



**The experiences and challenges of adapting to an inclusive
education learning environment: A study of students with
disabilities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College
Campus**

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Declaration

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Abstract

Available research suggests that in South Africa, the lived experiences, realities and challenges faced by students living with disabilities are inadequately addressed and prioritised. In addition, most of the studies on the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities are conducted by able-bodied researchers on persons with disabilities. This study bridges this gap in research as it is undertaken by a student with disability and with students with disabilities. This study, therefore, adopts an emancipatory disability research framework and the Social Model of Disability to produce a comprehensive understanding and examination of the lived experiences of students with disabilities. The main aim of this study is to understand the everyday life experiences and challenges faced by students with disabilities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Howard College Campus. The study adopted a qualitative design using in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews to collect data from twenty purposively selected participants. The study explored the challenges faced by male and female students with different types of disabilities. The findings demonstrate that certain infrastructure and services at the University remain disability unfriendly, and thus the notion of an enabling inclusive environment is problematic. These deficits inhibit students with disability from adapting to the inclusive education environment and context. These include, for example, accessing study material in appropriate formats and lack of awareness and knowledge by lectures, support staff and non-disabled students on how to assist or socialise with students living with different types of disabilities. This study found that the quality and type of interaction that students with disabilities have with the Disability Unit (DU) plays a crucial role in their academic life. The study also focused on a brief discussion of students' thoughts and experiences of the gaps in both the national and UKZN's policy frameworks and how the policies, services and environment can be improved to better address the needs of students with disabilities.

Acknowledgements

Psalm 23 Amplified Bible (AMP)
The LORD, the Psalmist's Shepherd: A Psalm of David

The LORD is my Shepherd [to feed, to guide and to shield me],
I shall not want.

He lets me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still *and* quiet waters.
He refreshes *and* restores my soul (life);
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

UKZN	-	University of KwaZulu – Natal
DU	-	Disability Unit
DUT	-	Durban University of Technology
DUS	-	Disability Support Unit
NSFAS	-	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
UPIAS	-	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
RMS	-	Risk Service Management
DASA	-	Differential abled student Association

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Sociology demonstrates the need to take a much broader view of why we are as we are, and why we act as we do. It teach us what we regard as natural, inevitable, good or true may not be such, and that the ‘givens’ of our life are strongly influenced by historical and social forces” (Giddens and Griffiths, 2006: 4)

1.1 Introduction

Sociology is a field of study which gives a broader understanding of why we are as we are and why we act as we do as humans. Through the study of sociology, people with disabilities can better understand their daily experiences, rather than being isolated from the society. From a sociological perspective, knowledge is obtained in a manner that is natural, and consideration of things accepted to be good or true may not necessarily be as people reason. This may seem to be strongly influenced by historical and social factors. The knowledge sociology perspective can restore the human dignity of people with disabilities. It enables them to be seen as equal citizens in their respective societies.

The approach adopted in this study is contrary to that of models such as the charity or medical model of disability that see people with disabilities as being less human or people who need to be sympathised with. Sociology is known to be a social science study which deals with processes and patterns of the social interaction of humans. It also looks at how individuals and group interactions take place, and how organisations of social groups may be formed as well as how groups influence individual behaviour (Doda, 2005). Doda (2005) suggests that it is through sociological thinking that people have a better understanding of each other and how their social groups are being organised, whether they are non-disabled people or people with disabilities.

Furthermore, the study of sociology is a field which gives insight into human behaviour as social beings, which reveals how human beings interact among themselves in their different groupings in their societies. It is then through applying sociological thinking that one can

gain an understanding of different types of people and why they do things in a particular way (Giddens, 2006).

Non-disabled professionals are seen as superior to those professionals with disabilities (O'Brien, 2006). Furthermore, professionals with disabilities are generally seen as passive and not worthy of the professionals that they have in society (O'Brien, 2006). This study argues that by applying sociological imagination and perspectives to such assumptions, a better understanding of the lives of people with disabilities and their rights as active citizens can be achieved. This study aims to understand the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities and how they are adapting to an inclusive education learning environment at UKZN's Howard College campus.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO (2009), explains that inclusive education can be established in mainstream schools, as it will provide quality education to every child in a given community. This will therefore close the gap between the private schools, mainstream schools and special schools. A learner with a disability will be able to receive the same curriculum as a non-disabled learner and both students will be able to understand what is taught. Students with disabilities will therefore not have challenges with adapting to the curriculum offered at tertiary level. UNESCO (2005:16) states that “an inclusive approach to education is one that strives to promote quality in the classroom. In order to move towards quality in education, changes are required at several levels”. Students with disabilities require additional support in order for them to be able to manage in an inclusive environment. Such support includes specialised software, the need for extra time and scribing services. Such needs must be provided to the student in order to serve the best needs of the students. If the students with disabilities can be provided with these needs, they can adapt to an inclusive education. Booth (1996) points out that inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all students through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, as well as reducing exclusion within and from education.

In India, the Ministry of Law (1996:4) states that a “person with disability means a person suffering from not less than forty per cent of any disability as certified by a medical

authority". In this context, the medical model of disability dominates, as it positions disability as a condition of suffering from a certain condition. Other terms such as the crippled, a person living with a disability and disabled person portray such persons in a negative way by placing the disease or disability first before the person. The Department of Social Development White Paper on the Right for People with Disabilities (2016:11) points out that;

“persons with disabilities include those who have perceived and or actual physical, psychosocial, intellectual, neurological and/or sensory impairments which, as a result of various attitudinal, communication, physical and information barriers, are hindered in participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others”.

This terminology is more appropriate as it puts the person first before the disability and focuses on the inability to or barriers to full and equal participation in society. It shows that the person with disability is not suffering from any condition, but there are barriers which are limiting them from performing certain tasks as human beings. Barnes and Mercer (1996:2) explain that “a disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being”. Disability is seen to be a limitation which prohibits a person from actively participating in everyday activities such as education, shopping, or employment.

This chapter presents the outline of the study and demonstrates how applicable it is in sociology. The chapter also sets out the background and rationale, the key research questions, theoretical framework and methodology, framing the examination of the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities in an inclusive learning environment. The aim of this study is to explore the experiences and challenges of adapting to an inclusive education learning environment for students with disabilities at UKZN’s Howard College campus.

1.2 Rational and statement of the problem

Atkinson et al. (1997:145) argue that “historically, people with specific learning disabilities have been segregated from mainstream school practices as well as economic and social activities” (also see Humphries and Gordon, 1992). As a result, inclusive education has not been adequately implemented across many educational institutions in South Africa.

However, many learners with disabilities attend specialised primary and secondary education schools. Those learners who attend specialised schools due to their disability socialise and learn with students who share the same or similar experiences, disabilities, and challenges as themselves. However, the Department of Education (2009:7) notes that:

“It is the case that a mainstream placement may not always be right for a child or, not right just yet. When a special school is right for a child, however, it will be important that the school has close links with neighbouring mainstream schools”.

Special schools should have close links with neighbouring mainstream schools, as this link helps develop the self-esteem of children with disabilities and help them to be able to adapt in a mainstream school in their higher grades. Mainstream placement may not always be right for a child with a disability, since he/she have difficulties that may be hard to overcome at mainstream schools. Gupta et al. (2014) point out that early childhood educators’ main aim is to be of assistance to pre-schoolers in developing and influencing them with skills that are needed for one to be successful in school as well as later in life.

While most first-year students experience challenges with adapting to life and learning at higher education institutions, students with disabilities experience increased difficulties. Ngcobo (2010) notes that some of the challenges experienced by first-year students include financial incapacity, access to accommodation and fundamental human needs. Such problems can cause stress and interference in academic performance. However, the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities are generally complex and different from those of other students. Students with disabilities are a minority group at universities. As such, their voices end up not being heard by the management. McCarty (2006) believes that exclusive education classes are the most beneficial for children with disabilities as they provide for exceptional children needing help beyond the skill level of a general educator. For instance, Low (1996) argues that the students' identities bring about tension among students with disabilities and students in general. Some students with disabilities are not used to studying with non-disabled students, and they encounter obstacles that make them feel rejected and isolated by other students.

Multiple rationales have drawn me to conduct this study. Firstly, I reflect on my personal experience as a student with a disability and attending a higher education institution. This stems from the background of my educational experience from primary, secondary, and

tertiary level. I attended primary and secondary education in special schools, and this influenced my thinking and beliefs that people with disabilities belong to a certain kind of environment and cannot attend the same institutions with 'normal' learners. Health professionals such as doctors as well as my family members thought that children with the same type of disability as I were not suited to fit in a mainstream school. This was because I am unable to write on my own, and I have difficulties in typing fast. "Negative portrayals of disability abound and disabled children, in particular, have been subject to the institutional discourse of tragedy, medicalisation, and otherness" (Corker and French, 1999: 93).

Atkinson et al. (1997), state that children with disabilities are usually educated in segregated classrooms, which are specifically designed environments to cater for their different needs. Being in a special school comforted me because as learners, we had similar experiences. Wang (2009) concurs and notes that children with disabilities benefit from the segregated system not only because this system offers an appropriate curriculum, but it also socialises classmates who share the same experiences and circumstances. Being surrounded by other learners with disabilities enhances one's confidence and self-esteem. Throughout my primary and secondary school, I had a classmate who had cerebral palsy just like me, and I felt reassured of my capability to function in the school environment.

It was only when I completed grade twelve that I realised that there were no specialised universities for students with disability. My own biases and assumptions about disability and inclusion/exclusion were thus challenged. In 2010, a dramatic change took place in my life when I was a first-year student at the UKZN Howard College campus. The greatest shock of all was being in a huge lecture room with only four students with disabilities and hundreds of non-disabled students. This experience was in stark contrast to my experiences at school as the largest class I ever attended consisted of only twenty learners. During my first year at university, I was shy and insecure, afraid that I might fail, and afraid that my needs as a disabled student may not be considered.

Secondly, through my work as an intern social worker at the Disability Unit (DU) at both UKZN Howard College and Pietermaritzburg campuses, I had the opportunity to work and interact with other students with a disabilities. This experience was an eye-opener for me

and I realized that I was not the only one who had difficulties in adjusting to the university environment during the first year of studies. This then made me become more interested in the experiences of students with disabilities at tertiary institutions, specifically UKZN. Most of the studies which have been conducted on disabilities are done by non-disabled scholars on people with disabilities. Therefore, this motivated me as a student with a disability to conduct a study on participants with disabilities. This study was my personal desire to get a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of students with disabilities and how these students interact with other non-disabled students.

This study has not only allowed me a chance to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by students with disabilities at institutions of higher education but also allowed me to critically reflect on my own experiences as a student with a disability. As a student at UKZN, I have participated in a few studies on disabilities, but there has been only one study where I was interviewed by a student with a disability. Jenkin et al. (2015:5) have acknowledged that:

“People with disability are seen as researchers and experts of their experience in contrast to ‘the power of the researcher expert ... [with] control over the design, implementation, analysis and dissemination of research findings’ that is traditionally held by researchers without a disability”.

This made me realize that there is a dearth of disability studies ‘voiced’ by researchers or postgraduates with disabilities. This has prompted my scholarly interest in disability studies, student engagement and participation in higher education by students with disability.

Holloway (2001) points out that in some countries, there is no constitutional requirement obliging an institution of higher education to accept students with disabilities or to make appropriate provision for them which is why students with disabilities are not appropriately provided with their needs. Matshediso (2010) identifies three official documents which provide an idea of the policy framework regarding students’ with disabilities education in South Africa. These include the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy, the National Plan for Higher Education, and the Education White Paper 6 on Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. The White Paper on

Integrated National Disability Strategy provides the guidelines regarding primary and secondary education. However, it does not focus on higher education. The National Plan for Higher Education aims to provide guidelines for the transformation of higher education and also to strengthen it by equal access, non-discrimination, and transformation. It seeks to provide redress in the education of disabled South Africans. Lastly, the Education White Paper 6 on Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System plans to cover the educational needs of learners with disabilities.

Over the years, many things have been put in place for students living with disabilities by most institutions of higher learning. The Disability Units that are available across four of the five campuses of UKZN is an example of efforts made to address the needs of students with disabilities at the level of higher education. The DU can be defined as a support service that assists students to overcome challenges which disabled students experience at UKZN. As the Department of Education, National Plan for Higher Education (2001: 29) suggests that:

“At the institutional level, in general, further and higher education, we will require institutions to establish institutional-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator, and institutional needs”.

Such support will assist lecturers and other staff members to become more aware of how to treat students with disabilities. At UKZN, the DUs provide support and services to students with disabilities, however, there remain challenges and obstacles to the full realisation of fundamental human rights for these students.

This study looks at the ways in which students with disabilities at the UKZN’s Howard College campus are adapting to an inclusive education learning environment. It also highlights some of the existing gaps in the university’s policy and how this policy can better respond to the challenges and needs of students with disabilities. This study also reviews some of the national policies that focus on transformation in further and higher education institutions, in particular, the creation of an enabling environment in higher education institutions. This transformation in the higher education sector should focus on identity and

responding to the diverse range of learning needs of students, particularly addressing the needs of students with disability (Ntombela, 2006).

Tinklin and Hall (1999) explain that few studies focus on disability and higher education. This gives an understanding that the voices of the students with disabilities are marginalised in research on disability, yet there is a need to hear from these students about their lived experiences. It requires research to be undertaken with and by persons with disability and not just on persons with disability. In general, and in South Africa in particular, the lived experiences, realities and challenges faced by students with disabilities are not fully addressed or prioritised. For example, studies such as that by Mazoue (2011) focuses on students who are deaf and, Naidoo (2005) focus only on students with visual impairment. These studies have focused on single types of disabilities rather than looking at a range of disabilities and the various challenges faced by, and the needs of students with disabilities. Some forms of disability are not visible. These include intellectual and emotional imbalances, and these students' needs can be easily overlooked.

At the same time, it is important to note issues of intersectionality and forms of social stratification. Most research, as shown earlier, focuses on a single disability and yet issues of gender, race, sexual orientation or class seldom feature in such analyses and theorisations. For example, disabled girls face a double burden based on their gender and disability and as a result, they are amongst the most marginalised groups. Very little has been done to address this and much more needs to be done to prioritise their needs in education practice and research (Clarke and Sawyer, 2014: 6). Disability must, therefore, be given equal consideration as master statuses such as race, class, and gender, are prioritised in mainstream research and institutional transformation agendas. This study's sample is stratified by gender in order to examine the gendered dimensions of students' experiences and challenges of living with a disability and adapting to an inclusive education learning environment.

1.3 Research objectives and key research questions

The main aim of this study was to identify and examine the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities at the UKZN. It sought to explore the ways that can shape or

promote policy and programme designs. The study did not focus on a particular type of disability or disabilities.

1.3.1 *Key questions and sub-questions*

1. What are the major experiences and challenges that are faced by students with disabilities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College campus? What institutional, physical, communication, attitudinal, social economic or teaching and learning challenges do the students encounter on a daily basis?
2. How have the students overcome their challenges, particularly during their first year of their studies? What opportunities and positive learning experiences can be documented and drawn on to assist other students?
3. To what extent do students with disabilities interact and socialise with students in general? What opportunity exists for interacting and socialising outside of the learning spaces?
4. How do the students with disabilities engage the Disability Unit, the library, lecturers and tutors to facilitate their learning process? What learning, teaching and assessment challenges and experiences do they encounter?
5. What role does the Disability Unit play in supporting students with disabilities? How do the students understand the Unit's role versus their own responsibilities in the learning process? In what way can the findings of this study support the development and expansion of the role and services that the Disability Unit offers students?

1.3.2 *The objectives of the study*

1. To understand the challenges experienced by students with disabilities who are studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College campus.
2. To understand and document how the students with disabilities overcome their challenges and adapt to the inclusive learning environment.
3. To describe forms of support the Disability Unit provides to students with disabilities and how these students engage with the Disability Unit, the library, lecturers and tutors to facilitate their learning process.

4. To examine how students with disabilities can be better supported to live and learn as independently as possible at the university.
5. To provide useful guidelines or recommendations in terms of policy and programmes the university can improve on, or introduce to support students with disabilities.

1.4 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The two dominant models for examining and understanding disability were the charity model and the medical model. These models do not portray persons with a disability in a positive, independent and productive manner nor do they consider their rights as citizens. The charity model sees a person with a disability as poor, unfortunate and dependent on the benevolence of society (Slorach, 2011). On the other hand, the medical model of disability constructs the person with a disability as someone with something wrong or missing and needing to be “fixed” to be able to “fit in” with the rest of the able-bodied world (Reiser, 2006). This study uses the social model of disability. As such, this model frames the analysis and discussions in this study.

During the 1980s, Mike Oliver introduced the social model of disability, and this was tailored for social worker professionals and other professionals who work with people with disabilities (Oliver, 2013). Oliver’s interest in disability and his development of a model stems from his personal understanding of disability as he is a person with disabilities. In describing his lived experiences, Oliver states, “As a severely disabled tetraplegic, who every day of my life needs to make the necessary arrangements to be able to get up in the morning and go to bed at night and indeed use the toilet, I find such suggestions galling, particularly when they come from nondisabled people or those disabled people who have no idea what it’s like to be at the mercy of state services for personal survival, let alone social functioning” (Swain et al., 2004:8).

Barton (2003) explains that the social model provides a framework for people with disabilities to describe their lived realities and in doing so raise questions about why and how society excludes particular individuals and groups which it categorises as inferior or lacking abilities or having an ‘unacceptable’ appearance. Oliver (1990) explains that people

are disabled by barriers which exist in their surrounding environment and the society, as they do not have a choice but to adhere to environmental settings designed for able-bodied or 'normal' persons. Such barriers therefore need to be removed or challenged so that people with disabilities can play an active role in society.

Oliver's model then is largely influenced by Marxist thinking. Here, the assumption is that students with disabilities live in an industrialised capitalist society that does not prioritise their needs. The author unpacks these issues in his seminal text entitled *Capitalism, Disability, and Ideology: A Materialist Critique of the Normalization Principle*. Oliver (2013) explains that in the labour markets, disabling barriers stem from attitudes and perceptions of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are seen as less economically productive, "unable" and dependent on others. This may mean that they are constructed as uncreative and incompetent in the working environment, particularly in a capitalist environment.

This model prompts us to ask what environmental, institutional, physical, communication, attitudinal, social economic or teaching and learning challenges/ barriers do students with disability encounter on a daily basis? How do they cope or adapt to these challenges? How can such barriers be addressed to facilitate the effective participation of all students in the university system?

1.5 Research methodology

This is a qualitative study grounded on an interpretive paradigm. Explorative and descriptive approaches are used in this study. Exploratory studies according to Blanche et al. (2006) are used to make a preliminary investigation into relatively unknown areas of research. On the other hand, descriptive studies aim to describe phenomena accurately, either through narrative type descriptions, classification, or measuring relationships. This study aimed to develop a meaningful understanding of the challenges and experiences of students with disabilities at the UKZN's Howard College campus. According to Bazeley (2007), the purpose of qualitative research is to do a project which involves interpretation of unstructured or semi-structured data. In this study, semi-structured interviews were

conducted in order to get a deeper understanding of the challenges and experiences that the students with disabilities encounter.

Blanche et al. (1999) explain that in qualitative research, the researcher selects cases that can shed light on the object of study. A non-probability sampling design was used; namely purposive/judgemental sampling. This design is based on the selection of participants based on their ability to provide rich information. In this study, it is an understanding of their everyday lived experiences/realities and challenges as students rather than the statistical probability of range that were critical. The participants were drawn from second year students and postgraduate cohorts of honours and masters students who were registered for support with the Disability Unit.

The sample size was twenty participants and it included both genders and students with various disabilities. Such a cross selection allowed for greater insights as the students would be better able to reflect on and recollect their lived experiences and how they adapted or managed. Face-to-face interviews were used as this is regarded as an appropriate data collection tool to gain 'special insight' into subjectivity, voiced and lived experience (Seale, 2005). A semi structured interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions falling under selected themes with guidelines for suggested probe questions was used. Interviews were recorded on a voice recorder device and these took between 60 to 70 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English and where necessary, clarity on questions or themes were provided in Zulu.

During the data analysis process, the recordings were played several times, in order to make sure that the transcribed data had all the detailed information and nuances that took place during the interview. According to Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003), the basic elements of narrative data analysis and interpretation are getting to know your data, focus the analysis, recognising information, and identify patterns and connections within and between categories and interpretation – bringing it all together. A detailed review of the transcripts assisted to manually code the data so as to group common answers into themes and pick up on insightful findings. The analytic challenge for the qualitative researcher is to reduce data,

identify categories and connections, develop themes, and offer well-reasoned, reflective conclusions.

The data was collected in a way that ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of all research participants. All interviews were voluntary, and participants were in no way coerced into taking part and were free to withdraw from the interview at any stage. A consent form was administered during each interview and it ensured all participants of their anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process. The study followed formal processes in terms of gaining ethical clearance by the University's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and permission from the Disability Unit at Howard College campus.

1.6 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of six chapters. These are explained in detail below:

An introduction incorporating background into the study and research objectives is set out in chapter 1. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review and discussion of existing and published work, as well as, a review of the local policy context i.e. the national policies and UKZN policies. It also focuses on the conceptual and terminology debates. Chapter 3 outlines the conceptual framework for this study and evaluates its relevance to the research questions and problems raised in the study. A detailed explanation and description of the research methods and methodology is covered in chapter 4. As this is a qualitative study involving in depth interviews, these provide details on the interview questions and how interview participants were selected. Results of the interviews under specified themes are presented in chapter 5. This chapter also provides the analysis and discussion of findings. The discussion is guided by the findings from the study which are examined in relation to the literature, policy and conceptual and the theoretical framework. Chapter 6 explains the conclusions drawn from the study and offers recommendation and suggestions for further research and policy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the last decade, the issue of inclusive education has been raised in many countries, but the challenge lies in the practice and implementation of such programmes. Learners with disabilities continue to attend segregated and separate primary and secondary schools. In these environments, specialised care and development is prioritised in the form of extra support from their educators, as well as access to different type of therapists, such as speech, occupational and physiotherapy. However, such support and care systems are not necessarily in place, available or accessible within a University or higher education environment. In such inclusive education systems, this can contribute to the additional challenges that students with disabilities are likely to encounter. This chapter is a critical review of relevant literature on students with disabilities' experiences and challenges at higher education institutions such as universities.

The chapter begins with a discussion of how disability studies emerged in the field of sociology and reflects on how scholars conceptualise disability. In general, much of the studies on and about disability are being undertaken by non-disabled researchers, doing research on and about persons with disability. This chapter focuses on examining some of the studies on the experiences and challenges encountered by students with disabilities. The section also pays attention to the discussion of the opportunities that inclusive education is meant to produce for students with disabilities. This is followed by a discussion of the challenges and experiences, including issues of isolation, social differentiation and stratification. This study also examines some of the gaps and limitations in disability studies. The chapter is rounded-up with an examination of the policy landscape and the implementation contexts or lack thereof.

2.2 Disability studies in Sociology

Over the last decade, there has been a proliferation of research and theorisations in the field of disability studies. An emerging discussion has been the diverse understandings and conceptualisation of the notion “disability studies” (Ferguson, 2012). Singh (2010), for example, argues that “disability studies” are not necessarily a new field of study. Durkheim, for example, established sociology theories about how persons with disabilities are visualised as objects that are part of sociological investigations (Singh, 2010). Barnes and Oliver (1993) explain that in most early sociological writings on disability, the ideology of the medical model was promoted and this positioned a person with a disability as having a certain type of sickness in their bodies, and portrayed them as lacking agency and autonomy. This approach of presenting disability as a bodily sickness is limiting and narrow-minded and more importantly, it overlooks the broader range of issues that disability studies cover. In contrast to earlier approaches to disability studies, the sociology of disability mainly focuses on making a distinction between disability and impairment based on the understanding that disability is not to be seen as a chronic condition (Ritzer and Ryan, 2011). Disability either disadvantages or restricts an individual from performing certain activities or functions. Impairment, however, is a shortage of a certain body part. Disability cannot be a chronic condition if viewed as a limitation or restriction an individual encounters in doing everyday activities.

Sociologists employ, adapt and adopt sociological theories, research, and insights to broaden the understanding of the social structures and processes in a society that limit or restrict the full and active participation of some citizens, including people with disabilities. Sociologists bring about a much deeper understanding of how social structure helps to reinforce inequality within society, particularly between the non-disabled and those who are disabled. The imbalance of power between the non-disabled and disabled produces inequalities and instances when the disabled are oppressed.

Sociological explanations and investigations into disability challenges and examines such inequalities, social stratification and social divisions in society (Oliver, 1996). Allan (2010: 603) explains that:

“the sociology of disability, the foundations of which were established by a small number of key scholars (Len Barton, Sally Tomlinson, and Mike Oliver), is marked by a significant shift in the analysis of the nature and causes of disability from individualistic to social and material frames of reference”.

Contemporary scholars (such as Oliver, Tomlinson and Barton) postulate that disability is ‘caused’ by the environment in which the person with a disability carries out their daily lives, works activities and care, rather than the issues of body or impairment. There is also emphasis on notions of ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’ and how these may contribute to a better understanding of the concept of disability (Allan, 2010). This has given rise to considerable debates about the benefits and advantages of implementing inclusive education.

2. 3 Gaps and limitations in disability studies

Evidence shows that “from 43 governments in the review of national progress in the implementation of the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002) indicated that less than 10 percent of children and youth with disabilities had access to any form of education” (UNESCO, 2009:7).

Studies on student engagement in the context of inclusive education within higher learning institutions are limited. Authors (for example, Hurst, 1993; Taylor, 1996) note that studies on disability and higher education usually tend to be small-scale in sample size, and to focus on students’ experiences of a particular impairment or students with disabilities studying a particular subject or a degree (Barnes and Mercer, 1996b). While these approaches are undoubtedly valuable and informative on aspects of students with disabilities’ experiences (Tinklin et al., 2004), they do not show that students with a range of disabilities and studying a variety of courses can have similar or dissimilar needs, experiences and problems.

