



Analysis of Teachers' Perception towards the Inclusion of Learners with Physical Disabilities in Physical Education: A Case of Selected Primary Schools of Chipata District in the Eastern Province of Zambia

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Abstract

This article is an extract of one of the objectives from the study that investigated teachers' perception towards the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school physical education. The study objectives were: 1. To examine the attitude of teachers on the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school physical education. 2. To establish the challenges of inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school Physical Education. 3. To ascertain coping strategies and measures to improve inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school Physical Education. The total sample size was fifty comprising of twenty teachers and five pupils selected through simple random sampling and twenty five key informants who included twenty head teachers and five officials from Chipata District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office identified as DEBS, DESO, ESO GI, ESO SPE and SHRO who were purposively selected. The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches and data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and observation schedules. Qualitative data were analyzed and presented thematically, while quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and presented in form of figures and tables.

The findings of the research were that teachers held positive perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school physical education. However, there were numerous challenges to the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in most primary schools which hampered its successful implementation. The findings revealed the following challenges: Lack of special equipment for learners with physical disabilities (LWPD), lack of in-service training for physical education teachers, lack of specific knowledge and intervention strategies on the nature of physical disability (PD), lack of collaboration between the school and parents or poor communication, home or social issues, long distance to school, lack of consistent formal planning for the students with physical disability on the part of teachers, high enrolment rates, low staffing levels and finally inadequate, dilapidated and unsuitable infrastructure for learners with physical disabilities. In order to overcome these challenges, the study made the following recommendations; 1. Government to train and recruit more special physical education teachers. 2. The government would consider integrating inclusive education in all primary teacher education programs. 3. The schools to conduct parental awareness on the importance of physical education to people with physical disabilities. 4. The government should provide financial and material support for inclusive education to primary schools. 5. Provide suitable special equipment and infrastructure to all primary schools.

Keywords: perception, inclusion, physical disability, physical education

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The Ministry of General Education acknowledges that quality education that is equitable and accessible is the right of every Zambian child irrespective of disability, gender, religion, ethnic origin, or any other discriminatory characteristic (MOE, 2016) ^[17]. In this regard, the Ministry has shown its commitment to providing quality education to learners with special education needs (LSEN) by enacting laws and policies in line with the provisions of various international conventions. These laws and policies include the Education Act number 23 of 2011, and the Education Policy "Educating Our Future". The development of these policies is the ministry's resolve to ensure that LSEN are not left out in the education system and are provided with quality education (MOE, 2016) ^[17].

Major international documents have reflected and supported the move towards Inclusive education for children with special education needs. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) reinforced the human rights perspective and called for the child to be fully enabled through education to achieve "fullest possible social integration and individual development" (article 23). (UNESCO, 1994) ^[26]. This has particular relevance for children with Physical disabilities who have been marginalized in their educational experiences including participating in Physical Education activities.

A special session on the rights of the children was called at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (New York) in 2002. Prior to this special session, a group of young people invited from around the world called for Fundamental Educational Reforms that would guarantee equal opportunities and access

to quality education that is free and compulsory. Mainstreaming schools, particularly for mainstreaming for LSEN, became an essential element in calling for equality of opportunities in education (MOE, 2016) ^[17].

The world conference on inclusive education held in Spain in 1994 (Salamanca Statement) reinforced the human rights perspective in relation to the education of LSEN (UNESCO, 1994) ^[26]. It is against this background that Zambia being, part of the global changing trends in education, has continued to embrace and restructure the education system. The changes made were to ensure that all children including those with special education needs participate and achieve within appropriate and accommodative learning systems and structures. To this effect, Zambia through the MoGE has domesticated these International Rights Frameworks in documents such as the Education Act 23, 2011, Education Policy 1996, the Person's with Disabilities Act No. 6, 2012 and the Revised Sixth National Development Plan 2011-2015. The production of these guidelines form part of the Government's measures taken to embrace these international obligations of providing quality education which is accessible and equitable to LSEN (MOE, 2016) ^[17].

