**STUDY TITLE**

**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM**

**BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA.**

A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Master’s Degree in Special Education.

**BY**

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# **DECLARATION**

I, Kapepelesha Janet Mwape, do declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been submitted for an award of any degree at the University of Zambia or any other University.

Signed: …………………..

Date: ……………………..

# **CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

This dissertation by Janet Mwape Kapepelesha is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Special Education of the University of Zambia.

**Examiners’ Signatures:**

Signed ……………….. Date ………………………….

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# **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. Their support rendered during my studies was overwhelming. I also dedicate this work to all the administrators and teachers in the field of special education because this work is helpful to change our attitude towards learners with disabilities to help them not to drop out of school as highlighted on the causes of dropouts with disabilities.

# **ACKNOWLEGEMENT**

I am extremely delighted to have the opportunity to acknowledge people who contributed so much to the completion of this dissertation. My sincere gratitude goes to Dr. K.K. Muzata who worked tirelessly to see this work to the end. I appreciate his openness in assuring that I did the correct thing. I also wish to thank my family for the encouragement I received not to give up but to go up to the end of my work. Lastly, my sincere gratitude goes to all my participants in this research who openly gave me the data I needed to write my dissertation. God richly bless you all.

# **ABSTRACT**

This study looked at, lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School in Lusaka District of Zambia. Dropping out by learners with disabilities is a well-known phenomenon in the country of Zambia. However, few studies have looked at lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities which this study addressed. The study objectives were; to explore lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities, to establish the causes of dropouts with disabilities, and to establish the mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities. The researcher used qualitative research approach which involves interpretation and description of the findings. Phenomenological research design which is an inductive, descriptive method was employed. The population for this study comprised dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special needs School for the last five (5) years, from 2015 to 2020. The sample size was fifteen (15) comprised of five (5) dropouts with disabilities, five (5) trained special education teachers one (1) head teacher, all from Bauleni Special Needs School and four (4) parents/caregivers to dropouts with disabilities. The researcher used purposive sampling technique that involved purposely hand-picking individuals from the population based on the researcher’s judgment. Semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data on the basis that one to one interviews produce in-depth data. The data collected was qualitatively analyzed using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method according to the themes that were guided by the objectives of the study. The key findings of the study suggested that dropouts regretted having dropped out because they lacked self-esteem, entered into early marriages, faced stigma, poverty and abuse. Further on the causes of dropping out, the study found that there was lack of sign language in the delivery of concepts, failure to pay school fees, unaccommodative infrastructure, poverty, negative attitude, and stigma among others. The study also revealed the management strategies to mitigate learners’ dropouts with disabilities which included establishment of support groups, identification of learners at risk, improvement on infrastructure to accommodate all disabilities and improve on shortage of manpower among others. The study recommended that parents and organizations for advocacy on disability should come on board to sensitize and give awareness on disability and education of people living with disabilities.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[DECLARATION………………………………………………………………………………i](#_Toc88606632)

[CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL ii](#_Toc88606633)

[DEDICATION iii](#_Toc88606634)

[ACKNOWLEGEMENT iv](#_Toc88606635)

[ABSTRACT v](#_Toc88606636)

[CHAPTER ONE: Introduction 1](#_Toc88606637)

[1.0 Overview](#_Toc88606638)…………………………………………………………………………1

[1.1 Background of the study](#_Toc88606639)…………………………………………………………1

[1.7 Significance of the Study………………………………………………………...8](#_Toc88606640)

[CHAPTER TWO: Literature review 12](#_Toc88606641)

CHAPTER THREE ………………………………………………………………………….19

[2.0 Overview………………………………………………………](#_Toc88606642)…………………19

[2.1 State of dropouts with disabilities in different countries ………………..............13](#_Toc88606643)

2.2 Lived experience of dropouts with disabilities…………………………………..12

2.3 Causes of dropouts with disabilities …………………………………………….13

2.4 Challenges dropouts face in acquiring employment …………………………… 15

[CHAPTER THREE: Methodology…………………………………………………………...21](#_Toc88606644)

[3.0 Overview…………………………………………………………………………21](#_Toc88606645)

[3.1 Philosophical frame work………………………………………………………..21](#_Toc88606646)

[3.2. Research approach………………………………………………………………21](#_Toc88606647)

[3.3 Research Design…………………………………………………………………22](#_Toc88606648)

[3.7 Research Instruments…………………………………………………………….26](#_Toc88606649)

[3.8.2. Data Quality Assurance……………………………………………………….26](#_Toc88606650)

[CHAPTER FOUR……………………………………………………………………………29](#_Toc88606651)

4.0 Overview …………………………………………………………………………..27

4.1 Lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities …………………………………...27

4.2 Perceived causes of dropouts with disabilities …………………………………….32

4.3 Management strategies to mitigate learners' dropout with disabilities ……………40

CHAPTER FIVE ……………………………………………………………………………43

Overview …………………………………………………………………………….....43

Discussion of lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities …………………………43

Discussion on perceived causes of dropouts with disabilities …………………………45

Discussion on management strategies to help mitigate learners' dropout ……………. 49

CHAPTER SIX ………………………………………………………………………..........53

Overview ………………………………………………………………………………53

Summary of the study …………………………………………………………………53

Conclusion of the study …………………………………………………………….....54

Recommendation …………………………………………………………………… …55

Recommendation for further study …………………………………………………......59

REFERENCES ……………………………………………………………………………...56

APPENDICES ……………………………………………………………………………....60

Appendix 1 …………………………………………………………………………... ...60

Appendix 2 ……………………………………………………………………………...62

Appendix 3 ……………………………………………………………………………...64

Appendix 4 ……………………………………………………………………………...66

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# **CHAPTER ONE:** **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter highlights different lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities and, shows both theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inform and guide the study based on forward mapping technique, delimitation of the study and limitations of the study as well as operational definition of terms and ends with purpose statement of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restriction).

There are many types of disabilities, such as those that affect a person’s vision, movement, thinking memory, learning, communicating, hearing, mental health and social relationships.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), disability has three dimensions:

1. Impairment in a person’s body structure or function or mental functioning; examples of impairments include loss of a limb, loss of vision or memory loss**.**
2. Activity limitation, such as difficulty seeing, hearing, walking or problem solving.
3. Participation restrictions in normal daily activities, such as working, engaging in social and

recreational activities and obtaining health care and preventive services.

Disability can be related to conditions that are present at birth and may affect functions later in life, including cognition (memory, learning, and understanding), mobility (moving around in the environment), vision, hearing, behavior, and other areas.

Chitiyo et al, (2015), says, in Zambia the provision of special education has been in existence for over 100 years, with missionaries leading the first efforts to educate learners with disabilities. Prior to the missionaries’ arrival in Zambia, children with disabilities did not have access to education. The missionaries led the initial effort to educate learners with disabilities, focusing mainly on the education of learners who had visual and hearing impairments (Lifumbo, 2016). Consequently, the first school for learners with visual impairments opened in 1955 (Katwishi, 1995). After, the Ministry of General Education began administering special education in Zambia in 1977, a number of special education schools and institutions were built. Additionally, in response to the international shift towards inclusive education, a number of special units and special classrooms were established within general education schools. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of children with disabilities were placed in general education settings (Kasonde-Ng’andu & Moberg, 2001).

Despite having an articulated policy on special education since 1977, Zambia’s implementation of special education services has been gradual and difficult (Kalabula, 1993). Like most developing nations, Zambia is experiencing challenges in addressing and delivering educational needs and services (Chitiyo & Chitiyo, 2007). Specific challenges that have been identified as major obstacles in the provision of special education services include, lack of government support, cultural influences, limited resources and poverty. Despite these challenges, Zambia is taking conscious steps in the provision of special education services (Eunice, Nyanga, & orodho, 2015; Muwana & ostrosky, 2014). To this effect Zambia has seen a gradual increase in the number of special education schools and consequently a rise in the number of learners receiving special education services.

According to the Ministry of Education statistical Bulletin (Ministry of Education, 2009a), the total number of learners with disabilities for the years 2004, 2005, and 2009 indicated an increasing trend in Zambia (i.e., from 76,144, in 2004 to 162,790 in 2009). Services for learners with disabilities are provided in four types of settings; (a) special education schools (n = 85) where only learners with disabilities are educated with no opportunities to interact with typical developing peers, (b) special education units (n = 260), attached to general education schools (n = 85) where learners with disabilities are educated separately but have opportunities to interact with typically developing peers during arrival/departure and recess time, (c) special education classrooms (n = 232), within general education schools where learners with disabilities are educated separately but have opportunities to interact with typically developing peers during arrival/departure and recess time, as well as during teacher planned activities that foster interaction among learners with and without disabilities and (d) inclusive classrooms (number not available) where learners with and without disabilities are educated in the same classrooms (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Typically, learners with more severe disabilities are placed in special education schools and special education units where they spend most of their time with special education teachers. Learners with mild disabilities typically are placed in special education and inclusive classrooms (Chanda, 2011).

The Ministry of Education in Zambia recognizes five categories of disability. These categories and the number of learners served include: (a) intellectual disability (n = 59,591), (b) hearing impairment (n = 38,267), (c) visual impairment (n= 32,094), (d) physical impairment (n = 23,054) and emotional (behavioral) disorders (n = 10, 784) (Ministry of Education, 2009b). Data indicating the number of learners by disability category served within each special education placement are non-existent.

As noted, the quality of special education is adversely impacted by the lack of resources and other challenges. Thus, the quality of special education services may not be comparable to developed nations. However, Eunice, Nyanga and Orodho (2015) noted that “UNESCO and others in the international community have acclaimed Zambia’s efforts to reach out to ‘children with special needs.

Zambia has made notable strides, with regard to special education legislation, beginning with the Ministry of General Education assuming responsibility for educating learners with disabilities. Specifically, three policies have provided the foundation of current practices in special education and inclusive education in Zambia: The education Reform Document (Ministry of Education, 1977), Focus on Learning (Ministry of Education, 1992), and Educating Our Future (Ministry of Education, 1996). The 1977 Education Reform Document outlined recommendations for special education and specified the need for integration and adaptation of the general education curriculum to meet identified and specified individual needs of learners. Furthermore, the reform document outlined the need for adequate funding in order for special education to be meaningful and beneficial. The second major education document, Focus on Learning (Ministry of Education, 1992), emanated from the declaration of education for all children at the World Conference on Education for All (1990). The conference stressed the importance of access to educational opportunities. Thus, in the 1992 policy document, the Zambian government reiterated that “every person-child, youth, and adult-shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their needs” (Ministry of Education, 1992, Article 1). Notably, the 1992 policy stressed the mobilization of resources for the education of all, including children with disabilities.

The third major educational policy, Educating Our Future (Ministry of Education, 1996), focused on formal education. Recurring themes in the document included educational flexibility, responsiveness to educational needs, and enhancement of quality of education for all children. In relation to learners with disabilities, improvement and strengthening of supervision and management of special education across the country was emphasized, (Ministry of Education, 1996). Educating Our Future (Ministry of Education, 1996, adopted after the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), marked an important advancement in special education in Zambia. This policy endorsed the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education settings and set the stage for inclusive education in Zambia.

The Zambian Government and the Ministry of General Education‘s stance on inclusion has been influenced by the Salamanca Statement and framework (UNESCO, 1994) to which Zambia ascribes. As a result, the Zambian government has adopted a policy (i.e., Educating Our Future) that stipulates equal opportunities, nondiscrimination, social justice, protection of basic human rights, and participation of learners with disabilities in the mainstream activities of school and society. The ministry of General Education has increasingly placed emphasis on the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the education system. Additionally, the Zambian government continues to review all legislation relating to persons with disabilities and relevant international convention in order to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery (Mung’omba, 2008).

In recent years, there has been a shift in the way special education and inclusive is perceived in Zambia. The shift in outlook may be attributed to the educational policy documents (i.e., The Education Reform Document (Ministry of Education, 1977), Focus on Learning (Ministry of Education, 1992), and Educating Our Future (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Muwana & Ostrosky, (2014) examined the attitudes of Zambia pre-service teachers toward the inclusion of learners with disabilities in general education classrooms. Overall, the Zambian pre-service teachers had positive attitudes toward including learners with disabilities in the general classrooms, citing that inclusion promotes an understanding and acceptance of individual differences between learners with and without special needs.

