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**Structural Support To Promote the Wellbeing of Grade Seven Teachers
working with Learners with Dyslexia**

by

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October 2023

DECLARATION

I, Karabo Sharon Ledwaba (student number: 18234748), declare that the mini-dissertation titled, Structural Support to Promote the Wellbeing of Grade Seven Teachers Working with Learners with Dyslexia, which I hereby submit for the degree to the Masters in Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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DEDICATION

In humble reverence and deep gratitude, I dedicate this mini-dissertation to three profound influences that have shaped my journey:

- To my younger self, whose dreams were yet to be realised, yet still dared to dream and believed in the power of knowledge.
- To the generations before me (Badimo ba ga Ledwaba, ba ga Molefe, ba ga Boloko, le ba ga Segole), your wisdom and sacrifices paved the way for my journey, you laid the foundation upon which I stand today.
- To God, my guiding light throughout this journey. Your grace and wisdom have illuminated my path. I dedicate this work to your infinite presence in my life, acknowledging that all knowledge and understanding are found in you.

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ABSTRACT

The policy of inclusive education in South Africa stipulates that learners with learning difficulties such as dyslexia need to be integrated into mainstream schools. Existing research highlights that teachers in mainstream schools, also known as full-service schools, experience challenges when working with learners with dyslexia. A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews was conducted to explore the teachers' perceptions of structural support that is provided by the Department of Education (DoE) district and their wellbeing experiences. Five Grade 7 teachers and two district officials (n=7) were purposively selected as participants for the study. Data sources comprised verbatim transcripts of the interviews, field notes, and audio recordings. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) served as the data analysis method. Four key themes emerged from the findings, three of which directly addressed the primary research question. These themes included multifaceted structural support, teachers' experiences of structural support, and the wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The study revealed that there is an imbalance between the support provided and the department's expectations. Diverse experiences were shared by teachers, and it emerged that the majority of teachers faced stress and burnout due to inadequate support. Recommendations to enhance support for teachers working with learners with dyslexia are made to the DoE, educational psychologists, and policymakers. The South African education system's commitment to inclusive education makes it crucial to prioritise wellbeing and provide adequate support for teachers implementing inclusive practices.

Key terms: teacher wellbeing, inclusive education, dyslexia, structural support, Department of Education, district officials.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASA	American Psychiatric Association
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	district-based support team
DoE	Department of Education
DSM-5-TR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition, Text Revision
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
EP	Educational Psychologist
EWP6	Education White Paper 6
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
JD-R	Job Demand and Resources model
PERMA	Positive, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment
QIDS-UP	Quality Improvement Development Support and Upliftment Programme
RTI	Response To Intervention
SASA	South African School's Act
SES	Senior Educational Specialist
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support
SLD	specific learning disorder

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

To effectively execute their professional duties, teachers need appropriate training and support from key stakeholders in education, including governmental bodies such as the Department of Education (DoE), school governing bodies, and parental involvement (Florian & Linklater, 2010). The educational landscape in South Africa witnessed the introduction of the inclusive education policy, which is aimed at fostering the integration of learners with learning difficulties into the mainstream education system (Donohue & Bornman, 2012). This policy transformation has mandated teachers to accommodate learners with diverse needs, including those confronting learning difficulties, within mainstream classrooms (Donohue & Bornman, 2012). Teachers bear the responsibility of facilitating inclusive educational practices and mitigating underachievement among all learners, especially those who encounter learning difficulties, such as dyslexia (Mogonea, 2019; Tyagi, 2016).

Within the spectrum of learning difficulties, this study specifically focused on dyslexia, which is a condition recognised as a specific learning disorder (SLD) primarily affecting reading proficiency (Kalsoom et al., 2020). Dyslexia, as outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR), is characterised by its adverse impact on an individual's capacity to read, write, and interpret written language (Alawadh, 2016). The DSM-5-TR categorises dyslexia as a sub-type of SLD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). According to Mugesh et al. (2023), SLDs represent neurodevelopmental disorders that disrupt an individual's ability to efficiently and accurately process and comprehend information, particularly in the academic domain (APA, 2013). While SLDs encompass dyslexia, along with dysgraphia and dyscalculia, dyslexia appears to be the most prevalent among school-going children (Lagae, 2008). Statistics indicated that approximately 5% of the 80% of learners identified or suspected to have SLDs are affected by dyslexia (Lagae, 2008).

Morton (2007) stated that learners with dyslexia require specialised educational interventions to realise their full cognitive potential. Similarly, Mugesh et al. (2023) indicated that such learners must exert heightened effort to attain proficiency in academic domains such as reading and writing. Considering these formidable challenges such learners face, particularly within mainstream educational settings, the South African DoE introduced

Education White Paper 6 of 2001, focusing on inclusive education. This policy framework was formulated with the overarching goal of establishing an inclusive and accommodating educational system that caters to the diverse characteristics of all learners, including those with learning difficulties like dyslexia (Department of Education, 2013).

Consequently, teachers are entrusted with the dual responsibility of concurrently accommodating learners with special learning needs alongside those without such needs within mainstream classrooms. However, Masango (2013) stated that many teachers lack the knowledge and training to implement inclusive educational practices effectively. This observation is corroborated by a study conducted in Namibia, which indicated that teachers struggle with implementing inclusive education (Mokaleng & Mowes, 2019).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Teachers tasked with teaching learners with dyslexia face multitudes of challenges when trying to implement effective inclusive teaching methods designed to meet the specific needs of these learners (Leseayne et al., 2018; Alawadh, 2016; Ladbrook, 2009; Morton, 2007). Predominantly, a lack of requisite knowledge and competencies for effectively accommodating such learners gives rise to various obstacles (Olivier, 2017; Forlin, 2012). Adding to this challenge is the evident lack of significant support provided to teachers tasked with working with learners with dyslexia (Chitsa & Mpofo, 2016). In addition, an alarming gap becomes apparent as teachers graduate from tertiary institutions with minimal exposure to comprehensive inclusive education training (Masango, 2013).

In response to this urgent need, the DoE introduced a form of structural reinforcement by establishing district-based support teams, seemingly designed to assist teachers in the complex environment of implementing inclusive education (DoE, 2013). Paradoxically, though, an empirical investigation revealed that support provided by the district-based team is primarily administrative in nature and significantly lacks effectiveness in improving the challenges teachers face when implementing inclusive educational practices (Mavuso, 2013). These shortcomings are supported by alarming statistics, with 71% of teachers expressing dissatisfaction with the district's interventions, as reported by the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2013). Similarly, Donohue and Bornman (2014) highlighted that teachers perceived workshops organised by the DoE as

ineffective. In light of these findings, a salient inference can be made that there is inadequate specialised support for teachers navigating the complexities of inclusive education.

Notably, existing research focused extensively on clarifying the requirements and obstacles faced by learners with dyslexia while paying little attention to the specific demands placed on teachers responsible for teaching them (Indrarathne, 2019; Leseayne et al., 2018; Fouche, 2015). The research focus that leans heavily in one direction significantly neglects the connection between teacher support and learner outcomes. Therefore, it becomes crucial to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the support at their disposal when teaching learners with dyslexia, thereby ascertaining the extent to which the presence or absence of such support contributes to their overall wellbeing.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the experiences of wellbeing and to explore the perceptions of structural support among Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia.

1.3.1 The objectives of the study

The following objectives guide the inquiry:

- To determine the nature of structural support from the DoE district officials for teachers working with learners with dyslexia.
- To establish the perceptions of DoE structural support among teachers working with learners with dyslexia and,
- To examine the role of structural support in the wellbeing of Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To ensure the delivery of quality education to all learners, it is imperative that teachers are adequately trained to recognise and address the diverse learning needs of their learners (Fouche, 2015). The way teachers provide support to and engage with learners facing learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, holds significant implications for the educational and behavioural development of these learners (Chitsa & Mpofu, 2016). Nevertheless, the provision of necessary assistance to learners with dyslexia, in the absence of commensurate

support for teachers themselves, can adversely affect teachers' wellbeing and capacity to fulfil their professional responsibilities. Consequently, ensuring teacher support becomes an essential element of teaching and learning.

Given the lack of research pertaining to the nature and extent of support available to teachers tasked with teaching learners with dyslexia, this study aimed to examine the perceptions of Grade 7 teachers regarding the support they receive from the DoE district and its contribution to their wellbeing. The choice of Grade 7 teachers as the focal point of investigation bears significance, as this grade represents a critical juncture in learners' academic journey, marking the transition from the intermediate phase to high school. In this context, teachers play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing the needs of learners with dyslexia to ensure their attainment of grade-level language proficiency and their readiness for the subsequent phase of their education (Hendricks, 2009). As such, this places pressure on teachers to ensure that their learners' success and readiness for high school.

The research aimed to interview ten Grade 7 English teachers across various primary schools in Hammanskraal. However, due to several challenges, including two schools' reluctance to participate in the study, demanding additional documentation beyond the permissions obtained from the Department of Basic Education's Head Office, and time constraints faced by the researcher, only five teachers were ultimately interviewed. The limitations arising from this constraint are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. These interviews sought to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the support provided by the district-based support team (DBST) and the manner in which this support contributes to their overall wellbeing. In order to corroborate the insights provided by the teachers, officials from the Tshwane North district, also referred to as the DBST, acting as representatives of the DoE, were also included in the study, as they are responsible for the provision of support within the selected schools.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question guiding the study read as follows:

What are the teachers' perceptions of structural support and their experiences of wellbeing in the context of teaching learners with dyslexia?

The sub-questions included the following:

- What is the nature of structural support provided by the DoE district office for teachers working with learners with dyslexia?
- How do teachers working with learners with dyslexia perceive the support offered by the DoE district office?
- What role does structural support play in the wellbeing of Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia?

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework served as the overarching lens through which the phenomena under investigation in this study were examined. To comprehend the wellbeing of teachers tasked with teaching learners with dyslexia, the researcher adopted Seligman's (2011) PERMA model. The PERMA model represents a multi-dimensional approach to comprehending individual wellbeing, positing five distinct pillars: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, that collectively contribute to an individual's overall wellbeing (Seligman, 2018). In the context of the present study, this theoretical framework informed the examination of teachers' wellbeing when implementing inclusive education, such as teaching learners with dyslexia alongside other learners. This framework allowed an exploration of each wellbeing pillar.

In addition, the researcher integrated the Job Demand and Resources (JD-R) model developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2006). This model was employed to investigate the structural support factors that could either enhance or diminish the wellbeing of teachers involved in teaching learners with dyslexia. The rationale behind integrating these two theoretical perspectives within the study framework was to elucidate that teachers' overall wellbeing in this context is intricately linked to their perceptions of the support structures in place. By combining the PERMA model and the JD-R model, this study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how structural support influences the wellbeing of teachers engaged in teaching learners with dyslexia.

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.7.1 Structural support

As stated by Thompson (2013), structural support encompasses assistance from external stakeholders, notably district management teams, vested with the responsibility of optimising the functionality of educational institutions, such as schools. This form of support is created to help teachers develop skills and capabilities, as well as have resources to effectively execute their professional obligations (Nel et al., 2016). Within the context of this study, structural support referred to assistance, psychological and professional provided to teachers facilitating the implementation of inclusive educational practices to meet the specific needs of learners with dyslexia. This support encompassed supplementary resources, educational workshops, and targeted interventions deliberately provided to teachers tasked with teaching learners with dyslexia.

1.7.2 Dyslexia

Dyslexia, originating from the Greek language, is a composite term comprising "dys" signifying difficulty, and "lexia" denoting words (Chen et al., 2017). It is defined as a neurological disorder characterised by an interruption in processing textual stimuli, resulting in the transmission of textual components in a disordered sequence. Consequently, this causes the encoding of cognitive information to become inaccurate (Romani et al., 2015). In accordance with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR), dyslexia is classified as an SLD marked by persistent challenges in acquiring fundamental academic proficiencies (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013).

The pivotal academic competencies adversely impacted by dyslexia include difficulties in accurately and fluently reading words, impaired reading comprehension, and restricted spelling development (Landsberg et al., 2019; APA, 2013). Within the context of this study, dyslexia is characterised as a condition that impedes reading capabilities and results in fluency, precision, and comprehension deficiencies. It should be noted that dyslexia is considered a language and literacy disorder that can manifest across diverse linguistic contexts (Pugh & Verhoeven, 2018). Consequently, this investigation focuses specifically on dyslexia within the framework of the English language.

1.7.3 Teacher wellbeing

The concept of wellbeing generally has a diverse range of definitions (Dodge et al., 2012), rendering it inherently multifaceted with no universally accepted definition. Scholarly discourse on wellbeing has often delineated it into two principal perspectives: hedonic and eudemonic (Ryan & Deci, 2001). From the hedonic perspective, wellbeing is characterised by transient feelings of accomplishment and contentment experienced at specific moments (Eloff, 2020). Conversely, eudemonic wellbeing posits wellbeing as an enduring practice that pursues personal growth and cultivates a purposeful life (Eloff, 2020).

While these divergent perspectives have been instrumental in shaping the discourse on wellbeing, it is worth noting that the definitions they offer closely resemble the conceptual framework employed in this study, namely the PERMA model. In the context of this research, teacher wellbeing was defined as the combination of the mental health experiences reported by teachers involved in the education of learners with dyslexia, juxtaposed against their perceptions of the adequacy of structural support provided to them. Consequently, the presence or absence of wellbeing is anticipated to manifest within these teachers' professional roles and psychological wellbeing. To operationalise and assess teacher wellbeing, the study draws upon the five pillars of the PERMA model.

Moreover, Soini et al. (2010) provided a suitable description of teacher wellbeing that closely matches the specific parameters of this research. The scholars characterised teacher wellbeing as an intricate interplay of professional and psychological fulfilment, purposefulness, and happiness (Soini et al., 2010). This nuanced definition is posited as a consequence of positive interactions forged among teachers and learners, a construct that encapsulates the essence of teacher wellbeing within the scope of this study.

1.7.4 DoE district officials

The personnel designated with the responsibility of providing educational support within schools, with a focus on optimising academic achievements specific to their assigned district, have been outlined by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2013). In the context of this study, DoE district officials refer to specialised individuals vested with the crucial duty of delivering both professional and psychological support to teachers. Their support endeavours are particularly oriented towards successfully implementing inclusive educational practices to accommodate learners with dyslexia and similar learning

challenges. In this present study, DoE district officials referred to the professionals responsible for providing support for schools within the boundaries of the Tshwane North District. In this study the terms DoE district officials and DBST will be used interchangeably to refer to district officials, appointed to provide support for teachers.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section briefly summarised the methodological paradigm and philosophical paradigm that guided the study, with more detailed information provided in Chapter 3.

1.8.1 Epistemological paradigm

In alignment with the aims of this study, the study employed the interpretivist paradigm to explore participants' subjective experiences. This paradigm highlights the importance of personal perspectives in research and recognises that knowledge is shaped by individual lived experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Unlike the positivist paradigm, which relies on objective measures for knowledge generation (Leong, 2008), interpretivism is rooted in the idea that a comprehensive understanding of human nature can only be attained by exploring rich accounts of individual experiences (Maree, 2020). In light of this philosophical foundation, the study aimed to subjectively explore this phenomenon, fostering a deeper comprehension of teachers' lived experiences, and offering valuable insights into their perceptions of support from the DoE.

1.8.2 Research paradigm

The study employed a qualitative research methodology. Creswell (2014) explained that qualitative research is fundamentally concerned with bringing out the meanings that individuals ascribe to a given phenomenon. This statement aligned with Cropley's (2021) study, which emphasised that qualitative research enables individuals to create narratives enriched with significance derived from their lived experiences and emotional reactions, all within the context of their natural surroundings.

Furthermore, as articulated by Jackson II et al. (2007), this methodological approach aligned with the empirical tradition of inquiry, deeply rooted in the quest to comprehend individuals' transcendental and lived experiences. Employing qualitative methods facilitated an in-depth exploration of teachers' perceptions regarding structural support and how its presence or

absence influenced their wellbeing and experiences. Additionally, it provided a means to collect insights into the perspectives of DoE district officials concerning their roles in providing structural support to teachers teaching learners with dyslexia.

1.8.3 Research design

The study used a phenomenological research design, a method that is used to explore participants' lived experiences and how they construct meaning from those experiences (2020). In addition, Alase (2020) asserts that phenomenology is the most participant-centred approach among research methodologies. Phenomenology encompasses two primary approaches: hermeneutic and transcendental phenomenology (Maree, 2020). In line with the epistemological foundation of this study, the study adopted the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, often called interpretative phenomenology, as elucidated by Neubauer et al. (2019). Interpretative phenomenology is centred on comprehending "how individuals interpret their life experiences and derive significance from them" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.5). In line with this study, this approach guided the researcher in exploring teachers' perceptions regarding the support from the DoE and its role in their overall wellbeing experience when working with learners with dyslexia. Additionally, it facilitated the researcher's comprehension of the DoE's standpoint concerning its role in providing support to teachers working with learners with dyslexia in ordinary classrooms.

1.9 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

1.9.1 Target population

The target population comprised Grade 7 English teachers in Hammanskraal and DoE officials from the Tshwane North District.

1.9.2 Site selection

Purposive sampling was employed to select six research sites, five government primary schools, and one district office in Gauteng province. However, only three primary schools, classified under the Quintile One category in Hammanskraal, were selected for the study. The selection of schools as research sites was based on specific criteria, focusing on schools' ability to support the study's research goals effectively. The second research site was the Tshwane North education district department, chosen because it oversees the

schools participating in this study. Its selection was solely based on this criterion. It was anticipated that this district office would yield substantial information, evidence, and data regarding their initiatives aimed at providing structural support to enhance teacher wellbeing.

