allocation and exert a supervisory role relative to school personnel (Sage, 1997). This supports the fact that principals set the tone for the success of inclusive education. Once the principals' perceptions toward inclusive education are positive, they can influence its practice effectively since they work as intermediaries between their schools and the head office. Based on the vital role that principals should play in inclusive education, the purpose of this study is to examine principals' knowledge and perceptions regarding inclusive education in the Caprivi region.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research was guided by the following questions in order to address principals' perceptions regarding inclusive education:

1. How do principals define inclusive education?
2. To what extent are principals in regular schools willing to accept learners with special educational needs and under what conditions are they willing to do this?
3. What are principals' perceptions towards inclusive education?
4. What is the extent of the use of academic practices associated with inclusive education?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Principals and teachers are confronted with inclusive education as part of their expanding responsibilities and increasingly learners with special educational needs are being educated in regular education environments. Therefore, it is important to examine the knowledge and perceptions of principals regarding inclusive education, as this may provide guidance to principals' and teachers' preparation programmes and assist the Ministry of Education in developing better academic inclusive practices.

As instructional leaders of their schools, principals are key players not only in restructuring regular programmes, but also in leading special education initiatives for inclusive education. Principals play a crucial role in seeing that the entire school staff is actively involved and

shares responsibility in planning and carrying out the strategies that make the school successful. If inclusive education is to be successful, it is the responsibility of principals to find new ways to enhance the acceptability of learners with special educational needs in the regular schools. Principals' belief in the inclusive philosophy, together with their willingness and ability to lead staff in successfully implementing inclusive practices, merits further examination.

The findings of this study may contribute towards the practice of inclusive education in Namibia. It may also provide a basis for understanding not only how inclusive practices could be better implemented, but also how principals should be prepared for inclusive education. It is also hoped that the results of this study will be used by the Namibian education system in formulating principals' and teachers' preparation programmes.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study did not cover the whole of Namibia, but it covered the Caprivi region only. This is due to the fact that no study has been done on inclusive education in the Caprivi region, as political circumstances could not allow in the previous years. There was also a lack of resources in terms of finance and transport, as well as the time available. Responsibilities at work also made it impossible for the researcher to take leave for a longer period in order to visit the other education regions.

The study was based completely on principals' reports on perceptions and not on their actual behaviour in the real setting. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

The following terms are defined for the purpose of clarity, delimitation, and specification of the procedures of the study:

1.6.1 Special education

It is a form of education provided for those who are not achieving, or are unlikely to achieve through regular educational provision, the levels of educational, social and other attainments appropriate to their age, and which had the aim of furthering their progress towards these levels (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1998).

1.6.2 Mainstreaming

The term is widely employed as an alternative to segregated school provision for learners with special educational needs. Mainstreaming, according to Aefsky (1995), provides learners with special educational needs the opportunity to be placed in a regular class based on the learners' ability to keep up with work assigned. It is accepted that the learner will adapt to the demands of the class (Engelbrecht, 1999).

1.6.3 Integration

This is a term popularised in the 1980s, and used to indicate the placement of a learner with special educational needs either in a special class, in a typical school or in a mainstream classroom where the learner could participate in some activities with peers without special educational needs, e.g. art, music, library, and assembly programmes (Aefsky, 1995; Kisanji, 1999).

1.6.4 Inclusion

This concept implies giving everybody an opportunity to be part of a group. It is simply a set of broad principles of social justice and resultant educational equity and school responsiveness (Dyson, 1998).

1.6.5 Inclusive education

This term refers to a single education system that is responsive to the diverse needs of all learners. It is a unified system that would allow all learners to receive the necessary educational services, which they require without being labelled and without being removed from the classroom environment (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996).

1.6.6 Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN)

This concept includes:

- learners from the lower socio-economic group,
- those affected by war and environmental degradation and change,
- learners who are victims of abuse and violence,
- street children,
- children being brought up outside of their own families,
- children in abusive forms of child labour,
- learners with impairments,
- girls in situations where their education is seen as less important than that of the boys,
- learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness,
- nomadic learners,

- learners from oppressed groups and subjected to racism or other forms of discrimination,
 - girls who are pregnant or have children,
 - learners whose home language is different from the language of instruction, etc.
- (Booth, 2000).

1.6.6 Impairment

This concept refers to any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. An impairment can lead to a reduction in the efficiency of an individual according to the usual norms of society (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

1.6.7 Disability

This definition refers to a condition characterised by a physical, cognitive, psychological or social difficulty so severe that it negatively affects a learner's learning. It is a condition that limits some major life activity (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organised as follows:

Chapter 1: The first chapter outlines the problem and the research questions. This is followed by a discussion of the significance of the study, limitations and relevant terms used in the study. The focal point of the investigation was to examine the knowledge and perceptions of principals regarding inclusive education.

Chapter 2: This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature reviewed to the problem under discussion. It helps to put the problem in its proper perspective and highlights the types of questions being addressed.

Chapter 3: This chapter gives a detailed description of the research design and methodology relevant to this study.

Chapter 4: This chapter is more exclusively based on the research results.

Chapter 5: This chapter includes a detailed discussion of the findings and a number of recommendations as well as a conclusion.

1.8 SUMMARY

The first part of this chapter explains the main discourses (the medical, charity, lay and rights discourse) that have constructed the field of special education. These discourses explain a series of socio-economic and cultural transformations that have occurred. This was followed by a discussion that the inclusive education movement is driven by a concern for equality of provision for all learners and that all learners should be afforded full participation in the community. When considering the specific statement of the problem, this chapter listed four questions in order to address principals' knowledge and perceptions regarding inclusive education. Included in this chapter is the significance of the study and the limitations of the study. The chapter concluded with a section that clarifies important concepts that will recur throughout the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an attempt is made to discuss the findings of some of the studies done on inclusive education so as to provide the general background and rationale for this study. The first section looks at the educational provision for learners with special educational needs internationally and nationally. The second section focuses on the importance of principals in the implementation of inclusive education. The third section is about the studies done on principals' perceptions regarding inclusive education, and the last section looks at some of the instructional practices associated with inclusive education

2.2 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:

2.2.1 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

International initiatives from United Nations organisations such as UNESCO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank, jointly add up to a growing consensus that all learners have the right to be educated together, regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other condition (Saleh and Vayrynen 1999, as cited in Möwes, 2002).

Frameworks for determining the rights of a learner to education have originated in a number of international declarations and recommendations such as: the Charter of

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959); the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (UN, 1966); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, 1966); the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971); the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975); the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981); the Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992); the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the 1990 World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs and the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993).

Today, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education provides the clearest and most unequivocal call for inclusive education and has reinforced the ideas expressed in the other international declarations and documents (Forlin and Forlin, 1996 & Saleh and Vayrynen 1999, as cited in Möwes, 2002).

2.2.2 NAMIBIAN PERSPECTIVE

Before independence, in Namibia, the general education system was characterised by segregation, inequity, fragmentation, and lack of provision for the majority of people. Systems of education were separated along racial lines as well as between ordinary learners in the mainstream and learners with special educational needs in an alternate stream. There was a

separate education for each of the various ethnic groups, all under one central government, and there existed a vast difference in the funding of the different education systems (Cohen, 1994). Services that existed operated along racial lines with services provided for white learners fairly extensively, while services for black learners being limited and in some cases non-existent. Lack of access to basic services, related with poverty, placed children at risk, and contributed to learning breakdown and further exclusion and marginalization (Amukugo, 1993). The inequities evident in education prior to 1990 can be directly assigned to the social, economic and political factors that were central to the history of the Namibian society during the years of apartheid.

Since independence in 1990, Namibia made a commitment to integrate all people with special needs in the society and to provide basic education to all people, including people with disabilities (Republic of Namibia, 1990). The Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) in a guiding policy for the education sector, *Toward Education for All*, identified the four broad goals of access, equity, quality and democracy as the main thrust of education for all in Namibia. The policy also stresses that it is mandated to provide education and training to learners with special needs and abilities. Included in this group are learners with vision, hearing or other physical, emotional or mental impairments. Included as well are above average and gifted learners as well as learners in the regular classrooms who are not achieving well. The main objective is to provide assistance to such learners as early as possible and to assist them to become optimally integrated into regular educational programmes as well as into society at large. There is also a National

Policy on Disability, which states “the government shall ensure that children and youth with disabilities have the same right to education as children without disabilities,” (Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, 1997).

At the moment, Namibia has about eight special schools. There is a rapidly developing National Institute for Special Education in Khomasdal in Windhoek with a school for the visually impaired, a school for the hearing impaired and one for the mentally challenged. There is also a Centre for Psychological services and a Speech Therapist that serves the whole country. There is one large special school in Oshakati in the North for visual and hearing impairments, and a school for learners with learning difficulties in the South of Namibia and finally two senior secondary schools in Windhoek, which offer a work-based curriculum (Howard, as cited in Zimba, Wahome, Legesse, Hengari, Haihambo-Muetudhana and Möwes, 1999).

Inclusive education implies that we need to revisit our earlier attempts to educate learners with special educational needs. Support for inclusion may be based on the inadequacies in our current special education provisions or on a paradigm shift in the way we think about differences amongst people, in the ways we choose to organize schools for their education, and in how we view the purpose of that education. In order to realise this right to education for all learners with special educational needs, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MBEC) is currently examining the policy on inclusive education with a view of implementation. At

present, the needs of learners with special educational needs are met through special classes in mainstream schools or special schools (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2001).

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF PRINCIPALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Principals play a crucial role in seeing that the entire school staff is actively involved and shares responsibility in planning and carrying out the strategies that make a school successful. They have long been acknowledged as instructional leaders (Parker & Day, 1997). Until recently, however, the extent to which the principal was responsible for the learning of students with disabilities has been less evident. In a dual system of education, it has been acceptable for the principal to defer to the special education administrator in matters involving students with special learning needs. By contrast, in an inclusive school, the principal is responsible for the needs of all students. This realignment of responsibility establishes a fundamental change in the roles for principals (Sage & Burrello, 1994).

In one case study, Solomon, Schaps, Watson & Battistich (1992) identified the following four key roles for principals in facilitating inclusive practices:

- Providing support to teachers as they learn and grow,
- Working to establish caring relationships with students
- Developing a school wide discipline programme that reflects insight into students and their problems and,
- Setting a tone of support and caring in the school community while providing resources for students, staff and parents.