Tinklin and Hall (1999) explain that few studies have focused on disability and higher education, hence, there has been little information known about the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities in higher education. The lack of research by and with students with disability raises concerns and questions about whose voices we hear, issues of marginalisation and deeper accounts and narratives of the lived experiences of all facets of students with disabilities, and not just their academic performances or teaching and learning experiences. Oliver (1996) observes that research on and about people with

disability fails to involve them or reflect on their perspectives. Rather, they are alienated in the research process and are constructed as objects of research. Hurst (1996) comments that the lived experiences of students with disabilities have been missing from previous studies since most studies on disabilities do not fully represent disability.

There has been a growth of interest in widening access and participation of student with disabilities in inclusive higher education. The voices of students with disabilities are important. Hanafin et al. (2007) state that inclusive education has positive changes in the academic practice, as it aspires to give equal voice to both students with disabilities and non-disabled students with the aim of gathering evidence to enhance the quality of scholarship, teaching and learning for all students. In adapting to an inclusive education system in higher education institutions, all students will benefit from the agenda of inclusive practice. Importantly, this does not necessitate discriminating between students with disabilities and non-disabled students (Waterfield et al., 2006). At UKZN the posting of lecture notes to an e-learning system which students with disabilities and non-disabled students have equal access in retrieving those notes is an indication of inclusive education practices that benefit all students. Fuller et al. (2010:460) in recording challenges faced by students refers to a critical remark by a student:

“It's all that and you're trying to write notes and I can't write the notes and listen to what they're saying and read the board all at the same time, I just can't cope with it all”.

Students with disabilities may find it difficult to multitask as their disabilities tend to limit them. For example a student, who is partially sighted, can have the ability to write fast, but this ability can be limited by their inability to clearly see the board or screen. Scholars such as Tinklin, Riddell, and Wilson (2004) focus on the wider access issues concerning students with disabilities such as the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment in higher education. These aspects are a litmus test of the ability of higher education to include a different range of students. Research into access to education for people with disabilities is particularly relevant in light of the recent emphasis on initiatives aimed at widening access to higher education to underrepresented groups. Holloway's (2001) study focuses on a small sample size of students with disabilities. This study looked at the experience of higher education from the perspective of students with disabilities at a university in the United

Kingdom and makes recommendations for policy and practice. It is, however, impossible to draw meaningful conclusions about the status of higher education for students with disabilities from such a small sample size. This study will not be able to carry out full evidence on the challenges that are experienced by students with disabilities, due to majority of students with disabilities being left aside.

Other notable researchers in disability studies include Adams and Brown (2006a), and Low (2010). Adams and Brown (2006) explore the barriers to learning faced by students with disabilities in higher education. As some students attended segregated schools and the curriculum of these schools were different from the curriculum that is been used in higher education. Low, (2010) explores how students with disabilities interact with non-disabled students and how students with disabilities adapt to the infrastructure of the university. Students with disabilities can experience difficulties in adapting to the physical environment of the university. and also on their identities towards non-disabled students.

Studies such as those by Adams and Brown (2006a), and Low (2010) have looked at many areas of students with disabilities, but there are critical gaps in research particularly in addressing the lived experiences and challenges faced by students with disabilities. The gap that this study strives to fill is one on the lived experiences of students with disabilities across a number of disabilities. By covering a wide range of disabilities, this study will give greater understanding to the experiences and challenges that are faced by students with disabilities.

Some South African qualitative studies focusing on students with disabilities in higher education tend to leave out some of the important experiences that students with disabilities go through in higher education. For example, Matshediso (2010) focuses on providing information on how students with disabilities should apply for post-secondary education (college or university) and also gives advice on employment opportunities and career development. As much as information on how to apply for higher education is important, information on how students with disabilities are adapting to life at higher education institutions is just as critical and would be extremely beneficial.

Lourens (2015), and Naidoo (2005) only examine the lived experiences of visual impairment students. Lourens (2015) and Naidoo's (2005) studies only focus on the experiences of students with visual impairments, and leave out the challenges that are faced by students with other disabilities. Mazoue's (2011) study was limited to deaf students enrolled under the undergraduate programme for the deaf at Durban University of Technology (DUT). However, the study did not reflect on other challenges that were faced by undergraduate students who were also deaf at DUT, or other students with a disability across DUT campuses. Swart and Greyling (2011:81):

“Focuses on their personal experience of living with impairment, both socially and individually, and demonstrates how both personal characteristics and proximal processes play an important role in participating in higher education”.

The authors examine the personal experiences of students with disabilities focusing on the social and individual roles and functions in higher education. South Africans will not forget the struggle of inequality during the days of apartheid. Black people with disabilities were extremely affected by this struggle during the days of apartheid when comparing them with white people with disabilities. Watermeyer's (2006) study aims to show that students with disabilities, particularly black students, have in the past been, and continue to be vulnerable to exclusion from the education system, including the higher education system.

2.3.1 Gender and intersecting forms of stratification

Ritzer (2012:312) notes that: “disabilities scholars argue that ability has been generally neglected in the intersectional analysis of gender and that gender has been under theorized within disabilities scholarship”. Ritzer explains that gender has been neglected by many disabilities scholars. At the same time, it is important to note issues of intersectionality and forms of social stratification. Most research, as shown earlier, focuses on a single disability and yet issues of gender, race, sexual orientation, class and age seldom feature in such analyses and theorisations. For example:

“Disabled girls are among the world's most marginalised sectors of society and yet their needs, and the double discrimination they face has largely been neglected in education discourse and practice to date (Clarke and Sawyer, 2014: 6).

Lewiecki-Wilson (2011) points to Sherry's idea on disability and diversity: the viewpoint of sociology has important contributions towards the conversations in disability studies about intersectionality. Sherry disagrees with the idea of disability identity, stating that disability cannot be understood as an identity category shared by a minority group but can be experienced by anyone. Disability does not choose to be experienced by a certain gendered, race, ethnicity, or class. It cannot be understood but it is experienced by all individuals, regardless of the gender you maybe, the class or one's ethnicity. There are students of different race, class and gender who have different types of disabilities at UKZN.

Christensen and Rizvi (1996:119) state that "disability itself is socially constructed in relation to gender and sexuality. But disability and gender, both individually and combined must be addressed as issues of oppression". Disability is part of the social construction of gender, due to how people respond to someone with a disability. As a result, gender and disability need to be clearly seen as issues of oppression. Barnes (2001) has also pointed out that in African societies, women are usually viewed as lower status than men. For such reasons, women with disabilities face double discrimination because they are women and because they are disabled. On the other hand, men with disability are respected on the basis of their gender of being men, although they also face discrimination. Kambarami (2006) points out that in the Shona culture, the socialization process which discriminates of men and women starts from a very young age. Males are channelled to view themselves as breadwinners and heads of households whilst women are taught to be obedient and submissive housekeepers. The society tends to take away the human identity from people with disabilities. As such, women with disabilities may no longer be acknowledged as being in the capacity of being mothers and their children are usually taken from them in custody battles. Even men with disabilities may have their masculinity denied, and thus face struggles to sustain an affirmed identity (Meekosha, 2004).

Christensen and Rizvi (1996) explain that men with disabilities, also face oppression as they do not enjoy the freedom, status, and self-realisation afforded to non-disabled men. This is due to the fact that in most cases, the capabilities of men with disabilities are being challenged or undermined by non-disabled people. Men with disabilities are therefore, not free in doing all things like non-disabled men. This is because they have to try to prove a

point that they can achieve things as non-disabled men. Men with disabilities are even not employed in places that may need them to carry heavy equipment as they are judged as not being able to carry heavy things. Meekosha (2004:4) also points that “the image of disability may be intensified by gender - for women a sense of intensified passivity and helplessness, for men a corrupted masculinity generated by enforced dependence”. Women are seen as helpless and non-participant human beings, while men with disabilities are identified as not men enough and also enable to become independent. People with disabilities are seen as less human when it comes to their abilities, and are perceived as being unable to participate in their everyday activities as citizens.

However in general, men have more advantages than women. This is also the same when we look at gender in the disability context. Rousso (2003:8) notes that “The African society places more value on boys than girls. So when resources are scarce, boys are given a priority. A disabled boy will be sent to school at the advantage of the girl.” In African societies, education is deemed less important for girls, who are expected to become wives and mothers, whereas boys who are destined to become breadwinners, are given priority in schooling.

Access to higher education improves employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities (Commission, 2002). However, the positive outcomes for the impact of education on employment may not reflect the experiences of those with visual impairments. This may be due to an employer not believing that a person with a visual impairment could be productive in the workplace. This is due to lack of knowledge and understanding that non-disabled employees may have towards people who are visually impaired. This study seeks to bring out the view of students with disabilities in terms of employment opportunities in the UKZN’s Howard College campus, and also if they see themselves as employable after their graduation.

Obtaining better employment for women with disabilities can be a challenge as Lehohla (2011:10) states that:

“The Department of Labour is mandated to coordinate and monitor commitment to inclusive employment practices stipulated in a number of legislations and policies,

namely the Employment Equity Act (1999), Black Economic Empowerment Act (2003), Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA), NDP, 2012 and Public Service Act of 1996, which, among other things, aim for the attainment of 2% target for persons with disabilities in the public service”.

The 2% target for persons with disabilities in the public service seems to be a very small target and such, it tends to discriminate and restrict people with disabilities. This may also mean that the percentage of women with disabilities in the workplace may be even much lower as these women face double discrimination (Lehohla,2011). Furthermore, women with disabilities are less likely to participate in the labour market than men with disabilities. The current employment rate of non-disabled men is 85% compared to 75% for non-disabled women. The global employment rate for men with disabilities is 52% while that for women with disabilities is at 48% (Salome et al., 2013). The above statistics indicate that women with disabilities face double discrimination, as they are discriminated against their opposite sex like all other women and also against other women due to their disability. In such conditions, women with disabilities are the least people who can be employed.

Finally, economics is often intertwined with gender roles. In impoverished families, the limited resources available will be used to educate the boys, with the expectation that they will ultimately help support the family. The disability must, therefore, be given equal consideration as such statuses such as race, class, and gender, and must be prioritised in mainstream research and institutional transformation agendas. This study sample is stratified by gender to examine the gendered dimensions of students’ experiences and challenges of living with a disability. It examines male and female student’s experiences and challenges of adapting to an inclusive education learning environment.

2.4 Inclusive education at all levels

Most students, including those with disabilities, struggle to adapt to a new environment and the challenges they face can result in students dropping out of university at first year or achieving lower performances than expected (Tinto, 1982). For students with disabilities, it is likely that their past experiences of segregation and separation and the limited opportunities for socialisation, participation and integration can contribute to challenges in adapting to an environment of inclusive education. For example, learners with disabilities

usually socialise with their family members and with learners and teachers within the segregated schools they attended and also with their immediate neighbours within the communities they live in.

Inclusion into mainstream schooling may benefit a learner to achieve broader educational, employment, socialisation skills and goals. This will depend on sufficient resources to be allocated to support learning by students with disabilities. Jankinson (1997) stated that success towards inclusive education is possible if there are adequate resource staff. Such teachers will be better trained on how to educate learners with disabilities. According to Wang (2009:154-5):

“Inclusion involves the reorganization of ordinary schools, in such a way that every mainstream school is capable of accommodating every student regardless of their disabilities, making it certain that each learner belongs to a single community. The concentration of inclusion is more focused on the discussion of values. Thus, the principle of inclusion is founded on the broad agenda of human rights, clearly emphasizing that segregation of any form is morally incorrect”.

Learners with disabilities would be able to attend schools in their communities, rather than a learner being forced to leave his/her community and family for specially established schools that have boarding facilities. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1999) states that it is due to certain circumstances that a learner with a disability has to live away from home to access appropriate education. The learners tend to forget their customs and values of their community, for most of the time they are in segregated schools which are not in their communities. Therefore, the establishment of an inclusive education and training system will create an integrated and caring society and an education and training system for the 21st century, according to the Department of Education, White paper 6 Special Needs Education (2001). Inclusive education will also restore a sense of belonging in the life of learners with disabilities, as they will spend most of their time with their families and community members.

In some countries, inclusive education is thought as an appropriate approach which provides for children with disabilities within general education settings. It is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners (UNESCO, 2001). Learners with disabilities will get to see themselves as equal and capable as non-disabled learners, rather than isolating themselves from other learners. Fuller, Bradley and Healey (2004) state that the importance of the participation of students with

disabilities in higher education is an issue both of equal opportunities and of empowerment for the students with disabilities. In order for students with disabilities to access equal opportunities and to be empowered, higher education institutions should look at reducing the barriers these students may encounter in teaching, learning and assessment. Importantly, inclusion education is based on values and principles founded on the broad agenda of human rights, and strongly stating that segregation is incorrect. This is because inclusion improves children in their academic achievement through their participation in group work; build a good communication through parent-teacher and also the speech and language of the child (Jenkinson, 1997).

Inclusive education has a progressive impression towards a student with a disability. Through inclusive education, students with disabilities are able to interact with non-disabled students. Students with disabilities will also gain an advantage of being active in participating in class discussions, which will enable them to get a better understanding of what is being taught in the lecture room or during tutorials. Inclusion aims to benefit students with disabilities by providing improvements in their learning outcomes, through including their social skills, academic success and personal development as human beings (Wang, 2009). Inclusive education aims to improve the learning outcomes for students with disability, for through the process of their learning in an inclusive environment, their skills and personal development are being challenged to adapt to an inclusive environment. This also benefits the person with a disability to build a positive self-esteem, through seeing that he/she has the ability to adapt to an inclusive environment. Furthermore, the mere fact that a person with a disability is managing to interact with others is important.

2.5 Opportunities, experiences and challenges

Limited emphasis is placed on the day-to-day challenges which students with disabilities encounter at the higher learning institution level beyond the curriculum, teaching and learning (Hurst, 1996). Most studies on disabilities focus on a certain type of issues that may be affecting students with disabilities rather than focusing on the in-depth day-to-day experiences of students with disabilities attending higher education institutions. Paul (2000:209) suggests that “these students constantly face various barriers in their educational environment”. Some of those experiences and challenges which are faced by students with

disabilities may be produced due to failure in their academics which can be a challenge that is unknown and cannot be attended to. It is therefore important to listen to the experiences of students with disabilities themselves. The process of listening to students with disabilities has an advantage of letting the individuals express their 'lived experience' of being a student at an institution of higher education and enables students with disabilities to discuss the physical barriers that they routinely encounter in greater detail (Jayram and Scullion, 2000). Such information can be useful in discussions during policy formulation and also to ensure that these challenges are mitigated. This would enable students with disabilities to at least fairly compete academically with non-disabled students.

2.5.1 Infrastructural challenges

This research was informed by the social model of disability, which states that people are disabled by barriers which exist in society. In this view, people with disabilities face barriers because they have to negotiate an environment which was not designed for them, and if they are to enjoy equality of access, it is this deficit in the environment which must be overcome. Kabuta (2014) emphasises that students with physical disabilities experience a limited chance of enjoying the higher educational institutional environment, because they experience challenges in going around the institution. This is because the institution may have steep areas and while there may be stairs leading to some departments, such as UKZN Howard College campus, some students with disabilities may have difficulties to access such areas due to the nature of their disability. In addition Azad (2008:19) states that:

“it is also an important contributory factor for ensuring social justice by providing vertical mobility to deprived sections of society by making higher levels of knowledge accessible to them and, in the process, improving quality of life of the nation as a whole” .

Azad (2008) highlights the importance of social justice in ensuring that environmental accessibility is provided to students with disabilities in higher educational institutions, in order for them to have equal access in every area in the institution.

Mobility is not only an issue of whether a student with a disability is physically able to climb stairs or walk up the hills across the campus, but it is also an issue of the amount of time and energy climbing and walking requires. “Stairs, narrow doorways and curbs are handicaps imposed upon people with disabilities who use wheel chairs” (Reynolds

and Janzen 2007:735). Time is a very important resource that must be carefully managed by all students regardless of whether they have a disability or not. The most important aim is to be successful at university, but students who rely on braces and crutches cannot run to make their next class. This is also due to issues of accessibility, for instance moving from one lecture venue to another can take considerable time.

Through institutional structures, students with disabilities encounter challenges in accessing different places in higher institutions not only in terms of gaining physical access to buildings, but also in relation to much wider issues within the institutions (Tugli, Zungu, Ramakula, Goon and Anyanwu, 2013). When changing lecture venues, it becomes very busy and congested in many areas around the campus. Students with disabilities will have to move very slowly, in order to ensure that they do not hurt other students or even get to be dashed down by other students. Furthermore, some venues may require the student with a disability to take a lift which may also take some time as the lifts are also used by non-disabled individuals. This delays the student with a disability and by the time the student reaches the lecture venue, the lecture may have already started and the student may not secure a strategic seat.

2.5.2 Teaching and learning activities

One of the reasons that could contribute to learning challenges faced by students with disabilities is that most students with disabilities have not experienced being educated in a class of more than twenty learners. In some special schools, learners are sometimes placed in a certain classroom specified according to their disabilities because of the need for additional support, which is the reason why some special schools have one teacher for every eight learner in a class room (National Council for Special Needs, 2014). Fuller et al. (2010) point out that some students with disabilities experience problems from lecturers who are talking too quickly or removing visual material such as overhead transparencies before the student digests the contents or capture the information on those slides.

Students with learning disabilities may have challenges coping with the pace of the lecturer and may have problems catching up with the content as well (Fuller et al., 2010). Students with a visual impairment may also encounter difficulties of contributing in the lecture room

during discussions particularly if a picture or a video clip is involved. (Naidoo, 2005:55) points out that “students with visual impairments are limited in acquiring information through incidental learning since they are often unaware of subtle activities in their environments”.

Other students with physical disabilities or learning disabilities may face a major challenge when it comes to written assessments, test, and examinations. In addition, Tinklin et al. (2004:2) highlight that:

“Student with disabilities pose particular challenges to higher education (HE) not only in terms of gaining physical access to buildings but also in relation to much wider access issues concerning the curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment. For these reasons, they may be seen as a litmus test of the ability of higher education to include a diverse range of learners, particularly relevant in light of the recent emphasis on initiatives aimed at widening access to higher education to underrepresented groups”.

These issues may raise concerns of whether students with disabilities are able to cope efficiently and effectively in an exclusive learning environment. Studies have shown that most students with disabilities are sent to separate (segregated) schools which are argued to cater for their special needs.

2.5.3 Degree and module choices

The curriculum offered in higher education could pose some challenges because most special schools offer a curriculum that is different from that of mainstream schools. The selection of courses for students with disabilities is thus challenging and needs to be taken with a need for fair consideration to be given to their disability and the course requirements. Students with disabilities may in some cases do courses that are not their first choice as when they choose their courses they have to consider whether or not their disability may hinder them or not. Kabuta (2014:57) states that:

“Due to difficulties in using and accessing the higher education institutions’ laboratories, some physically disabled students have been advised by their academic advisors to change courses from natural sciences to social sciences regardless of the rights that physically disabled students have to choose courses of their interests”.

Some students with disabilities may register to do natural science due to their passion, but due to difficulties emanating from their disabilities, they tend to encounter challenges during practicals. As such, they may be advised to quit that course and do what is deemed

manageable to them. Such situations may be very discouraging for a student with disability and may present a challenge in adapting in an alternative course.

The Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (2011) has shown that most of the students were studying courses in the faculty of Arts faculties followed by commerce. While a minority group of students studied sciences, education, law and health sciences, reason for such facts is that many students with disabilities did not do Math in high school. Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (2011) argues that it is not just the student's disability which limits them from doing other courses but it is also the type of courses that they would have chosen or were available to them in high school.

2.5.4 The Disability Support Unit (DSU)

Generally, students go through challenges at the university, but those with disabilities may experience greater challenges compared to their counterparts who are non-disabled. Apart from those challenges that students in general go through, those with disabilities also face challenges which are brought by their disabilities. Naidoo (2010:29) states "appropriate support systems are vital in ensuring equal access for students with disabilities in teaching and learning". The DSU, also referred to as the DU is a structure, which provides the need for students with disabilities to overcome the challenges which they experience at UKZN Howard College. At the Howard College campus, student with disabilities are in a privilege that there are two Disability Unit offices that provide a different type of support for them. The UKZN undergraduate prospectus (2016:52) points out that;

"The Disability Unit, in collaboration with schools, is responsible for developing and facilitating a wide range of services for disabled students, e.g. academic support, accommodation, finance, access, etc. It is recommended that applicants with disabilities contact the Disability Coordinator".

The DU office at Shepstone building has two social workers who support students with counseling, advocating for their special academic needs and assist in the application for bursaries which are provided to all students with disabilities in higher education. Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer and Acosta (2005) note that the social workers assist in advocating for the mitigation of barriers, such as the attitudes and unwillingness of the academic staff to provide arrangements, which can affect the progress of students with disabilities in higher

education. The social workers therefore write letters for students with disabilities to inform the lecturers of the type of requirements that are needed for each specific student. They assist students with reasonable accommodation, application for financial aid, and also counsel the student if they may be experiencing difficulties both academically and socially. The DU office at the Student Union building deals with all academic issues such as scanning and editing, tests and examinations and scribing. The UKZN (2004:11) policy states:

“The University will, where practicable, modify existing academic courses to accommodate the range of disabilities that individual students may have, providing such modification does not compromise the academic standard or the essential nature of the academic course. This will, where practicable, include fieldwork and practical/laboratory work, provided that no hazard is created for the students with special needs or for others associated with the activity. Examples include alternative projects or the granting of extensions”.

UKZN aims to ensure that it provides modification of all academic courses in order to accommodate students with different disabilities. Such modifications do not make courses that are done by students with disabilities easier than those done by non-disabled students. The modification is mostly to ensure that students with disabilities acquire all academic material required by any other student. The University of Cape Town (2010), also have a similar support system for students with disabilities in providing academic access. The type of academic support which they deliver is as follows: advocacy and advice on any issues related to the disabled student's disability, consultative and counselling support for students with disabilities, a resource centre with literature and material relating to disability studies and disability research, physical access, assistive technology, technical assistance, parking for disabled students, and facilitation of extra time and other examination accommodations for disabled students. It is also seen that the service which UKZN provides to students with disabilities is not only similar to that at the University of Cape Town, but also similar to Northumbria University which is an international institution of higher learning.

Northumbria University (2006) assists students with disabilities by providing advice and support in the application of Disabled Students' Allowance, giving them information and advice about services in the university and local community. Students with disabilities are also given proper advice on the use of the Support Worker Service or alternative; and also

on the ongoing individual support. They are also provided with support and guidance for study related issues as well as support and advice for academic and support staff. It is clear that students with disabilities are being supported in different ways at different universities. This shows that generally, universities are moving towards inclusive education.

2.5.5 Assistive devices

Assistive devices are technical devices which assist an individual to adapt and be capable to do activities that are a challenge for them to perform. According to Ahmad (2015: 64),

“Assistive technology is a generic term that includes assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for individuals with disabilities and includes 'virtually anything that might be used to compensate for lack of certain abilities”.

It is recognised that exposing students to technology and assistive devices can greatly assist in their success and can improve their academic marks (Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis, 2011). Students with disabilities face major challenges when it comes to their academic work because their disabilities limit them in many ways. Therefore, assistive devices can be very helpful to students with disabilities for these devices can assist them in overcoming several challenges. They can be able to adapt to the academic standard that is required from all students at the university. The World Health Organisation (2015:8) asserts that “access to assistive technology is a precondition for achieving equal opportunities, enjoying human rights and living in dignity”. UKZN Howard College campus provides several assistive devices to support students with disabilities to enable them to attain high marks despite their disabilities. Some of these devices also belong to the student as they also receive funding to purchase assistive devices (Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development, 2003).

Students who are deaf or partially deaf face difficulties in adapting to different learning styles and this problem is exasperated due to the lack of qualified sign language interpreters (Sameshima 1999). Some universities may decide not to accept students who are deaf or partially deaf. UKZN Howard College campus only accepted their first student who is deaf in 2016. Sign language interpreter for was employed to assist the student. Adopting inclusive education can be quite expensive for the higher learning institution, as it has to ensure that specialised equipment is provided for students with disabilities. Adams and

Brown (2006) mentioned that students with disabilities may be required to use new software packages and other information technologies in order to adapt and be able to engage appropriately with the different styles of learning required in higher institution. Without these assistive devices in the higher education, students with disabilities experience challenges in their academic life.

2.5.6 Financial support for academic needs

Studying at the university can be costly for most students. Some of the costs of schooling are paid directly to universities in order for students to be admitted and receive all the services which are offered by the university. Students with disabilities have been exposed to high expenditures and challenging economic needs at universities (Pauline and Bernadette, 2014). Apart of all the challenges that students with disabilities go through that have been mentioned in this literature review, financial problems are some of the stressful issues that majority of students experience in higher education. Students with disabilities tend to depend more on financial availability in order to overcome most of their challenges. The Department of Special Needs Education (2014:20) mentions that “Among the challenges they face is financial challenges. As they have disabilities, they might need extra money for their academic such as photocopying, transcription, exam reader, sanitation and others”. The financial needs of students with disabilities are mainly determined by the type of disability that the student has, as some of them may need to print out notes that are sent to them as they are unable to capture these during lecture times, need to take a meter taxi’s whenever they have to go to places or even pay their helpers.

Most students at university are studying using the National Student Financial Aid Scheme of South Africa (NSFAS) that assists students who are in need. The Department of Higher Education and Training (2014:4) states that:

“NSFAS loan does not cover registration fees except for students who qualify for full NSFAS awards (typically where the EFC / Expected Family Contribution is zero or close to zero). These funds are awarded to all students who are in Expected Family Contribution”.

Students with disabilities also receive NSFAS, although the type of NSFAS that they receive is a bursary which is from the department of education. The intention of this bursary

is for providing financial support to students with disabilities who need financial aid and are academically able (National Student Financial Aid Scheme 2012). The bursary covers the institutional registration, tuition cost which is paid directly to the institution. The cost of books and other study material, and accommodation are also being paid to the institution. Other needs such as meal allowance, cost of assistive devices and human support are paid out to the student's bank account (National Student Financial Aid Scheme 2012). With NFSAS funds, students with disabilities become fully independent as all their basic needs are covered. If a student needs personal assistant the bursary will cover the cost. Through these funds, students with disabilities cannot claim that their disability is an obstacle to furthering their studies.

