



**MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND  
CURRICULUM STUDIES**

**EXPERIENCES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNERS WITH PHYSICAL  
CHALLENGES WITHIN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM ROOM? : THE CASE  
OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CHEGUTU.**

**BY**

**PASAYA MEDIA**

**(R13143Y)**

A Research Project Submitted To the Department of Educational Foundations,  
Management and Curriculum Studies

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements Of The  
Bachelor Education Degree in Early Childhood Education (BECE)

**October 2015**

**Gweru**

**APPROVAL FORM**

The undersigned certify that they have supervised the student, read and made recommendations to the Midlands State University for acceptance of a project entitled “Experiences of early childhood learners with physical challenges within the mainstream classroom : The case of a primary school in Chegutu.” This project was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the **Bachelor of Education Degree in Early Childhood Education (BECE)**

..... Date  
..... (Project Supervisor)

➤ E.Mangwaya, (PhD)

..... Date  
.....

(Chair, Department of educational foundations, management and curriculum studies)

➤ Alois,S.Chiromo,M.Ed, (Professor)

..... Date  
.....

(Executive Dean, Faculty of Education)

**RELEASE FORM**

NAME OF AUTHOR: PASAYA MEDIA

TITLE OF DISSERTATION: **Experiences of early childhood learners with physical challenges within the mainstream classroom: The case of a primary school in Chegutu.**

**PROGRAMME FOR WHICH PROJECT WAS PRESENTED:**

Bachelor Education Degree in Early Childhood Education (BECE)

**YEAR GRANTED: 2015**

Permission is hereby granted to the Midlands State University Library to reproduce single copies of this project for private and scholarly research purposes only. The author reserves the other publication rights and neither the thesis nor extracts from it may be printed or otherwise sold without the author's written permission.

Signed.....  
.....

Date

**PERMANENT ADDRESS**

808 CATTLE TRAIL

NEW CONCESSION

CHEGUTU

## DECLARATION

Name: PASAYA MEDIA

Student Number: R13143Y

**PROJECT TOPIC:** Experiences of early childhood learners with physical challenges within the mainstream classroom: The case of a primary school in Chegutu.

I declare that this project is my own original copy. Where secondary material has been used (either from a printed source or from the internet), this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements. I understand that plagiarism is an academic offence and I am aware of the department's policy in this regard. I have not allowed anyone else to borrow or copy my work.

Signed.....  
.....

Date

# TITLE PAGE

Experiences of Early Childhood Learners with Physical Challenges within the Mainstream classroom? : The Case of a Primary School in Chegutu.

## LIST OF TABLES

	<b>PAGE</b>
Table 4.1. What the learners with physical disabilities like about school.	41
Table 4.2. What the learners with physical disabilities like about school.	42-
	43
Table 4.3. Things that can be done to improve the experiences of learners with physical disabilities in the mainstream.	44-
	45

## LIST OF APPENDICES

**PAGE**

**APPENDIX A (PERMISSION TO CARRY OUR RESEARCH LETTER)**

**APPENDIX B (LEARNERS' INTERVIEW GUIDE)**

**APPENDIX C (PARENTS' INTERVIEW GUIDE)**

**APPENDIX D (OBSERVATION GUIDE)**

**APPENDIX E (LETTER OF CONSENT)**

## DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to a woman who has believed in me all my life, and has never allowed me to think that disability is inability, my husband who dared to believe in me, my two sons Chikomborero and Munotidaishe and all the people living with physical disabilities who are working towards change.

"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected and that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace."

-- [\*Kofi Annan\*](#)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I give praise and thanks to the almighty God for his continual grace and favor upon my life. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my project supervisor, Mrs. Manyunwa for the patience and motherly assistance she gave me during the writing of this research. I am forever indebted to her for her valuable contributions she made towards the success of this project.

I would also like to thank my mother (Joyce Mavunduke), husband (Trust Mabhii) and all family members who contributed immensely in terms of financial and moral support.

Last, but not least, my appreciation also goes to the brave young girl and boys of a Primary School in Chegutu urban who dared speak out so as to bring about change and also the educators of the school who offered me the support I needed to carry out this research project.

## **ABSTRACT**

Inclusion is a fairly recent practice that has been brought about by the Salamanca Statement of 1994. Various local, regional and international instruments promoting inclusion of people living with disabilities have been conducted however it is the researchers' opinion that most of the researches carried out on inclusion have focused more on policy, practice and educators' perspectives and the experiences of the child with physical disabilities in the mainstream have not been fully explored. This study sought to explore the experiences of the early childhood learners with physical challenges who are included in mainstream classes at a primary school in Chegutu urban. The researcher used the case study design because of its ability to gather a lot of information directly from the respondents which would not normally be obtained by other research designs. It is the learners' voices that play an important part of the school self-assessment, therefore they need to have their views heard because their opinions paint a true picture and also give some important indications of how inclusive practices can be challenged and supported. Early Childhood Education learners from grade one to three were purposively sampled to share their experiences within the mainstream education with the researcher. Interviews and the complete observation technique were used for collecting information. From the research findings it was established that the learners interviewed enjoyed being in the mainstream as they liked their interaction with other children, they also participated in most of the school curriculum activities. Inadequate accessibility to parts of the school was a major factor the learners said they disliked, all the learners also expressed that they had suffered from rejection such as mocking and social rejection and all learners expressed that there are activities that their disabilities prevented them from taking part in. Recommendations such as teacher adaptations to teaching strategies, physically adapting structures within the school by constructing gentle slopes on high verandas, wheelchair ramps and access routes to the classroom and respective areas were made.

## Table of Contents

APPROVAL FORM.....	i
RELEASE FORM.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
TITLE PAGE.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background to the Study .....	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.4.1 Main research question.....	6
1.5 Assumptions of the study .....	6
1.6 Delimitations of the study .....	6
1.7 Limitations of the study .....	7
1.8 Definition of Key Concepts for the purpose of this study .....	7
1.11 Summary.....	9
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 Insight into Concept of Inclusion .....	10
2.3 Understanding disability .....	11
2.4 Perceptions of learners with physical disabilities on inclusion .....	12
2.5 What the learners with physical disabilities like about school .....	15
2.6 What the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school .....	16
2.7 Things that can be done to improve the experiences of learners with physical disabilities at school .....	18
2.8 Summary of Chapter .....	24
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>25</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	25
3.2 Research Approach.....	25
3.3 Research Design.....	26
3.4 The Sample .....	27
3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments .....	27

3.5.1 The Interview.....	28
3.5.2 the children’s views on: .....	28
Advantages of interviews .....	28
Disadvantages of interviews .....	29
3.6 Observations .....	29
Advantages of using observation as a research instrument.....	30
Disadvantages of using observation as a research instrument .....	30
3.7 Ethical considerations .....	31
3.8 Informed consent and voluntary participation .....	31
3.9 Protection from harm .....	32
3.10 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.....	32
3.11 Data Collection Procedures.....	32
3.12 Data Presentation and Analysis.....	33
3.13 Reliability and Validity of Data .....	34
3.14 Summary .....	34
CHAPTER FOUR .....	35
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION .....	35
4.1 Introduction .....	35
4.2 Background information of the participants.....	35
4.3 Sub-research question 1: what do the learners with physical disabilities like about school? .....	36
Table 4.1. What the learners with physical disabilities like about school. ....	37
4.3.1 Comment.....	37
4.4 Sub-research question 2: what do the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school? ..	38
Table 4.2. What the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school.....	38
4.4.1 Comment.....	39
4.5 sub-research question 4: what can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school?.....	40
Table 4.3. Things that can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school. 40	
4.5.1 Comment.....	41
4.6 Discussion on findings.....	41
4.6.1 Sub-research Question 2: What do the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school?	
44	
4.6.2 Sub-research Question 3: What can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school?.....	47
4.7 Summary .....	49
CHAPTER 5 .....	50

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS .....	50
5.1 Introduction .....	50
5.2 Summary .....	50
5.3 conclusion .....	51
5.3.1 Sub-research Question 1: What the learners with physical disabilities like about school. ....	52
5.3.2 Sub-research Question 2: What do the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school? 52	
Sub-research Question 3: What can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school? .....	53
5.4 Recommendation .....	54
REFERENCES .....	57
APPENDIX A: LEARNERS INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	62
APPENDIX B: PARENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE .....	63
APPENDIX C: LEARNERS OBSERVATIONS .....	64
APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT.....	65

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Inclusion is a recent phenomenon in the educational settings. Unlike in previous years when children with physical challenges were educated in segregated settings, inclusion requires them to be educated in the main stream classes. The focus of education is now on providing equal access to quality education for every child in line with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Number 2, which seeks to achieve universal primary education by 2015 (Gunhu,Rwatirera,Mugweni,Rose & Dhlomo Thelma 2011).This goal can only be achieved by responding to the diverse learning needs of all children, through listening to their views, even those views of young learners with physical challenges. It is the aim of this study to capture the experiences of learners with physical challenges within the mainstream classrooms? This chapter covered the background to the study, statement of the problem, sub problem, assumptions, delimitations and limitations of the study as well as the definition of concepts, the chapter ended with a summary.

### **1.2 Background to the Study**

Binding instruments in international law have taken to promoting inclusion of people living with disabilities. These include Education For All which has become a universal goal and more recently, according to The United Nations Children's Fund (2007), the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).These polices have been put forward as a way to afford children with disabilities their right to education in a free and fair environment. Gunhu, Mugweni, Rose and Dhlomo (2011) stipulate that this act is in line with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Number 2, which aims at achieving universal primary education by 2015.

According to Chakuchichi, Chimedza and Chiinze (2003) the United Nations Convention (UNC) article 23, Section 1 urges member parties to recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. Hence it becomes the duty of the education system to respond to the diverse needs of all children. In order to get some important indications of how inclusive practices can be channeled, challenged and supported, it is important to listen to the views of the children, even those with physical challenges who are included in the mainstream schools.

The traditional approach towards children with special needs in the Zimbabwean situation was averse to any form of disability. Physical and mental handicaps were perceived as punishment or a curse by God or the ancestral spirits for transgressions committed by the disabled child's parents or forefathers. The practice was to kill or to throw away the handicapped child since such a child was viewed as an abomination (Hapanyengwi, 2009). However the myths around disability gradually got demystified. The Government also adopted The Education Act 1987 amended in 1996 which stipulates that each child should have the right to education regardless of his/her disability, race, ethnicity, culture or background.

Major achievements in areas of development for persons with disabilities came in the form of the Zimbabwe Disabled Persons Act of 1996 which advocates for non-discrimination in the provision of education and non-discrimination of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe in all spheres of life respectively (Chireshe, 2013). The cementing fact was Zimbabwe's adoption of the UNESCO's Salamanca Declaration alongside ninety one nations, under Article 6:11, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory. Winter and O'Raw (2010:8) state that the Salamanca Statement urged governments to give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual

differences or difficulties. This resulted in children with disabilities being able to access their basic human right, which is the right to education.

The Zimbabwean government embraced the concept of segregated placement as well as integration through the Secretary's Circular Minute Number p36, of 21 June 1985. This Circular gave schools the mandate to enroll pupils with mild disabilities and place them in separate classes at the same school with their peers.

Murinda (2005) points out that those children who were previously segregated in schools have been or are now being accommodated in mainstream classes. Inclusive education in Zimbabwe is a structure or system whereby all the different types of learners learn together. The learners can be identified as slow learners, gifted, physically challenged, visually impaired and hearing impaired. Inclusion therefore calls upon teachers to include all these learners despite their challenges, under one roof in a classroom situation.

Disability is a global phenomenon, hence every country is affected. This has led to various researches centered on education and pedagogy being focused towards inclusive education which has emerged as one of the most dominant issues in both school structures and service delivery systems.