Physical Education aims at preparing the learners physically, socially, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and culturally so that they effectively contribute to national development. Physical Education gives appropriate alternatives to individual learning styles, interests and problems. The subject includes among other things all practices that foster health promotion, character building and acceptable values and attitudes in the society. It offers scope for experimentation skills, dramatization practices, excitement and freedom. This scope digs up the hidden and undeveloped sources of inherent skills and ability in individual learners so as to discover and develop their confidence in usage of their skills (Taylor, 2005) ^[24].

It is envisaged that participating in Physical education will provide opportunities for the individual and the group to learn activities that are invigorating developmental and educational which in turn lead to positive physical, social, mental and emotional growth (Winnick, 2005) ^[29]. In Physical Education; movement, being the core component, is at the very center of the children's learning process. Through movement pupils learn to act, interact and react to the world around them (ibid) ^[29]. Movement also serves as the primary vehicle by which they expand their knowledge of themselves and the world. Physical Education serves to compliment other educational areas in promoting desired educational outcomes. In particular, Physical Education helps to cultivate health habits, the spirit of teamwork, determination and resolve (Taylor, 2005) ^[24]. Physical Education enables learners to participate in sports and games both for leisure and competition and as a means of livelihood (Mufalali, 1974) ^[18]. The purpose of Physical Education is therefore, to give an equal opportunity to learners who are able and differently abled to their highest potential.

Physical education is an absolute fundamental and essential part of a balanced education for young people including learners with disabilities. It provides a contrast to the relative inactive of the classroom setting and has both physical and psychological benefits to health; no other single subject in the curriculum provides the stimulation for mind and body to

work together in harmony (Ibid) ^[21].

Physical education includes all activities which promote good healthy minds. These activities can either be in form of games, sports, swimming, free-play, camping, canoeing, mountain climbing, education gymnastics, free-standing exercises, athletics or dancing, judo, wrestling or boxing (Mufalali, 1974) ^[18]. Like any other subject in the school curriculum, teachers are expected to involve learners with physical disability in physical education.

Dunn and Fait (1989) ^[8] point out that organizational ability is essential in the good physical education teacher. Regardless of the method of teaching used, carefully planned class activities are time and energy savers. They make achievement of the desired goal easier and more certain. MOE (1996) ^[16] states that Zambia needs to improve education in the existing basic schools almost all of the factors that determine school effectiveness are in need of special attention, support and improved materials if Physical education is to remain an enjoyable subject for all children.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Over the last decade the idea of inclusion of students with physical disabilities in general schools has become increasingly the focus of national and international policies (Doulkeridou *et al*, 2011) ^[6]. Physical Education is extremely resourceful in supporting the participation and learning practices of all students, regardless of their educational needs and individual characteristics. Inclusive Physical Education has considerable benefits to teachers, the local community and all children, especially those with disabilities. They learn to communicate and interact with others and develop cognitive and motor skills through Physical Education (Hassanein, 2015) ^[10]. Despite these benefits, there has been little or no research conducted in this regard to ascertain teachers' perception with regards to inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school Physical education, hence the study.

1.3 Significance of the study

The finding of this study might enable the policy makers in the Ministry of General Education (MoGE), administrators and teachers of Physical Education to find remedies in cultivating positive attitudes in parents and teachers of learners with physical disabilities. This study would will also contribute knowledge to the scholarly world.

1.4 Study location

The study was conducted in Chipata district in the eastern province of Zambia. Twenty primary schools took part in the study. The schools that took part in this study belonged to three zones namely Chingazi, Makungwa and Madzimoyo.