1.9.3 Selection of participants

This study used a non-probability sampling approach to select participants. According to Etikan et al. (2015), non-probability sampling is a subjective method of participant selection wherein individuals within the population do not stand an equal chance of being selected to participate in a research study. Specifically, this method ensured that suitable participants were identified. This process involved purposefully selecting Grade 7 English teachers with experience in teaching learners with dyslexia or showing signs of dyslexia particularly manifesting as reading difficulties.

Patton (2002) characterised purposeful sampling as selecting participants with a wealth of information about the subject of inquiry, facilitating an in-depth examination. Furthermore, Etikan et al. (2015) elaborated that purposive sampling entailed the selection of participants based on their suitability to effectively address the research questions under investigation. Consequently, this method enabled the researcher to collaborate with participants with relevant insights regarding the study's objectives (Etikan et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, it is pertinent to acknowledge that using purposeful sampling is not without its critiques, primarily pertaining to the potential lack of representativeness of the chosen participants in relation to the broader population. In the present study, however, the primary intention was to thoroughly explore the phenomenon at hand, rather than to generalise the results to a larger population. The final sample comprised five Grade 7 English teachers in Hammanskraal and two district officials from the Tshwane North District. The criteria for participant selection included the following key attributes:

- Qualification as a teacher, with experience in teaching English in Grade 7, and a requisite level of exposure to learners formally diagnosed with dyslexia or learners experiencing reading challenges suggestive of dyslexia.
- District officials responsible for providing educational support to teachers at participating schools. Preferably, occupying positions such as subject advisors or educational psychologists. Significantly, their roles needed to include facilitating

teacher training programs, providing essential learning materials, implementing teacher wellness initiatives, and actively addressing challenges related to literacy deficiencies in schools.

1.10 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

1.10.1 Data collection

In this study, semi-structured interviews served as the primary method for data collection. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) noted that phenomenological researchers rely on in-depth interviews to construct and derive meaning from the phenomenon under investigation. Since this study sought to explore insights into teachers' perceptions of support and its role in their wellbeing, semi-structured interviews were used to gather comprehensive data. Adopting semi-structured interviews offered a structured yet flexible approach to data collection (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews necessitated an adaptive stance on the part of the researcher to enable respondents to express their viewpoints freely (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The researcher followed a predetermined set of questions while also allowing for the exploration of additional aspects through probing and participant-driven elaboration, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences. Nonetheless, due to the structured nature of this method, the data collection process proved to be efficient without consuming excessive time (Maree, 2020). The effectiveness of the method is further seen in its capacity to capture diverse information from diverse cases within the same study, thereby enhancing the robustness of findings (Maree, 2020).

Data were obtained through two sets of interviews, one with teachers and the other with district officials employed by the DoE. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with teachers at their respective schools, with strict adherence to all relevant COVID-19 safety protocols. Interviews with district officials were conducted via telephone. Each interview, on average, lasted 20 to 45 minutes. The researcher developed a distinct set of questions tailored to the specific information needed from teachers, which differed from the questions created for district officials. This differentiation mirrors the varying roles and perspectives inherent in these two participant groups, ensuring the study's focus remained clear and targeted.

1.10.2 Data management and documentation

To ensure the comprehensive and accurate capture of participants' responses, the researcher employed a multifaceted approach to documentation. This diverse strategy was implemented to faithfully represent the nuanced insights the participants provided. The researcher diligently documented participants' responses verbatim in line with the interviews. Simultaneously, field notes were taken during the interviews, and audio recordings were employed as an auxiliary method. Field notes were recorded during the interviews, which allowed the researcher to capture participants' reactions and comments as they unfolded.

Moreover, acknowledging to the inherent challenges of simultaneously posing questions, actively listening to responses, and documenting field notes (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), the use of audio recording had to be integrated into the data collection process with the explicit consent of the participants. These complementary data documentation methods proved helpful during the subsequent data analysis phase. The researcher used the field notes and audio recordings to cross-verify the consistency of information in the transcripts (Maree, 2020). This use of multiple documentation methods significantly contributed to the overall precision and credibility of the collected data (Maree, 2020).

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS

The analytical framework employed in this study was Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a methodological approach that follows a systematic procedure outlined by Smith and Osborn (2015). The researcher adhered to the sequential steps outlined by IPA, which encompassed:

- Immersion in the original data through a comprehensive and attentive reading of the transcripts while concurrently listening to the audio recordings;
- Identification and notation of salient content and elements within the data that held particular significance;
- Generation of emergent thematic constructs within each individual transcript, encapsulating the essence of the data;
- Examining interconnections and overlaps between these emergent themes facilitates their subsequent categorisation based on inherent meaning and relevance.

- The continual and iterative analysis of data across multiple transcripts to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the entire dataset; and
- The pursuit of overarching patterns and recurrent themes transcended individual transcripts, thereby contributing to the synthesis of a holistic interpretation of the collected data.

1.12 QUALITY CRITERIA

Trustworthiness is significant in qualitative research (Maree, 2020). A study that has passed a test of trustworthiness can be judged by the quality of its findings, data analysis, and conclusions (Maree, 2020), which will remain noteworthy to readers. This study followed four aspects to ensure trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

1.12.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which results can be considered trustworthy, reliable, and valid (Stewart et al., 2017). Despite the difficulty of qualitative research interpretation, numerous methods have been established to improve credibility (Wahyuni, 2012). This can be done by spending time with people, observing their context to better comprehend the phenomena, and using the expertise of supervisors to guide the research process (Wahyuni, 2012). In the present study, the supervisors consistently offered feedback and input, including their contributions to transcripts, the ultimate report, and the research methods employed. Interviewing participants allowed the researcher to gather in-depth responses that strengthened the study's integrity (Hadi & Closs, 2016). The data was extensively checked and rechecked to verify credibility and dependability.

1.12.2 Transferability

Transferability, a critical dimension of research validity, refers to how applicable the study's findings are in contexts outside of the specific research setting (Schurink et al., 2014). To make sure the findings could apply to other situations, the researcher carefully described the study's context and the participants. A comprehensive portrayal of the research context and detailed participant profiles were constructed (Stahl & King, 2020). This detailed documentation is crucial because it provides other researchers with the necessary information to assess if the study's findings can be applied in their own research. This

enhances the relevance of the research outcomes and ensures it can be valuable in various academic studies.

1.12.3 Dependability

Dependability, a key aspect of research integrity, signifies the stability and consistency of research findings across multiple instances and over time (Stahl & King, 2020). This facet of research rigour emphasises the importance of actively engaging in the research process to ascertain the constancy and trustworthiness of the study's outcomes. To bolster the dependability of this research study, attention was dedicated to the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures. By upholding these rigorous standards, the study sought to increase confidence in the reliability and consistency of its findings.

1.12.4 Confirmability

Confirmability, in accordance with Petty et al. (2012), signifies the extent to which the findings of the study faithfully and authentically reflect the core focus of the research, devoid of any sign of the researcher's subjective preconceived ideas. This integral facet of research quality includes establishing a transparent audit trail, carefully interpreting data analysis outcomes, and formulating impartial conclusions (Petty et al., 2012). To ensure confirmability, the researcher undertook a thorough examination by comparing the findings of this present study with those of scholars engaged in similar research undertakings. The consistency observed between the findings of this study and previous research outcomes highlighted the researcher's dedication to adhering to established academic principles, ensuring a neutral and unbiased inquiry.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are crucial to the research process (Arifin, 2018). Ponterotto (2010) emphasised that the ethical complexities within qualitative research methodologies are as a result of the researcher's establishment of intimate, sustained, and immersive interactions with participants in their natural settings. The overarching objective of research ethics is to safeguard the dignity of research participants by upholding the accuracy and dependability of collected data and, thus, precluding the possibility of erroneous reporting and data misrepresentation (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). The ethical framework that informed this study was founded upon a set of fundamental principles: the acquisition of ethical clearance

and research approval; the solicitation of informed consent from participants; the assurance of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity; the voluntary nature of participation; and the commitment to post-research participant wellbeing.

Securing approval was paramount, especially in educational research involving human participants (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). Consequently, the researcher initiated the process by applying for ethics clearance to the Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria (Ethics Committee, 2020). Furthermore, recognising the study's engagement with educational institutions in the Gauteng province, the researcher sought permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to conduct interviews at the selected research sites, which were schools. Additionally, the researcher proactively engaged with the school principals and representatives from the school governing bodies of the concerned schools to obtain their consent to conduct interviews with teachers from their respective institutions. Subsequent to that, the researcher administered informed consent forms to the participating individuals, wherein the study's objectives and interview procedures were unequivocally defined. A comprehensive exploration of the ethical considerations governing this research study is presented in Chapter 3.

1.14 RESEARCH STRUCTURE

The structure of this mini-dissertation is made up of five chapters, each serving a specific purpose within the research framework.

Chapter 1 served as the introductory section, providing an overview of the study's context and background. The study's problem statement, aims, objectives, research questions, conceptual framework, and key concept clarifications are presented. Additionally, the chapter offered a concise overview of the research methodology elements, such as the phenomenological research design, semi-structured interviews, purposeful sampling, and data collection techniques. Furthermore, the chapter delved into the data analysis procedures, specifically utilising IPA, and summarised the measures taken to ensure research trustworthiness. Lastly, ethical considerations that guided the research were discussed briefly.

Chapter 2 presented a detailed discussion of the literature pertinent to the research topic. This chapter comprehensively explored teachers' perceptions regarding structural support and its contribution to their wellbeing experiences.

Chapter 3 primarily focused on elucidating the research design and methodologies employed in the study. It elaborated on the specific data collection techniques and outlined the subsequent data analysis processes.

Chapter 4 offered a detailed presentation of the findings of the study, including an in-depth analysis and discussion of the emergent themes derived from the collected data. The utilisation of IPA for data analysis is discussed. Additionally, this chapter briefly contextualised the findings based on existing research.

Chapter 5 served as the culmination of the research and summarised the findings of the study as derived from the data analysis. Furthermore, this chapter provided recommendations, and the limitations of the study. Lastly, the researcher reflected on the process and presented a conclusion outlining the study's contributions to the field of education.

1.15 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 provided a comprehensive introduction and contextual background for this mini-dissertation. The chapter elucidated the study's rationale, objectives, problem statement, and research inquiries. Additionally, it provided details about the research methodology, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Furthermore, procedures used to ensure research trustworthiness and ethical adherence were outlined briefly. Chapter 2 explored the pertinent literature pertaining to the research topic and discussed the conceptual framework employed as a lens for comprehending the underlying phenomenon of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented the literature and the conceptual framework that underpinned this study. This review was structured to address various essential aspects pertinent to this study. Specifically, dyslexia and the nature of dyslexia were examined to provide insights into its characteristics and the challenges faced by learners with dyslexia. This was followed by the prevalence of dyslexia globally and within South Africa and the specific context under investigation. Then, the concept of inclusive education was explored to understand the broader framework within which learners with dyslexia are accommodated. In addition, the wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia was investigated to establish their challenges in working with these learners and their wellbeing experiences in relation to their perception of structural support. Lastly, an in-depth review of structural support from the DoE district was explored to establish the resources and interventions available to enhance the practice and wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia. Additionally, this chapter included a discussion of the conceptual framework that informed this study. This framework not only structured the literature review but also provided a theoretical lens through which the research questions were addressed.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is a complex and multifaceted condition and has been defined in various ways within the realm of research. Its complex nature has led to differing views among professionals regarding its precise characteristics (Mills & Clarke, 2017). The historical evolution of the term can be traced back to 1877 by the German physician Adolph Kussmaul, who employed the phrases 'word blindness' and 'word deafness' to describe adult patients who exhibited reading difficulties despite possessing ordinary intelligence (Anderson & Meier-Hedde, 2001). Subsequently, in 1884, the German ophthalmologist Rudolf Berlin introduced the term 'dyslexia' as a pertinent description for the neurologically-based reading challenges encountered by individuals, departing from the limitations of 'word blindness' (Ebere, 2016). However, despite these early efforts, there remained a need for greater conceptual clarity in defining dyslexia.

Reid (2011) asserted that the definitions of dyslexia are fundamentally rooted in its underlying causes, which encompass various factors such as neurological and genetic

influences, phonological, visual, and auditory issues, as well as challenges related to memory, time management, and coordination (Reid, 2011). A more simplified interpretation, offered by Chen et al. (2017), breaks down the term dyslexia into its Greek origins, 'dys', which means difficulty, and 'lexia' referring to words. Consequently, dyslexia is a disorder that hinders an individual's ability to accurately decipher distinct and blended letter sounds to compose words (Mills & Clarke, 2017). Notably, dyslexia does not involve the literal reversal of words or phrases. Instead, it affects the decoding of sound meaning from written text, significantly affecting comprehension and fluency (Romani et al., 2015). Wajuihian and Naidoo (2011) emphasised that dyslexia arises from neurobiological factors that disrupt phonological processing and memory, ultimately impeding an individual's reading and spelling abilities. Moreover, all these explanations of dyslexia converge on its core characteristics, which are reading, writing, and spelling difficulties.

Given the diversity of definitions in the literature, this study aligned with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Text Revision (DSM-5-TR) definition of dyslexia, which characterises it as a learning disorder marked by persistent reading impairment (APA, 2013). Specifically, SLDs encompass deficiencies in academic skills that hinder age-appropriate task performance (APA, 2013). Critical academic skills associated with dyslexia include accurate and fluent word recognition, reading comprehension, and spelling (APA, 2013). Consequently, individuals with dyslexia often experience challenges related to "fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and poor spelling abilities" (APA, 2013, p.78).

Dyslexia can significantly affect a learner's ability to read, write, interpret, or process words, potentially affecting their overall academic performance (Alawadh, 2016). Dyslexia bears no relationship to intelligence, as evidenced by research (Masala, 2017). Learners with dyslexia should not be deemed less intelligent, as several studies affirm that dyslexia has limited bearing on an individual's intellectual capabilities (Ebere, 2016; APA, 2013; Kommu, 2009). In fact, individuals with dyslexia may possess enhanced intellectual abilities, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity (Masterson, 2022). However, to unlock their full potential, learners with dyslexia require specialised education and support (Morton, 2007). Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of teachers to foster participation and mitigate underachievement among these learners (Tyagi, 2016).

In summary, this critical examination of the literature elucidated the multifaceted nature of dyslexia, the historical evolution of its definition, its impact on academic performance, and

the need for tailored educational strategies to support learners with dyslexia in reaching their full potential and to equally reinforce support for teachers who have learners with dyslexia to be in the best position to support them.

2.3 PREVALENCE OF DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is an SLD characterised by difficulties in reading (APA, 2013). Dyslexia has gained significant attention in the realm of educational research. Dyslexia is one of the most extensively studied and unique learning disorders (Masala, 2017). Compared to other SLDs like dysgraphia and dyscalculia, dyslexia appeared to be the most widespread (Yang et al., 2022; Daloiso, 2017). The APA (2013) reported that SLDs affect 15% of school-age learners, and dyslexia emerged as the most prevalent. Various scholars have attempted to quantify the prevalence of dyslexia on a global scale. Indrarathne (2019), Daloiso (2017), and Thwala et al. (2020) have indicated that approximately 10% of the world's population struggles with dyslexia. In the United States, studies suggest that dyslexia affects anywhere from 15% to 20% of the population (Flink, 2014; Kang et al., 2016). Leseyane et al. (2018) highlighted that one in ten South Africans has dyslexia. Remarkably, despite these numbers, a significant proportion of individuals with dyslexia remain undiagnosed (Mills & Clarke, 2017). Yet, substantial barriers to diagnosing dyslexia persist, and factors such as parental consensus are among the main hindrances (Harding et al., 2023). The lack of a formal diagnosis contributes to a prevailing misconception about dyslexia (Mbatha, 2018).

When looking at school-aged children, research estimates that 5% to 10% of children worldwide have dyslexia (Thwala et al., 2020). Dyslexia, accounting for as much as 80% of learners with SLDs (Lagae, 2008), remains a hidden disorder in many African nations, including South Africa (Wajuihiana & Naidoo, 2011). The scarcity of data on the prevalence of dyslexia in African countries exacerbates the situation. Wajuihiana and Naidoo (2011) noted that most African nations lack comprehensive data on the prevalence of dyslexia. As a result, disorders like dyslexia often go unnoticed and unaddressed. This lack of awareness hinders teachers and the public from fully comprehending dyslexia's implications (Abosi, 2007). In South Africa, the DoE has initiated intervention activities through the Quality Improvement Development Support and Upliftment Programme (QIDS-UP) to assist learners who struggle with reading, such as those with dyslexia (Howie et al., 2017). However, these efforts have faced criticism for being inadequate (Geertsema et al., 2022).

This raises questions about the effectiveness of current strategies for addressing dyslexia in African educational settings.

The prevalence of dyslexia in African educational settings is a matter of debate due to limited awareness, underdiagnosis, and misconceptions (Mbatha, 2018; Mills & Clarke, 2017). Research by Khaliq et al. (2017) highlighted that many learners with dyslexia remain undiagnosed, suggesting a potentially higher prevalence in South African school-going children than reported. This creates a significant gap in recognising and understanding dyslexia, hindering the development of effective teaching methods and support systems tailored to these learners' needs (Makgato et al., 2022). This section sets the stage for a deeper exploration of dyslexia and its prevalence. Moreover, it underscores the importance of raising awareness and providing training and support for teachers with learners with dyslexia, to help them develop skills to accommodate these learners effectively.