These key roles expected of principals, encompass not only the importance of facilitating inclusive practices; they should be the good examples of effective schools. Fullan, (1991) recognized that principals' perceptions and support are integral for successful inclusion. As instructional leaders in schools, principals are being called upon to provide training and support to teachers. If teachers and principals are not comfortable or confident in providing appropriate services for mainstreamed students, an even higher level of anxiety and negative reaction is likely to accompany the movement toward inclusive education.

As instructional leaders and agents of change in inclusive schools, principals should possess several competencies. Kaskinen- Chapman (as cited in Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998) found that principals should have the knowledge and skills in effective instruction, assessment and discipline to provide support and feedback to teachers. Secondly, principals should possess

skills in establishing and supporting instructional teams. They structure time for teams to meet and provide support for their work. Lastly, another competency needed by principals is the willingness to support collaborative interactions and operate comfortably and effectively in collaborative groups.

2.4 STUDIES ON PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Most of the studies, which have been done on inclusive education, were carried out in foreign cultural contexts and only a few were done in Namibia. There is a study that was done on “Namibian primary school principals’ perceptions toward educating learners with special educational needs in the regular classroom” (Kahikuata-Kariko, 2003). The results of Kahikuata-Kariko’s study suggested that Namibian primary school principals hold positive perceptions toward learners with special educational needs in general, though they have preferences of the type of disabilities to be accommodated in their schools. Principals also felt that inclusive education has potential benefits for both learners with and without special educational needs and that it presents opportunities for academic growth for learners with special educational needs.

The above-mentioned findings are similar to those of Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998), who examined the perceptions of principals toward inclusion across the state of Illinois. They used descriptive statistics to analyse their survey. Regarding perceptions, the respondents felt overall that their schools were somewhat inclusive and were continuing to work to become more inclusive. They felt that inclusion could work in their schools, but were not convinced that all

learners should be included in regular classrooms. Finally, they did not believe that teachers and school communities were adequately prepared to support the implementation of inclusive educational practices.

Davis (1980) also evaluated principals' judgment of how students with 21 different disabilities would succeed in their schools. The results indicated that students with the label "mentally retarded" (mild, moderate or severe) were perceived as having a poor chance of being successfully included in the regular classroom. Davis further suggested that successful inclusive programmes were unlikely to be available in schools where principals did not have expectations of success.

Cline (as cited in Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998) also examined principals' perceptions towards and knowledge of inclusive education. When asked to select the most appropriate placement from descriptions of learners with special educational needs, principals demonstrated a lack of knowledge regarding the nature and needs of learners with special educational needs. This was particularly apparent when their placement decisions were compared with the placement decisions of special education experts. The author concluded that in order to enhance successful inclusion efforts, in-service training is needed for principals.

Teachers' and administrators' perceptions toward inclusion were also examined in a study by Garva-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989). Administrators did not feel that inclusion would have a negative effect on the academic achievement of the other learners in the class, yet teachers felt that there would be an effect. Teachers also felt that principals often did not furnish the support needed to provide appropriate services to learners with special educational needs in the regular

classroom setting. Garva-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989) noted that if mainstreaming was to be successful, it was the responsibility of administrators to find new ways to enhance the acceptability of learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms.

Hawley and Rosenholtz (1984) also stressed the importance of the principal's role in establishing and communicating the goals of the school to the teachers. The report supported the use of the principal as a reporting source for the school norms from which teachers derive their subjective norms. This is in agreement with what Fullan (1991) said, which is that the principal is of major importance as an instructional leader in a school. Therefore, if the principal holds positive perceptions regarding inclusive education then it will be easier to implement it in schools.

For inclusive education to succeed, principals and teachers need to shift from one set of assumptions, beliefs, values, norms, relationships, behaviours and practices to another which entails a fundamental reculturing of learning and teaching (Miller, 1998 and Fullan, 1998). This involves constructing new conceptions about learning and teaching, and new forms of professionalism for principals and teachers that embrace values that reflect a supportive and caring environment that celebrates and nurtures diversity, and promotes equal opportunity and access to education.

2.5 SOME OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.

2.5.1 Introduction

“Since the main strategy for addressing the needs of learners with special educational needs in Namibia is to integrate them as fully as possible into regular education programmes” (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993), our teachers are assuming considerably more responsibility for meeting the educational needs of learners from diverse backgrounds and with diverse learning needs. Teachers will not only have to change the way they teach, but also what they teach (Heron & Jorgenson, 1995). Consequently, teachers’ use of effective instructional practices is one of the most consistently cited conditions associated with successful inclusion (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; Shaffner & Buswell, 1996; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1994). In these studies, successful inclusion involved the meaningful participation of learners with special educational needs in social and academic activities within the regular education classroom. Use of instructional practices such as peer tutoring, cooperative learning, cooperative teaching, collaboration, teacher assistance teams, behaviour management, direct instruction, curriculum-based assessment, learning strategies instruction, and parent education support groups has been noted in classrooms characterized as having achieved successful inclusion (Gazda, 1989; Bauwens, Hourcade & Friend, 1989; Möwes, 1999; Landsberg, 2005; Kokot, 2005; Shinn & Hubbard as cited in Lerner, 1993; Lerner, 1993).

2.5.2 Peer tutoring and Cooperative learning

Peer tutoring provides academic practice primarily for the learners with special educational needs, but achieves socialization for all learners. There is a growing body of research to support peer tutoring as an effective small-group strategy for increasing social interaction and building learners' self esteem (Gazda, 1989). Cooperative learning facilitates interaction and promotes the team approach. It also “builds upon heterogeneity and formalizes and encourages peer support” (Gazda, 1989). For successful peer tutoring and cooperative learning, school staff must teach and monitor appropriate and effective social skills to all learners. Examples of these skills are “receiving and giving criticisms, encouraging one another to participate, asking for suggestions and criticizing an idea rather than a person” (Gazda, 1989).

2.5.3 Cooperative teaching and Collaboration

In cooperative teaching practices, teachers and principals need to find ways to provide the necessary support to educate all learners. Regular and special education teachers need to work together to coordinate curriculum and instruction and to teach heterogeneous groups of students in the regular education classroom setting (Bauwens et al, 1989). Regular and special education teachers can implement inclusive education by learning to teach multiple levels. According to Bauwens et al (1989), listening to each other and respecting different views are the biggest keys in working together. Regular teachers can learn certain strategies from special education teachers and vice-versa. Co-teaching can actually work in the classroom in a way that one of the teachers delivers some instructions to the group as a whole, while the other teacher works with small groups or individual students. The benefits of cooperative teaching are that the

teachers have the opportunity to co-plan and co-teach and thus to co-ordinate and assess the ongoing educational programmes of all students (Möwes, 1999).

For collaboration practices, Pugach (as cited by Möwes, 1999) suggested that collaboration among teachers toward inclusion starts with a careful and critical examination of the general education curriculum when including learners with special educational needs. The focus then moves from a more traditional emphasis on the student as the problem to a more progressive emphasis on the learning environment and how the demands of that environment affect all the learners, not just a learner with a learning problem.

2.5.4 Teacher assistance teams

Teacher assistance teams are almost similar to co-teaching instruction. In an inclusive school, teachers may well have a teaching assistant. Assistants may be appointed by the school or by parents. Teacher assistants can be a great support to teachers, especially in class groups with a diversity of learners. The benefits of an assistant in class outweigh the disadvantages (Landsberg, 2005).

2.5.5 Behaviour management

Behaviour management interventions are those that most effectively prevent problems from occurring. These interventions are instructional in orientation, promote a positive learning climate, are made up of responsive dynamic interventions and benefit from teachers experiencing collegial interactions, which in itself is a distinct feature of an inclusive classroom

setting (Möwes, 1999). It is important to have basic rules in the classroom to which everybody should adhere.

2.5.6 Direct instruction

Direct instruction is sometimes referred to as “chalk and talk”. It is a teacher-centred approach to instruction where the teacher delivers content in a structured, directing the activities of the learners and maintaining a focus on academic content. The teacher’s focus should be on facilitating the learner’s understanding and development of thinking skills (Kokot, 2005). For example, when learners are being introduced to a new area of study, it may be useful to develop their basic knowledge and skills through direct instruction techniques, such as lectures or demonstrations, before giving them a more practical role in knowledge-seeking through strategies such as problem solving or experimentation (Kokot, 2005). This practice is important in an inclusive setting, as all learners will be given equal access to information.

2.5.7 Curriculum-based assessment

For curriculum-based assessment as an instructional practice, the materials used to assess learners are always drawn directly from the learner’s course of study. Testing procedures are designed to strengthen the connection between assessment and instruction by evaluating the learner in terms of the curricular requirements of the learner’s own school or classroom. For example, if the learner is expected to spell certain words in the classroom, the assessment measures the learner’s performance on those words. Performance results are graphed or charted so that the learner’s progress is clearly observable to both the teacher and the learner (Shinn & Hubbard in Lerner 1993).

2.5.8 Learning strategies instruction

Learning strategies instruction offers a viable and promising approach to helping learners to take control of their own learning. The objective of this instruction is to teach learners how to learn rather than what is contained in a specific curriculum. Effective strategy instruction involves helping learners use procedures that will empower them to accomplish important academic tasks, to solve problems, and to complete work independently (Lerner, 1993).

2.5.9 Parent education support groups

Parent education support groups offer parents a way to meet regularly in small groups to discuss common problems. They can be organized by the school, professional counsellors, or parent organizations. The opportunity to meet with other parents whose children are encountering similar problems tend to reduce the parents' sense of isolation. Further, such parent support groups have been useful in altering the community, school personnel, other professionals and legislative bodies to the plight of the children (Lerner, 1993).

2.5.10 Teacher training

The most important thing for teachers is the training and support that promote the comfort with effective inclusive practices. Once teachers have received initial training in practices for inclusion, one should not presume that those practices would be implemented correctly, systematically and painlessly without additional support and assistance.

SUMMARY

An overview of learners with special educational needs both internationally and nationally has been discussed. Initially, learners with special educational needs were catered for in special institutions. This situation seemed to discriminate against learners with special educational needs. With the call for human rights, there emerged the move toward inclusive education, which is based on a social justice paradigm of equal educational opportunities for all learners within the same classroom.

