Psychologists in Zimbabwean School Psychological Services: Support roles and practices in the implementation of inclusive education

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Thesis submitted for the degree Doctor Philosophy in Educational Psychology at the North-West University

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis hereby submitted by me for the PhD degree in Educational Psychology at the North-West University is my own, independent work, except to the extent indicated in the reference citations. It has not been submitted previously by me to any other University/Faculty. I therefore cede copyright of the thesis in favour of North-West University - Potchefstroom Campus.

Signed on this .......................day of ....................................2019.

E Nkoma
Student
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to pay special thanks, warmth and appreciation to the persons below who helped to make this research successful:

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2. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education who allowed me to conduct my research in three of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe.

3. The provincial education directors who allowed me to carry out the study in their respective provinces.

4. Educational psychologists who participated in this study. This study would not have been successful without them.

5. My workmates and friends whose constant encouragement spurred me on to meet the deadlines.

6. Thomas Mukundi, University of Zimbabwe, for the language editing.
THE FOCUS OF THIS STUDY WAS TO DETERMINE SOUTHERN AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES. THE STUDY ALSO SOUGHT IN-DEPTH INFORMATION REGARDING HOW ZIMBABWEAN TRAINEE/EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLES AND HOW THIS UNDERSTANDING SHAPES THEIR SUPPORT TOWARD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES. THIS WAS DONE BY ASSESSING THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES; DETERMINING INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES; EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF ZIMBABWEAN TRAINEE/EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS REGARDING THE TRAINING ON THEIR SUPPORT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND DETERMINING EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS’ SUPPORT ROLES REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE.


FOR ARTICLE 4, IN-DEPTH PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS WERE DONE WITH 16 PURPOSEFULLY SELECTED PARTICIPANTS (13 TRAINEE/EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS LOCATED AT THREE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES AND...
three experts on inclusion from three universities) and data was transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed. Monthly/annual reports from trainee/educational psychologists were used as additional reference material. The results of Article 3 indicate that trainee/educational psychologists had known their support roles through masters’ degree programmes, a single 2016 workshop, personally guided reading and collaborative work with workmates. Their views indicated inadequate training and supervision, and negative feelings toward the internship after the master's programme, toward the payment of supervisors, toward continuing professional development points, lack of degree programmes in Master of Science in Educational Psychology, and toward location of conferences. Three major themes emerged from the support roles in Article 4: (1) diverse views on inclusion; (2) critical roles, successful and unsuccessful experiences in implementing inclusive education; and (3) impact of experiences on rendering support services. Key findings indicate that critical roles of advocacy and consultation, assessment and placement, and in-service training were viewed as successful, whereas negative teacher attitudes and limited resources were viewed as barriers toward the implementation of inclusive education practices. The impact of experiences indicates inadequacy in the provision of support services. Annual reports of trainee/educational psychologists further indicated inadequate ongoing training on inclusive education practices. Recommendations for improving training included educational psychologists advocating for training initiatives through the Zimbabwe Psychological Association. The use of social media, Skype for example, where distance is a challenge, could be helpful for such training initiatives. However, continuous professional development points should focus on registered educational psychologists with at
least a master’s degree qualification so that they acquire advanced practical skills instead of those with an Honours degree in Psychology. Continuous professional development needs to focus on diverse areas such as psycho-educational assessment, consultation, intervention, and programme planning, and evaluation; and has to be self-directed. Interns with different Master of Science degrees in Counselling Psychology and Community Psychology need to be recognised by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Department of School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education so that they work collaboratively. There is a need to broaden trainee/educational psychologists’ roles by assisting schools in developing policies on inclusion that mandate learners with disabilities to be involved in the general curriculum, and by working with other government and non-governmental organisations in making schools safe and friendly to all learners. To have high-quality and appropriately trained professionals, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education needs to collaborate with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education so that ongoing training of trainee/educational psychologists is done by educational psychologists at local universities in each of the ten provinces.

Key words: Inclusive education, educational psychologists, support services, educational psychological services, continuous professional development, psycho-educational assessment, disability, trainee educational psychologist, Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe
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<tr>
<td>AHPCZ</td>
<td>Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>APS</td>
<td>Australian Psychological Society</td>
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<td>BPS</td>
<td>British Psychological Society</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Canadian Psychological Association</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development</td>
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<td>CSIE</td>
<td>Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education</td>
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<td>DBSTs</td>
<td>District-Based Support Teams</td>
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<td>MOET</td>
<td>Ministry Of Education and Training</td>
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<td>NASP</td>
<td>National Association of School Psychologists</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADPD</td>
<td>Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>School Psychological Provider</td>
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<td>SPS &amp; SNE</td>
<td>School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLAP</td>
<td>Performance Lag Address Programme</td>
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<td>ZPA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Psychological Association</td>
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1.1 OUTLINE – PART I

This part of the thesis familiarises the reader with the roles and responsibilities of educational psychologists in inclusive education. Chapter 1 focuses on the importance of educational psychologists in the provision of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. Background information on targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe by Western countries and the socio-economic meltdown between 2006 and 2008 and how it impacted the provision of services by educational psychologists is presented. Despite these challenges, the Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) introduced in 2012 seemingly provided functional support for inclusive education. It takes into cognisance diverse learners and differentiated instruction in general classrooms in order to address achievement gaps caused by regressed learning and subdued teaching between 2006 and 2008.

The reasoning behind the study is elucidated in the problem statement. The concerns regarding the capacity of trainee/educational psychologists’ training and their ability to effect inclusive education practices led to the research questions and aims of the study. A description of ethical considerations for the study and an overview of the structure of the thesis are included in Chapter
1.2 INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa at above 90% but it is estimated that there are 600,000 learners of school going age with disabilities. Of these, more than half have no access to education (Chakuchichi, 2013). In mainstream schools, some of the learners with disabilities are placed in segregated classrooms, that is, special classes and resource units.

The teacher-learner ratio in special classes in Zimbabwe is 1:19. Such classes cater for learners with mild to moderate intellectual challenges. Resource units are for learners who are deaf, visually impaired or have severe intellectual challenges. The ratio is 1:7 for those learners with severe intellectual challenges or those who are deaf, and 1:10 for learners with visual impairments. Such learners are assessed and placed in these classrooms by trainee/educational psychologists who form part of the personnel in the Department of School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education (hereafter called SPS & SNE).

Both the Zimbabwe SPS and SNE fall under the directorship of a single chief psychologist. Two deputy directors, one from SPS and the other from SNE, assist the chief psychologist in his/her functions. They are located at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Harare (Mpofu et al., 2007). Members of the SPS and SNE directorate also include education officers responsible for school programmes in hearing impairment, mental retardation, visual impairment and guidance and counselling.

At each of the ten administrative regions in Zimbabwe, a principal educational psychologist is the head of both the SPS and SNE Department. Each administrative region, ideally, has a staff
complement of four to five educational psychologists, six to eight remedial tutors, a guidance and counselling officer and one or two speech correctionists (Mpofu et al., 2007) who provide school psychology-related services (Oakland, Mpofu, Glasgow, & Jumel, 2003). They provide services on a peripatetic basis by visiting schools for purposes of consultation and providing services (Mpofu et al., 2007). The mentioned department has the following core responsibilities: “(1) supporting schools in their inclusive education practices and expanding the educational provision for learners with special educational needs, (2) in-service training of school psychological services personnel, teachers, head teachers, and education officers on issues and practices in special needs education, (3) raising awareness of learners with special educational needs and inclusive schooling among teachers, head teachers, parents, and communities country-wide; and (4) promoting early identification and inclusive interaction programmes for learners with special educational needs.” (Zimbabwe Action Plan, 2005, p. 30). The following paragraphs will focus on the challenges faced by the SPS and SNE Department.

The Department of SPS and SNE faces a lot of challenges in respect of the development and provision of services (Mpofu, et al., 2007; Zimbabwe Action Plan, 2005). According to Mpofu et al. (2007) the ratio of educational psychologist to learners was 1: 145 955 in 2004, which exceeds that of 1:700 recommended by the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (Wall, as cited by Mpofu et al., 2007), thus leaving many learners without the services of psychologists. Most of the administrative offices do not have a full staff complement due to job attrition and financial constraints (Mpofu et al., 2007). Moreover, many Zimbabwean learners with disabilities and other learning difficulties and their families are unaware of the
relevance and availability of school psychology services (Mpofu, Zindi, Oakland, & Peresuh, 1997). In addition, cultural and traditional beliefs regarding disability hinder families from utilising school psychological services. Instead, many opt for services from traditional healers (Mpofu, 1994, 2000, 2003).

In the late 1990s, the attrition rates of educational psychologists and speech therapists was high due to huge caseloads, understaffing and underfunding (Mpofu et al., 2007). This was exacerbated by the unfavourable economic environment between 2006 and 2008 that led to brain drain of licensed educational psychologists (Nkoma, Zirima, & Chimunhu, 2012) to non-governmental organisations and universities within the country and abroad. The brain drain of licensed educational psychologists at each of the administrative offices affected the quality of psychological training and school psychological services (Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002; Mpofu et al., 2007).

A drawback in provision of educational psychological services in the country is the extensive reliance on western tests and concepts. These largely lack validity (Mpofu & Nyanungo, 1998). Results from such tests and concepts have the potential to misguide interventions and could potentially harm learners. For example, tests used include those for achievement such as the Wide Range Achievement Tests-Revised and Graded Reading Test and ability such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scales and the British Ability Scales. These tests have not been being normed in the Zimbabwean context. The next paragraph will focus on policy statements that support inclusive education and activities of educational psychologists.
Inclusive education in Zimbabwe involves the identification and minimisation or elimination of barriers to learners’ participation in schools, homes and communities and the maximisation of resources to support participation (Mutepfa et al., 2007). However, there is no specific legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe but various government policy statements that promote and support the inclusion of learners with disabilities and broader barriers. These policy statements influence the activities of educational psychologists in schools and communities (Chireshe, 2013). For example, the government policy statements include the Education Secretary’s Circular Number P.36 of 1990 which provides guidelines for placement of learners in special classes, resource units and special schools and the Disabled Persons Act (Disabled Persons Act, 1996) which require that all learners, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed, and disability, have access to basic education. Zimbabwean educational psychologists, therefore focus on assessment to routinely screen for any form of disability and admit any school-age child regardless of ability (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chataika, 2007). The following paragraph focuses on Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) and inclusive education.

Despite the challenges highlighted earlier, Manicaland province is seemingly providing functional support for inclusive education. This may be because the last principal education psychologist was in Manicaland and left in 2011 after initiating the Performance Lag Address Programme which takes into cognisance diverse learners and differentiated instruction in general classrooms to address achievement gaps caused by regressed learning and subdued teaching - between 2006 and 2008 (Nkoma, 2014, 2015). Support in adopting the inclusive programme by the provincial directorate, district education officers, education officers, school head-teachers,
teachers and parents in Manicaland province saw learners achieving academic results far higher than other provinces in Zimbabwe both at primary and secondary levels. The Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) was then made a national programme in 2012 (Nkoma, 2014). The SPS and SNE personnel in Manicaland province were then tasked to in-service train other provincial staff.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Literature on inclusive education in Zimbabwe has focused on six main areas: (1) teacher attitudes toward inclusive education (Chireshe, 2011, 2013; Mafa, 2012); (2) parents of handicapped children's views toward inclusion (Zindi, 2004); (3) barriers to inclusive education (Peresuh, 2000); (4) policies on inclusive education (Mnkandla, & Mataruse, 2002); (5) perceptions of children with disabilities toward inclusion (Dakwa, 2009); and (6) inclusion of children with disabilities in primary school (Deluca, Tramontano & Kett, 2014). These studies used the survey methodology. A survey methodology is positivist in nature. To understand the current status of inclusive education in Zimbabwe, there is a need to focus on the lived experiences of trainee/educational psychologists who are responsible for supporting schools. Thus, this study aims to explore the support roles of educational psychologists in implementing inclusive education practices in Zimbabwe.

1.4 PURPOSE STATEMENT, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Purpose statement
This phenomenological study aims to seek in-depth information regarding how trainee/educational psychologists in Zimbabwe understand their roles and how this understanding shapes their support toward the implementation of inclusive education practices. The phenomenon of interest is the meaning ascribed to the support in the implementation of inclusive education practices. The researcher has worked for SPS and SNE and hence bracketed himself by setting aside own experiences and took a fresh perspective towards the implementation of inclusive education practices.

1.4.2 Central research question

What meaning do trainee/educational psychologists ascribe towards their support in the implementation of inclusive education practices, and how does this translate to support practices?

1.4.3 Objectives of the study

1. Explore trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences in their roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe.

2. Explore how trainee/educational psychologists learn about their support roles and responsibilities.

3. Explore the measures that could be taken to improve the association between educational psychology and inclusive education.

1.4.4 Secondary research questions

1. What are the trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences in their roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education?
2. How do trainee/educational psychologists learn about their support roles and responsibilities?

3. What measures can be taken to improve the association between educational psychology and inclusive education?

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research design

This study focuses on the lived experiences of trainee/educational psychologists regarding the support they render in the implementation of inclusive education. It adopts a qualitative research design based on a phenomenological perspective. A phenomenological perspective seeks to understand the meaning of lived experiences, events, and interactions of people in particular situations (Bogdan & Biken, 1998). This methodology is appropriate for this study as the information is collected in a natural setting, over long periods of time. Little, also, is known about trainee/educational psychologists lived experiences regarding their role in the implementation of inclusive education practices. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the social and psychological phenomenon from the perspectives of people who are involved.

1.5.2 Philosophical assumptions

Phenomenology has three assumptions about human beings (McPhail, 1995):

1. Consciousness. The assumption is that consciousness is an essential condition of human life.
2. Elimination of dualisms. It views every act of consciousness as containing objective/subjective aspects of the same thing rather than dividing the world into material and non-material realms.

3. Consciousness is temporal. It implies that an individual consciousness carries the lived experiences of the past in it and anticipations of the future.

Giorgi (2009) modified the philosophical phenomenological method to meet scientific and phenomenological criteria that are necessary for psychological understanding of the everyday situation. This modification enables data collection from others rather than from the researcher (Giorgi, 2009).

Phenomenology argues that the relation between perception and objects is not passive - human consciousness actively constructs the world as well as perceiving it (Gray, 2014). This rejects the subject-object dichotomy. The reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual (Creswell, 2013:78).

Phenomenology describes meanings of several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2010). This study will focus on trainee/educational psychologists as they experience a phenomenon of inclusive education support practices. The epistemological issue is that the researcher gets very close to the participants (trainee/education psychologists) and gets their subjective evidence based on individual views at their work places. The researcher has been a principal educational psychologist in the Department of SPS and SNE hence needs to bracket out own experiences. This implies that the researcher seeks to understand the world from the participants’ point of view (Gray, 2014). Therefore, the phenomenological
research is most appropriate, as it focuses on consciousness and lived experiences of trainee/education psychologists.

1.5.3 Research paradigm

Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2011) claim that the interpretivist paradigm allows researchers to discover reality through participants’ views, their own background and experiences. This implies that people give meaning to their social world and hence interpretive researchers seek to find how people perceive and make sense of this world (Phothongsunan, 2010). Such a construction of meaning is done by participants and the researcher. When this paradigm is applied to this research it makes the researcher understand the life-world experiences of trainee/educational psychologists’ roles and how this understanding shapes their support regarding the implementation of inclusive education practices in schools and communities they serve.

To support the use of this paradigm, further characteristics of the paradigm are of importance. According to Thanh and Thanh (2015), the interpretive paradigm often seeks answers for research by forming multiple understandings of the individual’s worldview. Willis (2007) concurs by saying that “different people and different groups have different perceptions of the world” (p.194). It follows that participants in this study will say what their experiences are. Such multiple perspectives in interpretivism lead to a comprehensive understanding of the situation (Morehouse, 2011). This, however, differs from positivism that seeks for one correct answer by focusing on objective or precise information. McQueen (2002) expounds the use of the qualitative approach in the interpretive paradigm by indicating that interpretivist researchers
seek methods that enable them to understand in depth the relationship of human beings to their environment and the part those people play in creating the social fabric of which they are a part.

In the interpretive paradigm, the crucial purposes of researchers are to get ‘insight’ and ‘in-depth’ information (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

From these perspectives, the researcher intended to obtain information for this study from trainee/education psychologists who are from different provinces so that diverse and multifaceted information is gathered.

1.5.4 Strategies of inquiry

The epistemological position of the study was formulated as follows: a) data are contained within the perspectives of people that are involved with the implementation of inclusive education practices at a coordinating level, and b) the researcher brackets out own experiences. This entailed the description of lived experiences of participants towards the support in the implementation of inclusive education practices. Thus, a psychological phenomenological methodology (Moustakas, 1994) can be viewed as the best means for this study. This qualitative study was done in three administrative offices in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe that houses trainee/education psychologists. All the participants shared common and particular experiences of support in the implementation of inclusive education practices.

1.5.5 Sampling strategy
Three provinces out of ten were purposively selected. This provides a sufficient number of variations that are needed in order to come up with a typical essence (Giorgi, 2008), rather than the generality of results (England, 2012). However, for the purposes of this study, the issue of representativeness is irrelevant when selecting participants.

Criterion sampling was used as all trainee/education psychologists with more than one year experience in the Department of SPS and SNE. All the participants have experience supporting the implementation of inclusive education practices in all the ten administrative offices. Trainee/educational psychologists with less than one year experience were excluded from the research as they may not have gained adequate experience in the implementation of inclusive education practices.

The selected sites are the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education offices that house the SPS and SNE Department at each of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe. At these sites, parents or guardians consult SPS and SNE personnel for counselling, transfer, psychological assessments and placement of special needs learners. Head-teachers might consult for the need for resource classes or special classes, instructional supervision of resource classes/special classes, the need for new special needs teachers and career guidance of learners.

1.5.6 Data collection methods

Data collection methods consisted of in-depth interviews and focus groups. These methods were supplemented by documentary analysis.
According to Englander (2012), phenomenological research aims to encounter the phenomenon via the participant’s description. Therefore, questions that are part of a phenomenological interview should meet the criteria of description (Giorgi, 2009). Such questions need to focus on participants’ descriptions of the situation in which they experienced the phenomenon.

The primary data sources include the trainee/educational psychologists at three provincial offices. Giorgi (2009) says that “What one seeks from a research interview in phenomenological research is as complete a description as possible of the experience that a participant has lived through” (p. 122). To collect data about the lived experience of inclusive education practices from these staff members, in-depth face-to-face interviews and focus groups would be appropriate as these complementary approaches provide rich nuances and depth. The data collection methods will be similar to Englander’s (2012) specification. Englander (2012) suggests a preliminary meeting with research participants prior to the actual interview is carried out. Such a meeting provided an opportunity to establish trust with participants, review ethical considerations, complete consent forms and also to review research questions and give participants time to dwell and ponder on the experience. This assisted the researcher to get a richer description during the interview without making the researcher having to ask too many questions (Englander, 2012).

The three secondary research questions comprised the phenomenological inquiry. The first focuses on trainee/education psychologists’ experiences in their roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education. The second focuses on how trainee/education
psychologists learn about their support roles and responsibilities whilst the third focuses on the measures that can be taken to improve the association between educational psychologists and inclusive education.

Prior to conducting the interview, the researcher wrote a full description of his own experience thereby bracketing off his experiences from those of the interviewees. The concept of “bracketing” comes from Husserl’s (2008/1931) epoché in which the researcher allows him or herself to be present to the data without positing its validity or existence (Kanyange & Musisi, 2011).

All interviews were audio-recorded with permission from participants and were then coded. They were then transcribed verbatim. Soon after each interview, key words, phrases and sentences were transcribed. A spare cell-phone was in place in case the other one malfunctioned. Back-up copies were put on computer files and a master list of the types of information gathered was then developed. A data collection matrix was developed as a visual means of locating and identifying information for the study.

The use of documentary methods refers to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon we wish to study (Bailey, cited by Mogalakwe, 2006). Marrian, as cited by Bowen (2009) indicates that documents of all types can assist the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem. Documentary reviews are designed to identify the supporting roles of trainee/education psychologists towards inclusive education practices. Such documentary evidence can provide
background information prior to conducting interviews (Yanow, cited by Owen, 2013). Policy
documents, mission statements, monthly/annual reports and staff reports were used to
supplement data gained through interviews and to verify their findings (Angrosino & Mays de
Pérez, 2000). The documentary evidence indicated convergence of information from different
sources, suggesting that the research report had greater confidence in the trustworthiness of the
findings (Bowen, 2009).

1.5.7 Data analysis

The Husserlian inspired descriptive phenomenology aims at revealing essential general
meaning structures of a phenomenon. In this investigation, the researcher stayed close to what
was given to him in all its richness and complexity, and restricted himself to “making assertions
which are supported by appropriate intuitive validations” (Mohanty, cited in Giorgi, 1986, p. 9).

Data was analysed using Moustakas’ approach (Moustakas, as cited by Creswell, 2013). This
phenomenological analysis followed the following sequence; firstly, the researcher started with a
full written description of his experience of support towards the implementation of inclusive
education. This attempted to set aside the researcher’s personal experiences so that the focus was
directed on participants in the study (bracketing). Secondly, a list of significant statements was
then developed. Statements in the interviews which focused on how individuals were
experiencing inclusive education practices were then identified. These significant statements
were listed (horisonalisation of the data) and each statement was treated as having equal worth
and a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements was then developed. Thirdly, significant
statements were then grouped into larger units of information called themes (“meaning units”).
Fourthly, a description of participants’ experiences of implementing inclusive education were
then written. This textual description of the experience included verbatim examples. Lastly, an
overall description of the phenomenon of inclusive education incorporating both textual and
structural descriptions was then written. This description represented what the participants
experienced regarding the phenomenon under study.

1.5.8 Ethical considerations

When carrying out the study, the researcher entered the private space of participants thus
raising ethical issues. According to Creswell (2013), the researcher has the obligation to respect
the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants. The confidentiality and anonymity of
participants were respected and protected throughout the study. Each participant signed an
informed consent document which fully disclosed the aims of the research and the procedures to
be followed. Participation was voluntary; participants’ right and choice to participate were
respected, which meant that participants could withdraw at any time during the study. Approval
was first obtained from the Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-00321-
16-A2) (See Appendix A). Permission to carry out the research in the three provinces was
obtained from the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (See
Appendix B). Approval to then carry out the research in the three provinces was then sought
from the Provincial Education Directors (See Appendix C).

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THESIS
The thesis is submitted in article format, as approved by the Senate of the North-West University, according to the guidelines for post-graduate studies. Each article has been prepared and submitted for publication in an accredited, peer-reviewed, scientific journal with interests in the topic. Two of the articles have already been published. Articles have been written according to the guidelines to authors of the various journals (see the relevant appendices).

This thesis is presented in three main parts as portrayed in Figure 1.1.

**Part I:** General Perspective and Orientation consists of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Chapter 1 introduces the problem statement, research questions and aims of this study. Chapter 2 includes a concise literature review with regard to the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological services at international and Southern African levels. Although the literature review in Chapter 2 is not comprehensive, it does consider the most important literature that will form the basis for the research articles. Chapters 1 and 2 and Part III, containing Chapter 8, have been written according to the prescribed standards of the North-West University Guidelines for References. Referencing is done according to the APA 6th edition method and a list of references is provided at the end of each chapter.

**Part II** of the thesis, which comprise four articles, consists of Chapters 3-6. The research methods and results of the research articles are discussed and interpreted in each chapter respectively. Although some journals request that the abstract, tables and figures be placed on separate pages after the list of references, in this thesis they were placed in the appropriate places in the text for technical reasons. Likewise, each article has its own relevant list of references. The
references and list of references of each article are presented according to the guidelines of the scientific journal it was prepared for. For the purpose of quality and examination, the font and spacing is kept the same throughout the thesis. Articles III and IV have already been published in peer-reviewed journals. The articles included in the thesis are as follows:

1. **ARTICLE I**: International perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services
   
   Under review: Educational Psychology Review

2. **ARTICLE II**: Southern African perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological services
   
   Under Review: Educational Psychology Review

3. **ARTICLE III**: Educational psychologists’ support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe
   

4. **ARTICLE IV**: Perceptions of Zimbabwean trainee/educational psychologists regarding the training on their support roles and responsibilities in inclusive education
   
Part III consists of the final chapter, which comprise a collective summary, conclusion, and recommendations and limitations of the study. Chapter 8 is followed by appendices.

Please see Figure 1.1 for a schematic representation of the study.

Figure 1.1 Structure of the thesis
1.7 REFERENCES


CHAPTER 2

CONCISE LITERATURE REVIEW

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2.4 REFERENCES 40
2.1 INTRODUCTION

A brief background regarding the history of inclusive education in Zimbabwe, the treatment of students with disabilities, and the role of educational psychologists in addressing these problems is provided, and then followed by a discussion of the existing infrastructure relative to educational psychology and issues impacting educational psychological services. A comprehensive overview of Southern African and international perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services is provided in Chapters 3 and 4 (Articles 1 and 2). Educational psychologists’ support roles in the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe and perceptions of Zimbabwean trainee/educational psychologists regarding the training in respect of their support roles and responsibilities in inclusive education are provided in succeeding chapters (Articles 3 and 4). As each of the articles links and progresses towards the research problem, they therefore represent the literature applicable to the topic under discussion. In order to avoid repetition, it was deemed necessary to provide a summary in order to orientate the reader in terms of the context.

For inclusive education to be effective, there is need for adequate support. Therefore, it is important to interrogate the educational psychological support for inclusive education. International guidelines such as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action proclaim that learners should, regardless of disability, receive education in regular classrooms within their local schools and teachers are encouraged to use child centred pedagogy to meet their diverse needs (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). Such a view focuses on normalisation and inclusive paradigms which minimise marginalisation (Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016). Learners most vulnerable to
barriers to learning and exclusion are those with disabilities and impairments (Murungi, 2015). Therefore, they need provision of support services such as special transportation, free education, guidance and counselling, health care, and appropriate instruction among others (Powers, 2016).

Inclusive education is viewed as a basic right that requires quality education for all learners. This orientation, in general, might be challenged by high teacher-learner ratios, lack of time of teachers, lack of policy integration, unclear roles between general education teachers and special education teachers, negative teacher perceptions on disabilities and lack of school support (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). Inclusive education development in Southern Africa is challenged by poverty, limited or lack of human and material resources, discriminatory attitudes, inflexible curricula, lack of clear conceptualisation of inclusion, the lack of participation of parents and community organisations in decentralised processes of decision-making, lack of policy integration as well as colonial legacies that perpetuate inequities (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016). The role of educational/school psychologists who use evidence-based teaching practices may be crucial in such a challenging inclusive education setting.

2.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Prior to independence in Zimbabwe, before 1980, school psychological services were available to white, Asian/Indian, and coloured students only (Mpofu & Nyanungo, 1998; Mukhopadhyay & Musengi, 2012). Charitable organisations and churches, complemented by missionaries, provided education to a few black children with special needs in rural boarding
schools where they were taught practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, sewing and cookery (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998).

