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**Transitioning from School to Work: A Narrative Inquiry of the Experiences of Out-of
School Youth with Disabilities who attended Newton Pre-Vocational School in the
uMgungundlovu District Municipality**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the academic requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in Social Justice Education

by

Gugulethu Thokozile Mkhize

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

PIETERMARITZBURG

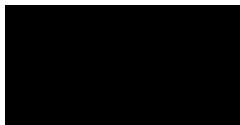
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2024

DECLARATION

I, Gugulethu Thokozile Mkhize, declare that:

- I. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- II. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- III. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Student's Signature

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Date



Supervisor's Signature

02/02/2024

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Mduduzi Mkhize, who has supported me financially, emotionally and otherwise throughout my study till the very end of completing the thesis.

I also dedicate this to my children, Noluthando, Mlungisi, Andiswa, Njabulo and Zasembo, who were unbelievably patient with me throughout this experience. A special dedication to Lindelwa, who is my inspiration for this title as she is/was a learner with special education needs (LSEN) who is intellectually impaired.

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ABSTRACT

A narrative enquiry was conducted to explore the experiences of out-of-school youth with disabilities who attended Newton Pre-Vocational School in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality of South Africa. Semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview were used to obtain the data for this study. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, located within a critical research paradigm. Six participants who were former learners at Newton Pre-Vocational School were selected for the study; their ages ranged from 19 to 25.

Findings revealed that although participants reported that their schooling experience at Newton Pre-Vocational School was much better than their primary schooling, 5 of the 6 participants felt that the Technical Occupation Curriculum used at the school did not prepare them adequately for adulthood and for their chosen field of work. In addition, as the programme was not recognised, the certificate that they earned from Newton did not open doors for them when they applied for jobs. The study found that 5 of the 6 of the participants had attempted more than once to obtain employment. Participants described companies as lacking understanding of their disability; as a result, they experienced prejudice and discrimination. This contributed negatively to participants already compromised mental wellbeing. The societal contribution to their mental state cannot be underestimated. It is imperative that stakeholders at all levels of society—parents, schools, the basic and higher education departments, the employment sector and department of Social Development—cooperate closely to support learners with special education needs to be able to transition successfully from school to the world of work and to contribute economically and socially. Further research exploring how stakeholders can support people living with disabilities—especially individuals with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities—as they transition from schooling to employment, is necessary.

Keywords: pre-vocational education; learners with special education needs (LSEN); people living with disabilities (PLWD); mild to moderate intellectual disabilities; workplace discrimination

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
CRPD	Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
NCAPD	National Coalition on Auditory Processing Disorders
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PLWD	Persons Living With Disabilities
PV	Prevocational
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	South African Development Community
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SMT	School Management Team
SVE	Special Vocational Education

T.O.C.	Technical Occupation Curriculum
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
EWP 6	Education White Paper 6
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The South African government acknowledges the right of people with disabilities to work on an equivalent basis with other people in terms of recruitment, career advancement, favourable working conditions, equal opportunities, reward for work, and the redress of work-related injustices (Statistics SA, 2016). Despite this, many people with disabilities experience disparities in these areas. The main purpose of this study was to look at the socio-economic experiences of out-of-school youth with mild to moderate mental disabilities who have completed prevocational schooling in Pietermaritzburg, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

This introductory chapter provides a background to the topic and outlines the rationale, purpose, focus of the study as well as the research questions used to guide the study. By reviewing literature from around the world, the following relevant concepts emerged namely education, socioeconomic inclusion, legislative field and employment of people living with disabilities (PLWD) which are presented in greater detail in Chapter Two.

1.2. Background to the Study

According to Statistics SA (2016), people with disabilities have tended to occupy lower socioeconomic positions due to the exclusion, ostracism and rejection they have experienced in different aspects of life, particularly in education and employment.

The 2016 South African census from which Statistics SA drew their conclusions, found that a higher percentage of people with disabilities that were under-reported and under-diagnosed were from poor families and communities (Stats SA, 2016). About 7.5% of persons living in South Africa reported living with a disability (Stats SA, 2016). Notably, there were no sex disparities amongst people with disabilities from this wealth quintile. Stats SA (2016) found an insignificant difference in the top quintile: 25% of males compared to 23% of females.

In the rationale below, I present the influence of the statistics together with other factors that influenced the study.

1.3. Rationale

This study was influenced by both personal and professional reasons. I have a brother who was diagnosed with a mild to moderate intellectual disability at an early age who studied at a prevocational school in uMgungundlovu District Municipality. He is currently unemployed because of his disability and the fact that his skills certificate is not accredited. Understandably, people with disabilities face countless challenges across the world (Otieno & Onyango, 2018). As a teacher at a prevocational school, I have personally witnessed youth with disabilities struggle with depression because of their uncertain future. According to Laal, Naseri, Laal, & Kermanshahi (2013), youth with mild to moderate intellectual disability who complete their prevocational schooling experience major changes in their life as they transition from schooling. I have also worked with parents to try to secure sustainable jobs for their children, which has proven to be difficult. Parents have also shared their frustration when, after paying thousands of rands to send their child to prevocational schools so that they can obtain skills to ensure their future, they are unable to find employment because of their disability, and ultimately sit at home. These challenges can trigger depression and anxiety and thus affect the mental state of youth with disabilities (Laal et al., 2013).

From time immemorial, people living with disabilities have experienced being ignored, ostracized, and prejudiced from employment because of the false perception that they are not fit to be employable (Turmusani, 2003). Nzagi (2009) remarks that, while the value of teaching and learning cannot be overemphasized, individuals with disabilities have restricted access to education. In addition, individuals with disabilities often face stigmatization and negative attitudes in their daily lives which negatively impact them (Buhori, 2014schwandt).

The business sector has tended to be reluctant to employ people living with disabilities because they either lack knowledge about people with disabilities or have a negative perception of them (Otieno & Onyango, 2018). This further limits their ability to find gainful employment.

Given the ongoing marginalization of people living with disabilities from the world of work, it is necessary to understand the socio-economic plight of people living with disabilities who do not have employment despite having acquired prevocational skills.

1.4. Purpose and Focus of Study

This study aimed to examine the socio-economic experiences of post-school youth with disabilities who have completed prevocational schooling in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality. The study focused on their socio-economic experiences about transitioning from school to work and gaining financial independence, as well as understanding the factors that influence their ability to gain meaningful employment after prevocational schooling and their experiences in achieving financial independence. This research contributes to the body of knowledge in the field. It can be helpful to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and policymakers in terms of providing new insights that can inform policy and the development of prevocational curriculum to better equip learners with the prevocational skills that will enable them to participate in the economy once they complete their education successfully

1.5. Objectives

The key objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the socio-economic experiences of out-of-school youth with disabilities who have completed prevocational schooling in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality;
2. To explore how their schooling experiences have prepared them for the world of work;
3. To understand the factors that have influenced their employability and how they have engaged with these factors.

1.6. Research Questions

The following research questions were developed from the study objectives to guide the design and implementation of the study:

1. What are the socio-economic experiences of out-of-school youth with disabilities who have completed prevocational schooling in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality?
2. How have their schooling experiences prepared them for the world of work?
3. What factors have influenced their employability and how have they navigated these factors?

1.7. Overview of Literature and Conceptual Framework

After reading and reviewing the literature on people living with disabilities (PLWD), four key concepts emerged: education, legislative field, employment of people living with disabilities and socioeconomic inclusion. Literature regarding inclusive education, both local and international, was reviewed. Finally, a review of the literature on relevant legislation and policies, education, employment of people living with disabilities and socio-economic inclusion were reviewed.

Bourdieu's social capital theory provided a model for understanding the findings and arguments in this study. This theoretical tool, together with the literature review, provided an analytical lens used to make sense of the findings in this study. A detailed presentation of Bourdieu's social capital theory with Capital, Habitus and Field as concepts is provided in Chapter 2.

1.8 Research Design and Methodology

This study chose a qualitative approach to explore the socioeconomic experiences of former learners with mild to moderate intellectual disability who completed their schooling at Newton Pre-Vocational School and how they responded to these experiences on a daily basis. This approach was appropriate as the study aimed to investigate their subjective experiences through the generation of narrative data.

1.8.1 Research Methodology

A qualitative approach can employ a wide range of methods for collecting and analysing data. I used narrative inquiry as the methodological approach to generate and analyse the data to understand the numerous factors that influence the socio-economic experiences of out-of-school youth with prevocational skills and disabilities.

Narrative inquiry as a research approach focuses on the stories that are told by participants. Narrative inquiry works with three dimensions: interaction, which involves the personal and social dimensions that helped in knowing the participants personally and socially to better understand their experiences; continuity, which involves the past, present and future; and situation, which involves the context and place. Therefore, the narrative approach was employed for this study as the participants were allowed to narrate their experiences.

1.8.2 Qualitative Approach

This study adopted a qualitative methodology, which was useful for investigating the behaviour, perceptions, feelings and experiences of individuals, and exploring what they find to be fundamental in their lives. The qualitative approach is grounded in phenomenology, which focuses on individuals' subjective experience of the phenomena that happen in their lives (Gill, 2020). The qualitative approach looks at things in participants' ordinary surroundings in order to understand phenomena in terms of the sense individuals bring to them (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017). In this study, it was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the socioeconomic experiences of the out-of-school youth with prevocational schooling in their search for job opportunities in the marketplace. The qualitative approach was ideal for this study as it allowed participants to make sense of their reality and enabled the study to be conducted in their natural settings (homes).

1.8.3 Critical Paradigm

A paradigm is a common worldview that embodies beliefs and leads to how difficulties are resolved (Schwandt, 2001). The critical paradigm suggests that social science can never be completely fair, or value-free, and focuses on understanding power and inequity in the contexts under study. The critical paradigm operates from the point of view that scientific inquiry must be performed with the express goal of societal transformation. Research that uses the critical paradigm may start with the understanding that there is inherent prejudice within systems. This study aimed to investigate the experience of youth with disabilities and their inclusion or exclusion from the world of employment. Moreover, this research aimed to understand the socioeconomic experiences of prevocational youth in their efforts to secure employment. Data was collected from out-of-school youth with prevocational schooling as research participants who were transitioning from school to the world of employment.

The critical paradigm not only examines power disparities but also seeks to change them. While this study does not claim to bring about social change as such, its focus on the inclusion or exclusion of youth with disabilities from the world of work and demonstrates either their social inclusion or oppression in relation to their disability. In this respect, it works to provide insight on the experiences of this oppressed social group in relation to their inclusion and participation in the world of work and society at large. Research within the critical paradigm also privileges the

standpoint of oppressed people, and in this study, youth with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities whose voices in relation to their socioeconomic experiences are valued. This is achieved through the methodology and methods used in the study. The researcher is also afforded an opportunity to critically understand participants' experiences post their prevocational schooling.

1.8.4 Site and Sample Selection

This study required participants who were able, and willing, to share their socioeconomic experiences after their schooling in depth. Six participants who were former learners from Newton Pre-Vocational School were selected because it is the only prevocational school in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality where learners with mild to moderate disability can learn a range of prevocational skills.

Newton Pre-Vocational School, which is located in Pietermaritzburg, the capital city of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa, is a school for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities. The school follows the Technical Occupational (T.O.) Curriculum, which emphasises pre-vocational skills. The curriculum includes plumbing, building, panel beating, motor vehicle repair, woodwork, metalwork, agriculture, landscaping, childcare, hospitality, needlework, office practice and hairdressing. Learners enter the school at 14 to 15 years of age. The curriculum is implemented over four years. This school offers work experience programs during the mid-year holidays for fourth year learners to expose them to the work environment and to potential employers.

I purposively selected six participants who were between 21 and 25 years of age. These participants learnt different prevocational skills; boys and girls are given different choices and courses are also offered on the basis of ability, which is usually assessed during their first year—the orientation year. During the orientation year they do all of the prevocational skills allocated for their gender on a rotational basis. At the end of the year they choose, or are assigned, a skill that they have shown aptitude for as their focus of study for the remaining three years of the programme. Of the 6 participants, 5 were struggling to find employment and to participate socially because of the challenges they had experienced, which are discussed in Chapter 4. Only one had secured a stable job. Hence there are two types of participants, those who were struggling economically, emotionally and socially, and one who was not. My intention was to identify participants who had achieved success in finding employment as well as those not employed.

1.8.5 Data Collection

This study employed in-depth semi-structured interviews to generate qualitative data. Interviews can be used as the single data collection tool for a qualitative research study. The semi-structured interview is usually organized around a set of prearranged, open-ended questions; during the interview other questions or topics may emerge for discussion (Batmanabane & Kfourri, 2017). For this study, an interview schedule of semi-structured questions was developed as the data collection instrument (See Appendix A).

The interviews were conducted in the participants' home language, isiZulu. Dey (1993) states that interviews usually consist of a dialogue between the researcher and participants, allowing the researcher to study the subjective viewpoints of the participants and gain in-depth knowledge of the experiences of the participants.