Further attention has been given to studies of principals' perceptions toward inclusive education. In general, studies have revealed mixed findings. Recent studies (Kahikuata-Kariko, 2003; and Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998) stressed the benefit of social integration while other studies (Davis, 1980; Garva-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989) have noted lack of support for inclusion based on the low expectations of success in the mainstreamed environment.

However, the majority of studies reviewed (Fullan, 1991; Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1984; Parker & Day, 1993; and Kaskinen-Chapman in Barnett & Monda-amaya, 1998) recognise that as instructional leaders, principals are being called upon to provide support to teachers. Furthermore, the use of effective instructional practices is one of the most consistently cited conditions associated with successful inclusion (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; Shaffner & Buswell, 1996; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1994).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods that were used to collect and analyse the data. Specifically, the subjects of the study are identified, the sample and sampling procedures, the research instruments, the administration of the instruments, and the methods of data analysis are described.

3.1 POPULATION

The population of this study comprised of the principals at regular schools in the Caprivi Region. The Caprivi region is located in the far North-Eastern part of Namibia. According to the list obtained from the Ministry of Education, the Caprivi region had 93 schools at the time of the study. They are mentioned below according to their levels: there were 30 primary schools from grades 1 to 7, 51 combined schools from grades 1 to 10, and 12 secondary schools from grade 8 to 12.

3.2 SAMPLE

Stratified random sampling was used to select schools so that each school had an equal and independent chance of being selected. The researcher compiled separate lists according to the school levels. The researcher randomly selected 43% of representation from each type of school. The more schools in a level, the more chances they were given for representation. The researcher ended up working with 40 school principals. This procedure resulted in the sample with characteristics that follow:

Table 1: Frequency distribution of demographic variables of respondents

Characteristic	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	33	83.5
	Female	7	17.5
Age	Up to 30 years	0	0
	31-40 years	6	15.0
	41-50 years	13	32.5
	50 years and older	21	52.5
Years of experience	0-5 years	13	32.5
	6-10 years	5	12.5
	11-15 years	10	25.0
	16-20 years	2	5.0
	More than 20 years	10	25.0
School level	Primary	15	37.5
	Combined	15	37.5
	Secondary	10	25.0
Teaching qualification	Teacher Training Certificate	8	20.0
	Teacher Training Diploma	15	37.5
	Bachelor's Degree	13	32.5
	Honours Degree	4	10.0
Training in Special Education Needs	None	37	92.5
	Bachelor of Education (UNAM)	1	2.5
	Bachelor of Education (Hon)	1	2.5
	Specialised Post Graduate Diploma in Special Education	1	2.5

Table 1 provides the frequency and percentage frequency of the background variables of the principals who participated in this study. Both male and female principals participated in the study. However, there were more males, 33(83.5%) than females 7(17.5%). The majority of the principals were in the age category of 50 years and more, 21(52.5%), this was followed by those whose ages were within the range of 41-50 years, 13(32.5%), and 31-40 years, 6(15.0%) respectively. No principals were younger than 31 years. Most of the principals, 30(75.0%) were

in their present positions for a period of not more than 20 years whereas 10(25.0%) had been principals for a period of more than 20 years.

In terms of the type of school in which principals worked in, 15(37.5%) were employed at primary schools, 15(37.5%) were combined school principals, and only 10(25.0%) were employed at secondary schools. Responses to qualifications obtained by principals, revealed that 15(37.5%) had a teaching diploma, 13(32.5%) had a bachelor's degree, 8(20.0%) had a teaching certificate, and 4(10.0%) held an honours degree. The last variable looked at the type of training received in special education needs, it revealed that the majority 37(92.5%) of the principals had no training in special education needs, while only 3(7.5%) of them had training in special education needs.

3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Data were collected using questionnaires. A structured questionnaire made up of scaled, checklist, and open-ended questions was used. The content of the questions in the questionnaire was derived from the literature review and the research questions that were discussed earlier.

In order to test the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to the three supervisors of this study for comments and suggestions. The comments of these experts were incorporated into the questionnaire before its administration. A pilot study was also used.

The questionnaire was made up of five sections. The first section sought biographical information of principals and comprised of 10 questions. The second section contained 34 items on the knowledge of principals regarding inclusive education. The third section

comprised of 9 items, which required principals to indicate the most appropriate form of schooling for each type of learner with special educational needs. The fourth section sought to find out the principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and had 12 items. The fifth section asked principals to rate how often the 19 practices given were used in their schools. In this section, principals were also asked to give any other comments on including learners with special educational needs in the regular schools.

3.4 PILOT STUDY

Before the actual research took place, the researcher selected a pilot sample of 4 principals in the Khomas education region. The researcher followed the procedures for administration that were used in the study.

Questionnaires were given to the pilot study participants and they were asked to read and answer the questionnaires. After completing the questionnaires, the participants were asked to tell the researcher what they thought the questions meant and to suggest ways of rewriting them if they were unclear or too complex. The researcher also included a section at the end of every questionnaire where participants recorded any additional questions they thought could be asked.

When the data were collected, the researcher read the comments, checked the responses item by item, and looked for blanks, unexpected answers, and clusters of responses that suggested misinterpretation of questions. Results of the pilot study showed that the instrument was valid

for the present study and that all of the items in the questionnaire elicited responses anticipated by the researcher.

3.5 PROCEDURE

The researcher obtained a letter of permission from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education after clarifying the purpose of the study to him. This letter was taken along to the Regional Director of Education in Caprivi for his awareness.

The whole exercise of collecting data took two weeks. In the first week, initial contact was made with those sampled principals to discuss the study and ascertain interest in participation. In the second week, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to each member in the sample and asked them to read it first, respond in writing, and then ask for clarifications where necessary. The researcher waited for respondents to complete the questionnaires and was able to collect all 40 questionnaires, which were distributed.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaires were coded and the data entered into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency tables, using percentages were run for most components of the questionnaire except for the open-ended questions. Open-ended answers were studied, seeking similarities and differences, and then were divided into smaller, meaningful groups.

The Chi-square test was used to determine whether there were significant relationships and/or differences in responses based on gender, age, experience as principal, school level, highest teaching qualification, and training in Special Education Needs (SEN).

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter described the methods that were used to collect and analyze the data. The population comprised of all the principals at regular, government primary, combined and secondary schools in the Caprivi region. Stratified random sampling was used. The researcher randomly selected 43% of representation from each type of school. Data was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were coded and the data were entered into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results of the data obtained during the course of the study are presented in this chapter. They are discussed according to the main questions of this study; firstly, the researcher reports on the principals' knowledge regarding inclusive education; secondly, shares the findings on the principals' preferred forms of schooling for learners with special educational needs; thirdly, reports on the perceptions of principals towards inclusive education; fourthly, refers to the instructional practices associated with inclusive education; and finally, reports on any additional comments on including learners with special educational needs in the regular school. Tables are used in most instances for clarity, ease of understanding and interpretation.

4.1 RESULTS RELATED TO PRINCIPALS' KNOWLEDGE REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In examining the knowledge of principals regarding inclusive education, the following issues were addressed; the knowledge of terms associated with inclusive education, the type of learner population regarded as learners with special educational needs, and open-ended responses regarding principals' knowledge of inclusive education.

4.1.1 Principals' knowledge of terms regarding inclusive education

Answers to this question were obtained from principals' responses to a given list of terms associated with the definition of inclusive education. Principals had to indicate their extent of familiarity with each term.

Table 2: Familiarity with terms

TERMS	Frequency of extent of use					
	Very familiar		Familiar		Not familiar	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Integration	13	32.5	26	65.0	1	2.5
2. Collaboration	10	26.3	22	57.9	6	15.8
3. Supportive environment	11	29.7	21	56.8	5	13.5
4. Celebrating differences	1	2.7	14	37.8	22	59.5
5. Mainstreaming	4	10.5	18	47.4	16	42.1
6. Social equity	14	35.0	19	47.5	7	17.5
7. School restructuring	8	21.1	24	63.2	6	17.5
8. School as community	23	59.0	12	30.8	4	10.2
9. Combining best practices	8	20.5	15	38.5	16	41.0
10. School-wide vision	12	30.8	17	43.6	10	25.6
11. Supported learning	12	30.0	22	55.0	6	15.0
12. Shared responsibility	21	53.8	16	41.0	2	5.2
13. Team instructional approach	13	33.3	15	38.5	11	28.2
14. Coordinating services	11	30.6	17	47.2	8	22.2
15. Supportive assistance for staff	16	40.0	18	45.0	6	15.0
16. Neighbourhood school	11	28.9	13	34.3	14	36.8

Table 2 showed that the majority of the principals were either very familiar or familiar with most of the terms associated with the definition of inclusive education. Overall, the nine items that were chosen most often were: integration (97.5%), shared responsibility (94.8%), school as community (89.8%), supportive environment (86.5%), supported learning and supportive assistance for staff (85.0%), school restructuring (84.3%), collaboration (84.2%), social equity (82.5%).

Terms also receiving high ratings by principals were: coordinating services (77.8%), school wide vision (74.4%), team instructional approach (71.8%), neighbourhood school (63.2%), combining best practices (59.0%), and mainstreaming (57.9%).

Only 40.5% of the principals indicated that they were familiar with the term celebrating differences and it was also ranked last on the list of terms associated with inclusive education.

A Chi-square analysis of the data in table 2 revealed that statistically there were no significant differences found for most of the terms associated with the definition of inclusive education except for the term neighbourhood school. The data showed that the variable of school level seemed to influence principals' knowledge of the terms related to inclusive education, greatly. More principals working in secondary schools (100%), compared to principals working in combined (46%) and primary schools (53%) were very familiar or familiar with the term neighbourhood school. This difference was found to be statistically significant.

Table 3: Familiar with neighbourhood school, by school level

School level	Extent of familiarity			
	Very familiar	Familiar	Not familiar	Total
Primary	5 38.5%	2 15.4%	6 46.2%	13 100.0%
Combined	3 20.0%	4 26.7%	8 53.3%	15 100.0%
Secondary	3 30.0%	7 70.0%		10 100.0%
Total	11 28.9%	13 34.2%	14 36.8%	38 100.0%

Note:

Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values.

Note: Chi-square = 11.263; df = 4; p<0.05

4.1.2 Principals' understanding of populations to whom the definition of LSEN should apply

Another related question was asked in order to find out which population of learners were regarded as learners with special educational needs. The results are summarised in table 4.