Globally a number of researches have been undertaken to promote the views of children in inclusive education. For example a case study carried out by Bishton, (2007) on what children with special needs had to say about their variously inclusive schools in England concluded that the children were overwhelmingly positive about their placements, the study recommended that the curriculum needs to be broad and balanced because different children like different activities, therefore activities that teach academic and social skills are equally important.



Messiou, (2008) carried out a study to explore marginalization in a mainstream primary school in Cyprus. This study concluded that the voices of the marginalised children should not be used only as a strategy for better understanding of inclusion, but these voices should be seen as an essential element within the process of developing inclusive practices.

In Africa studies on inclusion have also been conducted by various researchers. Awal Mohammed Alhassan, (2014) carried out a study to examine teachers` attitudes in implementing inclusive education in primary and junior high secondary schools in two districts in Ghana and concluded that these teachers hold some positive attitudes towards inclusion, but had little knowledge of inclusive practices as evidenced by the limited use of instructional adaptations to meet individual needs, this study recommended future research into teachers` knowledge of inclusion and government policy document on Inclusive Education.

Mukhopadhyay, Nenty, and Abosi (2012) carried out a case study on Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities in Botswana Primary Schools and concluded that despite positive peer acceptance, this study revealed that regular classrooms in Botswana failed to support the learning needs of all the learners with disabilities. It was concluded that placement in inclusive classrooms was not enough. It was important to make sure that learners with disabilities received all the necessary support and services for accessing the curriculum and co-curricular facilities. The findings of this study confirmed the view that implementing inclusive education is challenging.

Research related to inclusion in Zimbabwe, has been actively considered since 1994. A few studies such as those done by Chireshe (2013) who carried out a study on students at Great Zimbabwe University in an effort to establish the current state of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. The results from the study revealed that the participants perceived inclusive education as having promoted positive attitudes and reduced stigmatisation and

discrimination of learners with disabilities. The solutions to the challenges that were perceived involved training more teachers in special needs education, implementing more community awareness programmes, having itinerant specialist teachers, providing sufficient funding of the education system as a whole and availing more resources for inclusion.

Mafa (2012) also carried out a study with secondary school teachers in the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province Zimbabwe in order to investigate the challenges of implementing inclusion in Zimbabwe's Education System. This study concluded that if the promises of inclusion are to be realised, skilled and competent teachers, adequately resourced schools, positive attitudes among all stakeholders, suitable curriculum backed by proper assessment methods and properly implemented educational policies should be realised.

Not much research has been conducted to explore the experiences of the learners with physical challenges who are now accommodated in the mainstream classrooms hence the purpose of this study. This would enable educators to get some important indications of how inclusive practices can be channeled, challenged and supported.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The practice of inclusion is a recent phenomenon that was brought about by the Salamanca Statement of 1994, this has seen learners with physical challenges being accommodated in the mainstream settings. It is the researchers' opinion that various studies carried out on inclusion have focused much on policy, practice and educators' perspectives. The experiences of the primary school learners with physical disabilities in the mainstream have not been fully explored. This research therefore explored the experiences of learners with physical challenges within the mainstream classroom? at a primary school in Chegutu Urban.

## **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:-

### **Main research question**

How do early childhood education learners with physical challenges perceive their inclusion in one Primary School in Chegutu?

#### **1.4.2 Sub research questions**

- What do the learners with physical challenges like about the school?
- What do the learners with physical challenges dislike about the school?
- What can be done to improve the experience of children's with physical challenges at school?

### **1.5 Assumptions of the study**

It is the researcher's assumption that;

- Children with physical challenges are included in the primary school in Chegutu.
- When children with special needs are integrated into the mainstream they are more likely to encounter various challenges be they physical, social or emotional.
- Children with special needs just like their able-bodied colleagues, can exist and enjoy their inclusion in the mainstream.

### **1.6 Delimitations of the study**

This research targeted the voices of early childhood education learners with physical disabilities from one school in Chegutu. Other schools in the cluster were not part of this study.

The study also explored the views of learners with physical challenges only. Learners with other forms of disabilities were not considered.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The following limitations were encountered during the study:-

- Financial constraints threatened the research. The researcher was unable to afford some modern forms of research such as Photo voice which would involve giving learners disposable cameras to record images to amplify their place in the world. The researcher also needed to provide articles for research and this demanded some finance since all activities in this study were funded from personal earnings.
- *It is the researchers' opinion that a fund be set aside by the relevant authorities in the education field so as to help those undertaking the studies.*
- Time was a major factor that affected this study as the researcher was also on teaching practice and could not concentrate fully on the research. The researcher also lost a lot of time when she had to go about seeking parental consent before undertaking the study. The researcher however, had to set aside a few hours on different days to conduct the interviews without disturbing the children's lessons, which in turn consumed a lot of time.
- *It is the researchers' opinion that the universities set aside a semester so that those undertaking the studies can fully concentrate on the research.*

### **1.8 Definition of Key Concepts for the purpose of this study**

The following terms were defined as they were used in this study.

#### ➤ **Early Childhood Education**

Brewer (1995) defines Early Childhood Education as education from birth through to age eight which focuses on the school experiences of this range. Kostelnik and Grady (2007) say it is education of children from birth to mid-primary grades. In this study the term was taken

to mean children from the early childhood class to grade four. In this study the term concludes that early childhood education is simply the acquiring of knowledge and skills by children from the age of zero to eight years from people outside the family or in settings outside the home.

➤ **Special Needs Education**

Brennan (1984), quoted in Chiinze and Tambara (2002) says special needs education is instruction specially designed to meet the unique needs of exceptional children. Hallahan and Kauffman (2000) say it is education for learners who require special service if they are to realize their full potential. In this study it can therefore be said that special needs education is there to fulfil the needs of children with disabilities in order to afford them a chance to equal education

➤ **Learners with Disabilities**

Gates (2005) looks at learners with disabilities as those with a significantly reduced ability to understanding new or complex information, to learn new skills. Sacks (2001) defines them as learners with physical or mental impairments limiting one or more of life's activities. In this study the term was taken to mean children with orthopedic impairments who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services."

➤ **Inclusive Education**

Winter and O'Raw (2010:3) defines inclusive education as, ".....an approach that seeks to address barriers of learning and participation and provide resources to support learning and participation. Laurin-Bowie (2009:20) says it is "the concept of a high level paradigm shift for education systems to include and serve all children effectively". In this study the term was taken to mean that learners with disabilities are being educated in mainstream education settings alongside their nondisabled peers, where there is a commitment to the full participation of everyone and the removal of barriers and everyone is equally valued and unique individuals. For example: Education for ALL.

## **1.11 Summary**

This chapter managed to give an overview of the problem, as it sought to capture the experiences of learners with physical challenges within the classroom. The study covered the background to the study and also presented the statement of the problem. The research questions were also outlined in the chapter, the researcher discussed the assumptions, delimitations and limitations of the study and definitions of key terms were presented. Chapter 2 explored various theories and literature related to the area under study gaps.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Various scholars, academics and theorists have put forward their theories and counter theories on inclusive education practice with regards to learners living with disabilities. This chapter attempted to carry out a comprehensive review of the subject which is under study, The literature review is divided into categories which include the concept of inclusion in education, how learners with physical challenges perceive their inclusion and what can be done to improve the experiences of learners' with physical challenges in school.

#### **2.2 Insight into Concept of Inclusion**

In the past few decades, provisions for learners with disabilities have changed. More learners with special needs are studying side by side in regular schools with their peers who do not have disabilities. This concept is commonly known as inclusive education and according to authors such as (Nguyet and Ha 2010; Booth and Ainscow 2002; Farrell 2000) inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education through mainstreaming learners with special educational needs into regular classroom settings, allowing them to learn side by side with their peers without disabilities in the mainstream. Basing against the backdrop of these assertions, learners who have previously been segregated and excluded are now accommodated in the mainstream classrooms.

This is supported by (Winter and O'Raw 2010 and Murinda 2005) who affirm that inclusive education is aimed at including learners who have previously been marginalized due to

factors such as ability, gender, race, ethnicity, language, care status, socio-economic status, disability, sexuality or religion.

This shows that there are various reasons why learners were discriminated in education in the past, making the topic of inclusion broad-based. When approaching the issue of inclusion it demands a multi faced approach which makes the topic broad as supported by Gershel (2003) cited by (Winter and O’Raw 2010) who concurs that, one of the major reasons for this broader approach is that many of these factors act in combination or interact and can result ultimately in marginalization or exclusion. Ainscow (2000) suggests that, focusing only on a single factor is limiting as an agenda, as other wider contextual factors that affect learners’ progress might be overlooked hence it is the researchers opinion that when challenging and supporting inclusion in education it is important to understand factors influencing it or lack of .

### **2.3 Understanding disability**

Disability is part of the human condition which according Muradzikwa cited in the herald 2015 affects 900 000 out of the 13 million Zimbabweans. Sacks (2001) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment limiting one or more of life’s activities. Hallahan and Kauffman (1994) and Gates (2005) view disability as the inability to learn new skills, to do something or a diminished capacity to perform in a specific way. Hence it becomes obvious that disability is an umbrella term encompassing many conditions and categories. For example when an individual is termed to be living with a disability they may not be able to do certain things or perform tasks which can be done by the regular person with relative ease. Osborn and Russo (2009) say learners with disabilities include those learners with mental retardation, hearing impairments, speech or language impairments, visual impairments, serious emotional disturbances, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments or specific learning disabilities.



### **2.3.1 Physical disability**

Hardman et al (1993) refers to physical disability as an impairment that may interfere with an individual's mobility or coordination, this is echoed by Hallahan and Kauffman (2006) who say physical disability are physical limitations or health problems that interfere with school attendance or learning to such an extent that special services, training, equipment, materials or facilities are required. Therefore basing on the backdrop of the above statement, one can say that physical disability is a condition that is permanent and prevents normal body movement and /or control.

According to Zindi (1997) physical disability is classified into two categories namely neuromotor impairment and muscular-skeletal impairment. It may be caused by congenital anomalies such as deformity or absence of a body part. Physical disability may be as a result of an impairment caused by disease such as poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, muscular dystrophy, and many more. Impairment may also results from other causes such as cerebral palsy, amputations, fractures, or burns that cause contractures. This is also supported by Heward (1996) who states that there are many different causes for physical disabilities these include inherited or genetic disorders such as muscular dystrophy. Conditions present at birth such as Spina-bifida or serious illnesses affecting the brain or nerves, muscles, such as meningitis, spinal cord injury.

### **2.4 Perceptions of learners with physical disabilities on inclusion**

This research has taken time *to give ear to the learners' own voices* in an effort to investigate early childhood education learners' perceptions of their inclusion into the mainstream. Various studies have been done by researchers in an effort to gain insight into how students with disabilities understand the concept of inclusive education.

Research conducted by Bishton (2007) showed that the learners were overwhelmingly positive about their school placement and they seemed to view the actions and company of their peers as more important in their school environment. However opposed to this idea Sonja de Groot (2005) argues that, children in the mainstream setting tend to feel rejected or neglected more than their typically developing peers and are involved more with the adults in the classroom than with their peers.

In a research carried out by Mukhopadhyay, Nenty, and Abosi (2007) during classroom and school observations, it was found that learners with and without disabilities freely interacted with each other during group work tasks and outside the classroom as well. It emerged from the data that learners without disabilities would restructure the rules of the games to include their peers with physical limitations.