It is said that education is a great human mind reformer. For the past several centuries, education has been a useful vehicle for human development. It is therefore a very important tool for all human beings who would want to unlock the treasures of their future. However, people with disabilities still seem to be lagging behind in receiving education. For instance, UNICEF (2011) estimates that one third of the out of school children were children with disabilities. Considering that about seven hundred million children worldwide are out of school, one third of this number is a huge representation. Since they are about 10% to 15% people with disabilities in the world, which is about one billion of the total population of the world, one third of seven hundred million children are about two hundred and forty million children with disabilities who have access to education. This represents about 30% of people with disabilities. On the other hand, only about 6% of the able-bodied children are out of school. The progression and completion rates for disabled learners will be very low. For instance, in 2002, the government of Zambia declared education free for all learners. In 2003, there was a high growth enrolment level in all schools including children with disabilities, (Ministry of Education in Zambia, 2003). By 2009, the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities, ZAPD (2009) reported that only 5% of learners with disabilities would go for tertiary education. This report by the ZAPD correlated with the Ministry of Education bulletin of 2010 which showed that out of the 19000 learners with disabilities that were enrolled into grade one in 1997, only about 1000 of them reached their final secondary school grade 12, constituting a completion rate of 5.2%. These statistics are not anything to rejoice about. In any case, on average, most of the developing countries are experiencing similar trends in the provision of education to children with disabilities. This should be a concern for all well-meaning citizens of the world.

In today’s information age, financial stability and professional achievement are strongly correlated with educational attainment, (Gratz, 2009). For this and many other reasons, the researcher seeks to propose stricter measures of monitoring mechanism in the provision of education to children with disabilities in developing countries like Zambia, Lusaka district in particular.

**1.2 Background of Bauleni Special Needs School**

In August 1995, a survey was carried out in Bauleni Compound to identify children who had special education needs. A total of 110 children were identified between 10 months and 24 years old. Almost immediately after this survey, a small unit was opened for some of these children at Bauleni Middle Basic School in 1996. A volunteer from Ireland and a classroom assistant worked in the unit, which was funded by the Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary through Sister Elizabeth Dawson.

Due to lack of space at Bauleni Middle Basic School only forty (40) children were enrolled between the ages of 5 and 17 years old who opened a special needs unit. These children had different disabilities consisting of children with learning difficulties that were intellectually and physically challenged, the hearing impaired and visually impaired. They were grouped according to their ages, so that an appropriate programme could be offered. It was challenging at the beginning because of having one qualified teacher from the Ministry of Education.

In 1977, the school manager of Bauleni Middle Basic School asked the Special Unit and the Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary who supported the Unit to move to some other place. Reasons being that the school manager wanted the pupils to start making contributions towards the school through payments of fees which was more than the fees paid by the able bodied. This view was practically impossible because from the survey carried out, most of the children were either orphans or came from very poor families. At this time the ‘Education for All’ Policy was in place that allowed all children to access basic education. This school manager did not adhere to the policy, hence he preferred to take on the able bodied that were able to contribute financially unlike children with special needs in the Special Unit who could not contribute towards the school.

This action prompted the Teacher-In-Charge of the unit to apply to the Ministry of Education to shift the unit to another place. The District Education officer at the Time, Mr. Mwaba, who has since retired, authorized the unit to shift to Bauleni Street Kids Project where classrooms were built by French embassy for disadvantaged children. The project is located along Leopards Hill Road opposite Co-operative College. The recommendations for the school were made by various officers at district and provincial levels of the Ministry of Education and Inspectors of Schools inspected the premises. In their application they also asked for change of status from being a unit to a school to enable them accommodate as many children with disabilities as they could that were being identified daily. It is the school’s hope that the Ministry of Education can consider the school status by upgrading and recognizing it as a grant aided school because of increased levels of enrolment and the support that Bauleni Special School is receiving from both the Ministry of Education and the Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary to give quality and meaningful education to children with special needs.

The following are the dropout percentages of learners with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School in the last five (5) years. Lowani class (severe disabilities) 40%, pre-school 25%, grade 1 to 4 40%, grade 5 to 6 40%, grade 8 to 9 20%. The average percentage in the last five year, from 2015 to 2020 is 33% from Lowani class which has the severe disabilities to grade nine.

The school has developed in so many areas. It runs the Home/school-based education programme and 15 clients are enrolled. Because of using the classrooms all day, they are able to offer more sessions to children such as pre-school, basic education and extra-curricular activities. As most of the children come from poor homes, a feeding programme is in place to enable them be in school and allow learning to take place and lessen the levels of absenteeism. The children in the community school are taught to have a positive attitude about special needs children. They are not to ridicule them because of the policy put in place by the school to protect the children from all forms of abuse while being offered their education. The older learners that are 16+ years who cannot further with academic education are offered social and life skills and some vocational training. These include agriculture and animal husbandry, knitting and weaving, tailoring, carpentry and cookery.

With all the enthusiasm in form of projects done by the school and the support from the Ministry of Education to ease the life of learners with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School, the school has failed to keep the learners with disabilities in school as they keep dropping out prematurely.

**1.3. Statement of the problem**

In August 1995, a survey was carried out in Bauleni Compound to identify children who had special education needs. A total of 110 children were identified between 10 months and 24 years old. Almost immediately after this survey, a small unit was opened for some of these children at Bauleni Middle Basic School in 1996. A volunteer from Ireland and a classroom assistant worked in the unit, which was funded by the Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary through Sister Elizabeth Dawson.

Due to lack of space at Bauleni Middle Basic School only forty (40) children were enrolled between the ages of 5 and 17 years old who opened a special needs unit. These children had different disabilities consisting of children with learning difficulties that were intellectually and physically challenged, the hearing impaired and visually impaired. They were grouped according to their ages, so that an appropriate programme could be offered. It was challenging at the beginning because of having one qualified teacher from the Ministry of Education.

In 1977, the school manager of Bauleni Middle Basic School asked the special Unit and the Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary who supported the Unit to move to some other place. Reasons being that the school manager wanted the pupils to start making contributions towards the school through payments of fees which was more than the fees paid by the able bodied. This view was practically impossible because from the survey carried out, most of the children were either orphans or came from very poor families. At this time the ‘Education for All’ Policy was in place that allowed all children to access basic education. This school manager did not adhere to the policy, hence he preferred to take on the able bodied that were able to contribute financially unlike children with special needs in the Special Unit who could not contribute towards the school.

This action prompted the Teacher-In-Charge of the unit to apply to the Ministry of Education to shift the unit to another place. The District Education officer at the Time, Mr. Robam Mwaba, who has since retired, authorized the unit to shift to Bauleni Street Kids Project where classrooms were built by French embassy for disadvantaged children. The project is located along Leopards Hill Road opposite Co-operative College. The recommendations for the school were made by various officers at District and Provincial levels of the Ministry of Education and Inspectors of Schools inspected the premises. In their application they also asked for change of status from being a unit to a school to enable them accommodate as many children with disabilities as they could that were being identified daily. The District Education Officer understood and accepted the need to move from Bauleni Middle Basic School to the present place, Bauleni Street Kids Project. The District Office of the Ministry of Education has continued supporting the special needs children through sending skilled manpower and school grants. It is the school’s hope that the Ministry of Education can consider the school status by upgrading and recognizing it as a grant aided school because of increased levels of enrolment and the support that Bauleni Special School is receiving from both the Ministry of Education and the Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary to give quality and meaningful education to children with special needs.

The school is developed in so many areas. It runs the Home/school-based education programme and 15 clients are enrolled. Because of using the classrooms all day, they are able to offer more sessions to children such as pre-school, basic education and extra-curricular activities. As most of the children come from poor homes, a feeding programme is in place to enable them be in school and allow learning to take place and lessen the levels of absenteeism. The children in the community school are taught to have a positive attitude about special needs children. They are not to ridicule them because of the policy put in place by the school to protect the children from all forms of abuse while being offered their education. The older learners that are 16+ years who cannot further with academic education are offered social and life skills and some vocational training. These include agriculture and animal husbandry, knitting and weaving, tailoring, carpentry and cookery.

However, despite all this support and having more specialized teachers, year in year out huge numbers of learners with disabilities still keep dropping out of school. It is not known why these learners dropout, neither are their experiences known after they have dropped out of school. It is therefore, imperative to undertake this inquiry in order to shed more light on the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School.

**1.4 The purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to explore lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School.

**1.5 Research objectives**

This was guided by the following objectives:

1. To explore the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School.
2. To establish the causes of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School.
3. To establish stakeholders’ views on the mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities.

**1.6 Research Questions**

To adequately carry out the research, this study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs

School?

1. What causes dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School?
2. What are the stakeholders views on the mitigation measures for abating dropout among

learners with disabilities

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The researcher hopes that the finding of this study generates information on the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School.

The study is significant in that it has provided greater knowledge on the practical care giving, exploring socio-psychological realities of dropouts with disabilities in Zambia. Further, it is hoped that the information resulting from this study will assist to inform policy makers and other stakeholders to come up with best strategies aimed at improving the welfare of dropouts with disabilities in Zambia.

**1.8 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical frame work is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed for a research study. It serves as a structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions. The theoretical framework provides a grounding base, or an anchor, for the literature review, and most importantly, the method and analysis.

The theoretical framework explains the path of the research and grounds it firmly in theoretical constructs. The overall aim of theoretical framework is to make research findings more meaningful, acceptable to the theoretical constructs in the research field and endures generalizability. They assist in stimulating research while ensuring the extension of knowledge by providing both direction and impetus to the research inquiry.

Thus, it is no exaggeration for Imenda (2014) to say that the theoretical framework gives life to a research. A research without the theoretical framework makes it difficult for readers in ascertaining the academic position and underlying factors to the researcher’s assertions and/or hypotheses. This renders the research sloppy and not appreciable as contributing significantly to the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge. This part reviewed the study’s theoretical framework and related literature to uncover existing gaps in the knowledge about the factors that influence learners with disabilities to drop out of school. The reasons for the dropout rate have been explored, and programs to support retention have been discussed.

**1.9 Delimitation of the study**

Delimitations refer to the boundaries of the research study, based on the researcher’s decision of what to include and what to exclude. They narrow the study to make it more manageable and relevant to what one is trying to prove. In short delimitations are what the researcher will not do (elements outside of the boundaries they have set). Delimitations helps to put the research findings into context, and explains why the study is limited, it increases the credibility and validity of a research project. Examples of delimitations include objectives, research questions, variables, theoretical objectives that have been adopted and population chosen as targets of study. This study was restricted to dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School who live in Bauleni Compound.

**1.10 Limitations of the study**

Limitations relate to the validity and reliability of the study. They are characteristics of the research design or methodologies that are out of the researcher’s control but influence the researcher’s findings. Because of this they determine the internal and external validity of the study and are considered potential weaknesses. In other words, limitations are what the researcher cannot do (elements outside of the control).

Msabila and Nalaila, (2013) postulate that, limitation of the study includes potential challenges anticipated or faced by the researcher. Likewise, this study would not be conducted without limitations. Limitations of this research included the fact that the participants were all dropouts with disabilities which would have been difficult for some parents to release their children to be part of the participants. Fortunately, this was not the case because the researcher had a positive response. However, due to the limited sample which was used, the findings of this study might not be generalized to the other schools in different part of Zambia.

**1.11. Definition of key terms**

**Disability:** Is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limit one or more life activities (Decker, & Hartshorne, 2010).

**Impairment:** Damage in a way that makes something less effective.

**Dropouts:** Are learners who temporarily or permanently stop attending school before completing an education cycle, for example, ordinary level or advanced level.

**Dropout Prevention:** Strategies, techniques and programs that have the objective of decreasing dropout rates.

**Inclusion:** The act and concept of including students with disabilities in regular classrooms and schools without special treatment, with the intention that they will feel they belong and that they can immerse themselves in general society.

**CHAPTER TWO:** **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Overview**

Literature review according to (Davis, Smith and Underhill, 1989) is a “review of existing literature that identifies what researchers have found to be important and provides a basis for the researcher to work from”. Kasonde Ng’andu, (2013) further states that, “literature review assists in developing the researcher’s knowledge and identifies the boundaries of previous research, therefore, focusing and justifying the research problem”. A literature review is therefore, an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. It involves examining documents, journals and dissertations that have a bearing on the study being conducted. Literature review has been presented according to the following themes: To find out the lived experiences of dropout learners with disabilities, to establish the causes of dropout of learners with disabilities, to ascertain the challenges that dropout of learners with disabilities face in acquiring employment and to establish the management strategies that schools should employ to help mitigate learners’ dropout.