The education of these children was viewed more as a moral and religious obligation rather than as a right (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998). Lack of national policy on special education resulted in lack of coordination among the different service providers such as churches and non-governmental organisations, resulting in compromised quality of services (Chireshe, 2011; Chitiyo & Chitiyo, 2007; Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002).

People with disabilities did not command respect in the black African society (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004) and were considered burdens to the family and community (Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002). Many Zimbabwean families believed that spiritual forces caused disabilities and therefore sought services from traditional healers (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe, & Kasayira, 2007). When families could not raise money for school fees, children with disabilities were the first to stay at home (Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002). If such children had the opportunity to go to school, the pedagogical environment ignored their views and opportunities to participate because most teachers were unqualified in respect of special education.

After independence in 1980, school segregation was abolished, and school psychological services were extended to black students (Mpofu et al., 2007). The government of Zimbabwe introduced the Education Act of 1987, which required all children to have access to basic education at their nearest school (Chitiyo, Odongo, Itimu-Phiri, Muwana, & Lipemba, 2015; Mukhopadhyay & Musengi, 2012). The Disabled Persons Act of 1992, which was intended to remedy inequalities in the provision of social services including the provision of education
services was also enacted (Mpofu et al., 2007). These major milestones in advancing school psychology resulted in increased enrolment of children with special needs from 2 000 in 1979 to 4 000 in 1980 (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998).

To address some of the problems stated above, Zimbabwean educational psychologists focused on assessment to routinely screen for any form of disability and admit into class any school-age child regardless of ability (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chataika, 2007). Such children were placed in special classes, resource units, and special schools depending on the level of disability and home environment. Students with severe disabilities were placed in resource units within ordinary schools or residential special needs education schools as special classes were meant for students with mild-to-moderate intellectual challenges. Educational psychologists engaged in in-service training of teachers and administrators for teaching students with disabilities. During consultancy and advocacy, they worked with parents, learners, educators, social workers, physicians, and rehabilitation technicians. They educated communities about the availability of special education programmes and assistive devices for learners with orthopedic and sensory disabilities - from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and non-governmental organisations. International aid agencies such as the Swedish International Development Agency, Canadian International Development Agency, and the Norwegian Psychological Association funded outreach activities, continuing education for educational psychologists, transportation, test procurement, and test development (Mpofu et al., 2007). Educational psychologists carried out research on how best to assist teachers, parents, and schools regarding the effective delivery of special needs education programmes (Mpofu et al., 2007).
Educational psychology is regulated by statutory instruments enforceable through the country’s courts of law. The Zimbabwe Psychological Practices Act (Chapter 225) of 1971 restricts training and the practice of educational psychology to persons of a certain level of psychological education and experience (Mpofu et al., 1997). Educational psychologists hold either a Bachelor Science Honours degree in Psychology or a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology. A Master of Educational Psychology degree for teachers is not required for registration with the Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ) though a teaching qualification is a desirable quality (Mpofu et al., 2007; Nkoma, 2018). Before 2015, there were two programmes that prepared educational psychologists: a three year internship programme under the Department of SPS and SNE in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for those with a foundation degree in psychology and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology (Mpofu et al., 2007). Such a programme was meant to increase the number of locally trained educational psychologists. However, the Allied Health Professions Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ) 2016 regulations require a graduate degree and one-year internship for registration (Nkoma, 2018). The University of Zimbabwe was the only institution offering the programme and used to enrol 10 students biannually depending on the availability of lecturers with requisite qualifications (Mpofu et al., 2007). Presently, there is no university in Zimbabwe offering a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology. The stringent AHPCZ requirements coupled with lack of masters’ programmes at universities resulted in a critical shortage of educational psychologists (Nkoma, 2018). The shortage is also compounded by the freezing of government posts in 2012. Also, the prescribed number of educational
psychologist posts per province which have not changed since the early 1980s in spite of the increase in enrolment of learners.

The internship programme for trainee and intern educational psychologists covers child assessment, report writing, teacher, school, and parent consultation, special needs education programming, the administration of special needs programmes, child advocacy and legal aspects of school psychology practice. The training programme concludes with fieldwork placements at institutions that serve learners with disabilities, mainstream school settings or psychiatric settings (Mpofu et al., 2007). Trainee and intern educational psychologists are required to produce an internship portfolio for evaluation by the AHPCZ. The portfolio should include evidence of continuing education, papers presented at professional seminars and workshops, assessment reports, child placement reports and research reports (Mpofu et al., 2007).

The Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ) maintains the register of educational psychologists and regulates their practice while the Zimbabwe Psychological Association (ZPA) has regional chapters and provides a professional identity as well as education and training for all psychology specialities (Mpofu et al., 2007).

Clear policies on inclusive education are important as they direct the work of educational psychologists in schools and communities. The following section will focus on inclusive education policies in Zimbabwe.

2.2.1 Inclusive education policies in Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe is a signatory to both regional and international instruments which include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Zimbabwe ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1990 and national responses are guided by the following core principles of the convention: non-discrimination (Article 2), right to education (Articles 28 and 29), and rights of children with disabilities (Article 23) (UNICEF, 2011). Such a thrust indicates that children with disabilities and special needs need to be provided with “equitable access to education” (Chireshe, 2011, p. 157). Similarly, Zimbabwe is a signatory of international instruments such as the Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education which stipulates that all learners should actively participate in mainstream schools and communities in which they live.

Before independence in 1980, there were no disability related policy or support at schools for black African learners (Chireshe, 2011). Currently, there is no specific legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe (Mpofu, 2004). However, there are several government policy issues which are consistent with the intent of inclusive education. The Zimbabwe Education Act of 1996 and other Ministry of Education Circulars require that all learners regardless of race, religion, gender, creed and disability have access to primary education. There are legislation and policies such as the Children’s Protection and Adoption Act of 1996 and the Sexual Offences Act of 2001 that influence educational psychologists’ work. For example, educational psychologists promote the acquisition of behaviour management skills by service providers at rehabilitation facilities for child offenders. They provide counselling services to sexually abused children and provide expert testimony to courts on the intellectual functioning of abused learners.
with intellectual handicaps (Mpofu, 2004). The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education policy statements that direct the activities of educational psychologists in school and community settings include the following: (a) The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute No. P.12 of 1987 provides guidelines on remedial programmes for learners with specific learning disabilities; (b) The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute No. P.36 of 1990 provides procedures for educational placement of learners with special needs (c) The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute No. P.5 of 2000 provides procedural guidelines for counselling abused learners and their families, and (c) The Education Secretary’s Circular No. P.3 of 2002 provides guidelines on inclusive education and education for community participation and makes provision for guidance and counselling for secondary school learners (Mpofu et al., 2007). The next paragraphs focus on the challenges facing the provision of educational psychological services in Zimbabwe.

Challenges facing the provision of educational psychological services include underfunding by the central government, high job attrition, and consequently, the erosion of quality of training (Mpofu et al., 2007). The declined economy may be a result, in part, of the political sanctions by the Western countries after the land reform and economic mismanagement by the central government. The number of educational psychologists per province has remained at between five and six since 1980 despite the increased enrolment rates of learners from early childhood education up to high-school level. The high caseloads resulted in educational psychologists focusing on assessments rather than consultative work. The shortages of senior educational psychologists to supervise trainees resulted in frustration and high attrition rates. According to Kasayira (2005) and; Mnkandla and Mataruse (2002), the Department of SPS and
SNE has a history of neglecting trainees in their professional development needs. Recruitment of more trainees might alleviate some of these problems but the government has since frozen all public service posts because of financial constraints.

The acute shortages of senior educational psychologists who are responsible for training intern or trainee psychologists coupled with the freezing of government posts made it necessary to investigate trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences regarding their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of inclusive education practices.

The following section which focuses on terminology and explanation of key concepts is important for the reader for easy of comprehension.

2.3 TERMINOLOGY AND EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

2.3.1 Inclusive education

Inclusive education, hereafter referred to as IE, refers to the full participation and learning to high standards by all learners with disabilities in age-appropriate general education classrooms, with support provided to students and teachers to enable them to be successful (National Centre on Inclusive Education, cited by Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). This entails that schools need to ensure that all learners are welcomed, valued, and learn together in regular education classrooms regardless of their particular learning characteristics (McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Cizman, & Lupart, 2013). This perspective on inclusion focuses on the rights of learners with disabilities to be educated alongside their peers in regular education settings (Florian & Linklater, 2010; Liasidou, 2012). That way, equal opportunities in accessing learning
resources, services and experiences are realised (Florian & Linklater, cited by Baldiris, Zervas, Fabregat, & Sampson, 2016). This encourages teachers to use child centred pedagogy to meet the diverse needs of learners (Anderson & Boyle, 2015).

In Zimbabwe, IE entails the identification of, and minimisation or elimination of barriers to learners’ participation in schools, homes, communities and the maximisation of resources to support learning and participation (Chimedza & Peters, 1999; Mpofu, 2004). Learners with disabilities and other special needs may be placed in resource units, which cater for learners with mental, visual and hearing impairments, and special classes which are intended for learners with mild to moderate mental handicaps. Inclusion with clinical remediation is for learners with specific learning difficulties in mathematics or reading. Unplanned inclusion is where learners with disabilities find themselves in regular classes and are exposed to the full curriculum by default (Mutepfa et al., 2007) because their unique needs are not recognised by teachers. There is no documentary evidence by the school for their specific disabilities and they are in unplanned or de facto inclusion by default, that is, in the absence of options, rather than by design (Mutepfa et al., 2007). A significant number of learners with severe disabilities in de facto inclusion drop out of school by the third grade (Mutepfa et al., 2007).

2.3.2 Educational support of students, parents and schools

A number of Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education policy statements in Zimbabwe were developed between 1985 and 2000 to guide the work of educational psychologists. The passing of the Education Act in 1987 was a major milestone in advancing school psychology (Mpofu et al., 2007). According to Mpofu et al. (2007), after the enactment of
The Education Act of 1987, which extended the right to education to all Zimbabwean children, educational psychologists were then able to provide community outreach and education programmes. This resulted in increased enrolments of learners with disabilities in schools and in-service education to teachers and administrators on special education and programming. Mpofu et al. (2007) further alludes that The Disabled Persons Act of 1992 was intended to remedy inequalities in the provision of social services to people with disabilities. This includes the provision of education services. Educational psychologists thus provided services consistent with the intent of the Disabled Persons Act including advice on attitudinal and physical-structural barriers to educational opportunity for learners with disabilities (Mpofu et al., 2007). This resulted in students with disabilities getting access to educational opportunities equivalent to their non-disabled peers. The Children’s Protection and Adoption Act of 1996 is another piece of legislation related to the provision of psychological services. This Act provides for the establishment of juvenile courts and the protection, welfare and supervision of children and juveniles (Mpofu et al., 2007). Educational psychologists promote the acquisition of behaviour management skills by service providers at rehabilitation facilities for child offenders. Educational psychologists also provide counselling and expert testimony to courts on intellectual functioning of abused children with mental retardation (Mpofu, 2004).

2.3.3 Disabilities

Learners with disabilities are heterogeneous in their characteristics and educational experiences. Such learners have learning problems that are a result of visual and hearing impairment, mental retardation and emotional disturbance (Judd, 2012). In this document,
disabilities refer to learners in segregated classrooms – experiencing intrinsic handicaps - where they receive different or modified curricula and instruction designed to meet their individual needs. In Zimbabwe such learners are taught by specialist teachers in resource rooms or special schools.

2.3.4 Learning disabilities

Learning disabilities are neurological disorders that affect the brain’s ability to process, store and communicate information (Judd, 2012). This term refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written. This may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia (Judd, 2012). In this document, learning disabilities will refer to learners with specific learning problems in reading and mathematics and are taught by regular classroom teachers for two hours per week in the afternoon. Such students take the full curriculum in ordinary classrooms.

2.3.5 Internship

For the purposes of this study, internship refers to the training of persons with a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Psychology and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology within the Department of SPS and SNE. The internship covers student assessment; report writing, teacher, school, and parent consultation, special needs education programming, the administration of special needs programmes, child advocacy and legal aspects of school
psychology practice (Mpofu et al., 2007). These interns have field placements in institutions that have students with disabilities, in mainstream schools and psychiatric settings. These field placements provide hands on practical experiences as interns are exposed to learners with different disabilities and learning difficulties.

2.3.6 Trainee educational psychologist

In this document a trainee educational psychologist refers to someone with a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Psychology. Their training is as described above under interns. However, a trainee educational psychologist does not satisfy the requirements of a psychologist registered with the Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ, 2016) as they do not have a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology.

2.3.6 Supervising psychologist

Supervising psychologist refers to a senior educational psychologist with three years of experience after being registered with the AHPCZ. The person should be a holder of a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology (AHPCZ, 2015). Their duties are to ensure that all domains and activities of the internship are fully completed by the intern psychologist.

2.3.7 Intern educational psychologist

An intern educational psychologist refers to a person who is registered in their final year of the master’s programme. Intern educational psychologists should complete their internship in the year after completing their master’s programme. Intern psychologists need to have an
internship portfolio reflecting their activities as well as three quarterly reports and one final integrated report to the AHPCZ through their supervisors. The training needs take less than two years from the date of registration as an intern psychologist. After being provisionally registered as a psychologist, intern psychologists are then required to sit for an oral and written examination in order to be registered as a psychologist in the main register (AHPCZ, 2015).

2.5 REFERENCES


Mpofu, E., Mutepfa, M. M., Chireshe, R., & Kasayira, J. M. (2007). School psychology in


PART II
THE FOUR ARTICLES

CHAPTER 3
ARTICLE 1
International perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological services

Submitted to and under review: Contemporary School Psychology

ABSTRACT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.4 DEFINITIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

3.5 EDUCATIONAL/SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

3.6 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

3.7 UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND)

3.8 AUSTRALIA

3.9 CHINA

3.10 PAKISTAN

3.11 DISCUSSION

3.12 CONCLUSION

3.13 REFERENCES
The focus of this article is on international perspectives regarding the relationship between educational psychological services and inclusive education. This part of the broader investigation is based on an extensive literature review focusing on the United States of America, United Kingdom (England), Australia, China, and Pakistan. Advanced online searches to retrieve the most recent research were done by using educational and school psychology as key words in combination with inclusive education. The review indicates that higher levels of the psychologist’s preparation are associated with activities related to intervention and prevention. School psychological services in the USA, England, and Australia provide diverse services for individuals, groups and systems which may be partially explained by the strong professional associations within these countries. Professional associations provide codes of ethics, define the specialty of school psychology and the model of preparation of school psychologists. This indicates a strong positive relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological services in these country areas. Services in China and Pakistan lack professional associations thus school psychological services are provided by inadequately trained ‘school psychologists’ with little professional development and research background. This results in a significant number of learners with disabilities not attending school. This probably indicates a no relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological services in these countries.

**Key words:** school psychologists, educational/school psychological services, inclusive education, barriers to learning

3.1 **INTRODUCTION**
This article forms part of an investigation into educational psychologists’ support roles and practices in the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. Before focusing on this Southern African country, it was deemed critical to interrogate what is happening internationally in this regard. For inclusive education to be effective, there is a need for adequate support. Therefore, the focus of this review will be on what is happening internationally in terms of educational psychological support for inclusive education. International guidelines such as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action proclaim that learners should, regardless of disability, receive education in regular classrooms within their local schools. Teachers are also encouraged to use child centred pedagogy to meet their diverse needs (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). Such a view focuses on normalisation and inclusive paradigms which excludes marginalisation (Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016). Learners most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion are those with disabilities and impairments (Murungi, 2015). Therefore, they need provision of support services such as special transportation services, free education, guidance and counselling, health care services, and appropriate instruction, among others (Powers, 2016).

Inclusive education is viewed as a basic right that requires quality education for all learners; this orientation might be challenged by high teacher-learner ratios, lack of time of teachers, lack of policy integration, unclear roles between general education teachers and special teachers, negative teacher perceptions on disabilities and lack of school support (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). The role of educational/school psychologists who use evidence-based teaching practices may be crucial in such a challenging inclusive education setting.
In Zimbabwe, inclusive education entails the identification of, and minimisation or elimination of barriers to learners' participation in schools, homes, communities and the maximisation of resources to support learning and participation (Mpofu, 2004; Nkoma, 2018). In school settings, successful inclusion results in learners' and their families' participation in the regular activities of the school community while meeting their unique needs as well as contributing to the development of the school community (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chatarika, 2007). The Department of School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education (SPS & SNE) in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has the primary responsibility of educational placement of learners with disabilities. Educational psychologists within this department have the responsibilities of carrying out psycho-educational assessments, counselling, consultation and advocacy, professional training and resource mobilisation and research (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe, & Kasayira, 2007; Nkoma 2018).

3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This article focuses on international perspectives, excluding Southern Africa which will form part of a follow-up article, on the relationship between educational psychological services and inclusive education. It has been stated that children’s emotional, behavioural and other mental health problems arise mostly during the school years (CPA, 2014). Therefore it is imperative that the educational/school psychologist’s role in prevention, early intervention, and treatment of such problems in an inclusive school environment be interrogated. The ways of providing educational/school psychology services may vary within and across countries depending on the needs, resources and orientation towards inclusive education. Therefore, it is
important to investigate how educational/school psychology services minimise barriers to learning and exclusion to education. Secondly, how educational/school psychology services support the achievement of the goal of quality inclusive education for all. This bird’s eye view may provide context when this issue is scrutinised in the section for Southern Africa and specifically in the case of Zimbabwe.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part of the broader investigation is based on an extensive literature review focusing on the United States of America, United Kingdom (England), Australia, China and Pakistan. Advanced online searches to retrieve the most recent research were done by using educational and school psychology as key words in combination with inclusive education.

The next section focuses on definitions of inclusive education. These definitions help to provide a yardstick upon which countries can determine how inclusive they are in their educational practices.

3.4 DEFINITIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The term inclusive education is not only important but it is also viewed as controversial regarding the education of learners with disabilities internationally (Lauchlan & Greig, 2015). Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Depper, and Sharma (2013) indicate that the term lacks a tight conceptual focus, which may then contribute to some misconceptions and confused practice. Johansson (2014) indicates disagreements surrounding the meaning, extent and nature of inclusive education. For example, on one end of the continuum, the term is focused on increasing
the number of learners with special education needs and disabilities in mainstream schools while at the same time maintaining special schools and special classes. On the other end, it focuses on the rights of learners with (severe) disabilities to be educated alongside their peers in regular education and encourages teachers to use child centred pedagogy to meet the diverse needs of learners (CSIE, 2002). Inclusive education, therefore, seems to have different meanings for different individuals and nations (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013).

The definitions of inclusive education can be conceptualised into two broad categories: conceptualising it based on key features (Berlach & Chambers, 2011) and secondly as the removal of that which excludes and marginalises (Slee, 2011). With the first category all learners learn in an age-appropriate class in their local school, thereby eliminating bias, prejudice, and inequality. This results in welcoming learner diversity in classrooms. All learners follow similar programmes of study with curriculum adaptation and modifications and varied modes of instruction that are responsive to the needs of all (Florian & Linklater, 2010).

With the removal of that which excludes and marginalises category, the identification and removal of barriers to participation in education is central (Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick, & West, 2011). Barriers to inclusion may include lack of resources and adequate training, lack of school support and lack of time for teachers (Loreman, Forlin, Chambers, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2014). However, some disagree. For example, Norwich, as cited by Lauchlan & Greig, (2015) states that mainstream classes have a high teacher-learner ratio. This result in lower levels of support hence he argues against full inclusion.
In summary, inclusion focuses on regular classrooms where support services are provided to the learner, rather than moving the learner to services. It predominantly negates special education as segregated placement. The following section will focus on the relationship between educational/school psychological services and inclusive education practices internationally.

### 3.5 EDUCATIONAL/SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Much of the application of psychology to educational issues is done by educational and school psychologists (Gibbs & Miller, 2014). School psychology is involved with the application of psychological methods, theory and research in schools while educational psychology focuses on the application of psychological principles in all settings devoted to education (Mogaji, 2007). Bartolo (2015) notes that the terminology may differ but that there are strong commonalities between educational and school psychologists. Both have knowledge of human development, learning processes, skills in assessment and intervention and social change processes. As the differences between school and educational psychology are blurred, both terms will be used interchangeably for the purpose of this study.

Psychologists working in schools promote the wellbeing of all learners through collaboration with school professionals and administrators (Ahtola & Niemi, 2014). They are well placed to support inclusive education practices because of their knowledge of theoretical principles of psychology. They are applied psychologists knowledgeable in child and adolescent development and educational contexts (Atkinson, Bragg, Squires, Wasilewski, & Muscutt, 2012) who utilise evidence-based practices in the education system. The profession of educational and
school psychology is somewhat diverse and differs between and within countries, within support services, and lastly at the level of individual educational and school psychologists (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009). This implies that the training and job descriptions of school psychologists in different countries may differ due to the different roles and educational contexts in which they work (Bartolo, 2015).

Based on a range of well to lesser developed educational psychological services and the embracing of inclusive education, the following countries namely the United States of America, United Kingdom (England), Australia, China, and Pakistan will be discussed. An analysis of educational and school psychological services and practices will be done to determine whether a country is in line with inclusive education practices.

3.6 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

About 6.5 million children and youth between the ages of 3 and 21 receive special education in the United States. This translates to 13% of total public enrolment (Department for Education, 2016). This may suggest that full inclusion is not practised.

There were 32 300 school psychologists in the United States in 2005 (Charvat, 2005). 41% had a master’s degree, 28% a specialist degree and 30% a doctoral degree (Curtis, Chesno, Grier, Walker, Abshier, Sutton, & Hunley, cited in Jimerson & Oakland, 2007). The ratio between psychologists and learners was approximately 1: 1 381 in the school year 2014-2015 (Walcot, Hyson, & Loe, cited in Bocanegra, Rossen, & Grapin, 2017). This ratio appears to be one of the best in the world. However, it is not commensurate with the recommendations of the
National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) which recommends a ratio of less than 1000 learners per school psychologist, in general, and less than 500 to 700 learners per school psychologist when more comprehensive and preventive services are being provided (NASP, 2010). Fagan, as cited in Bocanegra et al., (2017) indicated that there was never a time when the supply of school psychologists was sufficient to meet demand. Such a comment suggests that learners do not receive adequate and quality services due to shortages of school psychologists. Higher ratios of school psychologist to learner are associated with special education related practices such as assessments and fewer preventive services (Curtis, Hunley, & Grier, 2002).

Apart from the NASP, national organisations working on behalf of school psychology include the American Psychological Association, Division of School Psychology, and the Council of Directors of School Psychology Programmes (Jimerson & Oakland, 2007). State laws govern the credentialing and licensing of school psychologists and state boards of examiners of psychologists regulate the practice of school psychology within and outside education.

Approximately 1900 students’ graduate annually from 218 school psychology programmes with master’s, specialist and doctorate degrees (Jimerson & Oakland, 2007). There is no foundation degree in school psychology. Therefore, students complete a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree and a postgraduate degree in school psychology to become a school psychologist (Jimerson & Oakland, 2007). Lack of foundational knowledge of psychology and education may imply a weak grounding in psychological principles applied to education. A master’s degree takes one to two years of theory and preparation at specialist level
involves theory and one-year supervised internship. The doctoral level takes four to six years with a year of supervised internship and a dissertation. Such course work at masters and doctoral degree level prepare them to be qualified practitioners of mental and behavioural mental health services. Hanchon and Fernald (2013) found that 92% of school psychologists reported that they received training to provide counselling services during graduate school. 86% cited opportunities to provide direct counselling during practicum.

The shortages of school psychologists can be explained by the findings of Bocanegra et al. (2017). The findings showed that graduate students learnt about school psychology through informal encounters e.g., internet searches, rather than through structured or formal learning experiences. However, Curtis, Hunley, and Grier (2002) found that higher levels of preparation were associated with activities related to intervention and prevention (possibly more related to inclusion) whilst those with lower degrees spent more time on activities related to special education.

Lansdown, Jimerson, and Shahroozi (2014) indicate that the roles and functions of school psychologists include psycho-educational evaluations, consultations, prevention, intervention, research and evaluation and such services occur at the level of individuals (parents, educators and learners) and systems (family, schools, classrooms, school systems and community organisations). Such task diversity is related to job satisfaction, but can be influenced by the psychologist to learner ratio and the school system (Curtis et al., 2002).
A psychologist’s input is mandated in assessment and programme planning for learners identified as having severe levels of special educational needs and his/her role is to address both the least restrictive environment mandate and the provision of evidence-based practices (Solis, Vaughn, Swason, & McCulley, 2012). School psychologists support general and special education teachers to work collaboratively in co-teaching within the general education setting to teach learners with disabilities and those at risk for academic failure (Murawski & Lochner, 2011).

School psychologists who work in special education devote about 32% of their time to learners with learning disabilities, 22% to those with behavioural and emotional problems, 14% to those with mental retardation and 16% to the general school population (Smith, 1984). At national level, school psychologists devote about 5% of their time to preschool, 60% to elementary, 20% to middle school and 15% to senior high school (Solis et al., 2012). This indicates that school psychologists effectively work with all learners regardless of disabilities and several legislatures promote their work in an inclusive environment. They facilitate inclusive agendas by supporting collaborative methods of co-teaching so that the rights-based process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, curriculum and community of mainstream schools (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2000) are focused on and individual differences accepted as part of the human condition.

The NASP (cited in Lansdown et al., 2014) recognises the importance of school psychologists in promoting respect and child rights through the partnership with parents,
educators, schools and their communities. Such collaboration focuses on the rights of children to be included in mainstream education, special classes or special schools. Inclusive education entails the least restrictive environment wherein learners with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible. This means that full inclusion is not practised because some learners learn in segregated classrooms or special schools. Suldo, Freidrich, and Michalowski (2010) stated that barriers to effective support included problems with using the school site for delivery, insufficient support from departmental and district administration, and insufficient training.

In summary, the roles and responsibilities of school psychologists in the USA are diverse and range from individual to systems levels. School psychologists effectively work with all learners regardless of disabilities and several legislatures promote their work in an inclusive environment. Although there is a perception of a high school psychologist to learner ratios, the ratio appears to be one of the best in the world.

School psychologists use psycho-educational assessments in order identify and plan for learners with severe levels of special educational needs and their role is to address both the least restrictive environment mandate and the provision of evidence-based practices. Such a view of addressing the least restrictive environment entails that some learners can benefit from the use of intensive services which cannot be found in general education classrooms. Therefore, full inclusion is not practised.
In terms of the training of school psychologists, undergraduate degrees in education and psychology and teaching qualifications are not required. This might mean that they may have a weak grounding in psychological principles applied to education.

3.7 UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND)

In 2015 there were 1,089 qualified educational psychologists and 156 second and third year trainees in 75 (out of 115) local authorities (National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists, 2015). Educational psychologists and trainees are funded by local authorities’ core council budgets and income generating streams (Truong & Ellam, 2014). Most educational psychologists work for local education authorities (LEAs); the ratio of educational psychologists to learners was approximately 1:2,757 in 2004 (Squires & Farrell, 2007). Such a ratio is lovely when compared to the world but it far exceeds the 1:500-700 recommended by the NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (NASP, 2013) in the US and that of the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (Wall, cited in Mpofu et al., 2007), thus leaving many learners with limited services of psychologists and also preclude involvement of psychologists from wider roles.