From these observations, they observed that peer acceptance is a positive indicator, not an obstacle. It is the researchers' opinion that learners with physical disabilities feel that they are less discriminated upon when they are also included in the mainstream and they feel a sense of belonging. This is echoed by Konza (2008) who states that when students with disabilities are educated in the neighbourhood school, as opposed to a special class or school some distance away, they become part of their local community. Their school friends are likely to live in their neighbourhood and social activities are more likely to occur with the people they see every day at school, and they are more likely to interact regularly with people they know when out in their own community.

Students with disabilities also have regular peers as models of behaviour, problem-solving and other cognitive skills in cooperative groupings. These normal interactions are less likely if the students are being transported to a school some distance away (Wills & Jackson 2000). Hence this means that mainstreaming has a positive impact for all the learners as they are able to overcome stereotyping. This socialization will lead to non-disabled learners' attitudes to disability becoming more positive. Pizzi (2008) agrees that having friends makes children

feel special, accepted, and above all, normal This is supported Peterson (1987) who postulates that While normalization will not remove a person's disability, or make them normal, it does make possible a more normal and non-stigmatised life style .

It has been noted in a research carried out by Hergarty, Pocklington, Lucas (1981). that learners in mainstream schools have greater Confidence than those in special schools, though less than that of their nondisabled peers .They cite a teacher who commented that: 'Our experience has shown that even pupils with severe and complex needs can be educated in the ordinary schools, not only with no damage to their self-esteem but with a positive enhancement'. Such positive self-esteem will enable the learners to fit well in society. Slavin 1994 articulates that when learners with and without disabilities are educated together, they together learn life-long lessons and skills that are necessary for positive relationship with each other. This is also backed by research data from Hanline (1993) who posits that supported inclusion leads to higher frequency of interactions and fosters the development of social and adaptive skills of learners with disabilities. Research from Guralnick , Groom ,( 1988) indicates that when young learners with disabilities attend inclusive programmes, their peers are more accepting of them than learners with disabilities served in separate classrooms .The inclusion model seems to be compatible with the society's emphasis on Utilitarianism. . According to the Utilitarianism philosophy, the normalization principle should apply to all persons with special needs, regardless of their degree of disability. Howard, Williams, Port, Lepper. (1997) postulates that when people are segregated, labelled or treated in any way that sets them further apart for their differences, then their worth is devalued hence young learners with disabilities can achieve their highest potential only when they are provided with 'normal' opportunities.

## **2.5 What the learners with physical disabilities like about school**

Dickson (2008) articulates that when learners with physical disabilities are placed in regular classrooms they may have more opportunities to interact with mainstreamed peers; thus, there is potential for developing interpersonal skills including learning appropriate social behaviors. Hence the learners are able to make friends and they see themselves as equal to their peers. It is the researchers' assumption that being acceptable makes the learner not concentrate on his or her disability and have a sense of belonging. Such development makes learner a more acceptable individual in the society.

Schooling enables learners with physical disabilities to move beyond their comfort zone experienced in specialized classrooms. Dickson (2008) agrees that mainstreaming prepares the learners for meeting new people and helps them adapt to unfamiliar environments, hence through such integration pupils are able to learn new skills from their friends. It is the researcher's opinion that such socialization allows for greater independence later in their lives when the specialized educational resources may not be there once they leave the school environment.

According to Mafa (2012), Young learners with disabilities can achieve their highest potential only when they are provided with "normal opportunities". In other words learners with disabilities are made to feel normal and hence participate fully in the learning environment when they are in inclusive classrooms. They are made to feel that they can do anything a "normal" learner can do, if not better. Mainstream schools allow their learners with disability who have significant strengths in particular subject areas a chance to prove to their friends that disability is not inability. This is supported by literature from (Bandy & Boyer 1994; Carroll et al., 2003; Cook et al., 2000; Lombard et al., 1998; Trump & Hange 1996; Westwood & Graham 2003; Wishart & Manning 1996) who assert that changing attitudes towards people with disabilities requires, both, information about these disabilities and experience with people with disabilities.

## **2.6 What the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school**

Learners with disabilities are now being included in the mainstream and it is the researchers' opinion that when such learners are integrated into the mainstream they are more likely to encounter various challenges be it physical, social or emotional

Various Literature from (Bryan and Bryan 1978; Baker & Donnelly, 2001; Coster & Haltiwanger, 2004; Curtin & Clarke, 2005) have shown that Learners with disabilities are likely to experience social difficulties, low levels of social interaction, limited friendships, extended solitary play, low levels of social acceptance, poor social skills, and negative responses to their attempts at social interaction when placed in mainstream schools .This therefore means that learners with physical disabilities may struggle to communicate and make lasting friendship with their peers in school , Pizzi (2008) supports this view that children with physical disability spent time in solitary play is that even if the child with the physical disability got another child to sit and play with him/her that would only last a short amount of time before that child became bored with the sedentary activity. Gottlieb and Switzby (1982) quote studies from Weinberg (1978) which suggest that negative attitudes towards disability develop early, with children as young as four years 4 preferring able bodied individuals in comparison with disabled ones

According to Dickson (2008) by the age of three, most children have learned to recognize and identify emotions, such as happy and sad and during middle childhood, recognition of social emotions arises. Social which include feelings of shame and guilt and are typically influenced by interactions with others.

Learners with physical disabilities are at high risk for social rejection in mainstream classrooms. Symbolic interactionists such as Bandura' view that people act on the basis of the meanings they hold for others, it seems learners with physical disabilities are at high risk for social rejection in mainstream classrooms because of the way some learners construct

meanings about other learners, and especially those learners who have physical disabilities within a school setting leading to mocking and social rejection. Heward (2009) attributes such perceptions to society's harsh long-standing stereotypes, images, and labels associated with them. Jillian Pizzi (2008) comments that these children are most often rejected due to the fact that they cannot socialize in a physical way (running, climbing, jumping, skipping, hopping), which is customary to most school aged children.

The social adjustment of emotion knowledge is first observed in learners three to six years of age (Liew et al., 2004).hence when learners discover that they are different from others and cannot undertake in some activities or play some games that the others are doing this affects their mental health making it difficult for them to co-exist peacefully in the mainstream

Bullying in schools is not a new phenomenon, hence learners with physical disabilities are more at risk as they cannot defend themselves, this is supported by Yude and Goodman (1999) who reported that learners with physical disabilities were more likely to be rejected, isolated, and victimized by other learners without disabilities, even when the physical disabilities are mild. Bullying leaves the victims with a low self-esteem and having a negative attitude towards school.

Ainscow, 1991 states that when learners encounter difficulty, educators need to work out what they can do to support the learner. This can only happen if the teacher is aware of the difficulties being faced by the learner.Schools should be places where teachers and pupils are engaged in activities that help them to become more successful at understanding and dealing with the problems they meet.

The availability of suitable resources in the mainstream schools is a great challenge that affects learners with disabilities in the mainstream. Mafa O. (2003) carried out a research on the Challenges of implementing inclusion in Zimbabwe's Education System, in this research

a good number of teachers interviewed pointed out that buildings in most mainstream schools were not constructed with people with disabilities in mind. For example, wheelchair users found it difficult to access most school buildings. He further states that without adequate resources and suitable facilities, it will always be difficult to implement inclusion properly. This is supported by Sourav et al (2007) who postulates that some pervasive barriers to including learners with disabilities in regular school classrooms were a lack of infrastructure, this is in line with a study carried out by Ocloo and Subbey (2008) who articulated that the concept of inclusive education, was being impeded by inadequate infrastructure for learners with disabilities. The finding of this research is also in line with the findings of studies conducted by Gaotlhobogwe (2001) and Masimega (1999) who confirms that very little has been done to provide appropriate resources for learners with disabilities. Bult M.k , Verschuren O, Lindeman E, Jongmans M, J and Ketelaar M (2014) asserts that many activities might be hard for learners with disabilities

## **2.7 Things that can be done to improve the experiences of learners with physical disabilities at school**

The sixth era is based on the conviction that learners with disabilities should be fully integrated into regular classroom and schools. Friend et al (2007) postulates that Inclusion consists of physical, social, and instructional integration of students with disabilities into the mainstream. Singh (2007) also stress that students with disabilities are an integral part of the social fabric of their general classroom, and that students with disabilities should be taught according to their specific needs and not any predetermined set of curricular standards. This therefore means that when looking at developing the child holistically, learners with disabilities should be placed in the regular classroom along with their non-disabled peers.

If endeavours to improve learner experiences at school is to be successful, then a lot of investment has to be channelled towards the training of educators, as suggested by Buell et al. (1999) who argued that general educators would benefit from in-service training that

included "program modification, assessing academic progress, adapting curriculum, managing students' behaviour and using supportive technology" (p. 153). Teachers may not feel confident with inclusive education practices without the proper training support in place, such examples have been frequently cited in the literature (Mafa, 2012; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, and Lesar, 1991; Smith & Hilton, 1997; Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, and Lisowski, 1995). Hence the government, policy makers in particular, should ensure that the policy on inclusive education clearly finds its way into the curriculum of a primary school teacher.

Training of the teacher to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of the physically challenged is important as supported by Baldwin (2006) who posits that the purpose of an adaptation is to assist learners in compensating for intellectual and physical challenges, they allow learners to use their current skills while prompting the acquisition of new skills, This therefore means that adaptations can make a difference between a child nearly being present in the class and a child being actively involved. Carroll et al., (2003) postulates when teachers have to adapt their curriculum carefully, in order to suit the learners with special needs in the mainstream this broadens their expertise and makes the teacher more knowledgeable.

McConkey (2001) attest that Learners with physical impairments can have difficulty sitting and moving around, hence they will require well supported seating and positioning in order to obtain optimal functioning. Improper seating and positioning may actually cause functional limitations. To cater for mobility there is need for structural modifications to the schools facilities such as the building of ramps and assisted toilets.

The environmental is a very important aspect in early childhood classroom setting; therefore the physical arrangement and accessibility of materials are important considerations. It is therefore necessary to physically adapt play or instructional materials to enable the learner



who is physically challenged to participate. In support Heward (1996) views that good positioning will maximize freedom of movement, improve the ability to look at a toy and facilitate controlled relaxed movement. Therefore for total involvement of the learners with disabilities the teacher should arrange the seven play areas in a position where the learner can access the materials easily and require a minimum of effort to manipulate them.

Materials in early childhood classroom can be physical adapted by increasing stability so as to minimize accidents that might harm the child. According to McCarthy (1984), the learners with limb deficiency may be physically affected. With this deficiency, sensation is normal but the lack of reach and grasp is a major problem therefore the teacher should identify and stabilize all areas in the classroom. For instance a child with missing limbs might require the use of certain objects to help maneuver, it is the teachers responsibility to monitor that these object are stable.

Every child is different however when a learner has a physical disability; those differences may even be more pronounced. Hence when the learner is now placed in a regular classroom, they may not know how to cope, as a result they may face difficulties in getting around and this could lead to emotional distress, acting out, disruptions or even angry outburst in the classroom. This can be solved by modifying a classroom environment to make it more accessible. The teacher can arrange the chairs and tables in the classroom so that learners on wheelchair can maneuver without any problems and maintain such arrangement in order to accommodate the needs of the learner.

Some learners with physical disabilities may lack in writing skills therefore the teacher must allow more time for the learner and be more patient, remain calm and understands the impact a child's physical disability can have on his or her emotional, social, cognitive and communication development.

The teacher may increase self-esteem of the learners with physical disabilities by focusing on their strengths and providing them with opportunities to excel such as assigning leadership roles where possible. This is supported by Shevin, (1992) who concurs that teachers' attitudes regarding students' differences are critical factors that can influence students' success in schools. Hence the teacher should include the child in all the daily activities, and must allow the child to make an attempt at what others are doing and not pity a child. Praise the learner's specific effort and strategy. Self-esteem is an important component to almost everything learners do, not only will it help with academic performance, it supports social skills and makes it easier for learners to have and keep friends.