**2.1** **State of dropouts with disabilities in different countries.**

A failure to address inequality, stigmatization and discrimination linked to wealth, gender, ethnicity, language, location and disability is holding back progress towards education for all.

As the 2015 deadline for education For All goals approaches, it is disconcerting to note only that too many countries are far from the goal, but also that data remain insufficient to assess progress in education goals by various population subgroups and have concealed wide inequality.

Regardless of their circumstances, all people have an equal chance of education. This must be at the heart of new goals, (Post, 2015). No person should be denied access to good quality education because of factors such as disability.

There is lack of concrete data showing the true scale of disabilities worldwide. This lack of data is severely constraining the ability of the international community to monitor the situation of children with disabilities. There has been insufficient attention to the need to collect data on disabilities and link them to education outcomes.

The scale of disabilities is often under-reported: to take one example, a 2004 census in Sierra Leone reported only 3,300 cases of mental impairment, while a detailed national survey the year before had estimated the real figure to be ten times higher. (GMR 2010)

According to the World Health Survey, in 14 of 15 low- and middle-income countries, people of working age with disabilities were about one-third less likely to have completed primary school, (GMR, 2013/14). In Bangladesh, 30% of people with disabilities had completed primary school, compared with48% of those with no disabilities. The corresponding shares were 43% and 57% in Zambia; 56% and 72% in Paraguay, (GMR, 2013/2014)

According to a World bank analysis of India’s 2002 national Sample Survey, learners with disabilities are five and a half times more likely to be out of school. Almost three-quarters learners in India with severe impairments are out of school, compared with about 35% to 40% among learners with mild or moderate impairments.

In Kenya, very few learners with disabilities study beyond primary level. They face constraints in employment because of their low level of education, little or no adaptation of their workplaces, and limited expectations among families and employers, (GMR, 2012).

In Uganda, dropout rates are lower among learners with visual and physical impairments than among those with mental impairments, (GMR, 2010).

The Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL), (2012), primary leaving examination pass list of 2012, studied grade retention over a period of time from 2007-2012 and noticed a slight decrease in the percentage of failures over the years. In 2007, 7176 (16.9%) learners failed, in 2008, 5705 (13%) learners failed, in 2011, 5197 (12.8%) failed their exams and in 2012, 5076 (12.8%) learners failed but not all of them repeated grade 7 as most of them dropped out from school before obtaining their primary school leaving certificate.

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### **2.2 Lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities**

Learners with disabilities experience a range of challenges during their education; therefore, their reasons for considering dropping out are varied. The nature of a particular learner’s disability is sometimes cited as the primary barrier to completion, while in other cases, institutional and programmatic factors are cited (Sass & Feng, 2012). Despite substantial efforts to improve educational outcomes for learners with disabilities at all levels, dropout rates remain high, (Bello, et al 2006),

Alwal, and Johns (2006) suggested that identifying the reasons why a learner with disabilities might drop out will also help to direct appropriate intervention strategies. Thus, exploring the reasons for the dropout rates in the literature can lead to improved identification of at-risk learners and corresponding strategies for preventing or reducing dropout rates.

Dropping out of school presents a serious national, state, and local problem. There are economic and social repercussions for society as a whole, as well as consequences related to the individual’s well-being. Consequences for the individual are that on average, high school dropouts less per year than high school graduates, (US Bureau of the census, 1994). Moreover, high school dropouts have limited job opportunities and are at greater risk for low self-esteem, Grayson, (1998). Although considerable research has been conducted on factors predictive of dropping out and strategies for preventing dropping out, the majority of this research has not specifically considered learners with disabilities. Wagner (1991) noted that dropout research, policy and programming have largely overlooked learners with disabilities, “perhaps because their special education programs are assumed to provide individualized services that should ameliorate whatever risk of dropping out these students might experience”.

**2.3 Causes of dropouts with disabilities**

There are many factors that lead to dropping out of learners with disabilities. These factors are somehow similar from country to country around the globe. Among the so many causes the following are some of them. Sebatane, (2009) consider the disability of learners as one of the contributing factors to dropping out. They state that the lack of initial access for learners with disabilities means most of them are able to drop out of school. The role of the educator is important because appropriate teaching methods could enhance the learning potential of many learners with disabilities. Many educators do not gain the appropriate training nor do they in some cases know to identify forms of learning difficulties. There are many factors that lead to dropping out of learners with disabilities.

According to the Education Statistics Bulletin (2011:21) in Lesotho, learners with disabilities amounting to 20490 out of 388681 dropped out of school due to lack of appropriate support from their educators and parents. The school environment also contributes towards dropouts due to the lack of appropriate facilities for learners with disabilities such as school toilets or play grounds which are accessible for learners in wheelchairs.

Furthermore, UNESCO (2011), state that some schools in Lesotho are situated so far away that travelling to and from school every day is difficult and tiring for the disabled learners and consequently they drop out of school. As for the educators, their working conditions are hardly ideal or productive for teaching and learning as classes are overcrowded, understaffed and the equipment is often inadequate or not operational.

Regarding the evaluation of free primary education, the Ministry of Education and training (2008), stated that educators are sometimes ill-equipped and/or do not possess the necessary skills required when teaching children physical or mental disabilities. Learners come from different socio-economic background and their ages vary considerably in similar grades. Consequently, some learners tend to struggle more or have difficulty coping with the work load or the school environment than others in their grade, resulting in learners dropping out. They also feel uncomfortable amongst their peers.

The Ministry of Education and training continues to say in their final report on education policy that policy and legislation in Zambia relating to disadvantaged learners and learners with disabilities, stated that only small proportions of learners with severe disabilities are attending the special schools that can support them according to their specialized learning needs. There are only a few schools in the country that may provide special education to the severely disabled learners. Among those schools are St. Mulumba in Choma and University Teaching Hospital (UTH) School in Lusaka. It is clear that the majority of disabled learners are not receiving specialized education resulting in dropping out of school.

According to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) as cited in Lekhanya (2008), another reason why learners do not finish primary school is because sometimes learners have problems with certain subjects, especially Mathematics and English which are the core subjects, and as a consequence they fail the whole course. Some learners may not keep up with the course work while others may miss too many days and could not catch up. Learners who repeat their grades have poor performance in examinations; parental decision and absenteeism are responsible for their repetition.

The Education Statistics Bulletin (2010) revealed that the number of orphans with disabilities has declined in enrolment between 2008 and 2011. That means most orphans with disabilities dropout of school while others do not enroll in school at all after the death of their parents. The surviving parent, who is usually central to learner’s education, is forced to look for work to support her family, resulting in children being taken care of either by their grandparents or other relatives. Those care givers are not always able to monitor schooling and may not priotise the learner’s education as would natural parents. Eventually these learners who experience frequent interruptions dropout of school in order to seek employment to help maintain families.

According to UNESCO, (2011), another factor perpetuating high rates of school dropout of children with disabilities includes lack of parental support, rejection or neglect by one or both parents. Possible reasons for the rejection or neglect may be that the mother is not ready or willing to assume the responsibility of parenthood to the child with a disability. Such disturbances in relations definitely pose a threat in form of anxiety in the learner and stunt his/her psychological development. UNESCO, (2011), further states that it is the parent’s responsibility to care for their children and guide them in their schoolwork regardless of their disability otherwise learners are likely to lose their love for school. Learners with disabilities are prone to stigmatization and discrimination and also lack the resources needed to meet their educational needs. Without the care, support and guidance of caregivers, these learners with disabilities who venture into education end up dropping out of school.

Compulsory attendance is another cause of dropping out by learners with disabilities. Some learners with disabilities attend school through no desire of their own. They may have been forcibly sent to school by their parents or guardians against their will. Subsequently, the results of compulsory attendance include, among others, passive attitudes (meaning these children are at school physically but without actively responding, active resentment (these children hate schooling), and hostility towards the school environment (meaning that they dislike the school environment), (Lekhesa, 2007).

Frustration; the curriculum structure demands an attraction of interest of the learners. An irrelevant curriculum may spark frustration in some learners with disabilities or the curriculum can be linked to school standards and long-term goals beyond the comprehension and ability of the learners with disabilities. Some may not see the subject or course as having any significance for their personal development, or they may see it as forcing them into a pattern which has no relevance to their preferred lifestyle. Frustration is fertile ground for deviance and aggressive attitude in school (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007)

**2.4 Challenges that dropout learners with disabilities face in acquiring employment**

Work is a central part of adult life, consuming as much as half of our waking hours. People often identify themselves by the work they do. A job can provide a sense of accomplishment and pride and have an enormous effect on our overall life satisfaction, or it can serve as a source of frustration and dissatisfaction. Finding the right job, simply knowing what it might be, is not easy, even for highly skilled individuals. Doing so is even more difficult for those who lack adequate training or face special challenges, such as a disability.

Compared to their nondisabled peers, learners with disabilities are more likely to experience unemployment or under employment, low pay and job dissatisfaction (Dunn, 1996). Many learners with disabilities dropout of school before graduating, leaving the even more unprepared for and less likely to obtain a job

The Common Core State Standards (Common Core, 2010) provides learners, parents, and teachers with standards that strengthen the rigor of the current state standards and align them with college and work expectations to prepare learners to succeed in a global economy and society. These initiatives mandate that schools immediately respond to the dropout crisis implementing effective drop-out prevention practices to steadily graduate more learners while preparing them to be in college career ready.

Preventing learners from dropping out should begin as early as learners show signs of withdraw and disengagement from school, which may be during the first years of schooling (Balfanz et al., 2010). More specific indicators of risk can be used to guide intervention efforts. For example, low performance or failure of academic, absenteeism, and retention, of dropping out of school (Balfanz, et al., 2007).

**2.5 Mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities.**

One of the most serious and pervasive problems facing education is the drop-out epidemic exhibited by learners with disabilities. Schools are tasked with the challenge of not only raising graduation for students with and without disabilities but also preparing these students to meet college and career readiness standards. Recent studies and reviews of the literature suggest promising practices to ensure that educators meet these goals by increasing student’s engagement in school. Considerably fewer, 55% of learners with disabilities, graduate high school with a standard diploma (Data Accountability Centre, 2008)

Learners with disabilities are disproportionally affected by the drop-out crisis, and as a result, face great challenges to securing a stable future. Accountability mandate from the Child Left Behind Act (2002) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) require schools to improve graduation rates and address the achievement gap of learners with disabilities. These indicators of progress serve as evidence of school performance and the engagement of learners with disabilities and their typical peers. To further support this effort, the Common Core State Standards (Common Core, 2010) provide learners, parents, and teachers with standards that strengthen the rigor of the current state standards and align them with college and work expectations to prepare learners to succeed in a global economy and society. These initiatives mandate that schools immediately respond to the drop-out crisis by implementing effective drop-out prevention practices to steadily graduate more learners while preparing them to be college and career ready.

Preventing learners from dropping out should begin as early as learners show signs of withdraw and disengagement form school, which may be during their first years of schooling (Balfanz et al., 2010). In additions learners whose grades drop significantly at major transition times are at a greater risk of dropping out. More specific indicators of risk can be used to guide intervention efforts. Disengagement, exhibited by increased rate of behavioral infractions, low performance or failure of academics, absenteeism, and retention, are among the significantly predictive risk indicators of dropping out of school (Balfanz et al., 2007)

In the recently released drop-out prevention practice guide, The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) reviewed the available research on drop-out prevention and provided the following recommendations, (Dynarski et al., 2008). The recommendations were as follows; Diagnostic processes for identifying learner-level and school wide dropout problems. Collect and document accurate information when learners are absent for an extended period of time data and adequately respond to leaners with various risk indicators. School staff members who show concern and individual attention to learners and consistency in rule and procedures for the collective learner body improve learner attendance and academic achievement as a result of building feelings of school connectedness and trust in the teacher. Responsive practices for appropriately serving learners with disabilities should be implemented.