Table 4: Type of learners with special educational needs

Type of learner	Frequencies					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Learners from the lower socio-economic groups	13	32.5	26	65.0	39	97.5
2. Learners affected by war and environmental degradation and change	23	57.5	15	37.5	38	95.0
3. Learners who are victims of abuse and violence	26	65.0	13	32.5	39	97.5

4. Street children	17	42.5	22	55.0	39	97.5
5. Children being brought up outside of their own families	10	25.0	26	65.0	36	90.0
6. Children in abusive forms of child labour	22	55.0	14	35.0	36	90.0
7. Learners with different types of impairments	36	90.0	1	2.5	37	92.5
8. Girls in situations where their education is seen as less important than that of the boys	12	30.0	28	70.0	40	100.0
9. Learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness	28	70.0	10	25.0	38	95.0
10. Nomadic learners	15	37.5	24	60.0	39	97.5
11. Learners from oppressed groups and subjected to racism or other forms of discrimination	16	40.0	24	60.0	40	100.0
12. Girls who are pregnant or have children	10	25.0	30	75.0	40	100.0
13. Learners whose home language is different from the language of instruction	11	27.5	28	70.0	39	97.5

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values.

The research results in table 4 showed that only five types of learner populations were chosen most often to fit the principals' definition of learners with special educational needs. They are as follows; learners with different types of impairments (90.0%), learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness (70.0%), learners who are victims of abuse and violence (65.0%), learners affected by war and environmental degradation and change (57.5%), and children in abusive forms of child labour (55.0 %).

Street children (42.5%), learners from oppressed groups and subjected to racism or other forms of discrimination (40.0%), Nomadic learners (37.0%), learners from the lower socio-economic groups (32.5%), girls in situations where their education is seen as less important than that of the boys (30.0%), learners whose home language is different from the language of instruction (27.5%), children being brought up outside their own families and girls who are pregnant or have children (25.0%) were selected least often.

A Chi-square analysis of the data in table 4 revealed that statistically, there were no significant differences found for all types of LSEN as related to gender, experience as principal, and training in SEN. Differences as related to learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness by school level and highest teaching qualification and also learners who are victims of abuse and violence by age, were found to be statically significant.

According to school level, more principals from secondary schools (90.0%) and combined schools (85.7%) compared to principals at primary schools (50.0%) considered learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness to be LSEN. This difference was found to be statistically significant (See table 5).

When analysed according to highest teaching qualification, more principals who hold teaching diplomas (86.7%), and those who hold bachelors degrees (83.3%) as well as those who hold honours degrees (75.0%) compared to those principals who hold teaching certificates (28.6%) considered learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness to be LSEN. This difference was found to be statistically significant (See table 6).

When analysed according to age, more principals in the age category of 41 to 50 years (92.3%) compared to principals in the age categories of 31-40 years (66.7%) and principals who are 50 years and more (50.0%) considered learners who are victims of abuse and violence as LSEN. This difference was found to be statistically significant (See table 7).

Table 5: Learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness, by school level

School level	Yes	No	Total
Primary	7 50.0	7 50.0	14 100.0
Combined	12 85.7	2 14.3	14 100.0
Secondary	9 90.0	1 10.0	10 100.0
Total	28 73.7	10 26.3	38 100.0

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values.

Note: Chi-square = 6.468; df = 2; p<0.05

Table 6: Learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness, by highest teaching qualification

Highest teaching qualification	Yes	No	Total
Teaching certificate	2 28.6	5 71.4	7 100.0
Teaching diploma	13 86.7	2 13.3	15 100.0
Bachelors degree	10 83.3	2 16.7	12 100.0
Honours degree	3 75.0	1 25.0	4 100.0
Total	28 73.7	10 26.3	38 100.0

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values.

Note: Chi-square = 9.231; df = 3; $p < 0,05$

Table 7: Learners who are victims of abuse and violence, by age

Age	Yes	No	Total
31 – 40 years	4 66,7	2 33,3	6 100,0
41 – 50 years	12 92,3	1 7,7	13 100,0
More than 50 years	10 50,0	10 50,0	20 100,0
Total	26 66,7	13 33,3	39 100,0

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values

Note: Chi-square = 6.346; df = 2; $p < 0.05$

4.1.3 Findings of open-ended questions regarding principals' knowledge of inclusive education

On the question as to *how principals thought they should be prepared for inclusive education*, a number of concerns and suggestions for improvement were given:

Twenty-seven respondents suggested that principals should attend workshops to get training on inclusive education, because it is a new concept for many principals. Seven respondents indicated that principals should be made aware of the needs and resources that make inclusive education a reality, whereas four respondents felt that principals should be taught on how to be flexible and change their attitudes to allow learners with special educational needs in the regular school. Two of the principals did not respond to this question.

When principals were asked *if the practice of inclusive education really worked in their schools, and if they could give advice on how they managed to do it*, they responded as follows:

Nineteen principals indicated that inclusive education does not work in their schools, whereas five principals did not respond to this question. Three said that they sometimes hold staff meetings involving parents and school board members in order to discuss strategies to deal with LSEN. Three principals responded in this way: *“We have meetings where we sensitise the community and get their support”*. In addition, three other principals said they encouraged colleagues not to discriminate against learners with special educational needs (LSEN). Furthermore, two principals mentioned that LSEN are identified in the first week of the first term and are given extra care. Two other principals said *“We show care towards LSEN at our school”*, and one of them indicated that in his school the admission requirements included all learners.

When principals were asked; *if the practice of inclusive education did not work in their schools, what do they suggest should be done?* They responded as follows:

Fourteen principals stated that principals and teachers should be trained on how to attend to LSEN. Nine of them were of the opinion that school buildings should be renovated to be disabled-friendly. Seven principals did not respond to this question while four principals indicated that resources should be made available for inclusive education. The other four principals felt that parents should be involved so that they gain knowledge on inclusive education. In addition two principals suggested that the teachers who are educated in SEN should be appointed at all schools.

4.2 RESULTS RELATED TO PRINCIPALS' WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The researcher inquired about the opinions of principals concerning various educational options for learners with nine different types of impairment. Five educational options were provided from which principals could choose. The five educational options were as follows: should not attend school, should attend special schools, should attend special classes in regular schools, should attend regular classes with support, and should attend regular classes without support. The definition of each of the nine types of impairment and the five educational options of schooling were verbally explained when the questionnaires were administered. Responses follow in table 8.

Table 8: Educational options for learners with special educational needs

CATEGORY	Should not attend school		Should attend special schools		Should attend special classes in regular schools		Should attend regular classes with support		Should attend regular classes without support		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Learners with hearing impairment	0	0	25	62.5	5	12.5	8	20.0	0	0	38	95.0
2. Learners with visual impairment	0	0	26	65.0	3	7.5	8	20.0	0	0	37	92.5
3. Learners with intellectual (mental) impairment	2	5.0	17	42.5	8	20.0	11	27.5	2	5.0	40	100.0
4. Learners with physical (motor) impairment	0	0	22	55.0	6	15.0	11	27.5	1	2.5	40	100.0
5. Learners with conduct impairment (emotional and behavioural difficulties)	0	0	11	27.5	11	27.5	16	40.0	0	0	38	95.0
6. Learners with learning difficulties	0	0	5	12.5	13	32.5	21	52.5	0	0	39	97.5
7. Learners with developmental delay	1	2.5	11	27.5	11	27.5	15	37.5	0	0	38	95.0
8. Learners with psychological problems	0	0	13	32.5	8	20.0	17	42.5	0	0	38	95.0
9. Learners with multiple impairments	4	10.0	30	75.0	3	7.5	3	7.5	0	0	40	100.0

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values.

The majority of respondents (see table 8) suggested one of two options for learners with impairments, namely; special school and regular classes with support. It can be seen that most principals felt that learners with multiple impairments (75.0%), learners with visual impairment (65.5%), learners with hearing impairment (62.5%), learners with physical impairment (55.0%), and learners with intellectual impairment (42.5%) should attend special schools.

Results further indicated that some principals were of the opinion that learners with learning difficulties (52.5%), learners with psychological problems (42.5%), learners with conduct impairment (40.0%), and learners with developmental delays (37.5%) should attend school in regular classes with support.

A Chi-square analysis of the data in table 8 revealed that more principals with 11 to 15 years of experience (70.0%) and those with more than 20 years of experience (70.0%) felt that learners with physical impairment should attend special schools. This difference was found to be statistically significant. Statistically, there were no significant differences found for other educational options for LSEN with regard to other variables (See table 9).

Table 9: Educational option for learners with physical impairment, by years of experience as principal

Experience as principal	Should attend special schools	Should attend special classes in regular school	Should attend regular classes with support	Should attend regular classes without support	Total
0 – 5 years	(7) 53.8	(3) 23.1	(3) 23.1	0	(13) 100.0
6 – 10 years	0	(2) 40.0	(3) 60.0	0	(5) 100.0
11 – 15 years	(7) 70.0	0	(3) 30.0	0	(10) 100.0
16 – 20 years	(1) 50.0	0	0	(1) 50.0	(2) 100.0
More than 20 years	(7) 70.0	(1) 10.0	(2) 20.5	0	(10) 100.0
Total	(22) 55.0	(6) 15.0	(11) 27.5	(1) 2.5	(40) 100.0

[Chi-square = 29.986; df = 12; p < 0,05]

4.3 RESULTS RELATED TO PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Answers to this section were obtained from an analysis of the principals' responses to 10 statements in section D of the questionnaire. Open-ended questions were also asked to get the general perceptions of principals towards inclusive education.

4.3.1 Principals' perceptions towards inclusive education

Principals were required to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed to some suggested perceptions towards inclusive education. The statements covered several aspects relevant to realising an inclusive school. Results concerning

principals' perceptions towards inclusive education are presented in table

10. Each statement in table 10 is analysed below:

Statement 1: Of the subjects, 75.0% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that schools should be responsive to the educational needs of all learners including those with special educational needs, which reflects a positive view towards inclusive education, whereas 15.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, suggesting a negative view towards inclusive education, 2.5% were undecided, and 7.5% did not respond.

Statement 2: Of the sample, 95.0% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the school's beliefs, mission, and goals should reflect all learners in the school community, thus revealing a positive view towards inclusive education, whereas 5% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, thus suggesting a negative view towards inclusive education.