Learner's activities must not be limited to the desk or a table as this further isolates him or her. The learner's need for physical assistance may vary from constant spot check to close continuous supervision. According to McCarthy (1984) learners with limp deficiency can manage at ordinary school this therefore means that assistance may vary from day to day and be provided by either the teacher or peers. Therefore the teacher should be aware of any assistance the learner may require beforehand.

The Parents of a learner with disability are important subsidiaries who play a critical role in the learner's education as they are the ones with all the rights and responsibilities; hence there are also sources of information. According to Bowler and Gardner (1980) education for learners with disability start with parents who should take advice from health institutions. Therefore it is the schools responsibility to liaise closely with parents and guardians, to gather information about the learner and maintain the student records. It is also important for the teacher to keep a communication book and record all the area the learner has problems in so that the leaner can also be assisted at home. Schools should collaborate with a variety of personnel, such as the schools psychological services (SPS) and special

needs education (SNE) in order to possess specific knowledge and skills on how to best assist the learner.

According to Bult et al. (2013) learners with physical disabilities show significantly lower preferences for physical activities. Hence they easily get frustrated, and that leads to anger, estimating that many activities might be hard for them to engage in. Rehabilitation and support intervention should therefore not only try to focus on functional limitations and promoting participation but also focus on the dreams and expectations of Learners, trying to broaden their horizons and encouraging them to have dreams and make plans to achieve them, even though they might think they are unreachable.

Mainstreaming is rehabilitating process to all learners despite their ability and disability, this is also apparent in a study by Howarth which looked at the mainstreaming of physically disabled learners into regular schools, parents observed the development of friendships with nondisabled learners and they agreed that these relationships lead to the personal development and increased maturity, independence, self-esteem and ability to take the rough with the smooth of their learners. They were also conscious that other learners were learning about disabilities and developing realistic attitudes towards them.

Slavin (2007) contends that when learners with and without disabilities are educated together, they learn life-long lessons and skills necessary for positive relationship with each other. According to Mafa (2012:16), "Inclusion leads to higher frequency on interaction and fosters the development of social and adaptive skills of Learners with physical disabilities". In support of this Ajuwon (2008) quoted in Fakolade, Adonigi and Tella (2009:157) say, "Learners are more likely to learn social skills in an environment that approximates to normal condition of growth and development". In other words, inclusion makes both the learners with disabilities emotionally and psychologically as they interact with others. These

normal interactions are less likely if the students are being transported to a school some distance away (Wills & Jackson 2000).

There still remains a lot of skepticism and ambivalence towards the implementation of inclusion in Zimbabwe. Learners with physical disabilities often are stigmatized, both at school and home and often have negative school experiences related to their having a disability, and in their daily life. Although legislation protects the inherent rights of individuals with disabilities, that legislation cannot always protect them from subtle forms of discrimination and prejudice. However an ideal center should commit themselves to educating parents and community members on disability issues attitudes towards people with disabilities. The cultural and societal beliefs regarding disability will need to change drastically.

Mafa (2012:16) states that, “Research also indicates that when young learners with disabilities attend inclusive programs, their peers are more accepting of them than learners with disabilities served in separate classrooms”. This is further qualified by Stainback and Stainback (1991) quoted by Fakolade, Adonigi and Tella (2009:126) when they say, “Inclusive education is the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcome communities, building an inclusive society and achieving equal educational opportunities for all”. Inclusive education practice creates an environment which caters for learners to respect each other’s differences. This in turn has a ripple effect that is transferred from the school to the whole community and society as people are made to value and respect each other’s uniqueness.

## **2.8 Summary of Chapter**

Overall, this chapter reviewed the concept of inclusion and focused on key themes within the research literature. Issues explored included definitions of inclusion, Understanding disability, how learners with physical challenges perceive their inclusion and what they liked and disliked about school lastly the chapter focused on the rationale for Inclusive Education. These issues were described as critical elements for understanding what can be done to improve the experience of learner's with physical challenges at school.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The following chapter will examine the research methodology relating to how data were collected and analyzed. The aspects under focus are research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedures and data analysis plan, reliability and validity of data. According to Haralambos and Holborn (1995) methodology is concerned with research methods and general procedures through which data is collected. The research methodology used in this study was drawn from Lewis et al (2005) who presented several different methods of gaining the views of disabled children. This study sought to obtain perceptions of early childhood learners with physical disabilities on their inclusion in mainstream classrooms.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

The approach used for this research was the qualitative approach. The researcher found this approach was favorable because it tends to record the behaviors, feelings and attitudes of the respondents. This is supported by Slavin (2007) who postulates that qualitative approaches are normally appropriate for studies that seek to obtain participants' perceptions, opinions and beliefs on a phenomenon. Since the study sought to obtain experiences of early childhood learners with physical disabilities on their inclusion in mainstream classroom. The use of interviews and direct observations were the most appropriate and ideal for the researcher to use for the study.

The design was most ideal for the research because it tends to record first-hand the attitudes, feelings and behaviours of the learners which was in line with the main objective of this study to capture the experiences of the learners with physical disabilities on their inclusion

in mainstream. Qualitative approach is also a friendly research method as it encourages the learners to expand on their responses and in the process feel free to open up new topic areas which had not initially been considered.

The qualitative approach was time consuming hence the researcher had to spend a great deal of time recording all potential useful data thoroughly and accurately. The approach also demanded that the researcher observe the ethical principles of research. Hence the researcher spent a lot of time when she had to go about seeking approval to carry out the research in Harare and also seeking parental consent before undertaking the study.

### **3.3 Research Design**

This study used the case study design; the case was a selected primary school in Chegutu urban. A case study design allows the researcher to make an in-depth analysis of a single person or group and its relationship to a phenomenon which in this case the researcher targeted the voices of learners with physical disabilities within the mainstream class at a primary school in Chegutu. Case studies are normally conducted on rare cases even with a minimal number of participants. This case study conducted presented a picture of how the children who are included in the mainstream are coping by listening to their experiences.

### **3.4 The population**

Macionis (1989:43) defines a population as, “all people about whom a researcher gathers information”. For the purposes of this study the population was drawn from pupils in grade one to grade three from a Primary School in Chegutu town Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe which is about 107 km west of the capital (Harare) along the Bulawayo-Harare road. The school has an enrolment of one thousand one hundred and seventy five pupils and only four students were considered for the research. The admission policy of the school is inclusive in nature from early childhood to grade seven. The population also comprised of

four parents or guardians from each learner undertaking the research. The parents were considered in this study as they play a critical role in the learner's education as they are the ones with all the rights and are also sources of information on the pupils' medical condition.

### **3.4 The Sample**

To get a representative sample, the researcher used purposive sampling. Cohen and Manion (1985) state that when using purposive sampling, the researcher handpicks the cases to be included on the basis of judgment and typicality. Due to the limited number of pupils with physical challenges at the school, the researcher employed purposeful sampling as the best sampling method compared to other techniques such as random sampling, stratified sampling and quarter sampling. In purposeful sampling, the researcher selects the participants because they possess particular characteristics being sought (Cohen et al. 2007), in this case, learners with the desired characteristics were drawn from those with special needs, in particular children with physical disabilities. This study was based around case studies of four learners with physical challenges (Ethan, Jessica, Rufaro and Hemmit.) All pupils were referred to by pseudonyms throughout this report. The pupils covered a spread of ages from 6–8. There were three boys and one girl. According to Borg and Gall (1989) a sample is a small part representing the population. In this study, learners with physical challenges were selected because they had the characteristics that the researcher was looking for.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

For the purpose of this research, the researcher used the interview and observation methods for collecting data.



### **3.5.1 The Interview**

The researcher used the task-oriented interview with the interested groups in order to keep the balance between theory and practice, instead of going into the classrooms and withdrawing learners with physical disabilities, a different approach was followed which included inviting all the learners who were interested. Learners came together with those with physical disabilities to carry out activities. However only the information provided by the respondents under study was considered. When carrying out research with emphasis only on children defined as having disabilities, there is probably a danger of reproducing certain stereotypes through one's own behaviors and especially when one is working with primary-school age children (Messiou, 2002, 2003).

### **3.5.2 The children's views on:**

- Who their friends were,
- Who helped them at school
- What they liked about school,
- What they disliked about school
- What they wanted to do in the future.
- How they were able to maneuver around the school

After the interview the children were given plain drawing paper and asked to draw things that they liked and disliked about school.

### **Advantages of interviews**

The researcher used task-oriented interview methods with the interested groups because this approach is child friendly and is often used to make the activities fun for the learner, thereby

reducing pressure on them talk or to maintain eye contact. Melanie (2008) articulates that the main task of interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees says. Hence the task-oriented interview methods are learner centered and reduce the power imbalance in the researcher-participant and they are more likely to result in the child confiding to the researcher what they are really thinking or feeling because, activities such as drawing significant events are often familiar to them. According to Shaver et al., (1993)The advantage of using drawing with children is that it can be creative, fun and can encourage children to be more actively involved in the research. Essa (2010) defines drawing as expression of the unconscious and can be interpreted to give insight into a person`s personality or emotional state. Hence drawing affords learners time to think about what they wish to portray. The image can be added to and changed, which affords the learners more control over their form of expression, this is unlike an interview situation where the responses tend to be quicker and immediate.

### **Disadvantages of interviews**

Using interviews have their drawbacks as they lack anonymity and the interviewee might tell you what she thinks you want to hear. The respondent may also have forgotten some of the information or may be too embarrassed or terrified to tell you the truth. This is called the response effect. The interview is costly in terms of time and money to travel (Masuku 1999:54).There is a chance of missing the interviewee at the interview venue even after making an appointment. The interviewer needs a great deal of concentration because of the speed at which the responses come in the face to face and telephone interviews

### **3.6 Observations**

In this study the researcher used the complete observation technique because it enabled her to observe the activities and events as they happened. Observation is the gathering of

information through noting facts or occurrences so as to give judgment and analysis vis-à-vis a given topic or area of study (Bodgan and Biklen, 1992). This is also supported by Heslin (1999) who acknowledges that observations are self-explanatory and document in detail experiences of people in particular settings

The researcher was able to observe directly the verbal and non-verbal cues set off by the learners, in the classrooms and in the playground during unscheduled hours. The researcher was observing

- Who the children tended to play with during break time
- Their favored activities in the classrooms and in the playground
- Who helped them at school
- where they liked to hang around
- How they maneuvered around the school

### **Advantages of using observation as a research instrument**

Often actions speak louder than words. Seeing what happens in context helps the researcher to have a better understanding of how pupils are coping in the mainstream, also the researcher can identify other important issues that might have been overlooked. For example the learner may forget to mention important facts but through the use of observation the researcher may be able to pick on the cues.

### **Disadvantages of using observation as a research instrument**

The greatest disadvantage of using this method was that the researcher could only observe a particular learner at any given place and time. The presence of the researcher tended to

influence the learners to change their behavior when they thought that the researcher was observing them, thereby impacting on the significance of the data. Recording was difficult, as written notes could not capture everything important, and also there was a danger of misinterpreting the pupils' actions.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

It must be noted that an appropriate ethical framework is especially important when researching children. Children's views are to be respected ((Morrow & Richards, 1996) as well as their freedom to take (or not take) part in a research project. The researcher followed the ethical guidelines required to undertake research carried out at schools. These include the obtaining of informed consent from the school and from the parents of the learners who were participating in the research.

### **3.8 Informed consent and voluntary participation**

After the research had been fully explained, the researcher firstly managed to capture the teachers' interest and was able to obtain approval to approach the children. It was explained to the learners that their participation was not compulsory and that they could simply say no. None of the children that were approached refused to take part, instead they were keen to participate. Since the participants are under age they were given consent forms and their parents were required to sign as to show their willingness for their child to participate in the research.