1.5 Literature review

Studies about attitudes of Physical Education teachers in Greece toward inclusion of students with disabilities in general Physical Education classes started recently. According to Vaporidi *et al* (2005) ^[27] the physical educators' contribution toward inclusion of students with disabilities in general classes in Greece was related to the level of knowledge that teachers believed they had for disabilities

condition. Hassanein, (2015) ^[10] revealed the doubt of Physical Education teachers' that inclusion could be workable, due to the lack of appropriate support services. An opposite finding of Doukeridou *et al.*, (2011) ^[6] revealed the positive attitudes of undergraduate students of Physical Education towards inclusion. All these findings give a first view of Greek Physical Education teachers' attitudes. Rapid changes of attitudes because of several educational settings, like Physical Education courses in schools, and sport events, make necessary the further study of attitudes and the factors that could affect them.

In another study conducted in the South-East periphery of Europe, it was noted that inclusive education was conceived so that everyone should learn, grow and work with others from similar and diverse backgrounds in a regular school (Rieser, 2012) ^[21]. Studies show that having contact with students with disabilities in school alone does not ensure changes in the teachers' attitudes; on the other hand, children who have contact with peers with disabilities during school show greater tolerance and a greater moral obligation toward inclusion than do those without contact. However, if such contact is not supervised throughout school routines, exclusion and harassment, which tend to increase in frequency with students' age, usually affect the educational activities, and prove to be especially damaging to students with disabilities (Gasser, Malti, & Buholzer, 2013) ^[9].

This was in line with the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (1994) which states that: "While inclusive schools provide a favorable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, their success required a concerted effort, not only by instructors and school staff, but also by peers, parents, families and volunteers (UNESCO, 1994) ^[26]."

Dunn and Fait (1989) ^[8] argue that a positive attitude towards learners with disabilities is an indispensable teacher attribute. They contend that the teachers must be sensitive and empathetic but not overly solicitous and the learners who are disabled deserve equal treatment and modifications, where appropriate instruction activities and equipment. In order to provide the kind of learning situation that makes these desired results possible, the teacher needs knowledge and training as well as certain special qualities of character and personality because of the specific problem that physical disability creates for an individual. A teacher of physically disabled learners must possess certain attributes in excess than those generally required of a teacher of a regular class. Like teachers in other fields, Physical Education teachers often feel inadequate when faced with the prospect of teaching learners with special needs (ibid) ^[8].

Winnick (2014) ^[30] further contends that opportunities for learners without disabilities to participate in physical education are well documented. Most middle and high schools in developed countries provide a full range of sports for the interested students. Opportunities for learners with physical disabilities however are not always apparent or available despite the subject being on the time table. Many teachers and schools in general have been slow to respond to the need and desire of their learners with physical disabilities.

Numerous studies have found that attitudes of teachers vary according to the quality of prior contact with students with

disabilities (Gasser, Malti, & Buholzer, 2013) ^[9]. For example, physical education teachers who have not had contact with students with disabilities, nor have had teacher training that includes pedagogical practices with heterogeneous groups (e.g., adapted physical education), do not consider themselves to be able to teach in inclusive environments, and tend to express unfavorable attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities. Experiences in inclusive settings are potentially influential in changing attitudes of teachers and professionals who work with groups with disabilities in regular school environments. However, it is possible that different components of attitudes affect teachers' perceptions of their own intentions from perceptions of self-efficacy (Block *et al.*, 2010) ^[4].

A study conducted in some schools in Ethiopia, a developing country revealed insufficient funding as the biggest drawback to the implementation of major programs, like inclusive education, as in many countries (Tukur and Kiyuba, 2014) ^[25]. Furthermore, challenges like teachers' attitude, materials and equipment provision, were also factors that affected inclusive education for children with disabilities. The study also revealed that the attitudes of the teachers were positively or negatively affected by the extent of a disability, either minor or complicated, in carrying out their duties diligently. Jordan *et al.*, (2009) ^[11] point out that teachers varied backgrounds in Physical Education ranging from little to no ability or interest in the subject pose a big challenge. The challenge is not seeing a relationship between play and educational opportunities that Physical Education has on learners with physical disabilities and this adversary affects the effectiveness of their inclusion in general Physical Education classes.