Statement 3: Of the subjects, 95.0% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that learners with special educational needs should have opportunities to participate in the full range of school programmes,

suggesting a positive view towards inclusive education, whereas 2.5% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, revealing a negative view towards inclusive education, and 2.5% did not respond.

Statement 4: Of the respondents, 97.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the principal should support problem solving among all staff regarding difficult situations or individual learners with special educational needs who may require additional support, reflecting a positive view towards inclusive education, whereas 2.5% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, revealing a negative view towards inclusive education.

Statement 5: Of the sample, 92.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that principals should encourage all existing staff to develop or expand their knowledge and skills regarding the education of learners with special educational needs, thus indicating a positive view towards inclusive education, whereas 2.5% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, suggesting a negative view towards inclusive education, and 2.5% were undecided.

Statement 6: Of the subjects, 97.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the principal should ensure that learners with special educational needs have the necessary level of support and materials to ensure equal access to the regular curriculum, revealing a positive view towards inclusive education, while 2.5% were undecided.

Statement 7: Of the subjects, 90.0% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the principal should have knowledge of information sources pertaining to the instruction of all learners, including learners with special educational needs, thus suggesting a positive view towards inclusive education, whereas 7.5% were undecided, and 2.5% did not respond.

Statement 8: Of the respondents 92.0% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the principal should set the tone and establish a climate of respect for diverse populations, reflecting a positive view towards inclusive education, 5.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, suggesting a negative towards inclusive education, and 2.5% did not respond.

Statement 9: Of the sample, 92.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the principal should ensure that the contributions of all learners, including learners with special educational needs, are acknowledged, thus revealing a positive view towards inclusive education, 2.5% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, suggesting a negative view towards inclusive education, and 5.0% did not respond.

Statement 10: Of the subjects, 95.0% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the principal should ensure that all teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches that have been proven effective in educating all learners, including learners with special educational needs, indicating a positive view towards inclusive education, while 2.5% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, suggesting a negative view towards inclusive education, and 2.5% did not respond.

4.3.2 Findings of open-ended questions regarding principals' general perceptions towards inclusive education

Respondents were asked to give their general perceptions towards inclusive education by mentioning the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education.

Respondents mentioned the following advantages of inclusive education:

Twenty-three of the respondents said that LSEN would not feel discriminated against/ isolated/ stigmatised – they will feel accepted, respected and treated equally. Fourteen respondents mentioned that learners with special educational needs (LSEN) will benefit from their peers who do not have special educational needs (SEN), and this will encourage teamwork. Nine respondents mentioned that practising inclusive education would lead to goals of equity, access, democracy, and lifelong learning being attained. Five other respondents said, *“Opportunities of success are created for all learners.”* Two respondents indicated that LSEN would try to live up to the expectations of their peers who do not have SEN whereas two others indicated that LSEN would develop a positive self-concept. One respondent said that LSEN would participate in other school activities, and another one said that LSEN will not be sent away from home to attend special schools – they can stay with their parents. In addition, one respondent mentioned that schools practicing inclusive education would attract donor funding, while one respondent did not respond to this question.

Table 10: Principals' perceptions towards inclusive education

	Statement	Frequency numbers & percentages					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not indicated
1	Schools should be responsive to the educational needs of all learners including those with special educational needs.	22 55.0	8 20.0	1 2.5	4 10.0	2 5.0	3 7.5
2	The school's beliefs, mission, and goals should reflect all learners in the school community.	30 75.0	8 20.0				2 5.0
3	Learners with special educational needs should have opportunities to participate in the full range of school programmes.	14 35.0	24 60.0	1 2.5	1 2.5		
4	The principal should support problem solving among all staff regarding difficult situations or individual learners with special educational needs who may require additional support.	24 60.0	15 37.5	1 2.5			
5	Principals should encourage all existing staff to develop or expand their knowledge and skills regarding the education of learners with special educational needs.	21 52.5	16 40.0	1 2.5		1 2.5	
6	The principal should ensure that learners with special educational needs have the necessary level of support and materials to ensure equal access to the regular curriculum.	20 50.0	19 47.5	1 2.5			
7	The principal should have knowledge of information sources pertaining to the instruction of all learners, including learners with special educational needs.	21 52.5	15 37.5	3 7.5			1 2.5
8	The principal should set the tone and establish a climate of respect for diverse populations.	26 65.0	11 27.5	1 2.5	2 5.0		
9	The principal should ensure that the contributions of all learners, including learners with special educational needs, are acknowledged.	28 70.0	9 22.5	2 5.0		1 2.5	
10	The principal should ensure that all teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches that have been proven effective in educating all learners, including learners with special educational needs.	26 65.0	12 30.0	1 2.5		1 2.5	

Respondents mentioned the following disadvantages of inclusive education:

Twelve principals mentioned that LSEN would not benefit as most teachers are not trained to deal with them, and this will lead to poor results. A lot of money is needed to train all teachers.

Six of them mentioned that the conditions and facilities at regular schools are currently not favourable for learners with physical disabilities. Five principals felt that inclusive education

will be an expensive exercise, and another three principals felt that it is time consuming to teach LSEN. Three principals said that learners without SEN might tease, insult, bully, and discriminate against LSEN. Two principals indicated that inclusive education would affect and hamper the teaching of learners without SEN whereas two others felt that gifted learners might become impatient with LSEN and regard their education as boring/not challenging. Furthermore, two principals said that not all LSEN could be accommodated through inclusive education, especially the ones with severe impairments. Another principal was of the opinion that it is too difficult to attend to LSEN in the regular class, which is already overcrowded with 30-35 learners, since they have unique needs. Lastly, one principal mentioned that teachers trained in SEN only couldn't teach learners without SEN.

4.4 RESULTS RELATED TO INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In this section, principals were given a list of instructional practices associated with inclusive education to indicate the extent to which they used each practice in their schools. Principals were also asked to give any additional comments on including learners with special educational needs in the regular school.

4.4.1 Instructional practices associated with inclusive education

Research results (see table 11) revealed that principals mentioned the following practices as being used either often or very often in their schools. They are mentioned in rank order: teacher mentoring, and curriculum-based assessment (70.0%), direct instruction (67.5%), learning strategies instruction (65.0%), collaboration (62.5%), peer coaching, cooperative learning, and

modifications of peer attitudes (60.0%), teacher assistance teams, behaviour management, and co-teaching (55.0%).

The results further showed that the following practices were not used often in schools: social skills instruction (47.5%), curricular modifications, and parent education support groups (45.0%), parent/volunteer participation (35.0%), in-service training on inclusion (27.5%), peer and cross-age tutoring (27.0%) and computer-assisted instruction (22.5%).

A Chi-square analysis of the data in table 11 revealed that statistically, there were no significant differences found for other instructional practices associated with inclusive education with regard to other variables except for co-teaching and behaviour management with regard to highest teaching qualification and experience.

According to highest qualification, the data revealed that more principals with teaching certificates (100.0%) used co-teaching either often or very often than principals with teaching diplomas (57.1%), principals with bachelor's degrees (58.3%), and principals with honours degrees (33.3%). This difference was found to be statistically significant. (See table 12).

Table 11: Instructional practices associated with inclusive education

Instructional practices	Frequency of extent of use							
	Seldom		Often		Very often		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Collaboration	10	25.0	16	40.0	9	22.5	35	87.5
2. Co-teaching	13	32.5	17	42.5	5	12.5	35	87.5
3. Parent education support groups	18	45.0	11	27.5	7	17.5	36	90.0
4. Parent/volunteer participation	21	52.5	12	30.0	2	5.0	35	87.5
5. Behaviour management	9	22.5	11	27.5	11	27.5	31	77.5
6. Curriculum-based assessment	6	15.0	12	30.0	16	40.0	34	85.0
7. Direct instruction	7	17.5	18	45.0	9	22.5	34	85.0
8. Teacher mentoring	7	17.5	19	47.5	9	22.5	35	87.5
9. In-service training on inclusion	23	57.5	7	17.5	4	10.0	34	85.0
10. Curricular modifications	16	40.0	13	32.5	5	12.5	34	85.0
11. Peer coaching	11	27.5	16	40.0	8	20.0	35	87.5
12. Teacher assistance teams	14	35.0	15	37.5	7	17.5	36	90.0
13. Cooperative learning	11	27.5	16	40.0	8	20.0	35	87.5
14. Computer-assisted instruction	24	60.0	3	7.5	6	15.0	33	82.5
15. Learning strategies instruction	7	17.5	22	55.0	4	10.0	33	82.5
16. Modifications of peer attitudes	10	25.0	18	45.0	6	15.0	34	85.0
17. Peer and cross-age tutoring	22	55.0	6	15.0	5	12.0	33	82.5
18. Social skills instruction	16	40.0	12	30.0	7	17.5	35	87.5

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values.

With regard to highest qualification again, the data revealed that more principals with teaching diplomas (91.7%), and teaching certificates (80.0%) used behaviour management either often or very often than principals with bachelor's degrees (50.0%), and principals with honours degrees (50.0%). This difference was found to be statistically significant. (See table 13).

With regard to experience as principal, the data revealed that more principals with experience of 6–10 years (80.0%), those with 11-15 years experience (60.0%), and those with 16 – 20 years of experience (100.0%) used behaviour management in their schools either often or very often, than those principals with less than 6 years of experience (See table 14).