The researcher regularly checked ongoing interest with the pupils. This involved checking with the children if they still wanted to take part in all the research activities, assuring them that they could withdraw at any time and picking up on any non-verbal cues of discomfort or unhappiness.

### **3.9 Protection from harm**

(Boyden and Ennew 1997; Boyden 2000) postulates that those carrying out research are responsible for protecting children from placing themselves at risk, even where a child might be willing to participate and voice their views. The researcher ensured and assured the participants that they were not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm. During the study the researcher aimed to be honest, respectful and empathetic towards all participants. However if the children had disclosed anything of a child protection nature to the researcher, this would have had to be passed on to the relevant authorities, but this was not the case.

### **3.10 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

The researcher, participant and their parents had a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study. All the participants' information and responses that were shared during the study were kept private and the results presented in an anonymous manner so as to protect the identities of the participants.

### **3.11 Data Collection Procedures**

The collection of data through different sources, and through the use of different methods, was thought to be very important for the enhancement of the validity of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, (2006); Lincoln& Guba, 1985).hence the children under investigation were identified by taking into account two perspectives which included the researcher's observations in the school and the teacher's point of view.

Once the learners had been identified the researcher sought parental consent, and when granted proceeded to interview the parents about the child's condition. The interview for

each participant took less than 10 minutes. The objective of the open ended interview questions was to gain a better understanding of the child's medical condition, and these were responded to (Appendix, B).

The researcher managed to conduct an open ended guided interview with the learners see guide (Appendix, C), in order to gain a better understanding of their experiences in the mainstream.

Since all the views sought were about school, the research activities took place in an authentic environment for the learner, which was an infant classroom at the school. However Instead of going into the classroom and withdrawing those children who had physical disabilities. The researcher conducted structured 60-minute sessions activity days once every week for a month, including all the interested learners together with those under study to come and participate in order to make research enjoyable for all the children.

The interviews were supported by a puppet called Bobo, through which all the interview questions and interaction were passed. The learners asked Bobo different questions and they even gave him advice on how to deal with certain situations. However only those response from the learners under investigated were recorded. After the interview with the puppet each learner was provided with papers to draw things they liked or disliked about school. The researcher also observed the learners in their classrooms and in the playground during unscheduled hours.

### **3.12 Data Presentation and Analysis**

In the analysis, the researcher adopted both the qualitative approach in her presentation meaning. The procedures are meant to bring an understanding of the issues under research. According to Gaye (1999) data analysis may be described as an attempt to organize, account for and provide explanations of data so that some kind of sense may be made. Hence findings will be presented in a chart

### **3.13 Reliability and Validity of Data**

According to Gilbert (1991) reliability is the extent to which the means of collecting data produce findings that are more or less the same from time to time. Cohen and Manion (1985) state that validity is the degree to which correct inferences can be made on the basis of the results obtained from the instruments. To ensure the reliability and validity of data in this study, the researcher adopted the use of two methods of collecting data. In this study, the use of interviews and observations were used.

### **3.14 Summary**

The research methodology section of the research study is the backbone of the researcher's data analysis without which one cannot effectively address any of the given objectives or assumptions. Therefore using the correct and approved systematic, procedures ensure that the researcher arrives at the most appropriate conclusions. Masuku (1999:51) posits that "validity of findings is ensured when the researcher follows and tries the tested path." Furthermore, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection methods and instruments, data collection procedures, data presentation and analysis, reliability and validity were added in this chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter sought to present and analyze the data that were collected during the study. During the presentation and analysis of data, the researcher took into consideration the use of the interview method to source for data from learners with physical challenges and their guardians. The findings from the researcher's observations were also integrated during the presentation. The problem under study focused on how learners with physical challenges on their inclusion in the main stream at a school in Chegutu. The research sought to answer the following questions.

- **Sub-research Question 1:** What do the learners with physical disabilities like about school?
- **Sub-research Question 2:** What do the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school?
- **Sub-research Question 3:** What can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school?

#### 4.2 Background information of the participants

This study was based around a case study of four learners with physical challenges (Ethan, Jessica, Rufaro and Hemmit,) .All the learners in this research have been referred to using pseudonyms to protect their identities, but their medical conditions are true.

*Hermmit (9 years old, grade 1)*



*Hermit is a boy who suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy according to the information provided by his parents. He is able to walk by himself but with great difficulties and pain .he uses a wheelchair to manoeuvre around the school .hermit is a reserved boy who hardly speaks and when he does his speech is blurred and delayed .he receives individual support from his career, teacher and friends.*

*Ethan (8 years old, grade 1)*

*Ethan is a boy of short stature and bowed legs who suffers from Hypophosphemic rickets .He is able to walk around the school unaided but with a limp in his step .Ethan is outgoing and very talkative, he is able to take part in most sporting activities but tires easily.*

***Rufaro (12 years old, grade 2)***

*Rufaro is a boy who suffers from Cerebral Palsy he has involuntary movements and lack muscle tone in his left hand although he has control of his right hand he experiences constants jerky movements. Rufaro uses a wheel chair to manoeuvre around the school. Rufaro has trouble in speaking and in most instants his friend who is always close to him would interpret to the researcher.*

***Jessica (10 years old, grade 3)***

*Jessica is a delightful little girl who was born with Spina Bifida.She is paralyzed from the waist down and uses a wheel chair to manoeuvre around the school. Jessica is a very petite girl and is easily comfortable around adults.*

#### **4.3 Sub-research question 1: what do the learners with physical disabilities like about school?**

During the interview the learners had this to say about the question asked:-

**Table 4.1. What the learners with physical disabilities like about school.**

<b>Learners</b>	<b>Answer</b>
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Hermit</b>	<i>I like being with my friends and enjoy it when my friends take turns to push me around. Like during break time I get to sit at the benches and we share Jiggies(chips) .In class I enjoy mathematics and drawing of all subjects</i>
<b>Ethan</b>	<i>I love coming to school in the school bus and playing with my friends, we exchange toys and make different funny hats .Do you know that I can climb trees, we do it all the time with my friends and I also love writing Content, Shona, Computers and English.</i>
<b>Rufaro</b>	<i>I love playing with my friends and enjoy reading story books .Best of all is I love home time when I get to go back home.</i>
<b>Jessica</b>	<i>I enjoy all subjects and prefer playing with my friends' .I am the class monitor and I also help the others in reading and other subjects. I love break time because I get to play with my friends and play doll house at the grounds ,we pretend that my chair is a big car .when I am in class I love artwork because the teacher always displays my work and when I come into class I always see my work and I become so happy. I am always top five in the class so I enjoy coming to school</i>

**4.3.1 Comment:** From the responses given by the learners interviewed, all the learners confessed that they had something that they liked about school. However basing on the observations carried out, Ethan was the most popular and commanded a huge group of followers whom he associated with, some of his friends were also from the upper grades. Jessica seemed to be popular and also moved with a group of three girls who never left her side. Hermit would often socialize with kids in the playground but was always kept the company of a three boys and his sister. This interaction is in line with a research carried out by Mukhopadhyay, Nenty, and Abosi (2007) who discovered that during classroom and school observations, the learners with and without disabilities freely interacted with each other during group work tasks and outside the classroom as well.

#### 4.4 Sub-research question 2: what do the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school?

During the interview the learners had this to say about the question asked

**Table 4.2. What the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school.**

Learners Name	Answer
<b>Hermit</b>	<i>I don't like coming to school because others laugh at me saying that I bring my mother to school and during the lessons I get so tired of sitting that my body hurts. I hate it when I cannot play games in the playground and during physical education everyone leaves me sitting alone and I feel like crying something inside of me feels so sad.</i>
<b>Ethan</b>	<i>I don't like coming to school because there are boys who laugh at my head saying "musoro bhangu" (big head), "haagone kufamba zvakakanaka" (he cannot walk properly) and take our food during break time. I always come last during sports and other pupils laugh at me and it makes me feel different. I don't like it when we have to walk around picking papers it makes me feel tired and my legs will be sore also the headmaster is always telling us to go and pick papers. I don't like it that I am always caught trying to run away from the prefects. The school verandah is so high, I have problems getting on it when moving around or running away from prefects.</i>

<p><b>Rufaro</b></p>	<p><i>I don't like most of the kids because they laugh at me and call me stupid, everyone is always looking at me. I do not like going to assembly .I wish I never had to come to school because I cannot talk or stand up like everyone and the teacher never gives me a chance. The teacher calls me lazy and most of the kids say that I wear nappies it makes me sad .i hate coming to school because when I am dropped by the car I have to wait for someone to come and push me because I cannot push the wheelchair up the verandah .kids are laughing and scolding me when I drop colours in the class and the teacher makes me sit alone .I cannot carry my bag. I used to be friends with Eldridge and Tonderai but the teacher scolded Eldridge and said if he continues being my friend he will fail now he does not want me to come close to him.</i></p>
<p><b>Jessica</b></p>	<p><i>I do not like it because it reminds me of the things that I cannot do. I cannot take part in all the activities that other children do, I can't run, walk or sit in the chairs .other children feel sorry for me or make fun of me .The teacher never picks me to write on the board even when I lift my hands. I hate bathroom time because my chair does not fit in the toilet so aunty passes me a jug outside where boys are standing and laughing at me.one day aunty shouted at me because I said I wanted to poo and she said 'unonetsa unombodyirei mangwanani' (you are a problem, why do you even eat in the morning), so now I avoid eating in the morning.</i></p>

**4.4.1 Comment:** From the responses given by the learners interviewed, one key factor which was highlighted was inadequate accessibility to parts of the school. The learner's environment has a great impact on the experiences and extent of disability. An inaccessible environment creates barriers to the learners' participation and inclusion in the mainstream.this resonates well with what the researcher observed at the school. Although the school has wheel chair ramps, these were only built at the senior block, the junior block did not have any ramps and the verandas were very high. The toilets were not wide enough for a wheelchair to fit and the researcher also observed that most of the chalkboards in most classes were too high for a child in a wheelchair to reach. These observations were

supported by teachers interviewed in a research carried out by Mafa O (2003) who pointed out that buildings in most mainstream schools were not constructed with people with disabilities in mind. For example, wheelchair users found it difficult to access most school buildings

#### 4.5 sub-research question 4: what can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school?

During the interview the learners had this to say about the question asked

**Table 4.3. Things that can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school.**

<b>Learners Name</b>	<b>Answer</b>
<b>Hermit</b>	<i>I wish there were other games and sports that children like me could do when others are doing their own games so that I am not left alone sitting. I also wish the toilets were big enough for those children who use wheelchairs.</i>
<b>Ethan</b>	<i>Children who laugh at other kids should be removed from school because it was God who created me like this and they should not have to laugh at me. They should remove the verandas so that everyone can walk nicely even the kids on the wheelchairs</i>
<b>Rufaro</b>	<i>Children should be taught not to stare at kids who are disabled because it makes us very sad and shy. Teachers should also be nicer to children who have disabilities because we don't mean to be slow at everything we do and the children with disabilities should be able to go home early because being at school most of the times is painful. Build verandas for wheel chairs and bigger toilets for kids wish they stop assembly because I cannot see anything .give children nicer teachers</i>
<b>Jessica</b>	<i>I wish children with disabilities can all be good so that their teachers like them .put more</i>

	<p><i>activities for children with disabilities that do not remind them of the things that they cannot do, lower the boards .provide bigger toilets and small verandas .I also wish the aunty and teachers who are mean is never allowed to work with all the kids.. I want the boy's toilet to be put far from the girls. Provide nice chairs and desks to sit on.</i></p>
--	---

**4.5.1 Comment:** From the responses given by the learners interviewed, all the children attested that there was something that could be done to improve the learners with physical disabilities experience at school?