Winnick (2014) ^[30] notes that the lack of qualified physical education teachers in most developing countries to provide a quality comprehensive school program in physical education contributed to the negative inclusion of learners with physical disabilities. The study therefore recommended schools to employ qualified teachers of physical education to provide direct teaching responsibilities and program coordination. The study noted that problems came in usually if the teachers not trained in Physical education were assigned to teach physical education classes, but if head teachers allocated teachers trained in physical education and were able to demonstrate genuine interest in the field that proved to be helpful. Ibid ^[33] indicates that teachers' combination of approaches and methods to meet the unique needs of the physically disabled learners is challenging. The study reviewed that it is a requirement for teacher's skills, interest and needs to achieve the intended goal.

Dunn and Fait (1989) ^[8] postulate the issue of lack of patience and sense of humor as indispensable qualities in any good teacher. They said that teachers who work with the physically disabled learners need to be endowed with a generous portion of each of these special qualities, for progress often proceeds very slow when the results for long hours of work do manifest themselves, however, they are extremely rewarding to the learner and the teacher. Creativity is yet another desirable quality in the teacher of learners with physical disabilities when teaching both physical education and other subjects. Creativity is necessary for the instructor to improve equipment for performing skills. When facilities and equipment for the

teaching of adapted activities are limited, the imaginative teacher adjusts and modifies the available facilities and equipment to fit the requirements of the program (Ibid).^[8]

Separate studies, conducted by Kakuwa (2004)^[12] and Mufalali (1974)^[18] reviewed that Physical Education is actively enjoyed by children up to twenty-one although girls usually retired much earlier than eighteen years. This has attributed to the stereotyped attitudes by the Zambian society in general and teachers in particular about girls' participation in physical activities. Traditionally people think that a girl's free time is inclined in the kitchen. The physical development of a girl has an effect in girls' performance in Physical Education. In this regard, Dunn and Fait (1989)^[8] eludes that perhaps the single most important attribute the teacher of learners with special needs should possess is emotional maturity which is the ability to solve problems and adjust to the circumstances without undue emotional involvement; these teachers must have a stabilizing influence on the learners for successful adjustment.

The literature shows that, in most countries as supported by campaigns by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), teachers tend to show favorable attitudes toward the inclusion paradigm, as long it is accompanied by resources and incentives for teacher training (UNESCO, 1994).^[26] In fact, regardless of teachers' training experiences, students with disabilities at various stages of severity, who are included in regular schools, show better scores on academic tests and can more adaptively solve challenges presented by the community (Jordan *et al*, 2009).^[11] However, with regard to access to education for students with disabilities, moral values and determinants may be more important to teachers' attitudes than logistics about resources and training methods (Gasser, Malti, & Buholzer, 2013).^[9] Commenting on the quality of current provision of education in Zambia, the education policy document 'Educating Our Future' reports that, a decline in real funding for the Education sector is an indication of low education at the lower and middle Basic school levels abound (MOE, 1996).^[16]

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research design

The researcher used a case study research design. A case study was adopted because it allowed for the collection of data in a particular environment and gave a detailed description about a phenomenon. The study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques with the help of semi structured questionnaires for data collection. This approach helped to get many views on the ground to enable the researcher come up with concrete conclusions and recommendations.

2.2 Target population

The study targeted all Head teachers, teachers and pupils in Chipata district and all members of staff at Chipata District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office.

2.3 Sample size

The total sample size was fifty (50) participants comprising 5 pupils, 20 teachers and 20 head teachers from the selected 20 primary schools in Chipata district and 5 members of staff

from Chipata District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office.

2.4 Sampling procedure

The researcher used multistage sampling techniques in this research. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the twenty schools, teachers and the pupils from the selected twenty schools. Purposive sampling was used to select the twenty (20) Head teachers from the selected schools and the five officials from Chipata District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office identified as DEBS, DESO, ESO GI, ESO SPE and the SHRO.