Accurately determining which learners are most at risk for dropping out should be a priority for schools. This is a critical first step to be able to provide timely intervention for learners who need it most. Monitoring all learners’ performance will systematically assist schools in identifying at-risk learners early as learners enter a phase of withdrawal or disengagement.

School wide interventions designed to enhance engagement for all learners and prevent dropout more generally. Communicate regularly with learners’ parents or caregivers regarding their learners’ progress. Strong relationships between learners and parents can increase learners’ grades and attendance and decrease the likelihood of dropping out of school. Advocates can encourage learners to communicate regularly with their parents about school expectations, their educational goals and their progress in regard to meeting their goals.

Actively engage learners in instructional tasks by matching curriculum to learners’ instructional level, culture, and interest and provide effective instruction that is scaffolded, explicit and strategic with multiple opportunities for successful experiences to encourage learners’ potential for learning prevention interventions, (Muzata, 2013). Learners with disabilities are at risk of dropping out due to their increased number of absences and course failures, these layers of behavioral support are the foundation for creating a safe and orderly school climate where learners feel welcomed and accepted.

Teach learners how to positively interact and effectively communicate with peers and adults (Smith, 2008). It is also effective to teach learners, especially those with disabilities, how to recognize and respond to problems, set and monitor goals, plan and organize, anticipate challenges, and express emotional responses in an effective manner.

Promote constructive problem solving. Learners who exhibit high-risk behavior should participate in immediate problem-solving sessions to develop conflict management skills to respond appropriately (Sinclair et al., 2005).

Developing a sense of self-efficacy and membership in the learning environment, developing a sense of belonging to peers or adults, and engagement in extracurricular activities can engage and motivate students to believe they can succeed, particularly learners with disabilities.

Provide accessible information to learners about their disability, their rights, and their responsibilities and bring awareness to learners regarding how their disability affects their daily activities (Scanlon & mallard, 2002). A relevant outcome for students with disabilities is that they can become self-advocates and articulate how their disability may affect their postsecondary options.

In conclusion, research evidence-based components of dropping out by students with disabilities can be prevented by using data to identify which students are most at risk for dropping out and the provide these learners with access to adult advocate who can implement academic and behavioral support in a school climate that promotes personalized and relevant instruction. It is possible to identify, monitor, and intervene based on learners’ risk indicators to maximize learner engagement, thereby increasing learners’ ability to progress in school, stay in school, and complete school.

# **CHAPTER THREE:** **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Overview**

The previous chapter gave a review of some important literature on dropouts with disabilities from objectives with respect to the experiences of dropouts with disabilities. The current chapter presents the methodology to be used in the study which includes the philosophical assumption, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques. The chapter further explains the research instruments, data quality assurance as well as data collection and analysis procedures. This section finally looks at ethical considerations.

### **3.1 Philosophical frame work**

The study adopted a social constructivism worldview advanced by Mannheim and works of men such as Berger and Luekmann’s (1967) social construction of reality; Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) naturalistic inquiry. The assumption in this worldview is that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work as they develop subjective meanings of their experiences towards certain phenomena. These meanings are varied and multiple thereby leading the researcher to investigate the complex views as opposed to few ideas. The researcher operating on this world view constructs the truth based so much on participants’ views of the situation being studied (Crotty, 1998). This provides a concrete platform for participants to construct the meaning of a situation through experiences in a general and more open-ended method of questioning.

In so doing, the researcher made the questions general and open-ended so as to carefully listen to participants’ lived experiences by using interviews. It is from this viewpoint that the experiences of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School in Lusaka District have been appreciated in this study.

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### **3.2. Research approach**

This study used qualitative research approach. According to Kombo and Tromp, (2006) a qualitative approach involves interpretation and description; it seeks to interpret, describe and analyze the culture and behavior of humans by collecting verbatim statements from participants. It is also concerned with establishing answers to the whys and hows of the phenomenon in question. Due to this, qualitative research is often defined as being subjective and findings are gathered in a written format as opposed to numerical.

In view of this fact, open-ended questions were used to allow participants offer responses within their unique context, and the value of the information provided was exceptionally high. This approach was appropriate for this study because it solicited information and investigated the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. The study focused on dropouts with disabilities in the last five (5) years, from 2015 to 2020.

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### **3.3 Research Design**

A research design is the ‘procedure for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies’ (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2000). It is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems with the pertinent and achievable empirical research. In other words, the research design sets the procedure on the required data, the methods to be applied to collect and analyze this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research questions, (Grey, 2014). This study utilized the phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is an inductive, descriptive research method. The task is to investigate and describe all phenomena including human experiences in the way these appear, (Omery 1983). The goal of phenomenological research is to seek reality from individuals’ narratives of their experiences and feelings, and to produce in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon.

With interpretive phenomenological research design therefore, the researcher was able to tap into lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities by bracketing or applying the principle of “epoch”**,** his own experiences thereby taking the information as it came from participants through verbal reporting. Since the study focused on dropout with disabilities, the said design appropriately guided the generation of interpreted information on dropouts shared experiences. Therefore, the study was purely qualitative in nature.

**3.4. Target Population**

Population is defined as a group of individuals, objects from which samples are taken for measurement (Kasonde-Ng’andu, 2013). The population for this study consisted dropouts with disabilities in Bauleni compound who dropped out of school from Bauleni Special Needs School in the last five years, from 2015 to 2020.

In view of the above, the researcher selected teachers of learners with disabilities, all from Bauleni Special Needs School, parents of dropouts with disabilities, and dropouts with disabilities, these were from Bauleni compound. These dropouts were captured from the school registers. The Head teacher of Bauleni Special Needs School was also part of the population.

**3.5. Sample size**

Kothari (2011) says, sample size refers to the number of participants selected from the population. This sample should have the characteristics, know-how and be accessible to help in the study under investigation. However, Sandeloski (1995) points out that in determining the sample size in qualitative research, there is no specific formula. It is ultimately a matter of judgment and experience on the part of the researcher, and researcher’s need to evaluate the quality of the information collected in light of the uses to which it will be applied. Therefore, the researcher used her own personal judgment to determine the sample size in this study. Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Marrison (2000) explain that in a qualitative study, a small number of sample size suffices.

In view of the above, the researcher selected 15 participants to constitute the sample for the study. The breakdown of the sample was as follows; five (5) teachers, one (1) head teacher, five (5) dropouts with disabilities, two were hearing impaired (HI), one visually impaired (VI), one intellectually challenged, and one physically challenged, and five (4) parents to dropouts with disabilities. This sample was drawn from Bauleni Special Needs School. Dropouts with disabilities were captured using the registers from school. The parents were drawn from Bauleni Compound.

To identify the participants easily the following codes were used.

For example,

D1 stands for dropout number 1, D2 stands for dropout number 2, D3 stands for dropout number 3, D4 stands for dropout number 4, and D5 stands for dropout number 5.

**3.5.1 Dropouts with disabilities codes**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Dropout participants** | **Distribution by gender** | **Area(residence)** | **Grade dropped out** | **Age** | **Disability** |
| D1 | M | Bauleni compound | Grade 4 | 11 | Hearing impaired |
| D2 | M | Bauleni compound | Grade 6 | 14 | Visually impaired |
| D3 | F | Bauleni compound | Grade 5 | 12 | Intellectually challenged |
| D4 | F | Bauleni compound | Grade 7 | 15 | Hearing impaired |
| D5 | M | Bauleni compound | Grade 5 | 13 | Physically impaired |

**3.5.2 Parents of dropouts with disabilities codes**

Parents were identified using the following codes

P1 stands for parent number 1, P2 stands for parent number 2, P3 stands for parent number 3, P4 stands for parent number 4.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Parent participant** | **Gender** | **Area (residence)** | **Employment** |
| P1 | F | Bauleni compound | Marketeer |
| P2 | F | Chalala | Marketeer |
| P3 | F | Bauleni Compound | House helper |
| P4 | F | Chilenje | house wife |

**3.5.3 Special Education Teachers codes**

The following were identity codes

T1 stands for teacher 1, T2 stands for teacher 2, T3 stands for teacher 3, T4 stands for teacher 4 and T5 stands for teacher 5.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher participant** | **Gender** | **Area (residence)** | **Professional Qualification** |
| T1 | Female | Bauleni school | 1st Degree |
| T2 | Female | Bauleni school | 1st Degree |
| T3 | Male | Bauleni school | 1st Degree |
| T4 | Female | Bauleni school | 1st Degree |
| T5 | Female | Bauleni school | 1st Degree |

**3.5.4 Head teacher’s identification code was H.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Head teacher participant | Gender | Area (residence) | Professional qualification |
| H | F | Chalala | Med (Special) |

The following are the roles of the above participants in this research. The teacher’s role was to provide data about the dropouts’ academic performance, learner’s abilities, what they can do and what they cannot do in the classroom environment and social life exhibited while they were in school.

The head teacher performs the best to provide better education to learners; tries to meet stakeholders’ expectations in terms of improving the school environment and to keep teachers motivated and satisfying parents. The dropouts with disabilities were expected to provide data, for example, on why they dropped out of school.

Finally the parents to dropouts with disabilities were equally very cardinal in this study because they contributed much to the well-being of the child and were able to provide lots of information about the child, for example they provided data about the home environment of the child in relation to the academic life of the child.

* 1. **Sampling Technique**

The study employed purposive sampling that involves purposely handpicking individuals from the population based on the researcher’s knowledge and judgment. However, to be specific, the researcher used typical sampling among other types of purposive sampling because the study sample involved dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School.

Orodho and Kombo, (2002) state that the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich in cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied.

Black, (1999) observes that purposive sampling ensures that those people who are unsuitable for the sampling study are already eliminated. Only the most suitable candidates remain. This means that the results of purposive sampling are usually expected to be more accurate than those achieved with an alternative form of sampling (Orodho and Kombo, 2002).

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

The researcher used an interview guide, semi-structured and unstructured questions because it is easy to use and provides flexibility to the interviewer. It also facilitates the conduct of the interview since the interview guide contains the topics to focus on during the interview conversation. They also elicit actual data and are easy to analyze.

#### **3.7.1 In-depth Interview Guide**

Interviews are questions asked orally (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). One to one interview was used to collect data from dropout with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. It is from the thick description that the researcher understood dropouts with disabilities experiences. Semi-structured interviews are based on the use of an interview guide which is a list of questions or topics to be covered by the interviewer. These interviews are flexible because they consist of both open and closed-ended questions. They are important because they gather in-depth information which gives the researcher a complete and detailed understanding from open ended questions. Therefore, using semi-structured interviews enabled the study to get firsthand information from dropouts with disabilities, their parents, teachers and the head-teacher holistically.

### **3.8 Data Quality Assurance**

The state of acceptability in terms of it being true and unique academic product was done using Guba’s four trustworthy strategy which is ideal for all qualitative studies, (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In this study, credibility was assured through the correct plan from the beginning to the end which was a descriptive phenomenological design that coincided with the study title; hence quality of data was assured.

Transferability was also assured through contextualizing with other studies in which similar information was found and new information added to the body of knowledge hence, data quality was assured. Dependability was equally employed through making research instrument reliable by conducting a pre-testing or pilot study and conformability was used through” Bracketing” or ‘’Epoch” taking the information as it came from participants through verbatim reporting. School registers or documents were used to come up with names of learners who dropped out and followed them up using this strategy.

* 1. **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection is the gathering of specific information aimed at proving and refuting some facts on how a researcher collects data and with what instruments (Kasonde-Ng’andu, 2013). Therefore, in trying to follow the data collection procedure, an introductory letter was sought from the University of Zambia to allow the researcher to go for data collection. However, before collecting data from the participants, the aim of study was thoroughly explained to them and assurance given that data which would be collected was purely for academic purposes. During data collection, a voice recorder was used to record the conversations to capture opinions and views of the participants in order to help the researcher with data analysis. When this was done, the researcher then categorized the statements and summarized them in narrative form. Key statements were quoted and thereafter a report was written on each of the 15 individual participants that constituted the sample size.

**3.8.4. Data Analysis**

Kasonde Ng’andu (2013) defines data analysis as a manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study so as to uncover the underpinning structures and extracting cardinal variables thereby testing any underlying assumptions. However, the appropriate methods of data analysis are determined by the data type, variables of interest and the number of cases. Therefore, the data which was collected from the field through semi-structured and unstructured interviews on the experiences of dropouts with disabilities was qualitatively analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. This method of analysis allowed the researcher to categorize the collected data and generate themes from it in line with the objectives of the study.