There were 1,228,785 learners with special educational needs in 2016 while those with a statement were 236,805 (Department for Education, 2016). A statement refers to the formal assessment of a learner and the documents set out the needs of the learner and the extra help he or she should receive (Department for Education, 2016).
To be trained as an educational psychologist requires a foundation degree in psychology and a master’s degree in educational psychology both recognised by the British Psychological Society (BPS), a teaching qualification, and two years’ experience of teaching learners aged below 19 years (Squires & Farrell, 2007). This means that psychologists have a good grounding in teaching and a foundation degree in psychology making them equipped in core courses of psychology such as research methods and statistics, individual differences, and introduction to psychology - among others. The training which takes a minimum of eight years involves university based training and supervised experience with an educational psychologist working in a local authority. Some psychologists may choose to do a doctorate in educational psychology which takes four years. The training is rather long and may deter people interested in the profession.

Farrell (2007) indicated that educational psychologists’ responsibilities focus on (a) assessment and intervention of learners between the ages of 2 and 19. They utilise a problem-solving framework when approaching assessments which starts with clarifying the problem with teachers, parents and learners. Approaches such as classroom observations, rating scales and self-report questionnaires, dynamic assessment or use of tests, will then follow. The option of using tests depends on psychologists; (b) working directly with learners, parents, teachers and other professionals. This involves joint problem-solving, developing intervention programmes, assessing cognitive abilities or attainments, counselling with individuals or small groups and classroom or playground observations. They assist school personnel such as teachers and teaching assistants; (c) working at school level by assisting schools to develop or review the
effectiveness of school policies (e.g., those that address behaviour, special education needs, inclusion, risk assessment for learners with challenging behaviour, equal opportunities), help schools implement legislative changes and assist teachers to engage in action research; (d) helping local education authorities meet requirements of central government initiatives to promote social and educational equality. They help local education authorities initiate action research, surveys or evaluation of new initiatives or interventions. Such diverse roles might appear to make psychologists effective in their inclusive education practices.

Research by Evans, Grahamslaw, Henson, and Prince (2012) indicate that the practice of educational psychology when rank ordered from greatest to least - involved consultations, standard assessment, non-standard assessment, therapeutic interventions, presentation and interpersonal skills training, problem-solving, learner intervention, research skills, group work, systemic approaches, staff support and parent support. A study by Atkinson, Bragg, Squires, Muscutt, and Wasilewski as cited in Atkinson, Squires, Bragg, Wasilewski, & Muscutt (2013) found that psychologists who used therapeutic approaches in their practice used 82.9% of these in direct work with individual learners. However, educational psychologists face difficulties in therapeutic delivery due to competing demands for their time (Yeo & Choi, 2011). This is compounded by schools not being aware of the full breadth of services educational psychologists offer (Atkinson, Corban & Templeton, 2011). Such challenges might be attributed to the relatively high educational psychologist to learner ratios.
The responsibilities of educational psychologists such as early intervention, collaboration, therapeutic practices and review of school policies put the child at the centre and prevent barriers to learning. This way, their duties are in line with inclusive education practices. Assessments of learners in collaboration with parents/guardians and general education teachers determine the best educational placement of learners with disabilities. Such a situation means that a learner may be placed in a special school, resource unit or mainstream class depending on individual needs of learners. Therefore, not all learners learn in mainstream classes. This placement paradigm may be viewed as counterproductive to the inclusive education project as placement strongly resonates with the older special education system.

3.8 AUSTRALIA

In 2003, it was estimated that 1 in every 12 Australian learners below the age of 15 had a disability. This translates to a total of about 350,000 learners; 89% of these attend mainstream schools (Walsh, 2012). Such a situation can be equated to the least restrictive environment in the USA thus implying that full inclusion is not practised but an effort is made to include learners where possible.

School psychologists are employed either in multidisciplinary schools and student support centres servicing district schools or working individually or in small teams in a host school and providing services to a cluster of schools (Faulkner, 2007). There are about 2,000 school psychologists resulting in a ratio of 1:2,000 learners (Faulkner, 2007). Such a ratio is good when compared to other countries. However, this ratio still suggests inadequate service
provision due to few psychologists. In several states, schools contract private psychologists to undertake particular forms of educational psychological work (Faulkner, 2007).

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) is the professional association of psychologists that has a significant registration of school psychologists (APS, cited in Gonsalvez & Milne, 2010). To become a fully registered psychologist, the society requires a minimum of a four-year undergraduate degree in psychology and two years supervision as an intern psychologist while some state/territory education departments require an additional teaching qualification (APS, 2016). Those with masters or doctoral studies in psychology or counselling following their initial degree can register as psychologists (APS, 2016). Such preparation entails that psychologists have a good grounding in school psychological services. The designations of psychologists vary by states. For example, in Western Australia they are called school psychologists, school counsellors in New South Wales, educational psychologists in the Northern Territory and guidance officers elsewhere (Faulkner, 2007). Guidance officers and school counsellors refer to individuals from other disciplines (APS, 2016). These designations vary because individual states and territories in Australia are responsible for their educational system and consequently each jurisdiction has its own Education Act and establishes its own agenda regarding the education of learners with special needs (Forlin, 2006). However, new models of accreditation and training for Australian psychologists working in school settings are being considered (Bowles et al., 2016).
Australian psychologists provide direct, indirect and whole school services to the school population. School and educational psychologists support learners to achieve academic success, psychological health and social, and emotional wellbeing (APS, 2016). This is done by engaging in psycho-educational assessment and report writing, intervention, consultation, individual and group counselling, and management of critical incidents in schools (Fagan & Wise, 2007; Faulkner, 2007). Such task diversity is related to job satisfaction (Curtis et al., 2002) but psychologists are discouraged from offering services they are not prepared for (Oakland & Jimerson, 2007).

Guidance officers in Queensland spend 20% of their time to consult with teachers, principals, parents and allied professionals, 13% to administration and travel and 3% to research and reading (Rice & Bramston, 1999). In comparison, Fagan and Wise (1994) state that about 54% of US educational and school psychologists’ time is spent on assessments, 24% on implementing interventions while 20% of their time is spent on professional development and consultations with parents, teachers and other professionals and 2% is spent on research and programme evaluation. Such differences have an impact on service delivery between jurisdictions. Psychologists in Australia are involved in mental health services such as consultation with school staff and problem-solving teams, social-emotional-behavioural assessments and counselling (Spett, Fowler, Weist, McDaniel, & Dvorsky, 2013). However, assessment demands limit the development of systemic and preventative practices (Bell & McKenzie, 2013).
There is no overarching definition under which inclusive education operates in Australia but the term focuses on high-quality education to all learners (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). This results in some confusion among teachers and administrators. This could be viewed as a barrier to implementing successful inclusive education.

The eight Australian educational jurisdictions manage and enact inclusion regulations in different ways leading to inconsistent levels of access and educational outcomes for learners (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). These inconsistencies are due to each jurisdiction having its own system of identifying learners in need of additional support. Resulting in unequal allocation of resources. Secondly, each jurisdiction provides full inclusion or a completely segregated model of education for learners with additional needs. A national approach to inclusive education with similar designations of educational and school psychologists in all states might be necessary for effective schooling of all learners in the country.

3.9 CHINA

1 560 special schools in China served about 372 000 learners while regular schools served 242 790 learners with special needs in 2004 (Zhou, 2007). This implies the practice of both inclusion and segregation. The high population density in China contributes to most learners with disabilities not being identified. Special schools serve learners with mental, visual, and hearing impairments implying that learners with physical disabilities are excluded from schooling. In 2002, the Ministry of Education introduced mental education centres for learners in primary and secondary education in order to assist learners with learning disabilities, anxiety and
interpersonal relationship problems so that they can reach their potential (Wang, Ni, Ding, & Yi, 2015).

There is no independent certification system for school psychologists in China. However in 2012, the Ministry of Education required each school to hire at least one full-time or part-time school psychological provider (SP) to provide mental health education (Wang et al., 2015). In order to meet this demand, some teachers obtained mental health certificates issued by the Ministry of Education in order to become school psychological providers (He & Huang, 2005). Another route was obtaining the mental health counsellor certificate issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (Li, 2011). Neither practicum hours nor supervision nor a bachelor’s degree in psychology is required to take the mental health counsellor certification examination at the entry level (Wang et al., 2015). This indicates that the training of and requirements for ‘school psychologists’ in China are not systematic. Negative consequences that result are related to the low training standards and lack of supervision for these mental health providers. Some of these consequences include consumers’ lack of trust and counsellors’ low efficacy in solving difficult problems (Gao, Jackson, Chen, Liu, Wang, Qian, & Huang, 2010). It is evident that universities need to develop accredited professional training programmes with ongoing on-the-job training and continuing education (Gao et al., 2010).

The school psychological provider to learner ratio is 1:1 360 (Wang et al., 2015). Such a ratio is too high for these semi-professionals who lack grounding in psychology and professional supervision and training.
Zhou (2007) states that the roles and responsibilities of psychological providers/mental health education teachers are to investigate mental health problems displayed by learners. These investigations are done through testing, interviewing and observation and by exploring environmental features that may influence learners’ behaviour and attitudes, provide suggestions to teachers, head-teachers, principals and departments of education regarding how to deal with those mental health problems at school. Class activities should be designed to help learners acquire greater self-awareness and self-development, individual and group counselling. Other interventions should be provided for learners who display mental health problems. A school crisis response team should be established and collaboration with parents and teachers facilitated.

If compared to countries in the West, school psychology in China can be described as being in its infancy (Tangdhanakanond & Lee, 2014). There are no well-qualified school psychologists to provide comprehensive and preventative interventions. However, it is important to note that Hong Kong is the only city in China that has an established profession in school psychology (Jimerson, Graydon, Yuen, Lam, Thurm, Kleuva, & ISPA research committee, 2006).

Social inclusion in the school system in China takes the form of placing learners with learning or behavioural problems in mainstream classes - with minimal quality education for all learners. Little provision is made for continuing development and ethical considerations. Mental health counsellors/psychological providers are not in a good position to provide psychological services. Parental involvement and collaboration with teachers seem to be minimal and the
negative effect is that schools engage in inclusive education practices without proper consultation. The rights-based perspective underpinning inclusive education does not attract adequate attention. Psychological providers use evaluation practices that are not comprehensive, psychometrically sound assessments and direct and indirect observations, resulting in inaccurate diagnoses, interventions and recommendations.

3.10 PAKISTAN

There are 5 035 million people living with disabilities in Pakistan of which 55.9% live in Punjab province - which has 264 special needs schools (Awais & Ameen, 2015). This might mean that there is more segregation than inclusion. Most of these learners either have a physical disability or hearing impairment or both (Ahmed, Khan, & Nasem, 2011).

Pakistan has no universities that provide academic and professional programmes to prepare school psychologists. However, there is no postgraduate continuing education programmes in school or counselling psychology. There seems to be little or no demand for school psychological services (Qamar, 2007). Punjab University provides a master’s degree in counselling and guidance - and school counsellors thus take the roles of school psychologists. There is one professional association for psychologists, the Pakistan Psychological Association, which conducts workshops on issues important to clinical and social psychology. Qamar (2007) further states that psychologists are not licensed thus the profession is unregulated.

There is no official definition of inclusive education in Pakistan but anecdotal evidence suggests that it refers to the physical placement of a learner with disability in a regular classroom
(Sharma, Shaukat, & Furlonger, 2015). This implies that individual needs of learners may not be met. Such a definition seems to be quite narrow in its approach.

Qamar (2007) further states that the role of school counsellors in Pakistan involves assessments for career guidance, collaboration with parents, teachers and learners. This is to facilitate learners’ abilities, remedial measures for learners with learning problems, and facilitating collaborative learning to enhance learners’ social skills and in-service training of teachers. Such roles when compared to the USA and UK appear to be very narrow.

There is no government department responsible for disabilities (Iqbal, Jabeen, & Maan, 2014). This has seen 96% of learners with disabilities not attending school (Manzoor, Hameed, & Nabeel, 2016). Barriers include lack of skilled personnel, rigid curricula and assessment systems, among others. Findings by the latter authors indicate that ordinary schools are not accessible to learners while special schools are far from learners’ homes (approximately 12km on average). The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities as cited in Ahmed et al. (2011) which promotes integration, ironically has seen government expanding post graduate training in special education and training to medical personnel who assist with diagnosis and implementation of therapies (Singal, 2015). The focus is medical in nature and the promotion of special schools is not fully in line with inclusive education practices. Lack of academic and professional programmes to prepare school and educational psychologists, an unregulated profession, and lack of mental health care have seen a significant number of learners not attending school.
3.11 DISCUSSION

Educational and school psychologists have an important part to play in promoting inclusion through their work with learners, parents, teachers and a range of other professionals. Bowles et al. (2016) state that assessment, intervention, consultation and counselling are major functions of educational and school psychologists. Psycho-educational assessments consume 40% to 75% of educational and school psychologists work time, though they prefer doing preventative activities, counselling and research (Harris & Joy, 2010). The preference for psycho-educational assessments can be attributed to the high school psychologist to learner ratios across countries. In the USA the shortages of school psychologists might be partly explained by graduate students learning about school psychology through informal encounters like internet searches rather than through structured or formal learning experiences. In Britain, the training which takes a minimum of eight years might deter people from pursuing the profession.

Educational and school psychologists are leaders in consultancy and are change agents (Evans et al., 2012) as reflected in recommendations and interventions designed for specific learners (Dunsmuir & Kratochwill, 2013). In the USA, Britain and Australia the roles and functions of school psychologists are diverse and such services occur at the level of individuals (parents, educators and learners) and systems (family, schools, classrooms, school systems and community organisations). The professional associations in these country areas provide diverse services. However, in China there are no national associations working on behalf of school psychology. This suggests that ‘school psychologists’ are not registered and the profession is
unregulated. School psychological services are therefore provided by inadequately trained ‘school psychologists’ who have little professional development and research background.

Oakland and Jimerson (2007) comment that professional associations are needed to assume leadership for developing high standards and ensure they are upheld. Such services provide the parameters of school psychological services in terms of scope of services and their functions. Unlike China and Pakistan, these associations are found in the USA, Britain and Australia.

Higher levels of psychologist preparation in USA, Britain and Australia have been found to be associated with activities related to intervention and prevention. China, except for the city of Hong Kong, and Pakistan have school psychological providers and school counsellors but their training seems inadequate. Such a scenario results in learners not receiving adequate quality services. Therefore, the weak support from educational psychologists brings about a watered-down inclusion.

Oakland and Jimerson (2007) indicate that a country’s gross national product (GNP) influences preparation in school psychology. Countries with higher GNP such as the USA, Britain and Australia offer masters and doctoral degrees in psychology. However, China as a developing economic giant provides teachers without requisite qualifications to be school psychologists. Pakistan has no universities that provide academic and professional programmes to prepare school psychologists but provides a master’s degree in counselling and guidance. However, China is an exception. A better service is provided only in the city of Hong Kong.
Furthermore, school psychological services are pronounced in countries that have the education for all disciplines. The discipline and profession of psychology is developed and well regulated in advanced economies such as the USA, Britain and Australia.

The duties of school psychologists in the USA, Britain and Australia which focus on early intervention, collaboration, therapeutic practices and review of school policies, put the child at the centre. This way, their duties are mostly in line with inclusive education practices. These countries have inclusive education policies that direct the work of school psychologists. In contrast, there is no official definition of inclusive education in China and Pakistan making the implementation of inclusive education practices difficult. Full inclusion is barely achieved in these mentioned Asian countries thus there are disagreements surrounding the meaning, extent and nature of inclusive education (Johansson, 2014).

3.12 CONCLUSION

There is a strong positive relationship that can be identified in the United States, Britain and Australia between inclusive education and educational psychological services. The provision of a wide range of services to learners, teachers and communities accompanied by higher levels of school psychological training is positively associated with better intervention and prevention programmes.

Professional associations provide codes of ethics, define the specialty of school psychology, and provide the model of preparation of school psychologists. Such professional
associations are found in the USA, Britain and Australia. China which does not have these associations has a critical profession that is not registered and regulated.

The diverse services provided at individual and systems levels entail that more learners with disabilities are provided with appropriate services thereby removing barriers to participation in education. The strength of this relationship is seen in the high number of school psychologists in USA, Britain and Australia areas where the discipline of psychology is accepted and developed.

In sharp contrast, there is a no association between inclusive education and educational psychological services in China and Pakistan where the profession is unregulated. In these countries, there are no national policies that guide the work of school psychologists. The appointment of teachers with little grounding in psychology as ‘school psychologists,’ and little or no evidence-based practices results in increased rates of exclusion and segregation. These practices turn out to be barriers to inclusive education. The lack of association between inclusive education and school psychological services is reflected in the small number of ‘school psychologists. This result in most learners being marginalised. Such a weak support from educational psychologists brings about a watered-down inclusion. The form of inclusion practised might be equated to inclusion by default with an orientation towards the medical model.
ETHICAL APPROVAL: This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

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CHAPTER 4

ARTICLE II

Southern African perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services

Submitted to and under review: *Contemporary School Psychology*

ABSTRACT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

4.3 METHODOLOGY

4.4 SEGREGATION, INTEGRATION, AND INCLUSION

4.5 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

4.6 SOUTH AFRICA

4.7 ZIMBABWE

4.8 MALAWI

4.9 ZAMBIA

4.10 LESOTHO
This article provides a critical overview of the roles of educational psychologists within inclusive education in Southern Africa. The country areas selected are South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Zambia, and Malawi thus representing about a third of Southern African countries. The countries were selected on the basis of their diverse economic and political situations. For these country areas, an EBSCOhost advanced search was used because of its multiple data-bases which include ERIC and PsycINFO related to education and psychology. Google and Google Scholar were utilised for countries from which it was difficult to find research using EBSCOhost. From these searches, it became clear that the acute shortages of educational psychologists in Zambia and their non-availability in Lesotho cloud quality service delivery to learners and families challenged by disabilities. The absence of national psychological associations that take an active interest in educational psychology in countries like Malawi and Zambia results in persons with various backgrounds claiming to be educational psychologists. Educational psychology is found in South Africa and Zimbabwe where the discipline appears to be grounded. The profession provides a wide range of services including those for individuals, groups and systems which are related to inclusive education practices. In Lesotho, where the discipline and profession of psychology is nearly non-existent, there seems to be unsystematic and biased assessment of learners by teachers resulting in inappropriate placements. Therefore, most learners in schools do
not have direct and regular access to psychological services. Educational psychological services are seemingly found in countries that take active interest in inclusive education practices. There seems to be an association between inclusive education and educational psychological support services in South Africa and Zimbabwe while in Zambia, Malawi and Lesotho little is seen of such a relationship.

Key words: educational psychology; Inclusion; disability; assessment; support services

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This paper examines Southern Africa perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services. Southern Africa refers to countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol. These countries are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Inclusive education ensures that all learners are welcomed, valued, and learn together in regular education classrooms, regardless of their particular learning characteristics (McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Cizman, & Lupart, 2013). Learners with disabilities learn alongside their same age peers in their neighbourhood school with the provision of necessary support to ensure success. However, these views are often based on empirical studies in developed countries that do not adequately take the realities of developing countries into account (Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016). To better comprehend this, a brief history on the development of psychology in non-western countries will be clarified.
Azuma, as quoted by Mpfou (2002) views the development of psychology in non-western countries as following stages from pioneering, translation and modelling, indigenisation to integration. The pioneering stage occurs when the relevance of western psychology is recognised to the societies and western university/college level textbooks are introduced into their education systems. In the translation and modelling stage, there is application of western psychological concepts and technologies with little adaptation. The indigenisation stage is where new concepts and technologies appropriate to the local culture are developed. The integration stage, which represents the highest level, is reached when psychology is freed from an exclusively western influence and develops orientations consistent with local cultural characteristics. In Zimbabwe, for example, the country adopts foreign psychological tests without adapting them to their cultures, thereby representing the pioneering stage. South Africa has adapted some tests, but the cultural diversity entails that not all cultures can benefit from such tests. This might represent the indigenisation stage.

In Southern Africa, the integration stage is difficult to reach because the countries are limited by resources and colonial legacies that perpetuate inequities (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016).

4.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The preceding discussion indicates the challenges faced in Southern Africa when implementing inclusive education practices. This article, therefore, provides a critical overview of the roles of educational psychologists within inclusive education in Southern Africa. The role
of educational psychologists differs across countries. In some countries, the profession is recognised whilst in others it does not exist (Boyle, 2014). The major question to be addressed focuses on whether the role of educational psychologists mitigates against the challenges faced in implementing inclusive practices in education.

4.3 METHODOLOGY

The strategy adopted is one of providing an in-depth literature review on Southern African regarding the relationship between inclusion and educational psychological support services. The situation in six of the SADC countries, namely South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Zambia, and Malawi will be discussed, and represents 33% of SADC member states. The country areas were selected based on the diversity of their economic and political situations. An EBSCOhost advanced search was used because of its multiple data-bases which include ERIC and PsycINFO related to education and psychology. Google and Google Scholar were utilised for detecting research in respect of countries where research was difficult to obtain using EBSCOhost.

The next section tries to clarify and differentiate the terms segregation, integration and inclusion. This is because these terms are invariably used yet they have important implications for educational psychological support services in Southern Africa.

4.4 SEGREGATION, INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

With segregation, learners with disabilities are provided with full-time special education in a special school, special class or resource unit because they cannot cope with general
education (Hotulainen & Takala, 2014; Kamga, 2016). These classes are segregated from the mainstream school programme. Such learners are presumed to need the services of special education teachers with requisite knowledge and skills to provide targeted instruction geared to individual learners (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2011). The implication is that educational psychologists might recommend placement for segregation depending on the severity of the disability.

On the other hand, regardless inclusive education envisions accommodating the needs of all learners equally in the same classroom (Murungi, 2015) regardless of ability or disability (Meynert, 2014). This means that all children are capable of learning hence the school system needs to adapt to the needs of all learners. Most countries in the world have focused on promoting inclusive programmes and eliminating exclusionary and discriminatory practices (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). Learners experiencing barriers are taught in mainstream classrooms and provided with appropriate education which, however, is challenging (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). Educational psychologists inter alia train teachers on how to teach diverse children and how to alter negative attitudes.

“Integration is a process established as a response to a segregated school system” (Hausstatter & Jahnukainen, 2014, p. 121). The model assumes that the learner has a deficit which needs ‘rehabilitation’ in order for him/her to fit in the classroom. In other words, the learner needs to adapt in the classroom. Integration is where a learner facing barriers to learning is partially educated in the general education programme to the maximum extent possible (Idol, as quoted in Dixon, 2005). This is done without modifying and adapting the curricula to suit their
special needs (Jonas, 2014). Unlike inclusive education, integration focuses on learners with disabilities who are presumed to be different from others.

4.5 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusion of learners with disabilities in general education classrooms has resulted in an increasing number of such learners receiving special education services in these classrooms (Weiss & Lloyd, as quoted in Mohangi & Berger, 2015). Consequently, general and special education teachers face challenges associated with provision of services and teaching learners with disabilities within general education settings (Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). To successfully implement inclusive education services, other professionals such as educational psychologists are required to work collaboratively with teachers, parents/guardians, communities and school administrators.

The roles of educational psychologists vary between countries. However, in general, such personnel have a good grounding in psychology and education. Therefore, they are still knowledgeable about learners’ learning and social change. They provide skills in assessment protocols and remedial interventions that are used to prevent, reverse or lessen the severity of problems learners present (Pillay, 2014). Some examples of educational psychologists’ practices that promote inclusion include the following: assisting mainstream schools to support learners with learning, behaviour, mental and emotional problems; assisting schools to develop policies on inclusion; working with government agencies to develop country wide inclusive strategies
and making schools safe and friendly from maltreatment, neglect, violence, sexual exploitation, bullying and intimidation (Farrell, 2006; Mohangi & Berger, 2015). Jimerson, Oakland, and Farrell (2007) also indicate that the specialty conducts research and helps prepare and supervise other stakeholders.

Educational psychologists need to focus on using consultation-based approaches when working at the systemic level. However, they are reluctant to embrace consultation because they find it difficult to claim that the activity is distinctive to the profession, that is, one that could not be carried out by another professional (Farrell, 2009). Farrell (2009) intimates that what makes them distinctive is their background in academic and applied psychology.

As stated earlier, the status of educational psychologists vary in different countries. This is reflected in the numbers employed and the training and conditions of service per country (Farrell, 2009). The concerns about the evolving nature of educational psychologists’ roles such as how their work overlaps with other professional groups such as teachers, clinical psychologists and their relationships with employers reflect uncertainty about the long-term future of the profession (Farrell, 2009). Such challenges need to be addressed by preparing high quality and appropriately trained professionals and ensuring that employers, teachers and other professionals continue to value their work (Farrell, 2009).

Educational psychologists must be certified and/or licensed by professional associations in their respective countries. Such associations provide written guidance for its members on ways to foster inclusion (Farrell, 2006). For example, it needs to ensure that learners are ready for
school, attend and participate meaningfully in school, achieve their potential, and are able to engage in decision-making and support their communities and environments, as well as achieve economic wellbeing once they leave school (Mohangi & Berger, 2015).

Educational psychologists support inclusion by eliminating certain causes of barriers and provide support to the learner over and above that provided by the school (Mohangi & Berger, 2015). Barriers to learning refer to educational difficulties experienced by some learners (Walton et al., 2009). These difficulties may be extrinsic and/or intrinsic to the learner (Nel et al., 2014). Intrinsic barriers are located within the learner. These may include physical, sensory, chronic illness, neurological, and developmental impairments while extrinsic barriers are those factors found outside the learner. Examples could be a lack of parental involvement in education and family problems like divorce, death, violence, poverty, inaccessible and unsafe built environment, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services to schools and lack of enabling and protective legislation (Beyers & Hay 2007). Extrinsic barriers such as death and poverty, however, are difficult to eliminate.

A critical analysis regarding the following countries mentioned below will provide insight into the association between inclusive education and educational support services.

4.6 SOUTH AFRICA

“In 2005 there were 1 178 psychologists registered with the Professional Board for Psychology as educational psychologists” (Wood, as quoted in Daniels et al., 2007, p. 367). These serviced more than 10 503 223 learners (Pillay, 2014) thus translating to 1 educational
psychologist for 8 916 learners. Psychologists work for the state, in private practice, higher education, the corporate sector, non-governmental organisations and community-based structures (Moola & Lazarus, 2014). A study by Hay (2016) in the Free State and the North-West provinces found that there are six psychologists in five districts servicing 650 000 learners. One district had no psychologists while two districts had one psychologist each. The psychologist to learner ratio in the district was 1: 108 333. The author further found that there were four psychologists in two districts of the North-West servicing 773 000 learners thereby giving a ratio of one psychologist to 193 250 learners. These high ratios imply that most educational psychologists only do direct work such as assessments for placement in, for example, special schools. This approach is reactive, problem oriented and deficit based rather than consultative or preventative. Such ratios are not commensurate with the guidelines of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2010). The guidelines recommend a ratio of less than 1 000 learners per school psychologist, in general, and no more than 500 to 700 learners per school psychologist when more comprehensive services are provided. The ratios in South Africa suggests that most learners may not be accessing school psychological services.