2.5 Instruments for data collection

The researcher prepared three (3) different types of structured questionnaires to collect data from all the 50 respondents. The respondents were identified as members of staff from Chipata DEBS office, head teachers, teachers and pupils in the sample. An observation schedule was also used to collect data that seemed difficult to elicit from questionnaires.

2.6 Data analysis techniques

The data collected was analyzed through the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software and excel was used to generate figures and tables.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Respondents perception of inclusion

In order to establish the perception of the respondents towards the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in physical education, they were asked whether the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school Physical Education was a good practice. The analysis produced the following responses: 22 (44%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 16 (32%) agreed while 8 (16%) disagreed and 4 (8%) strongly disagreed. It was clear that the majority, 22 representing 44% of the respondents strongly agreed to the question. The respondents' perception on this variable was therefore, positive since the majority of them strongly agreed.

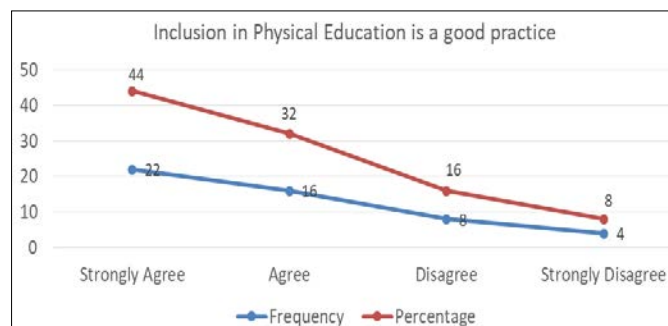


Fig 1: Respondents' views on inclusion in Physical Education

The results were consistent with past studies, especially when there were adequate academic preparation educators. In Greece for instance, Vaporidi *et al* (2005)^[27] found positive attitudes of Physical Education teachers toward inclusion of children with disabilities in regular physical education classes. The current study reveals that respondents believed that Physical activities were very necessary for learners with physical disabilities because they helped in the development

of their motor skills.

3.2 Whether Physical activities were appropriate to learners with physical disabilities

Figure 2 below shows analyzed research results from respondents on whether they believed that physical activities were appropriate to learners with physical disabilities. The graph indicates that 20 (40%) respondents strongly agreed and 18 (35%) agreed while 5 (10%) were not sure and 7 (15%) disagreed. A majority of 38 representing 85% of the respondents were in favor of physical activities being appropriate to learners with physical disabilities. Past literature about inclusion in Physical Education classes, suggested that many teachers do not agree with the notion of inclusion of students with Physical Disabilities as they perceived it to be extremely demanding for the teacher and not feasible (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007) ^[3]

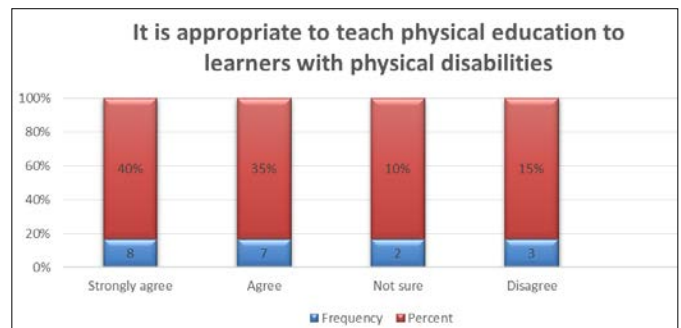


Fig 2: Physical activities are appropriate to learners with physical disabilities

Consistent with the previous findings, the current study established that respondents expressed doubt about the success of inclusion in Physical Education for children with Physical Disabilities (PD). In this regard, the positive attitude held by the respondents towards the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities was met with a great deal of challenges. The following were established as major challenges of inclusion of children with physical disabilities in primary school physical education.