2.4 CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

The Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (2001) laid the foundation for inclusive education aimed at accommodating learners with diverse needs in regular classrooms (DoE, 2001). This policy directive emphasised integrating what was previously known as special education with mainstream education (DoE, 2001) to establish full-service schools capable of addressing the needs of learners with various learning difficulties, including dyslexia. Inclusive education represents a fundamental objective for educating individuals with special learning needs (Lindsay, 2007). The core principle of the inclusive education policy revolved around providing equal opportunities for quality education to all (Stubbs, 2008). In other words, it is a system intended to deliver inclusive teaching and learning that caters to learners with special needs and those without special learning needs (Thwala et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, the success of inclusive education hinges significantly on adequate support from teachers (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). In South Africa, implementing inclusive education policies has been a subject of interest and significance, with many scholars exploring ways to make its objectives feasible (Walton & Engelbrecht, 2018; Hodgson, 2018; Dalton et al., 2012). However, implementing this policy is hampered by many factors, including a lack of teachers' skills and knowledge to address a wide range of learning needs (Dalton et al.,

2012). Research has noted that there has been inadequate and occasionally misplaced support for teachers implementing inclusive education (Mills & Clarke, 2017).

Dyslexia, like other learning barriers, can significantly affect a learner's motivation for schooling (Khalil et al., 2023). Morton (2007) emphasised that learners with dyslexia require specialised education to unlock their full potential. Many learners with dyslexia experience embarrassment in the classroom, particularly during activities (Kalsoom et al., 2020). Additionally, Lesenya et al. (2018) shed light on how learners with dyslexia struggle in school due to a deficiency in core skills such as reading and writing. These learners' lack of proper support can exacerbate problems and lead to adverse outcomes, including poor mental health and high dropout rates (Firth et al., 2013).

To support such learners, the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 108 of 1996, and the EWP6 emphasised the importance of equal access to quality education for all (Makoelle, 2012; DoE, 2005). However, despite these policy initiatives, many learners with dyslexia are still without equitable educational experience (Cooper, 2023). Dyslexia and other learning impairments are often stigmatised and misunderstood in many South African public schools, which frequently lack the necessary resources and understanding to effectively teach learners requiring additional support (Tops et al., 2020; Mbatha, 2018). This situation compromises the future economic contributions of individuals with dyslexia, as they may not be adequately equipped to contribute meaningfully to society (Hall & Theron, 2016).

However, a critical assessment revealed substantial gaps in the effective implementation of inclusive education policies (Ladbrook, 2019). Reports on the subject have highlighted persistent challenges, including inadequate teacher training, limited resources, and a dire need for specialists to support the implementation of inclusive education systems (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2015). Statistics indicated high dropout rates among learners with dyslexia and SLDs globally (Tops et al., 2021; Al-Lamki, 2012; Fleish et al., 2009). The school dropout rate for learners with dyslexia in the United Kingdom is 35%, compared to 27% in the United States (Al-Lamki, 2012). The specific dropout figures for South Africa remain elusive. Research indicated that the negative experiences learners with dyslexia face within the education system could potentially contribute to dropout rates (Hoskins, 2019; Leseayne et al., 2017). Research in South Africa has predominantly focused on providing quantitative data for SLDs and revealed a 10% dropout rate for learners with SLDs (Fleisch et al., 2009).

Implementing inclusive education in South Africa faces substantial challenges due to inadequate support for schools to address learning difficulties. These include insufficient teacher training, limited resources, and the scarcity of specialists (Ladbrook, 2019). The prevalence of high dropout rates among learners with dyslexia underscores the pressing need for empirical approaches and interventions. Importantly, there is a lack of evidence-based instructional strategies and interventions to address the unique challenges posed by dyslexia (Mills & Clarke, 2017). This study highlighted the complexities and gaps surrounding the integration of learners with dyslexia into the inclusive education system in South Africa and emphasised the urgency of addressing these issues for the betterment of these learners' educational experiences and outcomes.

2.5 FORMS OF STRUCTURAL SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of inclusive education (Adewumi, 2019; Alnahdi et al., 2022). In essence, they are responsible for fostering an inclusive learning environment that accommodates the diverse needs of all learners. However, for teachers to effectively navigate this complex terrain, they require adequate structural support (Ladbrook, 2019; Nel et al., 2016; Maseko & Fakudze, 2014). This section critically examined the significance of structural support for teachers in inclusive education and attempted to identify gaps in the existing literature pertaining to the topic. The policy landscape in South Africa emphasises the importance of supporting teachers in inclusive education. According to Nel et al. (2016), teachers need robust structural support to translate the rhetoric of inclusion into practical classroom strategies. Teachers, especially those new to the field, need support navigating the intricate demands of inclusive education (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). The policy document on inclusive education emphasised that teachers' support should be proportionate to the support provided to learners with learning barriers (DoE, 2005). This underscores the significance of teacher support to ensure the success of inclusive education (Nel et al., 2016).

The EWP6 on inclusive education set forth key strategies for developing support structures for teachers engaged in inclusive education (DoE, 2001). In South Africa, various national policies and statutory organisations exist to support teachers in implementing the curriculum. The DoE is the central entity responsible for providing essential resources and support to schools and teachers. Central to the strategies of the EWP6 is the concept of

district departments, identified by Nel et al. (2016) as a fundamental component of the initial support system for teachers. According to the DoE's policy document, the district departments provide guidance, monitor, and assist teachers to enhance school performance (DoE, 2011; Mavuso, 2013). Support emanates from various levels within the department, including teacher centres, circuit offices, districts, and the departmental head office, and it is provided by the District-Based Support Teams (DBST) (DoE, 2005).

The Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998 outlined that the (DBST) responsibility is to ensure that school-based teachers deliver quality work (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1998). Similarly, the National Policy on the Organization, Roles, and Responsibilities of Education Districts emphasises the roles of education districts and circuit offices in conducting school visits, classroom observations, consultations, and cluster meetings, as well as providing professional development support (National Education Evaluation & Development Unit [NEEDU], 2013). Therefore, the DBST role is pivotal in learning across schools as it carries responsibilities such as resource provision, assessment and evaluation programmes, and collaborative support for effective teaching and learning (Nel et al., 2016).

Effective, knowledgeable, and well-trained teachers are the cornerstone of inclusive education (Alnahdi et al., 2022). Similarly, teachers in good spirits and experiencing wellbeing are equally crucial for implementing inclusive education (Kruger, 2019). This will promote the highest quality of intervention and educational support for learners with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. However, needless to say, this should be a shared goal between the teachers and the employer. The realisation of this objective hinges on providing teachers with the necessary support to execute their roles effectively.

Research conducted in South Africa highlighted a need for improved support in many schools, particularly in rural and historically disadvantaged areas (DoE, 2005). Support and training programmes in inclusive education should encompass specialised support teams capable of providing practical training and relevant skills to address challenges in teaching learners with learning difficulties (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). While these policies and structures appear comprehensive on paper, there is a notable gap in the literature concerning their practical effectiveness and influence (Nel et al., 2016). Existing research often fails to critically assess how these policies translate into tangible support for teachers. In addition, little attention has been given to the experiences of teachers working within the

inclusive education framework, particularly in terms of their psychological and professional wellbeing.

To bridge the gap between policy rhetoric and practical implementation, empirical studies need to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the support provided by the DoE. Structural support for teachers is essential for the success of inclusive education. The following section explored support systems that are crucial for ensuring teachers are well-equipped to fulfil their pivotal roles in inclusive education, particularly when working with learners with dyslexia alongside other learners. The multifaceted support has been categorised into two distinct facets: professional support and psychological support.

2.5.1 Professional support

Professional support is critical to teachers' development (Saric & Steh, 2017). It includes providing essential physical resources, teaching materials, facilities, and equipment that positively contribute to the teaching and learning process. Additionally, professional support extends to in-service training, organised workshops, school visits, conferences, and career development programmes (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). In the context of inclusive education, professional support guides teachers on effective teaching and learning methods that accommodate diverse learners' needs. Research indicated that sufficient support is imperative for the success of inclusive education (Maseko & Fakudze, 2014). However, the actual effectiveness of the support provided by DBSTs remains a subject of debate. Quarterly school visits by district-based teams are a common form of support (Mavuso, 2013). Yet, as revealed in a study involving teachers in the Eastern Cape, teachers alluded to the support as being more administrative rather than addressing the real challenges of teaching learners with learning difficulties like dyslexia (Mavuso, 2013). In contrast, research suggests that DBST support should focus on helping teachers understand their role in inclusive education and providing practical assistance (Thwala, 2020). This highlights a gap in the literature, emphasising the need to explore the diverse perspectives held by teachers regarding the relevance and effectiveness of the support by the DBST.

The SIAS policy is one such initiative aimed at providing professional support to teachers working with learners with dyslexia (Karimupfumbi & Dwarika, 2022). However, studies have revealed that the support rendered may not be adequate or pertinent to the specific needs of teachers (Mavuso, 2013). Concerns raised by teachers were that the DBST support

barely prepared them for implementing inclusive education effectively (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). To bridge this gap and enhance the effectiveness of professional support, Mills and Clarke (2017) suggested various tools that can be integrated into professional development programmes for dyslexia, such as training on foundational reading, creating awareness of dyslexia's characteristics, and providing in-depth knowledge about the disorder's biological, cognitive, and behavioural aspects.

In conclusion, the role of DBSTs in providing professional support to teachers in inclusive education is crucial. However, the existing literature highlighted disparities in teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness and relevance of this support (Ladbrook, 2009). Further research should investigate these discrepancies by exploring how DBSTs can align their support strategies with teachers' needs and foster more productive collaborations. Additionally, studies should evaluate the impact of various professional development tools and approaches on the quality of support and professional growth of teachers of diverse learners, including those with dyslexia.

2.5.2 Psychological support

Psychological support encompasses assistance to preserve an individual's mental and psychosocial wellbeing (Taggart, 2011). Teaching learners with diverse learning needs in under-resourced schools can impact teacher wellbeing (Nkambule, 2018). In such contexts, teachers may face extensive workloads and increased responsibilities to provide quality education to all learners, including those with dyslexia, regardless of having inadequate support. A study conducted by Wessels and Wood (2019) focused on teachers' wellbeing and collaboration to enhance it. Their investigation uncovered that "teachers in socio-economically challenging contexts work under difficult conditions and, as such, require support" (Wessels & Wood, 2019, p. 7). However, their study did not specifically explore the wellbeing of teachers working with learners with learning difficulties like dyslexia, which is the primary focus of this dissertation.

Recognising the critical role of positive teacher wellbeing, especially in inclusive settings, the DoE needs to prioritise the needs of teachers (Nkambule, 2018). The demanding work environment makes teachers vulnerable to burnout, anxiety, and stress (Benevene et al., 2020). Therefore, psychological support is imperative to safeguard their wellbeing and foster an inclusive mindset. Psychological support plays a vital role in supporting teacher wellbeing in inclusive education, enhancing work engagement, and delivering quality education to

learners with dyslexia and other learners (Wessels & Woods, 2019). Furthermore, Wessels and Wood's (2019) study illustrated the potential of psychological support to nurture teacher wellbeing. In their study, utilising Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR), Wessel and Woods (2019) found that teachers demonstrated the capacity to turn their challenging experiences into positive wellbeing, showcasing resilience even in difficult situations. Their approach involved employing communication, critical reflection, commitment, coaching, collaboration, and character development (Wessels & Woods, 2019).

This method could potentially serve as a model for the DoE when designing programmes to assist district officials in offering psychological support for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. Psychological support may empower teachers working in challenging environments to implement positive classroom practices, including self-regulation and mindfulness. This, in turn, would enhance their resilience in the face of increased work pressure (Namone et al., 2021).

Conversely, the absence of psychological support can adversely affect teacher engagement, leading to demotivation. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2019) identified six crucial factors in the wellbeing of individuals in any work environment. These aspects can contribute to poor performance, absenteeism, and heightened stress if not adequately managed. These aspects include:

1. **Demands:** The workload and working conditions teachers face when teaching learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties;
2. **Control:** The autonomy, teachers have to choose their teaching methods to accommodate diverse learners, including those with dyslexia;
3. **Support:** The structures in place to assist and promote the wellbeing of teachers and their learners with dyslexia;
4. **Relationships:** The quality of the work environment and interactions, including those with learners with dyslexia;
5. **Role:** Clarity regarding teachers' roles and responsibilities, especially when working with learners with dyslexia and
6. **Change:** how changes in teaching methods and curricula are managed and communicated within an organisation to align with teachers' and learners' needs, including those of learners with dyslexia.

In this study, these aspects are related to teachers working with learners with learning difficulties like dyslexia in full-service schools. White (2020) notes that work environments imposing high demands on individuals without sufficient support pose risks to mental health and wellbeing. Teachers' mental health and wellbeing can significantly impact learners' mental health, academic outcomes, and overall wellbeing (White, 2020). Therefore, promoting positive mental health for teachers working with learners with dyslexia is of utmost importance. The absence of support may lead to teacher disengagement. Schaufeli et al. (2009) pointed out that job demands without corresponding support can result in burnout, while adequate support may increase work engagement.

2.6 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT, AND THE DEMANDS OF TEACHING LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

In the history of education, learners with learning difficulties, including dyslexia, were often marginalised within the educational system (Smit et al., 2020). However, the advent of programmes such as Education for All and Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) on inclusive education brought a transformative shift to South Africa. These initiatives proclaimed that all children, regardless of their diverse backgrounds and needs, have a fundamental right to equal and quality education (Engelbrecht, 2015; Smit et al., 2020). It is imperative to clarify that equality in this instance did not entail uniform treatment but rather entailed providing tailored support suitable for individual learners' needs within the classroom (DoE, 2001). The EWP6 aimed to ensure that no learner was denied access to education based on their challenges and that comprehensive support was extended to address their needs (EWP6, 2001). This revolutionary shift has seen learners with SLDs, including dyslexia, integrated into mainstream schools.

Dyslexia is not an intellectual disability but a condition that causes difficulties in certain areas of academic functioning (APA, 2013). Thus, learners with dyslexia require targeted interventions and effective pedagogical methods to bridge the gap between their intellectual capabilities and academic achievements (Peng & Kievit, 2020). Consequently, teachers often must go the extra mile to ensure these learners receive the necessary remedial educational support, as more appropriate remediation can lead to improved academic performance. Mills and Clarke (2017) stressed that incorrect intervention strategies for learners with dyslexia may lead to potential negative consequences. Similarly, Vaughn et

al. (2012) emphasised the importance of developing individualised intervention plans that address these learners' specific academic challenges.

Teaching learners with dyslexia requires that teachers possess a profound understanding of the disorder and the requisite skills to accommodate the learners' unique needs (Vaughn et al., 2012). Teachers must be proficient in recognising the signs and symptoms of reading difficulties and implementing teaching and learning methodologies to mitigate these issues and improve reading literacy outcomes (Kalsoom et al., 2020). Research conducted in Tshwane, South Africa, demonstrated that early identification of dyslexia among learners correlates with improved reading abilities (Colson, 2013). Suggesting the importance of equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge required to identify learners with dyslexia at the foundational level. Similarly, a study by Makgato et al. (2022) indicated that South African primary school teachers are aware of dyslexia, although concerns about the lack of support for teaching these learners remain unexplored.

Language teachers require extensive training and resources to effectively support learners, especially those experiencing barriers to learning, such as dyslexia. These skills would help them fulfil their pivotal role in developing strong literacy skills in such learners. Research indicated that teachers teaching learners with dyslexia often face significant challenges due to inadequate support and training, which may lead to detrimental experiences (Yeo et al., 2016). Additionally, studies conducted in Pakistan and South Africa revealed that teachers are frequently tasked with teaching learners with dyslexia without prior training (Kalsoom et al., 2020). These findings highlighted the lack of support for these teachers, which has adverse implications for their wellbeing and impacts the learning experiences of learners with dyslexia (Kruger, 2019; Hussain & Sultana, 2022). Thus, a need to investigate how Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia perceive the support they receive from DoE DBSTs and how the support contributes to their wellbeing was paramount.

Learners with dyslexia often require different approaches, which may be challenging for teachers and potentially hinder the curriculum's progression (Maseko & Fakudze, 2014). Teachers are entrusted with covering the syllabus within a specific timeframe and ensuring that all learners are included during this period. However, accommodating learners with additional educational support needs, such as dyslexia, without the necessary skills can disrupt the flow of the syllabus and compromise the objectives of teaching and learning for all learners (Maseko & Fakudze, 2014). Unlike some other learning disabilities, dyslexia is

manageable, and instructional methods and assessments are available to assist struggling learners (Brown-Chidsey, 2010). For example, the United States employs a 'Response To Intervention' (RTI) system that proactively identifies learners with dyslexia and provides early interventions to prevent academic failure (Reid, 2011). It is essential that teachers recognise and provide early intervention for learners with difficulties in learning (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). This is similar to the objectives of the Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) policy. Intervention strategies may encompass providing additional time for tasks, employing diverse instructional and behaviour management strategies, adjusting assessment tasks, and enhancing the learning environment to accommodate learners with dyslexia.