Some students with disabilities may fail to submit the needed documents for the application of the bursary on time. They may end up not getting the much needed funding during their first year of study. These students will therefore face financial challenges throughout the year may produce poor results. Other consequences include being excluded during the subsequent semester. University of Cape Town (2011) points that most first year students with disabilities tend to leave university at the end of their first year. This problem is mostly attributed to the lack of finance, relationships, study skills and poor academic advice. Such challenges tend to discourage students with disabilities, and hence they may see dropping out from university as the best solution. Financial support is very important for a student to be able to cope academically and also to overcome the challenges that are brought by their disability. With strong financial support, it is possible for all students including those with disabilities to complete their degree programmes.

2.5.7 Isolation, stigma and fear

Students with disability experience isolation from non-disabled students and this is because their ability is undermined. Davis and Hogan (2002) point out that there is very little recognition of the ability of children and young people with disabilities to plan their own services. It is due to this reason that young people with disabilities are more socially isolated than other young people who are non-disabled (Swain et al., 2004). According to Swain et al. (2004) isolation is produced through the charity model. The model portrays people with disability as socially isolated from the society, passive recipients of caring

attention making it easy to overlook the fact that people with disabilities are members of families and can actively participate in this context. Many adults with disabilities have an active role in caring for children whether as birth, step, adoptive or foster parents, as aunts, uncles or grandparents. Similarly, children with disabilities are also human and they enjoy reciprocal friendships and may be involved in looking after siblings or other relatives.

Usually people with disabilities are not acknowledged as people who are in a position to make the decisions for themselves or be given the chance to make their own choices. In 2014, I was doing my final year in Social Work; I wanted to stay in a residence adjacent to Howard College, as I wanted to be closer to a classmate who was a regular partner on group assignments. My application was not approved, they questioned my ability to cross the road.

There are very few lecturers that play a role in making sure that the needs of students with disabilities are met. Some of the lectures may just set a test or an examination that requires students to draw a diagram, forgetting that there may be students who cannot see or cannot write on their own. Many school children and students with disabilities may be physically incorporated in classrooms but remain socially isolated and academically. Consequently, they may under-achieve due to lack of implementation of alternative and inclusive modes of learning within these settings. Schools often become sites of failure rather than an equal opportunity environment (Peter, 1993). Isolation of students with disability indeed produces failure, as students with disabilities and non-disabled student have poor interaction with each other which creates a lot of tension between the students. There must be a way of dealing with the issue of isolation among students with disabilities and non-disabled students in order for isolation not to be a barrier to effective teaching and learning. However, such interventions should not leave out Disability Units and students with disabilities particularly of the planning phase educational problem. The interventions must understand disability discrimination within the spectrum of barriers to learning and aim to improve the social and academic experiences of students (Matshedisho, 2010).

Students with disabilities that are not visible, such as learning disability or chronic diseases often face a challenge of disclosing their disability, as they worry about how other people

will perceive. Hall and Tinklin (1998) state that most students choose not to disclose their disabilities in some situations, for they believe that students with disabilities may receive a negative reaction or that they may be disadvantaged in some way. Hall and Tinklin (1998) also highlight for example Zoe's experience in fearing to disclose her disability. Zoe did not disclose her disability of being dyslexia at first because she thought that she would be labelled as stupid by other students. She could see no advantage in disclosing her condition. Students with disabilities are therefore isolated in an objective sense when they are seen by others going in special doors and in situations where they feel disorientated, unsafe and afraid (Low, 2010). Through my work at the Disability Unit as an intern social worker, I came across a student who had a chronic disease and did not want to write his assessments with fellow students with disabilities. This was because he did not want other students to see him going in and out the Disability Unit. This shows that students with disabilities fear that they will be somehow disadvantaged if they either ask for assistance or disclose their disability to others.

Some students with disabilities may know that they could get support but choose not to take it because they want to be treated like other students (Hall and Tinklin, 1998). One of the psychiatric system survivors in the United States of America stated that "over the 15 years of my disability, I have learned what it is like to be isolated, segregated, and discriminated against" (Swain et al., 2004:56). For students with disabilities may sometimes have a fear of the stigma and discrimination that is always portrayed towards people with disabilities, they choose to struggle through their difficulties even if assistance is available. They fear that if they were to ask for assistance, they will be identified as if they are unable to cope due to their disabilities.

Some students with disabilities see disclosing their disability as an advantage, as Viney (2006) pointed out that disclosure for students with disabilities is now much more likely to occur for an advantage to gain access to financial support. In South African universities, students with disabilities are most likely to receive a bursary which covers for all their needs (tuition fees, book allowance, meal allowance, and assistive devices allowance). There is an advantage for some students with disabilities to disclose their disabilities to the Disability Unit Coordinator in order to receive the bursary.

2.6 Coping mechanisms

Students with disabilities come across many challenges at the university. They are able to overcome some of the challenges through use of their own coping mechanisms. Students with disabilities tend to focus on their abilities in adapting to teaching and learning, and also the type of support which they receive from the DU in order for them to cope with their studies.

2.6.1 *Adapting to teaching and learning of students with disabilities*

Shunmugam (2002) found that students had to adapt to alternate modes of studying and adjust to the university's systems of lecturing, doing assignments and examinations. For the mode of studying and the university's systems of lecturing was fully designed for non-disabled student, some lecturers may not even have a clue on any requirements that a student with disability may need. Access and the availability of adaptive learning devices and other forms of support are as important as the design of spaces and environments. The participation of students with disabilities in higher education is an issue of equal opportunities, adaptation to the university environment and of empowerment for the students with disabilities concerned (Fuller et al., 2010). Inclusive education is thought of as an ethical approach to serving students with disabilities within general education settings (Ainscow, 2005). This shows that it is essential for institutions, staff and students to be equipped to assist students with disabilities, and to be cognisant of the type of assistance students need. It requires an understanding and acknowledgement that the barriers that students with disabilities encounter are constructed by the society they live in and the institutions which operate within the society.

In addition, students with disabilities need equal access to learning materials and the institution should ensure that all teaching material are available to a student with a disability who is blind or partially sighted during or before the lecture commences, in electronic form. Students with disabilities who have different requirements will be able to convert such as appropriate as they may need them, such as changing text, size, colour and contrast or using the digital file as the basis for the production of audio or Braille materials (Seed Guide, 2011).

Furthermore, such transformation will create equal access to study materials between students with disabilities and non-disabled students. Students with disabilities will not have to wait for days for their study material to be reformatted in a form that is suitable for their needs. Ainscow (1999:218) suggests that “inclusive education should be concerned with ‘overcoming barriers to participation that may be experienced by any pupils’”. Therefore, if barriers are being overcome, then students with disabilities will identify themselves to be at an equal advantage in achieving excellent marks. Ganapathi (2014) compares 170 such students with disabilities in higher education institutions in Israel with 156 non-disabled students in formal achievements and overall participation in higher education. The final results revealed that the academic achievements of students with disabilities were almost as high as those of non-disabled students. Hadjidakou and Hartas (2008:116) state that:

“Some heads expressed the view that students should modify their needs to access the curriculum rather than the institution adapting its practices to remove obstacles to learning. Specifically, it was said that there is a general rule in our college that we accept all students, as long as their problem does not block their academic attendance. We treat everybody in the same way”.

Some institutions can place demands on students with disabilities without much concern for adapting to the student's needs. Students with disabilities are expected to try and adapt to the curriculum of the institution, rather than the institution providing means for the students with disabilities to be able to adapt. Such institutions can be described as contributing to discrimination against students with disabilities. Jacklin et al. (2006) point out at Clair's struggle in adapting at higher education; Clair's difficulties to adapt in higher education affected the social and educational aspects of her life as a student since the workload was taking longer than she expected it to be done.

2.6.2 Teaching and learning support and materials

Jenkinson (1997) points out that, inclusion provides several demands on the institution in terms of extra time, knowledge and skill required to prepare adapted curriculum materials and implement special instructional techniques which can benefit students with disabilities. At UKZN, students with disabilities have a different type of needs in order for them to achieve academically. For example, some student may be in need of scribes during their tests and examinations, because a student may not be able to write or may have difficulties

in writing fast. Students who are blind use computers that are installed with Jaws, a special type of software that reads a Microsoft document. Therefore the course material for a student who is blind has to be formatted into a Microsoft word document. On the other hand, students who are partially sighted use computers that are installed with Zoom-text. This software enlarges the font and the screen of the computer. All students that use the mentioned requirements are also in need of extra time during their tests and examinations. Furthermore,

“students with disabilities may require special methods of instruction to compensate for their disability, or they may need special equipment or communication technology to enable them to learn from an unmodified curriculum”, (Jenkinson, 1997:169).

Such alternation of study material is done in order for students with disabilities to independently access their study materials, and also to embrace that if they are provided with the support they need, then they are able to produce good results.

2.7 The national policy landscape

The National Plan for Higher Education focuses on providing guidelines for the transformation of higher education (Department of Education, White Paper 6, Special Needs Education, 2001). The document highlights the need to emphasise the role of infrastructure in higher education in providing for the needs of students with disabilities.

The Ministry has acknowledged that it will be possible for all the institutions to fully address all the infrastructural needs for students with disabilities. Institutions within regions were given an opportunity to come up with regional strategies that can ensure that students with disabilities are well catered for, throughout the region. This also called for all institutions to be provided with a minimum of basic infrastructure which can allow students with disabilities access to campus (Department of Education, White Paper 6, Special Needs Education, 2001).

The department of education aims to improve the infrastructure in high educational institutions in the best way that it can in all its regions. As the department of education wanted to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities were catered for, this was also to open greater opportunities for students with disabilities to study in universities and

further their studies. Most importantly, it was also to ensure that all campuses had basic infrastructure which was able to allow all people with disabilities to be able to access the universities. The Department of Education White Paper 6, Special Needs Education (2001) has emphasised that higher education institutions should have a three-year strategic plan to address infrastructural issues, and then ensure that the institutional infrastructure is accessible to all the students with disabilities, members of staff, and the broader community. By higher education institutions producing a three-year plan, such a plan will help in monitoring and evaluation and track progress towards creating an inclusive environment.

There have been many guidelines put in place. The Department of Education, Guideline to Ensure Quality Education and Support in Special School Resource Centres (2007) noted that support programmes should address things such as barriers to learning which are severe learning difficulties, hearing, vision, mobility, language use and social communication, complex, multiple and pervasive disability, behaviour and psycho-social factors and socio-economic neglect. The Disability Unit is one of the support offices at UKZN that serves as a support structure for students with disabilities.

The Education White Paper 6 on Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. Department of Education, Policy Proposal Consultation Document (2009:29) states that:

“At the higher education level, there is a need to establish support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator, and institutional needs.”

Most lecturers are not well equipped in lecturing or interacting with people who are disabled (Department of Education, Policy Proposal Consultation Document, 2009). The department of education has to also apply the idea of support teams at the higher educational level, in order to coordinate the student and lecture services in order for lectures to gain knowledge on how to understand students with disabilities and their needs. Students with disabilities will also benefit from these support services. As they receive appropriate support from their lectures, students with disabilities will also be able to bring up their academic issues with their lectures.

2.8 UKZN policy landscape

UKZN has adopted national policies in numerous ways (UKZN, 2004). In terms of the infrastructure, the university has provided lifts to increase access to certain departments for students with disabilities and residences that have floors which are not accessible for students with disabilities. Despite the fact that more needs to be done in creating a much better disabled friendly environment at Howard College and in the residences. There are services that the Disability Unit provides such as educating lectures on disability and assisting students with disabilities to overcome some of the challenges that they tend to come across on campus.

2.8.1 *Environmental issues on Howard College campus*

Although there seem to be huge gaps in the existing UKZN policy for staff and students with disabilities, such gaps are better understood by an individual who is a student with a disability at the UKZN. A major environmental challenge on campus centres on accessibility. Most of the lecture venues, tutorial venues, and lecturers offices at Howard College are not user-friendly for students with disabilities; most of these venues have stairs and there may be buildings which have lifts but the lifts are at times faulty and out of use for a long period of time. In terms of accessibility, UKZN policy states in the objectives and principles that the university strives to:

“Develop and maintain, where it will not cause unjustifiable hardship to the University, an accessible and safe built environment in which all people with disabilities can participate in university activities” (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004:2).

There are two ramps that are provided at TB Davis and at Memorial Tower Building, but both are too steep and may be risky for students with disabilities to use, and in these buildings, there are lecture venues and most of the tutorial venues. Furthermore, the university environment has many areas with too steep driveways and there are no alternate routes for students with disabilities. In terms of timetable and venues, policy points out that:

“The University recognises that it is important for students to be able to access their scheduled lectures, workshop/laboratory sessions and tutorials for units in a timely manner. Hence, the University will take those issues into account in room allocation, and timetable where practicable. Students with a disability may be given preferential tutorial allocation, where required” (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004:11).

The University also needs to renovate the environment on campus, as mentioned above that Howard College campus has many areas which are too steep whereby a student in a wheelchair has to take a longer route than other students. It is quite disappointing seeing some of the buildings on campus which are in good condition yet they are being renovated, but areas and buildings that are accessed by students with disabilities are not considered a priority.

Looking at such aspects of the environment of Howard College campus, it does not truly reflect equality of access in the academic environment. Reasonable and appropriate adjustments have to be made to enhance access by students with disabilities. The UKZN (2004) principal policy says, that students with disabilities have the right to equal access to the university environment, clear information, proper services and reasonable accommodation to enable such access for them.

2.8.2 Reasonable accommodation

The Department of Education (2001) aims to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities. Most residence buildings were designed with non-disabled students in mind. At UKZN, there are two residences on campus which have been assigned to students with disabilities. In these two residences, only one floor on each of these residences are suitable for persons with disabilities. Moreover, these residences are also self-catering. The University of KwaZulu-Natal policy (2004:10) stated that “within current and future financial constraints the University will endeavour to provide housing appropriate to the needs of students with disabilities”. Appropriate housing is still not yet well established for students with disabilities, as it has been twelve years since this policy was documented but there are still only two residences that accommodate students with disabilities. It would have been understandable if these two residences had lifts or ramps and well accessible toilets in all floors, in order for students with disabilities to have increased access to the entire residence instead of just one floor in each of these residences.

In terms of accessibility and accommodation, the UKZN policy must be reviewed and improvements made to its implementation in order to cater for the needs of students with disabilities. For example; renovating the lifts system and for all lifts to have a backup which

will automatically kick in whenever electricity cuts off on campus. There is need to renovate the residences especially those that are on campus, and at least three to four residence should fully accommodate students with disabilities. Doing so would increase the chances of inclusion and adaptation for students with disabilities.

2.8.3 Challenges in some of the courses

The university aims to support the use of alternative strategies as instruments of assessing students with disabilities. These alternative strategies for assessment include oral examinations, the use of special equipment or furniture, separate examination room, rest breaks during tests, use of visual aids, enlarged examination paper and allowing extra time during assessment. Such strategies are to enable students with disabilities to equally participate in the same manner as other students under normal assessment conditions (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004:11). Some of the courses that students with disabilities register for seem to fail in terms of providing alternative strategies for students with disabilities. This can cause hardships and subsequently poor results for the student with disabilities. This tends to happen when a lecturer has set a test or an examination paper that may require students to draw a draft, forgetting that there is a student who is unable to write or draw. As such, students with disabilities may decide to leave out these sections which require them to draw a certain diagram. Similar challenges are faced with course material in particular when the materials are not made available in an electronic format. For students who have visual impairments, the course material would have to be scanned and edited by the DU and this is time-consuming and causes delays in students receiving study materials.

2.8.4 Library facilities

“The University Librarian will be responsible for ensuring efficient access to information for students and staff with disabilities. Within legal and budgetary constraints the latter shall ensure that appropriate resources are provided that utilise media which are alternate to printed media e.g. digital, Braille and/or audio recorded material for blind people”, (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004:11).

The library facility is still an issue for students with disabilities at UKZN, especially those students who are visually impaired or blind. Up to now, there has been no practical initiative of having Braille and/or audio recorded material for blind people and there are a

huge number of students who are blind at Howard College. It is due to such reasons that students who are blind do not use the library for it seems useless to them as they cannot access any material. The university library should at least have two of each prescribed books texts available in brail or in audio for a student who is blind. As the library is for studying and searching for information, equipment such as Lest-thone, Smart-view, and a computer that are installed with Zoom Text which is equipment that is partially sighted are needed at the library.

2.8.5 The Disability Unit

Despite the demands faced by institutions, there have been definite signs of progress in the provision of support services for students with disabilities. Most institutions have at least one or two designated disability officers per campus and a senior manager with responsibility for disability issues. This is also the case at UKZN Howard College which has two disability officers responsible for approximately two hundred students with disabilities pursuing different degree programmes. This makes it quite difficult to provide for all the needs of all students with disabilities. It would have been better if each school had their own disability officers.

Therefore there is a great need for disability awareness training and development for lecturers. The university's principal policies commits to offer all staff members access to disability awareness training and development in order to ensure that they are equipped with appropriate skills on how to communicate and to have an ability to provide service delivery to students with disabilities (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004). Due to high staff turnover, implementing disability awareness training and development every semester could have a huge impact on students with disabilities. Such processes will prevent lecturers from asking many questions from a student which may make the student feel uncomfortable, as some students may have a disability which is not visible enough such as dysgraphia and visual impairment.

2.8.6 Challenges of adapting to the university environment

Students at the UKZN are faced with different type of challenges. In most cases non-disabled students are able to cope with those challenges and their voices are heard because

they are the majority. Students with disabilities constitute a minority group within the student population of higher education institutions and little is known about their experiences and challenges that they go through in higher education (Hurst, 1993). As a result, their needs and challenges are not heard. Many questions have been raised since the South African education system has been going through a transition. A critical question in terms of transformation in higher education would be whether the UKZN has been able to ensure that students with disabilities are being prioritised in terms of the cultural, social, scientific, technological and professional formation of the country's leadership (Department of Education, White Paper on Education and Training 1995).

2.9 Summary

This chapter adequately deliberated on what inspired this study. As a sociologist, the researcher has pointed out how the field of sociology gives a better understanding of how human beings interact among themselves in their different groupings. This has built a foundation in terms of expressing the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus. In the field of sociology, disability was mostly thought to be some type of sickness related behaviour. Disability sociologists employing sociological theories, research, and insights have endeavoured to broaden the understanding of disability. These theorists have transformed the imbalance of power between people with disabilities and non-disabled people. Therefore, sociology scholars have clarified that disability is caused by the environment and should not be viewed as a form of sickness.

There have also been many gaps which have been identified in other studies focusing on people in general or students with disabilities in particular. Most of these studies have not focused on a wide range of disabilities and in most instances these have not been conducted in a tertiary education setting. Most studies on disabilities have not discussed the role that gender plays in people with disabilities. In most cases, females who are disabled face double discrimination; that they are females and also that they are disabled. As a result, such discrimination limits many females from getting a good education and also the best employment that they may desire.

Therefore, this study has focused on a variety of disabilities, in order to get to know the experiences and challenges that are faced by the student in their different types of disabilities. The importance and benefits of inclusion have been discussed in this chapter, and the discussion has shown how UKZN tries to be as possible. For example, in University of KwaZulu-Natal KZN students who are blind or partially blind, have cerebral palsy and quadriplegia do experience the challenge of listening and writing notes or watching and making notes. These students seek letters each semester from the disability coordinators which require lecturers to email their notes to the access officer of the Disability Unit. These notes are to be reformatted to the suitable way which benefits the students.

The University's policy for staff and students with disabilities and the national policies have been critically discussed. In terms of these policies, discussion indicated that the implementation of these policies is usually very slow and also this tends to negatively affect the teaching of, and learning by students with disabilities. Therefore, some of the recommendations that UKZN needs to look at in order to be more inclusive to students with disabilities, and also ensuring that their aims and objectives in policy documents are practically implemented.

The social model of disability is the theoretical framework for this study. The following chapter will critically discuss the social model and how it relates to this study on.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Theoretical framework refers to an “outline” of the entire study and is the guide on which to build and support one’s study. It provides the structure to define how one will logically, organizationally and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole. Eisenhart (1991:205) defined a theoretical framework as “a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships”. This study uses the social model of disability as its theoretical framework. The social model has a unique perspective in viewing people with disabilities.

“The social model appears to have provided a powerful framework for bringing disabled people together in a common struggle for equality and rights. By doing so the social model has promoted the idea that disabled people should be actors in their own lives rather than passive recipients of care” (Albert, 2014:4).

The charity model and the medical model preceded the social model, and these models did not have a holistic view of disability. This study examined and critiqued the previous models. According to the Junction (2011), the charity model portrays an individual with a disability as someone in need of charity. People with disabilities are therefore unable to take care of, or even protect themselves (Junction, 2011). The model presents a person with a disability as being unable to be independent and incapable of exercising independence in the same way as a non-disabled person. This hinders the capabilities and demonstration of talent person with a disability.

The medical model, on the other hand, defines a person with a disability as suffering from a certain type of illness or medical condition. This representation tends to disempower people with disabilities, as the medical diagnosis is used as a tool that control their right of entry to equal benefits, which non-disabled people has access to (Sullivan, 2011). The medical model is underpinned by an ideology of excluding people with disabilities based on their perceived health status. As a result “any discussion of disability had been focused either on medical ‘cures’ or, where cures were not forthcoming, on pity and charitable donations.

Both these approaches (i.e. the charity and medical model) frame the disabled person as the ‘problem’ (Yeo, 2005:6).

This chapter briefly discusses three different models which are the charity, the medical, and the emancipatory model. The social model of disability will then be discussed in detail with particular reference to its suitability for this study.

3.2 Charity model

The charity model of disability was the first model that was used to understand people with disabilities during the Middle Ages (Griffo, 2014). This model of disability is still being used in other social and cultural settings to try to understand people with disabilities, and most people with disabilities do not like the ideology of the charity model.

“The charity model of disability, which dates from the Middle Ages and still survives today in various social and cultural contexts has interpreted the condition of persons with disabilities within a context of poverty, abandonment by families and social vulnerability” (Griffo, 2014:148).

Within the context of the charity model, people with disabilities were and are still seen as less fortunate, pitied and usually rejected by their family members, relatives, neighbours, and communities. The charity model views people with disability as hopeless beings, without any prospects of improving their lives. Therefore, non-disabled people have a tendency of devaluing people with disabilities with regards to their capabilities as human beings. Some people may think that people with disabilities cannot be well-skilled or are incapable of working to support themselves. Slorach (2011) and Yeo (2005) concur with Griffo (2014) about ideas espoused by this model. In the charity model, people with disabilities are usually discriminated against and their human rights unacknowledged or devalued by social actors and various institutions in society. Persons with disability are not seen as social actors but rather passive objects in society.

The charity model projects people with disabilities as dependents or objects for charitable efforts (Henderson and Willie, 2011). For example, a non-profit organisation may have an intension to provide services such as shelter for people with disabilities, but their main intention may entail receiving government subsidies for their own gains rather than to

adequately provide for the needs of people with disabilities. The charity model is rooted in ideas of divine justice and human beneficence, and it led to the establishment of charitable institutions, which often took persons with disabilities in as residents. However, this practice could be viewed as reinforcing segregation practices, social exclusion and institutionalisation (Griffo, 2014). Such institutions mark people with disabilities with a social stigma and make them be seen as socially undesirable to live among their families and communities at large (Griffo, 2014). Barnes (1991:4) pointed out that:

“Images of the disabled person as pitiable and pathetic are still marketed as they are most common in charity advertising. Moreover, despite vociferous protests from organizations of disabled people, many charities continue to exploit them. Others focus on the ‘courage and bravery’ of an individual ‘super cripples’. Besides emphasizing the abnormality of the individuals concerned, this approach reinforces the perceived inadequacy of the rest of the disabled population”.

People with disabilities become objects to attract sponsorship and funding for these charitable organisations and as such, these organisations tend to over emphasize the abnormality of the individual. This is done so as to garner sympathy and donations for such organisations. The charitable organisations, however do not realise that their strategy of support does not advance the views and rights of persons with disability but reinforces negative stereotypes which devalue the lives of the disabled (Henderson and Willie, 2011).

Henderson and Willie (2011) argue that ideas and perceptions underpinning the charity model tend to create rejection of people with disabilities. The experiences, views, and challenges of people with disabilities remain unacknowledged and devalued. It is a challenge to transform this type of mindset in a society where social actors and institutions harbour such out-dated and conservative views. The charity model has a tendency of presenting non-disabled people as superior to people with disabilities. The consequence of such acts is that people with a disability are discouraged and may fail to recognise their potential as citizens in broader society. Islam (2015) explains that this leads to such challenges as a continuous lack of respect, lack of uniform professional and quality service provision, the growth of poorly trained professional manpower, lack of integration between various sectors, unhealthy rise in financially motivated services, and vulnerable segments of the population.

The charity model's perception of people with disabilities as passive, devalued objects in a way fuels such measures to exclude people with disabilities from mainstream social arrangements, public service, education and employment (Junction, 2011). By focusing on the disability rather than the potential of the person, this model is therefore seen by its critics as dis-enabling people and is seen to be the cause of much discrimination against people with disabilities. Furthermore, Withers (2012) points out an important critique of the charity model in its aim to garner sympathy and thus ensuring that no real change ever occurs in the lives of people with disabilities. The charity model seems to be all about non-disabled people doing good for people with disabilities. It does not promote the ability of people with disabilities to do things for themselves.

3.3 The medical model

The medical model of disability perceives a person with a disability as a person who has something wrong or missing in their body parts and therefore needs to be “fixed” in order to “fit in” with the rest of the able-bodied world (Reiser, 2006). The model rests on the belief that the individual with a disability appears to be different when compared to socially determined norms and in need of adjustments to fit into society (Hughes, 2000). Such perceptions lower the self-esteem of the person with a disability and the individuals see themselves as being unacceptable within their society. Lang (2000:2) states that “the medical model thus projects able-bodied people as “better” or “superior” than those who have a disability”. Lang (2000) explains that the medical model has established that people with disabilities are biologically and psychologically inferior to those who are non-disabled. They are deemed as incompetent in exercising their own autonomy in respect of decision-making. Persons with disabilities is expected to accept whatever they are told by a non-disabled person, particularly by non-disabled medical professionals.