3.3 Challenges of inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in physical education

3.3.1 Over enrollment

This study established that over enrollment was one of the factors that was generally considered to negatively affect the inclusion process. The researcher observed that some classes were large and overcrowded making it un conducive for pupils with physical disabilities. For instance, at two primary schools, there were over 85 pupils in grades one, four and six classes respectively. This was consistent with what Mandyata ^[14] (2002) also reported to have caused some teachers in Kasama to refuse accepting children with special educational needs in their classes (Ngulube, 2016). ^[20] It is hoped that if class sizes were minimal to acceptable standards, teachers would accept children with special educational needs in their classes. For example, participants from the current study called for smaller classes in physical education. Having too many children in classes together with physical disabilities in class and limited support were identified as a serious barrier to successful inclusion (Smith *et al.*, 2011). ^[23]

The findings further revealed that the increased enrolments in schools resulted in increased pupil teacher ratios, pupil book ratios, pupil desk ratios and overcrowded classes. As a result, this increase became a challenge in that, the supply of teaching and learning materials underwent a severe strain, the teachers encountered abnormal teaching loads and the desks and other equipment were also few as compared to numbers of pupils in classes. Importantly, the respondents suggested that even at times when only a few children with physical disability were taught, learning quality was downgraded, with inclusion extremely hard to implement. These findings were consistent with those reported by USAID/Zambia (2007) on Zambian Education which revealed that most schools in Zambia had experienced overcrowded classes after the introduction of free primary education which impacted on successful inclusion of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) (Ndhlovu, 2008).^[19]

3.3.2 Inadequate administrative support

The study revealed that there was lack of administrative support in terms of finances and resources which were suggested to have negative effects on inclusion practices. This finding was consistent with the results of a study conducted by Canadian Council on Social Development, which focused on the level of support and services of children and adults in Canada (Duhaime *et al.*, 2004)^[7] and the results indicated that 68% of students with a disability, aged between 5 - 14 years, required some level of support to be provided to them by their school. Nevertheless, approximately 50% of students with physical disabilities were left unsupported.

Children with physical disabilities often need support as a result of the challenges that they face because of their disability. These children require psychological support from parents as well as their teachers to forge ahead in life by looking beyond their disability and focusing on their potentials. If an individual is not supported in this area stress or depression may come in because an individual may feel not wanted. Brophy (2003)^[5] confirm that teachers need to give emotional support to their physically disabled pupils by encouraging or counseling them every now and then and also having a good attitude towards them. Parents too do need to have positive words towards their children so that children feel part of the family. Teachers should also hold a neutral attitude towards every pupil whether disabled or not just like parents need to have the same treatment to all their children (Wade and Moore, 1993).^[28]

The Social Systems Theory acknowledges that children with physical disabilities often share unnecessary discrimination and challenges because of society's attitudes and bias and unfortunately, prejudices found in society are frequently reflected in schools as well (Smith *et al.*, 2011).^[23] Teachers being part of society often do not support their disabled pupils so that they can benefit from social interactions with their peers. Teachers often deny such children to go out for games or physical education as they perceive them to be children that do not deserve such opportunities as a result of their disability and this too is the case with parents. They in most cases make their children with physical disabilities stay in-doors while the other children go out to play making their children miss out on learning about certain societal expectations as a result of being

excluded from such interactions (Smith *et al.*, 2011).^[23] The lack of support in this area also does affect them psychologically because they tend to feel marginalized.

3.3.3 Lack of special teachers of Physical education

The current study established that the teachers who took part in the study lacked training in special education and felt this contributed greatly to the exclusion of pupils with physical disabilities in physical education. These findings were consistent with Kalabula (1991)^[13] who pointed out that most children with disabilities placed in ordinary classes in Zambian schools did not have adequate human and material support. Previous studies on the other hand reported that non acceptance of children with disabilities by ordinary teachers was mostly due to lack of training and resources to equip teachers in handling children with special needs in ordinary classes (Ngulube, 2016).^[20] An observation by Mandyata (2002)^[14] implies that if support services were available in schools teachers would accept children with disabilities. Training in special education for all teachers is therefore, critical to the success of inclusive education in physical education.