#### **4.6 Discussion on findings**

##### **Sub-research Question 1: What do the learners with physical disabilities like about school?**

The general conclusion gathered from the children about their likes in the mainstream is that their experiences were overwhelmingly positive .when asked about what they liked at school the children mentioned a wide variety of activities, all the children (Hermit, Rufaro, Jessica and Ethan) confessed that *they liked playing with their friends*. This is in line with the research conducted by Bishton (2007) who showed that the learners with disabilities were overwhelmingly positive about their school placement and they seemed to view the actions and company of their peers as important in their school environment. This is also supported by Dickson (2008) articulates that when learners with physical disabilities are placed in regular classrooms they may have more opportunities to interact with mainstreamed peers.

During break and lunch time the learners get to sit down refresh and eat and this is also the time where there are engaged in play .hence basing on the interview answers provided by the (Hermit, Ethan and Jessica) they all mentioned that they undertook various activities at the playground with their friends which included climbing trees, making hats, imaginative play

and sharing of food. This is also supported by Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963) theory of child development which state that children learn new behaviors from observing other people. These children learnt new skills and also taught the other children .This is evidenced by observations carried out by the researcher at the school grounds which showed that other learners would include the learners with physical disabilities in their games during play times.

Rufaro who seemed distant and had the least of activities mentioned during the interview just mentioned playing with friends, however during observation the teacher witnessed Rufaro being pushed around by a group of friends on several occasions when asked by the researcher what game they were playing Rufaro stated that *:-we are playing cops and robbers I am the good cop and Tonderai and others are pretending to be my partners who drive the car , and when we run I tell them were the bad guys are going* .This type of play time collaboration was also evident in a research carried out by Mukhopadhyay et al (2007) who observed that learners without disabilities would restructure the rules of the games to include their peers with physical limitations. Slavin 1994 articulates that when learners with and without disabilities are educated together, they together learn life-long lessons and skills that are necessary for positive relationship with each other.this is supported by Jillian Pizzi (2008) who advocates that Having friends makes children feel special, accepted, and above all, normal.

Jessica mentioned that she enjoyed the fact that she was a group leader and she helps other learners with their classwork. Hence the assigning of leadership roles where possible helps improve the leaners confidence. This is supported by Shevin, (1992) who concurs that teachers' attitudes regarding students' differences are critical factors that can influence students' success in schools. Hence the teacher should include the child in all the daily activities, and must allow the child to make an attempt at what others are doing and not pity a child.

All the children had classroom lessons that they enjoyed – Jessica had the most subjects that she liked, she attested that she liked *all the subjects*, Hermit named *mathematics, drawings and content*, Ethan liked *content, Shona, computers and English* and Rufaro enjoys *reading story books*. Hence learners with disabilities participate fully in the learning environment when they are in inclusive classrooms as posited by Mafa (2012) that learners with disabilities can achieve their highest potential only when they are provided with “normal opportunities. Mafa (2012) articulates that Mainstream schools allow their learners with disability who have significant strengths in particular subject areas a chance to prove to their friends that disability is not inability this is evidenced in Jessica’s statement that *I am the class monitor and I also help the others in reading and other subjects*.

During observation it was discovered by the researcher that Jessica and Ethan took part in their favored activities in the classroom .They participated even better than most students, However Hermit only responded when the teacher asked him and on most of the occasions he knew the answer but did not have the confidence. When asked sked by the researcher why he did not raise his hands he replied that: -

hermit :-*I do not raise my hands because when I give the answer there are boys who imitate the way I speak, they make fun of me and it makes me feel bad and sad ,that is why I respond only when the teacher asks me to speak .most of the time I know the answer but I just keep quite*

Such a scenario is commented on by Thornicroft and Kassam (2007) who agree that negative attitudes and behaviors have an adverse effect on children and adults with disabilities, leading to negative consequences such as low self-esteem and reduced participation



when schools end for the day ,a lot pupils run around happy to be going home during the interview Rufaro said he loves home time because that is the time he gets to go home .the researcher had a follow up interview to ask home to elaborate on his statement:

Researcher: *why do you say home time is your favorite time?*

Rufaro: *I love going home because during the day I spend a lot of time in the chair my back and my chest will be hurting so much that I feel like crying so as soon as I get home my mother removes me from the chair puts a mattress outside on the verandah where I (pause) ii can lie down and my cousins come and play with me. Sometimes I lie down or sit with my legs straight, and when the pain is too much my mother gives me pills.at home nobody laughs at me?*

Researcher: *why do you not tell the teacher that you are in pain?*

Rufaro: *I used to tell her before and she would send me to the office, firstly they would call my mother but now when I tell her that I feel sore she tells me to keep quite so now I just don't say anything.*

#### **4.6.1 Sub-research Question 2: What do the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school?**

During the interviews the researcher observed that the children were well aware of the different emotions between like and hate, all the learners were able to state their dislike. According to Dickson (2008) by the age of three, most children have learned to recognize and identify emotions, such as happy and sad and during middle childhood, recognition of social emotions arises. This was evidenced during interviews were all the children expressed that there was something they did not like about being in school.

From the responses given by the learners interviewed, one key factor which was highlighted was inadequate accessibility to the toilets and parts of the school. Ethan, Jessica, Rufaro and

hermit all confessed that there is a part of the school that remains inaccessible to them. This is also in line to what the researcher observed around the school. Although the school has parts of the verandas fitted with wheelchair ramps the junior block veranda does not have any wheelchair ramps and the toilets are not built wide enough for wheelchair accessibility. This is a situation which is given recognition by a number of teachers in research on the Challenges of implementing inclusion in Zimbabwe's Education System carried out by Mafa O. (2003) who captured that buildings in most mainstream schools were not constructed with people with disabilities in mind. This is supported by Sourav et al (2007) who asserts that some pervasive barriers to including learners with disabilities in regular school classrooms were a lack of infrastructure, this is also in line with a study carried out by Ocloo and Subbey (2008) who articulated that the concept of inclusive education, was being impeded by inadequate infrastructure for learners with disabilities.

During the interviews Rufaro expressed that he did not get on with a lot of learners and those that he got on with played with him for a short time before they left him all alone. Hermit also expressed a list of a few friends that he got on well with. The researcher contributed this solitary behavior to the fact that these learners also had trouble in communication. (Rufaro and Hermit) both have trouble in speaking. Curtin & Clarke (2005) mentioned that learners with disabilities have limited friendships and extended solitary play this was more pronounced in Rufaro case.

Rufaro: - *I don't like most of the kids because they laugh at me and call me stupid. I used to be friends with Eldridge and Tonde.*

During the interview (Hermit, Ethan, Jessica and Rufaro) all said that they had been subjected to cruel remarks and stares by the other children, (Ethan) mentioned that he had been bullied by other children and (Rufaro and Jessica) mentioned that they also had been subjected to cruel remarks by adults at the school. According to Jillian Pizzi (2008) learners who have physical disabilities are also victims of negativism and also at high risk for social

rejection in mainstream classrooms leading to mocking and social rejection. This is supported by Yude and Goodman (1999) who reported that learners with physical disabilities were more likely to be rejected, isolated, and victimized by other learners without disabilities, even when the physical disabilities are mild. All the learners interviewed expressed that they had suffered from a certain type of rejection in the mainstream.

From the observation carried out by the researcher in the playground, it was observed that more often Rufaro normally sits alone or in the company of a few classmates however most of the time they all leave her as they go and play other games. Hermit also expressed feelings of solitary play. This sentiment is shared by Pizzi (2008) who articulate that the reason why children with physical disability spent time in solitary play is that, even if the child with the physical disability got another child to sit and play with him/her that would only last a short amount of time before that child became bored with the sedentary activity. She further comments that these children are most often rejected due to the fact that they cannot socialize in a physical way (running, climbing, jumping, skipping, hopping), which is customary to most school aged children.

Disability is not inability but there are times when disability hinders the child from taking part in some activities. During the interview all learners expressed that there are activities that their disabilities prevented them from taking part in. During the interview (hermit) expressed that he could not participate in some games in the playground and physical activities, this is also true in Ethan's case where he takes part in sporting activities but does not enjoy it because it is hard for him and he constantly has to deal with embarrassment and shame when he always comes last, Rufaro also mentioned that he could not push himself to class and carry his bag and Jessica also mentioned that they were activities she could not take part in. This has also been noted by Bult et al (2014)agree that Children with physical

disabilities participated in significantly less activities because many activities might be hard for them to engage in .

Rufaro and Jessica during the interview expressed deep bitterness on educators who hold negative attitudes and have passed negative and hurtful comments towards them. Educators who have negative attitudes toward learners with disabilities tend to expect low achievement and inappropriate behavior from those learners hence they hardly seek ways to help the learner, this is evidenced in remarks made to Eldridge (Rufaros former friend). These negative attitudes then disadvantages a learner's chance to leading a near normal life as well as destroy the learners' self-esteem. Negative comments from trusted adults lead the learners to attach meaning to these experiences (Jessica) during the interview mentioned that she avoids eating in the morning and Rufaro contributes the termination of his friendship to Eldridge to the teachers' actions. This is supported by Pizzi (2008) who attest that children with physical disabilities are constantly attaching meaning to experiences and conversations with certain people and vice versa.

#### **4.6.2 Sub-research Question 3: What can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school?**

For inclusion to be successful it is imperative that the needs of the learners be addressed this is in line with what authors such as (Nguyet and Ha 2010; Booth and Ainscow 2002; Farrell 2000) propose that inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners in the learning environment. McConkey (2001) attest that Learners with physical impairments can have difficulty sitting and moving around, hence they will require well supported seating and positioning in order to obtain optimal functioning. Basing on classroom observation, the researcher observed that the furniture in the classroom was not

conducive for the little bodies, the benches that were in use, in the class were too high up that when Ethan was sitting his legs were suspended in the air and his standing up and getting on top of the bench were done with some difficulties. The desks in the classrooms did not allow the wheelchair to be close hence the researcher observed that when (Rufaro and Jessica) were seated on their desks whilst sitting on the wheelchair they had to stretch in order to reach the desk.

All the children had suggestions on what can be done to improve their experiences at school. During the interview hermit suggested that the school should include games and sports that children with physical disabilities can also partake in.

The interview findings from learners suggested that toilets with wide doors be built so as to accommodate the wheelchair users, this is imperative because basing on the observations carried out by the researcher, it was observed that the doors to the toilets were not wide enough for those children who use wheelchairs and this was also expressed by (Jessica, Rufaro and hermit) during the interviews. This has led to the children's right to privacy being infringed on as the pupils had no privacy during bathroom time. The researcher also observed the scenario on two occasions.

The high verandas were an issue that Ethan thought should be removed, the researcher also agreed with the sentiments because during observation it was discovered that the verandas were too high it mostly took at least four pupils lifting to help the learner with the wheel chair up this verandah.

*Rufaro: - the children with disabilities should be able to go home early because being at school most of the times is painful. Build verandas for wheel chairs and bigger toilets for kids*

Jessica: - *Provide nice chairs and desks to sit on, put more trees at the ground because it is hot and they is no shade to sit under. I want the boy's toilet to be put far from the girls and provide nice chairs and desks to sit on.*

Some of the students interviewed (Rufaro and Jessica) suggested that teachers should have a positive attitude towards learners with physical disabilities, Jessica also suggested that mean adults should not be allowed to work with the learners. This is in line with what was said by Shevin, (1992) concurs that teachers' attitudes regarding students' differences are critical factors that can influence students' success in schools. Hence it is important to note that teacher's attitude may also influence the other children in forming negative attitudes about learners with disabilities.