The medical model has an element of discrimination because it puts pressure on people with disabilities to make an effort if they want to participate, or be included within the mainstream society. This encourages the notion that people with disabilities are intrinsically of less value because of their disability (Lang, 2000). Such views are of concern for persons with a disability as they hinder their ability to grow and develop in their life. The model does not allow for self-direction, self-determination and the inclusion of people with

disabilities (Deborah et al., 2013). This model describes people with disabilities as individuals who fail to perform tasks of daily living as a result of their physical or mental disabilities (Popovska and Pirsl, 2013).

The image that is portrayed by the medical model towards people with disability has largely spread in the media, which also has contributed to discrimination against people with disabilities. According to Sullivan (2011:7), “the media can even go as far as to imply that life with a disability is a deficient, incomplete life not worth living, an extreme case of medical model beliefs”. Such description imparts onto society the belief that people with disabilities are worthless or poor people. This perception created by the media compounds the negative assumptions regarding people with disability and impacts on their confidence and ability to exercise autonomy (Tierney et al., 1988).

Dewsbury et al. (2011:147) state that the “Medical Models’ of disability have been criticized for the way in which they view disabled people as somehow ‘lacking’, unable to play a ‘full role’ in society”. Embedded in the medical model ideology is the view that people with disabilities are unworthy to be part of the society. Stereotypes which are being portrayed in the media are such that a person with a disability is pitiable or pathetic, an object of curiosity or violence, sinister or evil, the super cripple, a burden, and unable to participate in daily life (Popovska and Pirsl, 2013). People with disabilities tend to frequently internalise negative messages such as that they have problems which stem from them not having ‘normal’ bodies (Carson, 2009). Lang (2000) has also argued that the medical model gives little consideration to the socio-cultural contexts in which impairments are placed and advances an ideology that disability is fundamentally a social rather than a biological construct. As the medical model seeks to fix a particular part of an individual, a question arises as to what disabled people should do in order for them to best fit into society? This model is useful in addressing what needs to be done to the environment in order for disabled people to perform to their full potential.

The medical model is rooted mostly in negative attitudes held towards people with disabilities; they are seen as defective and dependent, in need of cure or rehabilitation (Sullivan, 2011). This thinking does have an impact on the disabled as medical practitioners

and the 'diagnosis' are known to have a powerful impact on the individuals' self-image (Scullion, 2010). Junction (2011) argues that the medical model defines people with disability by their illness or medical condition. The analysis of the medical model is used to regulate and control their access to social benefits, housing, education, leisure, and employment. This model contributes to the violation of the human rights of people with disabilities and encourages practices that exclude people with disabilities. People with disabilities are being perceived as having something which is wrong with them, which also limits them in accessing certain social benefits. The medical model also has a negative impact on the self-esteem of a person with a disability.

3.4 Emancipatory disability research and empowerment

'Emancipatory disability research' refers to an essentially new approach to doing disability research (Swain et al., 2004). Previously, research on disability had been mostly carried out by non-disabled researchers who had no experiential knowledge of disability. There is usually emphasis on the positivistic methodology which operationalised and perpetuated an individualistic medical model of disability. Emancipatory research is the role of research in the process of emancipation. This means that research can only be judged as being emancipatory after the event; one cannot 'do' emancipatory research without the occurrence of an event. One can only engage in an emancipatory research on an issue once he/she has gone through that particular issue. In this way, the researcher will then have a better understanding on what they are researching about (Oliver, 1997). This study draws from my personal experiences and challenges of adapting to an inclusive education learning environment. I went through the process of experiencing and facing challenges of having to adapt to an inclusive environment at the UKZN Howard College campus.

Research on disability is understood by a person with a disability, and as such agendas based on disabilities must be critically reviewed by people with disability, in order to be able to explore experiences and challenges that are faced by people with disabilities. In this manner, it is impossible to do research on disability without having experienced

the difficulties that are faced by people with disabilities. Danieli and Woodhams (2005:284) state that:

“Understandings of disability had been generated by non-disabled ‘experts’ who under the guise of claiming to be conducting objective, value-neutral research had produced distorted or alienated knowledge which bore little relationship to disabled people’s experience and understandings of disability”.

Reflecting on his experience with non-disabled researchers, Oliver (1997) was prompted to ask, 'What do you think you are doing talking about us in this way?' I found myself having similar thoughts at the UKZN Research Indaba on Disability 2015 since I was the only presenter who was disabled. It is important for people with disabilities to be empowered in order to become agents in the field of disability research. Agency is known to function as an ability of what a person is free to do and attain in the recreation of whatever goals or values he or she regards as being important. Agency resists the ideology of the charity and medical models of disability as it produces the element of empowerment in people with a disability (Sen, 1995). Empowerment has similar characteristics as agency, for empowerment is defined as an increase in agency that enables individuals to pursue their own valuable and important goals (Trommlerová et al., 2014).

Therefore, empowerment gives power to the person with a disability to put forward their own goals, rather than being limited by non-disabled people in what people with disabilities can do and what they cannot do. Empowerment is a useful instrument in promoting and enhancing the lives of people with disabilities. It gives people with disabilities a chance to prove that they are able to do things despite their impairment. The empowerment model allows for restoration of human rights for persons with disabilities through autonomy and agency. Agency and empowerment gives a person with a disability the right to advocate for themselves. One of the strongest elements of the empowerment model is its focus on building the self-esteem of a person with a disability and allowing them to be more confident.

According to Somek (2013:6), “the link between emancipation and common control has been insinuated by Marx’s vision of “human emancipation”. Marx’s idea of human emancipation is different from emancipatory research, as emancipatory research is known

to focus on an individual's ability in doing research after they have experienced a certain situation. While Marx tend to view emancipation in the idea of human emancipation which is seen as the greatest idea in the modern world, as it mostly emphasise on freedom, extending it to the control of the conditions that emerge as the accidental consequence of human practice, (Somek, 2013). Marx's idea of human emancipation may tend to view people with disabilities as people who are to be controlled by their disabilities in terms of what to do and how to do it. Human emancipation may also look at disability as a condition which happened accidentally. Wendling (2009:10) states that, "Marx's work therefore represents a stage on the way to a fully emancipatory conceptuality. Although he glimpses this conceptuality, it is not yet part of the world with which he must reckon and reason". Marx does not see the importance of one looking back to their experience and researching on that condition which the person went through.

3.5 The social model of disability

The social model is an evolution in disability thinking and research when compared to its predecessors; the charity and the medical model. The charity and medical models did not do justice to people with disabilities. There was a shift from the charity model to the medical model and from the medical model to the social model of disability. The latter is underpinned by an increased focus and awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities as well as social justice. Cobley (2011) states that the social model's strong focus is on a 'call to action' in the recreation of resources which may be better employed in supporting poverty-focused community organisations which are making an effort to address the most immediate concerns of local people with disabilities.

The core definition of the British social model comes in the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) document, Fundamental Principles of Disability, an edited version of which is reprinted in Oliver (1996), and which he quotes here at length:

"In our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society". To understand this it is necessary to grasp the distinction between the physical impairment and the social situation, called 'disability', of people with such impairment. Thus we define impairment as lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body; and disability as the disadvantage or

restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities. Physical disability is, therefore, a particular form of social oppression” (UPIAS, 1976:2-3).

The Fundamental Principles of Disability (UPIAS, 1976), state that it is the society which causes the individuals to become disabled. It is the structuring of the environment which makes life difficult for someone who has a disability, and results in them feeling oppressed and disempowered. To understand the difference between the term disability and physical impairment, it is important to know the meanings of such. Impairment is the lack of certain body parts or an imperfection of a certain part of a person’s body (Barnes and Mercer, 1996). Disability is some sort of limitation or an inconvenience which is caused by a society that pays no account to people who are physically impaired (Barnes and Mercer, 1996). In such cases then people who are physically impaired are then excluded from participation in the mainstream society.

The social model developed from the publication of Fundamental Principles of Disability (UPIAS, 1976). This model became known during the 1980’s from a course that Oliver was teaching, the first postgraduate course, in what would now be called disability studies (Swain et al., 2004). The emergence of the social model of disability was due to the recognition of the societal and environmental barriers which cause people with disabilities to be oppressed, marginalised and excluded (Sullivan, 2011). The social model sees disability as being caused by the society rather than a certain type of a medical condition. Lang (2000) explains that the social model of disability has arisen in response to the critique of the medical model. The social model has seen a shift from the deficits of the functional, physiological and cognitive abilities of the impaired individual to the detrimental and oppressive structure of society, and the negative social attitudes encountered by disabled people throughout their lives.

The social model has become the vehicle for developing a collective disability consciousness and has helped in developing and strengthening people with disabilities (Oliver, 2013). This model has also been an eye opener to people with disabilities as it

forces them to acknowledge that they are as capable as non-disabled people if the social barriers can be removed. Keyes et al. (2015:239) pointed that;

“A social model approach to empowerment, therefore, positions relationships between disabled people and the services they access as either rooted independence and powerlessness (which is not desirable) or (desirably) rooted in independence and autonomy. Independence and autonomy, therefore, leads to empowerment”.

The previous models of disability were rooted in the notion that people with disability are powerless and dependent on other people, whereas the social model approach lies in empowering people with disabilities. Through empowerment, people with disability can also gain autonomy. Autonomy is defined as self-government or self-determination (Friedman, 1997). The social model promotes the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society and for their complete acceptance as citizens with equal entitlements, rights, and responsibilities (Terzi, 2004).

3.5.1 Identity, rights and empowerment

Identity issues are also very critical aspects for people with disabilities. This is due to the previous models of disabilities that is the charity model and the medical model of disability. The social model, therefore, seeks to address what the previous models on disability missed in terms of the identity options for people with disabilities. The social model sees a person with a disability as a normal form of human diversity despite all the challenges and the experience they may go through in life. On the contrary, the medical model views disability as a pathological condition (Darling, 2013).

The social model produces development in the lives of people with disabilities and enlightens them on the capabilities they have as people with disabilities. It is common to find people with disabilities who have low self-esteem due to the treatment they receive from people who are non-disabled. Therefore, the social model can be a mechanism of psychological treatment as it promotes self-esteem. Shakespeare (2002) pointed out that people's commitment to the social model is based on the way it has transformed their self-esteem. This means that the model enriched the lives of people with disabilities by enabling them to see that nothing is impossible for them.

Through the social model, people with disabilities are able to aim as high as they like. For with the strength and encouragement they gained in the social model of disability, they began to be positive and believe in their capabilities. According to (Darling, 2013:4):

“The writers have assumed that positive self-identities among individuals with disabilities have been increasing along with the increasing popularity of the social model. However, not everyone has been exposed to the social model, and even those who have been exposed to the model may not espouse it”.

It has been assumed that the social model has impacted people with disabilities with positive self-identities. The social model has aimed for people with disabilities to be included in all social activities. It seeks to ensure that people with disabilities participate in such activities as education and employment, like any other non-disabled people in the society. The social model of disability removes hurtful feelings and restores hope to a person with a disability.

The social model of disability is presented as a powerful tool in the Disability Movement and in the lives of people with disabilities. If it is properly used, the social model of disability could become the tool of justice and freedom for people with disabilities ‘all over this land’ (Swain et al., 2004). UKZN has adopted the social model of disability as it has tried to accommodate students with disabilities at Howard College campus. Through the social model, students with disability are able to gain a good self-esteem and to be active both economically and socially.

Hasler (1993) stated that the social model leads to a more optimistic identity, which he described as coming out. Hasler (1993) explained the coming out as a process of positive self-identification, rejecting the categorisation of subjection, and affirming subjectivity and collective power. The social model of disability is a powerful tool in changing the lives of people with disabilities, which brings about the outcome of change and productivity in the lives of people with disabilities. The model is rooted in the understanding that people are not disabled but it is the environment that causes people to be disabled. Moreover, the social model also aims for the full inclusion of people with disability in the society and for their complete acceptance as citizens with equal entitlements, rights, and responsibilities (Terzi, 2004). The social model approach has a positive view of the self-identity of people

with disability as opposed to the experience of oppressive social relations and promote empowerment and a different self-understanding for people with disabilities (Barnes and Mercer, 1996).

3.5.2 *The social model and power differences*

The social model of disability was slow to find acceptance in most sociology departments in British universities (Hasler, 1993). This was due to the fact that disability seemed to be a problem for social policy and a research domain for medical sociology (Shakespeare, 2005). Studies of disability were mostly found in medical studies of sociology and in the sociology of health and illness courses where studies of structures of consciousness and personal experiences of an individual were not deeply focused on. Barnes et al. (2002:6) state that:

“Studies of disability have been typically situated within the context of medical sociology and the sociology of health and illness courses where interactionist and phenomenological perspectives have prevailed”.

The social model of disability explores the issue of shared power between the doctors and people with disabilities. Doctors need to understand how people with disabilities experience their disabilities and people with disabilities must attempt to understand how doctors are socialised and trained into thinking about disability in a particular way. Oliver (1990) argues that doctors must learn to give up some of their power and trust that a person with a disability is able to understand themselves and their condition. Such development of trust is part of getting rid of the medical model of disability and adopting the ideals of the social model.

The social model increases awareness for the autonomy that people with disabilities are entitled to enjoy. Similarly, people with disabilities need to trust doctors in terms of their expertise in the medical field. As doctors may have a certain degree of knowledge of a person's disability and such knowledge from doctors can be helpful and can advance their knowledge on their personal disabilities. Once doctors and people with disabilities are able to share their powers and have a relationship of mutual respect, then establishing appropriate conduct will pave the way for a patient-centric approach to treatment (Oliver, 1990). Similar practices can be extended to other professionals, staff, and lecturers who

work with students with disabilities. Oliver notes some inadequacies in social work professionals when dealing with disability. He has pointed out that the social model has not been fully integrated into the social work profession. This has resulted in social work professional's effectiveness being questioned and it has caused the social work field to fail to meet the needs of people with disabilities (Oliver and Sapey, 1999).

Firstly, the social model shifts disability from the individual and it critiques an environment that is not disabled friendly. The model states that an individual with a disability will be able to move around like everyone in the society with consideration (i.e. a disabled friendly environment was put in place to accommodate people with disabilities). Secondly, this model is able to identify other factors that may cause a specific problem to a person with a disability. For example, the issue of unemployment for disabled people is not only caused by the social organisation of work and the operation of the labour market, but it is due to lack of education about people with disability and the importance of creating an environment that does not oppress the disabled. Thirdly, the social model does not ignore the individual interventions in the lives of individuals with disabilities. These interventions may be medical, rehabilitative, educational or employment based and could have a positive impact on the life of a person with a disability (Oliver,1990).

Barnes and Mercer (2004) and Oliver (1990) explain that people are disabled by barriers which exist in their surrounding environment and the society which they live in. This is because they have no choice but to adhere to the environment's settings designed for able-bodied or 'normal' persons. Such situations occur for example when a person walking with crutches has to climb up stairs as there is no other route they can use. Crow (1996) shared her personal experience as a person who is disabled, stating that her body was responsible for all her difficulties but it was the external factors and the barriers constructed by the society in which she lived in. However, her capabilities and opportunities are being restricted by narrow-mindedness, discrimination, inaccessible environments, and inadequate support. For example, some of the barriers which exist include facilities and buildings that are designed in such a way that people with disabilities are not able to access them. Buildings that do not have ramps or lifts are a case in point. Public facilities that should be there to cater for the needs of all yet in their design exclude a segment of the

population, for example some of the public toilets that are inaccessible to people with disabilities, or facilities that have turnstile entrance points. If such barriers prevail then people with disabilities are not fully able to engage with society as these barriers deny them access to information, services and ultimately deprive them of their human rights.

The social model of disability has recognised the barriers that produce difficulties in the daily lives of people with disabilities. The social model has also brought about changes in lives of people with disabilities as it has highlighted the environmental barriers that exist in society. For example, wheelchair users had previously been restricted to environments as they are unable to climb stairs. The social model proposes solutions such as ramps and lifts that allow equal access for all people. Similarly, if a person is blind and cannot read written information, then the social model of disability suggests the solution is to provide an alternative format such as audio or Braille to assist the learner or student (Carson, 2009). In doing so, the challenges faced by people with disabilities are overcome and the learner or student is able to participate in society without facing any discrimination.

3.5.3 The physical environment at UKZN, Howard College campus

The diagram below demonstrate some of the environmental opportunities and challenges which students with disabilities come across at the UKZN Howard College campus.



Figure 1: Some of the pictures of me showing environmental opportunities and challenges.

1. A partially deaf student has difficulties of hearing in the lecture room.
2. The lift is not working and I do not know how to get to the lecture venue.
3. My room is at third floor and I have to go up the stairs.
4. This is the short route to where I want to go, but there are stairs and my scooter cannot use the stairs route.
5. I have no choice but to sit at the back during lectures, as there is no ramp inside the lecture venue for me to go down and sit in front.
6. Braille machine is used by a student who is blind.
7. This ramp is too steep; I sometimes feel that I will fall backwards when I am going up.
8. There are two toilets in residents that are for wheelchair users but these are on one floor.

3.6 The Social model and the appropriation of Marxism

Marx seem to intimidate disability scholars such as Oliver, Finkelstein, and Aberley. This is because each of these scholars had a clear picture that the capitalist society divided people into an oppressed group and dominant group of people (Barnes and Mercer, 2004), The less fortunate groups of people were being oppressed by a dominant group which was known to be more privileged than the others. The capitalist society has therefore placed people with disabilities as a disadvantaged group. For the capitalist society sees people with disabilities as unproductive citizen, and they are being oppressed by the by those who were privileged able bodies. Barnes and Mercer (2004:53) add that:

“In particular, the Marxist construction of ‘oppression’ with its call to identify the winners and losers or culprits and victims may appear to be a blunt instrument rather than a surgeon’s scalpel when used to delve beneath the surface layers of contemporary society in a search for the causative factors underlying disability”.

Terzi (2004) explained that the social model of disability has observed the relationship between disability and society, by trying to understand why people with a disability are excluded from the economic and social structure. Terzi (2004) found out that this exclusion came during the emergence of industrial capitalism and its specific organisation of economic activities. Oliver (2013) also explains that in the labour market, disabling barriers stem from non-disabled people’s attitudes and perceptions of people with disabilities, as they are seen as less economically productive, “unable” and dependent on others. This thinking is in some way parallel to the thinking of the productivist model which was used to describe the labour market during the Industrial Revolution. According to Griffo (2014), the principle of the productivist model excluded persons who were ‘sick’ or ‘incapable’ and people with disabilities. The social model’s idea of justice for persons with disabilities strengthened the decision not to separate them in special and separate places, or deny them the right of being seen as workers.

Finkelstein (2001) states that in Marxist philosophy, people with disabilities must find ways of being part of the class struggle where the historical direction of society is fought, won or lost. Such an ideology produces a struggle in the lives of people with disabilities as it forces them into finding their own way of adapting in the class struggle. People with disabilities

have to strive to adapt to the class struggle because the capitalist society discriminates against people with disabilities. In the capitalist society, people with disabilities are limited from enjoying social and economic equality. Oliver (1999) states that in the developed world, the labour markets continue to discriminate against people with disabilities. Within the labour market, people with disabilities are seen three times more unlikely to be employed than their able-bodied counterparts and as a result of this, they are thought to be the poorest people on earth.

3.6.1 *Marx's notion of alienation*

People with disabilities have been alienated in the society. In most parts, the environment does not accommodate people with disabilities. People with disabilities have also been excluded in numerous activities in their societies, as they have been perceived as unproductive citizens. Such ideology tends to lower the self-esteem of persons with a disability and makes them not to live their lives to the full. Ro (2012) points out that it is capitalism as a system which contributes to limiting people from exercising their human capabilities. It is also through alienation that people with disabilities may not be able to live their lives to the level worthy of their humanity.

Howard College campus of the UKZN is not as disabled friendly as it should be. As a result, students with disabilities have difficulties in going to some departments and also accessing some lecture rooms. Other students with disabilities may have challenges in taking notes from the board and also some lecturers may refuse to send notes to the Disability Unit or even to upload them on e-learning. In such cases, students with disabilities are limited in their mobility, which in other words means that they were limited from participating in inclusive education. Students with disabilities may fail some of their courses due to the lack of academic materials. Another challenge can even be that some students with disabilities may not be able to attend some lectures or tutorials because the venues may not be accessible for them.

The development of technology has also contributed to alienation, as most machines do most of the work which should have been done by human power. Such development has a great impact in alienating people with disabilities; due to the fact work that they may be

able to do is taken by machines or non-disabled people, which then results in lack of employment by people with disabilities. Wendling (2009:2) has pointed out that “Marx also shows how workers perceive steam technology as a dangerous competitor. Workers then revolt against technology—that is, against the means of production—and smash machines”. If non-disabled workers can show such anger by seeing technology as a dangerous competitor, how much more does technology affect people with disabilities by leaving them without any hope in the capitalist society? Erickson (1999:13) asserts that:

“Marx's theory of alienation has a physical basis, meaning that it refers to, for example, existing entities, the application of power and labour and their actual consequences or results, manifestations of thought and man's actions. Therefore, of particular concern is how accurately Marx presented and defined these entities and actions”.

Marx's theory of alienation pays much focus on the physical appearance of an individual, which is to view their ability to the application of power and labour. Such examination excludes people with disabilities, as most people with disabilities do not have much physical power and may not even have enough balance to support themselves. The idea of alienation in the capitalist society is described through the challenges faced by people with disabilities in their everyday lives. These challenges can be seen as some type of impersonal forces; that tend to limit them in the manifestation of human action in the working environment (Burawoy and Wright, 2000).

Marxist theory of alienation is mostly in favour of non-disabled people rather than people with disabilities. For Wendling (2009:2), “human beings need not accept responsibility for their social and political life, because the characteristics of this are projected onto the natural world” Wendling's understanding of alienation can be understood in the sense that people with disabilities must not decide for their social and political life, as their characteristics of this are projected by the capitalist society. Students with disabilities also come across alienation at the university, as they can be alienated from other activities due to the challenges they encounter at the university. Magongwa (2009) stated that Celia, who was the only deaf student in her class in 2003, was always lonely and isolated as she experienced alienation from hearing students because they found communication with her difficult.

3.6.2 *Marx's idea of false consciousness*

Many people with disabilities spend most of their life living in false consciousness; this is due to that in many cases their suggestions are not believe to be true unless whatever they suggest is motivated by a non-disabled person. In other words people with disabilities are made to realize the truth even if they know the truth. In this case they are seen as people who are unable to make the right decision or suggestion unless it is approved by someone else. McCoy (2014:2) states that false consciousness is;

“To charge someone with false consciousness is to charge him with failing to recognize and act on his own interests. False consciousness thus implies both cognitive error (a failure to recognize some facts about one’s interests) and motivational error (the desire to act in a way that frustrates one’s interests). This is why we speak of false consciousness—where “consciousness” refers to a complex of beliefs, desires, and attitudes—rather than simply “false beliefs” or “false desires”.

It is therefore understood that false consciousness is a belief that is created in a person’s imaginations. As McCoy (2014) has shown that false consciousness is created in the consciousness of the individual, for if it was not so it was going to be said “false beliefs” or “false desires”. People with disabilities may think that they will not be able to be something in life, but through determination they can look beyond false consciousness. For example, I stated that at grade four, I was told by my class teacher that I won’t even make it even to grade seven. However, I was determined and knew what I wanted which is why I am a masters student now. Engels ascribed in (Morrison, 1995:314) that “false consciousness to outside forces which he believed impel individuals to impute false motives to the cause of their hardship and suffering”. Therefore, this shows that people with disabilities do not have it easy in their lives particularly when it comes to proving a point that they are able to do things as non-disabled people.

3.7 Criticisms of the social model

There has been criticism within the Disability Movement and disability studies regarding weaknesses in the social model of disability. Oliver (1996), the main proponent of the social model, published a number of criticisms and misunderstandings within the Disability

Movement and disability studies regarding the social model of disability. Oliver's five criticisms as briefly explained below:

In the first critique, it is understood that the social model does not deal adequately with the real issues of the impairment. This was a misunderstanding of the social model, as this model is not derived from personal experiences of the impairment but it focus on the collective experience of disablement (Oliver, 1996b).

The social model is a collective experience rather than a personal experience of impairment; reason being this model is not specific towards a certain type of disability but rather focuses on all people with disabilities. Crow (1996) points out that the social model of disability has played a central role in promoting all people with disabilities' individual self-worth, collective identity, and political organisation. Removing environmental barriers is not only helpful for wheelchair users but also for those that are visually impaired, people who are old in age, people with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. This model also speaks to justice and equality and points out society's responsibilities regarding the condition of people with disabilities (Griffo, 2014). This, therefore, highlights that society needs to acknowledge the role the environment plays in disability and endeavours to create environments that are disability friendly.

The second criticism seems to be similar to the first one, as it points out that personal pain of impairment and disability are being ignored by the social model. Oliver denies that as he state that if that was the case he was going to write a book on male experiences of spinal cord injury (Barnes and Mercer, 2004).

Without the experiences of disabled activists in the 1970s, the social model would have not emerged. The experiences of people with disabilities during this time firmly structured the social model of disability and focused on the adaptation of the environment. Moreover, this model tends to destroy discrimination towards people with disabilities, which is also from the experiences of people with disabilities.

The third criticism states that the social model cannot integrate between the social division, which is race', gender, ageing, sexuality and so on (Barnes and Mercer, 2004).

Although the social model of disability has not shown any consideration of social division, this study aims to display some integrated dimensions of gender. For in most disability studies, gender differences amongst people with disabilities have not been fully investigated. The social model of disability attempts to put into practice the ideology upon which it is based, unlike policy initiatives that often fail to be implemented. Yeo (2005) pointed out that in many cases in the disability movement, the voices of disabled people are still not being heard to any great degree.

Otherness is the fourth criticism. For this is not based on the physical and the environmental barriers that people with disabilities go through but it is the way of how cultural values place people with disabilities. This model is strengthened by recent developments in the theory of postmodernism and ideas about representation being crucial to disabled people (Barnes and Mercer, 2004).