Psychologists in South Africa are trained as educational, clinical or counselling psychologists and need to hold a master’s degree to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) (Daniels et al., 2007; Moola & Lazarus, 2014). Daniels et al. (2007) posit that for one to pursue a master’s degree in educational psychology, the person needs to have an honours degree in psychology or educational psychology and a professional teacher’s qualification. A master’s degree constitutes one year of course-work followed by a year of
supervised internship and a dissertation. Some universities offer specialised master’s programmes in educational psychology which have equal weighting in terms of a thesis and coursework. The preparation of educational psychologists is labour-intensive resulting in shortages of resources to prepare adequate professionals to service schools (Daniels et al., 2007).

The HPCSA determines the standards of professional education and training and; promulgate and maintain standards of ethical and professional practice (Daniels et al., 2007). The Professional Board for Psychology, within the Health Professions Council, evaluates all professional training of psychologists. The Department of Education uses the term school psychologist to refer to those who provide psychological services to schools and are not necessarily in possession of a master’s degree (Moola & Lazarus, 2014). Some of these individuals in the Department of Basic Education in South Africa hold a minimum qualification of four-year Honours degree which allows them to register as a counsellor or psychometrist (Daniels et al., 2007). The term educational psychologist refers to those who hold a master’s degree and are registered with the HPCSA (Moola, 2011)

The Health Professions Act of South Africa as cited in Eloff (2015) defines the scope of practice of educational psychologists as: (a) assessing, diagnosing, and intervening in order to optimise human functioning in learning and development; assessing cognitive, personality, emotional and neuropsychological functions of people in relation to the learning and development in which they have been trained; (b) identifying and diagnosing psychopathology in relation to the learning and development; identifying and diagnosing barriers to learning and development; applying psychological interventions to enhance, promote and facilitate optimal
learning and development; performing therapeutic interventions in relation to learning and development; referring clients to appropriate professionals for further assessment or intervention; (c) designing, managing, conducting, reporting on, and supervising psychological research in learning and development; conducting psychological practice, and research in accordance with the Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practitioners registered under the Health Professions Act of 1974; adhering to the scope of practice of educational psychologists; (d) advising on the development of policies, based on various aspects of psychological theory, and research; designing, managing, and evaluating educationally-based programmes; (e) training and supervising other registered psychological practitioners in educational psychology; and (f) providing expert evidence and/or opinions. Such a helping profession provides psychological and educational interventions that support learners, teachers, parents, school principals and families from individual support to systemic interventions (Eloff, 2015; Moola & Lazarus, 2014). Such contributions by these professionals can be challenged by limited resources, inadequate training and lack of acknowledgement (Moola & Lazarus, 2014). This results in the provision of psychological services that prioritise assessment of and intervention on individual learners.

When looking at inclusive education in South Africa, the Education White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001) emphasises the importance of inclusive education and addressing barriers to learning and development in an endeavour to transform education in South Africa (Moola, 2011). The policy describes education support as the support for all learners within a systemic and development approach. Daniels et al. (2007) indicate that the education support services (ESS) in South Africa
have District-based Support Teams (DBSTs) and Schools Based Support Teams (SBSTs). The DBSTs are found in districts which comprise of specialised support service staff such as psychologists, social workers, learning support advisers, therapists and other staff employed by the Department of Education. The primary function of DBSTs is to support teaching, learning and management by building the capacity of schools and other learning institutions to recognise and address learning difficulties and accommodate a range of learning difficulties (Department of Education, 2005). The School Based Support Teams (located in schools) comprise of volunteer educators whose primary function is to put in place properly coordinated support services within the school. They identify and address barriers and facilitate learner, educator and school development (Department of Education, 2001). The SBSTs receive support from the DBSTs, other governmental departments, and those in the community who have appropriate skills. The roles of educational psychologists, in such a context, were expected to shift from being reactive, problem-oriented and deficit-based to being preventative, developmental, providing assistance to support and develop capacity to address barriers to learning in schools (Moola, 2011).

In a study by Makhalemele and Nel (2016) on the challenges faced by DBSTs, they found that DBSTs had inadequate transport to visit schools, insufficient human resources, lack adequate training, and school communities were unaware of their roles in supporting learners and schools. Also, Hay (2012) indicated that many disciplines in ESS have paramedical staff who do not have exposure to the educational environment prior to taking up a position within ESS.
Educational psychologists use standardised tests which are developed locally (Daniels et al., 2007). Achievement tests assess reading, spelling and mathematical abilities. Curriculum-based assessments focus on learners’ portfolios of work. The Junior and Senior South African Individual scales may be used to assess learners’ intellectual abilities. The Draw–a- Person Test, Kinetic Family Drawings, Thematic Apperception Test, Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire and the High School Personality Questionnaire are used to assess personality and temperament. The Connors Rating Scales are used to assess behaviour and social skills. Such locally developed tests are culturally appropriate to the needs of learners.

However, South African schools lack the capacity for early identification of learners who experience barriers to learning, proper assessment of learner’s strengths and weaknesses and limited collaboration and cooperation between micro-systems for example at school level (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). There is limited empirical knowledge on the supportive role of the educational psychology field within inclusive settings particularly in areas regarding the effects of collaboration with schools, allied healthcare practitioners and parents (Mohangi & Archer, 2015). This may partially be attributed to the shortages of educational psychologists.

Since 2001, eight schools of the Independent Schools Association in South Africa (ISASA) have been able to adequately meet the support needs of diverse learners (Walton, 2011), a step in the right direction. However, the non-implementation of inclusive policies has been attributed to lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, inadequately trained and negative teacher attitudes (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Hay, 2003). Studies by Hay (2003) and Swart et al. (2002) indicate the need for continuous professional development of South African teachers. Nel
et al. (2014) found that educators believed that they are not adequately trained and skilled to play an equal role in a collaborative partnership implying that shortages of educational psychologists clouds teachers’ perceptions of their work. Donald (1991) and Pillay (2003) recommended that training programmes of educational psychologists need to take into cognisance preventative, consultative and community-based approaches.

In summary, South African educational psychologists are required by law to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa, provide psychological and educational interventions. These interventions include supporting learners, teachers, parents, school principals and families. These interventions could range from individual support to being systemic. Orientations are consistent with local cultural characteristics because of locally developed tests.

The Education White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System emphasises the importance of inclusive education and addressing barriers to learning. Such a policy guides the role of educational psychologists within inclusive education. The preparation of educational psychologists appears to make them well equipped in supporting inclusive education. However, studies have found that educators believed that they are not adequately trained and skilled to play an equal role in a collaborative partnership. This could imply that shortages of educational psychologists may cloud teachers’ perceptions of their work. Also, lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms and negative teacher attitudes have a negative effect on the profession’s inclusive education practices.
In conclusion, there seems to be a reasonably strong relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support in South Africa as there are policies that guide the work of educational psychologists. However, certain factors do limit this relationship: the ratios against which the educational psychologists work in the Provincial Departments of Education are too high, team members of DBSTs that are still operating within the medical model, ambiguity in the inclusive education system. Many teachers and parents that are not convinced of inclusive education still prefer special school placement.

4.7 ZIMBABWE

In 2018, the number of educational psychologists in Zimbabwe was 50 servicing about 3,339,000 primary school learners (Nkoma, 2018). This translates to a ratio of 1(one) educational psychologist to 65,471 learners. Against such a high ratio, it is clear that Zimbabwe needs more educational psychologists to do traditional psycho-educational evaluations. This ratio far exceeds that of 1 to 700 recommended by the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation (Wall, as cited by Mpofu et al., 2007). Most learners at primary school level end up not receiving the services of educational psychologists. These services end up being provided by other professionals.

The Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ) maintains the register of educational psychologists and regulates their practice. The Zimbabwe Psychological Association (ZPA) has regional chapters and provides a professional identity as well as education and training for all psychology specialties (Mpofu et al., 2007). Educational psychology is regulated
by statutory instruments enforceable through the country’s courts of law. The Zimbabwe Psychological Practices Act (Chapter 225) of 1971 restricts both the professional education for and the practice of educational psychology to persons of a certain level of psychological education and experience (Mpofu et al., 1997). Educational psychologists hold either an undergraduate or post-graduate degree. A Master’s degree in Educational Psychology for teachers is not required though a teaching qualification is a desirable quality (Mpofu et al., 2007: Nkoma 2018). Before 2015 there were two programmes that prepared educational psychologists: a three-year internship programme under the Department of SPS and SNE in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for those with a Bachelor of Science Honours in Psychology and secondly those with a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology (Mpofu et al., 2007). Such programmes were meant to increase the number of locally trained educational psychologists. However, the Allied Health Professions Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ) 2016 regulations require a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology and one-year internship for registration (Nkoma, 2018). The University of Zimbabwe was the only institution offering the programme and used to enrol 10 students biannually depending on the availability of lecturers with requisite qualifications (Mpofu et al., 2007). Presently, there is no university in Zimbabwe offering a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology (Nkoma, 2018). The stringent AHPCZ requirements coupled with lack of masters’ programmes at universities resulted in a critical shortage of educational psychologists (Nkoma, 2018). The shortages are also compounded by the freezing of government posts and the prescribed number
of educational psychologist posts per province which have not changed since the early 1980s despite the increased enrolment of learners.

The internship programme for trainee educational psychologists includes child assessment, report writing, teacher, school, and parent consultation, special needs education programming, the administration of special needs programmes, child advocacy, legal aspects of school psychology practice, and fieldwork placements at institutions that serve learners with disabilities, mainstream school settings or psychiatric settings (Mpofu et al., 2007). Trainee and intern educational psychologists are required to produce an internship portfolio for evaluation by the AHPCZ. The portfolio should include evidence of continuing education, papers presented at professional seminars and workshops, assessment reports, child placement reports and research reports (Mpofu et al., 2007). Trainee/educational psychologists had negative attitudes towards professional seminars and workshops which are not decentralised and are costly to them (Nkoma, 2018). The following paragraph discusses inclusive education policies in Zimbabwe.

There is no specific legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe (Mpofu, 2004). However, there are several government policy issues which are consistent with the intent of inclusive education. The Zimbabwe Education Act of 1996 and other Ministry of Education Circulars require that all learners regardless of race, religion, gender, creed and disability have access to primary education. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education policy statements that direct the activities of educational psychologists in school and community settings include the following: The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute No. P.12 of 1987 provides guidelines on remedial programmes for learners with specific learning disabilities; the
Education Secretary’s Circular Minute No. P.36 of 1990 provides procedures for educational placement of learners with special needs; the Education Secretary’s Circular Minute No. P.5 of 2000 provides procedural guidelines for counselling abused learners and their families; the Education Secretary’s Circular No. P.3 of 2002 provides guidelines on inclusive education and education for community participation and makes provision for guidance and counselling for secondary school learners (Mpofu et al., 2007). Beyond the general implications for children’s schooling, the policy statements yield implications for educational psychologists. These implications are going to be addressed next.

Educational psychologists provide a number of services to learners which include consultation and advocacy, assessment, professional training, resource mobilisation and research (Mpofu et al., 2007). During consultancy and advocacy, educational psychologists work with parents, learners, educators, social workers, physicians and rehabilitation technicians. They also network with governmental and non-governmental organisations with interest in learners’ welfare (Kasayira, Chireshe, & Chipandamira, 2004). Such services provided by educational psychologists entail providing learners with support that meet their unique needs in an inclusive environment. However, for schools to utilise the services provided by educational psychologists they must be aware of the availability of psychologists and must value a service school psychology delivery model (Johnson & Zwiers 2016). However, Mpofu et al. (2007) indicate that parents or guardians in Zimbabwe often prefer to consult traditional healers rather than psychologists. This could be a result of educational psychologists’ orientations not being consistent with local cultural characteristics.
The roles and functions of educational psychologists in Zimbabwe are multifaceted, going beyond assessment. The following paragraph will focus on the tests used to assess learners for intervention in schools, “recognising that high-quality assessment data provide the foundation for other educational psychologist roles (e.g., intervention and advocacy)” (Kosher, Ben-Arieh, Jiang, & Huebner, 2014, p. 12).

Educational psychologists use task-oriented tests (curriculum-based assessments), observations and self-reports (Mpofu et al., 2007). Unlike in South Africa, they use imported achievement tests such as Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised, Word Graded Reading Test, Burt Word Reading Test, Schonell’s Reading and Spelling Tests, and Basic Arithmetical Skills. To determine learners’ learning potential, they use imported tests such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised, Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, British Ability Scales and the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children – Revised. These tests are used for learners from middle-class backgrounds and those with strong English language skills (Mpofu et al., 2007). The Vineland Social Maturity Scale is used to assess social skills (Mutepfa, 2005). There is, of course, a need to develop valid local tests rather than relying on imported tests. Imported tests could result in diminished credibility of test results (Mpofu et al., 2007).

Educational psychologists educate communities about the availability of special education programmes and assistive devices for learners with orthopaedic disabilities and sensory disabilities from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and non-governmental organisations (Mpofu et al., 2007; Nkoma, 2018). Educational psychologists carry out research
on how best to assist teachers, parents and schools regarding the effective delivery of special
needs education programmes (Mpofu et al., 2007). The following paragraph highlight the
challenges faced by educational psychologists in Zimbabwe.

A study conducted in Zimbabwe by Kent (2014) found that teachers and parents expected
more consultations, needed more research services on schools and yearned for more information
and advocacy services; and assessments in schools from educational psychologists. He also
found mixed views of satisfaction with the provision of educational psychological services by
parents and teachers. Educational psychologists face several challenges in the provision of
services such as underfunding by the central government, high job attrition (Mpofu et al., 2007)
and targeted sanctions from Western countries. The Department of SPS and SNE also has a
history of neglecting trainee educational psychologists in their professional development needs
(Kasayira, 2005; Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002). A result of this could be practitioners’
frustration, demotivation, and early job attrition. Educational psychologists, through their roles
of consultation and advocacy, are not providing proper in-service training to teachers in order to
handle diverse learners (Nkoma, 2018). Learners with significant disabilities end up being
turned away from schools because teachers feel untrained and ill-equipped to assist them
(Chinhenga, 2014; Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013).

Teachers are key players in an inclusive school community. Therefore, they need
collaborative partnerships when supporting learners who experience learning problems (Nel et
al., 2014). However, Zimbabwean educational psychologists often lack financial and human
resources to carry out such collaborative roles. In Zimbabwe there is more of integration than
inclusion. Inclusive education of integration is provided in the form of special classes and resource rooms or resource classes which are found within ordinary schools (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004) whereas educational psychologists provide direct services in the form of psycho-educational evaluations.

In summary, educational psychologists in Zimbabwe are in the translation and modelling stage (Azuma, as cited by Mpofu, 2002) as western psychological concepts are applied with little adaptation. This is clear in the AHPC requirements and use of western tests. The critical shortage of educational psychologists often result in the use of psycho-educational assessments of special educational needs learners. This is done to recommend segregated special educational placements. This is in essence anti-inclusive thus clouding their preventative and consultative roles. Such a thrust focus on exclusion rather than inclusion. However, some educational psychologists are recommending learners with mild disabilities to remain in mainstream classes albeit with support. Zimbabwean educational psychologists’ orientations seem to be inconsistent with local cultural characteristics due to the use of foreign developed tests, parents/guardians’ preferences of consulting traditional healers or parents or guardians being unaware of the availability of psychologists or just lacks a full appreciation of the profession.

The professional associations such as the ZPA and the AHPCZ indicate that the profession is recognised and protected when providing educational psychological support in schools and communities. Although there is more of integration than inclusion, some educational psychologists are embracing inclusive education by recommending learners with mild disabilities to be supported in mainstream classes. However, Zimbabwean educational psychologists lack
financial and human resources to carry out some of their roles. When taking these into
cognisance, the association between inclusive education and educational psychological support
in Zimbabwe might be viewed as moderate as there are some educational psychological services
and indirect policy statements that support inclusive education.

4.8 MALAWI

Educational psychologists in Malawi should have a master’s degree in psychology
(Mpofu et al., 1997). Educational psychology is a recognised profession in Malawi but there is
neither the designation of ‘educational psychologist/school psychologist’ nor is the practice of
educational psychology protected (Mpofu et al., 1997). This makes it difficult to know about
their preparation, roles and functions. Literature from Malawi indicate the role of special needs
teachers rather than educational psychologists in supporting learners with disabilities.

The Department of Basic Education has a director for special needs education assisted by
three principals while at primary and secondary levels there is a special needs education officer
responsible for special education services (Itimu & Kopetz, 2008). The training of these
specialist teachers is restricted to specific disabilities such as visual impairment, hearing
impairment and learning difficulties (Kamchedzera, cited by Mkandawire, Maphale, & Tseeke
2016). This implies that the sections of the mentioned department is headed by personnel with
training in special education instead of educational psychology. Such personnel may conceive
learning as an individualised rather than a social process entailing a broader range of skills
towards the prevention and intervention of individuals, groups, families and communities.
The education system in Malawi caters for learners with disabilities in three ways: firstly, through separate special schools; secondly through the provision of specialised support to Integrated Resource Centre Units in mainstream schools. Thirdly, through itinerant teachers who assist in some mainstream schools (SADPD, 2012). Such models appear to be focusing on exclusionary practices rather than inclusion. Therefore, it seems as if the traditional medical deficit model approach to special education still shapes and drives the development of inclusive educational systems in Malawi (Hummel, Engelbrecht & Werning, 2016).

Education in Malawi is currently in a state between the traditional medical deficit model approach to special needs education and an inclusive education approach (Hummel et al., 2016). Hummel and colleagues further state that the Malawian Government rarely uses the term ‘inclusive education’ in its education policy papers. There is not an explicit definition of inclusive education provided in policy documents. As a result, there is no consistent and clear understanding of what inclusive education entails for both mainstream education systems and existing specialised forms of support for children with disabilities.

The lack of support, inadequate teacher training and the average class size of between 80 to 100 students impose problems in realising quality inclusive education (Mateusi et al., as quoted in Mkandawire et al., 2016). Chavuta (2008) found that large class sizes resulted in many learners dropping out of school, especially those with disabilities. Teachers indicated inadequate training to teach diverse classrooms, inadequate resources in the form of hearing aids or Braille, lack of clean water and toilets while parents were ignorant about the importance of educating their children with disabilities (Mateusi et al., 2014). Cultural practices such as initiation
ceremonies in which sexual initiation is a part last for several weeks. After ‘initiation’, some girls soon drop out of school due to pregnancy or marriage while male ceremonies lead to disciplinary measures and ultimately school dropout or expulsion (Hummel et al., 2016). These challenges are compounded by negative societal attitudes towards disabilities resulting in children not going to school.

There are no standardised psycho-educational assessments for identifying specific learning difficulties but special needs education teachers rely on learners’ past academic records, personal interviews with the child, parents/guardians and referrals from teachers (Itimu & Kopetz, 2008). Such assessment protocols need to be coupled with psycho-educational assessments in order to have a better understanding of learners’ barriers to learning. Inclusive education is not well developed and practised in Malawi as literature indicates that segregation and integration take greater visibility (Mkandawire et al., 2016).

In conclusion, Malawi is at the pioneering stage. The practice of educational psychology is not protected and special education focuses on visual, physical and hearing impairments as well as learning difficulties with a major thrust towards exclusionary practices. The focus of special education teachers seems to be at individual and not systemic levels because they lack good grounding in education and psychology. The roles of educational psychologists are understated while those of special education teachers are prominent. The identification of learners in need of special educational provision within schools is narrow as it does not include behaviour problems such as bullying, drugs, teenage pregnancies, crime, and child abuse among others. Lack of inclusive education policy and its definition contributes to inconsistent
understanding of inclusive education practices. The perpetuation of cultural practices that result in school dropout rates entails that a school psychology service delivery model is needed. Inclusive education is not well described. This coupled with very little information on educational psychology may suggest that there is no real relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support in Malawi.

4.9 ZAMBIA

Towards the end of the first decade of the 2000s, there were 10 educational psychologists serving 4,264,127 students in Zambia (Jimerson et al., 2009), giving a ratio of 1 educational psychologist to 426,413 learners. This indicates a chronic shortage of psychologists and implies that most learners go without the services of psychologists. In addition, teachers and communities are not aware of the roles and responsibilities of educational psychologists thus putting the roles of the profession at risk of being taken over by other professions.

Educational psychologists are required to have bachelor’s degrees or certificates in guidance and counselling, a teaching qualification and teaching experience (Mpofu et al., 1997). This suggests a lack of a good grounding in psychology, skills in assessment protocols and remedial interventions that are used to prevent, reverse or lessen the severity of problems learners present (Cook, Jimerson & Begeny, as quoted in Pillay, 2014). Educational psychologists tend to receive more training in individual assessment methods and intervention techniques than do school counsellors. Also, educational psychologists are more often itinerant and therefore have more responsibilities than school counsellors. Public awareness of
educational psychologists is low and the services are rarely available in rural areas (Mpofu et al., 1997). Reasons offered by authors for the low public awareness include lack of a legal framework for special education, lack of funds to promote public awareness and mismanagement of funds.

Zambia’s movement towards inclusive education over the past 15 years has not been supported by research (Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). The country does not have a policy specifically on inclusive education (Noyoo, 2000; Mubita, 2009). This makes the implementation of inclusive education practices difficult (Kalabula, as quoted in Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). The major obstacles in the provision of special education services include poverty, illnesses, cultural influences, lack of government commitment and limited resources (Miles, 2011; Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). These obstacles would also impact negatively on inclusive education practices.

In summary, educational psychologists in Zambia are in the translation and modelling stage wherein western psychological concepts are applied with little adaptation. Some educational psychologists have certificates in guidance and counselling thereby making it difficult to have roles and responsibilities in eliminating some barriers to inclusive education. The chronic shortage of educational psychologists and lack of inclusive education policy are apparently a result of the lack of government commitment in the provision of educational psychological services. Therefore, there seems to be a weak relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support. On the ground, inclusive education is not really being practiced.
4.10 LESOTHO

By the end of the 20th century, there were neither educational psychologists in Lesotho nor was there a professional association of psychologists. Therefore, educational psychology was not recognised (Mpofu et al., 1997). Some academic content associated with educational psychology are included in teacher education (Mpofu et al., 1997). Teachers with diplomas or degrees in special education take the roles of educational psychologists (Mpofu et al., 1997).

The country has a Special Education Unit, established in 1991, within the Ministry of Education and Training whose primary responsibility is to implement inclusive education for primary schools. The drawback is that the department is poorly staffed (Matlosa & Matobo, 2004). The unit is staffed by teachers with training in different areas of disabilities and have the responsibilities of carrying community awareness campaigns, training personnel in identification and assessment skills; and improving management capacity and special education (MOET, 2005). Such a unit cannot diagnose and address diverse needs of learners with disabilities (Hoy & Greg, 1994). As a result, teachers’ assessments of learners with disabilities have been found to be unsystematic and biased (Desgranges, Desgranges, & Karsky, 1995). Special schools for the hearing impaired were found to be admitting learners with intellectual impairment but whose hearing is normal (Mittler & Platt, 1996). They also found learners learning braille when they could cope with eyeglasses or enlarged print. The unit utilises the indirect service delivery model in the form of in-service training for teachers, education officers and district resource teachers.

Lesotho has no disability-specific legislation but MOET policy documents such as policy statement of 1989 and the strategic sector plan 2005 are salient about the roles of psychologists
in assessment of learners with disabilities for proper placement and support (Mosia, 2014). The Education Act of 2010 legalises the right to free and compulsory primary education. This has resulted in insufficient classroom space, textbooks and increased number of unqualified teachers (Moloi, Morobe, & Urwick, 2008).

The integration of the deaf is done after standard 3 and interpreters would be required in all classes. This makes it difficult for these learners to be integrated at secondary school level (Matlosa & Matobo, 2004). According to Mosia (2014), the terms integration and inclusion are perceived as synonymous in Lesotho as evidenced by their use in the Policy Statement on Special Education (Ministry of Education, 1989) and Education Sector Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education and Training, 2005). For example, the policy statement on inclusion focuses on the integration of learners with disabilities or special needs education into the mainstream.

Research by Mateusi, Khoaeane, and Naong as quoted in Mkandawire, Maphale, & Tseeke (2016) indicate that teachers, with no ongoing in-service training, lack adequate skills and training to handle diverse learners in general classrooms. The research also indicated very few itinerant teachers who provide general education teachers with the much needed support. This is due to lack of motivation and high attrition in the Special Education Unit (Mosia, 2014). The high teacher-pupil ratio of 1:78 is far higher than that of 1:40 recommended by the Ministry of Education and Training (Mateusi et al., 2014). This has resulted in congested classrooms; this is associated with high rates of repetition by learners. Large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to reach individual learners in terms of preparation and planning, resources, and support services (Mbengwa, 2010).
Inclusive education in Lesotho faces several threats, such as poor perception of what inclusive education involves; slow development of policy on special education; and poor development of education resources to allow inclusive education (Mosia, 2014). Most of these challenges are associated with a lack of educational psychologists wherein inclusive education is at its infancy. Therefore, there is no association between inclusive education and educational psychological support.

4.11 DISCUSSION

The acute shortages of educational psychologists, for example in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, and their near non-availability in Lesotho cloud quality services. The nature of educational psychological services differs between countries depending on societal needs (Oakland & Jimerson, 2007). Educational psychology is found, for example in South Africa and Zimbabwe, where there are national psychological associations that take an active interest in educational psychology. In Lesotho and Zambia in which the discipline and profession of psychology does not exist, there seems to be unsystematic and biased assessment of learners by teachers resulting in inappropriate placements. Such a thrust is anti-inclusive. Therefore, most learners in schools do not have direct and regular access to psychological services. Access to educational psychologists entails the provision of services to learners which include direct and indirect interventions. These interventions focus on academic skills, learning, socialisation and mental health to schools and families so as to enhance the competence and well-being of learners (NASP, 2010).
The absence of national psychological associations that take an active interest in educational psychology in countries like Malawi and Zambia could result in persons with various backgrounds claiming the roles of educational psychologists. For example, special needs teachers in Malawi and teachers with guidance and counselling certificates in Zambia take the role of educational psychologists. The certifying and licensing of educational psychologists in South Africa and Zimbabwe establishes the profession and help it become respected, and ensure high standards for professional practice.

The lack of policy on inclusion in Malawi and Zambia makes the implementation of inclusive education practices gradual and difficult (Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). There is a lack of clear and consistent understanding of inclusive education practices by educators, special education teachers, parents and educational psychologists. Furthermore, the training of educational psychologists in SADC countries needs to take into cognisance the indigenous knowledge systems to find local solutions to cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies.

4.12 CONCLUSION

A reasonably strong association between inclusive education and educational psychological support services can be found in Zimbabwe and South Africa where there are educational psychologists and relatively clear policies on inclusive education. A relationship barely exists between inclusive education and educational psychological support services in Zambia, Lesotho and Malawi. In these countries, policies on inclusive education seem to be
absent, and educational psychologists are either extremely limited or underqualified. There is no clear direction of their roles in terms of inclusive education.