#### **4.7 Summary**

This chapter managed to present, analyze and discuss the data gathered by using two instruments, namely the interview and observations. This chapter also discussed in detail the information provided by each instrument on each research question in an attempt to answer each research question as it was presented. Chapter five focused on concluding the research as well as providing some recommendations and suggestions in line with the findings revealed by this research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provided a detailed summary of the study. The main thrust of this chapter was to explain briefly the researcher findings on the experiences of learners with physical challenges in the main stream at a school in Chegutu. This chapter gave a brief summary of the findings, implications and conclusions.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The main thrust of the study sought to capture the experiences of learners with physical challenges within the classroom. Various local, regional and international instruments to promoting inclusion of people living with disabilities were discussed. It is the researchers' opinion that various researches carried out on inclusion have focused much on policy, practice and educators perspectives and the experiences of the child with physical disabilities in the mainstream have not been fully explored. Therefore the study explored the experiences of learners with physical challenges within the mainstream class at a primary school in Chegutu Urban.

In chapter two the concept of inclusion and disability were discussed within the research literature. The research sought to understand how learners with physical challenges perceive their inclusion and what they liked and disliked about school. These themes were described

as critical elements for understanding what could be done to improve the experience of learner's with physical challenges at school.

Chapter three which was the backbone of the research dealt with the qualitative design method where the population was drawn through purposeful sampling method from pupils from grade one to grade three from a Primary School in Chegutu and sample was based around case studies of four learners with physical challenges (Ethan, Jessica, Rufaro and Hemmit,). The researcher used the task-oriented interview methods to source for information from the interested children with physical disabilities. The researcher also conducted face to face interviews with parents of the children in the sample so as to find out the proper medical conditions of the learners involved. To gather more information in this study the researcher used the complete observation technique to observe the activities and events as they happened in the classrooms and in the playground during unscheduled hours.

Chapter four managed to present and analyze the data that was collected during the study hence building up a rich picture of the opinions shared by children with physical disabilities. The information was presented and interpreted by using two instruments, namely interviews and observations. The information provided by each instrument on each research question was discussed in order to answer each research question as it was presented.

### **5.3 conclusion**

The findings from the researcher's observations were also integrated during the presentation. The problem under study focused on the experiences of learners with physical challenges within the main stream at a school in Chegutu. The main indicators show that the children



were overwhelmingly positive about their school placement, however the general findings are summarized below.

### **5.3.1 Sub-research Question 1: What the learners with physical disabilities like about school.**

The general consensus amongst the learners interviewed about what they liked most was the interaction with other children. Hence the learners interviewed also mentioned the friendship which had developed between them as well the help that peers gave them at school. Within the friendship circles some of the learners also proved to be very popular.

Some learners mentioned that they loved the fact that they were in leadership positions and also got to help other learners with their classwork. This in turn improved the learner's self-esteem and boosted their confidence.

All the children interviewed participated in most of the school curriculum activities, hence they all took part in various classroom activities and also had favorite activities which they participated in within the classroom.

### **5.3.2 Sub-research Question 2: What do the learners with physical disabilities dislike about school?**

One key factor which the learners said they disliked was inadequate accessibility to parts of the school and also the toilets. This is also in line to what the researcher observed around the school. The toilets are not built wide enough for wheelchair accessibility and did not offer privacy to the learners that were on the wheelchairs.

Although the school has parts of the verandahs fitted with wheelchair ramps, the junior block verandah does not have any wheelchair ramps. Some pupils said that they did not like the verandas because there were too high

All the learners interviewed expressed that they had suffered from a certain type of rejection such as mocking and social rejection all the learners interviewed said that they had been subjected to cruel remarks and stares by the other children, others also mentioned that they had been bullied by others. Some learners also expressed that they did not get on with a lot of learners and those that he got on with played with them for a short time hence solitary behavior and limited friendships

During the interview all learners expressed that there are activities that their disabilities prevented them from taking part in. During the interview some expressed that they could not participate in some games in the playground and physical activities, and some constantly have to deal with embarrassment when they cannot perform like other learners without disabilities.

During the interview some learners expressed deep bitterness on educators who hold negative attitudes and have passed negative and hurtful comments towards them. Some pupils mentioned that they also had been subjected to cruel remarks by adults at the school

### **Sub-research Question 3: What can be done to improve learners with physical disabilities experience at school?**

All the learners had suggestions on things that can be done to improve their experience in the mainstream. Some learners mentioned that the school also introduce games and sports that children with physical disabilities can also partake in.

Suggestions from the learners included construction of toilets with wide doors so as to accommodate the wheelchair users, and also the separation of the boys and girls toilets.

Various parts of the school were not suitable for use by learners with physical disabilities no matter how severe or mild the disability was hence suggestions for the removal of the high verandas were also passed.

Classroom furniture in the classroom was not suitable for use by learners with physical disabilities no matter how severe or mild the disability was .Suggestions were also put forward which included that the school provide nice chairs and desks to sit on.

Some of the learners suggested that teachers should adopt a positive attitude towards learners with physical disabilities, it was also suggested that impatient adults not be allowed to work with the learners with physical disabilities.

#### **5.4 Recommendation**

In order to improve the experience of the learners with physical disability in the mainstream it is important that the views and contributions of the learners should be used to improve inclusion, the learners' voice should be considered and conditions such as improvement of infrastructure, adaption of the curriculum, assigning leadership roles where possible, encouraging peer mentoring are to be realized. This is in line with the view put forward by Messiou (2008) concludes that children's views and concerns should be used not only as a strategy for better understanding inclusion, and for the creation of effective inclusive environments, but also more importantly these voices should be seen as an essential element within the process of developing inclusive practices.

- Friendship is an important attribute to humankind regardless of one's ability or disability hence it is important for school educators to consider increasing peer mentoring in the classroom and encourage all the learners to work in collaborative groups so as to assist each other.
- The educator must adjust their teaching strategies by altering the format of a lesson so that it can meet the needs of a learner who is physically challenged by including more opportunities for games ,whole class discussions, ,role playing, activity based lessons, where the learners get a chance to assist each other and learn more about each other.
- Educators may increase the self-esteem of the learners with physical disabilities by focusing on their strengths and not their weakness hence providing them with opportunities to excel such as assigning leadership roles where possible. The learner with physical disability should not be made to feel inferior to others in the mainstream.
- The teacher should include the learner with physical disability in all the daily activities being carried out, they must allow the child to make an attempt at what others learners are doing and not pity a child. Praise should also be given to the learner's specific strategy and effort. The educator must also frown upon name calling and laughing at the learners in the classroom .Self-esteem is important to almost everything the children do, not only will it help with academic performance, it supports social skills and makes it easier for learners to have and keep friends. This strategy also allows that the children to feel a sense of belonging in the classroom.
- The environmental arrangement and accessibility of materials are important considerations that the school needs to take note of. It is necessary to physically adapt structures within the school by constructing gentle slopes on high verandas, wheelchair ramps and access routes to the classroom and respective areas.
- Doorways to the classes and toilets have to be built wide enough for a wheelchair, and the doors need handles to be fixed at the appropriate levels, hence not too high so that a child sitting in a wheelchair can open and enter easily.

- Classroom seating and arrangement should enable the learners with physical challenges to move, when necessary, and to sit comfortably supported. For example the educator may try to invent attractive simple seating solutions, using mats and cushions. The classroom blackboards should be fixed at the appropriate levels for learners in wheelchairs.
- Toilet arrangements should be made private, safe and accessible. Only staff that is patient and gentle with children should be allowed to accompany the children to the toilet so that they do not end up losing tempers at the children or make the child feel uncomfortable. It is every child's right to privacy and it is particularly important for learners who may need assistance when using toilet facilities.

## REFERENCES

- Aggarwaal, J. C. (2002) *Essentials of Educational Psychology*. New Delhi: Allyn and Bacon
- Ainscow, M. (1991) *Effective Schools for All London*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000). Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school. *Teaching and Teacher Education*.
- Awal Mohammed Alhassan, "Implementation of Inclusive Education in Ghanaian Primary Schools: A Look at Teachers' Attitudes." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2014): 142-148. doi: 10.12691/education-2-3-5.
- Best, J. W. and Khan, J.V. (1993) *Research in Education*. London: Prentice-Hall
- Bodgan, K. S. and Biklen, S. K. (1992) *Qualitative Research for Education*. London: Prentice-Hall
- Borg, W. and Gall, M. D. (1989) *Educational Research – An Introduction*. London: Longman
- Boyden, Jo and Judith Ennew (1997). *Children in Focus – A Manual for Participatory Research with Children*. Stockholm: Radda Barnen.
- Boyden, Jo. (2000). "Conducting Research with War-Affected and Displaced Children: Ethics and Methods," in *Cultural Survival Quarterly* (pp. 71-73).
- Brucker, P.O. (1995). *The advantages of inclusion for students with learning disabilities*. *J. Learn. Disabilities*; 27(9): 581-582.
- Bult, Verschuren, Lindeman, Jongmans and Ketelaar, M. (2014) *Do children participate in the activities they prefer? A comparison of children and youth with and without physical disabilities* [sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav](http://sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav) [sagepub.com](http://sagepub.com)
- Cartwright, G. P. Cartwright, C. A. and Ward, M. A. (1999) *Educating Special Learners*. London: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Cassady, J. M. (2011). *Teachers' Attitudes toward the Inclusion of Students with Autism and Emotional Behavioral Disorder*, *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, volume no 2.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, W. L. (2006). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*
- Chiinze, M. and Tambara, C. T. (2000) *Introduction to Disability and Special Needs Education*. Harare: The Zimbabwe Open University
- Chimedza, R. (1999) *Special Needs Education and Teacher Education in Zimbabwe: Rethinking and Retooling Regular Teacher Preparation*. Harare: The Zimbabwe Bulletin of Teacher Education Volume no 2

- Cohen, L. and Manion, M. (1985) *A Guide To Teaching Practice*. London: Routledge
- Dedra A. Davis (2011) *What I Wish My Teachers Had Known About Students With Physical Disabilities* Vol 24, No. 4 Deficiency 86 (6), 596–600.
- Pather, S. (2011) *International Journal of Inclusive Education* Volume, Issue 10, and Evidence on inclusion and support for learners with disabilities in mainstream schools in South Africa: off the policy radar? Edith Cowan University, d.konza@ecu.edu.au
- Fakolade, O. A., Adonigi, S. and Tella, A. (2009) *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education* Volume 1. [www.iejee.com](http://www.iejee.com) Featuring LGBTQ Adolescents with Intellectual and/or Physical Disabilities to Strengthen
- Florian, L. (1998) *Inclusive Practice: What, Why and How*. London: Routledge.
- Florian, L. (2008) *Inclusion: Special or Inclusive Education: Future Trends*. London: British Journal of Special Education.
- Fredrickson, N. and Cline, T. (2002) *Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Gaotlhobogwe, B. (2001). *Inclusive education: An investigation of the support system for pupils with special educational needs in Botswana* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Manchester, England.
- Gates, B. (2005) *Learners Disabilities towards Inclusion*. China: Elsevier Limited
- Gay, L. R. (1999) *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis*. Columbus: Merrill
- Gottlieb, J., and Switzky, H. N. (1982), 'Development of school-age children's stereotypic attitudes towards mentally retarded children', *American Journal of Mental*.
- Gunhu M. Rwatirera\*, Mugweni M. Rose and Dhlomo Thelma (2011) *Journal of African Studies and Development* Vol. 3(7), pp. 135-143. Available online <http://www.academicjournals.org/JASD> ISSN – 2141 -2189 ©2011 Academic Journals.
- Guralnick MJ, Groom J,M. (1988) *Peer Interactions in Mainstreamed Specialized Class*. Academic Press, New York, 1988.
- Hallahan, D. P. and Kauffman, J. M. (1994) *Exceptional Children: Introduction to Special Needs Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Hallahan, D. P. and Kauffman, J. M. (2006) *Exceptional Children: Introduction to Special Needs Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Hapanyengwi. 2013. *A Synoptic View of the History of Special Needs Education in Zimbabwe*. Available on <http://www.thefreelibrary.comZimbabwe01073960231>
- Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. (1995) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: Collins Education
- Heslin, J. M. (1999) *Sociology: A Down To Earth Approach*. London: Allyn and Bacon