The above criticism points out that the social model seems to ignore cultural value. However, this is not necessarily the case as this model has huge propositions for poverty reduction work as it aims to fight against unemployment among people with disabilities and has relevance for all manner of marginalised groups (Yeo, 2005). Cultural values also differ from person to person and, in this case, it will also be difficult for the social model of disability to focus on a particular type of culture. Yeo (2005) also added that this approach emphasizes that each person with disabilities has equal economic, cultural and social rights; that international development work should be based on working for equal rights rather than on notions of charity.

The other criticism levelled against the social model is that it is insufficient when compared to other social theories of disablement. Oliver states that he does not think that in their first discussion on the social model they had any intension of the social model to be the same to a theory of disability (Barnes and Mercer, 2004).

The final criticism is that the social model is not likely to be seen as a social theory of disablement. Oliver (1996) stated that such criticisms should not be seen merely as academic disputes, however, heated and cruel they have become at times (Barnes and Mercer, 2004). It would be in many instances being beneficial to the growth of knowledge in disability studies if critics put as much effort into making improvements or inventing something that brings about effective change. As (Barnes and Mercer, 2004: 8) stated; “if the critics had spent less of their time criticising the social model for its perceived failures and instead put more effort into attempting to apply it in practice”

3.8 Summary

In this chapter, a review of three different models of disability, namely the charity, the medical, and the social model. The charity model of disability states that people with disabilities are to be pitied and helped as society sees people with disabilities as being helpless and need. The charity model puts the person living with a disability to be dependent on other people rather than encouraging a person living with a disability to become independent. The medical model is seen to be negative in its approach as it propagates negative self-identity through its focus on physical impairment and the need for adjustment in order for disabled people to participate in society. The social model is an evolution in disability studies as it places emphasis on the environment as a disabling factor. This thinking about disability compliments research that can be categorised as emancipatory research. Emancipatory research allows people with disabilities to play an active role in disability research as it views disabled people as fully capable of articulating their own experiences and researching this (and other) social phenomena. In this regard, the social model and emancipatory research prioritise and respect autonomy, agency, and human rights of people with disabilities. The following chapter will give an in-depth description of the research methodology of this study, and also show how the participants were selected.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the study method and methodology. A qualitative design was used. The qualitative method aimed to enhance a deeper understanding of the specific phenomenon under scrutiny. In research methods, it is important for qualitative researchers to have the personal desire of working well with people over a period of time (National Disability Authority, 2009). Hartley and Muhit (2003) argue that the qualitative approach is compatible with disability research. Although it is the focus of such studies on impairment, rather than the social issues that remains problematic and may not be easy to understand qualitative method is utilised to examine and understand the challenges and experiences of students with disabilities, at UKZN Howard College campus. As noted in earlier chapters, the focus on impairment is problematic, whereas disability research encapsulates a more human rights and participatory tone. My motivation for the adoption of these stances is to capture and better understand the social dimensions to the problems of people with disabilities.

4.2 Qualitative approach, Interpretivism and Disability Research

Quantitative approaches to disability research places emphasis on impairment-related and the social aspects of disability and the everyday lives of persons with disabilities are ignored and under investigated (Hartley and Muhit, 2003). For example, the charity model identified people with disability as dependent on the care and support from others and therefore lacking the capability to be independent. The medical model of disability sees disability as some sort of sickness rather than a social and environmental issue. Some of the social aspects on how students with disabilities manage to adapt to the university environment may be included. This study utilises a qualitative approach to understand the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities and how they adapted to an inclusive education learning environment at UKZN, Howard College campus. The qualitative method is concerned with exploring people's life histories or everyday behaviours (Silverman, 2000). Most students with disabilities went to segregated primary

and secondary schools, and as a result, adapting to the university environment can be quite difficult for such students.

The advantage of a qualitative method is that it creates room for students with disabilities to open up about their personal experiences and the challenges which they historically came across at the segregated schools that they attended, and also their day-to-day challenges at university. Patton and Cochran (2002:2) point out that, “qualitative research is characterised by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis”. This method allowed students with disabilities to describe their personal experiences in detail, through what they come across at lecture venues, tutorial venues, the library, at the residence, and in using the infrastructure at the university.

Golafshani (2003) highlights that qualitative research uses a real-life approach that seeks to understand the facts in context-specific settings. Unlike the quantitative method which would have required the students with disabilities to tick yes or no answers to a prepared questionnaire that has questions that the researcher may create in ‘speculating’ what may be the challenges that students with disabilities may go through at university. A qualitative approach allows participants the opportunity to provide thick data which is relevant to their specific contexts.

Hocutt (1996) shows how students with disabilities adapt to a different mode of learning, which can be learning in a small group, doing individual assignments that may require a student with disability’s cooperation rather than whole class instruction. Students with disabilities in these classes are expected to cover the same content at the same pace as non-disabled students. Such situations place students with disabilities in a vulnerable position as in segregated schools; learners with disabilities were taught in a curriculum which was accommodative for them and this curriculum was suitable for students with disabilities. Such issues can be best explored using a qualitative method in order to discover the experiences and challenges that students with disabilities come across in their social life at university. Moreover Hartley and Muhit (2003) pointed out that the qualitative method is known as an effective tool when the aim is to investigate vulnerable groups of people, such

as people with disabilities. The difficulties that are encountered by students with disabilities will not be better understood without the deployment of a qualitative method.

In the interpretive tradition there is no ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ assumption, but all judgments are made through identifying how ‘interesting’ those assumptions is to the researcher as well as those involved in the same areas (Walsham, 1993). Through the interpretive tradition, the researcher has to be at the same level of understanding as the participants in order to be able to get a solid truth of what is being investigated. Interpretivists also tend to pay attention to the meanings and motives of behaviour and interactions within people in the society and culture (Chowdhury, 2014). This study looked at the interactions between students with disabilities and non-disabled students, lecturers and other staff members at UKZN. Thanh and Thanh (2015) point out that scholars, have hypothetically understood that the idea of an interpretive approach allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants.

A researcher would have a great advantage in the interpretive paradigm through an emancipatory approach, which can permit the researcher to critically see the world in the way that the participants view it. Oliver (1992:110) points that, “emancipatory paradigm, as the name implies, is about the facilitating of a politics of the possible by confronting social oppression at whatever level it occurs”. The researcher had greater understanding of the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities.

Interpretivism, has been known to promote the value of qualitative data in the tracking down of knowledge (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). The utmost goal of qualitative researchers is to try their best in viewing things from the perspective of the human rather than having speculations which in most times are not true. For example, students in general may fear to be in close contact with students with disabilities; qualitative researchers can explore the truth of the live experiences of students with disabilities. As a result, qualitative research aims to examine the whole situation in a natural setting, in order to get the ideas and feelings of those being interviewed (Layder, 1994).

4.3 Exploratory and descriptive study

This study is both exploratory and descriptive. The focuses on an exploration of the difficulties that are faced by students with disabilities in their everyday life at UKZN. Hartley and Muhit (2003) point out that qualitative research does not seek to make statistical simplifications, but rather seeks to collect rich data to be gathered on the fullest range of possible views, by purposively selecting people with different backgrounds and experiences. Blanche and Durrheim (2006) state that exploratory studies are used to make preliminary investigative into relatively unknown areas of research. They employ an open, flexible and inductive approach to research as they attempt to look for insights into phenomena.

Descriptive studies aim to describe phenomena accurately either through narrative type descriptions, classifications, or measuring relationships. Experiences and challenges of students with disabilities at UKZN are not fully addressed, due to the lack of accurate information narrated from students with disabilities at the institution. According to Hartley and Muhit (2003:108), “qualitative research methods are known to be appropriate and effective when little or nothing is known about the situation, as they do not require a predictive statement and therefore seek the answers to open questions”. In order to explore an appropriate and effective understanding of the difficulties which students with disabilities go through on Howard College Campus, it was effectively done particularly that the study was conducted by a student with disability. This has enabled students with disabilities (the participants) to be able to be flexible and open, to the researcher seeing that he will better understand these challenges as he is also disabled. For such reasons, the researcher was in a better position to get deeper insight into the students’ experiences.

4.4 Selection of participants

The sample size of this study was twenty students with disabilities. The sample was stratified by gender and disability type: ten males and ten females. Most scholars in disability studies tend to focus on a single type of disabilities rather than looking at a range of disabilities. At UKZN, there are students with different of disabilities. According to Battaglia (2011:523)

“Sampling involves the selection of a portion of the finite population being studied. Non-probability sampling does not attempt to select a random sample from the population of interest. Rather, subjective methods are used to decide which elements are included in the sample”.

This study has therefore classified its sample by interviewing two students of the same gender and of the same type of disability. This selection is known to be a purpose sampling, which Silverman (2015:250) explain as “purpose sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are interested in and choose our sample case carefully on this basis”.

In order for this study to get the experiences and challenges that affect students with disabilities on campus, it was crucial to interview students with different types of disabilities. For example two female and two male who were blind; one male who was wheelchair bound and two female who were also wheelchair bound; two male and three female who were physically disabled. One of these males were also had difficulty in speaking, therefore, the researcher approach the student if he would like to participant in the study, and the student and the researcher agreed on doing the interview electronically. Two females who were partially sighted and one of these females were also an albino; two male who were partially sighted and one of these males was also an albino; two males and one females that were partially deaf which was also going to be quite a challenge to correspond to the participant, due it can be slightly difficult to understand the researcher when he speaks. The participants in this study were between the age of twenty and forty years.

4.5 Data collection tool

When collecting qualitative data, interviews are among the most familiar strategies used, for during interviewing the researcher is able to get a wide range of information from the participants (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) demonstrate that interviewing is a common instrument and the most powerful way to understand human beings. In this study, interviewing has been a helpful method as the researcher was able to get a better understanding of students with disabilities, because during the interviews, a wide range of information was collected based on the

experiences and challenges of students with disabilities at UKZN Howard College campus. (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:6) point out that:

“For the qualitative researcher, all perspectives are valuable. The researcher seeks not “truth” but a detailed understanding of other people’s perspectives. Exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of accurate and replicable data. These studies frequently use interviewing, analysis of case studies and the use of the informants to generate data”.

Qualitative design was used in this study as the researcher aimed to get a deeper understanding of the major challenges which affect students with disabilities on campus. An exploratory study targets at generating a solid insight which is comprehension rather than just the collection of accurate data. In this study which was conducted in the year 2016, interviewing was a powerful method of getting a rich understanding of how students with disabilities were able to overcome the challenges since their first year of study at UKZN. The interviews lasted between sixty and ninety minutes. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were given the opportunity to ask questions. Permission was asked from the participants to use a voice recorder; notes of the proceedings were taken during the interviews.

Burke et al. (2010) state that when transcribing, each recording can take about four to seven hours; it may also depend on a person’s typing skills. This was one of the major problems for me due to my disability as I only use one finger per hand to type, so five minutes of recording took me approximately one hour fifteen minutes. Each recording was normally sixty to ninety minutes, which therefore took me between nine and twelve hours long. This forced me to ask two of my friends to help me out. The recorded data and the transcription was preserved in order to increase the efficiency of data analysis as suggested by Blanche and Durrheim(2006).

4.5.1 Interviews and interview schedules

Flick (1998:76) “feels that the interest in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews is linked to the expectation that the interviewed participant’s viewpoints are more to be expressed than they would be in a non-face-to-face questionnaire”. In a face-to-face interview, the researcher and the participant communicate in person, and if there is any misunderstanding between the two, the other can give an answer while they are

communicating. In a face-to-face interview the participant will be able to express detailed information without leaving things hidden. Rubin and Babbie (2010:390) state that “this face-to-face interview allows the interviewer to adapt the sequencing and wording of questions to each particular interview”. As time went by during the interview, most of the questions were much easier to explain to the participants, due to the fact that I conducted the entire interviews by myself and got used in the style of asking the questions. I was also trained on how to follow up on the answers given by the participant, to obtain clarity as needed (Blanche and Durrheim, 2006). This was because participants would go off topic and fail answer appropriately, it was therefore important to follow up on the participant’s answers in order to get clarity of what they were trying to say.

In this study, a semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct the interviews, as the study aimed to explore the challenges and the experiences that students with disabilities encounter on a daily basis at UKZN. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006:315) explain that “semi-structured interviews are often the sole data source for a qualitative research project and are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events”. Interviews were done at different locations and at different times, depending on the preferences of the participant. Most interviews with female participants were conducted during the day and the venue that was suitable was the low vision room or one of the boot rooms in the Disability Unit. Male participants’ interviews were conducted in the participant’s room or in the researchers flat, as the researcher was the Resident Assistance at the male student’s residence.

Flick (1998) also explained that semi-structured interviews allow that the interviewed subject matter is to be clearly expressed in a reasonably openly designed interview situation, rather than in a questionnaire. The semi-structured interview allowed students with disabilities to adequately describe their experiences and challenges that they encounter every day on campus. The participants were not limited to their answers. This was better than using questionnaire, which the participant’s answers would have been limited, as it will just require the participants to ether ticking YES or NO based on what the researcher may think about issues that affect students with disabilities.

4.6 Data transcription and analysis

According to Riessman (1993), the process of data transcription takes a lot of the researcher's time and can be very frustrating too, but at the same time it is also an advantage to the researcher in familiarising with the data. This part was very challenging for me due to my disability. Listening, pausing and typing word for word was very stressful to me and for each interview it approximately took me eight to twelve hours. Through the help of my two friends, I was able to complete transcribing ten interviews on my own, one of my friends did four and the other friend did six. With the ten transcribes that I did I was able to familiarise myself with the data, which also made it easy for me to do the analysis. In analysing the data Braun and Clarke's six stages approach was used in analysing the data in the most appropriate way.

“Immersion usually involves repeated reading of the data, and reading the data in an active way - searching for meanings, patterns and so on. It is ideal to read through the entire data set at least once before you begin your coding, as your ideas, identification of possible patterns will be shaped as you read through” (Braun and Clarke,2006:19).

Blanche et al. (2006) indicate that data analysis involves reading through your data repeatedly and being engaged in activities of breaking your data down and building it up again in novel ways. This is the process of reducing data to a story and its interpretation. Data analysis is the process of the large data collected and reducing it (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). Data analysis was done using the six steps described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Data collected was also broken-down to ensure the data which remained was the one which was relevant to the questions which were asked to the participant. According to Kawulich (2004:2), “the coding process generates categories that must be fleshed out by seeking relevant data bits that inform the category”. Relevant information was clearly recognised through the process of coding, and answers which were similar were shaded with a specific colour. For example, the broad theme on challenges was highlighted with yellow, but challenges which were sensitive were highlighted in yellow and red colour. Other broad themes were highlighted in their specific colours or had the font in different colours. Coding are used as keywords, themes or phrases that may or may not communicate to actual themes in the text being analysed (Matthew and Carole, 2004:203). Coding helps in identifying themes, phrases and keywords which may or may not correspond with the theme that were expected in this study.

In the third phase, there was a long list of different types of codes from the data collected; these codes needed to be emerged the data into potential themes that were being identified in this study. Braun and Clarke (2006:19) state that “this phase, which re-focuses the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes, involves sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes”. In this phase the researcher gets to categorise all similar data and paste it under relevant themes in a separate document, as those code which were not themed will eventually be joined together to form an overarching theme. These themes that would have developed are themes which strengthen the finding of this study. This phase has also made it much easier during the analyses chapter.

During the fourth stage which is the reviewing stage, themes were being reviewed to identify if all of them have adequate data to support them. Some of the themes which had limited data were grouped with other themes that were similar to them. If there were no similarities, themes were discarded (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The phase also involves going back to the interview transcripts to re-check if there is anything which is left out by mistake, and also check if the bits of themes cannot be grouped with other codes. Theme five and theme six were then grouped with other sub-themes which were taken from different questions as they focused on providing support to students with disabilities and also providing useful guidelines or recommendations in terms of policy and programmes the university can improve on.

In the fifth stage, Braun and Clarke (2006:22) state that, “at this point, you then define and further refine the themes that you will present for your analysis, and analyse the data within them”. At this stage, themes have been detailed defined and shown how they are presented in the analysis and also how the sub-themes formed. The broad themes of this study were developed by the research problems and objectives of this study, and from the broad themes sub-themes which were developed. Neuman (1997:424) mentions that “researchers look selectively for cases that illustrate themes and make comparisons and contrasts after most or all data collection is complete”. Some themes were developed through frequently occurring experiences or challenges which were identified in the transcribed data.

During the sixth stage, which is the last stage, data was combined with information from other sources which strengthen the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicate that the write up must capture the essence of the theme within the data, revealing a clear picture of the commonness of the particular them. In this stage I had enough data, and when doing the write-up, other information was used from other authors to support the themes within the data. Lacey and Luff (2009) point out that through the use of grounded theory, early data would be subjected to introductory analysis, and then the emerging theory tested in following data collection. The label should be developed last and should be conceptually meaningful, clear and concise, and close to the data.

4.7 Trustworthiness and credibility

Trustworthiness is mainly used to verify the data that has been collected and analysed is to be believe and be trustworthy (Thomas, 2010). In demonstrating trustworthiness there are some elements that are used, which are credibility, transferability and conformability. Shenton (2004) points out that credibility is one of most significant aspects in establishing trustworthiness. It is also important to show how truthfulness of the study which would have been conducted. According to Anney (2014: 276) “Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings”. The findings of this study reflect credibility, as the interviews were recorded and the transcribing or the recorded interviews were transcribed word for word. The recordings have been stored as evidence.

Triangulation “involves the use of multiple and different methods, investigators, sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence” (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007:239). This study uses other literature in building its literature review, sources and theories in framing its theoretical framework. The research objectives have set the guidelines from which in-depth interview questions were formulated. Given that the research is undertaken by a student with a disability, it would be important to be aware of the possibility of bias. Conformability was used to reduce the effect of investigator bias (Shenton, 2004). The results of this study have revealed the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities. By selecting students with different type of disabilities, it also helped prevent

the researcher from being biased, as he also had his own experiences and challenges at UKZN Howard College campus.

According to Bitsch (2005:85), the “researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through ‘thick description’ and purposeful sampling”. To assist in reporting of results, detailed field notes were used to assist in capturing emotions and any other physical actions that took place during the interviews. Direct verbatim quotes were included in the final thesis in order to reflect participants’ perceptions. To establish a good quality context of the study, other literature was adapted to the data collected from participants, in order to show transferability. Students with disabilities tend to go through similar challenges and experiences, therefore many of the experiences and challenge the students with disabilities went through UKZN were similar to other studies. Using those studies and the data collected has shown the transferability of this study.

4.7 Reflexivity

In doing this study I thought I had a greater understanding of the experiences and challenges that student with disabilities do through on Howard College campus. This was because I did my undergraduate studies at UKZN Howard College and I am familiar with the environment. During the process of the interview, it was chocking to me, that students with disabilities go through greater challenges on campus that are not known by their surrounding community. I therefore noticed that the information that I collected was richer than I thought it will be. It was important to ensure that all the data collected were presented in the finding chapter, and strengthened with relevant theories.

4.8 Summary

The qualitative approach aimed to get a deeper understanding of the major challenges that students with disabilities encounter on campus. An exploratory study aims at receiving solid insight which is comprehension rather than just the collection of accurate data. In this study interviewing was a powerful method of getting a rich understanding the experiences and challenges encountered by students with disabilities and how they overcome these challenges. The interviews lasted between sixty and ninety minutes. Participants were informed about

the purpose of the interview and were given the opportunity to ask questions. Permission was asked from participants to use a voice recorder during the interview, and notes were of the proceedings were taken. The data analysis has also been presented in this chapter, to show how the data has been analyzed using Braun and Clark's (2006) six phases of analysis. In showing how this study can be ensured that it has been conducted in a trustworthy manner, trustworthiness has been detailed and demonstrated in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The research findings show that students with disabilities experience a significant number of challenges in the University environment, such as accessing the library, lecture and tutorial venues. Other challenges relate to access in their residence, their interaction in lecture venues with staff members and fellow non-disabled students. The implications are that inclusive education has not been fully realised.

This chapter highlights an overview and discussion of the key findings of the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities at UKZN's Howard College campus. The responses of twenty students who participated in this study are thematically organised and discussed in this chapter. The participants who are students with disabilities have indicated their experience and challenges that they come across at UKZN.

5.2. School background, experiences and challenges

The challenges which are experienced by students with disabilities at the University stem in part from their previous schooling experiences. There is some difference between the mainstream and special schools, which is why learners with disabilities were placed in a segregated schools. Most learners with disabilities were educated in segregated classrooms which were designed to cater for learners with disabilities. Teachers noticed that segregation as a system is advantageous for student with disabilities, as educators are able to apply a curriculum that is best formulated for learners with special needs (Wang 2009). One of the reasons that could contribute to learning challenges faced by students with disabilities is that most of them have not experienced learning in a room of more than twenty learners. As in special schools, learners are sometimes placed in a certain classroom specified according to their disabilities and the need for additional support. This is why there is one teacher for every eight learners in each class in some special schools (National Council for Special Needs, 2014).

Learners tend to face a challenge when they enter higher educational institutions, for it becomes difficult to adapt to the curriculum that is used in these institutions of higher learning. Adams and Brown (2006a) explore the barriers to learning faced by students with disabilities in higher education. Student who attended segregated schools had a major challenge in adapting to the curriculum, study material, infrastructure and socialising with non-disabled students in higher education. The special school, the infrastructure is disabled friendly, and the study materials are provided in a way that accommodated their disabilities. At the special school, they use a different form of curriculum from the one used in mainstream schools and in higher education. The curriculum which is used in higher education is not accommodative for students with disabilities.

5.2.1 The positive experiences at special school environment

In segregated schools, the classrooms are specially designed in the best suitable way for a learner with a disability (National Council for Special Needs, 2014). For example, the classroom needs to be open spaced so that students using wheelchairs or crutches can be able to freely move around. Furthermore, the curriculum which is used is different from the one used in mainstream schools. The curriculum that is used in segregated schools is accommodative to the needs of learners with disabilities. Another advantage in segregated schools is that learners with disabilities interact with other learners who also have disabilities. Therefore, this builds their self-esteem and self-concept as they also view themselves as equal among each other.

Students with disabilities have therefore mentioned similar situations of their experiences at the segregated schools they attended. The findings of this study demonstrate that students who attended special schools had greater challenges adapting to university life than those that attended mainstream primary and secondary schools. At special schools, the environment is conducive to, and enabling in that the needs of the learner are accommodated (Kabuta, 2014). This is not necessarily the case for students with disabilities at higher education institutions.

In addition, there were assistants and medical attention available to students with disabilities in segregated schools. The learners' educational and physical needs were fully taken care of, as male participant 10 has mentioned that physiotherapy was also provided at the school which he attended. There are normally helpers or assistants who provide assistance to learners with disabilities in segregated schools, thus learners with a disability may not find themselves at a disadvantage. For example, male participant 1 pointed out that, "In high school, I had a facilitator who carried my school materials, and wrote my class notes during class". Therefore, in terms of the understandings expressed in the social model of disability, the special school environment empowers students and facilitates both their learning and navigation of the physical environment.

The data below shows that students also felt more comfortable being around people who are also disabled like them. As female participant 4 notes that at the school they understand each other which made them feel normal and not as outcasts. People with disabilities have been alienated from the society, as the environment in most parts does not accommodate people with disabilities. People with disabilities have also been excluded from numerous activities in their societies, as they are being perceived as unproductive citizens.

Female participant 2: I went to a special school, a school that was able to accommodate me since I wasn't able to help myself, so they had helpers to assist us at all the time.

Male participant 9: Both my primary and high schools were special schools so they catered for people with disability. The schools catered for the visually impaired and physically disabled students. Due to the fact that our needs were different from each other, we were forced to be separated. The experience was good because we had enough facilitators who gave us enough attention we were able to pass and get a lot of information both in primary and high school.

The social model of disability is presented as a powerful tool in the Disability Movement and in the lives of people with disabilities. If it is properly used, the social model of disability could become the tool of justice and freedom for people with disabilities 'all over this land' (Swain et al., 2004). By the social model of disability being presented as a powerful tool, it therefore aims for the environment to be redesigned in order to accommodate people with disabilities.

5.2.2 Bullying and violence at the special school

In special school, not everything was going all good and smooth but there were also challenges that the learners encountered. One of those challenges that have been discovered in learners who are disabled is the age difference between learners. The World Report on Disability (2011) demonstrated that in most cases, learners with disabilities are lucky to enter school at the required age as non-disabled learners. Learners with disabilities tend to complete their schooling when they are quite old. They may end up bullying learners who are younger than their age at school.

Male participant 9: The first challenge is that we missed our homes and the age difference made older learners to bully us, and treat us in a very brutal way. That kind of brutality was bad, we didn't enjoy that.

Apart from missing home there are issues of bullying by older learners or adults. The student uses the word 'brutal' which may suggest incidents of physical or verbal harm and violence.

5.2.3 The experiences at mainstream school environment

Other participants with disabilities have reported that they have attended their primary and secondary schooling at mainstream schools and have come across a lot of challenges. Swain et al. (2004) argue that inclusive education is unlikely to be successful unless young people and adults with disabilities engage and participate in the discussions of implementing inclusive education.

5.2.4 Challenges at the mainstream schools

Students with disabilities who attended mainstream school also reflected on their challenges that they endured and how they had to adapt to the learning environment. This was due to their specific needs which were not being provided for since they were treated as being the same as non-disabled learners who were used to the mainstream learning environment. As a result, the learner ends up being excluded from other educational activities, such as attending some subjects which were taking place in venues that were not friendly for a learner with disabilities or even doing activities that learners with disabilities were not able to participate in. Mainstream schools are built to accommodate non-disabled learners, and

there are not to support learners with disability. Female participants 3 and 9 had similar experiences as they both stated that they sometimes used to stay on their own in the classrooms while other learners would go to other classes such as science experiment which could be in the classroom upstairs or to do Life Orientation which is done in the playing field that might be a long distances from the classrooms. Participants have therefore stated;

Female participant 3: The environment for both primary and secondary school was not accessible because at times, I would miss classes because I couldn't climb or use the steps or maybe when they were doing experiments, I would stay behind because I couldn't use my hands to do those experiments. So, I would stay in class and do something else.