1.8.6 Data Analysis

Information evaluation comprises four flows of activity: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and authentication. I used thematic analysis to analyse the data that was generated through the interviews. Thematic analysis is a technique for distinguishing, analyzing, organizing, illustrating and describing ideas found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This guided me to find similarities and differences between the accounts of the participants and then group similar patterns and ideas to formulate themes. The inductive and deductive analyses of the data is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

1.9 Trustworthiness, Validity and Reliability

It is critical to examine the trustworthiness of data to ensure excellence in qualitative studies through reliability and validity (Guba, 1981). Trustworthiness ensures that the study can be trusted (Greaves, 2019). According to Greaves (2019), it is difficult to determine validity in qualitative studies; however, participants were able to state exactly what happens in their natural settings. Greaves (2019) states that dependability and credibility are dependent on one another and can be achieved through detailed description of opinions and actions observed during an interaction. This was achieved by the participants listening to their transcript read aloud by the researcher.

Therefore, credibility, dependability and confirmability are concepts that determine the trustworthiness of qualitative research.

Credibility entails that the research findings should be believable. Confirmability entails determining that the investigator's understandings and conclusions are drawn from the data. This was ensured by using the participants' first language (isiZulu). Member checking was used, where participants verified the accuracy of what written about them by listening and confirming the transcription of their interview. I ensured dependability by using an audit trail, where the data collection methods and analysis were made transparent.

1.10 Ethical Issues

Cohen et al. (2001) define ethics as sensitivity to the rights of others. This study engaged with three important ethical principles of research, autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix B). Participants and their parents/guardians were given letters of consent and assent to sign before the interviews (Appendices C and D). Cohen et al., (2007) state that it is advisable to gain permission and fully informed consent by highlighting the benefit that the research might have for the participants. Therefore, participants were informed that they would not benefit financially by participating in this research.

Cohen et al., (2018) and Bertram and Christiansen (2014) indicate that autonomy can be assured by explaining the purpose of the study to the participants, indicating to participants that they may leave the study at any time if they choose to, and explaining that the data that is collected will be destroyed after five years. This approach was followed in this study in that participants were not compelled to answer questions that they found difficult or were uncomfortable answering. Furthermore, the autonomy of the participants was respected by ensuring confidentiality and, whenever the participant showed any sign of distress, the interview was put on hold immediately to allow the participant to calm down. After the interviews, they were referred to the psychologist who was on standby (Appendix E). Anonymity was ensured by the use of pseudonyms that the participants chose themselves, as recommended by Cohen et al., (2007). Permission to record the interviews was sought before recording.

Beneficence means the research should be beneficial to the participants and to society at large. It is hoped that this study will benefit future learners at Newton Pre-Vocational School (Beauchamp 2008). As this research contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of Pre-Vocational education, it is relevant to the school management team (SMT), teaching staff, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and education policymakers.

Non-maleficence emphasizes doing no harm to participants. Participants participated voluntarily and were given time to decide whether to participate in the study or not. The researcher explained that the participants could withdraw from the study at any time and availability of the psychologist was mentioned to the participant and their parents/guardians. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identity.

Data will be destroyed after five years. A psychologist was on standby to counsel participants before and after the interview in the event that participation in the interview triggered emotions and anxiety for the participants.

1.11 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is presented in five chapters, as indicated below.

In **Chapter One**, I have provided an overview of the study, a background on the topic of the study and the rationale for the study. The research purpose, questions and methodology were described in brief. Ethical issues and the aspects of the quality and limitations of the study were discussed.

In **Chapter Two**, I review both local and international literature on inclusive education. Next, I review empirical research on the lives and experiences of People Living With Disabilities (PLWD) around the world. Then, I present a literature review on the legislative field, education, employment of people living with disabilities and socio-economic inclusion.

In **Chapter Three**, I present the methodological and design decisions that I made to respond to this study's key research questions. I discuss the data collection methods used in the study as well as issues of trustworthiness, the limitations of the study and, finally, the ethical considerations made to ensure the respect and protection of the rights of the participants in this study.

In **Chapter Four**, I present and analyse the data gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations. The themes that emerged from the data coding are discussed in relation to the

theoretical framework and the literature review. I conclude the chapter by providing a summary and discussion of the key findings of the study.

In **Chapter Five**, I provide recommendations, reflect on the limitations of the study and suggest future areas of research.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a broad overview of the study. The background and rationale for the study were explained. I provided a brief review of literature, in order to provide an original foundation for the study. The methodology and design were explained and I provided a conceptual framework for understanding the findings of the study.

In Chapter two I present the review of literature and the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The chapter begins by examining the international conventions and the legislative framework in South Africa and its related policies, determining how they have addressed the needs of people living with disabilities. The chapter then presents a review of relevant research studies in relation to the employment of people living with disabilities and their preparedness for the world of work, locally as well as internationally.

This chapter also presents the conceptual framework that was used as a lens to interrogate the data gathered during the research study.

2.2. Legislation and policy: Disability and Employment

2.2.1 International protocols: Disability and Employment

The World Bank (2022) estimates that 15% of the world's population experiences disabilities, with the disability frequency being greater in developing countries where prejudice, discrimination and unfair practices are largely the resulting treatment for persons living with disabilities. People with a chronic illness or disability have a 40% higher risk of falling behind in employment, education or training (Di Rezze et al., 2019).

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, issued in Spain in 1994, is a pledge by 92 governments and 25 international institutions to evolve their education systems by encouraging inclusive education to guarantee that all learners, regardless of their geographical and socio-economic situations, enjoy unrestricted access to education (UNESCO, 1994).

UNESCO (2016) argues that a skills system which supports individuals and communities can be established to generate and maintain improved and unbiased income opportunities. The convening of nations caused a greater awareness of disability to ensure the privileges and rights of persons living with disabilities and had a significant impact in terms of ensuring that inclusive education needs are respected. Basson (2017) states that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is a multilateral treaty that commits its state parties to work toward the granting of economic, social and cultural rights to all individuals.

These rights include labour rights, the right to health, the right to education, the right to family life, the right to participation in cultural life, and the right to an adequate standard of living (Basson, 2017) As of July 2020, the Covenant had 171 signatories; The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights monitors the compliance of signatories. Basson (2017) states that the ICESCR does not define any specific rights for persons with disabilities but dignity and the equal and unchallengeable rights of humankind (Basson, (2017).

The Convention On the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) identifies that all signatories to the convention recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. The Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD) establishes the specific rights for PLWD.

2.2.2 South African National Legislation and Policy: Disability and Employment

South Africa is a signatory to the CRPD, which committed the government to uphold and enforce the principles of the convention; which include (Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, Article 3, p5):

1. Respect for each individuals' dignity and autonomy, including their freedom to make their own choices and their coherent independence
2. Non-discrimination
3. Full participation and inclusion in society effectively
4. Respect individual differences and accept persons with disabilities as an inclusion of human diversity
5. Equality of opportunity
6. Accessibility to all society has to offer
7. Equality amongst men and women
8. Respect for the dynamic capabilities of children with disabilities and the utmost respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) presents the foundational values that guides legislation and policies. The eight points enumerated above from the CRPD are in keeping with the constitution of the RSA which “emphasizes the values of human dignity, the attainment of equality, and the progression of human rights and freedoms as the foundations of a democratic

state”. (South African Constitution,1996, p6-7) These values as espoused by the Constitution of RSA call upon spheres of government and citizenry all to take up the duty and challenge of creating a humane and caring society for all South Africans.

South Africa being a signatory to the CRPD established legislation in relation to the CRPD in both the labour and education spheres. In the labour sphere, according to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (2002), all employees in the workplace environment including those with disabilities must work under fair basic conditions of employment, which are regulated, protected and also uphold the right to fair labour practices, as stipulated in section 23(1) of the Constitution. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (2002) forbids unfairness towards people on the grounds of disability or illness and stipulates that acceptable inclusion applies to candidates and workers with disabilities who are eligible for employment (Government of South Africa).

White paper 6 established the education framework and guiding principles giving effect to the provisions of the Constitution of the RSA as well as to the obligations of the government in being party to international conventions. According to Seedat (2018) White Paper 6 adds that in building a system for education and training in the 21st century, all of us carry an exceptional responsibility to put these values into practice and to ensure all learners, with and/or without disabilities, pursue their academic capacity to the most optimal height they can reach”, which can be attributed to inclusive education. Seedat (2018) affirms that an inclusive education system is a system grounded in shared duty and comradeship, in which heterogeneity is valued and discrimination eradicated.

There has been significant interest in the approach of skills development, where Kraak (2004) and Allais (2013) used it to pave a way forward for the particular shape of an evolving postapartheid skills system. Wedekind (2018) has explored the institutional shaping processes of an apprenticeship system in South Africa that looks past the regulatory norms and standards, whilst Allais (2018) argues that competition in a static and small formal labour market compromises the development of a robust Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in South Africa.

The Differentiated Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement (2018) and the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, enshrine the right of every child to access quality basic education without any form of discrimination. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by the Parliament of South Africa in 2007 (Article 24) requires the Government to ensure

that children with disabilities can access inclusive, quality primary compulsory education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live and that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education (DBE, 2018:2). In order to accommodate Learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities the DBE developed the Technical Orientation Curriculum (TOC) from the age of 14 years. Learners enrolled at schools that follow the TOC cater to learners who have been screened in terms of the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) and who cannot be included in mainstream schools as per inclusive education policy. This category of educational provision is referred to as pre-vocational. The pre-vocational curriculum aims to ensure that all persons with disabilities learn life and social development skills that will assist their equal participation in education and as members of the community.

The TOC Learning Programme has been developed to respond more effectively to the needs of these learners who have been identified and assessed through the protocols outlined in the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support of 2014 and who will benefit from curriculum content that is aligned to the Foundation and Intermediate Phase of the National Curriculum Statement at a more applied and functional level by their age, interest, and aptitude (DBE, 2018). Critically, the DBE (2018) indicates that even though the TOC is aimed at learners entering the program from age 14, the curriculum content is aligned to the Foundation and Intermediate Phases of the National Curriculum Statement; therefore, learners completing the program will have been assessed by and large, at the foundational competence level. The DBE (2018) further argues that the TOC learning programme is structured so that it provides a wide spectrum of learners with moderate to severe intellectual disability and learning difficulties across the age span. It aims to fully develop their human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth. It also allows for developing their personality, talents, and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities and cultural, social, environmental, and economic competencies to their fullest potential to enable them to participate effectively and independently in a free society as adults. (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006 and the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015).

It is clear that the DBE has placed an emphasis on human potential, sense of self-worth and dignity of the PLWD in the TOC programme.

2.2.3 Access to Higher Education and Employment

Improvements in technology have mitigated many challenges that persons living with disabilities faced in the past in terms of pursuing the careers of their choice (Cook et al., 2013). Employers can be assisted by the Department of Labour to employ persons with disabilities that meet the job requirements and employment equity targets. Thus, Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 empowers employers to implement affirmative action measures.

Regarding public interest, high-quality Special Vocational Education (SVE) is cost-efficient. It promotes successful market placement and increased productivity for people living with disability and can also lead to fiscal savings (Cook et al., 2013).

The National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (Department of Basic Education 2001), states that it “commits our higher education institutions to increasing the access of learners with special education needs. “Therefore, the ministry expects institutions to indicate, in their institutional plans, the strategies and steps with the relevant time frames and how they intend to increase the enrolment of Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWD)”. “The Ministry further recommends minimal education levels of provision for learners with special needs to higher institutions of education” (Department of Basic Education White Paper 6, 2001: 56).

White Paper 6 states that the Department of Basic Education should pay particular attention to school and college systems, policies, and legislation (Cocks & Stokes, 2013).

2.3 Review of Empirical studies

2.3.1 Education

The earliest interpretation of pre-vocational education, within the international context, is the one offered by Pillay (2013), who asserts that prevocational education is beneficial when “no special provisions are made for pupils who are failing in the usual school work, or who are apparently hopelessly behind grade or are certainly out of harmony with the aims and methods of the so called ‘general education.’” Pillay (2013 p22) and Lipscomb et al., (2017) state that youth with intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities have lower educational expectations, and these groups are less likely to take college entrance tests. Mutanga (2017) agrees with the above mentioned and adds that fewer PLWD actively participate in higher education, and the limited number that do gain entry to higher education, encounter many obstacles. This can be partly attributed to the fact that

there is currently no national policy plan for Higher education that includes disability (Mutanga, 2017). However, Lipscomb et al., (2017) further states that 24% of intellectually disabled youth have reported having taken college entrance tests compared to those without disabilities.

The South African government launched Education White Paper 6 to address the limitations in the education system (Department of Education, 2001). Programs such as program to-work linkages as a barrier to learning were highlighted (Ellman, Sunday, & Buchanan, 2020).

This 20-year plan emphasized the role of special schools to offer “comprehensive education programmes that provide life skills training and programme-to-work linkages” (Department of Education, 2001: 21). White Paper 6 acknowledges that the Department of Basic Education carries a special obligation to guarantee that all pupils, with or without debilities, have the opportunity to fully pursue their full learning potential, hence the development of a policy framework and constitutional rights that support inclusive education by the South African government. Despite the developed inclusion legislation, transition policies and financial resources in South Africa, South Africa still experiences-- failure to promote entry to further education, economic opportunities and independence for PLWD (Bam & Ronnie 2020). Ellman et al., (2020) concede that although the South African Department of Education deems its individual learning plan as a practical option for addressing the learners needs who continuously encounter barriers to learning, the school to post-school transition is yet to be addressed. In order to fulfil this gap in policy, its suggested that additional planning is essential and required for the transition of South African children experiencing severe intellectual disability (SID) in the schooling system, with particular and great emphasis on post-school options (Ellman et al., 2020).