In South Africa, where English is the primary medium of instruction, learners with dyslexia often face significant learning challenges (Mbatha, 2018). Proficiency in English requires extensive reading and writing, which can be particularly challenging for learners with dyslexia. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), South Africa's core curriculum policy, emphasises the importance of developing reading skills from the foundation phase (Howie et al., 2017). While various approaches have been employed to teach reading literacy, including the additive bilingual approach, which focuses on home language competency, learners with dyslexia may still struggle with literacy even in their home language (Mbatha, 2018; Kormos, 2016; Kormos & Smith, 2012). However, the difficulties predominantly affect second language literacy and vocabulary development in multilingual classroom settings where learners learn a language other than their mother tongue (Kormos, 2016; Lopez-Martin, 2013).

Consequently, learners with dyslexia require inclusive instruction and individualised support (Kormos, 2016). For example, learners with dyslexia often struggle with linking spoken and written language (Colson, 2013). Moreover, the curriculum policy allows schools flexibility in structuring their teaching time for home languages or additional languages based on learners' needs (CAPS, 2011). Therefore, teachers can exercise their discretion to cover essential elements such as phonics, shared reading, and group reading (Mbatha, 2018; Howie et al., 2017). These elements are pivotal in helping learners decode and understand written text. Furthermore, the curriculum encourages using visual information to teach reading literacy and comprehension (Howie et al., 2017). In essence, inclusive education should encompass a multi-level teaching approach to accommodate diverse learning needs (Talyio, 2013; DoE, 2011). Employing a multi-sensory approach is particularly beneficial for

learners with dyslexia as it helps them make meaningful connections. However, adopting such strategies relies on teachers possessing the requisite abilities and knowledge regarding dyslexia and its management within the teaching and learning process (Mbatha, 2018).

Therefore, educational districts and departments must provide programmes that equip teachers with extensive knowledge and training on dyslexia screening, identification, and accommodation. Furthermore, prioritising the wellbeing of teachers teaching learners with dyslexia is paramount, as it profoundly influences their motivation and morale. Implementing inclusive practices in mainstream classrooms depends on teachers having the necessary skills, knowledge, resources, and emotional support (Mbata, 2018). Several studies have explored the importance of professional training in shaping teachers' attitudes, addressing their concerns, and enhancing their self-efficacy beliefs regarding inclusive classroom practices (Ladbrook, 2019; Nel et al., 2016). Results have indicated that in-person teacher training programmes positively contribute to teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy while reducing concerns (Chao et al., 2016; Forlin et al., 2014; Sharma & Nuttall, 2016). Similarly, research that was done in relation to teachers' attitudes toward teaching learners with dyslexia revealed that teachers tend to have more positive attitudes after training (Kormos & Nijakowska, 2017).

However, much of the literature that is available is predominantly quantitative and focuses on teachers teaching English as a foreign language to learners with dyslexia. Therefore, a research gap exists regarding empirical evidence of South African teachers' perceptions of support, such as workshops and training, and how the support contributes to their wellbeing when teaching learners with dyslexia. This gap necessitated further exploration to inform teacher development programmes aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of these teachers and for these teachers to subsequently contribute positively to the educational experience of learners with dyslexia in South Africa.

2.7 THE DYNAMICS OF STRUCTURAL SUPPORT IN THE WELLBEING OF TEACHERS WORKING WITH LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

The wellbeing of teachers constitutes a central pillar in the discourse surrounding inclusive education and working with learners with learning challenges like dyslexia (Benevene et al., 2020). This study embarked on a thorough analysis of various findings from existing literature to elucidate the state of teacher wellbeing. Research indicated that there are

mounting stress levels in the teaching profession that result in heightened sick leave and a surge in attrition (Benevene et al., 2020). Teacher wellbeing has been conceptualised in various ways within the existing literature. Zakaria et al. (2021) described teacher wellbeing as the overall quality of a teacher's professional life. Similarly, Benevene et al. (2020) defined teacher wellbeing as encompassing teachers' cognitive, emotional, physical, and social experiences related to their work and professional domain. In addition, Dreer (2021), highlighted that teacher wellbeing can be understood as a measure of job satisfaction. In alignment with these perspectives, this study defined wellbeing as the quality of professional and psychological life experienced by teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The wellbeing of these teachers can be measured by their effectiveness in fulfilling their job responsibilities, adhering to performance standards, and delivering pedagogical services to both learners with dyslexia and other learners.

Across international borders, teaching has emerged as an inherently stressful profession marked by heightened stress, burnout, and early resignation (Bentea, 2017). One study in the United States indicated that teacher workload was the main contributor to teachers' anxiety (Santoro, 2021). However, pressure culminates within full-service schools, where teachers are tasked with implementing inclusive education (Forlin et al., 2014). In such multifaceted roles, teachers grapple with the elevated responsibility and accountability of safeguarding learners' right to quality education (Forlin et al., 2014). South African research provided empirical insights into teachers' experiences concerning the implementation of inclusive education, casting light on the associated stressors (Nel et al., 2016). These findings revealed that a significant proportion of teachers harbour negative attitudes towards inclusive education, possibly attributable to a lack of awareness and knowledge regarding dyslexia (Thwala et al., 2020; Mokaleng & Möwes, 2020; Mag et al., 2017; Voeten, 2010).

Indrarathne (2019) argued that this negative mindset results from a lack of awareness and knowledge about dyslexia. Nel et al. (2016) shared a staggering statistic, stating that 65% of South African teachers are untrained in inclusive education. This highlighted the scarcity of preparatory measures for the implementation of inclusive education. Expanding on the scope, international studies resonated with these findings and revealed disconcerting disparities in teachers' comprehension of dyslexia (Indrarathne, 2019; Alawadh, 2016). Alawadh (2016) underscored the limited knowledge of dyslexia among primary school teachers in Kuwait. Indrarathne's (2019) study which was conducted in Sri Lanka (2019) reported that there was a significant proportion of teachers having an insufficient

understanding of dyslexia. Another study that was conducted in India indicated growing concerns about the need for more support for those implementing inclusive education (Tyagi, 2016). In South Africa, many teachers have complained that they do not know how to manage learners with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, in their classrooms (Mfuthwana, 2016). Similarly, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) indicated that teachers struggle with articulating their literacy pedagogy and lack an understanding of dyslexia and the skills required to teach learners with dyslexia. Similarly, Nel et al. (2016) postulated that teachers reported implementing inclusive education in their classrooms as stressful because they needed more structural support. This deficiency stems from a broader absence of support for teachers working with learners with varying educational needs and underscores the critical need for targeted support (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). In light of these findings, it is evident that support structures are crucial, particularly given the concerning deficit in teachers' ability to manage learners with dyslexia.

The incapacity of teachers to manage learners with dyslexia carries profound implications for their self-efficacy and, consequently, their wellbeing (Benevene et al., 2020). Moreover, a lack of support is detrimental to their work-related psychological wellbeing (Hanson, 2013). Teacher wellbeing extends beyond functional capacity, but it also includes their ability to foster healthy and prosperous interactions with learners in their diverse nature (Benevene et al., 2020). This is in line with a study conducted by Acton and Glasgow (2015), which emphasised that a deficiency in wellbeing could lead to teachers becoming disengaged, resulting in reduced levels of involvement. To strengthen teacher wellbeing within inclusive environments, structural support needs to be prioritised (DoE, 2001). Systemic factors, including the lack of formal support structures, underpin poor teacher wellbeing (Nel et al., 2016), and should be mitigated. As such, it is important that the DoE recognise and concentrate on the elements that enhance and sustain teacher wellbeing within the teaching profession (Acton & Glasgow, 2015).

In conclusion, the escalating stress levels within the teaching profession, increase the demands for support structures for teachers. Notably, the knowledge deficit among teachers regarding dyslexia compounds these challenges and emphasises the critical importance of targeted support strategies. The lack of research surrounding teacher wellbeing in the context of teaching learners with dyslexia underlined the pressing need for future investigations to illuminate this multifaceted issue fully. Ultimately, supporting teachers'

wellbeing is crucial for successfully navigating the intricacies of inclusive education, such as teaching learners with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms.

2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In pursuing a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between teacher wellbeing and the challenges posed by teaching learners with dyslexia, a well-structured conceptual framework is imperative. The present study adopted two well-established theoretical models, the PERMA model and the Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) model, as guiding lenses. This section critically justifies the selection of these models. It discusses their applicability in the context of teacher wellbeing and the provision of support for teaching learners with dyslexia.

2.8.1 The PERMA Model

Positive psychology Seligman's PERMA model is intrinsically rooted in a holistic understanding of wellbeing (Kovich et al., 2023). This model postulated that wellbeing should be construed through five fundamental pillars: positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, a sense of meaning, and accomplishment (Kern, 2020; Seligman, 2011). This theoretical construct is pertinent in the examination of teacher wellbeing within the scope of working in an inclusive environment, such as teaching learners with dyslexia, for several compelling reasons.

Firstly, Seligman's PERMA model captures the multi-dimensional facets of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). Allowing for a nuanced evaluation of teachers' emotional states. Including their level of engagement in their pedagogical duties, the quality of their interpersonal relationships, their sense of purpose, and their perceived accomplishment (Wessel & Wood, 2019). Each of these dimensions is connected to gauge the overall wellbeing of teachers immersed in the complexities of teaching learners with dyslexia.

Secondly, the PERMA model operates on the premise that wellbeing is subjective. This aligned with contemporary research asserting that individuals' interpretations and experiences of their work environment significantly influence their wellbeing (Donaldson et al., 2022). Thus, this model affords a robust theoretical framework to explore teachers' perceptions of support, or its absence, and its consequential contribution to their wellbeing (Kern, 2020).

Thirdly, teaching learners presenting diverse abilities can exert profound implications on teacher wellbeing (Falecki & Mann, 2021). By adopting the PERMA model, this study embraced a holistic perspective to discern the intricate interplay between diverse dimensions of wellbeing, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the myriad factors influencing teacher resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy when implementing inclusive practices (Falecki & Mann, 2021). Furthermore, this model highlighted the symbiotic relationship between teachers' wellbeing, learners' wellbeing, and academic performance, which is a pivotal consideration in this study.

In line with the pillars of the PERMA model, this study examined the following dimensions of wellbeing in teachers teaching learners with dyslexia:

According to Seligman (2011), positive emotions refer to hedonic wellbeing. Kern et al. (2015) defined hedonic wellbeing as contentment, joy, and happiness. In this present study, this dimension elucidated the extent to which teachers teaching learners with dyslexia experienced positive emotions. This was done by gauging contentment, joy, and happiness in their responses in relation to their roles and with respect to their perceptions of support provided by the DoE or lack thereof, as well as their wellbeing experiences.

Moreover, Seligman (2011) mentioned that engagement refers to the psychological connection to duties or the relationship with the company. The psychological connection that teachers forge with their professional duties is a critical facet of wellbeing. This dimension probed into teachers' level of engagement or disengagement by specifically examining their willingness to implement inclusive practices for accommodating learners with dyslexia within their classrooms. This assessment is inherently influenced by the presence or absence of support from the DoE.

In addition, Seligman (2011) mentioned the pillar of positive relationships. This refers to a state of feeling cared for and socially integrated, forming an integral component of wellbeing (Butler & Kern, 2016). Teachers' perceptions of being cared for and socially integrated are explored in this dimension as the study delved into whether teachers teaching learners with dyslexia perceived a sense of care and support in fulfilling their obligations. Additionally, the study investigated the quality of the working relationships teachers share with those

responsible for providing structural support and highlighted the potential consequences of collaborative partnerships versus the absence of such relationships.

Furthermore, Seligman (2011) mentioned the concept of meaning as a dimension to understand wellbeing. According to Seligman (2011), meaning refers to believing that one has a sense of purpose and is valuable. This dimension investigated the existential aspect of wellbeing by investigating how teachers attach meaning to their roles as inclusive practitioners working with learners with dyslexia. This exploration unravelled the sense of purpose and value teachers ascribe to their professional roles.

Lastly, another pillar that was explored was accomplishment. According to Butler and Kern (2015), accomplishment occurs when an individual feels that they are progressing in their life. This can be measured by the degree to which they are able to achieve the goals they set (Seligman, 2011). This dimension is influenced by teachers' perceptions of their progress and achievement in their professional lives. The dimension evaluated the extent to which teachers working with learners with dyslexia feel capable or incapable of fulfilling their roles diligently, considering the support (or lack thereof) from the DoE. For instance, this includes their ability to successfully help learners reach their full potential.

2.8.2 Job Demands and Resources Model

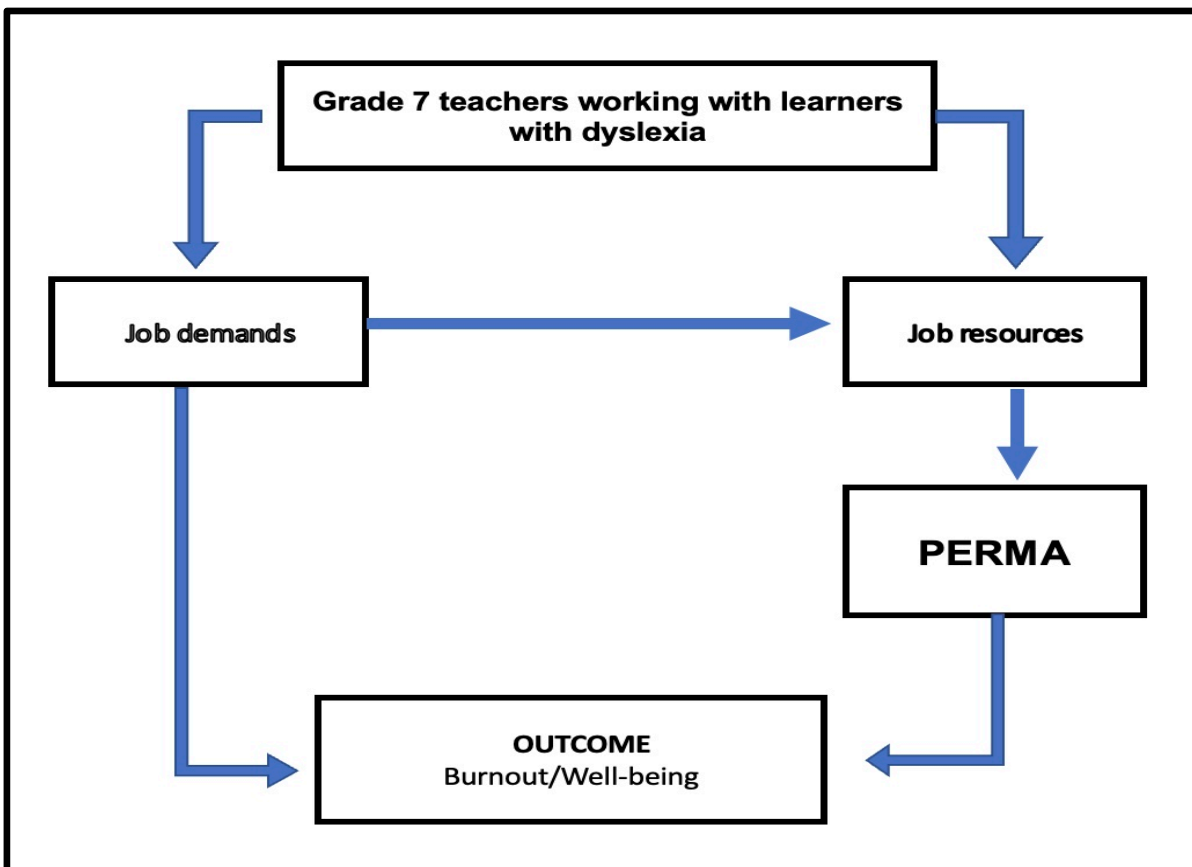
The Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) model, an established theoretical framework within occupational health psychology, was deployed to further enrich the study's conceptual framework. This model posits that job demands, which necessitate sustained physical or mental effort and incur physiological and psychological costs, can potentially lead to job strain and health impairment (Schaufeli, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2011). Moreover, job resources are the physical, social, psychological, and organisational aspects that act as protective buffers against negative experiences arising from job demands (Demerouti et al., 2011).

Within the context of this study, teachers working with learners with dyslexia face a host of job demands, including increased workloads, a lack of sufficient support and resources, and high expectations from the DoE (Thwala et al., 2020). These demands invariably culminate in heightened anxiety and reduced motivation among teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The JD-R model would help comprehend how nuanced factors can contribute to

or mitigate work-related stress among teachers confronted with distinctive challenges (Schaufeli, 2014). Essentially, the model shows the intricate relationship between job resources and job demands in maintaining the wellbeing of employees (Kaiser et al., 2020). In the context of this study, job resources comprised the professional and psychological support provided to teachers by the DoE. This study examined job resources from the vantage point of support extended to teachers teaching learners with dyslexia by assessing the presence or absence of the support and its contribution to their wellbeing. This model provided an insightful perspective on the challenges teachers face and emphasised the pivotal role that support mechanisms play in mitigating the adverse consequences of these challenges on teacher wellbeing.