Smith and Eatough, (2006) argue that the IPA method is a suitable approach to analyzing qualitative data when one is trying to find out what experiences individuals have towards a particular situation they are facing, and how they make sense of their personal and social world. The method is especially useful when one is concerned with the complexity, process and novelty of a phenomenon; in this regard lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. Therefore, the analysis of raw data enabled the researcher to transform it into meaningful information.

**3.8.5. Ethical Considerations**

These were issues which were upheld in the study. First and foremost, a clearance letter was obtained from the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and the researcher sought consent from the University of Zambia relevant authorities to carry out the research.

Participants were assured that names and personal details would be kept confidential and that the data which would be collected would not be reviewed or published but would only be used for academic research purposes. Names of participants were represented by certain codes. This assured anonymity. Additionally, the researcher assured that participation by the parents was voluntary. This was done by explaining to them the procedure, relevance and purpose of the study.

**CHAPTER FOUR:** PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

**4.0. Overview**

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Data presented in this chapter was obtained using interviews with open ended questions. The audio recorded interviews were fully transcribed without using names of participants, instead codes were used. The chapter also descriptively presents, the actual words said by participants. The findings have been presented in line with the study objectives using major and emerging themes. The following were study objectives.

1. To explore the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School.
2. To establish the causes of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School.
3. To establish stakeholders view on the mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities.

**4.1. FINDINGS ON LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The first objective of the study was to establish the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities. The findings are presented in themes and subthemes emerging from the verbatim excerpts. The findings on objective number one revealed five emerging themes namely regrets of dropping, disappointments, poverty, stigma, and abuse/early marriages

**4.1.1. Regrets for dropping out.**

Participants reported that they regretted having dropped out of school due to lots of challenges they go through. They lack opportunities, such as access to employment because they lack skills and the technical know-how to apply on the job market and their dreams for future prospects are shuttered. This finding is supported by the following verbatim from participants:

D2, VI mentioned the following;

“*Dropping out of school makes us not to have self-esteem and our psychological well-being gets disturbed faced with the reality that we lack skills and knowledge to fulfill our desires”.*

Another participant, the physically challenged, D5 echoed similar sentiments and stated that;

“*I am confused because I wanted to become a teacher now my dream has gone”.*

Further, D1, with HI remarked;

*“Dropping out of school comes with lots of suffering and hardship because we are avoided by peers and the community we live in. They say we are beggars and that we are not normal human being. This leads to limited employment prospects and if at all we are employed we are paid very little which do not sustain us. In short we suffer social discrimination”.*

D4, with HI added her voice;

“*I wanted to go back to school but I have a baby and my mother refuses to look after him. I am just suffering with the baby at home”.*

Even parents regretted having let their children drop out of school because they have seen other children with disabilities succeeding after school. The following verbatim attest to this:

*“Our children have low self-esteem because they are not exposed to learning more from their friends to build their confidence. They are always in doors for fear of being mistreated”. Said P4*

P2 also said;

“*Our children with disabilities are not accepted in the community, it is worse when they drop out of school. They feel bad about their situation and the community does not allow their so called ‘normal’ children to interact with our disabled children”.*

H equally reported that;

*“Dropouts with disabilities end up going into early pregnancies and marriages of which in some cases, the pregnancies are as a result of the girls being abused by their own biological fathers, brothers and uncles. These pregnancies just die within the families because no one is brave enough to talk about them”.*

**4.1.2. Disappointments**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was disappointments. One is disappointed as a result of having expectations that are not met. The emotional and physical well-being of a person is disturbed. The finding is supported by the following verbatim.

T1 had this to say;

*“Dropouts with disabilities are disappointed in that they continue depending on their parents for everything. The school is there to help them identify what they can do in life, but along the way they decide to drop out of school”.*

**4.1.3. Poverty as an experience**

The third theme that emerged from the findings was poverty. In most cases the learners spend long hours at school learning on empty stomachs such that even when they knock off they will find nothing left for them at home to eat. Eventually they decide to drop out. The verbatim below attest to that;

D4, shared the following sentiments

*“Life is not easy for me. I live with my mother and my two siblings. My father has left the home and we have no food to eat most of the time. Sometimes we even sleep hungry if my mother does not go to wash clothes for our neighbors. My mother even ended up asking me to start making door-mats to sell and raise money for food”.*

P2 commented,

*“Our husbands usually run away from us to fend for ourselves. This has made our situation even worse because we cannot manage to look after the disabled children alone. We fail to meet their needs”.*

**4.1.4. Stigma and discrimination**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was stigma. Stigma has a potential to ruin the life of dropouts with disabilities. The dropouts with disabilities cannot walk with their heads up because of the stigma attached to them. The following testified to the statement;

The H stated that;

*“The dropouts are stigmatized. The stigma comes from their disabilities. They are labeled and discriminated upon because they are put in their own class which makes them feel they are outcasts in the community”.*

T5 had similar sentiments;

“*They are discriminated and stigmatized. This has been seen from the way the communities relate to people with disabilities. Some of the words used to address them are abusive, for example, idiot, mad persons and imbeciles, just to mention a few, have made them to live in their own world”*

P1 echoed similar sentiments

*“My child cannot go anywhere alone because he is deaf and people who know that he is deaf take advantage by bulling him because they know he will not respond”.*

**4.1.5. Abuse**

The fifth emerging finding was that children experienced abuse in different forms. Abuse is a very prominent feature in people living with disabilities. This is as a result of not being concerned about their welfare. There are lots of unpleasant things attached to disability.

T3 stated that;

*“They loiter in the communities they live and end up being abused. In the case of boys, they are given work such as sweeping the market stands and drawing water without any payment and girls end up getting pregnant”.*

T4 had similar sentiments

*“Some parents even go to the extent of sending their children with disabilities to do some piecework and money is used to feed the family. These are activities of child abuse”.*

Clearly, looking at the findings, all the participants attested that dropouts with disabilities go through a lot of experiences. The major ones that emerged were; stigma, disappointments, regret, poverty and abuse. All the participants were in support that these were some of the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities.

**4.2. FINDINGS ON PERCEIVED CAUSES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES AT**

**BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL**

This was the second objective of the study. It explored the perceived causes of dropouts with disabilities at Bauleni Special Needs School. The findings showed various themes that emerged from this objective. The emergent themes included lack of sign language skills among teachers, failure to pay school fees, poor performance at school, negative attitude, stigma and discrimination, orphanage, health problems, unfriendly infrastructure, lack of transport to school and few special schools.

**4.2.1. Lack of sign language skills among teachers**

One of the themes that emerged from the findings as a cause of dropping out of school by dropouts with disabilities was lack of sign language skills among teachers of learners with hearing impairments. Learners with hearing impairments complained that they dropped out because their teachers could not communicate well in sign language, hence they were not benefiting from the lessons they offered. For example one of the participants,

D1 had this to say:

*“Years back our teachers did not have the skill of sign language, they were just writing on the board. So it was difficult for us to follow the lessons. This made us to stop school because we were not learning anything”.*

**4.2.2. Failure to pay school fees/poverty**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was failure to pay school fees by parents. We all know that there is no free education in Zambia regardless of the status one may have. A fee is the price one pays as remuneration for rights or services. If you do not pay your fees services are cut off or withdrawn and you will not continue with your school. This is supported by the verbatim below.

One participant, H said that;

*“Most of the learners with disabilities come from poor families. Parents fail to pay school fees for their children and because of the negative mindset about disability they feel it’s a waste of money to support the child who will not yield anything in life. They would rather use that money on other things”.*

P2 one of the participants stated;

*“We live in rented houses and our husbands have run away from us. Money is a challenge to meet all our daily needs, that’s why our disabled children dropped out of school”.*

P4 echoed the same sentiments;

*“We have self-pity and need empowerment to look after our disabled children so that we can afford to have decent shelter and provide for them. The government has not come up with a deliberate policy to engage us in any activity to generate income for our disabled children”.*

D4, with HI said;

*“Our parents failed to pay our school fees, we depended on well-wishers. They said that they were wasting money, we would not achieve anything academically. In short most of us had no support from our parents. This made us not to continue with school.*

Similarly, D2, VI, also echoed

*“My parents opted to pay school fees for my other siblings who are ‘normal’ and told me that I was not going to achieve anything in life”.*

The Head teacher also said that;

“*The health of the dropouts is compromised with reduced life span because they live in poverty. This is because the parents or guardians cannot afford proper balanced diet for them. They also fail to continue coming to school hungry because it makes them not to concentrate in class activities and end up dropping out“.*

**4.2.3 Poor performance**.

The third theme that emerged from the findings was poor performance. Failure to improve academically will force the learner into so many things. One of them is failure to continue school. This has been a common trend especially with learners with disabilities. A way should be found of keeping all learners in school up to the end of the programme. Below are some supportive verbatim;

D2, VI, confessed,

*“I was not performing well and was made to stop school by my parents. This was as a result of not being attended to well by our fellow learners who are called ‘normal’. We were discriminated upon and were very rude at times although other times they pretended to be good after they were talked to by some teachers. This affected me and I was failing to concentrate in class”.*

H remarked;

“*Learners with disabilities have challenges academically. As an administrator together with teachers have helped to make the learners stay in school regardless of their poor performance but some of them as they grew older opt to stop school and prefer to go for skills training. Some of the girls enter into early pregnancies and marriages”.*

H continued with similar sentiments;

*“Although learners with disabilities are naturally poor performers, lack of instructional materials even makes it worse for them to academically performance to help them meet their challenges. They end up dropping out of school thinking they are wasting time.*

**4.2.4 Negative attitude, stigma and discrimination**

Other emerging themes from the findings were negative attitude, stigma and discrimination. It is difficult for one to concentrate at school when they are discriminated upon. It even becomes worse when it is something to do with one’s disability because it is a condition one cannot change and did not decide to be what they are. It is not only the untrained teachers in special education that have a negative attitude towards learners with disabilities even people in communities who are not versed with disability issues. The school classroom is a social system with an important degree of integration between teacher and learners, hence, teaching cannot be effective if the leaner is simply a recipient of information without having any further relationship to the person delivering that information.

Stigma is a cancer to learners with disabilities because it makes them live in isolation. Sometimes it even makes them have self-pity. This has impacted negatively on their academic education. In support of the above;

H as one of the participants said;

*“Some teachers who are not trained in special education have a negative attitude towards learners with disabilities to the extent that they even refuse to teach them. This frustrates the learners who feel no sense of belonging, and decide to stop school”.*

T1 also had similar sentiments;

*“Attitude of the majority of teachers who are not trained in special education is pathetic. They think they are more educated than those of us who handle learners with disabilities. This is what they say; Why do you waste time to play with children who do not have anything to do in life? Those you call learners are not teachable and are an eye-sore to the school environment. They should have their own schools”.*

T4 echoed similar sentiments

“*There is negative attitude towards learners with disabilities by parents and communities. They are treated like outcasts because the community and parents think these learners have nothing to contribute to the society. All this is because of lack of sensitization. The community and parents to learners with disabilities should be made aware of the rights of persons living with disabilities.*

T3 also had this to say;

*Learners are discriminated upon to the extent that if there teacher is absent no one from the main stream can stand in to bridge the gap. They claim not to have any skill on how to handle learners with disabilities. In a case where one is forced to stand in for a colleague who is unavailable, they end up using abusive language to the learners. This makes the learners with disabilities to dropout out.*

D5, PC, brought out similar sentiments;

*“There was personality conflict with teachers. Some teachers from the main stream mocked, bullied, ridiculed and labeled us by giving us all sorts of names. This had a negative impact on us that we felt not part of the school”.*

T5 had this to say;

*“We are understaffed and get tired sometimes such that we fail to attend to the learners with disabilities adequately. These learners need a lot of remedial work, counseling and at times even visits to their homes but we cannot do all this because of understaffing. This has contributed to some learners dropping out as they get discouraged that we do not pay much attention to their various needs”.*

**4.2.5 Orphanage**

The other theme that emerged from the findings was loss of parents. Children feel the need to protect their remaining parent by internalizing their feelings and picking up where their deceased parent left off. This can result in anxiety, depression, and poor school performance.