Unlike countries such as the USA and Canada, which are bound by law to ensure that guidelines to smooth transitioning for PLWD, South Africa does not have legislation that addresses this transition (Ellman et al.,2020). Bam, A., Kriger, S., & Cottle, Z. (2023) state that transitioning for youth with disabilities is very challenging, therefore making the impact of transition programmes crucial to overcome the societal, environmental, intrinsic, tertiary education and employment barriers. Vlachos (as cited in Ellman et al., 2020) concede to the above by stating that accessing information is very crucial in transitioning as it can instill a sense of confidence in transitioning from one setting to the next.

According to Morina (2017), education and vocational training develop competency in people living with disabilities. Morina (2017) recommends that special and inclusive schools develop school-to-work transition programs in the form of training at vocational schools. Ellman et al., (2020) argue that it is every school's responsibility to provide transition planning for learners upon leaving the schooling system. According to Ellman et al., (2020) it is important to plan for transitioning because if planning is neglected, parents lack understanding of what to expect during the transitional phase once the child reaches this crucial stage. Rooney & Young (2023) argue that, following compulsory education, further learning opportunities must be available to people living with disabilities through post-school education and training institutions; these opportunities may include learning particular work skills such as communication, personal grooming and resume writing.

There are relevant guidelines and legislation that would improve the rights of PLWD. Therefore, it is a critical need to make, quality education, to increase chances for significant employment argue (Otieno & Onyango, 2018). Forlin (2013) agrees that inclusive education is recognized worldwide as a basic human right and the basis for a fair and equitable society. Inclusive education focuses on the need to provide a high-quality educational response for all learners, increasing the practices that lead to full participation (Morina, 2017). Morina (2017) argues that, in order to guarantee equal opportunities and facilitate the inclusion of learners with disabilities, it is necessary to incorporate the principles of inclusive education and universal design for learning into university policies and practices based on the social model of disability.

The findings of Zakour and Gillespie (2013) are that some researchers state that, the most important obstacle identified regarding the barriers was the negative attitudes displayed by faculty members. In many cases, the learners stated that the professor doubted they had a disability, did not adapt the teaching projects, and questioned their capacity to study at the university. Morina (2016) noted that many of the barriers identified by learners with disabilities are shared by other learners. Zakour and Gillespie (2013) explored policies, strategies, processes, and actions that can contribute to ensuring the success of all learners. They believe that a series of transformations, both at the institutional level and in classroom practices, could be considered in higher education to move towards a more inclusive university. Lipson et. al., (2017) argues that nearly all youth in each disability group; behavioural, emotional, sensory impaired disorder, physical and developmental attend schools that include non-special education learners, but in four groups more

than 1 in 10 of the youth attended schools for special education learners only. Overall, parents reported that 4 percent of youth with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) attended schools that served only youth in special education. These schools were designed for youth whose educational needs were significant or specialized enough that they could not be met in the regular educational environment. However, youth with autism, intellectual disability and multiple disabilities are most likely to receive academic modifications but least likely to receive some other forms of academic support Lipson (2017).

Pre-Vocational education is a system that is made up of different entities; complexity theory can be used to show and explain how these entities interact with each other and impact each other (Pillay, 2013). Pillay (2013) reports that prevocational education in Nigeria aims to achieve the acquisition of technical skill and expose learners to career awareness by exploring disposable options in the world of work and enabling youth to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Learners with disabilities often have significantly low levels of success post-school, compared with their non-disabled peer Mazzotti, et al., (2021). Mazzotti et al., (2021) continues to state that within the South African education system however, there continues to be no clear lines regarding disability. Hence, the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) was documented in 2014 (Department of Basic Education, 2014). The SIAS policy represents the progression to acknowledge the need to provide support to learners experiencing barriers to learning, however, practical implementation is still a challenge as some factors exist that may stall or be damaging to the progress of implementation (Bam et al., 2023).

McKenzie et al., (2023) agrees with the aforementioned, stating that South Africa still experiences a shortage of suitably qualified teachers with special education training, who teach in full-service schools and special schools. Mazzotti et al., (2021) states that there exist special schooling opportunities which may be attributed the term traditional 'exclusionary' special schools as they are aligned with a particular disability (blind, deaf, physical disability, intellectual disability) for children with high-intensity educational support needs which may be on a permanent or part-time basis.

Full-service and special (inclusive) schools are set out as 'schools that are supported and equipped to provide and cater for a broad spectrum of learning needs among all learners' (Department of

Education 2001b:22). These schools provide flexibility and educational support in teaching and learning to learners and educators, which incorporate the principle of diversity, encouraging the utmost participation (Ayaya, Makoelle & Van der Merwe 2020).

2.3.2 Employment of people living with disabilities

Vornholt, Uitdewilligen, & Nijhuis, (2013) argue that unemployment is among the major challenges affecting individuals with disabilities in South Africa. This, subsequently, has resulted in significantly high levels of unemployment and reduced wages for youth with disabilities Bam, Kriger, & Cottle, (2023). Bam et al., (2023) further states that youth between the age range of 15 – 24 years, 60.7% are currently unemployed, whereas youth between the ages of 25 - 34 years, a fluctuating 39.8% are currently unemployed. Prejudice and discrimination play a role. Vornholt et al., (2013) argue that there is a lack of acceptance of disabled co-workers and found that employers do not keep workers with disabilities in companies for sustained periods. Research by Vornholt et al., (2013) concludes that the lack of social acceptance of disabled employees by their abled counterparts is often the reason why disabled employees fail to stay in organizations for longer periods. In a recent study conducted by Bonaccio et al., (2020) it emerged that several inconsistencies still persist in the understanding the notion of recognition and its relationship to the employment of persons with debilities.

Rooney and Young (2023) and Yamamoto and Alverson (2022) state that, even when people living with disabilities graduate from high school or vocational school, they tend to continue to experience more barriers to employment in the open labour market and more unfair discrimination than their peers without disabilities. Maengwe et al., (2016) argue that poverty, particularly in emerging countries, needs to be addressed as it further impedes people living with disabilities from contributing to the manufacturing of goods and services because of prejudice from prospect employers. This would not only increase the economic benefit to that person and to the public but could also release family members from at least some of their care obligations. McGrath et al., (2020), like Maengwe et al., (2016) report that conventional labour employment and real wages have been stagnant in Africa, even post-independence.

According to Bam et al., (2023) career guidance is an essential part for vocational programs to be productive, sustainable and progressive, in order for the youth with disabilities to develop socioemotionally. This affects PLWD in their employment decision and their socio-economic

inclusion in society (Bam et al., 2023). Furthermore, career guidance in high school, where teachers and/or counsellors can assist the youth with disability with identifying career paths, is very crucial for the youth with disabilities so as to allow them to be able to participate socioeconomically (Dislere & Vronska, (2020). Career guidance provides relevant information on careers, aligning interests and abilities (Milosheva et al., 2021 & Bam et al., 2023). Support must therefore be afforded to youth with disability during the abovementioned process when decision making is necessary (Lindsay et al., 2018).

Bam et al., (2023) state that failures in transitioning from high school to tertiary education are typically attributed to the uncoordinated nature of poorly designed programmes, lack of opportunities and the fragmented career service provision through the life of PLWD. (Nuske et al., 2019) agrees to the abovementioned, adding that transitioning planning at high school level has a lifetime impact. Nuske et al., (2019) continues to add that transitioning planning has a significant impact and is also a determinant of success for tertiary education and careers. For transitioning to happen successfully, the interaction as well as the connection between the family, school, industry professionals, societal expectations and government policies is of paramount importance for the smooth, effective and efficient transitioning as these stakeholders will have a lifelong impact on PLWD (Lindsay et al., 2018).

Blattman and Ralston (2015) and McKenzie (2017) suggest that the Vocational Education Training (TVET) is focused on active labour market policies/employment-generation programmes. Blattman and Ralston (2015) and McKenzie (2017) also argue that skills programs show very limited positive effects, especially for men. Pillay (2013) agrees that the duration of vocational courses in South Africa is not sufficient to develop mastery and that special schools do not keep records about the job placement of their ex-learners.

Pillay (2013) found that some special learners in South Africa were later employed by their own schools, others got jobs in areas they were not trained for and some of the learners were absorbed by their family businesses, because of the negative perception of the prevocational stream. The negative branding of learners and absence of formal certification also negatively impact on their prospects of finding work after their schooling (Pillay, 2013).

In South Africa, prevocational schools are special schools and the learners that attend these schools are special needs learners with mild to moderate learning disabilities the skills required to do a job

and to compete with the able-bodied persons (Pillay (2013) In essence, learners with special needs are trained and prepared for the world of work in a mainstream society, which puts them at a disadvantage. Pillay (2013) further states that many ex-learners have become entrepreneurs, others are successfully employed; many are married and have stable relationships. On the other end of the scale, former prevocational learners are usually unable to work; a small percentage work in informal establishments, many depend on social grants and others stay at home without formal or informal employment (Pillay, 2013).

Due to fear of failure and rejection, which many have experienced in their lives, many learners have poor self-concepts, emotional problems, are unable to socialize appropriately, and have specific personality traits especially the lack of self-confidence. All these make it more difficult for South African prevocational learners to find employment compared to learners from mainstream schools (Pillay, 2013).

The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 was enacted into law to guarantee that all South Africans benefit from equal opportunities and just treatment in the workplace. It also extends to protect an individual's right to protection from any form of discrimination by their employer on the basis of race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientate, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language or birth (Cocks& Stokes, 2013)

Despite the above-mentioned, Unemployment is among the major challenges affecting individuals with disabilities. Alternative data estimate that the risk of unemployment in South Africa is four to five times higher for people living with disabilities Susuman, Blignaut, & Lougue, (2014).

Tomlinson (2017) concedes that the production of ingrained inability still exists as an excuse for unbalanced access to education. Access to education remains a problem, especially in struggling economies such as within Africa, given that people living with disabilities in Africa are seriously hindered from employment and job conservation (Tomlinson, 2017; Luftig & Muthert, 2005). According to the Draft protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa, all persons living with a disability are equal before the law and, therefore, possess the right to equal protection and benefit of the law which includes complete protection and enjoyment of all fundamental human rights (African Union, 2018) Protocol to the

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa (2018).

According to the World Health Organisation (2011), employment is very important for people with disabilities in terms of meeting their need for social interaction. Bonaccio, S., Connelly, C. E., Gellatly, I. R., Jetha, A., & Martin Ginis, K. A. (2020) state that past research has found that, in the United States, managers' report that they rarely see workers with disabilities in their applicant pools. This is substantiated by findings in a report by the US Department of Education that only 32% of intellectually disabled individuals had paid work experience in the year 2017 (Lipscomb et al., 2017). According to Bonaccio et al., (2019), it has been estimated that in the United States (US), only one in three (34.9%) individuals with disabilities are employed compared to 76% of their counterparts without disabilities, and this disparity appears to be increasing over time. Bonaccio et al., (2019) further elaborates that managers and human resource personnel tasked with selecting new employees understandably want to identify the best candidate for each job opening; one way to address this is by recruiting potential candidates from labour pools that competitors have overlooked or ignored. In this sense, employees with disabilities may represent one of the largest underutilized labour pools; however, despite this potential, Bonaccio et al., (2019) concede that managers consistently report that they find it difficult to attract qualified applicants with disabilities.

Blattman and Ralston (2015) present a structured analysis that indicates that the absence of certain technical skills contributes to the unemployment of some people. Goergiadou et al., (2019) argue that, although there is evidence of skills programs globally, they present positive effects that are limited, especially for men. McGrath et al., (2020) conclude that such programs are unsustainable. McKenzie (2017) agrees that vocational programs can be unproductive and such shortcomings make them poorly suited to addressing the difficulties of increasing productivity and economic development on the African continent.

Blattman and Ralston (2015), Goergiadou et al., (2019) McGrath et al., (2020) and McKenzie (2017) present similar findings in that the employment of PLWD is in the lower 30% for the United States of America.

In Greece, people with a chronic illness or disability have a 40 percent higher risk of falling behind in employment, education, or training (Georgiadou, I., Vlachou, A., & Stavroussi, P. 2020).

Learners with disabilities account for just 2.3 percent of vocational education learners in Greece (Georgiadou et al., 2019). Georgiadou et al., (2019) present analysis indicating that lack of economic growth contributes to this reality more than ineffectiveness of TVET systems. This refers to vocational education rather than employment.

2.3.3 Socio-economic inclusion

Bonaccio et al., (2020) defines Socio-economic inclusion as the process of improving access to resource opportunities, be it material goods such as money, education and healthcare, which individuals and groups can positively use to take part and prosper in society. Bonaccio et al., (2020) continues to mention that, in many jurisdictions around the world, laws such as the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) in the United States of America (US) specify that it is illegal to not provide reasonable accommodations, in particular if applicants or employees disclose a disability by requesting accommodations.

According to the South African Human Rights Commission (2018) on challenges facing persons living with disability face, the lack of awareness within the community result in negative attitudes towards PLWD, which stem from ignorance, misunderstanding and discrimination. This often limits PLWD from reaching and experiencing their full potential within society. The South Africa government maintains that it sees disability in the light of a social model perspective (Mutanga, 2017). Some of the elements used within the social model have somehow forsaken the need to understand the challenges for PLWD, not only emerging from the social element within an environment, but also from other elements such as the individual, environmental, economic and political landscapes (Mutanga, 2017). Otieno and Onyango, (2018) state that Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWD) find themselves living in poverty not because they want to, but due to problems such as inadequate access to credit facilities and micro-finance schemes.