Female participant 9: It was not inclusive in every area, as there were areas that I couldn't attend to, for example in 2010, I was in metric and I couldn't walk at all. I was using crutches. I was not able to go for assembly, and even break time. I would just sit in the classroom alone or with my friends. As they may be no other disabled learner, you may feel different from everyone. For example, during the Life Orientation period, everyone would go and play at the grounds and I would sit alone in the classroom. The teacher would give me marks for free. This would then make me feel like people felt sorry for me.

Male participant 7: It is difficult to attend a school with non-disabled learners while you are disabled, for when there is something which is being done, others may always tend to feel sorry for you even if there is no need to do so. In most cases, they tend to limit you from doing other things. Some things may be difficult but you may be able to do them and there is no reason for other people to limit you.

People with disabilities do not like to be sympathised with as to them it feels as if they are seen as incapable or have difficulties in doing certain things. Female participant 9 and male participant 7 clearly express that they were excluded from doing certain activities and further given free marks, and this did not settle well with them. Unfortunately, they had nothing to do as they were controlled by the environmental forces and structure of that school. Withers (2012) points out an important critique of the charity model in its aim to garner sympathy and thus ensuring that no real change ever occurs in the lives of people with disabilities. Shakespeare (2002) pointed out that it is the society which disabled people with disabilities live in, which exclude people with disabilities from participation in the society.

This is due to that disability is being imposed on top of their impairment. It is therefore seen that one of the major obstacles in mainstream schools is the infrastructure of the school which poses limitation on a learner with a disability. The classroom environment can also

have some challenges which can have a negative effect on someone who is visually impaired. Male participant 2 who went to a mainstream primary school faced challenges with lightning in the classroom and in the corridors which were too dark for him. As a result, he would end up not being comfortable when walking in the corridors.

Cobley (2011) states that the social model's strong focus on a 'call to action' in the recreation of resources which may be better employed in supporting poverty-focused community organisations which are making an effort to address the most immediate concerns of local people with disabilities. Teachers in mainstream schools are not trained in what may be some of the needs that learners with disabilities may require in order for them to be able to equally compete with non-disabled learners. This is also due to the fact that mainstream schools do not offer the support needed by a learner who is disabled (Shah, 2007). As male participant 2 has also mentioned that at the mainstream school, he used to receive worksheets and books which were written in a small font and that made it difficult for him to see.

Male participant 2: I would find that obviously they were writing on the board, and even if they had to make me sit in the front, I couldn't see the board, when they handed out workbooks or worksheet, I would find out that the print was very small, even if I had to put it closer or if I wear glasses the writing may still be very small for me. The lighting in the classroom was poor, even in the toilets; I would find that there were no lights. Even in the corridors it would be too dark, other children who had no visual impairment would be running around and I would be struggling to see in the classrooms and the corridors because it was too dark.

5.2.5 Positive impact at the mainstream schools

Despite the challenges that the students above would have had in the mainstream schools, the schools also had a positive impact on their educational life. For inclusive education will improve the learners language and speech programs, the learner will also be able to participant progressively during group work and also be able to have good communication skills with his or her educator (Jenkinson,1997).

5.3 Physical access and environmental barriers during first year of study

Every first-year student, either disabled or non-disabled tend to encounter a different type of challenges at the university. These challenges tend to add an additional stressful

situation on the students. This study has therefore critically sought to understand the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities at UKZN Howard College campus. In the data collected, it emerged that most students with disabilities encounter many challenges at the library, lecture and tutorial venues. Such challenges occur because the UKZN environment structure is and was built in a way that excludes students with disabilities and mainly accommodative to non-disabled students. Hughes and Paterson (2010) stated that people with disabilities are continuously being excluded from social spaces which are in favour of non-disabled people. Students with disabilities are excluded because building designers do not take into account the needs of people with disabilities when they are building.

5.3.1 *Barriers and visual challenges*

Students who are blind and partially sighted have major access challenges. They have challenges in accessing lecture and tutorial venues. Female participant 5 pointed out that her challenge was that the University environment is too huge and it was also difficult for her to find the lecture venues as she was also not familiar with the buildings since she was blind. Male participant 8 who is also blind came across a similar challenge when he got lost looking for lecture venues. Being lost around the campus was common among most participants especially when looking for a specific venue. Male participant 2 also faced this challenge. The most challenging part for him was that some of the numbers in lecture venues were very small for him to see as he is partially sighted.

Female participant 5: It was a big challenge when I came to campus, I had no idea that this place is so huge it's like I don't know, and it's a town on its own. I couldn't find my way around. So when I was told that I was attending maybe at MTB 5, Shepstone 7. I didn't know where Shepstone and don't know the MTB building where it was. I was unable to find it, so as a blind person it's really very much difficult.

Male participant 8: The only challenge I faced getting to those rooms was the fact that I was getting lost.

Male participant 2: Being a person who is visual impaired, my biggest challenge was to familiarise myself with the university environment, because now I had to memorise this place. Some places I will not be able to see them from a distance so I had to know the way that I am going too. Going to lecture venues was difficult for me as I needed to go inside the venue and ask someone, which venue it was. As the lecture venue number use to be written high up or the number of the venue is too small to be see.

5.3.2 *Challenges with accessing lecture venues*

Students who are quadriplegic, paraplegic and those with cerebral palsy have challenges with accessing most lecture venues. They either use motorised wheelchairs or scooters and such mode of mobility cannot be used to go up the stairs. Female participant 2 who was quadriplegic ended up withdrawing from one the modules that she was doing, due to the lift that she used to access the lecture venue was almost always out of order. She was not able to attend any lecture on the days that the lift was broken down. Male participant 10 also came across a similar challenge in his first year, as the lift was regularly not working. He saw it as a waste of time when he had to go to the lecture venue. Male participant 1 who has cerebral palsy and uses a scooter on campus stated that in some cases, he was forced to leave his scooter and use the stairs in order to reach the lecture venue. This clearly shows that the quality of maintenance for the lifts is very poor at UKZN and has a negative impact on the academic performance of the student with such disabilities. It is therefore the reason that the publication of *Fundamental Principles of Disability* (UPIAS, 1976) states that it is the society which causes the individuals to become disabled. It is the structuring of the environment which makes life difficult for someone who has a disability, and results in them feeling oppressed and disempowered.

Female participant 2: I face difficulties when I have to go to class. Sometimes I have difficulties reaching lecture venues. For instance, I had to change one of the modules because I couldn't reach the venue as it was next to a lift that is always out of order and as much as the lecturer tried to have the venue changed she ended up failing and advised me to change the module as it was only an elective. I ended up changing the module.

Male participant 10: Obviously, when I was doing the first year, I was not familiar with the place. I would wake up in the morning and get told that I had to go to MTB 605 and I didn't know where that was. Secondly, as I told you, as a person with disability you would ask where L2 is and you would see people climbing stairs and you get that the lifts are not working. Those were the challenges.

The selection of courses for students with disabilities is also challenging and needs to be done with fair consideration. Given that their disability and the course requirements has to be taken into account, as a number of student with disability experience difficulty with written coursework, examinations and of oral presentations (Fuller et al. 2004).

5.3.3 *Hearing-related challenges*

Students who are partially deaf encounter challenges at the lecture venues. One of their challenges is that some lecturers do not use a microphone when lecturing. A student who is partially deaf may not be able to hear the lecturer and may end up not understanding what is being lectured. The student may also end up seeing attendance as a waste of time. There is also a risk of failing the course.

Female participant 10: The lecture rooms are too big, and lecturers are speaking too softly that I can't hear them.

Male participant 5: In the lecture rooms, it was so difficult in my first year; first of all, I did not have the hearing aid, so I only went to the lecture room just to sign the register. Because I couldn't hear what the lecturer was saying, it was very difficult.

5.3.4 *Tutorials*

Majority of the participants stated that they have no problems with accessing tutorial venues as most of the tutorial venues are well accessible for them. However, challenges were faced in accessing lecture venues. Male participant 5 as a student who is partially deaf had difficulties in hearing his tutor. He fails to participate in group discussions because of difficulties in clearly hearing what was being discussed.

Male participant 5: It happened that one day I told my tutor, I have a problem that whenever I am in class I don't hear him and the other students when they're talking. I also told him that his voice is too low and I cannot hear you. So it was very difficult in the tutorials. Even sometimes if we had to discuss in a group, I use to tell my group member that I won't be able to participate because I have this kind of a problem.

Most students, including those with disabilities, struggle to adapt to a new environment and the challenges they face can result in students dropping out of first year or achieving lower marks than expected (Tinto, 1982). For student with disabilities, it is likely that their past experiences of segregation and separation and the limited opportunities for socialisation, participation and integration can contribute to poor academic performance.

At UKZN, consultation with tutors is very vital as students get more clarity on what is needed from them in their submissions, as tutors explain the individual questions that the students may have. Students who are physically disabled sometimes encounter challenges when it comes to consultations, as some of the tutors consult with students in venues which

are not disabled friendly. Female participant 3 pointed out that “I can’t go to tutors during their consultation times, because their venues for consultations have steps and I would end up asking someone to consult for me or collect scripts. Paul (2000) suggests that all students constantly face many barriers in their educational environment. Some of those experiences and challenges which are faced by students with disabilities may be produced due to failure in their academics which can be a challenge that is unknown and cannot be attended to.

5.3.5 Library

The library is a very important environment and service which needs to be accessible and accommodative for all students. The library is where students access academic materials such as books, articles, and theses. It is a quiet place where one can focus and study. Unfortunately, most students with disabilities are not able to access information at the library, due to the type of equipment and services that they receive at the library during their first year at UKZN Howard College which does not accommodate their needs. According to the UKZN policy on library services, the university librarians are responsible for ensuring that information is accessible to students with disability and also ensure that assistive devices such as digital, Braille and/or audio recorded material are provided at the University library for student who are blind (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004).

During data collection for this study, it was discovered that students who are blind and partially sighted had similar challenges to access the library at UKZN Howard College campus. The library does not provide the needs for this category of disabled students. It does not have even one computer which has software that is suitable for a student who is a blind or partially sighted. Students who are blind or partially sighted are not given proper orientation on how to access information from the library. As a result, students with such disabilities end up not even going to the library as they are unable to assess the much needed information on their own. Furthermore, scanning of books for students who are partially sighted and blind is not always to their advantage, but it sometimes serves as a disadvantage to them. Male participant 9 and female participant 1 pointed out that when books are taken for scanning, the staff at the Disability Unit (DU) takes a long time to make

the copies available for them. Students who are blind or partially sighted therefore, end up trailing behind others.

Female participant 4: The library environment is not friendly to me as it does not allocate much for my needs as a person who is visually impaired. One has to log into a computer and search for what you may need, but I cannot because there is no JAWS or Zoom Text, so I cannot do that.

Female participant 5: I didn't even go for the orientation the library orientation cause I find it that it was going to be useless for me to go around and teaching me how to find books and so on because even for now it's still a challenge not only it was a challenge then even now it's a challenge I rely on librarians or have to take someone with me to accompany me when I look for books and most of the times.

Male participant 5 mentioned that his challenges in the library are that when he is instructed to return a book to the counter after a certain time and he does not hear them clearly, he then found that he had been fined a huge amount of money. Another limitation for him is that when at the library, people should lower their voices when they speak, and that limits him in the sense that for him to be able to hear someone they need to speak a bit louder. He, therefore, responded as follows:

Male participant 5: In the library, they do not want noise, and because of my condition, one cannot talk to me in a low voice. Whenever one talks to me, they have to be loud. This becomes a challenge for me and difficult to ask for assistance.

Students who are quadriplegic face similar challenges as they both experienced being hurt by the gate at the entrance to the library, which was the challenge that they both mentioned. Female participant 2 also pointed out that the counter desk at the library is high for her and also the staff at the library has a negative towards her.

Female participant 2: I had a problem late last year when they changed the library access gates because it were blocked. When the gate got to open, it nearly hit my legs and I jumped. Another challenge is that I find the library desks too high, and I cannot reach whenever I need to talk to the librarian.

5.4 Current challenges by student with disabilities

In order to see if there was anything that UKZN was doing in order improve the quality of inclusive education in the past three to four years, it was important to establish if students with a disability still face similar challenges today at the library, lecture and tutorial venues.

The majority of students with disabilities still come across the challenges which they used to face in their first year on campus.

Female students who are quadriplegic still faced challenges, as the lecture venues are still not disabled friendly. Students on wheelchairs have no other option but to sit at the back of the lecture venue. As a result, they tend to lose concentration due to the noise outside the lecture venues and also other students talk to each other during lecture time. The participants responded as follows:

Female participant 3: The challenge that I face is that the lecture rooms become so full that I struggle to see the lecturer as I would sit at the back in such venues as Shepstone 1 and would even be disturbed by the noise of the students and end up losing concentration. With the tutorials, I haven't gone to any. The library is fine. I deal with these challenges by going to the Disability Unit.

Students who are partially deaf still face challenges today at the lecture venues. Other students distract them by talking to one another and making noise during lectures. This tends to make it very difficult to focus on a student who is partially deaf. As this student is now faced with two challenges which are to listen to the lecturer and also fight against the voices of other students. The main challenge for male participant 5 is that he is not familiar with the hearing aid. It is still a challenge for him to hear different types of sounds. The best way for him to hear is when doors and windows are closed during lectures.

Male participant 7 encounters challenges with the time in between tutorials as he is not able to walk fast. He has a problem with getting to the tutorial venues early especially when he is coming from another tutorial.

Male participant 7: The challenges that I face this year is the clashing of the tutorial times. In most cases, there is a very limited time between tutorials, and you need to run to the next tutorial and when you have a disability it is quite a challenge.

5.4.1 Infrastructure proximity and accessibility

The issue of infrastructure required by students with disability can course a huge hindrance the attainment of high marks. Therefore, the social model does not view disability as a difficulty in a person's life, but it identifies the society which posts the hardship to a student who is disabled. Both the institutional and social structure tend to discriminate and oppress a person who is disabled, as disability is being imposed on of the person who is disabled.

The social model does not see the disability as a problem, but it identifies the society which is causing a problem towards the person with a disability (Terzi, 2004).

Students with physical disability still have a challenge in walking on campus as some places are not friendly to them. In some instance, they are forced to comply with the situation of the environment in order for them to get the education that they desire. Female participant 7 has stated that her greatest challenge is walking up the stairs as she does not have much balance, and also seeing that there are not many ramps around the campus. Female participant 9 was allocated to a residence which is far from campus; this makes life difficult because she is unable to walk back to the residents whenever need arises. The resident is very far and she has difficulties in walking a long distance. The participant had the following to say:

Female participant 7: I find that the distance is quite challenging to walk. I forgot to mention that my balance is very poor I am a bit scared of falling over. In a crowd when students are rushing from one lecture to another I am scared of being bumped into because if they bump me I will fall over, even when I used my stick because of my poor balance. Another thing is the steps; they are a very big challenge.

Female 9: As I live in Tower, if it happens that I come to campus in the morning, I have no other way but to stay the whole day until I attend at 5pm.

Barnes and Mercer (2004) and Oliver (1990) explain that people are disabled by barriers which exist in their surrounding environment and the society which they live in. This is because they have no choice but to adhere to the environmental settings designed for able-bodied or 'normal' persons.

Female participant 6 also mentioned the issue of not being informed about the areas under construction. Students who are blind cannot see that red tape used to demarcate inaccessible areas such as construction sites. This then tends to be a challenge for them as they may need to change the direction that they are walking in. Furthermore, some people just park their cars even in places that students use when going for lectures. This may also be problematic for students who are blind as they may find themselves bumping into cars. Female participant 6 stated:

When there is construction work and they don't even notify us if there will be construction work ahead, you find that sometimes there will put a red tape. If the wind blows, the red tape will be blown away. You can imagine falling in that hole. Unless they contact Disability Unit and tell them that there will be construction on a particular area, we remain vulnerable.

Male participant 1 who has cerebral palsy, male participant 8 who is blind and male participant 10 who is paraplegic have stated that they still face the same challenges which they faced in their first year. Such challenges are infrastructure challenges which have not been resolved until today. Half of the participants have stated that they totally do not experience any challenges today at the library, lecture and tutorial venues. This, therefore, shows that this student had managed to overcome the challenges that they used to face in their first year at UKZN, which others still need to overcome their challenges to access the environment.

5.4.2 Interaction with lecturers

The majority of students with disabilities have had negative experiences with lecturers, which had a negative contribution towards their studies. Most lecturers tend to be unaware of understanding the needs of students with disabilities and this is hurting for students with disabilities. Such ignorance limits the interaction between the student with a disability and their lecturers, as the student may fear being disappointed by their lecturer. Students with disabilities end up having difficulties that limit their success in academic work. Low (2010) points that some students with disability experience rejection from non-disabled students. Students with disability therefore face challenges of isolation and this situation tends to affect their interaction with others.

Male participant 9 who is blind and male participant 5 who is partially deaf describe some lecturers as being unable to understand the challenges that they go through, as they commented that:

Male participant 9: There are bad lecturers, heartless lecturers; as sometimes you find that things are not in your side. The Disability Unit is not able to scan the book in the required time and time is beating you, you would explain that to the lecturer and they would say, no I don't care.

Male participant 5: Some of the lecturers do not understand our problems, such as the challenges I face in my disability. There was a lecture which I and Social Worker B had sent her emails, telling her that I am hard of hearing and I request that she send me notes, but she is not interested, she just ignore us.

Most students with disabilities also mentioned a critical issue which is that of lecturers not sending notes to them. Some lectures even tell students that they are not prepared to send the notes to them. In such cases, the student with disabilities may not have any control of this situation as they may not be able to see or to write for themselves. Some lecturers prefer to send their notes to students when they complete a chapter. This may also affect the student academically, as they will only be able to go through the notes whenever the lecturer is done with the chapter. At the same time, they are required to submit assignments in due course and a student with a disability may be limited as they may not have received their notes. From the twenty participants, four of them have pointed out a similar challenge.

Female participant 6: The negative experiences I have had at times with some lecturers, I don't know whether to say they are stubborn, or they don't understand students with disabilities. For sometimes you would go and introduce yourself or go to his/her office and they would tell you that you will get lecture notes at the end of the chapter. This becomes a challenge because you also need to prepare for tests and assignments.

Female participant 1: My negative encounter is when I got this lecturer who was saying that they won't send me slides, I explained that I have a problem, I can't see. She said she does not know how she can assist me but she cannot send me her lecture notes, as everyone writes the lecture slides and she is not entitled to email slides to any student.

Female participant 4: Most of other lecturers were fair but I would also come across very difficult lecturers in terms of getting notes, even if I ended up getting them through processes I just feel bad that when I am entitled to something I have to fight for it in order to get it, this makes my life quite difficult.

Female participant 5 who is blind and uses the JAWS software, had a challenge with one of her lecturers who used to upload his handwritten notes on e-learning. Her main issue was that JAWS is not able to recognize material that was hand written, and worst of all, the participant was blind. The lecturer refused to send the student typed notes and this was a great challenge to the student.

Female participant 5: Oh one bad experience, there was this one lecturer, who used to write his overhead notes using a pen, it was not typed even when he uploads those notes on e-learning they were hand written, of which it was very challenging for me, because the tools that I'm using in my laptop cannot read handwritten stuff.

Male participant 1 stated that his only challenge is that lecturers have difficulties in hearing him as he has a speech problem, which means that there may be a huge communication barrier between him and his lectures. Students, who are partially deaf,

face challenges of not hearing the lecturers clearly, and when they may ask the lecturer to repeat themselves the lecturer tends to refuse to do so. Male participant 3 has stated how one of his lecturers had made him small and frustrated him by his response when the student was in need of the lecturer's assistance. He stated;

Yes, I did have one negative issue where a lecturer said to me that my hearing issue is not a problem that I must be given preference from other people. He once said he also have my condition as he says he also wear a hearing aid but has managed to become a professor. "So what is so special about you and your disability?"

Female participant 10: the negative experience I have with lecturers is that they do not give me information regarding my studies.

Male participant 4: The negative experience is when you need something from the lecturer, such as more clarity of what the class was about, or if you need to write a test in a different venue. Those are just the challenges that lecturers sometimes really do not understand.

The rest of the students do not have challenges with their lecturers in terms of their academics and their lectures have a good understanding of them.

5.4.3 Interaction with all staff

Not all staff members are well educated on disability; therefore they may not know how to treat someone with a disability. Such has been reported by students with disabilities. Half of the participants have had negative interactions with non-academic staff members. Some staff members may sometimes refuse to give assistance to students with disabilities. In such cases, students with disabilities will see those staff members as people who just do not care. Furthermore, these students do not like to be questioned about their disabilities. Male participant 7 ended up not going to the Red LAN as he was continuously questioned non-disabled student or staff member about his disability and at sometimes he was being embarrassed in front of other students. Male participant 4 took offence with one lecturer who kept asking him about an assistive device. There is a great need for disability awareness training and development for all staff members at the University. As such, staff members will therefore be well equipped in how to interact with students with disabilities. For principal (K) of the UKZN policy states that the university will provide disability awareness train for all staff members and such programmes will enable staff members to better communicate with students with disabilities. Furthermore, staff members would be friendly and welcoming to these students (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004).

Participants stated the following:

Male participant 2: The negative thing will be that sometimes staff may refuse to assist me as they would say “you are not different from the other students, you’re first a student then your disability”. And they will not assist.

Male participant 5: The negative part is that when a person sees your assistive device they will ask you, “What is wrong with you and what is this on your ear?” And this is not right, and I face that problem everyone asking me,

Male participant 7: I do not know how to say it, the man who works at the Red LAN since last year is always questioning me about my disability and telling me that I do not belong to the Red LAN. I do not know whether he is joking or what; it even came to the point where I had to confront him.

Students with disabilities also come across non-academic staff members who tend to think that students with disabilities are lazy and do not want to do things on their own, despite that the student would be struggling and genuinely in need of help. This attitude demonstrated by some of the staff members can be hurtful to the students as they also wish they were independent like other students.

Female participant 6: Other staff members do know that students with disabilities are given first preference in during registration and at funding department. Staff members still ask questions such as why do we have to be given first preferences when it comes to services.

Female participant 2: I also think some of the staff members don’t believe that there are other things that we can’t do by ourselves. They just think that we are lazy as a result some become unfriendly to us. I also feel that others, particularly black people believe that the disabled have to be treated differently from others, as some even think that the disabled have to be kept in homes and be given assistance.

Half of the students who participated in this study have stated that they had negative experiences with non-academic staff members, four of them have had a negative experience with the Risk Management Service (RMS). Female participant 1 is partially sighted and had an issue with the RMS staff who are unable to give proper directions as students who are partially sighted. RMS will point at places that a short sighted or blind student is unable to understand the direction. Female participant 8 and male participant 10 have also shown how the RMS is reluctant to understand disability as they are often reluctant to accommodate students with disabilities. RMS staff tends to ask disabled student about their disability while the student's disability is visible. This makes a student with a disability to feel uncomfortable to answer such questions.

Female participant 4: I really do have a problem with the RMS and I think it is just unfair that some people will undermine you.

Female participant 8: In the university, I think the most negative experience you can encounter as a disabled person on campus is with RMS. I think that is about as negative as it gets as the RMS just seems incapable or reluctant to understand that something, as disability do, exists and it's not all of them it's just a selected few that aren't willing to be accommodating or they want to probe, they want to see that how disabled you are. Other staff members are more than accommodating because RA's are helpful, the assistive staffs is helpful, so for me, overall staff is always willing to help and as I've said the most negative experience you can ever have is with the RMS.

5.5 Persistent access, environmental and other barriers and challenges

Students with disabilities go through a variety of challenges that limit them from being successful in their educational lives. Such limitations produce similar obstacles to both male and female students with disabilities. Most of these limitations or barriers are brought by the historical educational background, as most students with disabilities attended special schools. The way higher education is structured and functions is such that that it favours the society at large and tends to exclude the needs of students with disabilities (Watermeyer et al., 2006). It was important to ask the participants about the type of challenges that they experience on campus. A student who is partially deaf may encounter challenges in having to concentrate during lectures since other students may be making noise close to that particular student. Lecture venues at UKZN are quite huge and can accommodate almost one hundred students in one lecture venue.

5.5.1 Hearing barriers and experiences

Male participant 3: One of the limitations I come across is when I am in class, I have to compete equally with other students, while the lecture is talking or giving the notes. Given that the lecture venues themselves are structured in such a way that they accommodate a lot of students rather than in groups.

5.5.2 Physical mobility

Male participant 10: The limitations that come with this type of disability, is that I can't access some recreational facilities such as the TV room because it is not wheelchair friendly. If I need to go to Westville and let's say I need something there, I cannot take a bus or a shuttle because I use a wheelchair. I therefore have to organize my own transport. It's not easy to go to different campuses like other students, I have to dig into my pocket and pay for a meter cab, and those are the limitations.

The infrastructure at UKZN Howard College campus does not only limit students who are wheelchair bounded but also those students who have mobility difficulties such as those with cerebral palsy or those have transverse myelitis. These disabilities can cause difficulties in walking up and down the stairs and also cause continuous pain to the student. This type of disabilities can also have a negative impact to the student's academic performance.

Female participant 7: I have challenges with walking. Walking up the stairs is difficult for me. I also have a problem of ongoing pains, I can't sit and walk for long periods of time, because the pain becomes very severe when I sit for too long. The one problem is that I end up losing my trail of thought. I have some problems with bowel and bladder control, so most of the time I am okay and sometimes I am not.

Female participant 9: I can't walk for long distances, or stand for a long time such as in a queue. I also have difficulties when I am sitting in a cold place for a long time. To sit and sleep for a long time is a challenge for me because I cannot sleep on all sides as I can only sleep on my back, stomach and my right side only. I am also not supposed to gain weight.

5.5.3 Barriers and experiences cause by visual impairment

Students who are blind also have certain limitations which may be a bit different from other disabilities, such as depending on other people to guide them when they walk or even to do things such as to choose a colour when buying clothes. This limitation can also place an individual in a position that they are uncomfortable to be in, as female participant 5 has highlighted here that it is like being dependent on someone else. Such dislike is understandable as one can see that an individual who is blind is unable to be independent.

Female participant 5: My first limitation is to read, because I cannot read for myself and I have to rely on other people to read for me. Another challenge that I experience is not being able to see the way whenever I am walking, or not being able to see what to wear and you can't see the colour. Another limitation for me is that if I like something, I need to rely on people to tell me if it is nice or to name its colour.