Figure 1

Visual Representation of the Conceptual Framework



2.8.3 Summary of the visual representation of the conceptual framework and the reason for integrating the two models.

The primary framework guiding this research is the PERMA model, chosen for its focus on assessing and promoting individual wellbeing, which aligns with the central exploration of this study. PERMA provides a holistic approach to understanding the factors that contribute to wellbeing. However, for a comprehensive exploration of teacher wellbeing, a model that provides a structured evaluation of work-related elements, such as resources and demands and their interplay in either enhancing or hindering wellbeing was necessary. Thus, the decision to employ the JD-R model. The conceptual framework illustrated the pivotal role of resource-demand dynamics in shaping the wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The balance between these factors is the pivot point for teachers' emotional and mental wellbeing. This nuanced interplay showed the critical importance of resource allocation and support mechanisms within educational settings catering to learners with dyslexia.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined and evaluated the existing body of knowledge relevant to the current study and elucidated several critical facets of the phenomenon being studied. The chapter also featured a dedicated section on the conceptual framework, which served as a lens through which to comprehend the experiences of teachers as they worked with learners with dyslexia and navigated the support structures at their disposal. This conceptual framework was pivotal in guiding the analysis and making sense of the subsequent findings. In essence, this chapter laid the groundwork for the empirical phase of the study by bridging the theoretical foundation with the empirical research to follow.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the perceptions of Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia regarding their perception of structural support provided by the DoE and how it contributes to their wellbeing. This chapter provided an in-depth overview of the research design and methodology that guided the study. A comprehensive explanation of the epistemological and methodological paradigms that informed the research was outlined. Subsequently, the research design, participant and site selection processes, methods of data collection, data documentation procedures, and data analysis methodology were thoroughly discussed. Lastly, this chapter discussed approaches to quality criteria and ethical principles that were followed to ensure that the research attained methodological rigour and maintained ethical standards throughout the entire research process.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

An interpretive paradigm was employed as it facilitated the exploration of the phenomenon under investigation and its inherent complexities through the lens of multiple interpretations (Creswell, 2014). Within this paradigm, the researcher assumed an interactive and empathetic stance while aiming to comprehensively grasp and derive meaning from participants' perceptions, cognitive processes, and lived experiences. By embracing this epistemological standpoint, the study encouraged diverse perspectives to emerge from the participants by granting them the flexibility to openly share their thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and values pertaining to their unique personal experiences (Silverman, 2013).

Interpretivism drew substantial influence from phenomenology, an approach that advocates for subjective interpretations of existence and how participants perceive the world around them (Maree, 2020). This alignment was particularly relevant to the study's purpose, which centred on gaining insight into teachers' perceptions of the extent of structural support available to them while working with learners with dyslexia. A significant advantage of adopting this paradigm was its capacity to yield a wealth of rich, in-depth data from participants. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that interpretivism is inherently subjective, which represents its primary drawback.

Nonetheless, this paradigm proved invaluable in eliciting profound insights from participants within their unique contextual frameworks. Throughout the course of the inquiry, the researcher remained acutely aware of their potential influence when interpreting the collected data. Silverman (2013) noted that self-awareness safeguards against introducing bias into the data interpretation process.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study employed a qualitative research approach to gather rich information and in-depth insights into the perceptions of structural support held by Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia and the wellbeing experiences of these teachers. Hancock et al. (2009) posited that qualitative research constitutes a form of social inquiry that prioritises individual interpretations of the world and the meanings individuals attribute to their experiences. In the context of this study, qualitative research afforded the researcher a direct avenue for engaging with the participants and eliciting valuable insights into their unique perspectives (Silverman, 2013). Austin (2014) stated that qualitative research is well-suited for thorough exploration. According to Hancock et al. (2009) and Sutton (2015), qualitative researchers seek to comprehend social issues as experienced by individuals and communities within their natural settings. This is similar to sentiments shared by Creswell (2014) that a qualitative approach is tailored to explore and describe individuals' experiences of a phenomenon occurring within a specific context. Therefore, qualitative research is characterised by its exploratory, descriptive, and contextual nature (Lethale, 2008).

This approach to research operates on the premise that knowledge is inherently subjective, and that reality is multifaceted (Creswell, 2014). The present study delved into the perspectives of diverse participants within their natural environments to elucidate their viewpoints and experiences. The focus of this inquiry remained the subjective viewpoints of the research participants (Basit, 2013), with the researcher relying on in-depth face-to-face interviews (Mayoux, 2001). Consequently, semi-structured interviews were adopted as the primary data collection method (Creswell, 2014). This approach placed the researcher at the forefront of designing, conducting, and analysing the research process and data (Mayoux, 2001).

Due to the limitations inherent in employing a qualitative research approach, which restricts the study's capacity to conduct and analyse only a limited number of cases (Basit, 2013),

the researcher opted to engage a selected number of participants, including teachers and district officials. This approach was chosen to ensure the acquisition of comprehensive data concerning the phenomenon under investigation.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research aimed to gain insights into teachers' perceptions regarding the structural support and the role of the support on their wellbeing experiences. To address this objective, the researcher adopted a phenomenological research design. Scholars such as Van Manen (1997) and Maree (2020) expounded upon the fundamental purpose of phenomenology, which is to comprehend participants' lived experiences. Alase (2020) affirmed that phenomenology represents the most participant-centred approach among qualitative research methodologies. Phenomenological research design is a qualitative approach employed to comprehend individuals' experiences of a phenomenon shared by one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014). In utilising phenomenological research design, the researcher identified common themes rooted in individual experiences of the phenomenon (Marque & McCall, 2005).

Phenomenology comprises two primary approaches: hermeneutic and transcendental phenomenology (Maree, 2020). Aligned with the epistemological stance of this present study, the researcher adhered to hermeneutic phenomenology, also called interpretative phenomenology (Neubauer et al., 2019). As Cohen et al. (2000) articulated, interpretative phenomenology focuses on how individuals interpret and derive meaning from their experiences. For instance, within the context of this study, the phenomenological research design facilitated inquiries into the perceptions of teachers working with learners with dyslexia regarding the support they receive from the DoE and how the support contributes to their wellbeing experiences. Furthermore, this approach enabled an exploration of the perspective of the DoE DBST concerning their role in providing support to these teachers.

Essentially, employing a phenomenological research design allowed participants to share their experiences through semi-structured interviews (Guest et al., 2013). This approach was imperative for collecting information that was rich in detail and depth. Additionally, a phenomenological research design empowered the researcher to craft a composite description of the experiences of all participants to derive a universal understanding of the phenomenon (Maree, 2020). The researcher remained cognisant of bracketing their

perspectives to avoid bias while interpreting findings (Maree, 2020; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012), a crucial step in achieving credibility.

Notwithstanding its advantages, this research design presented limitations, including a potential lack of scientific rigour due to its reliance on participants' lived experiences (Moreno, 2002). Furthermore, the design inherently rendered the findings non-generalizable by restricting the number of participants who could engage in the data collection process (Love et al., 2020). Love et al. (2020) also indicated that it is a challenge to distinguish between the researcher's voice and the voices of participants during data interpretation when employing a phenomenological approach. Consequently, the findings were interpreted with the aid of philosophical and theoretical foundations to bracket the researcher's presuppositions (Tuffour, 2017).

3.5 SELECTION OF CASES, PARTICIPANTS, AND SITES

This section outlined the process followed to select the research sites and participants. involving decisions about significant aspects of the investigation.

3.5.1 Target Population

The process of selecting appropriate individuals to participate as representatives of the entire population is known as sampling (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A target population consists of potential participants with similar characteristics or attributes that the study seeks to examine to inform potential generalisations about the overall population in the same context with the same experiences (Welman et al., 2005). The target population in this study was Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia and DoE district officials.

3.5.2 Selection of schools and district offices as research sites

In conducting this qualitative study, adherence to the naturalistic principles of qualitative research was essential and necessitated the examination of a social phenomenon within its genuine context using appropriate data collection methods (Aspers, 2019). The researcher employed purposive sampling to select six research sites consisting of five government primary schools and one district office in Gauteng province. This sampling method did not allow all schools in the region the opportunity to be included in the study (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The selected schools are classified as under-resourced primary schools in the Quintile One category. The rationale behind choosing these schools rested on their shared characteristics, which were expected to facilitate the exploration of similar experiences among individuals in different settings. The following criteria were applied when selecting schools as research sites:

- The selected schools needed to be primary schools located in Hammanskraal and classified under the Quintile One category.
- The schools had to fall under the jurisdiction of the Tshwane North district department.
- English needed to be offered as a subject in these schools as the study exclusively focused on teachers responsible for teaching this subject, and
- The selected schools were required to possess a documented history of poor academic performance in English, potentially attributable to challenges in reading literacy.

However, despite the initial intention to include five schools, only three schools participated in the study. School K and School M had additional demands and logistical constraints that the researcher could not accommodate within the limited timeframe allocated for data collection. Consequently, these two schools were excluded from the study.

Additionally, the education district department of Tshwane North was chosen as the second research site. The sole criterion for selecting this site was its role as the district office overseeing the schools involved in this study. It was anticipated that this district office would yield substantial information, evidence, and data regarding their initiatives aimed at providing structural support to enhance the wellbeing of teachers.

3.5.3 Selection of Participants

In the selection of participants, a similar non-probability technique, purposive sampling, was employed by the researcher. Purposive sampling is a subjective method for participant selection (Etikan et al., 2015). This method entailed the establishment of predetermined criteria closely tied to the research's specific focus. As Kielmann et al. (2011) emphasised, purposive sampling permits the intentional selection of participants and sites that possess

particular characteristics relevant to the research project. Given the distinct requirements of this study, which aimed to engage a specific group of teachers and district officials with comprehensive knowledge and experience related to the subject under investigation, using such criteria was imperative to ensure that the collection of data aligned with the study's objectives.

Initially, the researcher intended to interview ten Grade 7 English teachers, with two teachers from each of the five selected schools. However, the intended number of participants could not be met due to the uncooperative stance of the management at schools K and M. They declined participation, citing a need for an additional letter of approval on top of the existing authorisation from the DoE head office. Regrettably, the researcher could not comply with the constraints due to the limited time that was left for concluding the data collection process. Nevertheless, data saturation had been achieved during the teacher interviews as a shared experience among the selected participants was observed. As defined by Etikan et al. (2015), data saturation refers to a point at which no further information is anticipated to alter or enhance the research findings. It is a crucial indicator that sufficient data has been collected for a study.

Moreover, as a qualitative study, the depth of understanding takes precedence over the size of the sample. In other words, the methodologies used in this research inherently focused on the in-depth exploration of participants' experiences rather than the quantity of the sample size. Hence it was possible to reach data saturation with the reduced number of participants. The methods allowed for a detailed and rich data collection, which served as a countermeasure against this unforeseen limitation. The following criteria were applied when selecting teachers as study participants:

- The participating teachers needed to possess full teaching qualifications.
- They must have been actively teaching English to Grade 7 learners and
- They were required to have experience of teaching learners with dyslexia, or those suspected to have dyslexia.

At the district level, two participants were purposefully selected, a senior education specialist for English, and an educational psychologist. These participants were chosen based on their roles in providing teacher support. The following criteria were applied when selecting district officials as study participants:

- The participants had to be working as the DBST at Tshwane North, with an expanded role in providing support to teachers and
- Senior education specialist in English or
- Educational psychologist.

Table 1

A Composition of the Participants

	Participants	Gender	Level of Education	Major subjects	Occupation	Years in the field
School A	Teacher Y	M	Further Diploma in Education (FDE)	English and History	English Teacher (With other subjects)	20
	Teacher N	F	BA Honours in Psychology PGCE	English, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Sepedi	English Teacher (With other subjects)	2 years and 7 months
School B	Teacher T	M	Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)	Technology, Electrical and Mechanical Processing	English Teacher (With other subjects)	29
	Teacher Z	F	Honours in Education Management	Geography, Setswana, Physical Education	English Teacher (With other subjects)	28
School C	Teacher J	M	Bachelor of Education	English Social Sciences	English Teacher (with other subjects)	19
District	Official A	F	Master's Educational Psychology	--	Educational Psychologist	4

Participants	Gender	Level of Education	Major subjects	Occupation	Years in the field
Official B	F	Diploma in Education Honours in Educational Law	--	Senior Educational Specialist – English	4

3.6 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

This section provided an overview of the data-gathering technique employed in the study.

3.6.1 Data collection

Crowling et al. (2014) emphasised that data collection constitutes a systemic information-gathering process. Qualitative research offers a range of data-gathering techniques (Maree et al., 2020) encompassing methods such as observation, focus groups, debates, narratives, interviews, questionnaires, and surveys (Canals, 2017). Researchers select methods that align with their study objectives to enhance the feasibility of acquiring comprehensive data (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). This study employed semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. Semi-structured interviews provide real-time dialogue between the researcher and participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). For this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face at the participants' respective work settings, except for district officials where interviews were conducted telephonically. Prior to conducting the interviews, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria, enabling contact with potential research sites and participants. Moreover, permission was secured from the DoE Head Office to conduct interviews at the selected research sites. In schools, the cooperation of principals was sought to facilitate teacher interviews.

Before each interview, participants were provided with comprehensive information about the study's objectives. The researcher clarified the study's purpose and addressed confidentiality considerations relevant to the research process. Consent forms were distributed to the participants to allow them to indicate their voluntary participation in the study (see Appendix B). The interviews were conducted in English after ensuring all

participants had moderate to high language proficiency. The initial section of the interview focused on gathering participants' biographical information, including details about their educational background and years of work experience. Teachers were asked to specify the subjects they were trained to teach and the subjects they were teaching at that time (see Appendix D).

The subsequent section of the interview delved into participants' perceptions of structural support and their wellbeing experiences. For district officials, this section sought insights into the availability of structural support for teachers (see Appendix E). District officials' views were used to corroborate the information from the teachers (Maree, 2020). In both cases, interviews with each participant ranged from 20 to 45 minutes. As a phenomenological study, separate interviews were conducted with each participant to acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual's voice, perspectives, and experiences. This approach enabled the researcher to capture rich and in-depth data from participants, enhancing the trustworthiness of the research findings (Maree et al., 2020).

3.6.2 Data management and documentation

When employing a qualitative approach, the researcher is responsible for documenting any observations made during data generation. These data, either recording responses verbatim, taking field notes or digital recordings, hold significant importance for subsequent composition and analysis (Patton, 2002). As Bertman and Christiansen (2014) noted, field notes provide a window into the researcher's thoughts concerning the research process. Nevertheless, simultaneously taking notes and conducting interviews can present challenges (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Consequently, the researcher employed a dual documentation approach by collecting field notes and audio recordings.

Prior permission was secured to audio record the interviews. The responses were transcribed verbatim to facilitate data analysis. However, one participant did not consent to audio recording. In such instances, the researcher adjusted the interview pace for the meticulous transcription of the participant's responses. The research process documentation was paramount as it ensured the compilation of accurate findings and an authentic reflection of the research journey. Transcription of the recorded data was conducted using Microsoft Word. Subsequently, these Microsoft Word transcripts were converted into PDF formats and stored with password encryption to safeguard them against

unauthorised access and data tampering. The field notes were scanned and saved with password encryption. Access to these documents was restricted solely to the researcher to enhance data security further.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Hatch (2002) described data analysis as a process aimed at imparting meaning and structure to the collected data to convey findings, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations (Flick, 2018). In the context of this study, IPA served as the chosen method for data analysis. As elucidated by Eatough and Smith (2017), IPA constitutes a qualitative approach to data analysis rooted in phenomenology and is concerned primarily with exploring individuals' lived experiences. Similarly, Fall (2017) characterised IPA as a flexible approach to data analysis that focuses on examining a phenomenon in terms of the participant's perspectives and, thereby, placing value on subjective knowledge (Eatough & Smith, 2017). This approach inherently involves the co-construction of meaning, drawing interpretations from both the researcher and participants in a double hermeneutic approach (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Smith and Osborn (2007, p. 53) stated that in IPA, "the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants while they try to make sense of their world."

Within this framework, the researcher engaged in a process of co-construction by embracing participants' perspectives as they were presented and interpreted. This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of participants' lived experiences during decoding (Smith & Osborn, 2008). To ensure successful data analysis and comprehension of participants' voices and viewpoints concerning the phenomenon, the researcher pursued immersion in the participants' perspectives. This approach was instrumental in interpreting the data from a standpoint of understanding, accompanied by a reflexive approach (Tuffour, 2017).

To illustrate the data analysis and interpretation process for this study, the researcher adhered to the following general guidelines proposed by Smith and Osborn (2007):

3.7.1 Step 1: Immersion in the original data

This initial stage involved a comprehensive data review, including multiple readings and a close examination of audio recordings. It demanded complete immersion in the collected data. The researcher started with dissecting the transcribed interviews. While this process

was iterative and time-consuming, it allowed for identifying "similarities and differences, echoes and contradictions" in participants' responses (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 67). From this process the researcher identified patterns, and developed insights into participants' perspectives, laying the foundation for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

3.7.2 Step 2: Initial noting

This stage occurred concurrently with Step 1 (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The researcher began making notes to conceptualise potential themes based on participants' perspectives of the phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Different highlighters were employed to emphasise various nuances expressed by participants; each nuance was valued on its own merit. This process aimed to capture the essence and quality of the transcripts (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Additionally, it sought to establish theoretical connections between different transcripts in support of the study's objectives (Smith & Osborn, 2007). A tabular format was used to divide the worksheet into two sections: the first containing raw data from participants' statements, and the second dedicated to the notation and development of themes derived from these excerpts.

Table 2

Example of the Process of Reading and Noting

Excerpts extracted from the transcript	Initial noting
Teacher Z: <i>"Ah well, the district intervention to me is a drop in the ocean, more needs to be done."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Z frustrated with district intervention. • Believes district support is inadequate.
Teacher N: <i>"There is really no support; we are left to fend on our own."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher N feels abandoned and self-reliant. • Support provided is seen as insufficient.
Teacher Z: <i>"It is really hard because they expect you to produce results, but the support doesn't match the standard they put."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Z's challenge meeting district expectations. • Support inadequacy.