D5, PC, said,

*“I could not continue with my school because my mother died and no one was ready to continue paying for my school and escorting me to school because I was failing to push the wheelchair alone. This made me to stop school”.*

**4.2.6 Health problems**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was health problems. There are health problems that some learners have, for example, anemia or sickle cell that subject them to hospitalization most of the time and consistently miss school and lag behind. Our schools have no provision to attend to these problems. Therefore, the learner has to temporarily stop school and join later from where they left. The government should ensure that these chronic health conditions that interfere with learner’s learning and school attendance warrant evaluation and consideration.

H had this to say;

*“Prolonged illnesses lead to dropping out of school by learners with disabilities. Some of these learners are ever sick and hardly attend school. They end up dropping out because they think they have missed a lot and may not be able to catch up”.*

**4.2.7 Unfriendly infrastructure**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was unfriendly infrastructure. Schools that accommodate learners with disabilities should be inclusive in all aspects. The learners should not be limited when it comes to mobility. They should navigate the environment like any other learner. This was in line with the verbatim below;

H said,

*“Mobility is a challenge for the physically disabled because of the unfriendly infrastructure. Not all buildings have accommodations for the physically challenged but we are trying by all means to make our infrastructure as conducive as possible for all learners with different disabilities”.*

**4.2.8 Lack of transport**

Another theme that arose from the findings was lack of transport**.** All the parents reviewed that it is difficult to nurture a child with disabilities. They need lots of support in almost all areas of life starting from home environment to school.

T2 one of the participants said;

“*Some of our children are on wheelchairs, others cannot even afford a wheel chair, they struggle to walk and cannot walk long distances and others are visually impaired. We need support to take our children to and from school”.*

P3 aired similar sentiments;

*“All my four children are disabled, two girls and two boys”*

*Having a child with disabilities is a lot of work. We need lots of support so that the children are kept in school. I have failed to transport all of them to school every day because I lack transport money.*

**4.2.9** **Few special schools**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was few special schools for learners with disabilities. This is critical because some places do not even have a single trained special school and yet people with disabilities are found in all places. The verbatim below are in support of this;

H commented that;

“*Special schools are far apart and only dotted in few areas of our communities. Some learners with disabilities stop school when they relocate to other places where there are no special schools nearby especially the visually impaired and the intellectually challenged. This is as a result of not having anyone to escort them to school as they are made to walk long distances to find a school”.*

Clearly from the above verbatim excerpts, themes were generated from the common or key words. The following were the key findings that emerged; poverty, lack of sign language as a medium of communication to hearing impaired learners, failure to pay school fees, poor performance, and unfriendly infrastructure among many others.

**4.3.** **FINDINGS ON** **MITIGATION MEASURES FOR ABATING LEARNERS’ DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES.**

The third objective of this study was to establish management strategies to help mitigate learners’ dropout with disabilities. The findings revealed five emerging themes namely, avoid discrimination, improvement of Shortage of teachers, provision of friendly infrastructure, re-enforce sensitization and awareness, identifying at-risk learners of dropping out, establishing support groups, provision of sanitary towels to girls, parent empowerment and enhance family support

**4.3.1 Avoid discrimination**

One of the themes that emerged under this objective was the issue of discrimination. Dropouts with disabilities reported that going back to school was not a problem, but they were scared of what they went through while at school. They were discriminated upon and called all sorts of names. It is for this reason that learners with disabilities are not discriminated upon in order for them to stay in school. The verbatim below attested to this effect;

D3, LD reported that;

*“I can only go back to school if the problem of discrimination I went through is sorted out. We used to be called names by our peers and they never interacted with us. We need acceptance and we are also human beings. The interaction with everybody else in school should be promoted. This will help us stay in school”.*

D4, HI uttered similar sentiments;

“*Words like dull and less performers should be avoided at all costs. We should be motivated by our teachers for us to continue coming to school. We need words of encouragement such as, we can also do better. Schools should be places where all learners are treated as human beings with respect, dignity and love”.*

D2, VI echoed similar sentiments;

*“Teachers must use positive language to make us feel we are all equal. We must also be valued just like the so call ‘normal’ learners”.*

**4.3.2 Improvement of Shortage of teachers**

Another theme that emerged from the study was shortage of teachers**.** Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring that learners are kept busy by teaching them. Failure to that, the learners will lose interest in school and decide to dropout.

D5, PC said the following;

*“We should have been provided with enough teachers so that even if our teacher was sick, another one would have been provided to continue learning”.*

The H remarked;

*“The Zambian Government Policy should be proactive on special education.*

*The Ministry of Education should make sure that recruitment of teachers is balanced. Teachers who are trained to handle learners with disabilities should not be misplaced to create an artificial shortage of specialised teachers”.*

**4.3.3 Empower parents to dropouts with disabilities.**

Another theme that emerged from the findings in this study was lack of empowerment to parents of learners with disabilities. Parents feel they should be identified by government and well-wisher groups for empowerment so that they have something to cushion on the expenses that come with having a child with disabilities.

P2 remarked;

*“In most cases those of us who keep learners with disabilities are not empowered to support them. We need the government to come in. We can do it for our disabled children if we are only empowered to raise a bit to make ends meet”.*

P3 also said,

*“As parents of learners with disabilities, we need empowerment. This empowerment can even be in form of land where we can be growing some crops and sell to support our children”.*

**4.3.4 Provision of friendly infrastructure to learners with disabilities.**

Another theme that emerged from the study was Unfriendly infrastructure**.** Infrastructure is a motivating factor to learners with disabilities to continue coming to school. This is not the case because most of the schools in Zambia lack proper accommodations for learners with disabilities especially the physically challenged. For example, they lack ramps for wheelchairs and the doors are not wide enough to allow the wheelchair to pass through. For the VI, most of the schools have obstacles around which are hazardous to visually impaired learners. The following attest to this;

D5, PC reported that;

*“All learners should have access to all rooms in the school such as the computer lab, the workshop and many others including those on wheelchairs so that we all have equal share in education. I wanted to learn how to use a computer but could not because the entrance to the computer lab had no ramps”.*

Another participant, the H commented that;

***“****There should be improvement in the way the infrastructure is constructed to allow the learners with disabilities access all their needs without any challenges. For example, there is need for ramps to accommodate the physically challenged on wheel chairs and those that use clutches to ease their mobility. Entrances to the rooms should be wide enough to allow wheelchairs to go through easily”.*

**4.3.5 Re-enforce sensitization and awareness**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was sensitization and awareness. Mass sensitization and awareness on disability and education should be a priority. Disability should be taught to parents, teachers and the community. When this is done there will be harmony in schools, homes and community.

For example, T3 stated that;

*“Strengthening mass sensitization and awareness on disability to parents, community and schools on the importance of education to learners with disabilities is cardinal. Skills training centers should be opened within the schools so that those who fail academically should not dropout but be introduced to skills training such as tailoring, carpentry, production unit and cookery just to mention a few”.*

Yet another participant, T2 remarked;

*“Advocacy provisions to at-risk learners with disabilities in form of awareness campaigns about disability should be an ongoing thing. Organizations like ZNAD, Victim Support Unit, should have a deliberate programme to go round the schools to sensitize learners on what the law says about disability and disability rights”.*

**4.3.6 Establishment of support groups**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was establishment of support groups. For parents to look after their disabled children, they need support groups where they should meet as parents to discuss the welfare of their disabled children and encourage each other. In support of this,

The H stated that;

*“Parents who have children with disabilities should form support groups where they can discuss issues pertaining to their disabled children. For example, issues such as, how to look after their children so that they feel part of the family and how they can be encouraged to stay in school and to be responsible citizens”.*

**4.3.7 Identification of at-risk learners**

Another theme that arose from the findings was identification of learners who are at risk of dropping out. As special education teachers there is need to be alert of what is happening with learners both at home and school. This will help to have checks and balances about learners’ academic and social life.

H had the following to say;

*“Teachers should be encouraged to identify learners most at risk of dropping out. Timely interventions should be provided to learners who need it most by monitoring their performance systematically and updating the parents on the progress of their child. This will help parents to make an informed decision about their child’s education.*

H teacher further said;

*“School-Community Collaboration should be emphasized on the prevention of dropouts with disabilities. This focuses on an engaged and responsive community where everyone is accountable for the quality of education, resulting in a caring and collaborative environment where every child can strive and achieve”.*

**4.3.8 Provision of sanitary towels to girls**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was lack of sanitary towels in schools for the girl child with disabilities. It is hoped that when sanitary towels are provided to girls with disabilities, it will lessen the embarrassment they go through after messing themselves up. This makes them not to attend school during their messes. This was supported by the verbatim below

T4 commented that;

*“Our disabled girls need sanitary towels within the school so that when need arise they are helped. We have seen a lot of them not coming back to school because at one time or the other they had messed themselves up and are embarrassed to come back to school”.*

**4.3.9** **Enrich family support to learners with disabilities**

Another theme that emerged from the findings was lack of family support. Acceptance and love for disabled children should start from families where these learners come from. Minus that, families send a wrong signal to the outside world.

T5 emphasized on the following;

*“Family engagement has direct, positive effect on learners’ achievement, but they have no time to take their children with disabilities to school and back home. They need to be embraced by families”.*

P3 had this to say;

“*I have four children, two girls and two boys and all of them are intellectually challenged and are dropouts. My husband has run away from our matrimonial home because of having children with disabilities. Men should not run away from homes when they have a child with a disability. They should stick around to take care of the children. They should give support financially so that the children have access to all school requirements”.*

P1 echoed similar sentiments;

*“Parents who run away from their matrimonial homes because of having a child with a disability should be arrested and account for such a behavior. This will make them stick around to support their disabled children”.*

Clearly from the above verbatim, the following themes; evade discrimination, improvement of shortage of teachers, inappropriate infrastructure, sensitization and awareness, and need to establish support groups, just to mention a few were generated from key words under stakeholders views on the mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities.

**Summary of chapter four (4)**

Chapter four presented findings of the study on lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities, perceived causes of dropping out and mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities. The findings of the study were presented according to themes that emerged in line with the specific objectives of the study. The major themes that emerged in line with lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities were; regret, disappointments that come with dropping out of school, for example, low self-esteem, poverty, stigma, discrimination and abuse. Perceived causes of dropouts with disabilities had the following emerging themes; lack of sign language to communicate with hearing impaired learners, failure to pay school fees, stigma and discrimination, orphanage, health problems, unfriendly infrastructure, lack of transport to school and few special schools.

The third objective, mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities brought out the following findings, improvement on school infrastructure to accommodate all disabilities, family support should be encouraged towards learners with disabilities, empowerment to be provided to parents of learners with disabilities, and identification of learners who are at risk of dropping out among others. The next chapter presents discussion of the findings.

**CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

# **5.0 Overview**

The previous chapter presented findings of the study on ‘lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities form Bauleni Special Needs School in Lusaka. This chapter discusses the findings of the study based on the research objectives which were; to explore lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School; to establish the causes of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School and to establish stakeholder’s views on the mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities. The findings were discussed in the same sequence they were presented in the preceding chapter.

# **5.1 LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES.**

# The first research objective of this study focused on establishing lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities. The question sought to establish the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. There were a number of emerging themes that described the lived experiences of dropouts. Among them were; decreased quality of life, disappointment, lack of self-esteem, abuse/ early marriages and stigma.

# **5.1.1 Quality of life of dropouts with disabilities**

It is well known that education gives a lot of advantages to individuals, society and the country as a whole. We all view education as being so crucial to the development of individuals and as such Zambia as a country has guaranteed every person the right to education regardless of status. This is in line with Education Act, (2011) which says, everyone has a right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. While the right to education is guaranteed, it is sad that we still have a number of learners with disabilities dropping out of school along the way.

The research findings under quality of life of dropouts with disabilities indicated that dropping out of school by learners with disabilities comes with lots of challenges. First and foremost, there is regret to why they dropped out because they lack, for example, access to employment opportunities, skills, and technical know-how to apply on the job market and their dreams are shuttered. Dropping out of school presents a serious problem. While the numbers of learners with disabilities in schools is still relatively low, dropping out of the enrolled worsens the already achieved milestones in increasing to schooling for learner with disabilities. According to McKinney (2019) learners with disabilities constitute 30-40% of the current 121 million primary and lower secondary aged children who do not attend school.