This type of limitation may also be similar to someone who is partially sighted such as female participant 1 who stated her inability to see in an environment which is too dark or too bright, so eventually, she has to be in a dim environment as it will be more convenient for her. The sad part is that even the distance from which she can identify objects is also a matter of concern. It must not be too far or too near as it will bring some difficulties to her. To a certain extent, students who are partially sighted are also

in need of someone to clarify some things for them, so they can be clear of what they are doing.

Female 1: I am a hyper bio-person which is my biggest limitation to see clearly especially in a dark environment and bright environment, when I am indoors or outdoors it gets worse. I have a low vision which is in short distance, which means I cannot read in short distance but I am able to see things, but also I cannot see things when they are far. I get sun burnt so I cannot go out even if I want to.

5.5.4 *Learning disability*

Learning disability is one of the disabilities which are not easily seen by others. It is difficult to find out if the particular student has disclosed or if a teacher or a lecturer has noticed that a certain student has difficulties in their academic progress. Learning disability significantly reduces the ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence) (Emerson and Heslop, 2010). Learning disability may manifest through being slow in writing, in processing information or difficulties in calculating numbers. One out of ten male participants who had a learning disability has also mentioned that he takes a bit longer to grasp information and this was only discovered when he was doing grade 12.

Male participant 7: It takes me a while to grasp information. Once I have provided the sufficient amount of time it becomes easier. So my teachers in high school found out when I was in grade 12 that I have this disability so they gave me extra time during exams.

5.6 Assistive device used

Seeing the different limitations which are faced by students with different types of disabilities, it was also important to get to know the types of assistive devices that they use in order to overcome their limitations. Jill Gierach et al. (2009) point out that students with disabilities tend to experience numerous challenges which often require them to have assistive tools and that will be responsive and flexible to the medical, sensory, physical and cognitive challenge they experience daily. The assistive device helps them in their educational progress. At UKZN Howard College campus, students with disabilities are provided with most of this equipment particularly at the Red LAN. The Red LAN has specialized software for students with disabilities. The software is specialized for different type of disabilities, for example, Zoom Text Magnifier Reader which is mostly used by partially sighted students. Zoom Text Magnifier Reader is a

fully integrated magnification and screen reading program that enlarges, enhances and reads aloud everything on the computer screen. In this way, students with disabilities are able to utilize the computer as any other non-disabled individual, and can even browse the internet independently.

Students who are blind use a software called Job Access With Speech (JAWS). This software is known to be a computer screen reader program that is best used for Microsoft Windows and allows students who are blind to be able to read Microsoft documents and also be able to type in the same way as any other student. This software is mainly to enhance the academic life of students who are partially sighted, albinos and blind. Students, who are physically disabled, are dependent on manual or motorized wheelchairs and scooters to move around the campus as some of them have mobility difficulties. Students who are partially deaf use hearing aids which assist them to be able to hear clearly, especially during lectures. Assistive devices are technical devices which assist an individual to adapt and be capable to do activities that are a challenge for them to perform. Ahmad (2015: 64) defines an assistive device as:

“Assistive technology is a generic term that includes assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for individuals with disabilities and includes 'virtually anything that might be used to compensate for lack of certain abilities”.

5.6.1 Assistive devices needed by students with disabilities

Assistive devices have been used by many students with disabilities in the past years and some are still being used in present day. Therefore, such assistive devices have shown that they have been helpful to students with various disabilities in giving them the ability to complete their various degrees. During the interviews, participants were asked about other assistive devices that they may need in order to improve their academic performance.

The majority of the students were satisfied with the devices that they are currently using. These assistive devices had been of great assistance to students with disabilities. However, six participants mentioned that they are still in need of other assistive devices which will improve their quality of studying. One of the main reasons for not being

able to access this assistive device which they are still in need of, it is because these gadgets are quite expensive for them and they cannot afford them. Adams and Brown (2006b) mentioned that students with disabilities may be required to use new software packages and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) to adapt and able to engage appropriately with the different styles of learning required in higher education institutions.

5.6.2 Academic improvement with the provision of an assistive device

It is clear that if assistive devices were available to those students who are in need of such gadgets, their academic performance has the potential to improve. For example, participant 3 will get to hear clearly as the FM system functions as an amplifier. The amplifier enable the participant to hear whatever is said during lectures since the FM system will also be connected to his hearing aid. Male participant 9 is in need of a focus aid which will make his academic progress to be much faster rather than the normal pace as he will be able to use Braille. The participant only learnt how to use JAWS when he arrived at UKZN. The process of scanning a book and editing the scanned document into a word document can take a lot of time, therefore female participant 5 wishes to have a book reader as it will be able to read for her the normal text of the book. Female participant 1 said that in order for her to be able to view things in the different environment she, therefore, is in need of tattered glasses.

5.7 Financial assistance received by students with disabilities

Lack of financial income is one of the critical challenges that most students come across in higher education, and this challenge also negatively affects their academics performance. This challenge tends to be worse in students with disabilities as their needs for financial support is greater than the needs of non-disabled students. The Department of Special Needs Education (2014) mentions that among the financial challenges that all students go through at the university, students with disabilities might need extra money for their academics such as photocopying, transcription, exam reader, sanitation and others.

5.7.1 *Educational loans*

Educational loan schemes are designed to assist students from financial restrictions in order for them to be able to focus on their studies (Jarrah et al., 2004). In this study, students with disabilities receive a different type of financial assistance. Some receive educational loans, disability bursary, and also a disability grant that may also assist them at the University. Five participants have mentioned that they receive study loans, and these participants have also highlighted the extent to which this money covers their needs. Female participant 1 does not really know what the loan covers for her. The following are excerpts from the interviews:

Male participant 5: I am grateful that my tuition fees are paid off by the educational loan; I think this is the greatest assistance I can ask for. I use the same money for transport and also to buy some other things such as batteries to maintain my hearing aid. It is not enough as I sometimes buy groceries for R300, which is not enough. I use the other R400 to take care of myself, e.g. going to the hospital and buying some other necessary things.

Male participant 4 stated that it is too early in the year that he can say the money is adequate or not. Three of the participants have indicated that the loan does not cover all their needs at the University, as they pointed out that:

Male participant 7: No, it is not enough at all. To be honest, a person with a disability has a lot of needs so the money I receive is not enough for my needs, so as for me, it is very difficult as I have the NSFAS loan. For example, the NSFAS loan only gives us R1000 book allowance, and I do Psychology, Criminology, Sociology and Anthropology. Each book I need to buy may cost R500 or R550 or R450 and all of the money gets finished on books.

5.7.2 *Bursary for disabled people from the department of education*

The bursary that is received by students with disabilities covers a number of expenses which include institutional registration and tuition cost which is paid directly to the institution. The study materials, and accommodation are also being paid to the institution. The cost for meals, costs of books, assistive devices and for human support is paid out to the student's bank account (National Student Financial Aid Scheme, 2012).

Nine participants received a bursary which is given to students with a disability by the department of education. This bursary covers all the needs of students with disabilities, such as tuition fees, resident fees, meal allowance, book allowance and assistive devices allowance. Three of these participants have also mentioned that this bursary

also gives them money to pay their personal assistants. These participants have therefore pointed out how the bursary has assisted them:

Female participant 2: This money assists me a lot because since I'm struggling with transport. I use this money for meter taxis when I want to go to town and I spend like R140 which is a retail and is very expensive but it's the only option that I have when it comes to transportation. Furthermore, this money also helps me when I want to go home and this bursary also covers my residence fees, tuition fees and even meal allowances. I consider this money helpful or it comes in very handy because I'm able to cover my basic need expenses since I have to buy more food as I have a helper in my room.

Female 8: I think the funds to me go above and beyond some of the amounts to me do seem a bit exorbitant although others may differ, I feel like they accommodate everything that you need that takes care of you mentally, they feed you and they also up for that element of assistance devices the disability bursary doesn't cater for, I feel like it's more than adequate.

5.7.3 Disability grants and other forms or bursaries.

Female participants 2 and 3 have also stated that apart from the bursary that they are receiving, they also get the disability grant. Male participant 8 has mentioned that he only receives the disability grant which he says is adequate for him. Female participant 7 has stated that she was funded for her doctoral studies and she is also supported by her family. She also considered that this money is adequate as she has a supported family. Female participant 9 only receives the disability grant, which is not adequate for her needs. She cannot cover her personal and academic needs. Female participant 10 receives a bursary from NRF and she says that these funds are adequate for her though the only problem is that NRF does not buy her assistive devices.

Female participant 9: As I am doing my masters and we have to do readings every week, I have to read on my computer which strains my eyes as I do not have money for printing credits. And there is some work that we have to submit which is typed or hand written and I submit hand written work. Sometimes I do not even have money to go to church, so it really restricts my life.

5.8 Experiences of being undermined and devalued

Students with disabilities have experienced being undermined and devalued by non-disabled students, lecturers and Risk Management Services personnel. Ten of the participants have come across this experience in UKZN Howard College campus, and the other nine of the participants have not had such an experience at UKZN Howard College

campus. It is understood that students with disabilities may end up finding it difficult to disclose their disabilities due to the fear of being undermined or devalued (Makvana, 2015).

5.8.1 Undermined and devalued by non-disabled in group work activities

Participants who are blind and those who are paraplegic have experiences of being undermined by group members who were non-disabled during group activities. Group members were not reliable to female participant 6 as they would change meeting venues without informing her. Furthermore, her opinions in group discussion were avoided and this made her feel hapless in the group. Female participant 2 also had a similar experience, as her group members used to arrive late and they had a tendency of looking down upon her. The following were said:

Female participant 6: during group work, as a group let's say you are grouped by the lecturer and it's in a group of 6 and you are the only one who is blind, they will say let's meet in Shepstone 1 and all of a sudden they will change the venue without informing you, you go to Shepstone 1 and there is no one there, when we meet in class they tell you that they changed the venue without informing you. Secondly, if you make a suggestion they won't take your suggestion. They treat you as if you don't know what you will be talking about.

Female 2: I feel undermined during group work because in Management, we only do group work and last year I had a group where members would arrive late and I'm the type of person that cares about their work so they would look down upon on me. The group that I was allocated to did not work hard enough, as a result we failed the group work submission.

5.8.2 Undermined and devalued by non-disabled students in general

Hall and Tinklin (1998) state that most students choose not to disclose their disabilities in some situations, for they believe students with disabilities may meet with a negative reaction or that they may be disadvantaged in some way. Non-disabled students tend to look at students with disabilities as if they are being felt sorry for in terms of their academic as they are seen to not be able to manage academically. Female participant 5 pointed out that:

My other fellow students always undermine students with disability. You will find that you are in the same class you are also qualified to be in that class as they are, you write the same exam, you write the same assessment, you're having the same lecturer, and the same notes. But they tend to undermine you and for example claim that maybe you were given favours, you know not that she really qualifies to be here maybe they did her a favour to be in this class. Maybe they felt sorry for her to be in this class. I can't be with this person, what does she know?

Female participant 3 and male participant 9 have also being devalued by non-disabled students. Non-disabled students assumed that the intellectual of female participant 3 and

male participant 9 was not normal like them. In this case, students with disabilities are not given a chance to express themselves.

Female participant 3: In terms of making probes with other students, they will underestimate us because they think we are stupid as they think that if you have a disability, you have it everywhere even in your mind, so they will end up not allocating you or even giving you a chance to express yourself with regards to academic tasks.

Male participant 9: There were times where I felt that this is discrimination, at times non-disabled people tend to think that if you are visually impaired your, intellect is not working properly or else you can't even hear or smell you can't even do anything you are just numb. That's the meaning of a visually impaired person to a non-disabled person; they think you are dumb you can't do anything.

Male participant 7 tends to feel devalued when he is at the lecture venue particularly when the topic of disability is being discussed. In such cases, he discovered that non-disabled students know very little about disability. Hall and Tinklin (1998) state that most students choose not to disclose their disabilities in some situations, for they believe that students with disabilities may meet with a negative reaction or that they may be disadvantaged in some way. The participant stated:

Male participant 7: But I noticed last year in a class that when you have a disability people tend not to take you seriously. What I have experienced is that someone with a disability is taken as if they do not understand many of the things. I normally see this when I am speaking in class, that I am being devalued by other students and I do not care about them, if the lecturer understands my point, that is all that matters to me.

5.8.3 Undermined and devalued by lecturers

Lecturers may also undermine students with disabilities, something which can be hurtful to a student with a disability. A female pointed out her disappointment with her Social Work lectures, as her lecturers did not believe in students with disabilities. The participant is partially sighted while her friend is blind. She, therefore, pointed out that:

Female participant 4: Our lecturers organized someone to talk to us as students with disabilities, and this person told us that this was done because they thought that we might not cope with the work and I really felt intimidated.

Lecturers, therefore, need to understand the student before they start judging the student. Female participant 10 stated that: "I have been underestimated, by lectures who did not understand my disability."

5.8.4 *Undermined and devalued by Risk Management Services (RMS)*

Male participant 2 has pointed out that RMS has undermined him, due to the lack of understanding his disability. The RMS at UKZN seem to not be able to know how they can assist students with disabilities. Students with disabilities end up not being assisted and also tend to be forced to do things that they are limited to, male participant 2 stated that:

I actually felt that this is a place to which I do not belong. At some point, my disability is not understood, I actually felt like I was seen as demanding special treatment. You find that at some point, maybe the lighting in a given place is not good for me. I don't see when the place is too dark or not bright. The security guards wouldn't understand when my friends or my parents come and drop me late at night; they would demand that I be dropped at the main gate or at gate 3 because cars are not allowed on campus after 10pm. Sometimes the street lights are not working and even if there are working it is still too dark for me.

In the charity model, people with disabilities are usually discriminated against and their human rights unacknowledged or devalued by social actors and institutions in society (Slorach, 2011; Yeo, 2005 and Griffo, 2014). Persons with disability are not seen as social actors but rather passive objects in society.

5.9 Challenges at the residences

At UKZN, the majority of the students stay on their own at the halls of residence. From the twenty participants who took part in this study, there were only three students with disabilities who are living with their personal assistants. These students live with their personal assistants because they barely cannot do things for themselves and they are in dire need of support.

Male participant 1: Yes, I do have an assistant who helps me with cooking, washing, cleaning and sometimes dressing up.

Female participant 2: I required a helper because there are basic things that I can't do by myself so I stay with the helper. I can't dress or undress myself, give myself full bath so the helper assists with all of that including preparing food and ironing my clothes. The helper also assists me when I want to go to the toilet the helper assists me.

Other students with disabilities also encounter challenges at the residences. Some of these challenges are brought by the type of disability that the student has, as their disabilities limit them from performing some personal activities at their residences. Although the KwaZulu-Natal (2004) policy states that the university aims to provide appropriate residence that fully accommodate the needs for students with disabilities, male participant 10 also goes

through many challenges. Unfortunately, he does not have a personal assistant to help him with his day-to-day duties. He, therefore, explained his challenge by pointing out that:

“Cooking is on challenge that I face daily, I have to cook for myself, I have to prepare a meal I have to clean my room, I have to mop, I have to do my own laundry, it’s a challenge but I have to manage it”.

Female participant 6 seems to have a fear of losing her belongings in the residence as she cannot see if her door is really close at some times. Female participant 5 is a blind mother who lives off campus in her home with her family. She has many challenges that are exacerbated by her disability. She pointed out the following challenges:

“I am taking care of my son which is quite a challenge really, as he is a toddler who is attending a day care and I don’t have a baby, sitter. I therefore have to prepare him to go to crèche, bath him to make him look nice and so on, dress him in his uniform and making lunch for him, make sure that his bag is packed fully and wait for his transport to arrive. When he comes back home afternoon before I could even take my books and study, I have to help him to do his homework. I find it very much challenging because his drawing needs to be coloured in. I don’t know the colours I can’t see the colours so I don’t know if he has coloured it nicely or anything”.

Female participant 1 is challenged at the residence by accessing general information for example when notices are posted. She cannot read them because the notices are always printed in a small font size. She also faces a challenge of the brightness of the light. There is also female participant 4. Her only challenge is the fear of her past experience in her room. Female participant 10 cannot get proper connection to the internet when she is in her room; therefore, she has to go to campus to access WIFI.

Female participant 1: The only challenge I experience at the residence is that they print notices in very small font, then the house committee at the residence complains that I do not attend any meetings. I tell them that I did not see any notice about a meeting. Also, the brightness of the light is another challenge for me.

Female participant 7 lives in her house and most of the challenges that she goes through are a result of her disability. She mentioned that:

“I face challenges when showering, or sitting for long periods of time especially when studying, and the pain keeps interrupting me. Stairs are also a challenge for me either I have support or not, but I am not protected from things I struggle with”.

The main difficulties that female participant 9 goes through are the long distances that she walks from campus to her residence. Worst of all is that her room is on the fourth floor which means that she has to climb some stairs. Male participant 2 has challenges at the

residence kitchen as he cannot see properly. As a result, he fears to get hurt as some students do not switch off the stove after cooking. Furthermore, he cannot see whether the floor is wet or not, especially when the cleaners are doing their routine cleaning, so basically his many challenges are mainly a result of his disability.

Male participant 2: The challenge that I face is that, at the residence we share the same kitchen with non-disabled students. So you find that as a student who is visually impaired, I will only notice if the stove is clean or switched on when I get close to it. Such-challenges increase my chances of getting injured or using a place that is unhygienic. I also face a challenge when the aunties are cleaning in the passage, I may not be able to see if it is wet and I can easily slip and get injured.

Both male participants 3 and 6 experience one of the same challenges which are the noise of the loud music that plays at the residence. It seems worse for male participant 6 as he easily become distracted by the music when he is studying.

Male participant 6: The noise at the residence can be challenging for me, as I easily get disturbed by noise. I often go to quiet places because when I study, I like to speak out. I also do not like to disturb other people, which is why I try to avoid the library unless I really have to go there.

Male participant 7 comes across a challenge at the end of the semester, when he has to put his belongings in the store room. This is quite difficult for him as in most cases he does not have anyone to assist him.

Students with disabilities have shown to have many challenges, as it is seen that only five participants out of twenty said that they do not go through any challenges at the residences. UKZN needs to ensure that such challenges are dealt with in order to enhance the well-being of students with disabilities. The University has to also ensure that the social model of disability is fully implemented across all the departments. The social model promotes the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society and for their complete acceptance as citizens with equal entitlements, rights, and responsibilities (Terzi, 2004). Students with disabilities need to feel that they are not different from other students with equal entitlements, rights, and responsibilities even in their residence, and be able to exercise their rights like all other students in the residences.

5.10 Academic support from the Disability Unit

The Disability Unit is the support structure that caters for the needs of students with disabilities and seeks to overcome the challenges which they experience at UKZN Howard College campus. There are two Disability Unit offices that provide different types of support to for students with disabilities. The DU office at Shepstone building mostly support students with counselling, advocating for students special needs towards lectures and assists with applications for bursaries which are provided to all students with disabilities at high education. Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer and Acosta (2005) point that the social workers assist in advocating in barriers, such as the attitudes and willingness of the academic staff to provide arrangements, which can affect the progress of students with disabilities in higher education. The DU office at the Student Union deals with all academic issues such as scanning and editing, tests, examinations and scribing. The UKZN policy (2004) states the university's commitment to ensure that students with disabilities are able to receive modified academic courses.

5.10.1 Accessibility to the Disability Unit

It was vital to get to know if the Disability Unit (DU) is friendly and accessible to students with disabilities. Eighteen out of twenty participants have stated that the DU is disabled friendly, but seventeen of them said it is also accessible to them. Female participant 2 stated that the DU is not well accessible for her as she has difficulties in opening the door. She shared the following:

I can say that the DU is not well accessible for me, because I can't reach the door and my knock isn't loud enough due to I cannot use any of my four limbs. The door at the DU is also very heavy for me.

Furthermore, two other females said that the DU is no longer accessible as it was in their first year. In their first students were not told at the DU to buy their own stationary which will be convenient for the student to access their academic material.

Female Participant 1 said that:

Things have changed since my first year, as now when I ask for my academic material to be enlarged, I am now told to go to Adams and buy myself A3 papers. When I ask for my academic material to be scanned, back then it use to be done within a day but nowadays they will be done in four days.

5.10.2 *Students with disability interact and socialise with the DU*

Students with disabilities visit the DU very often, especially the office at the Student Union, as that office plays a vital role in their ability in accessing academic material. Students with disabilities have mentioned that the DU assists them in many different ways. Participants have stated that:

Male participant 3: The DU assisted me in terms of funding and academic issues, and the social workers assist in giving us advice for example when we do not know what to register for. They also motivate for us in terms of any assistance, which we may need on campus as students with disabilities. The social workers even negotiate for us during the examinations period, for us to write our examinations on campus. I also get an extra 15 minutes per hour during examination.

Male participant 8: The DU assisted me in preparing my notes, for example; I am a student who is blind and uses JAWS software. At the DU, they would convert my notes to word document so the JAWS software can read the document for me. In terms of my examination I usually use Braille, so at the DU they make sure that my examination paper is in Braille before time.

The above quotes have covered what has been said by twelve other participants. It is therefore clear that the DU supports students within scanning, formatting their material in Microsoft word, enlarge test and examination question papers, providing scribes and also providing enabling conditions such as granting extra time for the students. However, one of the participants mentioned that the DU has not been helpful to him. Male participants 7 have not had any positive experience with the DU, as he stated that:

The DU has never assisted me since I came to the University. I write my test and exams at SU Disability Unit. I was assisted by one of the students during exams as I was going to write my exams at OMSH, and the student told me that there are some students with disabilities who are writing at Shepstone 16. Then I got to ask one of the guys at the Red LAN and he told me what I had to do so I can also write at Shepstone 16.

5.10.3 *Challenges at the Disability Unit*

As much as the Disability Unit (DU) is assisting students with disabilities, there are some challenges which may negatively affect students. Some departments at UKZN do not recognize the DU. As a result, students with disabilities tend to suffer academically and end up failing some of their courses. Male participant 3 shared the following:

“I think the most important issue is that other departments need to understand and recognize the respect that the Disability Unit needs to have. Sometimes you find that an email is sent to a particular department and that department does not respond, again and again. Social Worker A, has to call that office and at sometimes one walks to those offices with the staff from the

Disability Unit in order for them to be attentive and at times they might not have seen the email or they do see it and then just do nothing. I think they need to be some respect for the Disability Unit in terms of the work that it does”.

The DU is to be respected by other departments and academic staff on campus, as the type of assistance that the DU provides to students with disabilities is meant to ensure that students with disabilities access their study materials in the most suitable format. In other words the DU plays a role of making sure that the university is inclusive towards students with disabilities. The service that is provided by the DU staff can also be challenging, as they may not have enough human resources to do the work efficiently. Male participant 8 has therefore stated:

Some of the Disability Unit staff usually complains about the work load at the DU. In some cases this delays us because we would submit something today and get it in two weeks.

Most of the participants had challenges from the DU on a personal level and it also had an effect on their academic performance. These challenges are different from one participant to the other.

Female participant 4: I experience challenges in getting my scanned materials and readings from the DU. I was told that they don't make enlarge copies for us. The scanning takes quite a while, and it becomes very frustrating. I once wrote an exam and my script was lost. When the results were out, mine were not there, the supplementary exam date came and I couldn't write a supplementary.

Meekosha (2004:4) also points that “the image of disability may be intensified by gender, for women a sense of intensified passivity and helplessness, for men a corrupted masculinity generated by enforced dependence”. Judging from the analysis it is seen that female students who have experienced the most challenges at the DU compare to male participants, as there have been only four male participants who had challenges at the DU and seven female participants who have had challenges. Five participants have mentioned that they have never experienced any challenges at the DU.

5.11 Some of the views on support needed to live and learn independently

5.11.1 Improvement in access to materials

In mitigating the challenges at the DU, it is important that the University as a whole allow the DU to at least hold four workshops on each campus, and make it to be compulsory for

staff from each department to attend these workshops. As female participant 8 pointed out that:

I feel that educating people about disability is vital, but it's not only about educating people, it's also about people willing to be educated. I also think that the university has countless initiatives and campaigns where they try to bring people's attention to disability and people are just not willing to take in the information which is being given to them. People have this mentality especially on campus that if it doesn't affect them then really they have no business concerning themselves with that thing.

Lecturers need to be further educated on exclusive education, and the needs that students with disability require in order for them to be accommodated in the learning environment. They can also learn that most students with disabilities do not like to be sympathized with as they like to be treated in the same way as non-disabled students are being treated. Therefore participant male 9 has stated that:

Lecturers must be given a lecture on inclusive education and its meaning; what is the meaning of the word inclusive? They must find the proper meaning because they tend to think that we are the same, but inclusive does not mean that we are the same, it means accommodating and the accommodating word means you must have enough resources for those people you are accommodating.

In order for students with disabilities to be able to access their course materials on time, it is therefore important that lecturers send the course material to the DU before the semester starts for students who are blind or partially sighted as their material needs to be formatted, a process that takes a lot of time. Therefore, it is vital that if the schools or colleges have accepted a student with any form of disability they must be fully aware of the student's needs. This can be done at application stage where students with disability fill in details regarding the type of academic assistance they require. In this way, the lecturers and the administrators will know what needs to be sent to the DU just by seeing the registration history. Female participant 6 explained that:

I think all departments need to know that they have disabled students or students who are blind. For in every cause, students who are blind need their course packs to be in a soft copies format. These course packs should be also sent to the DU before they can print and bind the course packs. Lecturers should know that they may have a blind student in their class and it's the student's responsibility to go to the lecturer and introduce themselves in order for the lecturer to know who the notes is sent too.

5.11.2 Improving the interaction of non-academic staff

In improving the interaction between students with disabilities and non-academic staff members on campus, non-academic needs to be educated on disability as they are bound to interact with students with a disability in one way or another. Male participant 2 mentioned that:

I think the only thing is to educate all staff members on the campus of the different type of disabilities that we have on campus. They need to be educated on how to assist people with disabilities and how to avail themselves and go beyond doing their work with people with disabilities.