Otieno and Onyango (2018) concluded that traditional beliefs and practices constrained the empowerment of people living with disabilities. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) promotes equality and outlines measures to clear the way for the elimination of unfair discrimination and hate speech on the grounds of race, gender and/or disability. Otieno & Onyango (2018) report that several scholars have begun to advocate for inclusive education to move beyond a deficit approach and focus on community partnerships, provide attention to existing strengths, and upscale successful inclusive education policies and

practices. In a study that involved learners with disabilities, Matshediso (2010) spoke to thirty learners with disabilities from varying higher institutions of education, who responded to a self-administered questionnaire via their respective Disability Units. A significant number of learners credited their success to supportive friends made during induction. Seedat (2018) states that Bronfenbrenner suggests that individuals develop and mature in a network of relationships, inclusive of family, community and the public at large. However, family/household practices are also revealed as a barrier that prevent people living with disabilities from taking part at the household or community levels (Otieno & Onyango, 2018).

Pillay (2013) notes that learners with an intellectual disability find it difficult to reason accurately and logically, which distorts their self-awareness and could result in unhappiness and self-defeating behaviour. They often experience feelings of intellectual inadequacy and incompetence when compared to other learners. The significance of social networks and relations is mentioned by Roux and Burnett (2010) in their study including four learners with disabilities, who were the best sport individuals from the University of Johannesburg. Challenges were recognized within the university such as the isolated infrastructure and some restricted practices in sports. However, these learners were managing through a network of support from family, friends and coaches.

Extensive defamation triggers the probability of failure and an attitude of helplessness, which then creates a cycle that result in poor self-concept and poor cognition. Individuals living with disabilities are sometimes classified as a group with a higher probability of societal rejection (Pillay, 2013). They commonly face ostracism and serious social, economic, and civic inequalities as compared with those without debilities for a variety of reasons, from stigma to an inaccessible environment Roggero, P., Tarricone, R., Nicoli, M., & Mangiaterra, V. (2006). According to Yeo (as cited in Maengwe et al., 2016), instances of societal rejection, experienced by disabled persons, such as restricted access to education, employment, and basic health services, are minimal to those that affect poor individuals without disabilities.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The research was conducted using Bourdieu's (1977) theoretical framework of cultural capital. The purpose of this segment is to outline the theory of cultural capital and its connection with concepts; economic, social symbolic capital, habitus and field. A discussion on how these concepts influence the socioeconomic experiences of former learners who have completed their pre-

vocational schooling from Newton school. The main aim of the use of this theoretical framework is to establish the effect of cultural, economic, social, and symbolic capital together with habitus and field on the socioeconomic experiences of former Newton Prevocational school learners who have completed their schooling.

A discussion on Bourdieu's broader theoretical framework and his concepts of habitus and field will demonstrate how this theory can be utilized to comprehend the participants' socioeconomic experiences.

2.4.1. Capital

Bourdieu (1973) states that there are four types of capital namely cultural capital, social capital, economic capital and symbolic capital.

2.4.1.1 Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1973) devised the term cultural capital to explain the different tastes and conduct of specific social classes, demonstrating how those features strengthen power relations between those who have desirable cultural characteristics and the institutions that support them. (Bourdieu, 1973; 1977; 1983). Cultural capital is an instrument for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially selected as worthy of being sought after and owned (Bourdieu 1973). This capital belongs to the entire society and is available to all, according to individual capability and effort.

According to Bourdieu (1973) education is seen as a ground of cultural conflict, where social disparities are replicated through the different types of capital both within and outside the system. (Bourdieu, 1983; 1973) further states that Cultural capital is the possession and reproduction of cultural goods that is exclusive to specific social classes, which offers characters that are hereditary from the family to the child. Bourdieu (1973) also views this as the way social class replicates itself, and social class impacts the family's tastes, which then influences how families raise their children, and how these children perform in education.

Cultural capital is more evident in the classroom and it provides learners of middle and higher classes an upper hand over their lower-class counterparts (Redford, 2007). Cultural capital that is learned at home before children go to school helps the student to flourish in their academic programmes (Dumais, 2006). Children of middle and higher socio-economic backgrounds also have advantage over their counterparts who come from the lower socioeconomic status as their

teachers, who also possess the middle-class cultural capital, tend to treat learners differently according to the class they come from (Condron, 2007).

Bourdieu (1973) implied that cultural values are carried over in early age in the child's life. However, Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) found out that if learners partook in these cultural practices at their teenage years, the chances of high academic performance may significantly increase. Despite the mass post-school education system in many countries, those who still benefit the most from policies aimed at expanded tertiary education are those with relative social, economic and cultural capital (Burke, 2012).

2.4.1.2 Economic Capital

Bourdieu (1986) sights economic capital as the basis of all other types of capital, and the other types as of capital as transformed type of capital. Bourdieu (1986) further states that adapting educational credentials into high paying professional position and economic capital can be used to other forms of capital; e.g., family income can be used to pay for school fees and extra classes resulting in positive educational results. Family income is one aspect of how parental status effects educational performance Cheng (2012). According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) family revenue captures only one facet of how parental status impacts educational performance, whereas the other types of capital can be transformed to economic capital such as converting educational credentials into high paying professional position. The importance of the role played by family in shaping the educational trajectories of children through the transmission of economic, social, symbolic and cultural resources cannot be over emphasized (Cheng, 2012).

Blanden and Gregg (2004) state that learners who come from higher socio-economic upbringings usually attain better school results than their less privileged counterparts. Duncan and Murnane (2011) found out that a ten percent increase in family income is associated with a fourteen percent increase in the prospect of learners attending and completing a fouryear university or college qualification. However, research conducted by Phillips (2011) and Carter & Reardon (2011) found that there is a growing achievement gap and inequalities found in educational experiences between learners from low socio-economic backgrounds, compared with their more affluent peers in the United States of America (USA).

2.4.1.3 Symbolic Capital

Bourdieu (1990) sights symbolic capital to signify the power of the dominant class. Bourdieu (1990) further states that symbolic capital is a camouflaged form of power that needs to be recognized. Symbolic capital is involved in cultural value attributes like educational credentials which can be materials, however, are not recognized (Bourdieu 1990).

Different level of social capital that are produced in the networks of families that the school serves tend to result in more differences in individual's symbolic capital which can be evident in individual educational success (Rogosic & Baranovic, 2016). Acar (2011) agrees with the above by stating that social capital supports educational achievement in the form of suitable school climate and the principles that inspire learners to achieve higher goals. Acar (2011) further states that the student's growth is strongly shaped by social capital in the school, community and in the family. Social capital can definitely affect educational success, and consequently the student's behaviour and development in a sense that it decreases drop-out rates, and increases college or university enrolment and subsequently, graduation rates (Israel, Beaulieu and Hartless, 2001).

2.4.2 Habitus

Even with a significant amount of research papers in previous years using Bourdieu's 1977 and 1984 theory of capital to describe educational imbalances, researchers have migrated from the misunderstood yet fundamentally significant concept of habitus (Gaddis, 2013).

Bourdieu (1977) defines the term 'habitus' as the personal nature and attitudes, that learners exhibit towards schooling, which signifies that a negative mentality towards school, eventually affects educational accomplishment. Habitus has three pillars; matrix of perceptions, which is a set of attitudes and values, appreciations, where the values and attitudes influence people's behavior and actions, which are conscious disposition and practices (Bourdieu, 1977). McClelland (1990) contends that habitus constitutes the past and the present, and is molded through collective effects of capital as well as a history of trial and error, resulting in feedback on its success or failure.

Bourdieu (1984) sees habitus as an inflexible theory, whereas other scholars propose that habitus can be altered based on a persons' personal interactions and experiences (Reay, 2004; Horrat and Davis, 2011). Gaddis (2013) therefore proposes that if learners possess positive personal

temperaments towards their schoolwork, this may be a critical mediator between cultural capital and academic results. Even though habitus plays a significant mediating role in the association between cultural capital and academic results, it's been terribly ignored in most literature (Gaddis, 2013).

2.4.3. Field

According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), the term Field epitomizes the battle inside distinct social circles. This is viewed as organized spaces around certain types of capital or an amalgamation of capital (Swartz, 2019). The dynamics of contention in a specific field develop social structures. These structures influence the individual's nature while simultaneously being molded by persons who have obtained and accumulated a wealth of capital (Cheng, 2012). In the field of education, for example, parents from varying socio-economic backgrounds all need help with doing what they perceive to be in the best interest of their children without considering their financial differences, levels of education, and individual natures (Phillips, 2011). Variations in certain types of capitals and also blends of capitals achieve varying educational practices and strategies, which, in turn, create varying educational outcomes (Swartz, 2019).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed empirical studies on education for people living with disabilities. International and local legislation was discussed. After reviewing these studies, four significant concepts were explored: education, the employment of people living with disabilities, socioeconomic inclusion, legislation, policy, and planning. The conceptual framework that guided this study was derived from Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of capital, habitus, and field. These concepts were also used as the lens through which the literature was reviewed. The following chapter presents the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and the methodological approach adopted in this study. This chapter begins with an explanation of the critical research paradigm within which this study is located. This is followed by a discussion of narrative inquiry, the methodology that allowed me to investigate the post-school experiences of youth living with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities in their attempts to gain employment and lead meaningful lives. The methods used to collect and analyse data are discussed. The research site and participants are described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research paradigm: critical paradigm

A paradigm is a point of view that defines a field's principles and beliefs which can lead to how difficulties can be dealt with (Schwandt, 2001). The critical paradigm focuses on power, inequity and social transformation. The critical paradigm suggests that social science can never be completely fair or value-free (Cohen et al., 2018). Cohen et al. (2018) state that this paradigm operates from the point of view that scientific inquiry must be performed with the express goal of societal transformation in mind. A critical paradigm may start with an understanding that procedures are prejudiced against others.

In this study, this research proposed to understand the socioeconomic experiences of youth who have completed their Pre-Vocational schooling in their pursuit of employment. According to Cohen et al. (2017), a critical paradigm is explicitly prescriptive and normative, entailing a view of what behaviour in a social democracy should entail. Its intention is not merely to provide an account of society and human behaviour but to realize a society that is based on equality and democracy for all its members (Cohen et al., 2017). One of the key principles underpinning this paradigm is the educational process, which should emancipate and educate all people regardless of their class, gender, race and disability (Vandrick, 1994).

A critical paradigm was appropriate for this study as its purpose was not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to contribute to the body of knowledge that influences social transformation. The critical paradigm not only examines power disparities, but also seeks to change

them. According to Cohen et al. (2018), the critical paradigm seeks to transform the recording and observing of experiences to bring about positive change. This paradigm was employed for the study as it gave the participants a platform to voice their views on their socioeconomic experiences and allowed the researcher to critically understand their experiences.

3.3 Research design: qualitative research

This study adopted a qualitative approach, which aimed to explore the post-school socioeconomic experiences of out-of-school youth with disabilities after pre-vocational schooling and how they responded to these experiences. This proved to be useful in exploring the experiences, behaviour, points of view and feelings of individuals with intellectual disabilities who have completed their Pre-Vocational schooling who are seeking employment

The qualitative approach was also helpful as it enabled the researcher to holistically observe the participant and their natural surroundings, such as their familial socioeconomic status, the education background of their family, their social skills and their perceptions of their surroundings (Gill, 2020).

3.4 Research approach: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a method of collecting data through storytelling for research purposes (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Connelly & Clandinin (2000) continue to add that narrative inquiry is a holistic, naturalistic approach that allows participants to develop meaning of their experiences through storytelling. The study employed a narrative inquiry, where the researcher analyzed the stories that were told by participants, where they narrated about their deepest emotions, personal and social experiences (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007). Webster and Mertova (2007) state that the objective of narrative inquiry is to tell the entire story, as opposed to other methods which aim to communicate understandings of learned topics. The approach also enabled the participants to reflect on their past as well as their aspirations for the future.

The participants experience and their reflection on the said experience at a prevocational school formed the foundation of the processes involved in this narrative inquiry. Therefore, in this study, the narrative enquiry was the story of the participants' experiences in respect of the key research questions where the narratives of the participants were created using semi-structured interviews and analyzing. The researcher found this to be compatible with the overall objective of the study.

In addition, perspective using critical theory was based on the assertion that understanding context is a crucial part of effecting change (Samuel, 2016). For this study, narrative inquiry gave a brief glimpse into the experiences of the participants in what their world means to them (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

This was beneficial to the research, as an in-depth understanding was gleaned as the participants freely narrated their experiences and expressed their inner feelings, both positive and negative, as individuals living with intellectual disabilities. Participants also freely expressed their feelings about their families and how they experienced support, or lack of support, from their families.

3.5 Research Site

This study took place in the South African city of Pietermaritzburg, which is located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The participants were former learners at Newton Pre-Vocational School, a school for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities. Newton Pre-Vocational School currently has 60 full time educators; however, it is noted that not all educators are qualified to teach learners with special educational needs (LSEN) or inclusive education. Participants were between the ages of 21 to 25.

The curriculum that was used at the time we they were at the school, and is still used today, is called the Technical Occupational (T.O.) curriculum. Its emphasis is on skills development. The T.O. curriculum offers training in technical skills such as plumbing, building, panel beating, motor vehicle repair, woodwork, metalwork, agriculture, landscaping, maintenance, early childhood development (ECD), food production, needlework, office practice, and hairdressing.