**5.1.2 Disappointment**

Disappointment means not meeting one’s expectations. The emotional and physical well-being of a person is disturbed. The school is there to help learners identify what they can do in life but alas learners with disabilities decide to dropout along the way. It is for this reason that they become perpetual dependents because they cannot stand on their own. Little do they realize that education is empowerment which they need to invest into. This is in agreement with Bello, et al (2006) who said; despite substantial efforts to improve educational outcomes for learners with disabilities, dropout rates remain high. It is for this reason that learners with disabilities should be helped to stay in school by making sure that the school community embraces their needs.

**5.1.3 Lack of self-esteem**

Self-esteem is an enduring personality characteristic that we all look forward to having. Unfortunately dropouts with disabilities do not possess self-esteem because they drop out of school prematurely. They have no confidence and feel insecure. Their psychological well-being gets disturbed faced with the reality that they lack skills and knowledge to fulfill their dreams. People with self-esteem value their achievements which lacks in dropouts with disabilities. Their low self-esteem makes them feel incompetent, unloved, unhappy, inadequate and unsatisfied with themselves most of the time. Low self-esteem also reduces the quality of life in many different ways, including, negative feelings, the constant self-criticism which can lead to persistent feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety, anger, shame or guilt. Grayson, (1998), observed that one needs self-esteem in order to learn more from others and to build confidence. Moreover, school dropouts have limited opportunities and are at greater risk for low self-esteem.

**5.1.4 Abuse and early pregnancies**

The pregnancy factor is a serious one to lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities. The research under this theme indicated that dropouts with disabilities end up going into early marriages and early pregnancies. This is in line with Barr (2017) who says, “There has been correlation between marriage and education leading to general assumption that girls attending school are less likely to be married at an early age compared with counterparts that have dropped out of school”. In some cases the pregnancies are as a result of the girls being abused by their own biological fathers, brothers and uncles. These pregnancies just die within families because no one is brave enough to talk about them. This shows that dropouts with disabilities have no protection in the homes and community they live. The abuse goes on and on because no one has a voice to speak for them. The government and the justice system should treat early marriages just as defilement is treated. This may help to stop marrying off of young girls especially those with disabilities.

**5.1.5 Stigma**

From the emerged themes stigma had been outstanding in this study. Learners with disabilities are blamed for their disability, or accused of using their disability to gain unfair benefits. People with disabilities have been stigmatized throughout history. In many cultures, disability has been associated with a curse, disease, dependence, and helplessness. According to the findings, disability stigma plays out in a number of ways. This includes; Social avoidance where dropouts with disabilities are left out in social activities and friends become more distant. Sometimes dropouts with disabilities may themselves adopt negative beliefs about disability and feel ashamed or embarrassed. Stigma leads to dropping out by learners with disabilities and being treated differently. This result in their being excluded from employment as they lack skills and livelihood opportunities, health and other public services, and full participation in all aspects of society.

Stigma is a major barrier to participation and also attitudes about disability can affect relationships. Stereotyping people with disabilities is presumed to be helpless, unable to care for themselves, or unable to make their own decision. Discrimination, for example, denies jobs or other opportunities due to false assumptions about disability. This is in support with, GMR, (2012),”They face constraints in employment because of their low level of education, little or no adaptation of their life and limited expectations among families and community”.

**5.2. CAUSES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES**

This was the second objective of the study. Various themes emerged from this objective. There are many factors that lead to dropping out of school by learners with disabilities. These factors included; academic challenges, lack of motivation, nature of disability and parental attitude. Others are; lack of access to schools, and lack of sensitization and awareness about disability. These factors are somewhat similar from country to country around the globe. Many studies have identified predictors and factors associated with dropout.

**5.2.1.** **Academic challenges**

Failure to perform academically would force the learners to dropout. This has been a common trend especially with learners with disabilities. Administrators and teachers should find a way of keeping learners in school up to the end of their school grade. For example, the factors associated with dropping out of school by Hunt (2008) in America, found that there are precursors to dropping out, where children could be seen to be at risk or vulnerable to early withdrawal. The study found that pupils who consistently performed poor were those who were over age for the grade they were attending and eventually decided to drop out. This appeared as problematic because teachers reported that, learners with disabilities are naturally poor performers. Lack of instructional materials even makes it worse for them to academically succeed. This is supported by what Sebatane, (2009) alluded to, “The role of the educator is important because the appropriate teaching and learning methods could enhance the learning potential of many learners with disabilities. Many learners do not gain the appropriate training nor do they in some cases know to identify forms of learning difficulties”.

The Ministry of Education and training continues to say in their final report on education policy that policy and legislation in Zambia relating to disadvantaged learners and learners with disabilities, stated that only small proportions of learners with severe disabilities are attending the special schools that can support them according to their specialized learning needs. There are only a few schools in the country that may provide special education to the severely disabled learners. This implies that the severe learners drop out along the way because their educational needs are not provided.

**5.2.2 Lack of motivation**

Further, another cause identified in this study had to do with lack of motivation due to problems created by the school as a factor to dropping out. This is in line with the study carried out by Verspoor (1990). He found that problems created by the school, make children who do not like school not very motivated to stay in school. Factors cited by dropouts as causes of dropping out of school included; Personality conflicts with teachers, mockery, bullying, labeling, ridicule and type of infrastructure not suitable for all disabilities. Infrastructure was a source of concern in that the mobility for the physically challenged was compromised.

The finding was supported by the Education Statistics Bulletin (2011:21) which says, learners with disabilities dropped out of school due to lack of appropriate support from their educators and parents. The school environment also contributes towards dropouts due to lack of appropriate facilities for learners with disabilities such as school toilets or play grounds which are not accessible for learners in wheelchairs.

**5.2.3 Nature of disability**

The nature of the disability was another finding in the study which was said to be a contributing factor to dropping out of school. Children with disabilities are less likely to go to school. Parents are often forced to make a choice whether to provide education to the child with disability or not. Findings showed that the more the severe a child’s disability, the lower the chances of the child attending school. In addition dropouts with disabilities have much lower education attainment. This is in agreement with what Sass & Feng (2012) alluded to, “Learners with disabilities experience a range of challenges during their education. Therefore, reasons for dropping out are varied. The nature of a disability is sometimes cited as a primary burrier to completion, while in other cases, institutional and programmatic factors are cited”.

According to the above quotation, administrators in schools should have learners with disabilities in mind as they programme for the school activities. Some learners with disabilities are forced to drop out because of the nature of their disability which cannot allow them to participate in certain activities laid down by the school.

**5.2.4 Parental attitude**

This finding talks about the perception of parents towards education and disability. Parents’ attitude towards children with disabilities and their education can be a key facilitator or a serious barrier to achieving the education their children deserve. Parental perception play a crucial role in determining the overall grown and development of a child with disability. Social stigma about disability faced by parents is transferred to their children. The understanding of a child’s disability goes through a cycle of shock, grief and acceptance for the parents. Inadequate counseling exists for parents to cope with the shock and to help them to accept their child’s disability. Therefore, they might make the child change schools often. Some parents may believe that their children cannot be educated like non-disabled children. Many parents may be overprotective which may, in turn, affect their child’s education outcome.

**5.2.5 Access to schools**

The finding from the study was; children with disabilities are among the most disadvantaged in terms of access to schooling and completion of education. It was noted that the learners with disabilities are subjected to multiple deprivations and that they are the most excluded from education. This is due to, school fees, transport costs and parents not having time to accompany children to school, this is in line with what UNESCO (2011) states, “Some schools are situated so far away that travelling to and from school every day is difficult and tiring for the disabled learners and consequently they drop out of school”.

The above statement implies that not every child with disabilities would be able to attend school every day. This is due to some learners who are wheelchair bound, others may be using crutches and they are some with health problems. This group of people cannot walk long distances to school every day, as result they are forced to drop out.

**5.2.6 Lack of sensitization and awareness**

The knowledge on various types of disabilities and the impact on the child’ education is not wide spread through communities. Sensitization and awareness should be emphasized. Disability should also be taught. In the findings teachers talked about the important of awareness that it provides a sense of respect to the disabled persons. Strengthening mass sensitization and awareness on disability to parents, community and the children with disabilities on the importance of education is cardinal. Further skills training centers should be opened within the schools so that those that fail academically should not dropout but be introduced to skills training such as tailoring, carpentry, production unit and cookery just to mention a few.

Clearly, from the above discussion, the following themes emerged under causes of dropouts with disabilities; no access to schools, poverty, inadequate specialized teachers, failure to pay school fees, poor performance and unfriendly infrastructure among others.

**5.3** **MITIGATION MEASURES FOR ABATING DROPOUT AMONG LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES.**

The third objective of this study was to establish mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities. The findings showed various themes that emerged from this objective and the following stood out to be the major ones; provision of favourable school environment, family engagement in the welfare of learners with disabilities, evade humiliation, care for at-risk learners and economic hardships. What then should be done to eradicate or dramatically reduce the number of learner dropout with disabilities?

**5.3.1 Provision of favorable school environment.**

First and for most, there is need to remind one another that the role of the school is not just to get children into school but to ensure their continued stay in school until they complete. This means that it is incumbent upon all schools to provide a favorable environment to ensure learners do not dropout. Learners should be motivated to continue coming to school by the provision of teachers to teach them. Safe orderly, inclusive and inviting learning environment help learners realize their potential as individuals and as engaged members of society. All learners need to be safe, physically and emotionally to be expected to achieve. Lack of favorable environment is breeding ground for deviance and aggressive attitude in school (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007). The implication here is that, unfavorable environment may bring frustration in some learners with disabilities. Some may not see the school as having any significance for their personal development, or they may see it as forcing them into patterns which has no relevance to their preferred lifestyle.

**5.3.2 Family engagement.**

Research constantly found that family engagement in the education of learners with disabilities has a direct, positive effect on learner’s achievement and is one of the most accurate predictors of a learner’s success in school. This is in line with UNESCO, (2011), “Another factor perpetuating high rate of school dropout of learners with disabilities includes lack of parental support, rejection or neglect by one or both parents”. This comes in especially if the mother is not ready or willing to assume parenthood to the child with a disability. Such definitely poses a threat in form of anxiety in the learner and stunt her psychological development. UNESCO, (2011), further states that it is the parent’s responsibility to care for their children and guide them in their school work regardless of their disability otherwise learners are likely to lose their love for school. Without the care, support and guidance of caregivers, these learners with disabilities who venture into education end up dropping out of school.

If a child with disabilities is sidelined the consequences are felt by the same parents. We see lots of people living with disabilities who are independent, all this is because their parents put in enough and never discriminated upon them.

**5.3.3 Humiliation**

From this finding it is important that humiliation is avoided at all costs in schools. Dropouts with disabilities reported that they would have loved to go back to school but it was not possible because of the humiliation they went through. Humiliating punishment should be avoided as learners may drop out of school on account of having been embarrassed by their teachers. Schools should be places where learners are treated as human beings with respect, dignity and love. Name calling should be a thing of the past so that these learners interact freely with everybody else in school. Teachers should try by all means to retain the pupils who have been enrolled by looking at the pupils as valuable and responsible people. It is a fact that some of the teachers have contributed to certain pupils dropping-out of school owing to the hostile attitude towards the learners. A good teacher therefore, can do a lot to prevent the dropping out of pupils from school.

**5.3.4 Care for at-risk learners**

Looking back to the findings, monitoring offers a significance support structure for at-risk learners. Teaching of one to one strategy focuses on academic support and is an effective practice when addressing specific needs in collaboration with the learner’s base teacher. Accurately determining which learners are most at risk for dropping out of school should be a priority for schools. This is a critical first step to be able to provide timely intervention for learners who need it most. Monitoring all learners’ performance will systematically assist schools in identifying at-risk learners early as learners enter a phase of withdraw or disengagement. This is in line with, Balfanz, et al., (2010), It is important that preventing learners from dropping out of school should begin as early as learners show signs of withdraw and disengagement from school, which may be during the first years of schooling.

Additionally, communication with learners’ parents or caregivers regarding learners’ progress is inevitable. Strong relationships between learners and parents can increase learners’ grades and attendance and decrease the likelihood of dropping out of school. Actively engage learners in instructional tasks by matching curriculum to learners’ instructional level, culture, and interest and provide effective instruction that is scaffolded, explicit and strategic with multiple opportunities for successful experience to encourage learners’ potential for learning prevention interventions, (Muzata, 2013).