Teachers held wavering beliefs toward the inclusion of students with disabilities for several reasons. For example, frequent negative teacher experiences, when including students with physical disabilities, may possibly counteract any initial positive perceptions held about inclusion. As a consequence, the present study revealed physical education teachers questioned their teaching skills due to these frequent unsuccessful attempts at inclusion. At times, some of the teachers reported feeling bad about themselves and started questioning their professional abilities. Feelings of guilt associated with unsuccessful inclusion practices, were reported in other studies. Previous research has also indicated that teachers, who stated more positive experiences and posed high perceived competence, had a more positive attitude and perception towards inclusion (Block *et al.*, 2010).^[4] Teacher respondents also spoke about lack of specific disability-related knowledge, attributed mainly to inadequate university practicum experiences. Perhaps the difficulties that affected inclusion practices were attributed to the lack of disability and disability specific knowledge as claimed by the participants

In general, the study established that one of the most core aspects for inclusion success is physical education instructional actions for instance, planning and implementing strategies. However, in order for teachers to effectively plan, they must have a strong understanding about inclusion and to be as knowledgeable as possible about inclusion processes. Knowledge is an important element of effective inclusion. Yet, past literature indicates that physical education teachers claim a lack of disability and inclusion related training which, in turn, reveal a lack of core knowledge about inclusion and related practices, particularly when it comes to physical disabilities. Eventually, these beliefs may negatively affect physical education teacher instructional actions, downgrade the entire inclusion process, and negatively affect educator self-competence. Consequently, the acquisition and mastering of core levels of disability and inclusion related knowledge may constitute the basis for successful inclusion practices (ibid.).^[15]

Lack of knowledge of the disability contributes to the negative attitude held by parents and teachers. Parents with inadequate information about the disability feel overburdened by this child and therefore see no need in supporting the child as the parents may perceive the child to be less human when compared to the rest. A teacher who does not familiarize himself or herself with the disability gets to know little about the child's academic ability or needs thereby concluding that such a child does not deserve the chance to be in school and therefore, no support is available for such a child (Alexander *et al.*, 2001).^[1]

3.3.4 Poor infrastructure

Throughout the study, the researcher discovered that, despite efforts by the Ministry of Education to introduce inclusive education in Zambia, infrastructure was not yet modified to accommodate children with physical disabilities. The study further revealed that conditions of sports fields, and classrooms in most primary schools made inclusion in physical education almost impossible. Furthermore, the shortage of desks was experienced in many primary schools. In most schools, not only were the desks few but they were also observed to be in poor condition. As a result it was very difficult for the learners with physical disabilities to concentrate in class. This situation also discouraged learners with physical disabilities from attending lessons regularly and others, though present, could not participate in class activities because the infrastructure and equipment were unfavorable and not comfortable. For example, most infrastructure had no ramps and rails along the corridors in most primary schools. Doors in most school buildings including toilets did not allow wheel chairs to pass. This situation made the learning environment somewhat hostile to pupils with physical disabilities. Therefore, some pupils dropped out of school because they could not cope with these poor prevailing conditions. This observation was consistent with that of Amr *et al.*, (2016)^[2] who pointed that in Finland infrastructure was unsuitable to children with disabilities but Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) built new schools, made school infrastructure accessible to children with special educational needs at all levels of education, provided bursaries to vulnerable children and worked with professionals in public awareness on inclusion (Ndhlovu, 2008).^[19]