The participants were admitted to this school at the age of 14 or 15 and their studies took four years to complete. During the 1st year, learners will rotate all Technical subjects respectively. Learners will then be given the opportunity to choose their preferred Technical subject. From the 2nd to the 4th year of study, learners will be educated on their chosen Technical subject. The school offered a work experience program during the June holidays of the fourth year to expose learners to the work environment and potential employers. The work experience program was still in place at the time of the study.

3.6 Research Sample and Sampling Method

Bertram and Christensen (2014) describe sampling as a process involving making decisions about people, settings, events and/or behaviors to be included in a study. In qualitative research, there are several sampling methods used which include but are not limited to convenience sampling, purposive sampling, stratified sampling and random sampling (Creswell, 2011).

Purposive sampling method was thus used for the purpose of this study (Bertram and Christensen, 2014). For the data collection phase, participants were selected using purposive sampling for their inherent capability to give an abundance of information on factors which can contribute or hinder their success in participating socio-economically after completing their Pre-Vocational schooling at Newton Pre-Vocational School in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that purposive sampling is a process where the researcher, using certain factors, will select particular individuals from the population that will represent part of the research population. Based upon the researcher's knowledge of the populace, a decision is made about which prospective participants are to be selected to provide the study with the most relevant information to answer the research questions as well as the research objectives. In this study, a purposive sample of six participants was selected. The researcher endeavored to represent learners from the low and middle socio-economic background and all six participants had completed their prevocational schooling at Newton Pre-Vocational School. Among the six participants in the purposive sample, the researcher also endeavored to obtain at least 1 participant who had successfully found employment and 1 participant who had attempted to further their studies at a TTVET college. This was crucial as it would enable the researcher to identifying and analyse different factors, which promoted or hindered learners post-schooling socio-economic experience.

3.7 Research positionality

According to Holmes (2020), the term 'positionality' describes both an individual's worldview and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context.

The individual's world view or 'where the researcher is coming from' concerns ontological and epistemological assumptions (Holmes, 2020). Holmes (2020) further state that a researcher's

positionality can be viewed as ‘insider’, ‘outsider’, or both. My positionality in this study was as both an insider and an outsider. I am an insider because I have been teaching at Newton Pre-Vocational School for 7 years and specifically taught some of the participants. I also have a child with a disability. This means that the research processes might have been influenced in various ways by my proximity to the phenomenon under study. According to Griffith (2001), this gave me, as a researcher, a ‘lived familiarity’ with and a prior knowledge of the group being researched. According to Fetterman (2008), insiders are members of specified groups and collectives or occupants of specified social statuses. Holmes (2020) state that positionality includes a description of the researcher’s lenses, such as their philosophical, personal and theoretical beliefs and the perspective through which they view the research, hence I used cultural and social lenses to navigate the study aided by Bourdieu’s concepts. I was also an outsider, however, as I am not a person living with a disability: I could only witness, as a special needs educator, the frustrations and emotions of individuals with intellectual disabilities during and after they have finished their Pre-Vocational schooling, but I did not share these experiences myself.

3.8 Semi-structured interviews

According to Cohen et al. (2018), the purposes of the interview as a data collection technique are many and varied. They include: to understand, evaluate, or assess a person, to test or develop hypotheses, to develop a research instrument such as a survey to gather data, and to sample participants’ opinions. One of the commonly used techniques in acquiring qualitative data is interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Interviews require direct interaction between both the researcher and participants, therefore ensuring data is detailed and subjective (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). Therefore, the type of interview chosen for the study were semi-structured interviews, which entailed the interviewer and the participant engaging in formal conversations, which were guided by possible questions and/or themes (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008).

A semi-structured interview for this study made use of open-ended questions (Gall & Borg, 2007). A semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix A) was used to guide the interviews, which were conducted with the permission of the participants and their parents. Permission from the participant’s parents (Appendix D) was obtained and was appropriate for the study since some of the participants might have needed assistance from their parents and/or guardians to recall their

experiences. An audio recording device was used to record the interviews, which were then transcribed

3.8.1 Data collection

This study employed face-to-face semi-structured interviews, each lasting between 30mins – 60mins, every two weeks over 6 months. The semi-structured method employed in this study used open-ended questions to get an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences. The semi-structured interview also allowed the researcher to ask probing and clarifying questions to explore the participant's unique understanding. Before conducting the interview, the researcher followed the sequence of questions to ensure that all the themes that were crucial for answering the key research questions were answered. Berg (1995) states that semi-structured interviews enabled participants to express their opinions, emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences openly and freely, without constant interjections from the researcher.

Prior to the commencement of the interview session, participants were notified that they may freely speak in the language they felt most comfortable communicating in. The researcher used isiZulu as the primary language of communication with the participants in order to clearly and concisely understand their personal experiences. IsiZulu was also the language of preference for the participants as it was their home language and they also felt that they could communicate better and also understand the questions more easily in isiZulu. This allowed the participants to clearly state their viewpoints of their experiences in seeking employment. This was also beneficial to the researcher as the interviews flowed smoothly, and where probing questions needed to be asked, participants were able to answer as truthfully and as honestly as they could.

3.8.2 Focus group

In a focus group, participants interact with each other rather than with the interviewer, enabling the participants' views to emerge (Cohen et al., 2018). It is thus from the interaction within the group that the data emerges; hence, the dynamics of the groups are essential. Focus groups consist of specifically chosen representatives of the population, often chosen based on particular criteria, to discuss a particular given theme or topic, where the interaction with the group results in data and outcomes (Smithson, 2000; Hydén & Bülow, 2003).

The focus group included six former learners from Newton Pre-Vocational School. The participants were invited to a neutral venue where they interacted with one another. The participants were briefed about the ground rules. The researcher answered the participants' questions.

During the focus group, the researcher, after leading the participants in using an initial list of questions, asked probing questions where necessary. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences as honestly as possible. Participants were encouraged to keep to the point when answering questions. This method was economical and time efficient and a large amount of data was produced in a short period of time

3.9 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

The researcher employed the Inductive thematic analysis, which includes 'to-ing' and 'fro-ing' between the various sources of data, which assists the researcher to find connections and patterns between the different learner participants' experiences (de Hoyos & Barnes, 2012). The data collected from the interviews with the participants was transcribed and coded.

Coding is the process of breaking down segments of text data into smaller units based on whatever criteria are relevant and then examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data (Cohen et al., 2018). Coding was utilized to organize the data (Creswell, 2011). This enabled the researcher to be submerged in the data so as to gain an in-depth understanding of it.

According to Creswell (2011, p. 152), coding is necessary because "text data are dense data, and it takes a long time to go through them and make sense of them". Coding assigns a category label to a piece of data, decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected (Cohen et al., 2018). In qualitative data analysis, a code is a name or label that the researcher gives to a selection of text that contains an idea or a piece of information (Cohen et al., 2018). The same text may have more than one code ascribed to it, depending on the richness and contents of the text (Cohen et al., 2018). A descriptive data analysis method, which entails organizing data so as to present the data concisely and coherently. The researchers' initial step was to transcribe all interviews, thereafter the researcher read all the transcribed interviews in order for the researcher to familiarize with the participants' narratives. Repetitive answers emerged, which were noted and coded. The researcher was careful to compare and group similar answers, to ensure they were dissected as interrelated wholes (Cohen et al., 2018).

After analysing and breaking down segments of the data, it was then put into different categories. Inductive and deductive approaches were utilized. The inductive approach is a procedure where the data that was collected is organized into categories, themes and patterns as it emerges from the raw data; the deductive approach was used to explore and elaborate on the themes that emerged from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Education, employment, emotional wellbeing and socioeconomic experience(s) emerged as themes from the data collection. These are discussed in Chapter Four.

3.10 Trustworthiness, Validity and Reliability

The trustworthiness of a study, a cornerstone of research excellence (Cohen et al., 2018), was meticulously ensured in this research. An audio-recording device was used to capture the interviews to guarantee the credibility of the findings. This not only furnished the study with recorded evidence of the interviews but also fortified the credibility of the data received.

The narrative inquiry employed in the study was a testament to its authenticity. This was achieved through the active participation of the participants, who were encouraged to answer honestly and truthfully to the best of their ability. They were interviewed in their natural environments, where they felt most at ease, as advocated by Cohen et al. (2007). In their own voices, tone, and word choice, the participants narrated their own experiences through interviews, thereby ensuring the trustworthiness of the study (Cohen et al., 2007).

Reliability and validity refer to the extent to which interpretations of data are warranted by the theories and evidence used (Cohen et al., 2018). Interview questions were compiled to ensure the reliability and authenticity of the study. These questions were read to the participants in order for them to respond accordingly. Probing questions were also compiled to be asked where necessary.

Dependability involves determining that the researcher's understanding and conclusions are drawn from the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Audio recordings were translated into English transcripts. Once the recordings were transcribed, the transcripts were authenticated and verified as correct by each participant respectively.

3.11 Ethical issues

Partington (2006) states that the term ethics originates from the Greek word 'ethos', a term which gives the researcher guidelines on what amounts to ethical conduct in research. Research ethics

are a crucial component for upholding of research participants' rights, their protection as well as their respect, and for developing a sense of trust with participants and lastly, promoting the research's integrity (Israel & Hay, 2006). Certain measures have been set in place to ensure research ethics. Enshrined in the Hippocratic oath is the principle of *primum nanocore* ('first of all, do no harm') which is held as a guiding precept which also applies in educational research (Cohen et al., 2001). It is therefore imperative that the research should not harm the participants physically, psychologically, emotionally, professionally, personally, or in any other way.

According to Cohen et al. (2018), participants' identities must be kept confidential; any exceptions to this must be made with the agreement of the participants.

Firstly, the researcher requested ethical clearance (Appendix B) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee. Secondly, a letter of consent was completed and signed by the participants and another letter of consent was completed and signed by their parents or guardians (Appendix C and D). Due to their intellectual disability, the parent's consent was sought. According to Cohen et al., (2007), it's advised to obtain permission and also fully informed consent by drawing attention to the benefits that the research may possess for the participants and/or the school.

The purpose of the study was explained to all the participants. Participants participated voluntarily, and the researcher explained that the participants could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were informed that data would be destroyed after five years. Pseudonyms in agreement with the participants were used to protect the participants' identities. A psychologist was on standby to counsel participants before and after each interview, in the event that the interview triggered anxiety or other difficult emotions for the participants. Participant's autonomy and confidentiality was also ensured and respected by requesting permission to have the interviews recorded prior to any recording took place.

Beneficence is defined as the expectation that the research is beneficial to the participants and also to society at large (Howe and Moses, 1999). This research aims to influence the body of knowledge in educational field regarding teaching and learning, the school management team and staff, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and the relevant policymakers regarding curriculum development and/or changes, especially the T.O. curriculum. This will also benefit the participants by giving them a platform to voice their concerns and frustrations at the same time it will also benefit Newton's Prevocational school's prospective learners.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design and methodology used in this study. The study adopted a qualitative approach, using face-to-face interviews and a focus group to collect data. The research site, as well as the research participants, were described. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the study's trustworthiness, design limitations and ethical considerations.

The next chapter presents the findings that were derived from the data collected during interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the key findings regarding the participants' post-school educational experiences and their perspectives on how effectively the pre-technical and vocational schooling and the Technical Occupational (T.O.) curriculum prepared them for the world of work. The chapter also presents key findings in relation to participants' experiences in the job market.

As explained previously in Chapter 3, data was generated using interviews and focus groups with the six participants, who selected the following pseudonyms: Asanda, Londiwe, Michelle, Rose, Thabo and Zandi, to safeguard their identities. Asanda, Londiwe, Michelle and Rose resided in and around Edendale, a former township that was designated as a black township under apartheid and now falls within the Msunduzi Local Municipality, which includes the town of Pietermaritzburg and surrounds. Msunduzi falls within the uMgungundlovu District Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Thabo and Zandi resided in the suburbs in Pietermaritzburg. Asanda and Rose came from a lower – class families, Asanda's mother was unemployed and Rose's mother worked as a part time domestic worker whereas Londiwe, Michelle, Thabo and Zandi came from middle-class families. Thabo's parents worked as teacher and police respectively, Zandi however was adopted by her aunt who worked as a municipal official.

In Chapter three, I described how the data was obtained. In this chapter, I present the analysis of the data that was obtained using the main research questions. Below, I present the research questions and the data emanating from the said questions.

Main Research Questions

1. What are the socio-economic experiences of out-of-school youth with disabilities who have completed prevocational schooling in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality?
2. How have their schooling experiences prepared them for the world of work?
3. What factors influence their employability and how have they circumnavigated these factors?

The participant data was organised according to emergent themes from which the key findings were derived. This chapter examines the sociocultural, socio-economic and educational factors

that influenced the participation and success of Newton Pre-Vocational School graduates with mild to moderate intellectual disability in seeking employment. I begin by providing a brief biography of each of the participants.

4.2. Participant biographies

4.2.1. Asanda

Asanda is a 25-year-old man who was unemployed at the time of the study. He resided in Imbali, a sub-division of the Edendale area of Pietermaritzburg. He was diagnosed with mild to moderate intellectual disability while he was in primary school. The exact age at which he was diagnosed was not stated. Asanda resided with his mother and sister, who had not completed their schooling and were unemployed. None of the family members received a state grant, and they coped financially through temporary work that Asanda's mother obtained, like washing cars. Asanda assisted her until clients complained about his service. Asanda studied and completed Building as a technical subject at Newton Pre-Vocational School.