3.7.3 Step 3: Developing emergent themes

The process of noting transcribed documents led to identifying themes within the transcripts (Smith & Osborn, 2007). In this context, themes refer to a series of perceptions or experiences shared by participants that address the research question (Mishra & Dey, 2022). As outlined by Mishra and Dey (2022), this step aimed to develop relevant themes that facilitated a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and contributed to the existing body of literature. The rich and in-depth data obtained through the interview questions enabled the researcher to formulate pertinent themes related to the phenomenon. This step assisted the researcher in developing themes representing the shared perceptions and experiences of teachers and DoE district officials regarding the phenomenon.

3.7.4 Step 4: Connecting the themes

Emerging themes were closely examined to identify theoretical connections (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The researcher applied interpretive skills to analyse and synthesise themes into distinct clusters based on their characteristics (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Each cluster was assigned unique names to delineate themes (Smith & Osborn, 2007). In this process, a separate document was created to list subthemes alongside corresponding themes in order to identify them within each transcript (Smith & Osborn, 2007). During this phase, the researcher exercised discretion in retaining or discarding themes based on the depth of data provided within the transcript to address the research questions (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

3.7.5 Step 5: Continuing the analysis with other cases

The same analytical process was applied to each participant's transcripts, and it was acknowledged that, while the context remained consistent, perspectives and experiences varied (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Insights gained from themes derived from previous transcripts informed the analysis of subsequent transcripts (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The researcher remained mindful of the content of preceding transcripts and utilised this knowledge to identify new and distinct perspectives or experiences in the data. Some responses further underscored previously established themes that contributed to the meaning-making process.

3.8 MEASURES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Scholars have emphasised the challenge of quantifying the reliability and validity of qualitative research, considering its inherent subjectivity (Wahyuni, 2012). Consequently, alternative approaches have been developed to gauge these aspects. This section elucidates the strategies employed to ensure the research's credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility, in the realm of qualitative research, pertains to aligning research findings with the investigated phenomenon, signifying the researcher's confidence in the findings' authenticity (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). It signifies whether the data faithfully represents the participants' perspectives. Establishing credibility often involves sustained engagement with participants and diligent observations to grasp the essence of the phenomenon. Peer debriefings are valuable for assessing insights and analyses beyond one's own disciplinary boundaries (Wahyuni, 2012).

The researcher received guidance and support from the supervisor throughout the study. The supervisor scrutinised transcripts, the final report, and the methodology to provide critical feedback. Extensive fieldwork and interactions with participants over an extended period enriched the understanding of the phenomenon and fortified the study's credibility. Rigorous data scrutiny further corroborated the credibility of the research.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability focuses on the potential applicability of research findings in similar contexts or for policymaking within the field, akin to external validity (Schurink et al., 2014). To enhance the comprehensiveness of the insights of the study, purposive sampling was employed, ensuring that diverse perspectives were captured. Detailed contextual descriptions and comprehensive participant profiles are provided in Section 3.5, Table 3.1 to facilitate inferences regarding the study's transferability to other research contexts (Stahl & King, 2020).

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability concerns the extent to which a research study can revisit the same phenomenon over time and yield consistent findings (Nowell et al., 2017). Consistency, a hallmark of dependability, aligns with credibility in this study (Stahl & King, 2020). To achieve this, a reflexive research journal was used to document the essential information related to the data collection process.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability, analogous to objectivity in quantitative research, evaluates the extent to which research findings genuinely reflect the study, free from the researcher's biases or interests (Shenton, 2004). To ensure confirmability, several measures were implemented, including an audit trail of the data analysis process, participant checking, crystallisation, and a reflexive research journal. These mechanisms preserved records of the entire research process, encompassing data transcription, analysis, emerging themes, and the overall research trajectory, offering traceability in the event of scrutiny regarding the origins of research findings.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Adherence to ethical principles is paramount in any research study. This section comprehensively discussed the ethical considerations that guided this research.

3.9.1 Ethics clearance

The conduct of this dissertation was in strict accordance with the ethical guidelines established by the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria. The ethics committee within the Faculty of Education granted the research permission to proceed.

3.9.2 Informed consent

To ensure ethical research practices, the researcher sought informed consent from all participants. Developing appropriate consent forms was a collaborative effort involving the supervisor and co-supervisor to align with best practices (see Appendix B). Participants were given an informed consent form, which they signed to indicate their comprehension of the study's objectives and their agreement for their responses to be collected and

amalgamated with those of other participants. The introductory statement and the interview questions employed simple and concise English to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the research's purpose. Furthermore, participants were informed explicitly of their prerogative to ignore questions they found uncomfortable and withdraw from the research at any juncture.

3.9.3 Voluntary participation

The principle of voluntary participation was upheld, and participants were informed explicitly that their involvement in the study was voluntary. They were assured that they could withdraw from the research at any point without any repercussions. Importantly, participants were neither promised nor provided with any form of compensation or benefit for their participation in the study.

3.9.4 Participant confidentiality

Stringent measures were implemented to safeguard all participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants were assigned codes, and all audio recordings and transcripts were password-protected to ensure restricted access. Moreover, any participant-specific information acquired during their engagement in the study was treated with the utmost confidentiality. All research data was securely stored at the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria.

3.9.5 No harm to participants

To mitigate potential harm and provide appropriate aftercare to participants, the researcher conscientiously respected the boundaries set by participants concerning the extent to which they were willing to divulge information about their lived experiences, particularly related to their wellbeing. Participants were not pressured to participate and were free to withdraw from the research at their discretion (De Vos, 2002). Additionally, participants were made aware of the possibility that the study could evoke emotional distress, although the study's questions were intentionally designed to be non-threatening, sensitive, and non-offensive to participants (Basit, 2013). In the event of emotional distress, participants were informed of the pertinent support organisations that could help during distress.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter elucidates the empirical research process undertaken in this study. The selection of a qualitative approach and adopting an interpretivist paradigm were deliberated. Moreover, the rationale behind opting for phenomenological design as the research methodology was explained. The subsequent sections focused on the procedures for participant selection, data collection, and documentation. Subsequently, the data analysis process, adhering to the IPA method, was outlined. Furthermore, the chapter detailed the strategies and procedures employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study's findings. Lastly, the ethical principles that guided the study were presented.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

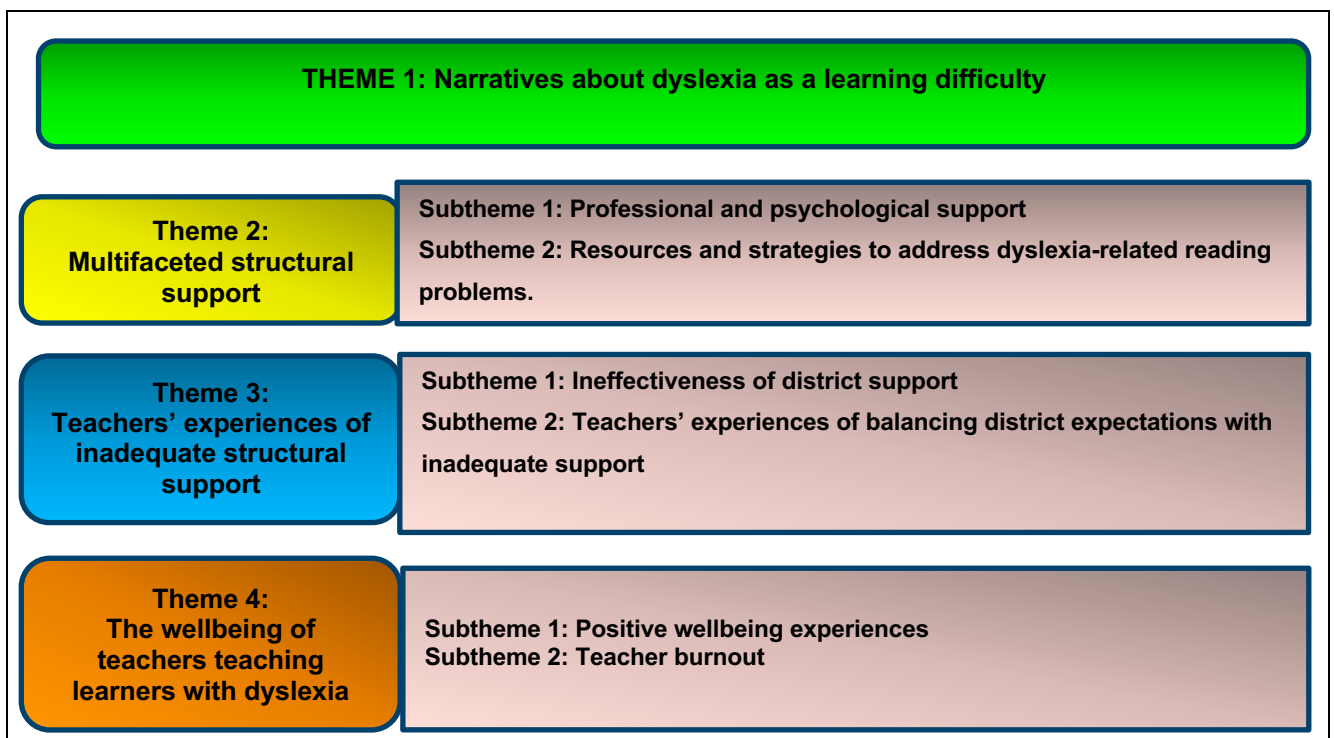
This chapter answered the main research question: What are the teachers' perceptions of structural support and their experience of wellbeing as teachers teaching learners with dyslexia? IPA was employed to derive four themes that addressed each sub-question to answer the main research question. The sub-questions that were used are listed below.

- What is the nature of structural support from the DoE district office for teachers working with learners with dyslexia?
- What are the perceptions among teachers working with learners with dyslexia of support from the DoE district office?
- What is the role of structural support in the wellbeing of Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia?

The emerging themes and subthemes are outlined in the figure below.

Figure 2

Summary of the Themes



The themes in the figure above provide a brief summary of the results of the investigation about teachers' perceptions of support from the DoE district and their experiences of wellbeing when working with learners with dyslexia. Four themes were identified in the findings. However, Theme 1 provides an orientation for the reader to understand the rationale of the study. As such, it did not answer any research question but a general background on how it is teaching learners with dyslexia. Nonetheless, all the themes are interconnected and, as such, elucidate narratives from teachers working with learners with dyslexia in full-service schools. Participants were distinguished by their profession, gender, and years of work experience. Additionally, teachers were assigned different alphabet letters, i.e., Teacher Y.

4.2 THEME 1: NARRATIVES ABOUT DYSLEXIA AS A LEARNING DIFFICULTY

The aim of the study was to explore teachers' perceptions of structural support and their wellbeing experiences when working with learners with dyslexia. In this theme, the researcher first embarked on a preliminary exploration of teachers' narratives pertaining to their encounters with teaching learners experiencing learning difficulties, specifically dyslexia. This initial inquiry established the teachers' knowledge and awareness of dyslexia, their perceptions of the difficulties learners with dyslexia have, and the complexities of managing learners with different learning need. By acquiring this foundational information, the study aimed to gain insights into the extent of effort required from these teachers to ensure that all learners, including those with dyslexia, reach their full academic potential. Based on the insights, the significance of providing adequate support to these teachers would be evident.

In the following excerpts, teachers acknowledged that they have learners experiencing learning difficulties within their classrooms. This observation aligned with Dalton et al.'s (2012) study about South Africa having many learners with learning difficulties. With regard to dyslexia, teachers demonstrated commonality in terms of dyslexia being the most prevalent learning challenge among their learners. This consensus mirrors the findings of Harding et al. (2023), who reported dyslexia as the most common learning difficulty. Although uncertainties persist regarding the exact prevalence of dyslexia, Yang et al. (2022) estimated that it affects 5% to 17.5% of children worldwide. Nevertheless, no definitive

statistics pinpoint the prevalence of dyslexia among South African school-aged children (Wajuihian & Naidoo, 2011).

The observation arose from the varying ways in which dyslexia manifests itself among different learners, as noted by the participants. This multifaceted manifestation aligns with the conclusions drawn by Geertsema et al. (2022) that dyslexia is diverse in its presentation. This also highlighted the critical role of teachers in identifying dyslexia among learners. This is evident in the following excerpts:

Teacher J, a male teacher with 19 years of teaching experience, shared the following:

“The learning condition that is common among learners is dyslexia. Most of the learners with learning difficulties in my class struggle with reading and writing, including the reading and writing of the most basic sentences.”

Adding to the varying ways in which dyslexia manifests, Teacher Y, a male teacher with 20 years of teaching experience, mentioned:

“They [learners with dyslexia] are not able to differentiate between a sound and a letter, so we start with the letter, like, this is letter B.”

Similar sentiments were expressed by Teacher T, a male teacher with 29 years of teaching experience, as shown in the excerpt below.

“The way we know that a learner has dyslexia is we do oral assessments, one of our formal assessments is oral. So, we use a rubric for this oral, which looks at ... also, the fluency when they read. Learners with dyslexia often lack fluency when they read.”

Teachers' accounts, such as those by Teacher J, emphasised that learners with dyslexia experience challenges in areas such as phonics and reading comprehension. Teacher J explained:

“I know it is dyslexia because when you give the learners a task, it becomes difficult. The most difficult task is reading, as the learner would not have mastered phonics. Learners with dyslexia are not able to differentiate between letter sounds.”

Another participant alluded to the fact that dyslexia can be seen when a learner experiences the challenge of reading even in their home language and not only English. Teacher N, a female teacher with over two years of teaching experience, stated:

“It could be [a problem with English], but the challenges is also recorded in the home language subject where they struggle to read even in that language.”

Such insights challenged the conventional view of dyslexia as a uniform condition and indicated the necessity to develop tailored approaches for intervention (Snowling et al., 2020). Similarly, this is congruent with the work of Kunwar and Sapkota (2022), which emphasised that learners with dyslexia face unique challenges and thus need targeted pedagogical strategies. This signifies the relevance of the SIAS policy, which states that teachers must possess the ability to screen and identify learners for any learning challenges so that relevant intervention can be provided (DBE, 2014; Witzel & Mize, 2018). In line with existing literature about creating provision for learners with dyslexia, teachers shared their experiences by divulging their innovative strategies to support and accommodate learners with dyslexia.

Teacher N spoke about how she accommodates learners with dyslexia in her classroom:

“I have taught learners with dyslexia. There are so many learners who can't read or understand what they are reading. As an English teacher, I sometimes have to go to an extent where I use Setswana to help them understand what they are reading.”

Similarly, Teacher Z, a female teacher with 28 years of teaching experience, described strategies she uses to accommodate learners with reading difficulties:

Normally, when we give them the question paper, I read the question, or we read together in class. We do this so that even those that cannot read can understand or hear the sounds of the words. In English, when you teach a comprehension question,

you read the comprehension with them and then read the questions with them, then make them answer the question before you go to another question.

In addition, Teacher T mentioned another technique to support learners with dyslexia:

“... in their lessons, we start by explaining new words. For example, when they read, they are asked to underline new words in the text. Then we will explain some words and give homework to others, and this helps them to become familiar with the words. We encourage the use of a dictionary for these kinds of learners so that they can learn to make meaning as they read.”

This is in line with a study by Witzel and Mize (2018) that teachers need to implement different teaching strategies to teach reading in order to accommodate learners' literacy needs. This may include developing individualised programmes designed to address the unique needs of learners with dyslexia (Stuart & Yates, 2018). For example, another teacher indicated that he has differentiated the curriculum for some of his learners with dyslexia to enable them to develop literacy skills. Teacher Y explained:

“So, I just try to accommodate them while giving them work that has just be scaled down, to accommodate their needs. You we start small, and gradually go to bigger words. These small achievements build up their confidence.”

Not only that, but the same teacher also adopted the use of social media to support the learners with dyslexia in his classroom, *“So I would go into YouTube and find a video that is related to phonics”*.

Teacher N's use of Setswana to remediate comprehension, Teacher Z's collaborative reading approach, Teacher T's method of scaffolding, and Teacher Y's modified approach, and the use of social media are examples of creative and individualised measures taken to support learners with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia. These findings resonate with the broader literature on inclusive education and underscore teachers' adaptability and dedication in catering to learners' diverse needs (Granziera et al., 2019; Mahlo, 2017).

Despite the efforts, participants mentioned that some learners with dyslexia lack basic foundational reading skills, which has negatively influenced their ability to learn reading.

Participants attributed the poor development of reading skills to the lack of stimulation in childhood and the unsatisfactory quality of education during the foundation phase. Teacher T explained:

“You find that this learner performs well in other areas but struggles with language and reading. These types of learners often come to our school hoping that the school will use a different method of teaching, that will address the challenge. But when you try to get the history of these learners from foundation phase, you find that they didn't study Grade R, they just came straight from creche, meaning they lack certain skills and maybe that is where the problem is.”

Similar sentiments were shared by the educational psychologist (EP), a female with four years of experience working with learners with learning difficulties:

“Learners are currently experiencing a number of learning problems, especially with reading and writing. Sadly, for some learners that have not been stimulated correctly from their foundation phase, they find themselves falling within the cracks.”

A study that was done in South Africa indicated that learners with dyslexia do not receive much support to improve their literacy challenges during the foundation phase (Mbatha, 2018). Instead, most of them are referred to special schools (Mbatha, 2018). Speaking on the lack of screening and identification for dyslexia during the foundation phase, the EP stated:

“Another thing is that there are those learners that fall within the cracks because they have not been paid much attention to during their foundation phase, which is Grade one, two, and three, and were not developed properly in reading and writing.”