The preparation of educational psychologists in South Africa and Zimbabwe appears to be systematic. There are regulations that restrict both the professional education and the practice of educational psychology to persons of a certain level of psychological education and experience. Such preparations mean that educational psychologists are experts in supporting teachers to be effective in delivering quality education in an inclusive environment. Unlike in Malawi, Lesotho and Zambia, there are no national psychological associations that take an active interest in educational psychology and where persons with various backgrounds may claim to be educational psychologists. The roles and responsibilities of ‘educational psychologists’ in these countries are not regulated making it difficult to eliminate some barriers to inclusive education. For example, the roles in supporting and monitoring teachers to recognise barriers to learning, providing support to parents to manage their children’s difficulties and assisting learners to achieve to the best of their abilities are limited. Such a thrust can be described as anti-inclusive. This results in a near absent relationship between school psychological services and inclusive education practices in Zambia, Lesotho and Malawi. The situation is dire when Lesotho is evaluated. Apparently, there are no educational psychologists in education. Roles in terms of inclusive education are non-existent.

Policy statements on inclusive education direct the work of educational psychologists in South Africa and Zimbabwe making the implementation of inclusive education practices easier. However, there is a need for policies that support schools and communities in responding to the
diversity of learners (Wah, 2010) rather than separate policies for special education and general education (as in Zimbabwe). This separation perpetuates the exclusion of learners as the notion that a separate intervention system is required to look after such learners is fostered (Wah, 2010). In contrast, Zambia and Lesotho lack clear policy statements on inclusive education making it difficult for educators, special education teachers, parents and ‘educational psychologists’ to have a common understanding of inclusive education practices.

A clear and relatively strong association between inclusive education and educational psychological support services is found in Zimbabwe and South Africa while a non-existent relationship exists in Zambia, Lesotho and Malawi.

ETHICAL APPROVAL: This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

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Pillay, J. (2014). Challenges educational psychologists face working with vulnerable children in


CHAPTER 5
ARTICLE III

Perceptions of Zimbabwean trainee/educational psychologists regarding the training on their support roles and responsibilities in inclusive education

Published

ABSTRACT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

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5.8 METHODOLOGY
ABSTRACT

The study primarily used focus group interviews at three administrative offices (provinces) that house trainee/educational psychologists. This was to explore their experiences on how they learn about their support roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education. Thirteen trainee/educational psychologists from these provinces volunteered to participate in the study. The study used a qualitative design based on a phenomenological perspective. Inductive thematic content was used to analyse data. The results indicate that trainee/educational psychologists had known their support roles through master's degree programmes, a single 2016 workshop, personally guided reading and collaborative work with workmates. Their views indicated inadequate training and supervision, negative feelings towards internship after the master's programme, payment of supervisors, continuing professional development points, lack of degree programmes in Master of Science in educational psychology, and location of conferences. The results provide important information about educational psychology in Zimbabwe with important implications for training and policymaking.

KEYWORDS

Educational psychology, inclusive education, internship

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on how trainee/educational psychologists learn about their support roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education. The article will
provide a brief history on inclusion in special education in Zimbabwe, the treatment of learners with disabilities, and the role of educational psychologists in addressing these problems.

Prior to independence in 1980, school psychological services were available to white, Asian/Indian, and coloured learners only (Mpofu & Nyanungo, 1998; Mukhopadhyay & Musengi, 2012). Charitable organisations and churches complemented by missionaries, provided education to a few black learners with special needs in rural boarding schools. They were taught practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, sewing and cookery (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998). “The education of these learners was viewed more as a moral and religious obligation rather than as a right” (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998, p. 75). Lack of national policy on special education resulted in lack of coordination among the different service providers such as churches and non-governmental organisations. Inevitably, this compromises quality of services (Chireshe, 2011; Chitiyo & Chitiyo, 2007; Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002).

People with disabilities did not command respect in the black African society (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004). They were considered burdens to the family and community (Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002). Many Zimbabwean families believed that spiritual forces caused disabilities, therefore, they sought services from traditional healers (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe, & Kasayira, 2007). When families could not raise money for school fees, learners with disabilities were the first to stay at home (Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002). If such learners had the opportunity to go school, the pedagogical environment ignored their views and opportunities to participate because most teachers were unqualified in special education.
After independence in 1980, school segregation was abolished and school psychological services were extended to black learners (Mpofu et al., 2007). The government of Zimbabwe introduced the Education Act of 1987 which required all children to have access to basic education at their nearest school (Chitiyo, Odongo, Itimu-Phiri, Muwana, & Lipemba, 2015; Mukhopadhyay & Musengi, 2012). The government also introduced the Disabled Persons Act of 1992 which was intended to remedy inequalities in the provision of social and education services (Mpofu et al., 2007). These major milestones in advancing school psychology in Zimbabwe resulted in increased enrolment of learners with special needs from 2,000 in 1979 to 4,000 in 1980 in specialised settings (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998).

The increased enrolment resulted from Zimbabwean educational psychologists focusing on assessment to routinely screen for any form of disability and admit any school-age child regardless of ability (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chataika, 2007). Such learners were placed in special classes, resource units, and special schools depending on the level of disability and home environment. Learners with severe disabilities were placed in resource units within ordinary schools or residential special-needs education schools as special classes were meant for learners with mild-to-moderate intellectual challenges.

Educational psychologists engaged in in-service training of teachers and administrators who teach and support learners with disabilities. During consultancy and advocacy, they worked with parents, learners, educators, social workers, physicians and rehabilitation technicians. They educated communities about the availability of special education programmes and assistive devices for learners with orthopaedic and sensory disabilities from the Ministry of Health and
Child Welfare and non-governmental organisations. International aid agencies, for example the Swedish International Development Agency, Canadian International Development Agency, and the Norwegian Psychological Association, funded outreach activities, continuing education for educational psychologists, transportation, test procurement and test development (Mpofu et al., 2007). Educational psychologists carried out research on how best to assist teachers, parents, and schools regarding the effective delivery of special-needs education programmes (Mpofu et al., 2007).

As indicated above, educational psychologists have a broad array of skills that can benefit learners who have difficulties. In an inclusive model, educational psychologists can, thus, offer their expertise for the benefit of learners. Inclusive education ensures that all learners, including those with disabilities, are welcomed, valued, and learn together in regular education classrooms regardless of their particular learning characteristics (McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Cizman, & Lupart, 2013). Inclusive education is a key policy in many countries because the rights of learners are compromised by special education. Special education tends to segregate learners with disabilities from their “non-disabled” peers. This segregation extends to mainstream curriculum and educational practices (Lindsay, 2007).

Zimbabwe is a signatory to both regional and international instruments. These include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Zimbabwe ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1990. National responses are guided by the following core principles of the convention: non-
To support the inclusive agenda, educational psychologists need to engage in continuing professional development to facilitate the adoption and evolution of high quality service provision (Swerdlik & French, 2000; Wizda, 2004). Provision of direct and indirect services requires that the nature of educational psychological services be determined by preparation of educational psychologists and societal needs (Oakland & Jimerson, 2007). Pillay (2003) identified some reasons why the training and supervision of psychologists is important. These include testing theory in practical situations and engaging in action research.

Inclusive education policies/statements that influence educational psychologists’ work are now discussed below.

5.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES IN ZIMBABWE

Inclusive education in Zimbabwe involves the identification and minimisation or elimination of barriers to learners’ participation in schools, homes and communities and the maximisation of resources to support participation (Mutepfa et al., 2007). Mpofu (2004) and Chireshe (2013) indicate that there is no specific legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe but there are various government policy statements that promote and support the inclusion of learners with disabilities. Table 1 provides a summary of the policy statements that influence educational psychologists’ work. The policy statements are given to school head-teachers by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and then cascaded to teachers through staff development training in their respective schools. These are then taken to students via workshops.
by the School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education (SPS and SNE) Department and other governmental departments for example, the Social Services and Health and Child Welfare Departments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation/policy statement</th>
<th>Role of educational psychologist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987</strong></td>
<td>Right to education for all learners: outreach programmes and in-service training of teachers and administrators on special needs education and programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Disabled Person’s Act of 1996</strong></td>
<td>Advice on attitudinal and physical-structural barriers to educational opportunity for learners with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute Number P.36 of 1990</strong></td>
<td>Provides guidelines for placement of learners in special classes, resource units and special schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Secretary’s Circular No. P.12 of 1987</strong></td>
<td>Provides guidelines on remedial programmes for learners with specific learning disabilities at both primary and secondary levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Education Secretary’s Circular No. P.5 of 2000</strong></td>
<td>Provides guidelines for counselling abused learners and their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Secretary’s Circular Number 2 of 2000</strong></td>
<td>Inclusion of learners with albinism with reference to meaningful inclusion in schooling and co-curricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Education Secretary’s Circular No. P.3 of 2002</strong></td>
<td>Provides guidelines on inclusive education and education for community participation and provision for guidance and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Children’s Protection and Adoption Act of 1990</strong></td>
<td>Promote the acquisition of behaviour management skills at rehabilitation facilities for child offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Sexual Offences Act of 2001</strong></td>
<td>Provision of counselling services to sexually abused children and expert testimony to courts on the intellectual functioning of abused learners with intellectual handicaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director’s Circular Number 7 of 2005</strong></td>
<td>Offers guidelines for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in all school competitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next section will focus on the infrastructure of educational psychology in Zimbabwe.

### 5.3 INFRASTRUCTURE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN ZIMBABWE

Organisations that service the interests of educational psychologists include the Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ) and the Zimbabwe Psychological Association (ZPA) (Mpofu et al., 2007). The AHPCZ sets the standards for training and education of psychologists in collaboration with Health Professions Authority and Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) (AHPCZ, 2016). The AHPCZ has a psychology education committee whose responsibility is to evaluate undergraduate and postgraduate university programmes for possible accreditation. The council also maintain a register for educational psychologists, licensing the premises for practice, and regulating their practice (AHPCZ, 2016;
Chireshe, 2005; Mpofu & Khan, 1997). The AHPCZ, regulations of 2016, have stringent professional training criteria. The current registration requirements differ from the previous two tier system where the registering of psychologists involved a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Psychology and a full-time 3-year internship programme under the Department of School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education. Alternatively, one needed to hold a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Zimbabwe (Mpofu & Khan, 1997) which would automatically ensure registration. The current registration criteria is also a two tier process that involves a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in psychology and a master’s degree plus one year internship, or a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in psychology plus three years internship which should include a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology before applying for final registration (AHPCZ, 2016). Registration applicants need to pay $50 for annual registration and are required to pass the oral and written board examinations before registration. Practising psychologists and interns are also required to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) to attain a minimum of 50 points per year to renew practising certificates. The CPD categories include lecturing, attending conferences or presentations, publishing in peer reviewed journal and engaging in community service among other categories.

The ZPA provides a professional identity and training of psychologists. The ZPA is currently launching regional chapters in the country’s 10 provinces to make psychologists participate in its activities after the economic meltdown of 2006 to 2008. Trainee educational psychologists, on the other hand, need to have a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Psychology before being
recruited by the Public Service Commission and then work for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education. They then register as an intern psychologist with the AHPCZ after gaining employment.

The following section will focus on the preparation of educational psychologists in Zimbabwe.

5.4 PREPARATION OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN ZIMBABWE

The Master of Science degree programme in educational psychology was discussed in an earlier section. There are no local universities currently offering the programme and interns are doing Masters’ degrees in Community Psychology offered by Midlands State University and Counselling Psychology offered by Great Zimbabwe University. Currently, there are only a few senior educational psychologists in the Department of School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education to supervise trainees in the 10 provinces. The AHPCZ now allows trainees to be supervised by registered psychologists in private practice or at universities at a cost of $100 per month. The cost is born by trainees.

All psychologists are required to hold an Honours degree in Psychology which is achieved after 4 years of university education (Mpofu & Khan, 1997) and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology (AHPCZ, 2016). A Master in Educational Psychology degree for teachers, which is different from Master of Science, is not required though a teaching qualification is a desirable quality (Mpofu et al., 2007). Trainee educational psychologists taking internship with the School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department have internship experiences that include child assessment, report writing, teacher, school, and parent consultation, child advocacy, and legal aspects of school psychology practice (Mpofu et
al., 2007 p. 444). The trainees have field work placements at institutions that serve learners with disabilities, mainstream settings, and outpatient psychiatric settings (Mpofu et al., 2007). The prevailing socioeconomic conditions in the country resulted in some of these placements not being done leading to an erosion of quality training.

Trainee educational psychologists are required to produce an internship portfolio for evaluation by the AHPCZ which include assessment reports, professional seminars and workshops attended and research reports (Mpofu et al., 2007).

5.5 **ISSUES IMPACTING EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN ZIMBABWE**

Challenges facing the provision of educational psychological services include underfunding by the central government, high job attrition, and consequently the erosion of quality of training (Mpofu et al., 2007). The declined economy may be due to, in part, the political sanctions by the Western countries after the land reform, and economic mismanagement by the central government.

The number of educational psychologists per province has remained at between 5 and 6 since 1980 despite the increased enrolment rates of learners from early childhood education up to high school level. The high caseloads resulted in educational psychologists focusing on assessments rather than consultative work. The shortages of senior educational psychologists to supervise trainees’ results in frustration and high attrition rates. According to Kasayira (2005) and; Mnkandla and Kasayira (2002), the Department of School Psychological Services has a history
of neglecting trainees in professional development. Recruitment of more trainees might alleviate some of these problems but the government has frozen all public service posts since 2012 due to financial constraints.

The University of Zimbabwe was the only institution offering a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology and had its last intake in the year 2012 due to lack of qualified lecturers. Other universities need to introduce this programme if they have lecturers with requisite qualifications.

Educational psychological services are provided for free. Mpofu et al. (2007) recommended that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should levy private schools for educational psychological services in order to overcome resource scarcity.

5.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The high job attrition rates at senior levels in Zimbabwe impacted negatively on the quality of training and on the availability of school psychological services (Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002; Mpofu et al., 2007). This is worsened by the new AHPCZ stringent regulations on the training and registration of psychologists. In this regard, Oakland and Jimerson (2007) indicate that a sufficiently large workforce should precede the development of professional association so that a discipline evolves over time. There are a few licensed educational psychologists in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education due to the prevailing socioeconomic conditions. The Master of Science degree in educational psychology was offered at the University of Zimbabwe and used take 10 students every two years (Mpofu et al., 2007). Due to shortages of lecturers with requisite qualifications, the programme was last offered in 2012 and no other institution is
offering the programme. The above conditions faced by educational psychologists and the mentioned policies related to inclusive education serve as background to the problem statement; namely to understand how trainee/educational psychologists learn about their support roles and responsibilities with regard to inclusive education practices in Zimbabwe.

5.7 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to understand trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences on how they learn about their support roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education.

5.7.1 Research questions

1. Which documents (policies) guide the support roles and responsibilities of trainee/educational psychologists in schools and communities?
2. How have trainee/educational psychologists learnt about their roles and responsibilities regarding inclusive education?
3. What are trainee/educational psychologists’ views regarding the quality of their training?
4. What are trainee/educational psychologists’ views regarding the AHPCZ 2016 regulations?

5.8 METHODOLOGY

5.8.1 Design

The study used a qualitative design based on a phenomenological perspective (Bogdan & Biken, 1998). A phenomenological design seeks to understand the meaning of lived experiences,
events, and interactions of people in particular situations. Focus groups were used within this paradigm to produce data. Data was gleaned off group interactions and dialogue around trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences of their preparation on support roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education. This implies that phenomenological research takes the position that the facts of a situation are but one way of understanding it. Uncovering “the beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives related to a phenomenon provide another mechanism for understanding its occurrence” (Sansosti & Sansosti, 2012, p. 919).

5.8.2 Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select 13 trainee/educational psychologists from three provinces who volunteered to participate in the study. Eleven (11) were trainee psychologists while two were registered psychologists. One trainee educational psychologist with less than a year’s experience was exempted from participating because she was presumed not to have adequate experience while one male trainee psychologist refused to participate. Table 2 provides characteristics of the participants in each focus group.
Table 5.2: Characteristics of participants in focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Highest education</th>
<th>Registered/trainee psychologist</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus group I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>MSc Community Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>MSc Community Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>MSc Child and Family Studies</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Year of Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>MSc Community Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus group III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>Msc Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Registered</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8 (including 2 years registered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>013</td>
<td>MSc Counselling Psychology</td>
<td>Registered</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9 (including one year registered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total participants = 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.8.3 Procedure
After ethics approval was obtained from the university ethics committee at which the researcher is a doctoral student. Permission to carry out the research was first sought from the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and then from provincial education directors from each of the three provinces. A preliminary meeting with research participants prior to the actual interviews was carried out a week before the interviews. Such a meeting provided an opportunity to establish trust with participants, review ethical considerations, complete consent forms and also to review research questions. The meeting also afforded the participants time to dwell and ponder on their experiences.

5.8.5 Data collection

This study utilised focus groups and documents. Any documents referred to by participants during focus groups were examined to explain the behaviour and attitudes of participants.

According to Englander (2012), phenomenological research aims to encounter the phenomenon via the participant’s description. Therefore, questions that are part of a phenomenological interview should meet the criteria of description (Giorgi, 2009). Such questions need to focus on participants’ descriptions of the situation in which they experienced the phenomenon. Also, documents referred by participants were reviewed.

The data collection methods were similar to what Englander (2012) specified. A preliminary meeting with research participants prior to the actual interview was done a week before the interview. Such a meeting provided an opportunity to establish trust with participants, review ethical considerations, complete consent forms and also review research questions and
also to give participants’ time to dwell and ponder on their experiences. This assisted the researcher to get a richer description during the focus groups without having to ask too many questions (England, 2012).

Three focus groups were held in three administrative offices that house trainee/educational psychologists. The researcher acted as a moderator and was responsible for facilitating the discussion, managing the dominant members of the group, and at the same time, prompting the quieter members to participate. Whilst the researcher moderated the discussion, a colleague, a lecturer, would audio-tape, verify data and assist the researcher with analysis and interpretation of data (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The same interview guide was used for the three focus groups which were audio recorded with consent from participants. These were then transcribed verbatim.

Krueger (1994) and Morgan (1997) suggested that three different focus groups are adequate to reach data saturation and/or theoretical saturation. Each group met once. Focus groups have the advantage of a sense of belonging in a group, increase participants’ cohesiveness, thereby making them feel safe to share information (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

5.8.5 Data analysis

Inductive thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyse the data. This process identifies and analyses patterns and themes which are consistent with the phenomenological approach. Each focus group transcript was, initially, independently analysed to determine recurring themes and then followed by identification of themes across transcripts so that unique and common themes are identified (Padgett, 2008). Direct quotes were used to
ground findings and interpretations (Braun & Clark, 2006). These were then tagged in terms of focus group number (i.e., FGI standing for Focus Group I, FGII for Focus Group II and FGIII for Focus Group III).

5.8.6 Trustworthiness

This study utilised focus groups and documents. These were then triangulated to ensure that the collaborative different sources shaded light on a theme. This helped to locate evidence and document a theme from these sources. Any documents referred to by participants during focus groups were examined to explain the behaviour and attitudes of participants. Site triangulation was achieved by purposefully sampling three provincial offices to maximise variation of participant characteristics. The main participant characteristics were gender, ethnicity, and time served in School Psychological Services. These characteristics would aid in achieving a diversity of comparisons into the phenomenon under study. In comparison to using a single provincial office, use of multi provincial offices decreased systematic bias. Similar results emerged at different sites suggesting greater credibility.

To achieve credibility, a focus group was convened with participants in August 2017 at each of the provincial offices. Participants then reflected on the written preliminary analyses comprising of themes so that their views were solicited and any missing detail would be added. Participants indicated overwhelmingly that the analyses reflected their experiences.

5.8.7 Ethical considerations
Voluntary participation ensured that participants would willingly and genuinely participate in the study. This served to promote honesty. One participant objected to use of audio-recordings and therefore opted out of the study. Participants were encouraged to be frank and were assured that there was no right or wrong answers so that they could freely contribute ideas and experiences. Participants were told that they can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason for doing.

5.9 RESULTS

There was some diversity in trainee/educational psychologists’ views on how they learn about their support roles and responsibilities in implementing inclusive education practices. However, the following common themes were identified across the focus group interviews:

5. Documents that guide trainee/educational psychologists in their support roles
6. How they learn about their support roles
7. Views about the in-service training and internship
8. Views about Allied Health Practitioners Council new regulations of 2016, and
9. Perceived solutions
Table 5.3: Identified themes and subthemes emerging from the data

**Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents guiding trainee/educational psychologists</th>
<th>Learning about support roles</th>
<th>Views about training</th>
<th>Views about AHPCZ new regulations</th>
<th>Perceived solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major documents</td>
<td>In-service training workshops</td>
<td>Inadequate workshops</td>
<td>Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Internship after foundation degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education policy statements</td>
<td>Supervised training</td>
<td>Shortages of senior psychologists in the Ministry</td>
<td>Internship after Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Decentralised workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subthemes</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
<td>On-going training</td>
<td>Payment of external</td>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.9.1 Documents that guide trainee/educational psychologists’ inclusive education practices

Education Circulars and the Education Act of 1987 were experienced as guiding trainee/educational psychologists in their roles in implementing inclusive education. Major circulars were viewed differently by different focus groups. The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute Number P.36 of 1990 which provides guidelines for placement of learners in special classes, resource units and special schools was seen as a major circular by FGII while FGI cited the Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987. This Act, which provides the right to education for all learners, was perceived as major. The following extracts indicate their experiences:

*The Education Act which guides education for all is the pillar to all-inclusive activities and all policies come in now to augment what the Act provided* (FGI).

*P36 is major one. It talks about the establishment of special classes and resource units in mainstream schools. It states that there should be psycho-educational assessments to be carried out and classify children according to their need* (FGII).
We have the P36 which provides placement procedures for special classes, resource classes and special schools. This is done in order to implement The Education Act of 1987 which states the right to education of all children. It is the instruction of the Ministry that all special needs children shall participate as full as possible in the national curriculum. It addresses the procedures on identification and placement of special needs children (FGIII).

The Ministry has a number of circulars that support inclusive education. One of them is Director’s Circular No. 3 of 2001 on equal access to all learners (FGI).

Director’s Circular No. 24 of 2001 on examinations of students with disabilities for example sign language interpretation, extended examination time. The circular addresses some of the issues that have adversely affected the performance of candidates with disabilities for example the use of sign language during the process of writing examinations (FGI).

Some responses from participants indicate that there is no specific policy for inclusive education and the roles of educational psychologists are not outlined in these policies. For example:

*There is no policy specifically for inclusive education* (FGII).

*All circulars do not specify the role of psychologists and are not specific on inclusive education* (FGII).

Some responses from participants indicated that The Secretary’s Circular No. P.12 of 1987 provides guidelines on remedial programmes for learners. Others said the Secretary’s Circular number 2 of 2000 focuses on inclusion of learners with albinism with reference to meaningful inclusion in schooling and co-curricular activities. Yet for others, the Director’s
Circular Number 7 of 2005 offers guidelines for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in all school competitions.

These responses and analysis of circulars indicate that Zimbabwe does not have a specific inclusive education policy but education related policies that demonstrate intent towards inclusive education. These circulars do not specifically state the roles of educational psychologists. Most participants seem to know about these policies but some, a minority though, are ignorant.

5.9.2 How trainee/educational psychologists learn about their support roles

Trainee/educational psychologists across the three focus groups appeared to have different training experiences about their support roles. Some of these roles include one in-service training workshop, supervised training, informal training, and collaborative work between themselves. The following extracts indicate their experiences:

*We had a national training workshop last year 2016 in Masvingo…. (FG111).*

However, another participant indicated resource constraints in workshops:

*Basically we cannot say we have them annually. If resources are permitting, engagements are done* (FG1).

Several participants experienced learning about their support roles during masters’ degree programmes:

*I learnt my support roles and responsibilities during my master’s* (FG111).

*To me it was some form of in-service training through my supervisor whom I meet maybe once a year or so and through this community psychology programme* (FGII).
The importance of informal collaboration with colleagues was highlighted in the following experiences:

*If we know someone’s strengths we then give each other assignments and then discuss these issues* (FGIII).

*At the office we share information amongst ourselves* (FGIII).

*We also do personal research when we receive a case we do not really know how to best manage it in inclusive settings* (FGI).

The following experiences indicate informal training experiences:

*I was exposed to my job description which details what I am expected to do as an educational psychologist. In terms of training, it was an informal one meaning to say there was no deliberate programme of training educational psychologists* (FGII).

*My training was informal. Someone trained me at home on assessments and about my job description. It was like getting way down alone* (FGII).

The above experiences indicate that participants had known their support roles through master’s degree programmes, a single 2016 workshop, personally guided reading and via informal collaboration with colleagues.

### 5.9.3 Views about the in-service training and internship

Views on inadequate in-service training and supervision were pervasive while one participant indicated regular training through his supervisor. The following descriptions indicate inadequate training:
I think the training is inadequate and lack regularity. Sometimes it’s held once a year then after maybe two or three years before you have training. There is need for regularity in training so that we become equipped (FGII).

The training is not adequate. Something needs to be done so that we are fully equipped to offer a meaningful service to our clientele (FGII).

Sometimes when we get national workshops, the period itself will not be enough to cover the ground and content (FGI).

Those who have been registered cannot supervise because of the two year probation period. (FGIII).

There was a situation when there were two registered psychologists; one at head office and the other in Manicaland. The magnitude of the workload was maybe one supervisor to 15 trainees. So the quality of supervision was compromised (FGIII).

One participant indicated continued supervision by one senior psychologist while another indicated that they can consult anyone who is a registered educational psychologist:

The training of psychologists is covered because we consult our supervisors. You can use emails or Skype to consult your supervisors which is quite okay. The national workshops are done once a year but for individual training you can always consult your supervisor (FGIII).

In terms of consultations, we are free to consult anyone who is a registered professional including our supervisors and director at head-office (FGIII).

These experiences indicate a lack of systematic training of psychologists due to shortages of senior psychologists in the Department of School Psychological Services.
5.9.4 Views about Allied Health Practitioners Council’s new regulations

Analysis of the AHPCZ 2016 regulations indicates a two-pronged approach to registration. A $100 payment for practicum supervision at master’s degree level and monthly payments of $100 for the internship. Trainee/educational psychologists need to accrue a minimum of 50 continuous professional development (CPD) points in order to renew their practising certificates for the following year.

The participants indicated positive views about the requirements of AHPCZ but negative feelings towards internship after the master’s programme, payment of supervisors, CPD points, lack of Master of Science degree programmes in educational psychology in local universities, and location of conferences. The following are some of the positive views expressed by participants:

*It is a noble gesture because it protects the clients...they want the very best from us* (FGII).

*I think to maintain quality standards, we should marry theory and practice. So a master’s degree should be one of the prerequisites, so that what you have learnt will have to be applied* (FGII).

*The CPD points encourage us to read and publish because as psychologists we might stay here for 10 years doing the same things without growth* (FGII).