Table 12: How often is co-teaching used in school, by highest teaching qualification

Highest teaching qualification	Seldom	Often	Very often	Total
Teaching certificate		3 50.0	3 50.0	6 100.0
Teaching diploma	6 42.9	8 57.1		14 100.0
Bachelors degree	5 41.7	6 50.0	1 8.3	12 100.0
Honours degree	2 66.7		1 33.3	3 100.0
Total	13 37.1	17 48.6	5 14.3	35 100.0

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values

Note: Chi-square = 13.215; df = 6; $p < 0.05$

Table 13: How often is behaviour management used in school, by highest teaching qualification

Highest teaching qualification	Seldom	Often	Very often	Total
Teaching certificate	1 20.0	3 60.0	1 20.0	5 100.0
Teaching diploma	1 8.3	2 16.7	9 75.0	12 100.0
Bachelors degree	5 50.0	4 40.0	1 10.0	10 100.0
Honours degree	2 50.0	2 50.0		4 100.0
Total	9 29.0	11 35.5	11 35.5	31 100.0

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values

Note: Chi-square = 15.239; df = 6; $p < 0.05$

Table 14: How often is behaviour management used in school, by years of experience as principal

Years of experience	Seldom	Often	Very often	Total
0-5 years	5 50.0	4 40.0	1 10.0	10 100.0
6-10 years	1 20.0		4 80.0	5 100.0
11-15 years	2 40.0		3 60.0	5 100.0
16-20 years		1 50.0	1 50.0	2 100.0
Total	9 29.0	11 35.5	11 35.5	31 100.0

Note: Total f's in this table are less than 40, because of missing values

Note: Chi-square = 15.664; df = 8; $p < 0.05$

4.4.2 Additional comments on including learners with special educational needs in the regular school

Principals were asked to give additional comments on including LSEN in regular schools. They suggested that the following issues should be considered when implementing inclusive education:

Twenty-three of them mentioned that more research on inclusive education should be done and that principals and teachers need to be trained properly on SEN before inclusive education can be practiced. Five indicated that the necessary resources should also be provided. Furthermore, three principals mentioned that LSEN in regular classes are currently disadvantaged because teachers only attend to the needs of learners without SEN. Two others felt that the Ministry of

Education should formulate a combined curriculum to accommodate inclusive education whereas the other two mentioned that each school should have a teacher trained in SEN.

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a descriptive summary and an analysis of the results of the survey conducted in order to determine the relationship between demographic variables, the principals' knowledge and perceptions regarding inclusive education, the preferred forms of schooling for learners with special educational needs, as well as the extent to which instructional practices associated with inclusive education are used in their schools.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An attempt was made in the preceding chapter to analyse and report the results of the collected data. The objective of this chapter is to interpret the results and to make recommendations based on these results. In so doing, the discussion will be carried in the following manner: firstly, a discussion of the results will be done in the order they were presented in the preceding chapter, followed by recommendations and conclusions of the study.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS RELATED TO PRINCIPALS' KNOWLEDGE REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The discussion of the results on the knowledge of principals regarding inclusive education will be done in the following manner: firstly, the discussion of the knowledge of terms associated with inclusive education will be outlined, followed by a discussion of the type of learner population regarded as learners with special educational needs, and then a discussion on the open-ended responses regarding principals' knowledge of inclusive education.

5.1.1 Discussion of results related to principals' knowledge of terms associated with inclusive education

The findings of this study have provided some evidence that the majority of the principals were either very familiar or familiar with most of the terms associated with the definition of inclusive education. Out of sixteen (16) terms associated with the definition of inclusive education, nine (9) terms emerged to be clear and essential to the definition of inclusive education for over 70% of the respondents. The other seven terms were rated as essential by

60% or fewer of the principals (see table 2). These findings are consistent with those reached by Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) in their study on the knowledge and attitudes of principals toward inclusion. They found that terms such as shared responsibility, supportive environment, supportive assistance for staff, collaboration, and team instructional approach and mainstreaming, also received higher ratings compared to other terms. Since these terms were selected from a review of the literature as the most commonly associated with or used to define and describe inclusion, it becomes clear that principals have some knowledge of inclusive education.

The data also showed that more principals working in secondary schools were either very familiar or familiar with the term neighbourhood school than principals in primary and combined schools (see table 2). The message that can be communicated here is that principals at secondary schools have a better understanding of the term neighbourhood school than those principals at other school levels.

5.1.2 Discussion of the results on principals' understanding of populations to whom the definition of learners with special educational needs should apply

Over 60% of principals did not consider the following populations of learners as learners with special educational needs (see table 4): girls who are pregnant or have children, learners whose home language is different from the language of instruction, girls in situations where their education is seen as less important than that of the boys, children being brought up outside of their own families, learners from the lower socio-economic groups, Nomadic learners, learners subjected to racism or other forms of discrimination, and Street children.

About 55% of the principals considered a few populations of learners with special educational needs to be learners with special educational needs (see table 4), they are: learners with different types of impairments, learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness, learners who are victims of abuse and violence, learners affected by war and environmental degradation and change, and children in abusive forms of child labour.

The above findings communicate a message that most principals in the Caprivi region lack some knowledge of special education. They show a lack of understanding of populations to whom the definition of learners with special educational needs should apply. Principals could only choose those populations of learners with visible signs of impairments as learners with special educational needs. Those could be the learners that principals are either familiar with or with whom they have had some form of contact in their lives. This is so because most of the principals who participated in this study have not received any training in special needs education and they have indicated the need for training in that field.

More secondary and combined school principals compared to primary school principals and principals with teaching diplomas and bachelor's degrees compared to those with other qualifications consider learners who are affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness to be learners with special educational needs. The data further revealed that more principals in the age category of 41-50 years compared to principals in other age groups consider learners who are victims of abuse and violence as learners with special educational needs (see tables 5, 6, & 7). This shows that those few principals mentioned above have some understanding of

populations to whom the definition of learners with special educational needs should apply. The fact that those principals have chosen such populations of learners to be learners with special educational needs shows that they have some form of knowledge in special education.

5.1.3 Discussion of the open-ended results regarding principals' knowledge of inclusive education

Responses to open-ended question number 1, which asked principals to state how they think principals should be prepared for inclusive education, revealed that the majority of the principals suggested that principals should attend workshops to get training on inclusive education because it is a new concept to many of them whereas some of them felt that they should be taught on how to be flexible and change their attitudes to allow learners with special educational needs into the regular classroom. Seven of them indicated that they needed to be made aware of the needs and resources that make inclusive education a reality. These results are in agreement with Cline (as cited in Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998) who also concluded that in order to enhance successful inclusion efforts, in-service training is needed for principals. This training can be provided in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences etc. Kaskinen-Chapman (as cited in Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998) also indicated that principals should have the knowledge and skills in effective instruction, assessment and discipline in order to provide feedback to teachers and to be agents of change in inclusive schools. This shows that principals feel that they are not sufficiently trained for inclusive education, it is only when principals will be made aware of what the concept really entails that principals can change their attitudes and be better examples to their schools.

The results of open-ended question number 2 revealed that inclusive education is practiced in some schools but to a lesser extent. A few of those principals who practice inclusive education said they manage by holding staff meetings that involve parents and school board members in which they discuss strategies to deal with learners with special educational needs. They further said that they always encourage teachers not to discriminate against learners with special educational needs. The overwhelming majority of principals indicated that inclusive education is not practiced in their schools because most of them have not received training in special needs education. The fact that the majority of principals indicated that they do not practice inclusive education should be seen as a serious problem. In almost all regular schools throughout Namibia, we have learners with SEN. The fact that they are not always visible does not mean that they should not be catered for. It is thus imperative that the Ministry of Education should look into this issue by providing training to the teachers and more specifically to the principals.

Respondents had much to say to open-ended question number 3. Most of them suggested that they should be trained to attend to learners with special educational needs. This has been mentioned earlier and it seems prominent. They further suggested that teachers who are trained in special education needs should be appointed at all schools so that they can help those who are not trained on how to deal with learners with special educational needs. Some of them felt that resources for inclusive education should be made available, and school buildings should be renovated to be disabled-friendly. Currently, the resources and building structures in schools in the Caprivi region only caters for learners without special educational needs. Other principals indicated that parents should be involved so they gain knowledge on inclusive education. With

the support of the parents, all learners with different learning needs will receive education in regular schools. Apart from the training that is needed, it seemed that principals were also concerned about the resources as well as the involvement of parents in the inclusive process. There is thus a need to address these issues as well, since these are some of the key aspects needed for realizing inclusive schools.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS RELATED TO PRINCIPALS' WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT LSEN

The majority of principals suggested one of two options for learners with special educational needs: special schools and regular classes with support. The educational option that received the most responses was a special school. The following categories were mostly suggested for a special school (see table 8): learners with multiple impairments, learners with visual impairment, learners with physical (motor) impairment, and learners with intellectual (mental) impairment. Principals felt that learners with the above mentioned impairments would be better off in special schools. This could be explained by the fact that most of those principals are not trained in special needs education and would find it difficult to work with such type of learners. Owing to their lack of knowledge and skills in the area of special needs education they think that special school provision would be more appropriate for learners with such type of impairments.

Findings further revealed that principals are willing to integrate learners with certain types of special needs, which they feel they can handle, such as: learners with conduct impairment

(emotional and behavioural difficulties), learners with learning difficulties, learners with developmental delay, and learners with psychological problems (see table 8).

Paralleling these findings are findings from research conducted by other researchers (Kahikuata-Kariko, 2003; Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998; and Davis, 1980). Kahikuata-Kariko (2003) found in her study that principals have preferences for the type of disabilities to be accommodated in their schools. Similarly Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) found that principals are of the opinion that inclusion could work, but were not convinced that all should be included in regular classrooms. In line with the above, Davis (1980) found in his study that principals were of the opinion that students with the label “mentally retarded” (mild, moderate, severe) had a poor chance of being successfully included in the regular class. The message that can be communicated here is that principals find it hard to accommodate learners with various types of special needs due to their lack in training. As reported earlier, the majority of principals who participated in this study had no training in special education needs. However, principals are not unwilling to accommodate learners with special educational needs.

When data were analysed according to experience as principal, more principals with 6-10 years experience, those with 11-15 years experience and those with more than 20 years of experience felt that learners with physical impairment should attend special schools compared to those principals with less than 6 years of experience. This could be because the principals with more than 6 years of experience have noticed that regular schools were not built to cater for learners with physical impairment.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS RELATED TO PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

This section addresses two issues, namely: the discussion of the results regarding principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the discussion of the open-ended results regarding principals' general perceptions of inclusive education.

5.3.1 Discussion of the results regarding principals' perceptions towards inclusive education

The data obtained from this question revealed that more than 75% of principals in the Caprivi region agreed with all 10 statements in table 10. It might be concluded based on responses to these statements that the respondents overall had positive perceptions towards inclusive education.

More than 70% strongly agreed or agreed with statements 1,2 & 3 (see table 10). Those statements focus on the school's responsiveness to the needs of the learners. Responsiveness begins with ensuring that all the school's beliefs, mission and goals reflect all the learners in the school community. For consistency, the principal should review all statements- beliefs, mission and goals. Similar to that, Hawley and Rosenholtz (1984) also stressed the importance of the principal's role in establishing and communicating the goals of the school to the teachers and learners. Principals may involve all the stakeholders in the formulation and review of the statements.