3.3.5 Inadequate work preparation for learners with physical disabilities

The study reveals that more than 50% of the administrator participants commented that teachers did not consistently use formal lesson planning to facilitate the inclusion of students with physical disabilities. Head teachers contacted for this study said that sometimes teachers in their schools would be found teaching without a lesson plan. The situation forced the concerned teachers to be more reactive than proactive in managing physical disability issues and, consequently, practicing exclusion in physical education. It is sad to note that students with physical disabilities were one of the most likely groups of children to be excluded from physical activities (Gasser, Malti, & Buholzer, 2013)^[9]. Thus, proactive strategies are imperative to enhance teaching and the success of inclusion. Many of the teacher respondents

mentioned a variety of teaching actions they occasionally used to include students with physical disabilities but many of these teacher actions were often implemented spontaneously in unorganized manner. They stated that they would struggle a lot to find the best possible strategy to facilitate the inclusion of students with physical disability. Previous research reported similar findings where teachers referred to a great variety of teaching styles and the frequent use of exclusion practices (Gasser, Malti, & Buholzer, 2013).^[9]

3.3.6 Economic challenges

This study established that economic factors such as poverty and unemployment contributed greatly to the exclusion of learners with physical disabilities from physical education as some parents of children with disabilities were unemployed and this made it difficult for them to afford educational costs. One teacher reported that his learner stopped school because her parents could not pay her school PTA fees, uniforms, exercise books and other learners materials. This study was consistent with Kelly (1991) who reported that children with disabilities especially girls were victims of poverty. Their parents were reported to be poor and struggled to feed and provide clothing for them. MOE (1996)^[16] states that government would disperse all direct educational costs for children with special educational needs and would provide bursaries for such individuals at all levels of education. Of course this was not evident from the schools that participated in the study. This study suggested that there was need for Non-Governmental Organizations to supplement government efforts by providing bursaries to vulnerable children including those with physical disabilities in primary schools.

3.3.7 Long distances to school

This study has revealed that long distance to school hindered most children with physical disabilities from accessing school and in turn physical education. These findings were similar to that of Shimishi, and Ndhlovu, (2015)^[22] who reported that, in Chinyunyu, Lusaka province, children walked 12 kilometers to reach their schools. Such findings were also reported by Moberg and Kasonde (2001)^[15] who observed that almost 50% of learners with physical disabilities in Western and North Western provinces of Zambia dropped out of school system because they could not afford transport to school, food or uniforms. Those in rural schools walked an average of 11 kilometers to school. The situation becomes almost impossible for children on wheel chairs or crutches (Ndhlovu, 2008).^[19]

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that most teachers in primary schools in Chipata district had a positive perception towards the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in physical education and that inclusion was really a good practice. Respondents believed that Physical activities were very necessary for learners with physical disabilities because they helped in the development of their motor skills. In addition the study established that teachers' perception had an influence on determining the rate of inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in primary school physical education and that most primary schools practiced inclusion in physical education though with a lot of challenges which forced them to practice

exclusion.

The challenges revealed by this study included, the difficult to practice inclusion with learners with physical disabilities due to lack of interest and self-esteem emanating from discriminatory remarks by other pupils and members of the community. Respondents also felt that it was time consuming to effectively practice inclusion of learners with physical disabilities in physical education. Other challenges included lack of administrative and financial support for inclusion, teachers' lack of disability knowledge and failure to be proactive in terms of preparing work for pupils with physical disabilities were yet other challenges established. Inadequate special sporting equipment and facilities, children dropping out of school, due to unconducive school environments for instance, shortage of classroom space, inadequate and hard to access toilets and water points, inadequate desks, economic barriers and dilapidated school infrastructure were also among the major challenges revealed by this study. In view of the findings, the study recommended the following: 1. Government through the Ministry of General Education should consider training and deploying more special physical education teachers. 2. The government to practice integration of inclusive education in all physical education teacher education programs. 3. The schools to conduct parental awareness on the importance of physical education to people with physical disabilities. 4. The government should provide financial and material support for inclusive education to primary schools. 5. Provide suitable special equipment and infrastructure to all primary schools.

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