In the residences, there are staff members such as Residence Assistants, security guards and cleaners who sometimes interact with students with disabilities. Staff members will, therefore, need to be equipped with the skills on how to work with students with disabilities.

5.11.3 *Improved library accessibility*

Students with disabilities who face critical challenges at the library are mostly those who are blind or partially sighted and those who are paraplegic, for these students are also need to access information from the library. It is very important that their needs are also considered. Some participants have had suggestions on how the library at UKZN Howard College can be improved to ensure that it accommodates students with disabilities. Female participant 2 who is paraplegic saw from her personal experience as a first year that there should be a librarian to assist first years in accessing books. Some students with disabilities have suggested that the University should provide books which may be reserved at the reserve area for students who are partially sighted. Female 4 have also emphasized that the library should have computers which have specialized softwares which will accommodate students who are blind and also partially sighted.

Female participant 1: The library can be improved if the University can provide books that have bigger font size than the normal book. These books should be kept at the reserve for us as students who are partially sighted, or contact people from the DU to not refuse to enlarge books for us.

Female participant 4: I wish one librarian is trained to work with us rather than doing things for us. If at least they had one computer with JAWS and Zoom Text, it will make life much easier because we do not like depending on people for everything, as we have the knowledge and we like to do things on our own. Furthermore, they can at least have one book on reserve that is large print or electronic copy that will serve a great purpose.

5.12 Adapting barriers and challenges

5.12.1 *Lecture venues*

Students with disabilities have mentioned many challenges that they come across at the lecture venues, but despite such challenges they have ways to overcome them and also managed to pass their studies. Some of the participants have shown that the DU has been of great help for them in overcoming their challenges especially in the ability to adapt to the University environment.

Male 2: What helped me a lot was the Disability Unit on campus, and all our challenges especially at first year when we were given mentors and social workers that we could go to as the first years. We also have regular meetings weekly with the social workers and they look at our progress about our challenges, and how we adapt to the university environment. Having such assistance helped us to speak out about our challenges and get the necessary advice on how to deal with all the issues we had.

Male 8: There was a lady M who worked at the DU, she was the one who taught us the routes around the university and how to get to lectures. When she was not available, I would call my friends and ask them to please take me to a venue that I needed to go to, that is how I adapted.

5.12.2 *Undermined and Devalued*

In dealing with being devalued or undermined, students with disabilities had their different way of dealing with such attitudes from different people on campus. Few participants have dealt with being undermined or devalued by different individuals on campus by just ignoring them and focusing on the positive side of life. Male participants 8 and 9 who are blind dealt with being devalued and being undermined by having a straight talk with the person who is undermining them as they have mentioned that:

Male participant 8: I just tell the person that, I can also do this thing myself, the only reason I needed your help is that I wanted to get to a venue or maybe it was because I couldn't see what was written and I needed someone to read it for me, besides that I can do it for myself.

Male participant 9: If I find that someone is discriminating me just because they don't understand, I will try to teach them. If I find that he/she is not comfortable, I will remove myself without teaching them, because I can't be persuading people.

Self-motivation is what has helped female participant 2, as her success has increased her motivation and made her see that she is able regardless of how her group members can see her. She then stated that:

I deal with being undermined through motivating myself because I know what I want. Furthermore, what motivated me last year is that when I did my individual assessment, I passed with flying colours and the other student that I was doing the group work with failed the individual work.

5.12.3 Support staff for DU

Some participants have suggested some that the challenges faced by the DU needed to be taken into account in order to improve the service provided by the DU to students with disabilities. This may be in the form of additional staff and delegation of some of the lower priority tasks to these staff. Male participant 10 pointed out that:

They should bring us someone who is at the same level as social worker A, who can also do things, because when you look for social worker A, you cannot find him because he is a busy man you get that he is at other campuses and we don't get helped that's the problem there.

Participants may see that at sometimes other staff members are not able to give a go ahead of things if social worker A is not around. Female participant 4 mentioned that each staff member at the DU should be responsible for tasks that are issued to them during their shifts. This will prevent a staff member to point fingers at others if the individual has failed to complete the task given to them. As female participant 4 stated that "I think that there needs to be order at the DU and people have to be responsible instead of pointing fingers at each other". Participants have emphasized on the quality of service from staff members of the DU which needs to be improved. The staff members are to be equipped with skills to deal with students with disabilities.

5.13 Positive experiences

Despite the challenges that students with disabilities go through in their everyday life on campus, they also come across positive experiences from time to time. Participants have had different forms of positive experiences at the University, and such experiences tend to uplift their self-esteem. Such positive experiences are due to the implementation of inclusive education and the social model of disability. The inclusion aims to benefit students with disabilities by providing improvements in their learning outcomes, especially

through including their social skills, academic success and personal development as human beings (Wang, 2009). The social model aims to ensure that people's commitment to the social model is based on the way it has transformed their self-esteem (Shakespeare, 2002). This means that the model enriched their life in realising that nothing is impossible for them.

Female participants 4 and 9 have expressed their positive experience by their academic achievement as they have completed their undergraduate degrees and they are now doing master's degrees. Furthermore, male participant 3 is proud of himself for being able to reach his final year of his degree and also for being able to cope with his study until present day. They, therefore, stated that:

Female participant 4: Having been able to learn in an environment which is different from the one I was previously in is important. My background is that of a school for visual impaired learners. Having to learn how to adapt to a new environment and completing my degree is a positive experience for me.

Female participant 9: Being one of the top students in the Social Work Department, coupled by being recognized by the Golden Key as one of the top students in the University in 2013, that really made me proud. I also went abroad to study for one semester on an exchange program.

Students with disabilities like to interact with other people, especially seeing that they are able to make friends. The ability to interact with other non-disabled people is a great achievement for them. Female participant 5 and male participant 3 have shown their wonderful experience that they have had in making new friends within the University environment. Female participant 5 has also shared the positive experience of getting a friend who accepts her for who she is, and importantly, the friend always motivates her all the times. Female participant 2 and male participants 5 stated that being accepted by another student whether a student who are disabled or non-disable student, is a positive experience. These students have therefore stated that:

Female participant 5: My new friends at the university liked me so much. Even if they are not on campus now we are still friends. They always say to me that you open up our eyes to learn more about other people, to learn that disabled people are not different from them, and we are the same.

Female 2: When I came here, there were mentors and it was for the first time I felt welcomed warmly by people with disabilities as the first experience wasn't good. I think that was caused

by the fact that those people weren't mature, compared to the ones from this university and I am also encouraged seeing people with disability having masters and PhD's. What encouraged me to continue studying is what they told me, that failing is part of the process and one just need to pick themselves up and claim their victory.

Female participant 8 was glad to see the willingness of non-disabled students being able to help her out whenever she is struggling. Furthermore, their interest in wanting to learn more on disability seemed to amaze her. She was also happy that other students were able to look at her first, before they looked at her disability. Male participant 2's positive moment was that he was able to take up a leadership position and also to participate in different types of competitions on campus.

Furthermore, students with disabilities have also mentioned their positive experiences that they have had with their lecturers. One of the lecturers was able to acknowledge students with disabilities that they are able to score good marks despite their challenges. Students with disabilities have also shown how they appreciate the great support they received from their lecturers and from other students on campus. They, therefore, pointed out that:

Female participant 1: My positive experience is just the one statement which was made by one of the lecturers which troubled me, but after analysing it, I then understood that it was a positive statement. She said to the non-disabled student, "why they are beaten by students with disabilities yet they are the one who need more support than you. Furthermore, students with disabilities are able to strive their best; I think you guys are lazy". When I speak in class I speak confidently, even if I say a general thing but when I say it, and it captures the attention.

Male participant 8: Well, firstly I would say that I get my resources easily. Number two, I always get students to assist me and number three lectures have never treated me as a different person.

5.14 Summary

This chapter has given an in depth understanding of the experiences and challenges that students with disabilities go through at UKZN Howard Collage campus. This was mainly achieved through taking the answers from the participants and linking them to the literature and the social model of disability which is the theoretical framework used for this study. Majority of students with disabilities have studied at segregated schools, while only a few went to mainstream schools. It was also noted that both of these schools had their positive and negative impacts on students with disabilities. Although it seemed that those who went

to mainstream schools had greater challenges at school, students with disabilities who went to special school were fully supported by their teachers.

Despite those challenges that students with disabilities encounter at either segregated or mainstream schools that they have been through, they still managed and get a pass mark that gave them access to the University. One of the greatest challenges which were faced by students with disabilities was to adapt at the University. Students with disabilities, who went to segregated schools, had a major challenge in adapting to the curriculum and the style of teaching used at the University. Other challenges were due to the infrastructure on campus that causes a challenge for students in accessing lecture venues, the library and study materials. Furthermore, challenges included access to their residences, interaction with lecturers and with staff members and fellow students who are non-disabled. Students with disabilities were also able to overcome some of these challenges through the use of their assistive devices and also through the assistance that they receive from the DU.

Students also mentioned the type of financial assistance that they receive and also stated how far these financial resources get to assist them. Students also shared their ideas of how to improve the challenges that they are going through. The improvements that students have suggested include the call for the University to go back to its policy and see how far they have gone in implementing it. Towards the end of this chapter, it emerged that students with disabilities have also highlighted their positive experiences that they come across on campus. Such experiences have shown that UKZN Howard Collage campus has made an effort in extending inclusive education, as some of the participants have graduated and some continue with their post-graduate studies.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary and Key Findings

Students with disabilities come across different types of challenges when they enter institutions of higher learning. This is because most students with disabilities have previously attended segregated schools, where their needs were identified by their teachers and such needs were fully attended to by their teachers. For this reason, learners with disabilities were more comfortable being around fellow learners with disabilities. Students with disabilities who attended segregated schools experienced challenges when they were in their first year at the university. The aim of this study was therefore to understand the experiences and challenges that are faced by students with disabilities at UKZN Howard College campus. The voices of the students with disabilities on their experiences and challenges have not been heard.

The findings obtained from this qualitative study were rich and informative. This was perhaps a result of the study being qualitative in nature, thereby allowing the researcher to solicit both rich and thick data. This study was able to achieve its main aim of exploring the challenges and the experiences which the students with disabilities face on campus. It is also highlighted that the UKZN policy for staff and people with disabilities has not yet been fully implemented in many areas, as every year the number of students with disabilities is increasing; yet there are still only two residences that cater for them. Not forgetting that these residents only have one floor each which is wheel chair friendly. It also came out in this study that students who are partially sighted and those who are blind are unable to utilize the library due to the lack of special equipment reserved and made especially for students with disabilities which can assist them with easy access information. The findings have shown that there is a need for improvement in the implementation of inclusive education at UKZN Howard College campus. The following are the major challenges that the participants have mentioned;

6.1.1. Challenges faced by students with disabilities who went to segregation schools

In segregated schools, learners with disabilities were made to believe that they belong to an environment containing learners with disabilities like them. Such a notion was driven by the charity model of disability. Coming to university as a student with a disability also added a challenge of feeling intimidated. This is because in South Africa, there are no universities that only cater for students with disabilities; therefore students with disabilities have to attend lectures and tutorials with non-disabled students. Atkinson et al. (1997) argue that learners with specific learning disabilities have been segregated to schools which facilitate certain things differently from mainstream schools including economic and social activities. Students with disabilities feel intimidated as it may be their first time to learn with non-disabled students. Other students with disabilities were also intimidated by the environment because they felt that it was too huge for them, and they were worried of how they will adapt in this environment.

6.1.2. Difficulties in adapting to the university curriculum

Most learners with disabilities were in segregated schools. These schools were designed to cater for the students' specific needs. Educators also believed that these schools were a beneficial system for students with disabilities, as these schools are able to apply curriculum formulated specifically for special needs children (Wang, 2009). The challenge of adapting to the university curriculum was a result of the educational background that students with disabilities come from. Hocutt (1996) highlights that in universities, students with disabilities have to adapt to a different mode of learning, which may be learning in a small group, individual assignments that may require students with disability's cooperation rather than whole class instruction. This is because the curriculum that is used in segregated schools is slightly different from the one which is being used at mainstream schools and at higher education institutions.

6.1.3. Lack of specialised equipment in the library

Students who are blind and partially sighted have reported that they do not go to the library, due to the fact that there are no computers that have the requisite softwares they can use. The World Health Organisation (2015) indicates that in order for students with disabilities

to achieve equal opportunities, it is essential for them to get access to assistive technology, so that they can also enjoy their human rights and live in dignity. Lack of such devices; have limited the chances for good academic achievement, as their rights are being violated. Students that are blind and partially sighted are not able to search for information or books that they may need which significantly impact on their academic performance. Moreover, students who are deaf or partially deaf also have challenges of communication in the library. One of the participants reported that he ends up with a huge bill as he does not get to hear clearly when the librarian is informing him when to return a book to the counter. Therefore, with reference to Sameshima (1999), students who are deaf or partially deaf face difficulties in adapting to different learning styles, and this problem is largely exacerbated by the lack of qualified sign language interpreters.

6.1.4. Difficulties to access course materials and notes

It emerged that most students with disabilities have experienced challenges in accessing notes and course material from their lectures. This is because students may struggle to see the slides, or the lecturer may remove the slide before the student can copy. Other students may be blind while others may not even be able to write on their own. Fuller et al. (2010) point out that some students with disabilities experience problems with lecturers who are talking too quickly or removing visual material they use for lecturing, and also the noise that may be caused by other students while the lecturer is speaking.

6.1.5. Challenges of mobility around the campus

Students who have mobility difficulties have mentioned how the infrastructure at the university has been a barrier to them. Students on wheelchairs have also stated that they sometimes miss classes especially when the lifts are faulty. They indicated that the lift are almost always faulty. These students are also unable to sit in front during lectures, as inside there are stairs in most lecture venues. Such conditions may hinder the student to complete some of their courses; whereas if the students did not come across these challenges, they would have done much better. The participants' statement supports Oliver (1991) when stating that somehow the person is disabled by the environment that they are to use (Terzi, 2004).

6.1.6. *The challenge of being undermined and devalued by lectures*

Participants have also mentioned that they have been undermined and devalued by non-disabled students, lecturers and also non-academic staff members on campus. Such experiences have lowered their self-esteem and made them to view themselves as different from others. Students who do not disclose about their disabilities have fears of discrimination or stigmatization, and feeling that their disability no longer affected their lives (Greenbaum et al., 1996). Students with disabilities seem to feel unsecured when being devalued or undermined by any of the staff members. One of the participants mentioned that they have had such an experience with one of his lecturers, but the first time that he disclosed it was only during this study.

6.2 Recommendations

This study has explored the experiences and challenges which students with disabilities are going through at UKZN Howard College campus. Most of the challenges that have been identified are rooted in the lack of knowledge and information that the university management, lecturers, non-academic staff members and non-disabled students have on disability.

6.2.1 *The Disability Unit (DU)*

The University management and the DU have needs to collaborate and organise educational disability programmes that can be divided into two groups. One of the educational programmes should be in the form of quarterly seminars which will be held for all staff members and the management of the University. Attendance of these programmes should be added in the University policy to be compulsory for all staff members. Secondly, disability awareness campaigns should be held for all students and it is envisaged that doing so will also encourage the participation of both students with disabilities and non-disabled students. The educational programmes are to be facilitated by social workers at the Disability Unit and the awareness campaigns should be conducted by the staff members at the Disability Unit and the Differently Able Student Association (DASA).

6.2.2 Courses and library accessibility

The initiative of educational programmes for lecturers will make lecturers to be aware of the type of assistance that students with disabilities require, and how they can play their part in helping these students. The policy for staff and students with disabilities has aimed to provide alternative strategies for the assessment of these students. These strategies may include oral examinations, the use of special equipment, separate examination rooms, rest breaks during tests, use of visual aids, enlarged examination paper and allowing extra time for undertaking assessment (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004). Students with disabilities will therefore have equal chances as non-disabled students to produce quality results.

6.2.3 Environmental issues on Howard College campus

The university management, DU Coordinators and the committee members of the DASA have to sit down and discuss how they can change the university environment to make it more conducive for students with disabilities. In this way, the university management and the DU Coordinators can use the bottom-up approach, as they will get to hear from the representatives of students with disabilities regarding areas that need adjustments. The representatives of student with disabilities can provide detail on the major environmental challenges on campus that affect the accessibility of student with disabilities. Furthermore, most of the lecture and tutorial venues and offices at Howard College are not user-friendly for students with disabilities. These areas may be best known by student with disabilities or their representatives, rather than the university management and the DU Coordinators. The students with disabilities representatives may also reference their point from the UKZN policy for staff and students with disabilities.

6.2.4 Library facilities

UKZN's vision is to reach all students with disabilities when the policy for staff and students with disabilities was drafted. The policy states that the university librarian shall be responsible for making sure that there is efficient access to information that is provided for students and staff with disabilities (KwaZulu-Natal, 2004). The DU staff and the library staff have to invite stakeholders such as Mbilo Blind Society, and see what assistive devices they can supply to the library for students who are blind and partially

sighted. It will be a great idea if the university library should at least have two copies of each recommended book in Braille; or in audio recording for students who are blind.

6.2.5 Disability friendly accommodation

For UKZN Howard College campus to be inclusive of all students, students with disabilities should also be allowed to share residences with non-disabled students so that they can also establish friendships with non-disabled colleagues. Therefore, there is need that on-campus residences should all be disabled friendly and accommodating for students with any type of disabilities. Such changes also need the staff members from the DU, Residence Affairs, the University management and the representatives of students with disabilities to come together and plan how these changes can be implemented. Reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities has been one of the objectives of the university, as it has also been drafted on the policy for staff and students with disabilities. The KwaZulu-Natal (2004) Policy shows that the university will seek to ensure that it provides housing which is appropriate to meet the needs of students with disabilities. It is important that an action plan should be drafted. This will provide information on when the university will start the project on constructing disability friendly accommodation for students with disabilities.

6.2.6 Policy

Most policies are very meaningful and quite promising on paper, but the implementation of such policies is not visible. This is due to the fact that some policies may not be known by the people that they are supposed to implement, and these people may not be aware of their rights. The institutional policy should have a sub-committee, which will ensure that the policies that would have been drafted are known by the intended beneficiaries. Furthermore, this sub-committee can visit the institution that have an approved policy to see if the policy would have been implemented and monitor and evaluate the implementation process. In short, there is a need for a policy implementation monitoring committee.

6.2.7 National Policies

It is more than a decade since the idea of inclusive education has been talked about, but the implementation of it has not really been initiated. Inclusive education is an important mechanism to prepare learners with disabilities to be able to interact with non-disabled

learners. It also prepares the learner with a disability to be equipped with the requisite skills for studying in any institution of higher learning. It is therefore advisable for learners with disabilities to enter mainstream schools at a young age. This will limit the students' challenges when they get into tertiary institutions.

6.3 The study strengths and limitations

The objectives of the study were achieved through the data collected from the participants. The main objective of this study was to understand the challenges and experiences of students with disabilities who are studying at UKZN Howard College campus. To understand and document how the students with disabilities overcome their challenges and adapt to the inclusive learning environment. The study has also described the support provided by the DU to students with disabilities and how these students engage with the DU, the library, lecturers and tutors to facilitate their learning process. The in-depth interviews deployed by the researcher have strengthened the quality of this study; as the study was able to solicit the views of students with disabilities regarding their experiences and challenges at Howard College campus. With such concrete information, this study can be used in closing the gaps which were not known by lectures, university management, non-academic staff members and the DU staff. The process of closing these gaps will also be beneficial in enforcing the standard of the social model of disability. Furthermore, the university will be much more inclusive in terms of the services it offers to its students.

There are two identified limitations in this study. Firstly, there is very limited information in terms of the institutional, curriculum and local context that can be used to examine how students with disabilities can be better supported to live and learn as independently as possible at the university. This was due to the fact that most of the participants failed to offer a true reflection on their experience and challenges that they face at the university. It then resulted in having limited information based on institutional, curriculum and local context; and examining how they can be better supported to live and learn as independently as possible at the university. Secondly, very few participants responded to questions on how to provide useful guidelines or recommendations in terms of policy and programmes that the university can improve on, or introduce to support students with disabilities on campus.

The sample was also limiting as it was from one university and may not be generalised to other contexts.

6.4 Future research

Looking at the experiences and challenges that students with disabilities go through in interacting with lectures and non-academic staff at university, it is also important to investigate how the lecturers and non-academic staff interact with students with disabilities. Post graduate students with disabilities should take part in emancipatory research, as they will explore more issues on disabilities. UKZN is in a developed city but students with disabilities still have major challenges. It is therefore recommended for future researchers to investigate the experiences and challenges that students with disabilities go through in disadvantaged universities.

6.5 Conclusion and remarks

This study has shown that UKZN Howard College has made an effort to accommodate students with disabilities, such as having lifts and ramps on campus, having two Disability Unit Offices which provide personal, social and academic assistance for students with disabilities. There are also two residences that accommodate students with disabilities. However, there are still some gaps that need to be filled in this institution, in order to fully implement inclusive education. Participants have answered from the research questions that there are challenges related to the infrastructure at the university where there are steep areas and a lot of stairs. The plight of students with disabilities is further exacerbated by the fact the fact that the lifts are usually out of order and students end up not being able to attend lectures. Students with disabilities also had challenges of negative attitudes demonstrated by non-disabled students, lecturers and other staff members on campus. Other students have also mentioned the economic challenges that they face on a daily basis on campus, but most of them manage with the money that they receive. Students with disabilities also mentioned that their assistive devices and the support that the students receive from the Disability Unit was one of the mechanisms helpful in overcoming the challenges that they have experienced especially during the first year at the university. Other students with disabilities have been assisted by their friends.

It emerged that the participants were willing to share their lived experiences because the study was conducted by a student who is also disabled. It can be argued that if such a study is done by a non-disabled researcher, some of the rich information may not be fully explored. Although participants may have the information, they may not be comfortable to share it with a non-disabled researcher.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

Biographical and general information

1. Gender:

2. Age:
3. What type of disability/ disabilities do you have?
4. How long have you been living with a disability/ disabilities?
5. From your own experiences what are the limitations that are brought by this kind of disability/ disabilities? Long breath, hand movement
6. What assistive devices or assistance do you currently have access to or use?
7. Are there any assistive devices that you need but still have not access to? *If yes then ask why this assistance is not available.*
8. Do you have personal assistance (a person assigned to support you) for undertaking any everyday activities? In what activities do they provide support to you?
9. Tell me what do you understand about the words 'person/ student with a disability'? Is this a label you are comfortable with? Why? How would you like people to refer to you?

I would like to briefly focus on your experiences as a learner living with disabilities at primary and high school:

10. Please tell me if you attended a mainstream or special school for
 - a) Primary school?
 - b) Secondary school?
11. How would you describe the school environment, that is, was it inclusive and accessible to you as a person living with a disability? Tell me a bit more about this.
 - a) Primary school
 - b) Secondary
12. Can you please tell me, what challenges (any/ broadly) did you encounter in both these school settings?
 - a) How did you cope or adapt to these challenges?
 - b) What assistance or support did you receive from the School or Department of Education?

I would like to now focus on your daily needs, challenges and experiences as a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal:

13. Which school are you registered with at the University? Which degree are you currently doing? Why did you select this degree and the modules you are registered for? What year of registration are you currently in? She laughed
14. What forms of financial assistance do you receive currently?
 - a) Can you please explain to what extent does it/ these assists you?
 - b) Do you consider these funds adequate to meet your daily living expenses?
 - c) What additional aspects do these funds not meet?
15. Do you stay off or on campus? What type of challenges do you experience with everyday routine activities in the residence / home? She laughed
16. Thinking back to your first year on campus can you please tell me, what type of challenges did you encounter in going to and from...? How do you deal with these challenges?
 - a) lecture rooms
 - b) tutorial venues
 - c) the library

17. Can you please tell me, what type of challenges do you encounter *today* in going to and from...? How do you deal with these challenges?
 - a) lecture rooms
 - b) tutorial venues
 - c) the library
18. Are there any challenges you come across in accessing study material, and books from the library? Tell me about this/ these and how you cope with this or if you seek any type of assistance. In what ways can this service be improved?
19. What about access to other general information on campus? What challenges do you experience?
20. How would you describe your interaction with all your lecturers? What positive experiences have you had? What negative experiences have you had? How do you think this can be improved?
21. How would you describe your interaction with all your other staff? What positive experiences have you had? What negative experiences have you had? How do you think this can be improved?
22. Have you experiences of being underestimated or devalued in term of your academics or in any other way? Who are the ones who usually make you feel this way? How do you deal with such a situation?
23. Do you encounter any challenges in making friends with students on campus? What are the student's general reaction and interaction with you? How do you deal with this?
24. What are some of the most positive experiences you have had thus far as a student? Tell me about this.

I would like to focus on some of the information about the Disability Unit:

25. Is the Disability Unit easily accessible and disabled friendly to you?
26. How often do you go to the Disability Unit for assistance?
27. Can you please explain to me, in which way does the Disability Unit assists you?
28. What are some of your positive experiences you have had with the Disability Unit and its staff?
29. What are some of the challenging experiences? How do you think this can be improved and by whom?

I would like to focus on some of the general information

30. Let say you have to go to hospital or maybe you are to attend a workshop on one of the campus in Pietermaritzburg. Who do you ask for assistance with accessible transport? Who pays for this and who arranges it?
31. What opportunities for contract or part-time employment are available to students with disabilities on campus? Do you know of such opportunities?
32. What employment opportunities do you think will be available to you once you graduate?
33. Are you considering doing postgraduate studies? If No ask why?
34. In concluding: If there have been other challenges that you come across where there it can be socially, academically and physically, please tell me about this and in what ways where you able to overcome those challenges? I would like to hear from you about any

other issues you think it is important to ask about or document and which I have not covered here.

Thank you very much for your patience and time.

Appendix 2: Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

My name is Lungani Mthethwa. I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College / Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: The experiences and challenge of adapting to an inclusive education learning environment: A study of students living with disabilities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. The aim of the study is to (*explain in a few sentences ...*). I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about (*how long?*).
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg. / Howard College Campus, Durban. Email: 210527272@stu.ukzn.ac.za;
Cell: 078 421 9193

My supervisor is Sharmla Rama who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus / Howard College Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email Ramas@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 033 265 188

My co-supervisor is who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus/ Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email Phone number:

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... (*full names of participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