Of the sample, 97.5% strongly agreed or agreed with statement 4 that reads "The principal should support problem solving among all staff regarding difficult situations or individual

learners with special educational needs who may require additional support. This agreement is similar to what Cross and Villa (1992) reported in their study. They reported that administrative support stand out as the most powerful predicator of teachers' perceptions toward inclusive education. Once teachers perceive that their principal fosters a supportive environment, they get stimulated to accommodate a diversity of learners in their classrooms.

Of the respondents, 92.5% strongly agreed or agreed with statement 5 that reads, "Principals should encourage all existing staff to expand their knowledge and skills regarding the education of learners with special educational needs". This includes making current and relevant information available. Similar to this, is what Fullan (1991) reported that as instructional leaders in schools, principals are being called upon to provide training and support to teachers. For example, a principal may encourage teachers to include special education related studies as part of their personal growth plan or encourage them to join and become active members of professional associations concerned with the education of LSEN.

Of the subjects, more than 92.0% strongly agreed or agreed with statements 6,8 & 9 (see table 10). Several authors; Fullan (1991), Sage (1997), and Solomon, Schaps, Watson, & Battistich (1992) also have similar perceptions. Fullan, (1991) stated that the support of principals have been documented as integral for successful inclusion. As such they are expected to initiate change, implement it and facilitate it. Sage (1997) is also of the view that as school site administrators, principals influence reform implementation decisions, control resource allocation and exert a supervisory role relative to school personnel. Furthermore, Solomon, Schaps, Watson, & Battistich (1992) mentioned that setting a tone of support and caring in the school community while providing resources for learners, staff, and parents is one of the roles

that principals must play in facilitating inclusive practices. It is therefore the responsibility of the principal to enhance the acceptability of LSEN in the regular school. For example, all learners should be given the opportunity to display their work and accomplishment. The principal, in this regard, should encourage all school members to acknowledge and respect each learner for his/her progress and achievement of personal best. This encourages a school climate that recognise the worth of all individuals.

Of the sample, 90.0% strongly agreed or agreed with statement 8 that states that the principal should have knowledge of information sources pertaining to the instruction of all learners, including learners with special educational needs. In agreement with this statement is Kaskinen-Chapman (as cited in Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998) who indicated that principals, as agents of change, should have the knowledge and skills in effective instruction, assessment and discipline to provide support and feedback to teachers. This is imperative as the principal oversees the school programmes that includes all learners and interfaces with families. The knowledge of special education will also aid the principal in working with parents and in seeking resources in the community.

Lastly, 95.0% strongly agreed or agreed with statement 10, which reads, “The principal should ensure that all teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches that have been proven effective in educating all learners, including learners with special educational needs”. As discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (2.5), use of instructional practices, such as; peer tutoring, cooperative learning, cooperative teaching, collaboration, teacher assistance teams, behaviour management, direct instruction, curriculum-based assessment, learning strategies instruction,

and parent education support groups has been noted in classrooms characterized as having achieved successful inclusion (Gazda, 1989; Bauwens, Hourcade & Friend, 1989; Pugach; 1995, Möwes, 1999; Landsberg, 2005; Kokot, 2005, Shinn & Hubbard in Lerner, 1993; & Lerner, 1993). According to the above-mentioned authors, these practices not only draw on diversity to benefit all, but also promote learner initiative and social skills. Therefore, principals should be knowledgeable about such practices and ensure that all teachers are fully prepared to implement them.

5.3.2 Discussion of the open-ended results regarding principals' general perceptions towards inclusive education

Research results have provided evidence that principals hold a variety of perceptions towards inclusive education. Principals were of the opinion that inclusive education would encourage teamwork and create opportunities for success between learners with special educational needs and those without special educational needs. Principals also felt that inclusive education would lead to the attainment of goals of equity, access, democracy, and lifelong learning. These goals were also stressed in *Toward Education for All*, a guiding policy for the education sector (MEC, 1993). It is also in line with the commitment that Namibia made at independence in 1990: to integrate all people with special educational needs in the society and to provide basic education to all people, including people with disabilities (Republic of Namibia, 1990).

Also emanating from principals' perceptions towards inclusive education was the need for effective in-service training and workshops on special needs education in order for them to be equipped with abilities and strategies that will enable them to support and nurture the learning

of learners with special educational needs. Principals were also of the opinion that the necessary facilities, infrastructure and other resources (including smaller classes) be put in place before inclusive education is implemented, and they also believed that the change process to inclusive education would be an expensive exercise. Finally, principals were of the opinion that not all learners with special educational needs could be accommodated through inclusive education, especially the ones with severe impairments. The fact that principals' perceptions towards inclusive education are in line with various authors (Kahikuata-Kariko, 2003; Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; & Garva-Pinhas & Schmekin, 1989) showed that principals have an understanding of what inclusive education entails, though it is not practiced in most schools in the Caprivi region.

The results of Kahikuata-Kariko's study (2003) suggested that Namibian primary school principals hold positive perceptions toward learners with special educational needs in general, though they have preferences of the type of disabilities to be accommodated in their schools. Principals also felt that inclusive education has potential benefits for both learners with and without special educational needs and that it presents opportunities for academic growth for learners with special educational needs. The above-mentioned findings are similar to those of Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998), the respondents felt that inclusion could work in their schools, but were not convinced that all learners should be included in regular classrooms. They also did not believe that teachers and school communities were adequately prepared to support the implementation of inclusive educational practices. Similar to that are findings of Garva-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989) who reported that administrators did not feel that inclusion would have a negative effect on the academic achievement of the other learners in the class.

5.4 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS RELATED TO INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The final research section addresses two issues, namely: the discussion of the results of principals' ratings of the extent of use of 18 instructional practices associated with inclusive education and the discussion of the results on any additional comments on including learners with special educational needs.

5.4.1 Discussion of the results of instructional practices associated with inclusive education

The data gathered for this question, revealed that out of 18 instructional practices, 11 of them received higher ratings (see table 11). The choice of some of these practices e.g. peer tutoring, cooperative learning, cooperative teaching, collaboration, teacher assistance teams, behaviour management, direct instruction, curriculum-based assessment, learning strategies instruction, and parent education support groups may be explained by the fact that they have consistently been reported in the literature as effective instructional practices for inclusive education. These practices have also been noted in classrooms characterized as having achieved successful inclusion (Gazda, 1989; Bauwens, Hourcade & Friend, 1989; Pugach, 1995, Möwes, 1999; Landsberg, 2005; Kokot, 2005, Shinn & Hubbard as cited in Lerner, 1993; & Lerner, 1993).

As discussed in Chapter 2 (2.5.2), Gazda (1989) stated that peer tutoring is an effective small-group strategy for increasing social interaction and building learner's self-esteem, whereas cooperative learning facilitates interaction and promotes the team approach. Learners will be able to talk to each other, share experiences with their peers and each will contribute some of what

they know to the topic discussed. Möwes (1999) and Landsberg (2005) stressed that co-teaching and teacher assistant teams give teachers the opportunity to co-plan and co-teach, and thus to coordinate and assess the ongoing educational programmes of all learners. This is very helpful in class groups with a diversity of learners. Möwes (1999) further stated that behaviour management interventions most effectively prevent problems from occurring. It is, therefore, very important to have rules in an inclusive classroom to which everybody should adhere due to the fact of having learners with different learning needs. Furthermore Kokot (2005) stated that direct instruction is important as the teacher focuses on facilitating the learners' understanding and development of thinking skills. This avails equal access to information for all types of learners in a classroom.

On the other hand, the instructional practices which received lower ratings (see table 11) gives an indication that those practices were not used often in schools. The above results are in agreement with those found by Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) who also found that similar instructional practices received lower ratings in their study and those lower ratings were indications that those practices were not used often and were not effective for implementing inclusive education. Further examination is needed to determine the influences on principals' views of, and experiences with a variety of effective instructional practices.

When analysed according to highest qualification, the data showed that more principals with teaching certificates compared to other qualifications used co-teaching either often or very often while more principals with teaching diplomas compared to other qualifications used behaviour management often or very often as an instructional practice (see tables 12 & 13). The

data further revealed that more principals with experience of 6-20 years often or very often used behaviour management in their schools than those principals with less than 6 years of experience (see table 14). This may be explained by the fact that those mentioned practices are some of those that have consistently been reported in the literature as effective teaching practices in an inclusive setting.

5.4.2 Discussion of the results on any additional comments on including learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms

Results on this question communicated the need for additional knowledge on how to deal with learners with special educational needs. Twenty-three principals indicated that more research on inclusive education should be done and that principals and teachers should be trained properly on special educational needs before inclusive education can be practiced. Principals and teachers who are already in service should be provided with in-service training in the form of workshops where they will receive the necessary skills and knowledge for teaching LSEN. Teacher training centres e.g. the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Colleges of Education should offer inclusive education as a subject in order to equip the up-coming teachers with the relevant knowledge and skills relevant in an inclusive setting.

Some suggested that the necessary resources should also be provided. The necessary resources for learners with special educational needs raises great concern as they are not available in schools currently, and teachers should be made familiar with the use of some of the special aids used by LSEN. Furthermore a few of the principals indicated that learners with special educational needs are currently disadvantaged because teachers only attend to the needs of

learners without special educational needs. This is true, because most teachers are currently not trained in special education needs. There was also a suggestion that the Ministry of Education (MEC) should formulate a combined curriculum to accommodate inclusive education because the current curriculum used in regular schools does not cater for the needs of learners with special educational needs. Lastly, principals suggested that each school should have a teacher trained in special education needs so that those trained teachers can help those who are not trained on how to deal with learners with special educational needs.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow emanate from the results reported earlier and their discussion.

5.5.1 It is clear from the findings that training of principals in the Caprivi region will need to change in order to make inclusive education a reality. It is recommended that principals who are already in service should be provided with in-service training in the form of workshops. This in-service training should provide the necessary skills and knowledge for teaching learners with special educational needs, thus bridging the capacity gap that currently exists. Once principals are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills, they can encourage all existing staff to develop or expand their knowledge and skills related to educating learners with special educational needs.

5.5.2 It is also recommended that schools should be re-modelled and modified in order to accommodate learners with a variety of special educational needs in terms of accessing the classrooms as well as other facilities on the school premises.