*After acquiring an honours degree which is general but you need to take up the Master of Science in educational psychology which gives you the theoretical ground in one’s practice. I support this aspect. However without adequate supervised practice then a practitioner won’t be useful in society. So after a master’s degree one has to undergo a supervised internship so that*
the theory is complemented with practical aspects of the profession. So I feel that a master’s plus supervised training is good (FGI).

The issue of training is crucial in any profession. So to me despite shortages of educational psychologists, I think the professional training standards have to be upheld because if the professional standards are relaxed at the end of the day we are going to produce professionals who will be of more harm and danger to society. So all who want to be psychologists should follow those standards (FGI).

The following views indicate the lack of Master of Science degree programme training in educational psychology at Zimbabwean universities:

There is no university offering MSc in Educational Psychology in Zimbabwe. There is nowhere to go and get that qualification (FGIII).

We do MSc Community Psychology and MSc Child and Family studies. We have no option but to take what is there, what is available (FGII).

A person is now forced to do master’s degree in any area of psychology but is it that which is expected of educational psychology (FGII)?

The internship after the master’s degree programme was viewed as unnecessary because the practicum at master’s degree level covered similar content.

We have a challenge with this regulatory body because even if after the master’s they require you to do an internship again for a year which is not necessary, as most of the masters’ programmes have got the practicum aspect whereby you produce a file. So I think it is duplication. So I think after doing a practicum for a year and then you are going to get a
master’s and then do another year internship for you to get registered, I think it is asking too much (FGII).

The following extracts indicate views on payment of supervisors:

So this aspect of internship of supervision has been motivated by self-aggrandisement. It is now required that you pay your supervisor a minimum of $100. So they tell you after finishing your masters, you should go for a year paying....which amounts to $1200 (FG11).

Supervisors are required to have a maximum of six trainees. The Ministry of Education supervisor has six trainees and it means that 40 trainees do not have supervisors and automatically it means you have to look for an external supervisor which becomes expensive (FGII).

Even if you have the Ministry supervisor, she only supervises those in Harare. All trainees in Harare have been registered (FGII).

The following are the views on CPD points:

There is this thing that has been introduced to us - CPD points - you won’t renew your internship before you acquire 40 points. At the same time it is a noble idea but the way it is cascaded to us is not fair. The ministry supervisors are not communicating to us directly. We do not know what is happening only that we need this and that from Allied (FGII).

There is no study leave given to us to do research in the Ministry (FGI).

Trainee/educational psychologists indicated that the workshops organised by the AHPCZ occur in Harare, are expensive, and that there is a short notice.
They communicate within two days that we are having a workshop, which has a conference fee of $40. Looking at our salaries, you can’t garner that amount and bus fares included. I think it’s a challenge for us (FGII).

The conferences are in Harare; at night between 7 and 8pm for 30 minutes and you pay $40 (FGII).

You pay $100 to your supervisor; you are expected to pay $50 registration fees to AHPCZ, bus fare to and from Harare. That’s impossible from a salary of $300 (FGII).

Where these workshops are done is a limiting factor for those outside Harare. If you are outside Harare you need to attend these workshops at night and travel back to your base the same evening and want to be at work the following morning without any reimbursements (FGIII).

Psychologists need grounding in theory at master’s level which will then be augmented by practice. The CPD points were positively viewed as they prevent knowledge and skills from becoming obsolete. However, psychologists faced challenges in that there is no university in Zimbabwe offering a Master of Science degree programme in educational psychology resulting in trainees doing a master’s programme in any psychology field. The AHPCZ communicates directly to psychologists concerning CPD points while the employer, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, is not knowledgeable about it resulting in having no study leave to do research. Other concerns centred on centralised location of workshops, timing and short notices of such workshops, and payment of supervisors.

5.9.5 Perceived solutions
The following experiences indicate that the internship after a basic degree is adequate to provide services to clients. Information about AHPCZ should be pervasive to all stakeholders, workshops need decentralisation, and trainees need to be self-motivated in order to achieve their goals.

There is need to register a person after three years internship in the School Psychological Services department. This is a thorough supervised training. What is important is not a master’s but the actual training you get. So I think a person should be given a chance to be examined to prove that he has received adequate training than just to stick to the master’s programme. (FGI).

The assumption has to be proven scientifically by the Board of Examiners and not assumptions about adequately or inadequately trained (FGI).

The regulatory body need to improve in terms of information dissemination. They need to make sure that all stakeholders are aware of what is supposed to be done in terms of registration. I did some informal research with students on attachment. They do not know what’s awaiting them. So as a regulatory board they can improve on that part (FGII).

Those under training should push themselves not the supervisor to push you and motivate you to train. So it’s an issue about self-motivation. To me the standards are not stringent because I joined this department in 2009 and in 2017 that is when I submitted my file. So I do not blame anyone for taking so long. So to me it is not AHPCZ but it is with those who are being trained. Standards should remain. They are good for us (FGI).

The AHPCZ which facilitates workshops need to decentralise these (FGIII).
Participants indicated the need for a degree in psychology and three year internship so that they get registered. Furthermore, information about AHPCZ should be pervasive to all stakeholders.

5.10 DISCUSSION

The experiences of trainee/educational psychologists indicate that Zimbabwe does not have a specific inclusive education policy but education policies that demonstrate intent towards inclusive education. The education circulars do not specify the roles of educational psychologists. This lack of a policy framework, usually, is a barrier to quality education and support for all in an inclusive education system (Porter & Smith, 2011). The lack of a focused inclusive policy results in educational psychologists not having a clear framework and specific guidance for the implementation of inclusive education practices. In contrast, South Africa has a policy on inclusive education. The *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system* (Department of Education, 2001) outlines the roles of education support staff. In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act provide guidelines regarding the education of children with disabilities. Such legislations have important implications for the preparation and practices of educational psychologists (Jimerson & Oakland, 2007).

Trainee/educational psychologists across the three focus groups appeared to have different training experiences on in-service training workshops, supervised training, informal training, personally guided reading, and collaborative work amongst themselves. The ZPA provides a professional identity, and education and training for all psychology specialities (Mpofu et al., 2007). The ZPA is currently launching regional chapters in the country’s 10
provinces in order to make psychologists participate in its activities after the economic meltdown of 2006 to 2008. The professional body, however, lacks financial resources for the continuing education of psychologists.

According to Oakland (2000), a country’s gross national product influences school psychological services. Shortages of senior educational psychologists in the Zimbabwean Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Department of School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education result in only a few interns getting adequate and quality supervision. Informal training at, for example, private homes is not allowed as the AHPCZ only allows training at institutions that are accredited or approved by the board (AHPCZ, 2016). The board allows a ratio of one senior psychologist for six interns resulting in the majority of interns seeking services from private registered psychologists at a fee. To overcome some of these challenges, trainee/educational psychologists advocate for informal collaboration with colleagues. This is consistent with Moloi (2005) who suggested the need for frequent collaboration to overcome challenges imposed by the inadequacy of supervision.

The experiences of participants indicate positive views about the requirements of AHPCZ but there are negative feelings towards the internship after the master’s programme, payment of supervisors, CPD points, the lack of a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology at local universities, and location of conferences. According to Pillay (2014), some African countries legislated the requirements of educational psychologists to have a minimum of a master’s degree qualification and a license in order to practice. The AHPCZ is clear about psychologists’ training, registration and practice but as Oakland and Jimerson (2007) indicate, a
sufficiently large workforce precedes the development of professional associations and that a discipline only evolves over time.

There are few registered psychologists in Zimbabwe due to high job attrition rates (Mpofu et al., 2007) caused by the prevailing harsh economic conditions. The preparation of educational psychologists is labour-intensive (Daniels, Collair, Moola, & Lazarus, 2007). Because of the acute shortages of senior educational psychologists, Donald (1991) ended up recommending for shorter programmes that emphasise community and family interventions, intersectoral collaboration, proactive, preventative, and consultation work with teachers and schools.

Payment of external supervisors is a form of incentivising supervision but at a cost to interns. The formulation of the 2016 AHPCZ regulations appears to have had minimal consultations with the stakeholders on the internship programme. According to Mpofu and Khan (1997), after independence in 1980, there were few licensed psychologists and two programmes were used to prepare educational psychologists. A full-time 3-year internship programme for those with Bachelor of Science degrees in psychology under the School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology at University of Zimbabwe which led to automatic registration. These conditions were suspended and more stringent conditions were put into effect. Such stringent conditions may be appropriate when there are adequate numbers of licensed psychologists.
Intern psychologists in the Department of School Psychological Services are now doing any master’s degree with a major in psychology. For example, Master of Science degree in Community Psychology offered by Midlands State University and Master of Science degree in Counselling Psychology offered by Great Zimbabwe University and such qualifications are not recognised in the Department of School Psychological Services. Such a scenario results in demotivation of interns who are required to have a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology. Also, registration with AHPCZ is not a prerequisite for employment in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

In South Africa the minimum qualification to work as a school psychologist in a school or district is registration as a counsellor or psychometrist (Daniels et al., 2007). Clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, counselling psychologists, psychometrists and counsellors work as part of district support teams (Daniels et al., 2007). Such a scenario needs to be adopted in the Zimbabwean context wherein different specialist areas work collaboratively in the same department.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a means by which members of the profession broaden the expertise required in their professional lives (AHPCZ, 2016) to prevent knowledge and skills from becoming obsolete. The minimum required CPD points per annum is 40 to renew certificates for practicing psychologists and interns. For example, on-site CPD activities such as workshops, conferences and presentations have lower points than publishing in a peer reviewed journal. The CPD does not include consultation, assessment, intervention and programme planning and evaluation.
In South Africa the system of continuous professional development applies to registered psychologists who are compelled to engage in a minimum of professional development activities annually in order to remain registered with the Health Professions Council (Daniels et al., 2007). Psychologists need the CPD as a professional and ethical requirement (NASP, 2010a) to develop competencies, meet certification requirements, cope with professional isolation and maintain current knowledge in rapidly changing field (Tysinger, Tysinger, Diamanduros, & Smith, 2015). Educational psychologists are therefore motivated by certification requirements to engage in professional development throughout their careers (Armistead, Castillo, Curtis, Chappel, & Cunningham, 2013).

Trainee psychologists - though competent in the provision of school psychological services are novice practitioners (Tysinger et al., 2015) and hence view CPD negatively, maybe because they have inadequate time at work or as a way of resisting change. Research indicates that psychologists’ CPD is often self-directed (e.g., Neimeyer et al., 2010; Snyder et al., 2010). CPD that is not considered stimulating may actually impair professional growth (Macklem et al., 2001). Fowler and Harrison (2001) found that psychologists learn best when they have control over CPD selection particularly when the CPD includes an experiential learning component (Daniels & Walter, 2002).

CPD that is prescribed by AHPCZ resulted in negative attitudes of trainee/educational psychologists. The findings of this research indicate a lack of financial reimbursement and study leave. Fowler and Harrison (2001) found that compensated leave, financial reimbursement of expenses, perceived need, and personal interest increase the likelihood of educational
psychologists pursuing CPD. Although Fowler and Harrison (2001) found that the most frequently reported CPD activities were workshops, in-service training and self-study. Zimbabwean educational psychologists indicated difficulties in attending workshops which are centralised in Harare. The costs of attending such workshops are prohibitive. Armistead et al. (2013) found that educational psychologists had positive attitudes towards CPD and they frequently engaged in intervention, academic, behavioural and social-emotional interventions and, academic screening and progress monitoring.

It is therefore crucial that registered educational psychologists engage in continuing professional development to facilitate the adoption and evolution of high quality service provision (Swerdlik & French, 2000; Wizda, 2004). However, initial professional training of trainees should be under the supervision of a senior educational psychologist who has the full responsibility for trainee vis-a-vis the client (Roe, 2002). The broader implication here is that CPD should focus on those in independent practice. Also, there is need to continuously review training from the perspective of the trainee educational psychologists.

5.11 RECOMMENDATIONS

Most trainee/educational psychologists are aware of the documents (policies) that guide their support roles and responsibilities in schools and communities. However, they indicated inadequate in-service training and a lack of Master of Science degree programmes in educational psychology at local universities. This makes them ill-equipped to discharge responsibilities in inclusive education. Zimbabwe has a low gross national product that is characterised by weak economic resources (Oakland & Jimerson, 2007). Therefore, there is need for a minimum
qualification of an undergraduate degree for one to train as an educational psychologist and get registered with a professional association. Interns with different masters’ degrees in counselling psychology and community psychology need to be recognised by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education; and Department of Schools Psychological Services so that they work collaboratively together. Universities having lecturers with requisite qualifications need to develop educational psychology programmes in their institutions. There is a need to source funds from non-governmental organisations such as UNICEF and Save the Children so that more workshops for trainee/educational psychologists on inclusive education are held per year.

The AHPCZ needs to work in collaboration with the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education so that those people with a master’s degree can register with the AHPCZ as interns before they can work independently.

5.11.1 Further research

Further research regarding the training of trainee/educational psychologists’ support roles and responsibilities in inclusive education need to include the director for SPS and SNE and his/her two deputies so that the training of psychologists is better conceptualised.

Trainee educational psychologists are recruited by the Public Commission without any adherence to AHPCZ registration requirements. Further research is needed to determine the implications of not renewing practise certificates or failure to accumulate the minimum number of CPD points on their jobs.

5.11.2 Implications and conclusion
Trainee/educational psychologists’ perceptions indicated inadequate training, partly due to few senior (licensed) psychologists. Therefore, there is a need to have at least a basic degree and internship training for one to be a registered psychologist. This helps to meet the demand for registered psychologists.

Trainee psychologists’ or interns’ perceptions on AHPCZ regulations indicated that they do not have adequate practical experience to have CPD for renewal of certificates or registration. The psychology board examination needs to give trainees with an appropriate internship a chance to write and determine their suitability for registration. In addition, interns should be aware of AHPCZ requirements before appointments into the public service. The implication is that developing countries need to develop a realistic vision that takes into cognisance the resources available and develop practical inclusive education practices in the schools and communities.

Thirdly, there is need to recognise graduate qualifications in the fields of community and counselling psychology by the Department of SPS and SNE. Without these considerations, the department will continue to have a critical shortage of educational psychologists.

The current education policies are outdated. They need renewal in the face of changes in educational psychology. Also, a specific policy on inclusive education that outlines the roles of educational psychologists needs urgent attention.
5.2 REFERENCES


Masvingo State University.


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CHAPTER 6
ARTICLE IV

Educational psychologists’ support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe

Published


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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on a phenomenological study of trainee/educational psychologists’ lived experiences regarding their support roles in the implementation of inclusive education practices in Zimbabwe. In-depth phenomenological interviews were done with sixteen (16) purposely selected participants (thirteen trainee/educational psychologists located at three administrative offices and three experts on inclusion from three universities) and data was transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed. Monthly/annual reports from trainee/educational psychologists were used as reference material. Three major themes emerged from the data regarding support roles: (1) diverse views on inclusion; (2) successful and unsuccessful experiences in implementing inclusive education; and (3) impact of experiences on rendering support services. Key findings indicate that advocacy and consultation, assessment and placement, and in-service training were viewed as successful experiences, whereas negative teacher attitudes and limited resources were viewed as barriers toward the implementation of inclusive education practices. The experiences of trainee/educational psychologists indicate inadequacy in the provision of support services. Annual reports of trainee/educational psychologists indicated inadequate on-going training in
respect of inclusive education practices. These findings are discussed in relation to the inclusive education literature.

**KEYWORDS**

Educational psychologist, inclusive education, support roles

6.1 **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this research was to examine educational psychologists’ experiences in their support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. Educational psychologists in Zimbabwe are divided into trainee/educational psychologists and qualified educational psychologists. A trainee/educational psychologist in this article refers to someone with a BSc Honours degree in psychology and is required by the Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (AHPCZ) to attain a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology within 5 years of completion of their internship. This internship programme includes child assessment and placement, report writing, teacher, school, and parent consultation, special needs education programming, child advocacy, and legal aspects of school psychology practice. The trainee has field placements in institutions that have students with disabilities, mainstream schools, and psychiatric settings to provide him or her with hands-on practical experiences with learners experiencing disabilities and learning difficulties. A qualified educational psychologist is one who has fulfilled all academic and internship requirements and has been registered by the AHPCZ as a practicing educational psychologist and has less than 2 years of independent practice. Such a person is not allowed to train intern educational psychologists. Those with above
2 years of independent practice are called senior educational psychologists and are allowed to train intern educational psychologists.

Other educational psychologists’ responsibilities include programme development and evaluation, research, and supervision of trainees or interns. An educational psychologist's role in supporting inclusion include elimination of certain causes of barriers to learning and provision of support to the learner in addition to what the school provides (Mohangi & Berger, 2015). Barriers to learning, which could be extrinsic and/or intrinsic to the learner, are difficulties learners experience (Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Tlale, 2014; Walton, Nel, Hugo, & Muller, 2009). Intrinsic barriers are located within the learner. These may include physical, sensory, chronic illness, neurological, and developmental impairments. On the other hand, extrinsic barriers are those factors found outside the learner. For example, lack of parental involvement in education; divorce, death, violence, and poverty, inaccessible and unsafe environments, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services to schools, and a lack of an enabling and protective legislation (Beyers & Hay, 2007).

Internationally, inclusive education is regarded as a right of every learner to be part of mainstream classrooms (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, & Tlale, 2015). All learners benefit from high standard learning and they benefit from the support provided to enable them to be successful (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). This implies equal opportunities in accessing learning resources, services and experiences (Baldiris, Zervas, Fabregat, & Sampson, 2016). Therefore, inclusive education requires that learners with diverse barriers to learning be included and receive appropriate instruction in general education classrooms.
Engelbrecht and Articles (2016) indicate that the rollout of inclusive education in Africa is challenged by poverty, limited or lack of human and material resources, large numbers of under qualified or unqualified teachers, discriminatory attitudes, inflexible curricula, lack of clear conceptualisation of inclusion, the lack of participation of parents and community organisations in decentralised processes of decision-making, lack of policy integration, as well as colonial legacies that perpetuate inequities. However, in the Zimbabwean context, the challenges include underfunding by the central government, high job attrition rates of registered psychologists, low awareness levels of school psychology services and the type or relevance of the services (Mpofu, Zindi, Oakland, & Peresuh, 1997). Families with strong indigenous cultural beliefs about disabilities prefer to seek services from traditional healers, often in place of psychological help (Mpofu, 2003). As a result, educational psychologists who argue for inclusive education practices end up struggling to fully offer their services.

The following section provides some context about school psychological services and inclusive education in Zimbabwe. It includes the structure, personnel and their roles, and challenges faced by educational psychologists.

6.2 SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

The Zimbabwe School Psychological Services and Special Needs Education (SPS & SNE) Department falls under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Its primary
responsibility is to support schools in implementing inclusive education practices (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe, & Kasayira, 2007). The department is found at each of the ten provincial education offices in the country and provides free school psychological services to all learners in the country (Mpofu et al., 2007).

The chief psychologist is the director of the SPS and SNE and is assisted by two deputy directors. One deputy director is from School Psychological Services and the other one from Special Needs Education. These directors are based at the head office in Harare (Mpofu et al., 2007). At the head office, there are four education officers responsible for school programmes in hearing impairment, mental retardation, visual impairment, and guidance and counselling. Each provincial office is headed by a principal educational psychologist.

The Department consists of trainee/educational psychologists, remedial tutors, speech correctionists, and guidance and counselling education officers who provide school psychology-related services (Oakland, Mpofu, Glasgow, & Jumel, 2003). The School Psychological Services department provides services on a peripatetic basis by visiting schools for purposes of consultation and providing services (Mpofu et al., 2007). The department of SPS and SNE has the following core responsibilities: “(1) supporting schools in their inclusive education practices and expanding the educational provision for learners with special educational needs, (2) in-service training of school psychological services personnel, teachers, head teachers, and education officers on issues and practices in special needs education, (3) raising awareness of learners with special educational needs and inclusive schooling among teachers, head teachers, parents, and communities country-wide, and (4) promoting early identification and inclusive
interaction programmes for learners with special educational needs” (Zimbabwe Action Plan, 2005, p. 30). The following paragraph focuses on the challenges faced by trainee/educational psychologists.

The Department of SPS and SNE faces many challenges with respect to the development and provision of services (Mpofu et al., 2007; Zimbabwe Action Plan, 2005). The number of educational psychologists has not changed since 1980 despite an increased number of primary school learners from 1.7 million in 1981 to 2.7 million in 2012 (Nkoma, 2018). The ratio of an educational psychologist to learners is 1:52 941 yet the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recommended ratio is 1:700 (UNESCO, as cited in Mpofu et al., 2007). The Zimbabwean ratio far exceeds this ratio thereby leaving many learners without any or adequate services of psychologists. In the late 1990s, there were high attrition rates of educational psychologists due to high caseloads, understaffing and underfunding (Mpofu et al., 2007). This was further exacerbated by the unfavourable economic environment between 2006 and 2008 which led to a brain drain of licensed educational psychologists to other more rewarding opportunities (Nkoma, Zirima, & Chimunhu, 2012. The internship programme for trainee/educational psychologists depends on the availability of senior educational psychologists at each of the provincial offices (Mpofu et al., 2007) - therefore the loss of experienced psychologists affected the quality of training and the availability of school psychological services (Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002). Also, the department has a history of neglecting the needs of interns who are still in their professional development (Kasayira, 2005; Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002).
Despite these challenges, Manicaland province was seemingly providing functional support for inclusive education. This may, in part, be because the last principal educational psychologist was in Manicaland and left in 2011 after initiating the Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP). PLAP takes into consideration diverse learners and differentiated instruction in general classrooms to address achievement gaps caused by regressed learning and subdued teaching between 2006 and 2008 (Nkoma, 2014, 2015). Support in adopting the inclusive programme by the provincial directorate, district education officers, education officers, school head teachers, teachers, and parents in Manicaland province saw learners achieving far higher pass rates than other provinces in Zimbabwe at both primary and secondary levels. PLAP was then rolled out as a national programme in 2012 (Nkoma, 2014). SPS and SNE personnel in Manicaland province were then tasked to in-service train other provincial staff. Taking into consideration these successes and challenges, it seems important to explore the lived experiences of trainee/educational psychologists toward supporting the implementation of inclusive education practices.

6.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Literature on this study on inclusive education in Zimbabwe has focused on six main areas: (1) teacher attitudes toward inclusive education (Chireshe, 2011, 2013; Mafa, 2012); (2) parents of handicapped children's views toward inclusion (Zindi, 2004); (3) barriers to inclusive education (Peresuh, 2000); (4) policies on inclusive education (Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002); (5) perceptions of learners with disabilities toward inclusion (Dakwa, 2009); and (6) including
learners with disabilities in primary school (Deluca, Tramontano, & Kett, 2014). These studies used survey methodology which is positivist in nature.

To understand the current status of inclusive education in Zimbabwe, there is a need to focus on the lived experiences of trainee/educational psychologists who are responsible for supporting schools. Thus, this study aims to explore the support roles of educational psychologists in implementing inclusive education practices in Zimbabwe.

### 6.3.1 PURPOSE STATEMENT

This phenomenological study aims to seek in-depth information regarding educational psychologists’ support roles in implementing inclusive education practices in Zimbabwe. The phenomenon of interest is the meaning ascribed to the support offered in the implementation of inclusive education practices. The researcher has worked for the Department of SPS and SNE and therefore bracketed himself by setting aside his own experiences, and took a fresh perspective toward the implementation of inclusive education practices.

### 6.3.1 Central question

What meaning do educational psychologists ascribe toward their support roles in the implementation of inclusive education practices?

### 6.3.2 Secondary research questions

1. What are educational psychologists’ views on inclusive education?
2. What are their experiences regarding the support roles in the implementing inclusive education practices?

3. How do these lived experiences impact on the rendering of support services?

6.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach. This is appropriate as the information is collected in a natural setting. The chosen methodology lends itself credible as little is known about Zimbabwean educational psychologists’ lived experiences regarding their support roles in the implementation of inclusive education practices. The purpose of this research is to understand the social and psychological phenomenon from the perspectives of those who lived the experience under study (Welman & Kruger, 1999).

To gather such information, the researcher used open-ended questions to gather data and interpreted meanings. According to Willis (2007, p. 194) “different people and different groups have different perceptions of the world.” Therefore, participants, verbalised their experiences. Such multiple perspectives in interpretivism may lead to a comprehensive understanding of the situation (Morehouse, 2011).

This qualitative study was done in three administrative offices in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. This ministry houses the SPS and SNE personnel, the study participants. Qualitative approaches are more appropriate as they provide the insight necessary to understand the participants’ lived experiences in their support toward the implementation of inclusive education practices.
6.4.1 Research context and participants

Findings from this research are based on data collected from three provinces, namely Manicaland, Masvingo and Midlands. These areas were purposefully selected because they are closer and convenient to the researcher (Neuman, 2016). The selected sites are the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education offices that house the SPS and SNE department and university lecturers at each of the three provinces. At the SPS and SNE sites, parents or guardians seek counselling, transfer of their special-needs children, psychological assessments and placement of special needs children. Head-teachers might consult for the need for resource classes or special classes, instructional supervision of resource classes/special classes, the need for new special needs teachers and career guidance of learners.

At each of these administrative offices there are five trainee/educational psychologists giving a total of 15 possible participants. Criterion sampling was used to select all trainee/education psychologists with more than one-year experience in the School Psychological Services Department. As these were presumed to have adequate experience in supporting inclusive education practices. Those with less than one year’s experience were thus excluded from the research. Thirteen trainee/educational psychologists comprising of 10 males and 3 females participated in the study. Their experience in the department ranged from 3 to 38 years. Of the 15 staff members, one refused audio-recording, while another did not meet the inclusion criteria, giving a total of 13 actual participants. The experts (n = 3) on inclusive education in this context refers to university lecturers in the Departments of Education or Psychology from each of these provinces who had once held the post of principal educational psychologist in the
Department of SPS and SNE. The sample size seemed to provide a sufficient number of variations that are necessary to come up with a typical essence (Giorgi, 2008), rather than the generality of results (Englander, 2012).

Table 6.1: Demographic information of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Highest education</th>
<th>Registered/trainee psychologist</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manicaland province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>MSc Community</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Area</td>
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<tr>
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<td>--------</td>
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<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>MSc Community Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>Msc Child and Family Studies</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD Psychology</td>
<td>Registered psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masvingo province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>MSc Community Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>Bsc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 2</td>
<td>PhD Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Registered psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>lecturer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>MSc Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Registered psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8 (including 2 years registered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>013</td>
<td>MSc Counselling Psychology</td>
<td>Registered psychologist</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9 (including one year registered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>BSc Honours in Psychology</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>BSc Honours</td>
<td>Trainee psychologist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4.2 Data collection methods

Phenomenological research aims to encounter the phenomenon via the participant’s description (Englander, 2012). Questions that are part of a phenomenological interview should therefore meet the criteria of description (Giorgi, 2009). Such questions need to focus on participants’ descriptions of the situation in which they experienced the phenomenon.