Sinclair et al., (2005) says, promote constructive problem solving, learners who exhibit high-risk behavior should participate in immediate problem-solving sessions to develop conflict management skills to respond appropriately. This implies that the school should not wait for a problem they have seen in a learner with disabilities to worsen. It should be attended to immediately. By waiting the school may fail to address it and may end up losing the learner.

**5.3.5 Economic hardship and death of parents or guardians.**

Economic hardships and death of parents or guardians is a contributing factor to dropping out of school by learners with disabilities. We need to rekindle the extended family in Zambia. I remember when I was growing up, we used to live with cousins, nieces, nephews and uncles. But today it is father, mother and children. If we all cared and supported children left by our departed relatives the dropout rate can be reduced to its lowest point in Zambia.

The above finding is supported by The Educational Statistics Bulletin, (2010) which revealed that the number of orphans with disabilities had declined in enrolment between 2008 and 2011. That means most orphans with disabilities dropped out of school while others did not even enroll in school at all after the death of their parents. The surviving parent, who is usually central to learner’s education, is forced to look for work to support her family, resulting in children being taken care of either by their grandparents or other relatives who may not see the importance of educating a child with disabilities. Eventually these learners drop out of school.

Clearly, from the above discussion, the following themes emerged under mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities;unfriendly infrastructure which should be made friendly, improvement on shortage of manpower, provide solution to economic hardships and loss of parents, care for at-risk learners, avoid humiliation and encourage family engagement in care and support of learners with disabilities, just to mention a few.

**Chapter summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of the study on lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities, causes of dropouts with disabilities and mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities. This chapter demonstrated that the objectives of the study were answered. The following chapter will give the summary, recommendations, conclusion and suggestions for further research.

**CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

**6.0 Overview**

This chapter gives the conclusion of the study. It highlights the findings of the study, the conclusion drawn from the highlights of the findings and the recommendations. Suggestions are also made for further areas of research.

**6.1 SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to establish the lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School in Lusaka. It also looked at the causes of dropouts with disabilities and mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities**.**  The study was purely qualitative research and used phenomenological research design.

The study reviewed that dropouts with disabilities live in very difficult circumstances and some of the experiences they go through are; stigma because of their disabilities, abuse from the community, and family, lack of self-esteem because they lack confidence, lack of protection in homes and community which results in early pregnancies in the case of girls, just to mention a few.

Furthermore, the study also reviewed the causes of dropouts with disabilities which should be curbed. The causes that emerged from the findings were; poverty. These dropouts come from poor families that fail to meet the school requirements for them. They are discriminated upon by peers and teachers who are not trained in special education. Unfriendly infrastructure was another cause for dropping out of school and many others which are discussed in the findings.

Apart from lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities and causes of dropping out by learners with disabilities, the study went further to also look at mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities. The findings were; to improve the infrastructure in schools to accommodate all learners including those with disabilities, for example, adding ramps and widening entrances to the classrooms for wheelchair bound learners and remove all obstacles around the schools for better mobility to learners with visual impairments. Shortage of specialized personnel was another finding from the study. The government through the ministry of education should ensure that deployment of specialized teachers is fairly done so that all learners with disabilities are catered for.

In summing up, it is prudent for all stakeholders to work together and fight pupil dropout in Zambia. Everyone has a role to play in this battle against pupil dropout

**6.2 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, based on the findings in line with objective one; Lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities, reviewed the following major themes; regret because dropouts lack self-esteem, abuse which in some cases lead into early pregnancies and marriages, and stigma that comes from the disabilities. Dropouts are labeled and discriminated upon. Other findings were; poverty which compromises with their health and also disappointed because they continue depending on their parents for everything.

The findings of the second objective of the study; perceived causes of dropouts with disabilities reviewed the following major themes; dropouts with disabilities had academic challenges. They performed poorly because of financial constraints. They were also discouraged that they cannot learn because of their disabilities. This resulted into lack of motivation. Parental attitude also discourage them. Parents thought that persons with disabilities cannot learn like the non-disabled. Access to school was a challenge as they needed to walk long distances to and from school. They also lacked school fees as a result they ended up dropping out.

The third objective was to establish mitigation measures for abating dropout among learners with disabilities**.** The major findings of the study disclosed the following measures to be taken. There is need to provide a favourably learning environment for learners with disabilities. Dropouts talked about the infrastructure which was not accommodative to their disabilities. Wheelchair bound learners was cited as an example. The mobility to classrooms and other facilities was difficult due to lack of ramps. Doors were not also wide enough to allow the wheelchairs to go through easily. Family engagement was equally lacking in the education of learners with disabilities. If anything learning starts from home. Humiliation by teachers and peers discouraged them to continue with school because they were not free to interact.

These were the main findings of the study. However, dropouts with disabilities said if all the above mentioned short comings were addressed, they would have continued schooling.

**6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section looks at the recommendations of lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities. Based on the research findings, the following are the recommendations that were made.

1. The learners cited shortage of specialized teachers as one of the causes of dropping out of school. The Government through the Ministry of Education should make sure that there is uniform deployment of specialized teachers in all schools.
2. Government should also priotise building schools that will accommodate all learners with different disabilities
3. Organizations like ZNAD and victim support unit should have a deliberate programme to go round the schools and communities to sensitize learners and the communities on what the law says about disability and disability rights.
4. Parents and teachers must work in collaboration on how they can encourage learners with disabilities to stay in school.
5. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Head teachers of special schools and parents should find a way of keeping learners with disabilities in schools by making sure that all the factors that lead to dropouts with disabilities are followed to the latter.

**6.4 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The study focused on Bauleni Special Needs School in Lusaka, hence, the possibility of generalization is limited. There is need for in-depth studies involving many other schools with dropouts with disabilities even outside Lusaka.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**TOPIC: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

Dear participant,

You have been selected to participate in providing information for research. The interview is intended to collect information on lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. The information collected is only for research purposes. Names of participants shall be kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

Participant’s identification

Name: ………………………………………....................

Gender: ………………………………………………….

Age: ………………………………………………………

When did you start school?: ………………………………

In what grade did you drop out of school? ………………

Are you an orphan or not?: ……………………………………………

Do you have children or not?: ………………………… …………

***PERCIEVED* CAUSES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

1. Describe your experience at school.
2. What factors may have contributed to you dropping out of school?
3. How would you describe your relationship with your peers when you were at school?
4. Explain your sibling’s attitude towards your school.
5. If you live with both mother and father, what contributions did they give towards your education?
6. What good things did you enjoy at school, what do you miss and why?
7. What was your ambition when you were at school?
8. Explain what your parents could have done to persuade you from dropping out of school.

**MITIGATION MEASURES FOR ABATING DROPOUT AMONG LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES.**

1. Explain what help you need as a learner in order not to drop out of school.
2. In your own view what support can learners with disabilities be given to keep them in school?
3. Why do learners with disabilities drop out of school?
4. In your own opinion what do you think can reduce the dropout rate of leaners with disabilities?

**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES**

1. How does dropping out of school impact the quality of life of dropouts with disabilities?
2. What challenges do you as a dropout with disabilities face in the community you live?
3. Having dropped out of school, explain how you are treated by your family.
4. Explain the effects of dropping out of school.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS INTERVIEW**

**APPENDIX 2**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS.**

**TOPIC: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

Dear participant,

You have been selected to participate in providing information for research. The interview is intended to collect information on lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. The information collected is only for research purposes. Names of participants shall be kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

Participant’s identification

Name: ……………………………………….............................................

Gender: ………………………………………………………………….

Age: ………………………………………………………………………..

Teaching experience of learners with disabilities: ……………………..

**PECIEVED CAUSES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

1. Explain the status of dropout rates in your school or class.
2. What support is in place to retain learners with disabilities in school?

3. Explain the problems that make learners with disabilities uncomfortable at school.

4. What activities does the government have for dropouts with disabilities?

1. Describe the problems that cause learners to drop out of school?

**MITIGATION MEASURES FOR ABATING DROPOUT AMONG LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES.**

1. Where do learners with disabilities go for help when they have a problem at school?
2. In your own view what support can learners with disabilities be given to keep them in school?
3. Why do learners with disabilities drop out of school?
4. How can drop out rates of leaners with disabilities be reduced?
5. What advocacy provision is given to at-risk learners with disabilities?

**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES**

1. How does dropping out of school impact the quality of life of dropouts with disabilities?
2. Explain the challenges dropouts with disabilities face in the community they live?
3. From you experience as a teacher, do the families accept dropouts with disabilities in their homes, if not why?
4. How do dropouts with disabilities affect the community?

**THANKYOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS INTERVIEW**

**APPENDIX 3**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS WHO KEEP THE DROPOUTS**

**TOPIC: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

Dear participant,

You have been selected to participate in providing information for research. The interview is intended to collect information on lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. The information collected is only for research purposes. Names of participants shall be kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

Participant’s identification

Name: ……………………………………….........................

Gender: …………………………………………………….

Age: …………………………………………………………

Marital status. ……………………………………………..

How many children do you have? ………………………...

How many of those have disabilities? …………………….

Is he/she your biological child? …………………………...

**PECEIVED CAUSES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

1. How can you describe the rate at which children with disabilities drop out of school in this community/school?
2. Describe the major causes of dropouts with disabilities.
3. Explain how the home environment contributes to learners’ dropouts with disabilities.

4. What challenges did or do you go through as a parent to support your child in school?

5. Explain the general perception of the community towards dropouts with disabilities.

**MITIGATION MEASURES FOR ABATING DROPOUT AMONG LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES.**

1. In your view as a parent, which children are most likely to drop out of school?

2. Explain what you as a parent would have done to persuade your child not to drop

out of school.

3. Through your experience of having a dropout with disabilities, describe how school

dropouts can be prevented.

**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROOUTS WITH DISABILITIES**

1. Discuss the activities that your dropout child is involved in both at home and in the community.
2. Explain the risks dropouts with disabilities have both at home and in the community they live.
3. Describe the effects of dropping out of school?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS INTERVIEW**

**APPENDIX 4**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEAD TEACHER.**

**TOPIC: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

Dear participant,

You have been selected to participate in providing information for research. The interview is intended to collect information on lived experiences of dropouts with disabilities from Bauleni Special Needs School. The information collected is only for research purposes. Names of participants shall be kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

Participant’s identification

Name: ………………………………………..........................................

Gender: …………………………………………………………………

Age: ……………………………………………………………………

For how long have you served as head teacher of Bauleni Special Needs School? ………..

How many dropouts with disabilities do you have in the last five years?

Male [ ] Female [ ]

How many teachers are trained in special needs education in your school?

Male [ ] Female [ ]

What is their level of qualification in special needs education?

Certificate Male [ ] Female [ ], Diploma Male [ ] Female, Degree Male [ ], Med (Special) Male [ ] Female [ ], PhD (Special) Female [ ] Male [ ]

**PERCIEVED CAUSES OF DROPOUTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BAULENI SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL.**

1. How can you describe the rate at which children with disabilities drop out of school in this community/school?
2. Explain why learners with disabilities dropout of school.
3. Describe the measures taken by the government to prevent dropouts with disabilities.
4. According to your observation, which learners are most likely to drop out of school and why?
5. Describe the activities the government have for dropouts with disabilities.
6. Explain the general perception of teachers, ordinary pupils and community towards dropouts
7. According to your experience as head teacher of this school, discuss the factors that lead to dropping out of school by learners with disabilities.

**MITIGATION MEASURES FOR ABATING DROPOUT AMONG LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES.**

1. As head teacher of Bauleni Special Needs School, explain the contributions the school would make to prevent learners’ dropouts with disabilities.
2. Suggest possible solutions that can be exploited to control further dropouts with disabilities.
3. Mention some of the accommodations you give to learners with disabilities as a school.
4. As head teacher of Bauleni Special Needs School, what support can learners with disabilities be given to keep them in school?

**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DROOUTS WITH DISABILITIES**

1. Explain the perception that teachers, pupils and community have towards the dropout with disabilities.
2. Describe the effects of dropping out of school by learners with disabilities
3. Discuss the challenges the community face as a result of dropouts with disabilities.
4. Describe the experience of dropouts with disabilities.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS INTERVIEW.**