This correlates with a study by Mill and Clarke (2017) that people with dyslexia are often unaware of the condition as there is a lack of screening and diagnosis in the foundational years of school. Similarly, Harding et al. (2023) stated that most learners with dyslexia in the foundation phase go undiagnosed.

Although children with dyslexia find it challenging to learn to read, their intelligence is normal (Wajuihian & Naidoo, 2011). The discrepancy is evident in the excerpts below:

Teacher J expressed that dyslexia causes learners to experience difficulties in reading, understanding, and answering questions that they would otherwise understand if they were presented verbally:

“Learner [with dyslexia] knows how to answer questions, the only problem is they cannot read the question. If you ask them verbally, they will give you the correct answer to the question. The problem is they cannot read the answer on their own. In this regard, I think dyslexia is not a disability but rather a learning difficulty.”

In support of the aforementioned response, Teacher T added, *“You find that this learner performs well in other areas but struggles with language”*. Teachers’ perceptions regarding the misalignment between academic achievement and intellectual ability among learners with dyslexia aligned with existing literature (Hammill & Allen, 2020; Wajuihian & Naidoo, 2011). Existing literature posits that learners with dyslexia have average or better cognitive ability (Hammill & Allen, 2020). Similarly, Wajuihian and Naidoo (2011) mentioned that children with dyslexia might struggle to learn to read. However, their intelligence is normal. The findings of this study and the existing literature are consistent regarding the discourse on the cognitive profile of individuals with dyslexia.

Drawing from the present study’s findings and existing research, it is evident that learners with dyslexia have average to better intellectual abilities ((Hammill & Allen, 2020), and all they need is adequate support within both their home and school environments to achieve academic success (Tarjiah, 2023; Sahu et al., 2018; Witzel & Mize, 2018; Wajuihian & Naidoo, 2011). A study found that the academic progress of learners with dyslexia is hindered by the gap between school and home in terms of support, sometimes attributed to the lack of parental involvement (Sahu et al., 2018). Similarly, the results of this study point to a deficiency in parental involvement for learners with dyslexia. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Teacher Y expressed that there is a lack of parental engagement to assist in supporting learners with dyslexia, and as a result, that places more pressure on teachers:

“The support that the learners with dyslexia are getting at home is not enough. One of the crucial areas should be support at home. However, support from home is

usually not enough or at times non-existent. Therefore, as teachers we should be the ones covering the gap.”

Similarly, Teacher N shared her frustration about the lack of support from parents of learners with dyslexia. She stated:

“Support from who? There is no support, even parents do not care about having extra classes or checking on the progress of their children even know they are aware of their reading challenges.”

Teacher N's remark reinforces the work of Oyinloye (2021), which highlighted that teachers possess a negative perspective about inadequate parental involvement. Nevertheless, Teacher Z suggested a collaborative approach, reflecting on what could make the experience of teaching learners with dyslexia less challenging, particularly in terms of having active parental involvement, *“In order for this [teaching learners with dyslexia] to be more effective, there is a need for parents and guardians to also do the same exercises at home”*. This present finding by Teacher Z resonates with the work of Tarjiah et al. (2023), which indicated that, for developing reading skills in learners with dyslexia, it is crucial that teachers and parents work collaboratively to develop effective strategies. As advocated by Teacher Z, this collaborative approach ensures the continuity of the learning process for these learners.

Theme 1 explored the rich narratives offered by teachers and district officials, aiming to uncover the challenges of teaching learners with dyslexia. This thematic exploration unveiled that dyslexia stood out as the most prevalent learning difficulty, congruent with existing literature, which emphasised that dyslexia is dominant among disorders affecting school-going children (Geertsema et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2022; APA, 2013; Lagae, 2008). Moreover, based on the existing literature and the findings of this study, learners with dyslexia do not have any inherent intellectual deficits (Kunwar & Sapkota, 2022; Hammill & Allen, 2020). However, these learners may struggle to master various, if not most, academic skills when no requisite support is provided. This wide skills gap among learners with dyslexia could be traced back to their foundation years, suggesting they were not equipped with the necessary skills to improve their challenges. Mbatha (2018) highlighted the need for an educational strategy during the foundational phase that fosters enriched teaching and learning experiences to propel academic progress. For instance, learners with dyslexia

could benefit significantly from early exposure to phonics-based strategies during their formative school years (Flynn et al., 2012).

In relation to this theme, new information emerged that teachers possess a reasonable understanding of dyslexia as a learning challenge that affects learners' ability to read. In addition, the most common finding reported by participants was that learners with dyslexia lack foundational reading skills meant to be developed during their foundation phase level. Participants, predominantly teachers, expressed the difficulties associated with accommodating such learners alongside their typically developing peers. This suggests that additional effort and heightened adaptability are critical in ensuring that these learners unlock their full academic potential. The implication of this present finding for the South African education system could be to create more awareness workshops and training about dyslexia for foundation phase teachers so that they can develop skills to screen, identify, support, and facilitate learning for children with dyslexia.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that parental involvement for learners with dyslexia is lacking. Teachers reported that this gap hampered the effectiveness of accommodating these learners in their classrooms. Consequently, the findings underscored the call among teachers for a collaborative effort between parents and teachers to facilitate the progress of learners with dyslexia. The implication of this present finding for the South African education system is to get educational psychologists to provide psychoeducation to these learners' families or guardians. This psychoeducation will not only inform them about dyslexia as a learning difficulty but will also emphasise the significance of collaborating with teachers to ensure the continuity of learning outside school. This aligns with the study by Sibanda (2021), which posits that a harmonious partnership between parents and teachers shapes learners' educational destinies.

In summary, this study not only contributed to the understanding of dyslexia but also added valuable insights into its discourse in terms of its prevalence, manifestations, pedagogical challenges, and the importance of collaborative efforts among teachers and parents with learners with dyslexia. As already mentioned, the findings underscore the urgency of addressing issues that affect teachers working with learners with dyslexia to ensure inclusive and effective educational practices for all learners as per the objective of the policy on inclusive education.

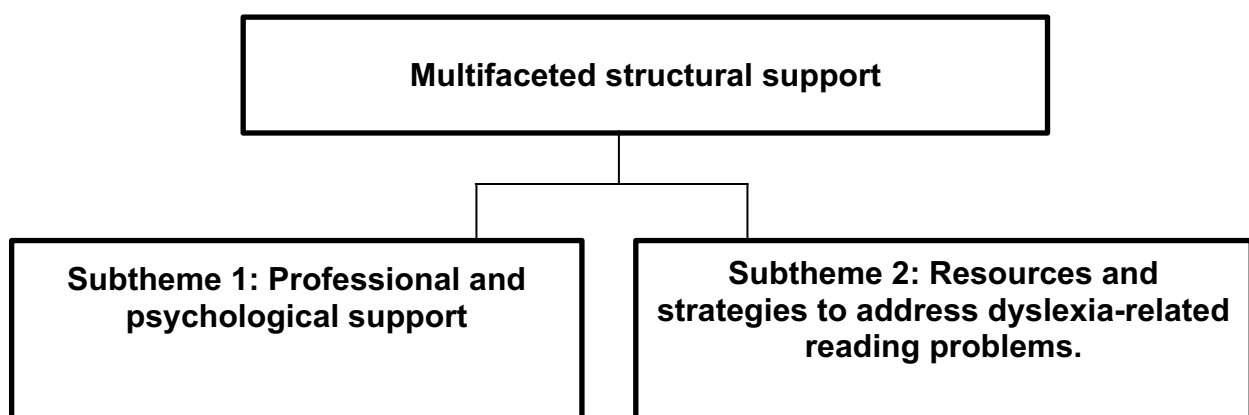
4.3 THEME 2: MULTIFACETED STRUCTURAL SUPPORT

This theme addressed the first research question and highlighted the structural support mechanisms available for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. Considering the theoretical framework of the JD-R model, it is imperative to acknowledge that various contextual factors can introduce unfavourable or challenging conditions within the work environment, potentially culminating in elevated job demands (Lopez-Martin & Topa, 2019). In the context of this study, this refers to situations where teachers have to engage learners with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, in proximal processes while concurrently teaching other learners. In such instances, teachers may encounter heightened job demands due to the necessity for supplementary efforts to facilitate the academic progress of learners presenting with learning difficulties.

Using the JD-R framework as a lens, the concept of job resources assumes paramount significance. Supportive mechanisms, conceptualised as job resources, provided by the district emerge as pivotal for mitigating the elevated demands that teachers working with learners with dyslexia in regular classes may have. In line with the study by Lopez-Martin and Topa (2019), job resources are pivotal for the purpose of ameliorating the burdens associated with the teaching profession and enabling effective teaching practices. Theme 2 was divided into two subthemes, as illustrated below.

Figure 3

Graphical Representation of Theme 2



The theme looked at how teachers and district officials view the nature of the structural support provided by the DBST for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. This support

included the services and resources actively utilised by teachers and latent services or resources that remain underutilised. To illustrate, the responses from participants encompassed a spectrum of support mechanisms. Some participants cited resources or services already accessed by teachers, while others articulated desires for additional support, including resources and services they wished could be available.

According to Nel et al. (2016), teachers require appropriate structural support to pursue inclusive education. Consistent with the principles outlined in the EWP6 and the SIAS policies, teachers should receive support from various education stakeholders, such as the DBST (DBE, 2014). This support is envisioned to provide wellness programmes and initiatives to equip teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively accommodate learners encountering learning difficulties such as dyslexia (DBE, 2014). The following subthemes emerged for the main theme:

4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Professional and psychological support

The participants articulated various forms of support, encompassing both professional and emotional dimensions.

Some teachers mentioned that professional support was pivotal in equipping them with methodologies to work with learners with dyslexia, enhancing their pedagogical practices. Two teachers highlighted that they received support from the DBST, which included guidance on teaching techniques and workshops, and indicated that the support empowered them to facilitate inclusive and adaptive practices, enabling them to cater for the diverse needs of learners. Teacher T shared some of the mechanisms that district advisors use to facilitate support for these teachers:

“We have Curriculum and Instruction workshops from district subject developers. Our district subject developer is one of the hosts for these workshops to advise us on content coverage, common mistakes, and methods of teaching when working with learners who cannot read, for example.”

Research posits that having adaptive learning environments is imperative, as they allow teachers to be attuned to the distinctive needs of learners (Awang-Hashim et al., 2019; Granziera et al., 2019). Diverse pedagogical strategies and well-informed and engaged teachers are needed to implement such a learning environment and effectively cater to these

unique needs (Witzel & Mize, 2018). This present finding is congruent with the JD-R model, which postulates that job resources not only address the immediate challenges of teachers but also contribute to their wellbeing, enabling them to do diligent work (Ostermeier et al., 2023; Murangi et al., 2022).

Another similar finding highlighted the support that is there for them as English teachers, particularly as they are the ones who have to facilitate the process of developing reading skills for learners with dyslexia. The following excerpt outlines the process often followed by district advisors to provide guidance for these teachers during school visits. Teacher T explained:

“Our subject advisor would normally come and collect our classwork books, formal books. For example, she will say, Grade 7, give me 5 books, and she will do this for all teachers teaching English. She will spend the whole day in the school checking my learners' books and the books of my colleagues' learners. She would call us to give us the outcome based on what she found in our books. Then she would take us step by step showing us why we should never do things in a certain way. For example, if the content coverage is more or less or if one is on the direct path. She will then look at the challenges of our teaching methods, looking at how we teach maybe for example reading. Then she will show us some different ways to teach reading. So, she helps us to balance the teaching process.”

Such support is consistent with the principles of inclusive education outlined in the EWP6 (DBE, 2013), highlighting the significance of departmental support in equipping teachers with the skills to cater for learners with diverse learning needs such as dyslexia. However, the findings differ from the existing literature about the effectiveness and relevance of the support provided during school visits. Existing literature posits that teacher support from district officials during school visits does not focus on areas of significant need, such as training teachers on how to approach the process of teaching learners with dyslexia in regular classrooms (Thwala et al., 2020; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Instead, the focus is on monitoring and surveillance of content coverage (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018).

For instance, it emerged in the following findings that two teachers perceived the support provided by the district as inadequate, stating that it does not address the challenges faced by teachers working with learners with dyslexia. Teacher J explained, “... we meet on

Teams, but even so, we do not focus on such things as dyslexia.” This is congruent with the study by Mills and Clarke (2017) that support for teachers working with learners with dyslexia is often misplaced and fails to address actual needs. Similarly, Teacher Z expressed, “*The support is not enough because they are not helping with dyslexia. They are just facilitating on their subject.*” Existing literature evaluating the effectiveness of district support for teachers teaching learners with dyslexia reported that the support provided is irrelevant (Thebe, 2022; Thwala et al., 2020). Research suggests that teacher support should be specific to the needs of the teacher (Ladbrook, 2019). This is in accordance with the SIAS policy, which states that support should “focus mainly on addressing teacher needs” (DBE, 2014, p.14).

Furthermore, there were cases of underutilisation of psychological support. In this instance, two teachers highlighted that they are aware of the support services offered by the district but indicated that they are not using the services. Teacher Y explained, “*The district has, what do we call it, the psychological; a psychologist, but you we don’t use these services.*” The reason for not using the support included the issue of accessibility. Teacher Y mentioned, “*...ah! The support is not readily available, so we rely on ourselves.*” This present finding is consistent with the existing research, which posits that teachers fail to utilise essential job resources to foster wellbeing (Ostermeier et al., 2023; Granziera et al., 2021). This is despite research stating that teachers are susceptible to adverse mental health outcomes due to the inherently demanding nature of their profession (Benevene et al., 2020; Kruger, 2019).

Similar views were shared by Teacher N, who demonstrated awareness about the support programmes but indicated that information on the kind of support available and how to access it is not explicit. Teacher N stated, “*I know that the district offers programmes to support teachers, but these are just general programmes, and we also do not have much information on that.*” This present finding by Teacher N indicates that teachers are aware of the district's support programs even though there is a potential barrier to obtaining information regarding access to, understanding of, and engagement with the available support resources (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This present finding supports the study by Kruger (2019), which indicated that the DoE does not have clear directives as to how teachers can access wellness programmes, stating that only information on wellbeing in the context of HIV and AIDS education is readily available in the *Action Plan to 2019* (DBE, 2015). Moreover, the characterisation of the support programmes as “*just general*

programmes" may imply a perception among teachers that these services lack specificity and may not adequately address their specific needs.

Furthermore, the perspective of the district official was that the district, as the employer, is committed to empowering teachers to address the unique challenges of teaching learners with dyslexia. The EP stated:

"as a district-based support team member, we provide school-based support teams with development workshops for teachers working with learners with difficulties, such as when having to accommodate a learner with dyslexia."

In highlighting what support for teachers teaching learners with difficulties entails, the EP explained:

"These workshops provide guidance on for example, how to identify learners that have special barriers, we bring about workshops that are practical on the type of strategies that they should use or follow, and this is a continuous thing. It occurs on a regular basis, and in most cases, we have resource centres as well."

Another similar finding highlighted the significance of providing the requisite support for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. This time, the senior education specialist (SES) for English, a female with four years of experience, stated:

"It is crucial that they [teachers] are supported by us, but they need to try and empower themselves as well; they can try and help themselves as well as they will be helping learners who are unable to read."

Demonstrating the curation of the support to assist teachers working with learners with dyslexia, the SES explained:

"As we speak now, I am busy with intervention strategies for my teachers, I need to send it because I made one, I'm compiling something like a booklet that teaches reading. I made one which they used in term two. So now I am busy doing another one for term three. Many teachers are unaware of dyslexia and how to deal with it."

Another similar finding revealed that there was a recent workshop held to train teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The EP stated, “*so there was one workshop that was I think, held last term, if not first, on how to teach a learner that is dyslexic.*” These present findings align with the DoE (2008) standards, which indicate that education district officials, such as subject advisors, should provide training workshops and assistive materials for teachers to foster the development of effective teaching and learning by addressing barriers to learning.

Furthermore, in some instances, the district officials highlighted that the district, as the employer, provides psychological support services for teachers. The EP explained:

“Teachers have got their specialised team of professionals who are in the health and wellness centre or section. They're the ones that deal with the emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing, and everything else that includes educators or professionals.”

The district-teacher (employer-employee) relationship of care, although transactional, according to Kruger (2019), is significant in ascertaining teacher wellbeing. This study is supported by Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, which posits that wellbeing can be achieved by assessing and promoting different aspects of the PERMA model in every teacher. Within the context of this present study, this may encompass the provision of emotional or social support. Prior literature found that people with strong social support tend to be motivated, productive and creative and barely experience burnout (Field, 2017; Achor, 2013). The EP provided insight into the different professionals assigned by the district to provide support to promote the wellbeing of teachers who may be stressed due to the pressure of working with learners with dyslexia. The EP stated, “*There are psychologists, there are social workers, and other professionals that are assigned to them and for their wellness.*” Challenges in teaching are dynamic, so having various professionals providing support to promote the wellbeing of teachers aligns with the recognition that teachers require multifaceted care and support to navigate the demanding nature of the profession (Hascher & Waber, 2021).

Moreover, in accordance with the PERMA model, the EP further outlined the areas of wellbeing that the psychological support addresses and provided information about the department responsible for providing these kinds of support at the district level:

“Teachers have got their specialised team of professionals who are in the health and wellness centre or section. They're the ones that deal with the emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing, and everything else that includes educators or professionals.”