The primary data sources included the trainee/educational psychologists and experts on inclusion at the three provinces. To collect data about the lived experiences on inclusive education practices from participants, in-depth face-to-face phenomenological interviews were carried out. The process of data collection was similar to the suggestions of Englander (2012). This author specified that a preliminary meeting with research participants prior to the actual interview should be carried out. In this study, it was done a week before the interview. Such a meeting provided the opportunity to establish trust with participants, review ethical considerations, complete consent forms and also to review research questions and give participants time to dwell and ponder on the experience. This assisted the researcher to obtain a
richer description during the interviews without making the researcher having to ask too many questions (Englander, 2012).

Before conducting interviews, the researcher wrote a full description of his own experience as an educational psychologist within the specific department, thereby bracketing off his experiences from those of the interviewees. The concept of “bracketing” comes from Husserl’s (2008/1931) epoché in which the researcher allows himself to be present with the data without positing its validity or existence (Kanyange & Musisi, 2011).

Each individual interview took between 25 and 50 minutes depending on the participants’ experiences. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission from participants and these were coded (for example, 003; 28.07.2017). These were then transcribed verbatim. Soon after each interview, key words, phrases and sentences were transcribed.

6.4.3 Ethical considerations

Permission to carry out the project was sought first from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and then from the Provincial Education Director at each of the three sites. A preliminary meeting with research participants prior to the actual interview was carried out one week before the interview. During the meeting participants were told that they can voluntarily participate and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons for doing so. Completion of consent forms was done using a fellow lecturer as a neutral person during this period. The rights to privacy and confidentiality were explained and assured to participants on how data was going to be used and stored. Participants were also
assured that there was no perceived harm in participating in the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the university where the primary researcher is a doctoral student.

6.4.4 Data analysis

Data was analysed using Moustakas’ approach (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher started with a full written description of his experience of support towards the implementation of inclusive education practices. By setting aside his personal experiences, the focus was then directed to participants in the study (bracketing). This was done before data collection and analysis of the research interview. The researcher was attempting to recollect examples of personal experiences as an educational psychologist. This implied that the researcher’s biases do not negatively influence the interview process or analysis of data (Grocke, 1999).

Secondly, a list of significant statements was then developed. Statements in the interviews which focused on how individuals were experiencing inclusive education practices were found and these significant statements were listed (horizontalisation of the data). Each statement was treated as having equal worth and a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements was then developed. Thirdly, significant statements were then grouped into larger units of information called themes (“meaning units”). Fourthly, a description of participants’ experiences in the implementation of inclusive education practices was then written. This textual description of the experience included verbatim examples. Lastly, an overall description of the phenomenon of educational psychologists’ support into inclusive education incorporating both
textual and structural descriptions was then written. This represented the lived participant’s experience of the phenomenon of support for inclusive education.

6.4.6 Credibility

Merriam (2009) notes that the equivalent concept of internal validity in qualitative research is credibility. It deals with the question of how congruent are the findings with reality. Individual interviews and documents (trainee/educational psychologists’ monthly/annual reports) were triangulated to ensure that these collaborative but different sources would shed light on a theme. Thus the process of triangulation aimed to provide credibility to the findings. Any documents referred to by participants during the interviews were examined to explain the behaviour and attitudes of participants. Site triangulation was achieved by purposefully sampling three provincial offices, ensuring a high level of variation of participant characteristics in terms of gender, ethnicity, and time served in the Department of SPS and SNE. This aided in achieving the greatest diversity of comparisons into the phenomenon.

Additionally, to ensure credibility of the findings and interpretations, a meeting was convened with participants so that they could reflect on the written preliminary analyses comprising of themes. This enabled participants to check whether their views had been accurately captured. This is referred to as member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

6.5 FINDINGS

Five major themes emerged from trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences of their support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. These were: (1)
diverse views on inclusion; (2) successful and unsuccessful experiences in implementing inclusive education; (3) critical roles in the implementation of inclusive education; (4) inclusive education practices in schools and communities, and (5) the impact of experiences on rendering support services. Please refer to Table 2 for participant frequencies on these themes. These themes and their general descriptions were taken back to the trainee/educational psychologists during August 2017 to verify and check for authenticity. Trainee/educational psychologists made reflections on these general themes and adjustments were effected accordingly. The findings are discussed below, with excerpts to support data generated, and expounded upon with reference to inclusive education literature.
Table 6.2: Frequencies of experiences by participants on themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Diverse views on inclusion</th>
<th>Number of experiences</th>
<th>Successful and unsuccessful experiences</th>
<th>Number of experiences</th>
<th>Critical roles</th>
<th>Number of experiences</th>
<th>Practices in schools and communities</th>
<th>Number of experiences</th>
<th>Impact of experiences</th>
<th>Number of experiences</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>f; d; f; j; k</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>f; g; h</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>d; e</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>e; h; 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>h; e</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>e; f</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>e; l</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>a; c</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>e; d; 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>e; f; h</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>e; j; k</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>e; h</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>a; c</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>e; f; i; l; p</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 1</td>
<td>a; b; c</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>a; e; h; i</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>f; g; h; i</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>a; c</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>c; d; f; h; j; l</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>h; f</td>
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<td>f; d; e; g; h</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>c; d; m</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>f; h</td>
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<td>e; o</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>c; d; o</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>e; d</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>f; j</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 2</td>
<td>a; b; c</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>e; f; h; i</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>E; f; h; i; o;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>b; i; k</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>c; e</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>013</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>f; h; l; m</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>e; h</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>f; h</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>i; f</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>K</td>
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<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>c; b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>e; k; l</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>f; g; h</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>e; f; k; l</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>e; f; h</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>a; b; c</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>e; f; g; h; i; j</td>
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Key:

A= academic; b = social; c = ethical; d = infrastructural; e = assessment and placement; f = capacity development; g = early identification and intervention; h = outreach programmes/advocacy; i = consultation/collaboration; j = resources; k = class size; l = attitudes; m = curriculum and examinations; n = furthering studies; o = counselling; p = knowledge.

### 6.5.1 Diverse views on inclusion

Their views on inclusion focused on academic, social and ethical issues. There appeared to be contrasting views among psychologists when discussing inclusion. One participant indicated that exposure to learners with disabilities is beneficial to those without this knowledge. This is reflected in the following experience:

*It allows learners to understand and appreciate differences that learners experience.....learners with disabilities are able to access the curriculum (003).*
However, others showed concern about differences in curriculum for those learners with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. This is clearly illustrated in the following experience:

*The curriculum for learners with intellectual disabilities is not the same to those in the mainstream classes* (005).

The differences may be explained by their orientation toward segregated practices. Similarly some participants indicated that there is a need for meaningful learning for learners with disabilities.

*We do not need to just include people with disabilities without taking care of their needs, they need to be included but meaningful learning has to take place* (010).

Other participants’ experiences indicate the provision of alternate placement options in order to address the individual needs of learners with disabilities.

*When we place in other facilities it will be depending on the level of need but our first priority is to place in the mainstream* (008).

This may imply that all learners with disabilities will not be placed in regular classrooms all the time but the educational needs of learners with disabilities need to be met no matter where they are placed.

Participants’ experiences in respect of social inclusion focused on friendship within the school and community life for learners in segregated classrooms. The following extract depicts some of their experiences:
Learners with disabilities in resource units and special classes get to mingle and socialise with others....because they are in the same school ...during break time, lunch time they socialise (015).

Experiences of participants also indicate the right to education of every learner in their neighbourhood schools. For example:

All learners are afforded a right to education regardless of their differences and learn in their communities (013).

Generally, most participants viewed total inclusion as theoretical and not practical.

Genuinely speaking, inclusive education is a very good notion but in my own opinion currently it is more theoretical than practical (010).

Participant responses focused on the right to education in their neighbourhood schools, and academic and social inclusion for those in segregated classrooms. Total inclusion was seen as theoretical and not practical. Placement of learners in mainstream classrooms and resource units depended on the severity of the disability. Overall, meaningful learning has to take place despite being segregated or included.

6.5.2 Successful and unsuccessful experiences in implementing inclusive education practices

Trainee/educational psychologists indicated capacity development of teachers, assessments and placement, and advocacy and consultation as successful experiences while
barriers such as class size, physical accessibility, curriculum, examinations, learner and teacher attitudes and lack of resources were viewed as unsuccessful.

The theme of advocacy focused on developing school environments that support learner learning and well-being while capacity development of teachers, as a theme, focused on teaching diverse learners. This is best illustrated by the following extract:

*We have tried by all means necessary to advocate for the programme and the advocacy has included such practices as schools building ramps, building toilets that are accessible by children using wheelchairs and crutches. We have tried to capacity develop teachers in order that they can have the skills and knowledge to handle learners with varying degrees of disabilities (008).*

The critical role of assessment which focuses on screening for educational purposes was pervasive throughout the interviews.

*My role is that of assessment and placement so that I place learners accordingly. We assess learners so that we send them to integrated settings where they learn in general classrooms that are age appropriate (014).*

Experiences of participants about barriers to inclusive education focused on inaccessible environments, insufficient funding, large class sizes, and learner and teacher attitudes. The participants indicated that the government and schools are not committed to the building of inclusive school structures. The following extract clearly illustrates their views:
In financing of inclusive structures, schools are not budgeting for the building of infrastructure in the form of ramps. Sometimes you could get to a school and find a learner on a wheelchair trying to negotiate ‘mujecha’ (sandy soil) making it difficult for the learner to negotiate his/her way within the school environment. This makes it difficult for the learner and our programme to move on (009).

The following experience indicates lack of teacher skills in teaching diverse students, insufficient support services and school administrators who do not want learners with disabilities in their schools.

Sometimes it has been unsuccessful especially school authorities who prefer that you take away a learner with physical challenges rather than adapting the environment. Teachers lack training in teaching diverse classes and have inadequate support services (010).

Data also indicates that the curriculum, pedagogy and the examination system represent major barriers to inclusion.

You know how our curriculum is like, teachers would concentrate on finishing the syllabus and on making sure that they achieve a high percentage pass rate, and that is achieved by maybe concentrating on those average to above average learners and they disregard learners with disabilities, they say they have a negative impact on the pass rate and on completing the syllabus (009).

The negative attitudes of learners, teachers and school administration were viewed as barriers to inclusive education. This is reflected in the following extract:
Learners with disabilities are labelled and stereotyped in such a way that there is nothing positive that is seen from them. For example, I heard one primary school teacher saying in his classroom ‘I will put you in the special class if you do not improve’ (005).

Similarly, another participant indicated his experiences with a head-teacher who wanted a child to be transferred from the school.

It happened when schools opened first term and a primary school head-teacher phoned me saying that please come and remove this grade one child from my school. The teachers and children are running away from him because of his big protruding eyes which are scary (004).

One participant indicated that teachers and school administrators’ negative attitudes are due to lack of knowledge.

Some school administrators and teachers lack knowledge and understanding of the programme (007).

Large class sizes have been perceived as a challenge for inclusive education

Theoretically it’s (inclusive education) ok but practically we don’t have teachers with the skills to use sign language within the 45-50 class........large class sizes prevent teachers from tailoring their instruction to individual students (006).

Trainee/educational psychologists indicated capacity development of teachers, assessments and placement, and advocacy and consultation as successful experiences while
barriers such as class size, physical accessibility, curriculum, examinations, student and teacher attitudes and lack of resources were viewed as unsuccessful.

6.5.3 Critical roles in the implementation of inclusive education

The participants indicated that assessment and placement, and capacity development of teachers were perceived as critical. The focus on the role of assessment and placement was pervasive throughout the interviews. The following quote indicates the role of placing learners with disabilities in the general education environment while recognising that some learners would not benefit from full inclusion due to the nature of their disability.

*Our support roles include assessments and placement. We recommend in accordance to the level of need. We may place a child in a special class or special school but in most cases, we want to make sure that whoever we place, the first choice is to place in the mainstream so that the idea of inclusive education is better understood* (005).

The focus of psychologists appears to be on maximising interaction between learners with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. However, the less restrictive environment can be rejected depending on the nature or severity of the disability and home environment of the learner.

Trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences also involved giving support to the teachers in terms of construction of individual education programmes and how to teach diverse students.

6.5.4 Inclusive education practices in schools and communities
Participants’ experiences included raising awareness of learners with special educational needs and inclusive schooling among teachers, head-teachers, parents and communities country-wide. In community education programmes, participants’ experiences focused on resource mobilisation such as telling communities where to access assistive devices for learners with disabilities, school fees from non-governmental organisations, and rehabilitation from governmental and non-governmental agencies. Other experiences in communities indicate early identification and intervention and the availability of special education programmes.

The following quote captures some of the inclusive education practices in schools and communities:

One of the methods we use is early identification where community outreach programme awareness campaigns have been mounted in various communities so that parents are aware on the disabilities that are associated with our children. At the same time the importance of early identification and enrolment in schools so that they are not disadvantaged. Sign language in homes and schools are totally different and hence communities have been engaged to ensure what the learners are learning in school especially on sign language is also the same language that they learn at home (003).

However, one participant indicated that they do not go into communities:

We do not go into communities but the community members come to the school...our roles are confined to schools (009).
The differences may be due to participants’ experiences in the provision of inclusive education practices in communities.

Some experiences in schools indicate the placement of learners with mild to moderate disabilities.

In schools we managed to place those with mild to moderate disabilities within their local schools, though of course those with severe to profound are still difficult for us to place within their local schools rather we send them to special schools (004).

One participant indicated the movement away from assessment and focusing on the provision of psychosocial support:

Nowadays we spend much of time attending to incidences and cases in our schools by offering psycho-social support to different learners such as child abuse and bullying. These are mainly emergency cases and not planned work (010).

Such services are reactive rather than preventative.

Psychologists also network with governmental and non-governmental organisations that have an interest in the welfare of children.

We network with a number of partners provided they have a memorandum of understanding with our ministry. We network with the Ministry of Social Services on a day to day basis, they refer clients to us and we also refer to them...particularly on BEAM (Basic Education Assistance Module to assist vulnerable children with school fees), Ministry of Health and Child Welfare for
physiotherapy and assistive devices), PLAN International who are into learner welfare and also support in terms of infrastructural development...they pay school fees for the girl child (013).

The following extract indicate that some psychologists do not have teaching qualifications and they are assisted by remedial tutors and speech correctionists in pedagogical approaches.

Within our department we have personnel with teaching qualifications, like speech correctionists and remedial teachers who really know what can be done. We involve them as well in trying to capacity develop teachers and how to reach different learners in their classrooms (011).

Participants’ experiences included raising awareness of learners with special educational needs and inclusive schooling among teachers, head-teachers, parents and communities country-wide.

6.5.6 Impact of experiences on rendering support services

The following extract indicates inadequacy in the provision of services. This may be due to shortages of educational psychologists.

When we could assess the impact of what we have done we would discover that at the end of the day, we have covered so little and yet they are so many people who want the services (014).

Another participant echoed similar sentiments.

As a department we are trying but the province is too big, so we might not end up reaching to everyone (008).

Some participants’ experiences show the benefits of outreach programmes as compared to assessments:
So now we have adopted the community outreach approach not the elitist mode where we would sit in the office and then wait for them to come. In order to reach every one we need to be in the community rather than the office (009).

However, another participant experienced the following:

*The Department of School Psychological Services does not have adequate funding for outreach programmes and we only go out there when funds are available* (005).

The impact of these experiences indicates inadequacy in the provision of services due to resource constraints. This is something beyond psychologists’ control:

*Sometimes you do not have the resources or maybe the answers to some of the challenges.... there is a lot to do in offering these services to parents and teachers. These experiences are giving me a challenge that I don’t have to sit and relax* (007).

The challenges that some psychologists face have motivated them to do community psychology programmes.

*Different experiences have motivated me to pursue a Master’s in Community Psychology. All this is an effort for me to offer effective and meaningful support services to all our learners* (015).

Some experiences have made some participants to see the benefits of collaboration on inclusive education practices.
Stakeholder involvement is very critical because at the end of the day it is our job together. So if we come together and move together, we are likely to score. We need to involve everyone, the learners, education officials and politicians…everybody should be involved (013).

In summary, these experiences suggest that psychologists struggle to implement inclusive education practices.

6.6 DISCUSSION

The first research question focused on educational psychologists’ views on inclusive education. Participants’ views focused on the right to education in their neighbourhood schools, academic and social inclusion for those in segregated classrooms. Total inclusion was seen as theoretical and not practical. Meaningful learning has to take place despite being segregated or included. Placement of learners in mainstream classrooms and resource units depended on the severity of the disability.

There appeared to be contrasting views among psychologists regarding the right of learners to learn in their neighbourhood schools. Some psychologists indicated that the curriculum of those with intellectual disabilities is different from typical learners. Such an orientation by some psychologists suggests a deficit model where they assume that the problem resides in the learner and therefore there is a need to ‘fix’ such a problem. To ‘fix’ the problem, there is need for a specialist teacher who is trained to teach those learners with disabilities rather than general education teachers. Some psychologists’ are for full participation of all learners including those with disabilities in the academic experiences of the classroom. Such an
orientation, not only implies access to education but also acceptance and participation which results in quality education for all (Katz, Porath, Bendu, & Epp, 2012; Terzi, 2008). Such a view is consistent with Ajuwon’s (2008) findings. Ajuwon (2008) indicated that learners with disabilities can benefit from learning in regular classrooms while their peers without disabilities gain from being exposed to learners with diverse characteristics, talents and temperaments. Similarly, Westwood and Graham (2003) indicated that exposure to learners of all types on a daily basis allows typical learners to see that, just like themselves, learners with disabilities have strengths and weaknesses, and good and bad days.

Some participants indicated that learners with disabilities in segregated classrooms benefited from social inclusion. These findings are not consistent with observational and qualitative studies in Sweden, USA and Iceland. The studies found that learners with disabilities participated less in both structured and unstructured activities compared to their peers without disabilities. Notably, the studies revealed that learners with disabilities experience limited classmate interaction and playground/recess participation (Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz, 2008; Egilso & Traustadottir, 2007; Eriksson, Welander, & Granlund, 2007).

Some participants voiced concern on total inclusion, saying that it is it is theoretical and not practical. These findings are supported by Warnock (2005) and Meynert (2014). The authors rejected the idea of 100% inclusion.

The second research question focused on educational psychologists’ experiences regarding the support roles in implementing inclusive education practices. Trainee/educational
psychologists indicated capacity development of teachers, assessments and placement, and advocacy and consultation as successful experiences while barriers such as class size, physical accessibility, curriculum, examinations, learner and teacher attitudes and lack resources were viewed as unsuccessful.

Participants’ experiences included raising awareness of learners with special educational needs and inclusive schooling among teachers, head-teachers, parents and communities country-wide. In community education programmes they focused on resource mobilisation. For example, telling communities where to access assistive devices for learners with disabilities, school fees from non-governmental organisations, and rehabilitation from governmental and non-governmental agencies. Other experiences in communities indicate early identification and intervention and the availability of special education programmes.

The participants indicated that assessment and placement, and capacity development of teachers were perceived as critical. The focus on the role of assessment and placement was pervasive throughout the interviews. Assessment is used to gather information about a learner so that informed advice or recommendations are made concerning his/her educational or psychosocial functioning and attainment (Bowles et al., 2016). Such views by participants in this study support Farrell and Kalambouka’s (2000) findings that educational psychologists are viewed by teachers in different countries as having the responsibility of assessing and recommending resources for learners who experience difficulties in learning and behaviour. Similarly, Fagan and Wise (1994) found that educational psychologists spend the highest percentage of their time undertaking assessments. However, educational psychologists indicated
that outreach programmes are more economical than individual assessments. This is consistent with Dowdy et al. (2015) who indicated that an individual problem-focused approach to service delivery is not sustainable particularly when resource-restricted economic conditions prevail.

The capacity development of teachers focused on equipping teachers with the skill of teaching diverse learners in mainstream classes by adapting instructional practices so that all learners achieve in ways that are meaningful (Hutchinson, 2007). Khochen and Radford (2012) found that teachers constantly demand appropriate initial and long-term training for inclusion.

The services of educational psychologists in schools and communities focused on the provision of remedial and reactive support, and proactive programmes aimed at early detection and early intervention. Common roles of educational psychologists in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa include psycho-educational evaluations, consultations, prevention, intervention, research and evaluation. Such services occur at the level of individuals (parents, educators and learners) and systems (family, schools, classrooms, school systems and community organisations) (Fagan & Wise, 2007; Farrell, 2007; Lansdown, Jimerson, & Shahroozi, 2014). The perceptions of participants in this study clearly captured advocacy and awareness and consultative roles of members in the Department of SPS and SNE. This interfacing results in provision of comprehensive and support services. The SPS and SNE Department provide services on a peripatetic basis - that is, visiting schools for purposes of consultation and providing services (Mpofu et al., 2007). Few educational psychologists in Zimbabwe have teaching qualifications (Mpofu et al., 2007) hence the need to collaborate with colleagues in the department with such qualifications.
Barriers, such as examinations, learner and teacher attitudes, class size, physical accessibility, curriculum, and lack of resources were viewed as serious challenges to supporting inclusive education implementation. The views of participants indicated that schools focus on covering the curriculum and preparing learners for examinations. The findings are consistent with Farrell (2004) who found that mainstream schools are under increasing pressure to raise academic standards. Therefore, they are reluctant to admit and retain learners whose presence could have a negative impact on their results. Konza (2008) found that learners who may not necessarily contribute to a profile of academic excellence are viewed as not making a contribution to the overall appeal of the school. Similarly, educational psychologists interviewed by Suldo, Friedrich, and Michalowski (2010) reported that many staff in their schools are exclusively focused on the academe and lack concern for learners’ mental health. Research indicates that most schools perceive their primary mission to be the academe. Any focus on social–emotional development is frequently questioned (Del’Homme, Kasari, Forness, & Bagley, 1996; Lloyd, Kauffman, Landrum, & Roe, 1991).

The experiences of participants on teacher attitudes are confirmed by other studies. These other studies show that teacher attitudes and expectations are significant barriers to successful implementation of inclusive classrooms (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). Similarly, a review of literature carried out by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) from 28 studies about North American and Australian teachers’ attitudes towards integration and inclusion showed that teachers supported the philosophy of inclusion. However, few were actually willing to include special education needs learners in their classrooms. Some of the
reasons given by participants for negative teacher attitudes include lack of training in inclusive education, inadequate support services and large class sizes. The teacher to learner ratio in Zimbabwean primary schools is between one teacher to about 40 - 55 learners. Norwich (2008) found that higher learner to teacher ratios resulted in lower level of support in mainstream classes.

Bender, Vail and Scott, as cited in Vaz et al., (2015) observed that common practical concerns raised by teachers included lack of adequate support services, limited training and competence in supporting inclusive educational practice. Large class sizes do not allow for the additional individualised attention some learners’ need (Westwood & Graham, 2003). The concerns about teachers’ capacity to manage and educate learners with disabilities, and feelings of anxiety and inadequacy may manifest as resistance to inclusion (Poon, Ng, Wong, & Kaur, 2016).

Barriers to participation include the physical design of schools that affect learners with physical and visual disabilities to participate in the full range of school activities (Hemmingson & Borell, 2002). Participants in this study indicated that the physical design of schools was a barrier to inclusive education. This is consistent with views of participants on structural or physical barriers within a child’s environment which include lack of knowledge, bureaucratic inflexibility, and beliefs toward resource availability (Pivik, McComas, & Laflamme, 2002). Developing countries have adopted the philosophy of inclusion but there is insufficient funding, support or knowledge, to be able to assume an effective system-wide inclusive approach to all learners (Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler, & Guang-Xue, 2013).
The third research question focused on how educational psychologists’ lived experiences impacted on the rendering of support. The impact of these experiences indicate inadequacy in the provision of support services. The 2016 Annual reports of educational psychologists indicated inadequate on-going training on inclusive education. For instance, only one workshop on inclusive education was held. The 2016 to 2017 monthly reports show that psychologists spent most of their time doing individual and group assessments. This is consistent with the research findings.

The challenges facing trainee/educational psychologists are due to high attrition rates of senior educational psychologists due to high caseloads, understaffing and underfunding (Mpofu et al., 2007). This was exacerbated by the unfavourable economic environment between 2006 and 2008 which saw the brain drain of licensed educational psychologists (Nkoma, Zirima, & Chimunhu, 2012) to non-governmental organisations and universities within and outside the country. The internship programme depends on the availability of senior educational psychologists at each of the provincial offices (Mpofu et al., 2007) hence the brain drain affected the quality of training and the availability of school psychological services (Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002).

6.7 CONCLUSION

This study showed that trainee/educational psychologists’ support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe focused on assessment and placement, consultancy, and advocacy. Structural-organisational barriers such as class size, physical
accessibility, curriculum, examinations, and lack resources hindered the full implementation of inclusive education in schools. The most important contribution of this research is that trainee/educational psychologists will move forward with practice that is informed by research evidence as opposed to intuition.

The study has important implications beyond Zimbabwean trainee/educational psychologists. Placement of learners with disabilities and special needs in general education classrooms needs careful consideration. When recommending for mainstream classrooms, trainee/educational psychologists should consider class sizes and compositions. One possible option is to have only one type of disability in one class or by reducing class sizes when there is need to include multiple disabilities.

The research noted that psychologists work in a constrained environment due to high attrition rates of senior educational psychologists and the unfavourable economic environment. Such problems cannot be resolved soon. However, the study challenges the government to provide resources that will facilitate inclusion.

The other finding indicated the need to cover the curriculum and preparing learners for examinations. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary needs to provide guidelines for determining which learners will sit for examinations and also to give parents the option of exempting a learner with special educational needs from writing their terminal examinations and proceed to a vocational school.
The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute number P.36 of 1990 legitimises the placement of learners with disabilities in segregated classes. The implication here is that there would be misinterpretation of special education by stakeholders as a special location instead of a set of supports and services to be delivered to any location. Psychologists can make placement decisions based on the fact that when a learner requires more intensive services, then there is need for a highly restrictive placement or the belief that the learner has a right to move from more to less restricted environments.

The in-service training of teachers by educational psychologists is an effective method of improving teaching skills. The involvement of disability organisations, and having itinerant teachers who support a cluster of schools can provide on-going support and mentorship for general education teachers. The initial training inputs such as conceptual knowledge of inclusion, differentiated pedagogy, and practical observations or simulations may develop positive teacher experiences. Such a model that starts with in-service training workshops followed by on-going consultation in the school and classroom settings increases the impact of training. That way, the negative attitudes of teachers can be changed.

A system of early detection, identification and referral at community settings which involves governmental and non-governmental organisations is encouraged. Such a system can also provide support and training of communities on inclusive education practices.

In summary, Zimbabwean educational psychologists seem to be embracing the inclusive agenda but with a main thrust on assessments and making recommendations. These assessments
and recommendations are for segregated provision thus actually assisting in maintaining a system of segregated special education provision. This has been influenced, in part, by the medical model of human development studied at first degree level and the Education Secretary’s Circular Minute number P.36 of 1990. However, some have adopted the school based consultative role by working with different stakeholders for prevention and intervention.