- 5.5.3** It is further recommended that there should be activities initiated to create positive perceptions towards learners with special educational needs in regular schools. One way of doing this is to disseminate information about special needs educational outcomes and achievements.
- 5.5.4** Another suggestion is that parents should also be involved in creating an inclusive school. Effective parent involvement is only possible if parents are empowered and equipped with the necessary skills. Parents should actively participate in their children's learning by participating in the school governance and supporting the child after school.
- 5.5.5** It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education should ensure that all schools use a variety of instructional practices that have been proven effective in educating all learners, including learners with special educational needs. Some of these practices that can be used are: peer coaching, cooperative learning, cooperative teaching, collaboration, behaviour management, teacher assistance teams, and direct instruction etc. These practices not only draw on diversity to benefit all, but also promote learner initiative and social skills. Principals should ensure that all teachers use a variety of these instructional practices.
- 5.5.6** Finally, it is recommended that more research on inclusive education, specifically on principals' knowledge and perceptions towards inclusive education, and on parents and learners in regular schools' perspectives on inclusive education in Namibia should be done before such an educational change is implemented. This is significant because

principals are the key to ensuring that all learners participate and progress to the maximum extent possible, and the active involvement of parents in the teaching and learning process of children is fundamental to the development of an inclusive learning community.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In view of the importance of principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the lack of research within the Namibian context, the purpose of this study was to make a contribution to the understanding the pivotal role principals' perceptions can play in the implementation of inclusive education practices.

The focal point of the investigation was to examine the knowledge and perceptions of principals regarding inclusive education. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do principals define inclusive education?
2. To what extent are principals in regular schools willing to accept learners with special educational needs and under what conditions are they willing to do this?
3. What are principals' perceptions towards inclusive education?
4. What is the extent of the use of academic practices associated with inclusive education?

Responses to these questions have provided some evidence that principals in the Caprivi region have very little knowledge about inclusive education. Over 60% of them could not point out the learner populations considered to be learners with special educational needs in special education. However, they were aware of some of the terms associated with the definition of

inclusive education. Findings also revealed that principals are willing to integrate learners with certain types of special needs they feel they can handle.

The findings further revealed that principals in the Caprivi region have a variety of perceptions towards inclusive education. Over 75% of them agreed with all the 10 statements that were directed in a positive way towards inclusive education, which is an indication that they view inclusive education in a positive way.

Principals also indicated that if inclusive education is to be implemented in Namibian schools, a number of changes needed to be considered. They expressed the need for effective training in order to be equipped with knowledge and strategies that will enable them to support and nurture the learning of learners with special educational needs. This can be done through either in-service or pre-service training. Furthermore, they indicated that the current curriculum used in regular schools is not suitable for learners with special educational needs. They were also of the opinion that the necessary facilities, infrastructure and other resources be put in place before inclusive education is implemented. They further suggested that a departure from traditional instructional practices towards a variety of practices could utilize diversity in the teaching and learning process to ensure that different needs are met. Finally, principals were of the opinion that parents should be involved in the inclusive education process, since they form an integral part of the world of both learners with and without special educational needs.

It is clear from the above-mentioned information that the majority of principals in the Caprivi region do have specific needs regarding the implementation of inclusive education. It is therefore imperative that the Namibian government takes note of these perceptions and couple them to the development and implementation of an effective inclusive education system.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

PRINCIPALS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

I am a student at the University of Namibia, carrying out a research on Principals in the Caprivi region's knowledge and perceptions regarding inclusive education.

I will be very grateful if you could take some of your precious time to assist me by completing the following questionnaire. There are no wrong or right answers. All the answers are important.

NB: The responses you will give will be treated with complete confidence. No information about individual principals will be circulated or reported. The returned completed questionnaires will only be used for the purpose of the study.

Thank you very much for your time, effort and co-operation.

Instructions:

- 1. Do not write your name.**
2. Please answer all questions.
3. Write answers in the spaces provided OR mark the appropriate box with a tick.
4. Please feel free to ask for clarification when you do not understand any question.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Which position do you occupy at school?

Principal	1	
Deputy principal	2	
Head of department	3	

2. In what type of school are you currently working?

Primary	1	
Combined	2	
Secondary	3	

3. Indicate whether you are:

Male	1	
Female	2	

4. Which one of the following age categories applies to you?

Under 20 years	1	
21- 30 years	2	
31- 40 years	3	
41- 50 years	4	
Over 50 years	5	

5. How many years (complete years) have you been serving as a principal?

0-5 years	1	
6-10 years	2	
11-15 years	3	
16-20 years	4	
More than 20 years	5	

6. Please indicate your highest level of teaching qualification achieved:
(Please mark only one qualification).

Teacher training certificate	1	
Teacher training diploma	2	
Bachelors degree	3	
Honours degree	4	
Masters degree	5	
Doctoral degree	6	
Other (please specify) (-----)	7	

7. Do you have any training in special needs education?

Yes	1	
No	2	

8. Type of training received in special needs education.

Bachelor of Education (UNAM)	1	
Specialised Post Graduate Diploma in Special Education	2	
Med. (Special Education)	3	
Other (please specify) ----- -----	4	

9. Do you feel that you are sufficiently trained to meet the specific needs of learners with special educational needs?

Yes	1	
Uncertain	2	
No	3	

10. Do you need additional knowledge on how to work with learners with special educational needs?

Yes	1	
No	2	

SECTION B: KNOWLEDGE REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1. The following is a list of terms associated with the definition of inclusive education. How familiar are you with these terms? Please mark in the column of your choice.

	Terms	Very familiar	Familiar	Not familiar
1.	Integration			
2.	Collaboration			
3.	Supportive environment			
4.	Celebrating differences			
5.	Mainstreaming			
6.	Social equity			
7.	School restructuring			
8.	School as community			
9.	Combining best practices			
10.	School-wide vision			
11.	Supported learning			
12.	Shared responsibility			
13.	Team instructional approach			
14.	Coordinating services			
15.	Supportive assistance for staff			
16.	Neighbourhood school			
17.	Other (<i>please specify</i>) -----			

2. How do you think principals should be better prepared for inclusive education?

3. If the practice of inclusive education really works in your school, could you give

advice on how you manage to do it?

4. If it does not work in your school, what do you suggest should be done?

5. Which of the following types of learners would you regard as learners with special educational needs? Mark 'Yes' for learners with special educational needs and 'No' for learners without special educational needs.

		Yes	No
1.	Learners from the lower socio-economic groups		
2.	Learners affected by war and environmental degradation		
3.	Learners who are victims of abuse and violence		
4.	Street children		
5.	Children being brought up outside of their own families		
6.	Children in abusive forms of labour		
7.	Learners with different types of impairments		
8.	Girls in situations where their education is seen as less important than that of the boys		
9.	Learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness		
10.	Nomadic learners		
11.	Learners from oppressed groups and subjected to racism or other forms of discrimination		
12.	Girls who are pregnant or have children		
13.	Learners whose home language is different from the language of instruction		

**SECTION C: WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

1. Below is a list of different educational options for learners with special educational needs. Please tick what you feel is the most appropriate form of schooling for each type of learners with special educational needs.

		Should not attend school	Should attend special schools	Should attend special classes in regular school	Should attend regular classes with support	Should attend regular classes without support
1.	Learners with hearing impairment					
2.	Learners with visual impairment					
3.	Learners with intellectual (mental) impairment					
4.	Learners with physical (motor) impairment					
5.	Learners with conduct impairment (emotional and behavioural difficulties)					
6.	Learners with learning difficulties					
7.	Learners with developmental delay					
8.	Learners with psychological problems					
9.	Learners with multiple impairment					

SECTION D: PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- 1. Please indicate your extent of agreeing or disagreeing with each of the following statements by marking with a tick the box that matches your choice.**

	Statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly disagree
1	Schools should be responsive to the educational needs of all learners including those with special educational needs.					
2	The school's beliefs, mission, and goals should reflect all learners in the school community.					
3	Learners with special educational needs should have opportunities to participate in the full range of school programmes.					
4	The principal should support problem solving among all staff regarding difficult situations or individual learners with special educational needs who may require additional support.					
5	Principals should encourage all existing staff to develop or expand their knowledge and skills regarding the education of learners with special educational needs.					
6	The principal should ensure that learners with special educational needs have the necessary level of support and materials to ensure equal access to the general curriculum.					
7	The principal should have knowledge of information sources pertaining to the instruction of all learners, including learners with special educational needs.					
8	The principal should set the tone and establish a climate of respect for diverse populations.					
9	The principal should ensure that the contributions of all learners, including learners with special educational needs, are acknowledged.					
10	The principal should ensure that all teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches that have been proven effective in educating all learners, including learners with special educational needs.					

2. What are your general perceptions towards inclusive education? Give advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education?

2.1 Please list the advantages of inclusive education.

2.2 Please list the disadvantages of inclusive education.

**SECTION E: INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

- 1. Which of the following instructional practices are associated with inclusive education? Please indicate with a tick how often these practices are used in your school?**

	INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES	Seldom	Often	Very often
1	Collaboration			
2	Co-teaching			
3	Parent education support groups			
4	Parent/volunteer participation			
5	Behaviour management			
6	Curriculum-based assessment			
7	Direct instruction			
8	Teacher mentoring			
9	In-service training on inclusion			
10	Curricular modifications			
11	Peer coaching			
12	Teacher assistance teams			
13	Cooperative learning			
14	Computer-assisted instruction			
15	Learning strategies instruction			
16	Modifications of peer attitudes			
17	Peer and cross-age tutoring			
18	Social skills instruction			
19	Other (<i>please specify</i>) -----			

- 1. Give any other additional comments on including learners with special educational needs in the regular school.**

—

THANK YOU

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

Ms. B. Mayumbelo
P. O. Box 70121
Khomasdal
0812425632

12 May 2005

**The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
Private Bag 13391
Windhoek**

Attention: Mr Ankama

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW SOME
PRINCIPALS IN THE CAPRIVI REGION FOR THE PURPOSE
OF RESEARCH.**

**I am a student at the University of Namibia doing a Masters
degree in the field of Educational
Psychology and Special Education.**

I am doing a research study on “Principals in the Caprivi region’s knowledge and perceptions regarding inclusive education. The research is purely for academic purposes. The interviews should be carried out in the first two weeks of the coming trimester, which will be from the 30th of May to the 10th of June 2005.

I would be very grateful if favourable consideration is made at your earliest possible convenience.

Yours faithfully

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Brenda Mayumbelo