4.2.2. Londiwe

Londiwe is a 25-year-old woman who was unemployed at the time of the study. She resided in Dambuza, a sub-division of the Edendale area of Pietermaritzburg. She was also diagnosed with a mild to moderate intellectual disability at a young age. She came from a middle-class family, where both her parents were employed as teachers. She had a sister who was employed full-time in the medical industry as a doctor. At Newton, Londiwe studied and completed Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a technical subject.

4.2.3. Michelle

Michelle is a 25-year-old woman who was unemployed at the time of the study. She resided at Esigodini, a sub-division of the Edendale area of Pietermaritzburg. She was diagnosed with a mild to moderate intellectual disability and bipolar disorder at a young age. She was on medication for bipolar disorder. Michelle was from a middle-class family, where her parents worked as teachers, and her siblings studied at tertiary institutions. Michelle studied and completed Office Practice at Newton School as a technical subject.

4.2.4. Rose

Rose is a 24-year-old woman who, at the time of the study, was unemployed and resided in Acacia, a low-cost residential area, with her mother in Pietermaritzburg. Her mother worked as a part-time domestic worker when she was able to find employment. Rose was an only child and was diagnosed with a mild to moderate intellectual disability as well as a speech impairment in primary school. At Newton, Rose studied and completed Hairdressing as a technical subject.

4.2.5. Thabo

Thabo is a 24-year-old man who was employed at the time of the study. He resided in Bisley, a suburb of Pietermaritzburg. He was the only child, and both his parents were permanently employed full-time. His mother was a teacher and his father a police officer. Thabo was diagnosed with a mild to moderate intellectual disability and dyslexia at a young age. At Newton, Thabo studied and completed Motor Vehicle Repairs (MVR) as a technical subject. He was also chosen to be the head boy. At the time of the study Thabo was employed at a reputable automobile company in Pietermaritzburg as a motor mechanic.

4.2.6. Zandi

At the beginning of the study, Zandi was a 24-year-old unemployed woman. She was born with a chronic illness and was diagnosed with a mild to moderate intellectual disability at a young age. Zandi was orphaned when she was three years old and then adopted by a middle-class relative who was employed full-time as a municipal official and resided in Northern Park, one of the suburbs in Pietermaritzburg. At Newton Pre-Vocational School, Zandi studied and completed Needlework (sewing) as a technical subject. Zandi attempted to open a business, which did not succeed due to a lack of financial support and the discrimination that she experienced as a person with a disability.

Zandi sadly passed away during the study period, but data generated from the interview with her is in this study.

4.3. Data presentation, Discussion and Analysis

The following are the themes that emerged from the interviews after categorizing and coding the data.

4.3.1. Education

All of the participants completed their education at Newton Pre-Vocational School which offered the Technical Occupation Curriculum (TOC). The focus of the TOC is on skills development for learners living with disabilities, particularly, mild to moderate intellectual disability. When participants were asked to describe their experience at Newton, all 6 indicated that they had found the curriculum and classroom teaching to have been extremely accommodating in relation to their respective intellectual disabilities, as compared with the mainstream curriculum which they encountered when they were still in primary school.

All 6 participants shared the same sentiments that their experience with Newton teachers was very comfortable as the teachers often gave them emotional support. However, 5 of the 6 participants indicated that the work experience program that is offered in their final (fourth) year of study was not helpful. This program is aimed at helping learners to integrate what they have learned in the classroom into practical work experience. Parents of fourth-year learners were encouraged to seek a temporary position at a reputable company for their children to do their work experience, in the area of the specific skill they had learnt at Newton. Five of the participants indicated that they had found it very difficult to find a placement at a reputable company.

Rose stated that she could not find a reputable salon:

[Sad expression] *“Most of the salon businesses awaregistiwe [are not registered] and those who are registered were not willing to take me as they were uncomfortable in allowing me to work on their clients. They felt that I was not adequately trained. It made me feel discriminated against”.*

Michelle expressed similar sentiments:

“I couldn’t find a company that was willing to allow me to work in an administrative capacity.
[Began to cry] *They said ‘bathi ngiyadomoroza’ [we cannot allow a crazy person to touch our*

documents]. *I felt very discriminated against because it made me feel like my disability was preventing me from getting the opportunity to do my work experience program.*”

Asanda also expressed similar sentiments

“First of all, ma’am it was very difficult for me to find a place where I can do my building as work experience program as I could not find one next to where I lived. After some time ngayithola esthawa [meaning town] but [long sigh] my happiness of finding the place was short-lived because they did not allow me to do the program stating many reasons one of them was “ubani ozorhafa uma ngilimala” [who will pay if I get injured while doing the program] The other reason “okuyiyona eyangikhawatha kakhulu” [the one that bordered me the most] “ukuthi i oledi lalingangisaphohti” [my mother did not support me] this was a big problem as they also needed her consent.[with sadness in his face] they also told me they don’t work with mentally challenged people.”

Rose shared her experience by stating:

[eyes tearing up] *“wememu ave kwabalikhuni ukuthola inkulisa eristiwe eyayingavuma”* [It was very difficult to find a registered day care that was willing to allow me to do my work experience program] *this was very painful because next to where I live there were more than three registered day-cares but none of them allowed me sighting that I might not be mentally and emotionally fit to handle young children. loko ngakuthatha ngokuthi ingoba ngiqhamuka e Newton”. [that made feel discriminated because of the type of school I came from] “My mother was always at work so she did not help me as she felt she would be wasting her time”.*

Zandi shared her experience by stating:

“Trying to do my work experience was so difficult for me ,okokuqala yenziwa ebusika okuyinkinga ngoba [which was a problem for me]as I’m always sick in winter because of my chronic condition [tearing eyes] I did not get a place that was willing to take me. That is when I decided that when I’m finished, I will open my own sewing business, which I did but wasn’t successful. [sighing] The lack of support from my guardian made me to give up searching for other places as she told me they will all reject me”.

Thabo, on the other hand, found the work experience program to be useful. He said:

[Smiling] *“Finding a job was somewhat a blessing as I was still doing my work experience when a reputable motor company told me that they were hiring me. I became fully qualified after I completed and passed my trade test.”*

Regarding the TO curriculum, all participants stated that the curriculum did not help them enough in gaining access to tertiary education, nor did it provide any provisions for tertiary education because the level of study they did at school did not qualify them to study further. Asanda stated that because he had seen many former Newton school learners struggling to further their studies he did not expect to be enrolled as a result after one rejection from a TTVET he did not try again. Pillay (2013) states that youth with intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities generally have lower educational expectations and are less likely to take college entrance tests. Londiwe, Rose and Zandi stated that after they were rejected from TTVET they tried to enrol at mainstream schools so that they can get a grade 12 certificate but they were also rejected as they did not meet the requirements.

Further more inclusive education promotes the need for a high-quality education (Morina, 2016). Pillay (2013) points out that Education White Paper 6 on inclusive education carries a special obligation to guarantee that all pupils with and without disabilities are able pursue their learning potential to the maximum. Despite the development of a policy framework and constitutional rights to quality education, the South African government has thus failed to effectively implement post school education that is inclusive (Pillay 2013).

Regarding the abovementioned, Michelle said:

[Appeared to be sad and on the verge of crying] *“I enrolled at a TTVET college in Pietermaritzburg. However, after a month I had to deregister as I found that the curriculum there is on another level. My classmates used to call me ‘ngesidomu sase Newton’ [that ‘stupid one from Newton’]. As much as I enjoyed learning at Newton, because the curriculum there was suited to my needs, I feel as though it doesn’t do much to prepare children like me when they leave Newton and want to study further.”*

Michelle’s experience identifies that the T.O.C was the problem in that it emphasized foundation and intermediate competence while the TTVET expects mainstream senior competence.

When asked if they had received any emotional or financial support from home during their schooling at Newton, 4 participants said they had not. This attribute contributed to their negative attitudes towards themselves Bourdieu (1977). These participants also expressed strong views that if they had received the necessary and desired support during their schooling—and especially during the work experience program during their final year—they would have been better off emotionally and better equipped to deal with the realities they faced after school. Rose said:

“My mother never attended any of my parent-teacher meetings. [Hurt expression]. If she did, I feel she would have had a better understanding of my intellectual disability and maybe provided more support and guidance instead of shouting at me every chance she got.”

It appeared that Rose was convinced that her mother did not care about her. According to Bourdieu (2002), habitus is informed by the family background and in Rose’s case, it was evident that she was not convinced of her mother’s love and support.

Asanda said:

“My mother never attended even one parents meeting as she always said angeke ngimoshe isikhathi sami ngalombhedo wakho ngiyatohoza mina uma ngilova uzodlani? [I can’t waste my time on this rubbish of yours you know I have to do some piece jobs for you to be able to eat]

Londiwe said

“I did not get any support at all as I was seen as a disgrace to the family, I felt alone all the time”

Zandi said:

“As an orphaned child I always felt that my guardian is not supporting me, as she will always have excesses when it comes to my schooling this frustrated me in such a way I would often lock myself in my room she would not even notice”

4.3.2. Employment

When participants were asked if they had any success in finding employment, of the 6 participants ,3 had never been employed, even though they had been actively searching for employment since completing their studies at Newton. Michelle received a monthly stipend from being enrolled in a learnership program. Asanda had been employed to wash taxis at one time but this did not last. Zandi had tried to open a business using the skills she learnt at Newton but it failed because of the

lack of clients to support her business. Thabo had been employed permanently immediately after completing the studies at the same school. This demonstrates that people living with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities can be employed and can lead fruitful lives, if given the opportunity.

While Newton Pre-Vocational School issues a certificate of completion reflecting the skill that a learner has studied, the programme is not recognised. This makes it more difficult for graduates to obtain jobs. Most participants felt that, had the training they had received at Newton been recognised they would have stood a better chance of finding sustainable jobs. Bourdieu (1987) states that cultural capital can be institutionalised in a form of certificates but because the certificate the participants got from Newton was not recognised made it difficult for them to acquire cultural capital.

Michel shared her experience:

“I once applied at a local supermarket for an administrative position, [[face filled with sorrow] out of 4 applicants that brought in the CV on that day I was the only one who was told immediately that even though I had studied Office practice at Newton I did not meet the requirement because my certificate is not recognised, Ngaphuma umoya wami uphukile ngiphoxekile” [I felt disappointed and embarrassed]

Rose shared the same sentiments:

“I studied hairdressing as a skill at Newton but whenever I apply for jobs emasaluni [at hairdressing salons] njalo ngiyaphoxeka, ngelinye ilanga the owner of the salon wavele wangihleka uma ebona isitifiketi sami” [every time I get disappointed, one day the salon owner literally laughed at me after seeing my certificate] [with sadness on her face]

All of the participants felt that the curriculum at Newton had not prepared them with the skills they needed to look for a job—such as basic computer skills, identifying sites for job listings, writing a curriculum vitae (CV) and marketing themselves and the skills they possessed. They also felt that they would have benefited greatly if they had been taught some basic business skills, such as how to start a business or how to draw up a business plan. Participants also felt that it would have been helpful to them if the TOC had included basic computer skills, which in this day and

age is necessary. Participants felt that the lack of this knowledge severely hindered their ability to seek and secure employment.

Furthermore, most of the participants felt that they had been discriminated against when looking for jobs because of their intellectual disabilities. All of the participants felt that companies' lack of knowledge about intellectual disabilities had made it difficult for them to secure sustainable jobs.

A study conducted by Vornholt et al. (2013), which focused on the lack of acceptance of disabled employees by non-disabled co-workers found that businesses in South Africa often do not employ individuals with disabilities for sustained periods. Michelle, who had a learnership at a reputable company where she was earning a R3000 monthly stipend reported that she had a terrible experience because of the discrimination and prejudice that she felt amongst her colleagues, or experienced from her colleagues:

“From my learnership experience, it was a horrible time for me [she began to have a panic attack as she recalled her experience] because I was discriminated against and undermined constantly. I was sometimes called ‘mad’ or ‘crazy’. This got worse once they knew I was on bipolar medication, which, to me, was a constant reminder of my intellectual disability. I just felt like I don’t belong.”

Similar sentiments were shared by Asanda:

“I was employed as a car washer in my neighbourhood. I was underpaid, ill-treated, and called names on a daily basis. Some customers would not want me to wash their cars because they knew that I went to a special needs school. [becoming angry] If I did wash their cars and did a poor job, I was subjected to harsh treatment and called names—‘lesdomu’ [stupid]—because of my intellectual disability. It got to a point where I was fired because I was scaring away business.”

Although Thabo was fortunate to have been offered a permanent job immediately after leaving Newton, he had also experienced discrimination and defamatory comments from colleagues:

“I was offered a job [big smile] while doing my work experience. After finishing my schooling, I was employed permanently, and the managers were impressed with my work ethic and eagerness to learn about the industry and trade. My colleagues, however, were the opposite. [Stopped smiling] I would often be called names and asked why I was here because I was coming from a special needs background.”