6.7.1 Limitations and further research

This study has been limited to experiences of educational psychologists’ roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in three provinces only. Therefore, the application of these findings to other contexts requires careful consideration and caution. To better understand the support roles of educational psychologists in Zimbabwean schools and communities, further research needs to focus on the views of learners, parents, teachers, and administrators. Future research needs to also compare the views of trainee and educational psychologists by gender in order to get a clearer picture of their inclusive education practices.

6.7.2 Recommendations

There is a need to broaden trainee/educational psychologists’ roles by assisting schools to develop policies on inclusion which mandate learners with disabilities to be involved in the general curriculum. This will be done by working with other government and non-governmental organisations, by developing inclusive strategies, in making schools safe and friendly. To have high quality and appropriately trained professionals, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education needs to collaborate with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education so that on-
going training of trainee/educational is done by educational psychologists at local universities that are in each of the ten provinces of the country.

6.8 REFERENCES


**PART III**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS**
CHAPTER 8
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

8.2 SUMMARY

8.3 CONCLUSIONS

8.3.1 Research question 1

8.3.2 Research question 2

8.3.3 Research question 3
8.1 INTRODUCTION

International guidelines such as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action proclaim that learners should, regardless of disability, receive education in regular classrooms within their local schools; teachers are also encouraged to use child centred pedagogy to meet their diverse needs (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). Such a view focuses on normalisation and inclusive paradigms which counteracts marginalisation (Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016). Learners most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion are those with disabilities and impairments (Murungi, 2015). Therefore, they need provision of support services such as special transportation, free education, guidance and counselling, health care services and appropriate instruction (Powers, 2016).

Inclusive education is viewed as a basic right that requires quality education for all learners. However, this could be hindered by high teacher-learner ratios, lack of time of teachers, lack of policy integration, unclear roles between general education teachers and special teachers, negative teacher perceptions on disabilities and lack of school support (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). The role of educational/school psychologists who use evidence-based teaching practices may be crucial in such a challenging inclusive education setting. Educational psychologists
receive training that equips them to assume consultative, interventional, and supportive relationship roles. Such roles include working with learners, parents and the community with the objective of assisting all those associated with the teaching-learning process (Berry, 1993). The following paragraphs will summarise the international and Southern Africa perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and school psychological services respectively.

Professional associations representing educational psychologists in the USA, UK and Australia have been active in promoting inclusive education. For example, the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) and NASP in the UK and USA respectively have provided guidance for its members to foster inclusion. These countries have a pronounced relationship between inclusive and educational psychological services as they have educational/school psychologists and inclusive education policies in place. The countries without professional associations such as China and Pakistan have been found to have difficulties in implementing inclusive education practices. School psychological services are provided by inadequately trained ‘school psychologists’ who have little professional development and research background - resulting in poor relations with educators and parents. Such a scenario results in a significant number of learners with disabilities not attending school. There is, therefore, no association between inclusive education and school psychological services in China and Pakistan. The following paragraphs relates to southern Africa.

In South Africa and Zimbabwe, the discipline of educational psychology provides a wide range of services including those for individuals, groups and systems. Professional associations for educational psychologists and policies on inclusive education indicate a relatively strong
relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological services. In Lesotho and Zambia, there seem to be unsystematic and biased assessment of learners by teachers resulting in inappropriate placements. Such a thrust remains anti-inclusive. Most learners in these schools do not have direct and regular access to psychological services. The absence of national psychological associations that take an active interest in educational psychology in countries like Malawi and Zambia results in persons with various backgrounds assuming the roles of educational psychologists. This indicates that in practice there is no association between inclusive education and school psychological services in these country areas. The following two paragraphs focus on inclusive education, roles of educational psychologists and challenges they face in Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, inclusive education entails the identification of, and minimisation or elimination of barriers to learners' participation in schools, homes, communities and the maximisation of resources to support learning and participation (Mpofu, 2004; Nkoma, 2018). In school settings, successful inclusion results in learners' and their families' participating in the regular activities of the school community. This helps to meet their unique needs as well as contributing to the development of the school community (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chatarika, 2007). Educational psychologists within the Department of SPS and SNE have the responsibilities of carrying out psycho-educational assessments, counselling, consultation and advocacy, professional training, and resource mobilisation and research (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe, & Kasayira, 2007; Nkoma, 2018).
The Department faces many challenges with respect to the development and provision of services (Mpofu et al., 2007; Zimbabwe Action Plan, 2005). The ratio of educational psychologist to learners was 1:65,471 in 2018 (Nkoma, 2018) whilst a ratio of “1:700 is recommended by the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation” (as cited in Mpofu et al., 2007, p. 440). The Zimbabwean ratio far exceeds the recommended ratio thereby leaving many learners without the services of psychologists. In the late 1990s, there were high attrition rates of educational psychologists because of high caseloads, understaffing, and underfunding (Mpofu et al., 2007). This was further exacerbated by the unfavourable economic environment between 2006 and 2008 which saw the brain drain of licensed educational psychologists to non-governmental organisations, universities within the country and abroad (Nkoma, Zirima, & Chimunhu, 2012). The internship programme for trainee and intern educational psychologists depends on the availability of senior educational psychologists at each of the provincial offices (Mpofu et al., 2007). Therefore, the loss of experienced psychologists affected the quality of training and the availability of school psychological services (Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002).

8.2 SUMMARY

This thesis aims to seek in-depth information regarding how trainee/educational psychologists understand their roles and how this understanding shapes their support roles towards the implementation of inclusive education practices. The phenomenon of interest was the meaning ascribed to the support given in the implementation of inclusive education practices. Specifically, the thesis sought to address the following three objectives: 1) to explore
trainee/educational psychologists’ experiences in their roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education, 2) how trainee/education psychologists learn about their support roles and responsibilities, and 3) explore the measures that could be taken to improve the association between educational psychology and inclusive education.

Chapter 2 included a concise literature review concerning perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological services. A brief background on the history of special education in Zimbabwe and the roles of educational psychologists was provided. The challenges that Zimbabwean educational psychologists face were clarified. Such a context makes it important to understand how psychologists learn about their support roles and support the implementation of inclusive education practices.

Chapters 3-7 were presented in the form of research articles, all of which have been submitted to accredited journals for publication. Of these four articles, two have already been published in accredited journals.

Chapter 3 contained the review article entitled “International perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services” that was submitted to the Contemporary School Psychology and is currently under review. The purpose of this article was to critically interrogate what is happening internationally with regard to educational psychological support roles and practices in the implementation of inclusive education in five countries namely the United States of America, United Kingdom (England), Australia, China, and Pakistan.
It has been stated that children’s emotional, behavioural and other mental health problems arise mostly during the school years, (CPA, 2014). Therefore, it is imperative that the educational/school psychologist’s role in prevention, early intervention, and treatment of such problems in an inclusive school environment be interrogated. The ways of providing educational/school psychology services may vary within and across countries depending on their needs, resources and orientation towards inclusive education. Therefore, it seemed important to investigate how educational/school psychology services internationally minimise barriers to learning and exclusion to education and support the achievement of the goal of quality inclusive education for all. This bird’s eye view provided a context to the review of literature regarding Southern Africa and Zimbabwe specifically.

Educational and school psychologists have an important part to play in promoting inclusion through their work with learners, parents, teachers and a range of other professionals. Bowles et al. (2016) state that assessment, intervention, consultation and counselling are major functions of educational and school psychologists. For educational and school psychologists, psycho-educational assessments consume 40% to 75% of their work time though they prefer doing preventative activities, counselling and research (Harris & Joy, 2010). Educational and school psychologists are leaders in consultancy and are change agents (Evans et al., 2012). This is shown in recommendations and interventions designed for specific learners (Dunsmuir & Kratochwill, 2013).
Higher levels of psychologist preparation have been found to be associated with activities related to intervention and prevention. However, Oakland and Jimerson (2007) indicate that a country’s gross national product (GNP) influences the psychologist to learner ratio. Generally, lower ratios are found in high gross national product countries. Low GNP countries offer undergraduate degree programmes whereas high GNP countries offer master’s degree programmes. A country’s GNP thus directly influences the quality of school psychological services. Furthermore, school psychological services are pronounced in countries that have the education for all mandates, the discipline and profession of psychology is accepted and regulated. China, in contrast, a developing giant economically and highly populated, has psychological providers who can be equated to special needs teachers and does not recognise the profession of school psychology.

School psychological services in the USA, England and Australia provide diverse services for individuals, groups and systems which could be explained by the strong professional associations within these countries. Oakland and Jimerson (2007) comment that professional associations are needed to assume leadership for developing high standards and ensure their enforcement. Such services provide the parameters of school psychological services in terms of scope and function. However, 100% inclusion is not practised but allows for the least restrictive environment model. Services in China and Pakistan lack professional associations thus school psychological services are provided by inadequately trained ‘school psychologists’ who have little professional development and research background. Usually, this leads to poor relations
between educators and parents. Such a scenario has as a consequence that a significant number of learners with disabilities do not attend school.

The above indicates a relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services in the United States, Britain and Australia. Professional Associations in these countries provide codes of ethics, define the specialty of school psychology, and provide the model of preparation of school psychologists. The diverse services provided at individual and systems levels require that more learners with disabilities are provided with appropriate services and therefore removal of barriers to participation in education. The strength of this relationship is seen in the high number of school psychologists. The discipline of psychology is accepted and developed because the needs for services are recognised.

In sharp contrast to the USA, UK and Australia, there is no association between inclusive education and educational psychological support services in China and Pakistan where the profession is unregulated and there are no national policies that guide the work of school psychologists. The appointment of teachers with little grounding in psychology as ‘school psychologists,’ and little or no evidence-based practices result in increased rates of exclusion and segregation. This is seen as a barrier to inclusive education practice.

Chapter 4 contained the second research article entitled “Southern African perspectives on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services”. The article was submitted to the Contemporary School Psychology and is currently under review. This article provides a critical overview of the roles of educational psychologists within inclusive
education in Southern Africa. The country areas selected were South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Zambia and Malawi which represent 33% of Southern Africa.

Azuma as quoted in Mpofu (2002, p. 180) viewed the development of psychology in non-western countries as following the stages of pioneering, translation and modelling, indigenisation and integration (highest stage). The pioneering stage occurs when the relevance of western psychology is recognised and their textbooks are introduced into the education systems of recipient societies. The translation and modelling stage entail the application of western psychological concepts and technologies with little adaptation. The indigenisation stage is where new concepts and technologies appropriate to the local culture are developed. The integration stage, which represents the highest level, is reached when psychology is freed from an exclusively western influence and develops orientations consistent with local cultural characteristics. This implies that the education agendas of developing countries are influenced by the developed world where it is presumed that more expert knowledge resides and sophisticated ideas and systems are tried and tested (Pather & Nxumalo, 2013). Such a view suggests that most African psychologists are trained in western countries and thereby lack cultural responsiveness in their respective countries.

Inclusive education development in Southern Africa is challenged by poverty, limited or lack of human and material resources, large numbers of under-qualified or unqualified teachers, discriminatory attitudes, inflexible curricula, lack of clear conceptualisation of inclusion, the lack of participation of parents and community organisations in decentralised processes of decision-making, lack of policy integration as well as colonial legacies that perpetuate inequities
(Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Engelbrecht & Artiles, 2016). Some of the challenges might be minimised by educational psychologists’ roles and responsibilities.

The role of educational psychologists seems to be extremely mixed across countries. In some, the profession is recognised whilst in others it is not and may not exist at all (Boyle, 2014). This raises a question of whether a successful inclusion climate is dependent on the supportive role of educational psychologists or not in Southern Africa. In other words, the focus is on the relationship between inclusive education and educational psychological support services.

The acute shortages of educational psychologists in, for example, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and their non-availability in Lesotho clouds quality services delivery to learners. Families are challenged by disabilities and mainstream schools cannot support learners with behaviour, mental and emotional problems. The nature of educational psychological services differs between countries depending on educators and societal needs (Oakland & Jimerson, 2007). Educational psychology is found, for example, in South Africa and Zimbabwe where the discipline provides a wide range of services including those for individuals, groups and systems. In Lesotho and Zambia, there appears to be unsystematic and biased assessment of learners by teachers resulting in inappropriate placements. Such a thrust is anti-inclusive. Therefore, most learners in schools do not have direct and regular access to psychological services. Access to educational psychologists enables the provision of services to learners. These include direct and indirect interventions which focuses on academic skills, learning,
socialisation and mental health and to schools and families. Provision of these services enhance the competence and well-being of learners such as “response to crises and improvement of family-school collaboration” (NASP, 2010, p. 1).

The absence of national psychological associations that take an active interest in educational psychology in countries such as Malawi and Zambia results in persons with various backgrounds assuming the role of educational psychologists. For example, special needs teachers in Malawi and teachers with guidance and counselling certificates in Zambia assume the role of an educational psychologist. The certifying and licensing of educational psychologists in South Africa and Zimbabwe make the profession become established and respected and ensure high standards of professional practice.

The lack of policy, specifically for inclusion, in Malawi and Zambia makes the implementation of inclusive education practises gradual and difficult (Muwana & Ostrosky, 2014). There is a lack of clear and inconsistent understanding of inclusive education practices by educators, special education teachers, parents and educational psychologists. The training of educational psychologists in SADC countries need to take into cognisance the indigenous knowledge systems to find local solutions to cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies. An association between inclusive education and educational psychological support services can be found in South Africa and Zimbabwe while in Malawi, Lesotho and Zambia the association is non-existent.
Chapter 5 contained the third research article entitled “Perceptions of Zimbabwean trainee/educational psychologists regarding the training on their support roles and responsibilities in inclusive education” by Nkoma, E. that has been published in Psychology in the Schools, 2018, 55, p. 555–572. This article focuses on how trainee/educational psychologists learn about their support roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling was used to select 13 participants who volunteered to participate in the study. Three focus group interviews were conducted in three administrative offices, provinces that house trainee /educational psychologists and were formed using pre-existing groups. Inductive thematic content analysis was used to analyse data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process identifies and analyse patterns and themes which are consistent with the phenomenological approach. Each focus group transcript was, initially, independently analysed in order to determine reoccurring themes and then followed by identification of themes across transcripts so that unique and common themes were identified (Padgett, 2008). Direct quotes were used so as to ground findings and interpretations (Braun & Clark, 2006) and these were tagged in terms of focus group number (ie., FGI standing for Focus group I, FGII for Focus II and FGIII for Focus group III). The results indicated that trainee/educational psychologists had known their support roles through master's degree programmes, a single 2016 workshop, personally guided reading and collaborative work with workmates. Their views indicated inadequate training and supervision, and negative feelings towards internship after master's programme, payment of supervisors, continuing professional development points, lack of degree programmes in Master of Science in educational psychology, and location of conferences.
Chapter 6 consisted of the fourth research article entitled “Educational psychologists’ support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe” by Nkoma, E and Hay, J. that has been published in Psychology in the Schools, 2018, p 1–17. This study aimed to explore the support roles of educational psychologists in implementing inclusive education practices in Zimbabwe. In-depth phenomenological interviews were done with 16 purposively selected participants (13 trainee/educational psychologists located at three administrative offices and three experts on inclusion from three universities). Data was transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed. Monthly/annual reports from trainee/educational psychologists were also used as reference material. Three major themes emerged from the support roles: (1) diverse views on inclusion; (2) successful and unsuccessful experiences in implementing inclusive education; and (3) impact of experiences on rendering support services. Key findings indicated that advocacy and consultation, assessment and placement, and in-service training were viewed as critical and successful experiences, whereas negative teacher attitudes and limited resources were viewed as barriers toward the implementation of inclusive education practices. The impact of experiences indicated inadequacy in the provision of support services. Annual reports of trainee/educational psychologists indicated inadequate ongoing training on inclusive education practices. This study demonstrated that trainee/educational psychologists’ roles and responsibilities focused on assessment and placement, consultancy, and advocacy, while structural-organisational barriers such as class size, physical accessibility, curriculum, examinations, and lack of resources were viewed as barriers to inclusive education.
The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute number P.36 of 1990 legitimises the placement of students with disabilities in segregated classes. The implication here is that there would be misinterpretation of special education by stakeholders as a special location instead of a set of support and services to be delivered to any location. Also, psychologists can make placement decisions based on the fact that when a student requires additional intensive services, then there is a need for a highly restrictive placement or the belief that the student has a right to move from more to less restricted environments.

8.3 CONCLUSIONS

8.3.1 Secondary research question 1: Article 3

What are the trainee/education psychologists’ experiences in their roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education?

The results revealed inadequate training and supervision, and negative feelings towards internship after master’s programme, payment of supervisors, continuing professional development points, lack of degree programmes in Master of Science in Educational Psychology, and location of conferences. The experiences of trainee/educational psychologists indicate that Zimbabwe does not have a specific inclusive education policy but education policies that show intent towards inclusive education. Also, the education circulars do not specify the roles of educational psychologists. The lack of a policy framework is a barrier to quality education and support for all in an inclusive education system. Trainee/educational psychologists across the three focus groups appeared to have different training experiences which included in-service
training workshops, supervised training, personally guided reading, and informal collaboration with colleagues. The ZPA provides a professional identity, and education and training for all psychology specialities. The ZPA is currently launching regional chapters in the country’s 10 provinces to make psychologists participate in its activities after the economic meltdown of 2006 to 2008. However, ZPA’s efforts are hampered by a lack of financial resources for the continuing education of psychologists.

8.3.2 Secondary research question 2: Article 4
What are trainee/educational psychologists’ support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe?

This study demonstrated that trainee/educational psychologists’ roles and responsibilities focused on assessment and placement, consultancy, and advocacy. Structural-organisational barriers such as class size, physical accessibility, curriculum, examinations, and lack resources were viewed as barriers to inclusive education. The most important contribution of this research is that trainee/educational psychologists will move forward in a practice that is informed by research evidence as opposed to intuition. The findings further indicate that psychologists work in a constrained environment with high attrition rates of senior educational psychologists and unfavourable economic environment. Such problems are not quick to resolve. The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute number P.36 of 1990 legitimises the placement of learners with disabilities in segregated classes. The implication of this action is that there would be misinterpretation of special education by stakeholders as a special location instead of a set of supports and services to be delivered to any location. Psychologists can make placement
decisions based on the fact that when a learner requires more intensive services then there is a need for a highly restrictive placement or the belief that the student has a right to move from more to less restricted environments. In summary, Zimbabwean educational psychologists are embracing the inclusive agenda. However, the main thrust is still on assessment and making recommendations for segregated provision thereby maintaining a system of segregated special education provision.

**8.3.3 Secondary research question 3**

What measures can be taken to improve the association between educational psychology and inclusive education?

Zimbabwe has a critical shortage of senior educational psychologists resulting in intern educational psychologists or trainee educational psychologists not having adequate training in inclusive education practices. The number of trainee/educational psychologists has remained the same since 1980 despite the increased enrolment of learners. This is further compounded by a lack of Master of Science degrees in Educational Psychology at local universities. This implies that most learners, teachers and parents do not have regular access to school psychological services. If services are being provided to learners, these will be in the form of psycho-educational assessments rather than interventions and consultative services.

To provide psychological and educational interventions that support learners, teachers, parents, school principals and families from individual support to systemic interventions, there is a need to recruit more educational psychologists. There is also a need to recognise those interns with Masters of Science degrees in Community Psychology and Counselling Psychology so that
they work collaboratively in the Department of SPS and SNE. Reintroducing a 3-year internship programme under the Department of SPS and SNE for those trainees with a BSc Honours degree in Psychology can increase the number of locally trained educational psychologists.

The AHPCZ needs to consult with trainee/educational psychologists on the training requirements rather than putting more stringent training requirements such as registering as an educational psychologist after a Master of Science degree programme in educational psychology. Such a requirement by AHPCZ does not take into cognisance the fact that Zimbabwe does not have such degree programmes at local universities.

To improve the association between educational psychology and inclusive education, there is a need for more specific inclusive education policies which provide an official and clear definition of inclusive education so that there is no confused practice. This means that Education Secretary’s Circular Minute number P.36 of 1990 which legitimises the placement of learners with disabilities in segregated classes needs replacement or modification. Such policies should be clear about the roles of educational psychologists.

The in-service training of teachers by educational psychologists is an effective method of improving teaching diverse learners. The initial training inputs such as conceptual knowledge of inclusion, differentiated pedagogy, and practical observations or simulations may develop positive teacher experiences. Such a model that starts with in-service training workshops followed by on-going consultation in the school and classroom settings increases the impact of training thus changing the negative attitudes of teachers.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS
The results and recommendations made in this thesis will be disseminated through feedback to the Permanent secretary, Director SPS and SNE, and educational psychologists in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the AHPCZ. Similarly, it will be disseminated through publications in peer reviewed research journals. Two articles have been published as mentioned in the summary (8.1).

The results of this study provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of trainee/educational psychologists in Zimbabwe regarding their support roles and practices in the implementation of inclusive education. The following recommendations can be made from the results which can be used effectively to assist in improving educational psychologists’ practices in the implementation of inclusive education.

Zimbabwe has a low gross national product and therefore lacks adequate resources needed in the training and retention of education psychologists. Therefore, there is need for a minimum qualification of an undergraduate degree to qualify as an educational psychologist and get registered. Interns with different Master of Science degrees in Counselling Psychology and Community Psychology need to be recognised by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Department of Schools Psychological Services so that they work collaboratively together. Universities having lecturers with requisite qualifications need to develop educational psychology programmes in their institutions.

The AHPCZ needs to work in collaboration with the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education so that those people with a master’s degree can register with the AHPCZ as interns before being able to work.
The study has important implications beyond Zimbabwean trainee/educational psychologists. Placement of learners with disabilities and special needs in general education classrooms needs careful consideration. When recommending for mainstream classrooms, trainee/educational psychologists should consider class sizes and compositions. One possible option is to have only one type of disability in one class or by reducing class sizes when there is need to include multiple disabilities.

The findings indicate that the psychologists work in a constrained environment such as high attrition rates of senior educational psychologists and unfavourable economic environment. Such problems cannot be resolved soon. However, the study challenges the government to provide resources that will facilitate inclusion.

The other finding indicated the need for teachers to cover the curriculum and preparing learners for examinations. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education needs to provide guidelines for determining which learners will sit for examinations and also give parents the option of exempting a learner with special educational needs from writing their terminal examinations and instead, proceed to a vocational school.

The Education Secretary’s Circular Minute number P.36 of 1990 legitimises the placement of learners with disabilities in segregated classes. The implication here is that there would be misinterpretation of special education by stakeholders as a special location instead of a set of supports and services to be delivered to any location. Also, psychologists can make placement decisions based on the fact that when a learner requires more intensive services then
there is a need for a highly restrictive placement or the belief that the learner has a right to move from more to less restricted environments.

The in-service training of teachers by educational psychologists is an effective method of improving teaching skills. However, the involvement of disability organisations, and having itinerant teachers who support a cluster schools, can provide ongoing support and mentorship for general education teachers. The initial training inputs such as conceptual knowledge of inclusion, differentiated pedagogy, and practical observations or simulations may develop positive teacher experiences. Such a model that starts with in-service training workshops followed by on-going consultation in the school and classroom settings increases the impact of training thereby changing the negative attitudes of teachers.

A system of early detection, identification and referral at community settings which involves governmental and non-governmental organisations is encouraged. Such a system can also provide support and training of communities on inclusive education practices.

There is a need to broaden trainee/educational psychologists’ roles by assisting schools to develop policies on inclusion which mandate that students with disabilities be involved in the general curriculum. Working with other government and non-governmental organisations is necessary in making schools safe and friendly by developing inclusive strategies. To have high quality and appropriately trained professionals, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education needs to collaborate with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education so that on-going training of trainee/educational is done by educational psychologists at local universities in each of the ten provinces.
In summary, Zimbabwean educational psychologists are embracing the inclusive agenda but with a main thrust on assessments and making recommendations for segregated provision. This results in the maintenance of a system of segregated special education provision. This has been influenced in part by the medical model of humans developed at first degree and the Education Secretary’s Circular Minute number P.36 of 1990 mentioned earlier on. However, some have adopted the school based consultative role by working with different stakeholders for prevention and intervention.

This study has been limited to experiences of educational psychologists’ roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in three provinces only. Therefore, the application of these findings to other contexts requires careful consideration and caution. In order to better understand the support roles of educational psychologists in Zimbabwean schools and communities, further research needs to focus on the views of learners, parents, teachers, and administrators. Future research needs to also compare the views of trainee and educational psychologists by gender in order to get a clearer picture of their inclusive education practices.

Trainee educational psychologists are recruited by the Public Commission without any consideration to AHPCZ requirements for registration to enable professional practice. Further research is needed to determine the implications of not renewing practise certificates or failure to accumulate the minimum number of CPD points on their jobs.

8.5 REFERENCES


http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1411179/


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission from the permanent secretary, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

Appendix B: Permission letters from the Provincial education Directors

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form: Trainee/educational psychologists

Appendix D: Ethical clearance

Appendix E: Questionnaires

Appendix A: Permission letter from Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education
Appendix B: Permission letter from the Provincial education Director
ALL communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director for Primary and Secondary Education"
Telephone: 263585/264331
Fax: 039-263261

ZIMBABWE

Ref: C/426/3
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P. O Box 89
Masvingo
30 March 2017

Elliot Nkoma
Great Zimbabwe University
P. O. Box 1235
Masvingo

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE: PROVINCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS.
Reference is made to your application to carry out a research in Masvingo Province on the research title:

"PSYCHOLOGISTS IN ZIMBABWEAN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES."

Please be advised that the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education has granted permission to carry out your research.

Z. M. Chidga
Provincial Education Director
MASVINGO PROVINCE

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form
Appendix E: Ethical approval

Participant Consent form

Psychologists in Zimbabwean School Psychological Services: Support roles and practices in the implementation of inclusive education

Statement of consent form

By signing below, you are showing that:

1. You have read and understood the information document regarding this project
2. Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
3. If you have any additional questions you may contact the research project head
4. Understand that you voluntarily participate in the project and you are free to withdraw from the project without giving any reason for doing so
5. Understand that you can contact the research ethics committee at North-West University if you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project
6. Agree to participate in the project
7. Understand that the project will include audio recording

Name: MUSARA PESANAI

Signature: _______________________

Date: 12/07/17

Provincial: Masvingo Province

Principal Educational Psychologist
Appendix F: Questionnaires
Focus group interviews with trainee and education psychologists

Questions

1. Describe the documents (policies) that guide your support of inclusive education practices?
2. How have you learnt about your support roles and responsibilities?
3. Where are these training sessions done? How frequently per year?
4. Who are responsible and involved in your training?
5. What are your views/feelings with regards to the training you get? Is it adequate or not?
6. Describe your inclusive education practices in schools and communities
7. Describe your views/feelings with regards to the Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology as a prerequisite for registration with the Allied Health Professions Council of Zimbabwe?

In-depth interview for trainee and educational psychologists

Open ended questions

1. Describe the university training you received with regards to inclusive education in detail.
2. Describe your in-service training on inclusive education in detail.
3. What are your views on inclusive education?
4. Which experiences regarding your roles in the implementation of inclusive education practices have you perceived as successful?
5. Which experiences have you perceived as unsuccessful?
6. Describe your inclusive education practices in schools and communities.
7. Which support roles do you perceive as critical in the implementation of inclusive education?