- Heward, W. L. (2009). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Horne, P. E., & Timmons, V. (2009) Making it work: Teachers' perspectives on inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(3), 273-286.
- Howard VF, Williams BF, Port PD, Lepper C. (1997) *Very Young Children with Special Needs*. Merril, Columbus OH, 1997
- Jillian Pizzi (2008) challenges of children with physical Disabilities. Published by Rivier College, rivier academic journal, volume 4, number 1, spring 2008.
- Jillian Pizzi (2008) challenges of children with physical disabilities rivier academic journal, volume 4, number 1, spring. *Support for Learning*, 17 (3), 117–21 [International Electronic Journal of research in special educational needs](#) Volume 17 issue 3,. [www.iejee.com](http://www.iejee.com).
- Kim, Sonja de Groot. (2005). Kevin: "I gotta get to the market": The development of peer relationships in exclusive early childhood settings. *Early Childhood*, 163-169.
- Konza, D (2008) Inclusion of students with disabilities in new times: responding to the challenge
- Laurin-Bowie, C. (2009) *Better Education For All: When We Are Included Too*. Spain: Inclusion International
- Lincoln Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lindsay, G. (2011) *Educational Psychology and the Effectiveness of Inclusive Education/Mainstreaming*. London: The British Psychological Society
- Lipsky D, Gartner A (1989). *Beyond a Separate Education: Quality Education for All*. Brookes, Baltimore. Liverpool: Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.
- Lisa A. Hazlett William J. Sweeney Kevin J. Reins (2011) *Using Young Adult Literature*
- Mafa O. (2003) *Optimizing Mixed-Ability Grouping for Effective Instruction at the Junior Secondary School Level in Botswana*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Botswana.
- Mafa, O. (2012) *Challenges of Implementing Inclusion in Zimbabwe's Education System*. [onlineresearchjournals-org//SER/pdf/2012/mag/mafa.pdf](http://onlineresearchjournals-org//SER/pdf/2012/mag/mafa.pdf)
- Masimega, N. T. (1999). *Including students with hearing impairment* (Unpublished master's thesis). Manchester, UK: University of Manchester.
- McDonell, J., Thorson, N. and McQuivey, C. (2008) *Comparison of the Instructional Contexts of Students with Severe Disabilities and their Peers in General Education Classes*. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*.
- Melanie N (2008) *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper Conducting qualitative research with people with learning, communication and other disabilities: Methodological challenges*



- Messiou, K, (2002), 'Marginalisation in primary schools: listening to children's voices',
- Morrow & Richards, 1996
- National Action Plan of Zimbabwe (2005) Education for All towards 2015. Planiplis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Zimbabwe/EFANAP.pdf
- Ocloo, M. A., & Subbey, M. (2008). Perception of basic teachers towards inclusive education in the Hohoe District of Ghana. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12, 639-650.
- Panda, K. C. (2003) Education of Exceptional Children. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House
- Peterson N, L. (1987). Early Intervention for Handicapped and at Risk Children. Love Publishing House, London.
- Phiri, P. M (2012) The Development of Special Education in Zimbabwe: From Extermination to Inclusion. [www.academia.edu/2342966/The\\_History\\_of\\_Special\\_Education\\_Towards\\_Inclusive\\_Education](http://www.academia.edu/2342966/The_History_of_Special_Education_Towards_Inclusive_Education)
- R. chimedza and S.Peters (2001) Disability and special needs education in an African context college press printer's pvt ltd.
- Roy McConkey (2001) Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs in Inclusive Classrooms Classroom Inclusion Theory Into Practice, 50:206–214, 2011 Copyright © The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University
- Sacks, A. (2001) Special Education: A Reference Handbook. California: ABC-CLIO Inc
- Sara Dickson (2008) Self-Perception of Learning Disabled Children within Mainstream Classrooms.
- Save the Children 2002 [www.savethechildren.org.uk/development](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/development)
- Scheuren, F. (2004) what is a Survey? [www.amstat.org/sections/srms/pam](http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/pam)
- Slavin RE 2007. Educational Research in an Age of Accountability. Boston: Pearson.
- Sourav Mukhopadhyay<sup>1</sup>, H. Johnson Nenty<sup>1</sup>, and Okechukwu Abosi<sup>2</sup> (2007) Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities in Botswana Primary Schools.
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Innocenti Digest No. 13 (2007) Promoting the Rights of
- Thornicroft G, Rose D, Kassam A. Discrimination in health care against people with mental illness. *International Review of Psychiatry* (Abingdon, England), 2007, 19:113-122. PMID: 17464789 Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Shank, M. and Leal. D. (1999) Exceptional Lives: Special Education In Today's Schools (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). New Jersey: Prentice Hall

UNESCO (1994) The Salamanca Statement and Framework For Action.  
[www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SACAMA](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SACAMA)

UNESCO (2009) Towards Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities. Bangkok: UNESCO Publishers

Valenzuela, D. and Shrivasta, D. (2012) Interview as a Method of Qualitative Research.  
[www.ask.com/question/what\\_is\\_qualitative\\_data](http://www.ask.com/question/what_is_qualitative_data)

Winter, E. and O'Raw, D. (2010) Literature Review of the Principles and Practices Relating To Inclusive Education. Dublin: National Council for Special Education

Wolery M, Wilbers JS. (1994). Including Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Programs, Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Zindi, F. (1997) Special Education in Africa. Mogadishu: Tassal Publishers

## APPENDIX B: LEARNERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name of Interviewer.....

Date .....

Time ..... Minutes.....

### SECTION A: Interviewee Information

Name of Interviewee.....

Gender.....

Age.....

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### 3.3.1 During the interviewer sought the children's views on:

1. Who are your friends?

Children's preferences will also be used as means for further discussion with children about their relations with other children. They will be asked to justify their choices, about other children whom they did not choose,

2. How do you manage to move around the school?

a. Which places do you need help to get to

b. Who helps you at school

3. Which activities do you enjoy when you are at school?

Children's preferences will also be used as means for further discussion, with children about the activities that they take part in when they are at school.

4. What do you like about school?

Emphasis will be placed on their favourite indoor/outdoor activities and also favourite pastime during school time

5. What do you disliked about school?

Emphasis will be drawn on the indoor/outdoor activities that the learners do not enjoy participating in during school time

Following on from the interview the children were given a plain drawing paper and asked to draw things that they liked and disliked about school. The interviewer will ask the learner

6. What does your drawing show?

7. Why do you like/dislike this place?

Children will be coaxed into further discussion about their drawing, and asked to relate their feelings towards their artwork.

## APPENDIX B: PARENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name of Interviewer.....

Date .....

Time ..... Minutes.....

### SECTION A: Interviewee Information

Name of Interviewee.....

Relationship to learner.....

#### Introduction

As part of the requirements of the Bachelor in early childhood education degree, the researcher is currently exploring the experiences of early childhood learners with physical challenges within the mainstream class. The learner in your class has the desirable characteristics that the researcher needs .more information is required that will help us understand how the child is coping in an inclusive environment.

#### **The interviewer sought the parent's views on**

1. Do you know what medical condition your child suffers from?

Thank you very much for allowing me to have an interview with you and also for your time.

**I certify that the interview was conducted according to acceptable ethical standards of data collection.**

Signed by interviewer.....

## APPENDIX C: LEARNERS OBSERVATIONS

### **In the classroom**

Is the classroom infrastructure inclusive in relation to learners with physical disability?

Is the learner able to maneuver around the classroom without assistance?

Is there anyone to assist them at school?

Does the learner participate in most classroom activities?

Does the learner take part in their favored activities in the classrooms?

Does the learner appear to enjoy group work?

### **In the playground**

Is the school's infrastructure inclusive in relation to learners with physical disability?

Is the learner able to maneuver around the school without assistance?

Is there anyone to assist them at school?

Does the learner tend to play with others during break time/lunch time?

Is the learner included in activities by the peers?

Does the learner take part in their favored activities in the playground?

YES/NO

## **APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT**

808 Cattle trail  
New Concession  
**CHEGUTU**

Cell Number: 0773119261

Email: [medpasaya@gmail.com](mailto:medpasaya@gmail.com)

### **Dear Parent or Guardian**

As part of the requirements of the Bachelor in early childhood education degree, the researcher is currently exploring the experiences of early childhood learners with physical challenges within the mainstream class .The researcher would want to interview early Childhood learners who are physically challenged as sample. Your child has the desirable characteristics that the researcher needs.

Your child being a minor makes it necessary for you to give consent for him/ her to participate. Information has been included for your attention and ask that you review it and sign the tear off slip. Only the learners who would have returned their consent forms will participate in the study.

Thank you for your time in reading the following information:

**DATE:** 19 July 2015

**RESEARCHER:** Miss Media Paidamoyo Pasaya (Bachelor in early childhood education degree) Student at Midlands State University of Zimbabwe.

**ADDRESS:** Number 808 Cattle trail New Concession Chegutu

**SUPERVISOR:** Mrs. E. Manyumwa

## **INFORMED CONSENT:**

1. **TITLE OF STUDY:** Experiences of learners with physical challenges within the mainstream class :The case of a primary school in Chegutu Urban
2. **PURPOSE OF STUDY:** To explore the experiences of early childhood learners with physical challenges within the mainstream class.
3. **PROCEDURE:** The research will take a maximum of one month .During this time, the researcher will meet with the learners for a maximum of 30 minutes per day. Sessions will be held once weekly, at each session your infant will have the opportunity to take part in various task oriented activities such as drawing and puppet show. Your infant will also be observed whilst attending classes and in the playground during unscheduled hours
4. **RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:**  
There are no foreseen risks or discomforts which are related to this research. However If the learner feels uncomfortable with any part of the research process they may withdraw their participation without consequence.
5. **BENEFITS:** participation in this study is voluntary and there are no direct benefits to the learner for participating in this research; however the results of the study will help reveal how inclusive practices in the mainstream can be channeled, challenged and supported.
6. **PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS:** The researcher will constantly be checking ongoing assent with the pupils. This will involve checking with the children regularly that they still want to take part in the research activities, and assuring them that they could withdraw at any time.
7. **FINANCIAL COMPENSATION:** Your child’s participation in this research is completely voluntary and no financial compensation will be awarded. Although we cannot offer any compensation we can provide you with a copy of all the information pertaining to your child in this study
8. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Steps will be taken to protect the learners’ anonymity and identity; your infants name and personal information will not be revealed and all data collected is solely for the purpose of academic study. Pseudo names or codes will be used in place of their real names.
9. If you have any question or concerns, you can contact **Miss Media Paidamoyo Pasaya** on (00263773119261) during office hours.

**DECLARATION BY GUARDIAN**

I understand my child’s rights as a research subject and i voluntarily consent to participation in this study. I understand what the study is all about and why it is being done. I will keep the information and send back the tear off slip.

.....

**TEAR OFF SLIP**

**PARENT’S SIGNATURE** .....

**DATE** .....

**CHILD NAME** .....

**DATE** .....

**RESEARCHERS’ SIGNATURE** .....

**DATE** .....