A lack of finances was one of the factors that some participants shared, which hindered them from securing sustainable jobs. For instance, Rose mentioned that once she was called for an interview, she did not have the funds to get there. Some participants mentioned they needed more funds to prepare and submit their CVs and visit job sites

Asanda said:

“As said before I tied working, washing cars, I often experience problems with my clients as I often did not have funds to buy cleaning material. As a result, I ended up losing my working station because I could not afford to pay rent for my space” [trying to hide his pain]

Zandi said:

“Although I am good at sewing, I could not sustain my business as I lacked funds to even advertise my work” angisaphathi imali yokuthenga I material [not to mention the money to buy material]

4.3.3. Emotional wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing, or wellness, is defined as the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times (Cowen, 1994). Asanda, Londiwe, Michelle, Rose and Zandi, were diagnosed with depression due to their inability to secure employment, socioeconomic factors, and a poor emotional support structure within their families. This resulted in them having a low sense of emotional wellbeing. This was, however, more evident with Zandi and Londiwe. Zandi mentioned that after the failure of her business things got really bad for her emotionally.

Londiwe mentioned that her depression became worse when she was constantly compared to her sister who was studying towards a medical degree. She said:

“My depression got worse after my father shouted at me at one stage, asking me why I couldn’t be like my sister. This was after I made a minor mistake while cooking dinner. My depression worsened as I was not allowed even to have friends; I was always in my bedroom, eating my pain away because my parents were ashamed of me. As a result, I am now obese, which frustrates me even more as I feel ashamed for people to see me like this.”

Londiwe was not permitted to go outside because of she was intellectually challenged and female and she felt this was the reason her parents were ashamed of her. She was prevented from accessing

post school educational opportunities and had no interaction or relations with people outside her immediate family. Londiwe experience what Bourdieu (2002) termed as symbolic violence as her parents imposed their thoughts and perceptions of her by as she was prohibited to even go outside Bourdieu (2002)

The depression experienced by participants was further exacerbated by low self-esteem and a poor self-image. Pillay (2013) notes that learners with an intellectual disability find it difficult to reason accurately and logically, which distorts their self-description and could result poor self-esteem, discontent and self-defeating behaviours. They often experience feelings of intellectual inadequacy and incompetence when compared to other learners. Prolonged stigmatization triggers an expectancy of failure, an attitude of helplessness, and an outward directedness. Richards (2013). Of the 6 participants, 5 indicated that they had tried to commit suicide at least once since completing their studies at Newton due to depression. Zandi had made two failed suicide attempts at the time of the interview. Bourdieu (1997) terms this as 'socialized subjectivity'. which when people view their personal judgement or opinion of themselves rather than that from outside This was the case with Zandi as she perceived herself as a failure and a disgrace. She explained that her depression was exacerbated when she tried to start a business as she was subjected to constant rejection by clients who discriminated against her because of her disability.

Zandi also said:

"Sometimes I feel like I can sit alone as I often feel like people can see that ngiyagula and yiko bengafuni ukuthungelwa yimi" [can see that I have a chronic illness and I feel that is why they did not support my business] "I think it will be better if I die then to experience such pain, so I tried to kill myself".

Londiwe shared the same sentiments:

"The constant comparison of me and my sister is what bothers me a lot. I also feel like I am an embarrassment to my family, ikakhulu kubazali bami [especially my parents] as a result I overdosed on painkillers at one stage trying to commit suicide"

Michelle described her negative feelings about herself and towards her sibling as follows:

"I see myself as the black sheep of the family. I feel like my sisters and brother are the favourites of my parents and, because I have a intellectual disability, I feel like I am not making them proud.

My other siblings are all mentally abled, my younger sister is in university, so I often feel like they are proud of her and her accomplishments more than me. I have sometimes found myself thinking very horrendous thoughts towards my younger sister. So one day, I went to my mom's bedroom and drank all her pills."

Individuals will develop and adapt strategies like isolation that to meet the needs of the social world that they inhabit (Bourdieu, 1996).

4.3.4. Economic experiences

Asanda and Michelle expressed that, as they were unemployed, they were unable to contribute financially to their households. Otieno and Onyango (2018) state that persons living with disabilities find themselves living in poverty not because they want to, but due to problems such as inadequate access to employment and finance. This leads to them experiencing feelings of worthlessness and futility and of being a burden to their parents.

Asanda spoke to his experience of not being able to contribute to his family financially:

"I feel like I am a burden to my mother, sometimes, because I can't help her put food on the table. When I was washing cars, it was a bit better, but now that I am unemployed, things are tough. I can't even apply for an I-grant from SASSA (South African Social Security Agency). At one point they said I'm not sick enough to receive a grant, which frustrates me even more because I am also not well or fit enough to get employed by companies or the government themselves."

4.4 Discussion of the main findings

4.4.1 Emotional experiences.

Bourdieu (1977) defines the term 'habitus' as the personal nature and attitudes, that learners exhibit towards schooling, which signifies that a negative mentality towards school, eventually affects educational accomplishment. From the participants' narratives, it was revealed that 5 out of 6 participants expressed that their journey after the completion of their prevocational schooling has been an emotional and a painful one. It further was noted that 5 out of 6 participants mentioned that, after completing their schooling, not being able to find employment and further their education resulted in depression and anxiety. A few had other underlying conditions such as dyslexia, bipolar disorder and chronic illnesses, in addition to their mental disabilities. These

conditions were aggravated by their negative experiences as they tried unsuccessfully to find sustainable employment

4.4.2 Inadequate preparation for the world of work.

Although participants described their schooling experience at Newton Pre-Vocational School as relatively positive, they stated that the T.O. curriculum used at Newton needed to adequately prepare them for adulthood and their chosen field of work. In the field of education, for example, Bourdieu implies that parents from varying socio-economic backgrounds all have difficulty doing what they perceive to be in the best interest of their children without considering their financial differences, levels of education, and individual natures (Phillips, 2011). Schooling experiences can ultimately have an impact on a child's employment opportunities. Yulwaswati (2013) recommends that special and inclusive vocational schools develop school-to-work transition programs in the form of specific industry-related training that is current and relevant to the market. Rooney and Young (2023) share this same view that further learning opportunities for PLWD must be made available through post-school education and training institutions; these could include learning specific skills for seeking jobs or succeeding at work.

According to Bourdieu (1973) education is seen as a ground of cultural conflict, where in some families, the value of education may be seen as a fundamental stepping stone in achieving success in employment and in other families, it is merely valued as a tool of learning about the world we live in. Out of the 6 participants, 5 participants felt that the T.O. curriculum had limitations; they felt that the scope of the curriculum was not broad enough as there were important areas that were not covered. Three of the 6 learners also felt that the certificate that they had obtained upon finishing their schooling was not as strong as they would have like it to be as the programme offered by Newton was not recognised. In this regard, Symbolic capital is appropriately exhibited as it is involved in cultural value attributes like educational credentials which can be materials, however, are not recognized (Bourdieu 1990). As a result, these participants felt that their prevocational certificate had not increases their chances of employment.

Although the participants thought that the work experience program was a great initiative by the school to assist them with developing their skills, the school should have helped in terms of upholding the Education and Training Act No.8 of 1998 ss 9(2), which states that the imbalances of the past in gender and disability must be addressed and redressed. Education and Training Act

No.8 of 1998 18(3) further stipulates that the state must determine the appropriate measures to redress past inequalities by identifying and forming partnerships with relevant companies to create work-leakage programs to assist them. Because of the lack of support from the school, 5 out of 6 participants did not complete the program as they needed help finding a registered and reputable company willing to give them a placement. As part of the criteria stipulated by the school, learners were required to find a registered company willing to take them on for work experience. Despite the challenges faced by the participants, Thabo was the only participant to have been offered permanent employment where he had completed his work experience program. This is evidence that the program can benefit the learners if they get support and assistance from the school.

4.4.3 Inadequate family support.

The fact that it was the responsibility of parents, rather than the school, to find a suitable company for the learner to obtain work experience presented a problem because, according to 5 participants, most of their parents needed to learn how to assist effectively. The participants perceived this as an unwillingness, disinterest, and uncaring attitude toward their education on the part of their parents. Parental attitude can be attributed to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997). Furthermore, this can also be attributed to what Bourdieu (2002) termed as habitus, as the participants had embodied a sense of habitus that rendered them a predisposition to specific values and beliefs as some perceived and viewed the failure of their parents to support them as discrimination or lack of empathy. As a result, some were convinced that their future was bleak. Therefore, These values and beliefs influenced how they perceived themselves as individuals. Bourdieu (1987) further states that field and habitus can influence each other; hence, all of them were influenced by their habitus and field, whether positively or negatively. Self-perception was also evident with Thabo compared to the rest, as he had support from home and was recognized as a leader by the school; he became strongminded and adapted to the needs of the social world. Habitus is ensconced in the family background and can mold and shape an individual through their environment (Bourdieu, 2002). One participant expressed that she felt that her parents did accept her as an intellectually disabled person as she was constantly compared with her older sister, who was studying to be a doctor.

4.4.4 Ignorance and discrimination in the workplace

According to Morwane et al, (2020) the social shame, prejudice and the lack of support from the government were the main obstacles of PLWD in acquiring employment. Participants reported that the companies they had approached while seeking employment had lacked understanding and knowledge about their disability and had demonstrated prejudice towards them as compared with their abled counterparts. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), the term Field, which epitomizes the 'struggle-within-a-struggle' and battle inside distinct social circles, can serve as a valid reason for the abovementioned. Rose, who studied hairdressing at Newton Pre-Vocational School, felt that she should have been given support by the school in securing a reputable salon to do the work experience program since most salon businesses are informal. The registered ones were very sceptical about offering her the opportunity. As a result, she ended up not doing the work experience program at all. Michelle, who had taken Office Practice as a practical subject, was reluctant to afford work experience. None of the companies her parents approached offered her a chance. The school is focusing on "skills" without understanding the sector requirements as they are divorced from it in terms of school/workplace relationships. The expectation that parents must find a workplace for their children is sometimes a negative factor.

The lack of support and understanding from their families and potential employers contributed negatively to participants' already compromised mental well-being. As a result, 5 of the 6 participants stated that they had tried to commit suicide at least once due to depression.

The negative impact of discrimination and rejection, on the social level, on participants' psychological well-being cannot be underestimated, as the employers, co-workers, customers, or family members may be presumed to have lacked understanding about their intellectual disability. This was evident when Thabo mentioned that he often faced discriminatory remarks from his colleagues who doubted his abilities based on the stigma associated with Newton Prevocational School.

4.4.5 Articulation gap between pre-vocational education and higher education

An articulation gap between prevocational schools for special needs learners and higher education was reported. Michelle was fortunate to have the opportunity to enroll at a TTVET college. According to her, she felt that she could not cope with the curriculum that was offered, and her peers discriminated against her. The lack of opportunity to enroll at a TVET made her frustrated

and felt alone; as a result, she dropped out. Bourdieu (2002) states that the theory of cultural reproduction is also influenced by how a person is socialized, which will be evident in how they embody dominant ideas in social dynamics. Hence, Michelle felt convinced by her peer's perception of her. Her TTVET lectures may have lacked understanding of her condition or Michelle could have had a more positive experience had she been adequately prepared for the TTVET environment. However, the TTVET lecturers did not have sufficient knowledge of the T.O. curriculum and the type or category of learners used it.

4.5. Conclusion

The data emanating from the study has presented a very clear picture of the participants' perceptions about their schooling, their own self-image and the image of them by significant others. The data also very clearly identifies and lays bare the difficulties encountered by the participants in leading a productive and fulfilling life due to the challenges that limit their opportunities and which creates a tremendous frustration in fulfilling their employment desires.

Critically, the data also identifies that the South African Schools Act of 1996 with the best intentions, does not translate into opportunity unless there is a managed process of creating opportunity especially for learners with mild or moderate intellectual disability. It lays bare the realization that the Technical Vocational Education and Training strategy of the government is geared towards learners from mainstream schools and is exclusionary when it comes to learners with mild and moderate intellectual ability.

The data also clearly identifies that within the education system as a whole, that key role players such as teachers and lecturers do not have a clear understanding of how to effectively create opportunity for learners categorized as being mildly or moderately intellectual disability and are thus unable to cater for let alone support such learners.

In the next chapter I present the Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations emanating from this research study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented an analysis of the narratives of the participants, who were out of school learners who had attended Newton Pre-Vocational School. The findings revealed that the participants had experienced intense and difficult emotions since completing their prevocational schooling because of the impact of their disability on social interactions and employment opportunities, exacerbated by limitations and gaps in the prevocational curriculum especially in the certificate they obtained upon finishing their schooling which was not accredited therefore rendering it useless when seeking employment. They had also developed about themselves.

This chapter discusses the main findings and key issues that came out of the study, guided by the research questions that shaped the study. This chapter also explores the significance of the study. The limitations of the study are discussed. The chapter concludes with recommendations for the mitigation of the challenges that were encountered by participants, and my final reflections.

5.2. Conclusion-Significance of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate and understand the different transitioning experiences and emotional experiences of out-of-school learners who attended Newton Pre-Vocational School for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality of South Africa. These learners are faced with immense challenges when trying to secure sustainable jobs due to the nature of their disability and the fact that intellectual disability is often misunderstood in the employment sector and within society. These individuals are limited by ignorance about mild intellectual disability on the part of employers, who fail to recognise that this disability does not render a person totally mentally impaired and that they could perform well under proper guidance and support. The study highlights the plight of these learners resulting not only from their disability but also from limitations in the Technical Occupational (T.O.) curriculum that is offered in Newton Prevocational school. Teachers who teach learners with disabilities are usually not trained to teach learners with special needs; hence, they lack significant skills (Pillay, 2013).

This study contributes to a wider body of knowledge about mentally disabled learners' experiences, with particular emphasis and insight into the way the South African T.O. curriculum

prepares them for the world of work. Individuals such as the participants in this study, who have intellectual disabilities that are not severe, are expected to become self-sufficient as adults, yet the experience of these participants was that the curriculum did not equip them to become skilled and respectable members of society.

Participants described experiences of discrimination and prejudice by prospective employers, coworkers, clients and family members that caused them intense emotional distress. Five of the 6 participants suffered from anxiety and depression after their schooling related to feelings of worthlessness.

It was noted that even those who came from middle income and educated families experienced the same difficulties. Their capabilities and acquired skills were often brought into question as they attempted to enter the world of work and participate economically.

This study provided a platform for participants' voices to be heard and their predicament to be understood by policy makers and curriculum designers, thus creating an awareness of the lived experiences and realities of mentally challenged learners in terms of their career and economic endeavors during and after schooling.

It was also hoped that the research process, itself, would engage participants in a way that would assist them in transforming their thinking and rebuilding their self-worth, as well as giving them the knowledge they needed to be able to access psychological services to help them address the difficult emotions they experienced as a result of discrimination based on their disability.

5.4. Limitations of the study

The rationale for conducting this study was based on my personal experiences, as I have a brother who has struggled to participate socially and economically, as a result of his intellectual disability. My personal experiences became a limitation, however, as I stood the risk of being biased in my interpretation of data which did not validate my own experiences, while favoring data that affirmed the views I hold. There was also a risk that I would have preconceived ideas about the participants' experiences based on my own brother's experiences or my previous interactions with the participants when I was their teacher.

During analysis of the interview data, the researcher noted that more time for interviews, was necessary to provided more time for the participants to recall their experiences as they had short attention spans and limited communication skills due their intellectual disabilities, to give them enough platform to voice their personal thoughts and experiences. The interviews triggered difficult emotions for the participants. To support them, a psychologist was available whom they could access as needed; this resulted in some interviews taking longer.

Due to the degree of the participants' intellectual disabilities, the participants' self-reflections and emotional experiences were not as detailed.

It should be stressed that the study involved a small number of former learners from Newton Prevocational School who were purposively chosen using convenience sampling; the findings thus cannot be generalized to other pre-vocational schools in the country.

It was difficult to obtain parents' consent for their children to participate in the study as they stated that they did not understand the purpose of the study even after the study was explained to them by the researcher. Since the participants are intellectually disabled, obtaining parental consent was imperative. The delay in obtaining parental permission altered the researcher's time frames as it took longer to get 6 participants. A limitation of this study was that I was only able to find one successfully employed participant.

5.5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations for Newton Pre-Vocational School

- The technical occupational (T.O.) curriculum that is offered at Newton Pre-Vocational School should be revised by the Department of Education to include job-seeking skills.
- The work experience programme should be driven by Newton Pre-Vocational School so that the school forms partnerships with prospective employers and companies to increase the learners' chances of getting accepted by reputable companies for work experience, which could potentially lead to permanent employment.

- The work experience program at Newton Pre-Vocational School should be extended to one year to give learners sufficient work experience to secure sustainable jobs.
- Newton Pre-Vocational School should establish a parent support group to educate, guide, and assist parents in dealing with the unique needs of their children to prevent discrimination and ill-treatment of special needs learners by their families and to empower parents to support their learners' educational journey and career aspirations more actively.

Recommendations for government

- The involvement of the Department of Social Development is recommended to ensure that learners with intellectual disabilities can access social grants. Accessing social grants can be achieved through collaboration with the Department of Basic Education so that learners enrolled at a prevocational school diagnosed with an intellectual disability are afforded access to social grants
- The articulation gap identified between the pre-vocational T.O. curriculum and higher education entry points should be addressed by the Department of Higher Education by developing bridging programs for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities who have completed prevocational schooling and would like to continue their education.
- Newton Pre-Vocational School should undertake to meet the criteria to have its programs accredited and apply for accreditation to increase the employability of its graduates.
- The study highlighted several gaps and barriers experienced by learners with intellectual disabilities that need to be addressed through more vital collaboration by all stakeholders—the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education, schools, parents, the employment sector, and the Department of Social Development—for these learners to be able to transition successfully from education to the world of work and to be able to become financially independent and to contribute economically.
- The Department of Education needs to support teachers and parents on the Occupational Stream, pave a way forward on the exit plan for learners, and involve other stakeholders and institutions.
- The study also highlighted that some participants endured discrimination. The Department of Social Development, in collaboration with the Department of Labour, should undertake initiatives

to teach businesses and employees about disabilities and the effects that discrimination has on disabled individuals.

Recommendations for further research

Further research is needed into how people living with disabilities—especially individuals with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities—can be supported by all stakeholders to integrate successfully into the work environment.

5.6. Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted the intensity of emotions and frustrations experienced by these former learners as they attempted to enter the workplace after completing their schooling. This study provided a platform for these participants to voice and share their emotional experiences, thus empowering them. The study aimed to investigate and understand the different transitioning experiences and emotional experiences of out-of-school learners who attended Newton Pre-Vocational School for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality of South Africa.

The participants' narratives were used to gain an understanding of and deeper insight into the emotional experiences of these out-of-school youth with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities who had completed their schooling at a pre-vocational school as they navigated the world of work. Legislation in South Africa and its related policies and international policies were examined, and how they have addressed the needs of people with disabilities was examined. Although some have succeeded in obtaining employment, the literature and the findings of this study suggest that the majority struggle to obtain employment due to various factors.

The curriculum also plays a vital role in preparing people living with disabilities for the workplace and equipping them with skills they can use to sustain themselves after completing their schooling. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that interventions be made at the level of the government in order to realise the vision of the Department of Basic Education to equip learners with the skills they need to sustain themselves.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please note that this is for record purposes only. Your name or the name of your institution will not be divulged in any way in any communications emanating from this project.

Name & Surname	
---------------------------	--

Place of Birth	
-----------------------	--

Sex (Tick one)	Female	Male
-----------------------	---------------	-------------

Age	
------------	--

Disability/ Disabilities	
-------------------------------------	--

Religion	
-----------------	--

Place of Residence	
---------------------------	--

Vocational Course Completed	
--	--

Year of Completion of Schooling	
--	--

Current Employment Status	
--------------------------------------	--

Parent/s Information

Marital Status	
Level of Education	
Employment	

Siblings Information

No	
Ages	
Current status (What are your siblings currently doing? E.g. are they schooling, studying or employed?)	

SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE

1. In your own words, please describe your schooling experience at Newton Pre-Vocational School. (Prompts: describe your experience of teaching and learning, assessment, teacher learner relations, learner-learner relations, parent-school relations. Describe the factors that facilitated or impeded your success in your vocational studies. How did you manage the challenges you faced?)
2. What knowledge and skills do you believe you need for employment in your field?
3. Do you believe that your pre-vocational schooling has provided you with the necessary knowledge and skills for employment? Explain. (Prompt: In what ways do you believe you have been prepared for employment? In what ways do you believe you could have been better prepared for employment?)
4. In what ways do you think Newton Pre-Vocational School prepared you to navigate the world of work? (Prompt: Were you provided with skills which enable you to identify and apply for jobs in the market, such as developing a curriculum vitae, completing application forms, writing letters of application, etc.)

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

1. Can you please describe your experience of finding employment? (Prompts: How many job applications have you completed? Were you supported in applying for the job/s? If, yes, who supported you and what form of support did you received? Did you qualify for the jobs you

applied for? How many applications were unsuccessful? If, yes, what was the reason you were not successful in your application for employment? Were you provided with a reason for your unsuccessful application for employment? If yes, what was the reason provided? What do you believe to be the reason for you being unsuccessful with your job applications? do you think having your disability has affected your chances of employment? Explain. Do you think the current socio-economic context has affected your chances of getting employment? Explain. Do you think that your socio-economic status has influenced your chances of gaining meaningful employment? Explain.)

2. If you are currently employed, describe your work employment experience?
(Prompts: What factors facilitated your orientation to the new job? Did you received any additional training for the job you currently have? Explain. In what ways do you feel included in your place of work. In what ways do you feel excluded in your place of work? Explain. In what ways do you think you should or can be supported in your place of employment?)
3. If you are currently not employed, describe your experience of not being employed. (Prompts: How have you dealt with not being employed? Are you currently being financially supported? If yes, how or by whom? What are you doing to gain employment? Are there any other factors not covered above that influence your ability to gain employment?).

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



12 November 2023

Gugulethu Thokozile Mkhize (221049131)
School Of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear GT Mkhize,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005975/2023

Project title: Transitioning from school to work. A narrative inquiry of the experiences of out-of- school youth with disabilities who attended a prevocational school in the uMgungundlovu District.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 08 August 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 12 November 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX D: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT LETTER

PARENTAL/ GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD’S PARTICIPATION

I, (Full Name), parent/guardian of a former learner at have been informed about the study “*Transitioning from School to Work. A Narrative Inquiry of the Experiences of Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities who Attended the Newton Prevocational School in the uMgungundlovu District*”, by Gugulethu Mkhize.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have been answered to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] or Dr S Sader at SaderS@ukzn.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609 Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za |

hereby assent to be present during:

Voice recording of the interview YES / NO

Signature of participant

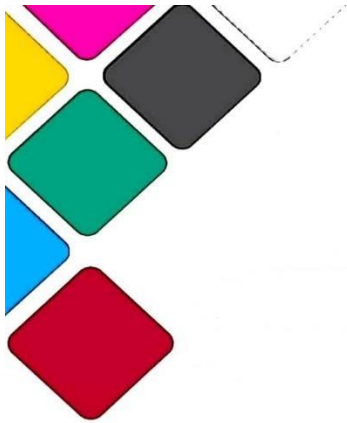
Date

Signature of Witness

Date

APPENDIX E: PSYCHOLOGIST LETTER

PSYCHOLOGIST REPORT



NOMVUYO- VUYO KHESWA
PSYCHOLOGIST

B.A. Psych (UNISA)
Hons. Psych (UKZN)
M.E.D Psych (UZ)

HPCSA. 0150339

PR No. 0984922

Tel. 033-3980059

Cell. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PIETERMARITZBURG

09 September 2022

To who it may concern

This is strictly highly confidential.

This letter confirms that Miss Nomvuyo-Vuyo Kheswa, will offer pro-bono psychological support for all participants that will be working with Mrs Gugulethu Thokozile Mkhize - student number 221049131 during her academic research project while collecting data.

[REDACTED]

NOMVUYO-VUYO KHESWA

PSYCHOLOGIST

APPENDIX F: CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING

I, Barbara L. Louton, do hereby declare that I am a professional editor with a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Writing and seventeen years of experience as an editor, researcher and writer.

I declare that I was contracted by Gugulethu Thokozile Mkhize, a Master of Education candidate under the supervision of Prof Saajidha Sader in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, to complete a professional edit of his thesis:

Transitioning from School to Work: A Narrative Inquiry of the Experiences of Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities who attended Newton Pre-vocational School in the uMgungundlovu District

I declare that I have completed a two-stage professional edit of the document, addressing structural and logical issues, the clarity and flow of language, and correcting grammatical, spelling and formatting errors. Changes were tracked and comments were left for the client, who then make further revisions which were then edited.

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<u>Barbara L Louton</u>	<u>[REDACTED]</u>	<u>20 December 2023</u>
Name	Signed	Date

5 February 2024

To whom it may concern

Editing of dissertation for Gugulethu Thokozile Mkhize I hereby confirm that I have edited the dissertation titled **Transitioning from School to Work: A Narrative Inquiry of the Experiences of Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities who attended Newton Pre-Vocational School in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality**

Corrections were made in respect of grammar, tenses, spelling and language usage using track changes in MS Word 2016. **Once corrections have been attended to the dissertation the dissertation should be correct.**

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APPENDIX G: TURNITIN REPORT



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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The South African government places the right of people with disabilities to work as an important focus with other people in terms of recruitment, career advancement, favourable working conditions, equal opportunities, reward for work, and the nature of work-related support. (Mazurka SA, 2016). Despite this many people with disabilities experience disparities in their lives. The main purpose of this study was to look at the socio-economic experiences of one of school youth with mild to moderate mental disabilities who have completed postsecondary schooling in Pretoria, in the province of Free State.

This introductory chapter provides a background to the topic and outlines the research program focused for study as well as the research questions and the possible study. By reviewing literature from around the world, the author highlights research projects which relate to key concepts, including: mental health, legislative intent and employment of people living in the situation. (M. 2016) which are presented in greater detail in Chapter Two.

1.2 Background to the study

According to Statistics SA (2016), people with disabilities have tended to occupy lower socioeconomic positions due to the exclusion, restriction and neglect they have experienced in different aspects of life, particularly in education and employment.

The 2016 South African census shows that Statistics SA does their calculations, found that a higher percentage of people with disabilities that were under-employed and under-educated than their peers families and communities. (Stat. SA, 2016). About 7.2% of people living in South Africa reported living with a disability (Stat. SA, 2016). Notably, there were no sex disparities amongst people with disabilities in terms of disability. From the 2016 based on an equal share difference in the top gender, 20% of under-employment, 27% of females.

In the various factors, I present the influence of the relation together with other factors that influence the study.

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