Such support teams may address the pressures teachers face and promote their overall wellbeing experiences (Benevene et al., 2020). Providing high-quality education in South African public schools is inextricably tied to the productivity, wellbeing, and health of the teachers working there (Zuma et al., 2016). Using the JD-R and PERMA models as a lens, professional support and psychological support are essential for fostering the wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia (Achor, 2012; Turner et al., 2021).

The general sentiment from these findings is that teachers and the DBST understand the support that should ideally be available for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. However, it emerged in the findings that teachers have not experienced support that addresses their challenges of teaching learners with dyslexia, meaning that there is a gap in that regard. The implication of these findings for the South African education system is that there need to be initiatives solely dedicated to supporting and training teachers as they work with learners with dyslexia to foster inclusive pedagogy. In addition, the findings also showed a disconnect between teacher awareness of available psychological support and its accessibility, practical usage, and implementation. These findings confirmed what Kruger's (2019) study reported about the lack of information on other forms of support to address the wellbeing of teachers. The participants in this study reported that there are no clear directives about how to access psychological support when feeling under pressure.

The incongruity between policy intent and implementation is a recurring theme in this present study, mirroring findings from existing research (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019; Kruger, 2019; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018; Mavuso, 2013; Smith, 2011; Mahlo, 2011). Therefore, the paradox calls for an exploration of the underlying reasons and dynamics at play to shed light on the complexities surrounding the practical use of support services, particularly by teachers who experience challenges in their classrooms.

4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Resources and strategies to address dyslexia-related reading problems

According to existing research (Geertsema et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2022), dyslexia manifests uniquely in each individual. Therefore, teaching learners with dyslexia presents distinct challenges as teachers must adapt their teaching methods to accommodate the varying degrees and areas of difficulty associated with this condition. This aligns with the assertion made by Colson (2013) that effective teaching of learners with dyslexia necessitates a multi-sensory approach. Hence, it is paramount that teachers responsible for these learners receive appropriate teaching materials and resources to facilitate the implementation of such pedagogical practices as per the principles of the JD-R framework guiding this study.

Some participants indicated that the district provides materials and methods of intervention to address reading difficulties experienced by learners with dyslexia. Teacher J spoke about the reading programme from the DoE district that he uses in class to promote and support learners who cannot read:

“The district has just introduced this thing called DEAR – Drop Everything And Read for 30 minutes before you start with each and every lesson. This is an intervention that helps us to incorporate more reading into our lessons.”

Since dyslexia is a condition that affects an individual ability to read fluently and with comprehension, the present finding is consistent with existing literature that adopting curriculum differentiation, such as integrating support initiatives such as the DEAR into the lessons, may foster reading skills for learners who struggle with reading (Olivier, 2017; Moss, 2016). Contrary to the present finding, Geertsema et al. (2022) argued that such a generalised approach to managing learners with dyslexia might not be sufficient. Literature supports using a multilevel approach when teaching learners with dyslexia (Gordon, 2013). Nevertheless, it's worth noting that this finding has certain limitations, as it does not provide insight into the effectiveness of the *DEAR* initiative in helping teachers teach reading to learners with dyslexia.

Another similar finding indicated that the district provides teaching and learning material according to the specific requests submitted by teachers. Teacher T explained:

“This [provision or resources] starts by supporting the school through the provision of learning and support materials. The district always requests a list of the needs per subject. They ask what you need as a teacher. For example, I need a chart with information about verbs or nouns. The district will then finance the school according to its needs.”

Furthermore, Teacher T expanded on the examples of some of the teaching and learning material that the district provides:

“The district gives us support, it starts by supporting the school by providing LTSM ... The district buys dictionaries for learners. It is important for these learners to have a dictionary at home. The district also provides some external people to come to school, to teach spelling.”

According to the EWP6, the key purpose of the DBST is to help teachers create teaching methods and assessments of learning that are more flexible (DoE, 2006). The DBST is also responsible for providing exemplary learning programmes, learning materials, and assessment instruments (DoE, 2006).

Furthermore, there were cases where two teachers reported a total lack of teaching and learning resources to address reading difficulties among learners. Teacher N shared, *“We do not even have resources such as magazines, visual material, or novels to address reading problems that we have amongst our learners.”* This is similar to Thebe's (2022) study, which indicated that teachers reported having a shortage of teaching material to address dyslexia challenges. Similarly, another finding highlighted the lack of strategies to address reading issues in Grade 7, stating that strategies that are available have been primarily designed for lower grades and necessitate adaptations if they are to be used for Grade 7 learners. Teacher J explained:

“With the Grade 7's there no extra support. But with the Grade 4's they have what they call PSRIP, Primary School Reading Improvement Plan ... for Grade 7 there is nothing, so I extend the same method used in Grade 4 to help the Grade 7s with reading. This is to prepare them for high school.”

Reid (2013) highlighted the need for specialised resources and agreed with the above finding, emphasising the need to make classrooms dyslexia-friendly with necessary teaching aids. The DBST's failure to make such provisions may contribute to ineffective teaching and support, thereby affecting learners with dyslexia, and ultimately leading to work-related stress (Mupa, & Chinooneka, 2015). The JD-R framework states that job demands without resources may create work pressure, which may lead to burnout (Adil & Baig, 2015; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

Furthermore, the educational psychologist, as a member of the DBST, shed light on places teachers can access resource material to enhance effective teaching and learning for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The EP stated, *"We have resource centres... Our resource centres also collaborate with private institutions to actually develop educators"*. In addition, the EP indicated that the supply of resources is based on the demands outlined by the school. The EP explained:

"So, on an annual basis, and during end of the year mostly, schools are requested on, or they are requested to mention the support that they need. For example, if a learner cannot sound, they would request that, okay, we have a shortfall when it comes to such, we have a shortfall when it comes to supporting learners."

In summary, the findings elucidated a nuanced perspective concerning the support provided by the DBST to assist teachers working with learners with dyslexia. While the DBST asserts the existence of support, the perspectives of teachers varied, indicating concerns such as the insufficiency of teaching materials and the absence of developed strategies specifically tailored to support teachers when teaching learners with dyslexia in Grade 7. These present findings confirmed Thebe's (2022) study, which reported that teachers working with learners with dyslexia lacked the necessary resources and expertise to effectively support them.

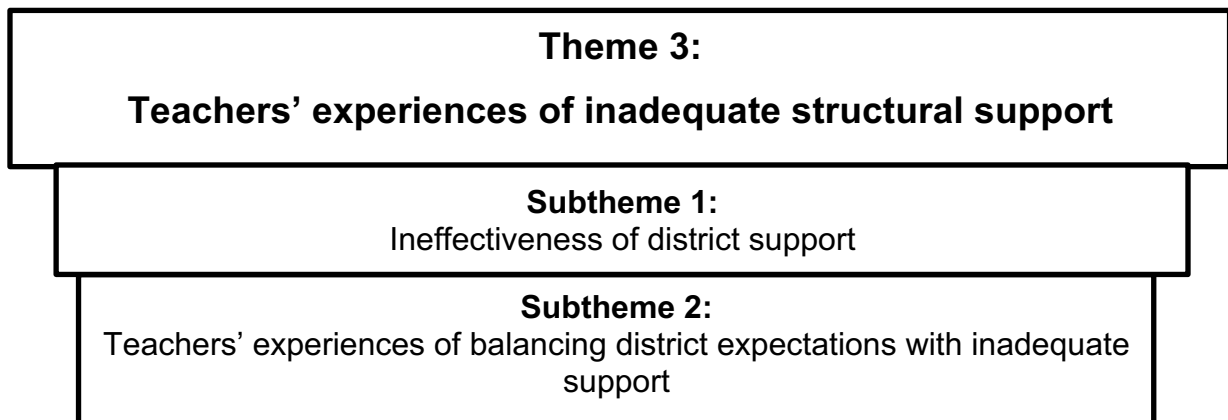
Overall, theme 2 highlighted a need to explore the nature and efficacy of DBST support in classrooms accommodating learners with dyslexia. Additionally, it calls for a critical appraisal of policy implications to improve support for teachers with learners with dyslexia, particularly in Grade 7. This prompts critical questions about the factors that impede the translation of policies, such as the SIAS, into tangible support for teachers (Mahlo, 2017). For instance, finding out whether there is an issue of resource allocation, awareness, or a

misalignment between policy objectives and realities in schools. Theme 3 explores teachers' lived experiences in relation to the support they have received from the district.

4.4 THEME 3: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF INADEQUATE STRUCTURAL SUPPORT

Figure 4

Graphic Representation of Theme 3



This theme answered the second research sub-question, which aimed to gain insights from teachers regarding their practical encounters with support from the district while teaching learners with dyslexia. Participants, particularly teachers, exhibited a range of experiences and perceptions concerning the support provided by the DBST. However, the prevailing consensus centred on the inadequacy of district support. This is consistent with existing literature that implementing inclusive education is hindered by a lack of support (Ladbrook, 2019; Mfuthwana, 2016; Mahlo, 2011). Most teachers voiced the necessity of independently developing initiatives to cater for learners with dyslexia, underscoring the insufficiency of DBST assistance in addressing the challenges they face when teaching these learners. This is supported by the work of Kormos and Nijakowska (2017) who stated that teachers in inclusive classrooms have a responsibility to maximise opportunities for participation for all learners. Mkhuma et al. (2014) added that they need extend their responsibilities to provide additional learning support for learners experiencing difficulties.

Despite certain participants displaying knowledge and awareness of the necessary support for accommodating learners with dyslexia, along with a few positive outcomes of their efforts, it remained apparent that the lack of adequate support contributed negatively to the implementation of inclusive practices. In addition, while the primary focus rested on

teachers' experiential narratives, district officials also expressed their perspectives regarding the district's support for these teachers. The following subthemes were elaborated upon below.

4.4.1 Subtheme 1: Ineffectiveness of district support

This subtheme highlighted the pressing issue of inadequate support for teachers teaching learners with dyslexia. The findings elucidated several critical aspects, ranging from the limited to the complete absence of district intervention, as well as the repercussions of this inadequate support on teaching and learning.

Several participants expressed profound views regarding the complete inadequacy and perceived ineffectiveness of the support provided to assist in teaching learners with dyslexia. Teacher Z stated that the support resembled a small contribution by the district and expressed a need for substantial efforts: *"Ah well, the district intervention to me is a drop in the ocean; more needs to be done."* This finding reflects a sense of disheartenment and frustration. This participant perceives the support from the district as inadequate and insufficient to address the challenges associated with dyslexia. The metaphorical phrase "a drop in the ocean" underscores the belief that the existing support is merely a small and insignificant part of what is required to effectively teach learners with dyslexia. Teacher Z's viewpoint aligns with the broader sentiment of dissatisfaction with the current state of support for teachers (Nembambula et al., 2023; Mfuthwana, 2016; Mahlo, 2011).

Similarly, Teacher N expressed a notable perception of inadequacy in the available support systems to address their challenges when working with learners with dyslexia: *"There is really no support we are left to fend on our own."* The present finding is supported by existing literature, which reported similar sentiments among teachers regarding the inadequacy of existing support structures (Sibanda, 2021; Bozkus, 2020). This finding further highlights a profound sense of abandonment and self-reliance among teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The same participant further emphasised that the support provided does not effectively address the specific challenges posed by dyslexia: *"I would not say that the support is helpful for or prepares us to teach learners with Dyslexia."* These findings by Teacher N suggest that the current resources and intervention provided by the DBST do not adequately cater to the demands associated with teaching learners with dyslexia. This is similar to the literature by Thwala et al. (2020) and Mupa and Chinooneka (2015), which

alluded to the fact that lack of support and insufficient resources contributed to ineffective teaching and learning.

Similarly, other participants indicated that inadequate support hinders them from producing good results. Teacher J succinctly expressed this frustration:

“The support we are getting from the Department of Education does not yield the results that we anticipated. I will say that the success rate is far below the intended purpose.”

Teacher N echoed a similar sentiment by highlighting the lack of knowledge and support in teaching learners who struggle with reading: *“We don't know how to deal with learners who can't read ...”* Teacher N further emphasised that the absence of support has had negative consequences on teacher performance: *“... Sometimes we fail as teachers because of lack of support.”* The finding underscores the link between inadequate support and teachers' struggles in effectively addressing the diverse needs of learners with dyslexia (De Boer et al., 2011). The SES highlighted the impact of poor support for teachers on learner achievement, emphasising that it leads to *“... high failure rate, and the lack of skill to help those learners”*.

The findings supported Thwala et al.'s (2020) discussion of the ineffectiveness of DoE support in helping teachers comprehend their roles in inclusive education. They also corresponded with Tyagi (2016), who highlighted that teachers experience ongoing struggles when implementing inclusive education. Furthermore, Mavuso (2013) supported these findings by suggesting that, while there are established rules and procedures for guiding DBSTs in assisting teachers working with learners with dyslexia, the support provided often falls short in terms of sufficiency and relevance.

Furthermore, another participant illustrated the perception among teachers regarding the role of the DBST, particularly during school visits. A general view was that district officials focus on administrative tasks and paperwork rather than actively empowering or supporting teachers in their professional roles, such as navigating the challenges of accommodating learners with dyslexia in an ordinary classroom. These perspectives resonated with earlier studies conducted by Thwala et al. (2020) and Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018), wherein teachers expressed the belief that the district's primary focus lies in monitoring curriculum

progress and ensuring compliance with content coverage rather than actively providing them with the essential support they require. Teacher N explained:

“Normally I see district facilitators as people who come just come to fill in in their reports. All they focus on is finding mistakes in the work we do, but they do not really empower us. They are just concerned about papers and doing administrative work.”

The participant described district officials’ visits as primarily concerned with bureaucratic tasks, filling in reports, and identifying teacher work errors. This is congruent with previous literature on the irrelevance of district support for teachers (Mavuso, 2013; Ladbrook, 2019). This portrayal suggests that district facilitators do not offer desired guidance or empowerment to teachers, indicating that the support provided during district visits lacks depth and practical relevance (Mahlo, 2017; Ladbrook, 2019; Nembembula et al., 2023).

Discussing the district’s involvement in providing intervention for learners who have been identified as having challenges such as dyslexia, as per the requirement of the SIAS policy, the participant expressed dissatisfaction about the length of the process. One participant indicated that the slow process puts pressure on them as they will still need to accommodate the learners while waiting for the district to take over. Teacher T explained:

“While the district offer support to teachers with learners with dyslexia and the learners themselves, the challenge is that when a learner is identified the processes afterwards is slow, and this includes the external evaluator coming to school to find out why the learner is struggling. But still, they will not provide an intervention or place the learner to the school that will address their challenges. Instead, the learner will progress based on their good performance in other subjects and the age-cohort principle. What this means is that as a language teacher, the number of learners with challenges will increase in your classroom, putting a lot of strain on you as a teacher.”

The participant noted that the process is time-consuming, resulting in learners with specific difficulties like dyslexia advancing to higher grade levels without receiving timely and effective interventions to address their challenges. This situation, in turn, places increased pressure on the teachers who receive these learners in subsequent grades. Similar findings were reported in the Von Solms (2020) study, which stated there is a need for a simple

process of SIAS policy implementation with timely feedback and improved engagement from the district.

Although this theme focused on capturing teachers' experiential accounts, the SES, as a member of the DBST, provided insights regarding factors that hinder the effective provision of support to teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The SES mentioned that the process has its own complexities, making it impractical for the support to be continuous due to the high job demands of the subject advisors. The SES explained:

"I can only visit one school once a year, to see how my teachers are doing. So, if there is no stable programme that addresses reading challenges in schools, my teachers and learners will continue struggling because they are moved from pillar to post."

This finding is different from the DoE policy, which states that district subject advisors have the mandate to visit schools at least once per term to provide support for teachers (DoE, 2008). Additionally, it is expected that more visits need to take place at schools that require stronger support, such as schools that have teachers working with learners with learning difficulties such as dyslexia (DoE, 2008).

Moreover, the SES highlighted that evaluating the effectiveness of the existing support provided to teachers to help learners with dyslexia is also impractical due to their work overload. Furthermore, the excerpt's findings revealed some potential reasons why this is a problem.

"There is no reflection whatsoever, to see which initiative is really helping teachers to be effective and confident in teaching learners how to read. As it is, I have 106 schools that I have to oversee."

The present findings by the SES highlight the complex issues that the DBST experiences. Moreover, based on the findings, it is not clear whether the district support conceptualised as job resources in the JD-R model (Costa et al., 2021; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011) effectively alleviates the job demands associated with the complexities of teaching learners with dyslexia, particularly because there seem to be factors that impede active and functional support by the district.

Teacher support ensures quality education and learners' success (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). The realities of support for teachers working with learners with dyslexia were explored in this subtheme. The sentiments shared by participants have demonstrated a sense of neglect regarding the provision of adequate support to help teachers manage the challenges of teaching learners with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Various scholars have alluded to the fact that the support provided for teachers is not thorough or appropriate in most public schools in South Africa (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019; Mavuso, 2013; Mahlo, 2011). The findings in this present study confirmed what was previously reported, as seen in the participants' responses about the discontent with the district's level of support. In line with the JD-R framework, these findings show that although there are increased responsibilities placed on teachers working with learners with dyslexia, the necessary job resources are lacking due to other factors at the management level, implying a potential risk of teacher burnout if their demands are not met (Lopez-Martin & Topa, 2019).

Most participants' voices reflected a shared frustration with the current support, contributing valuable insights to the gap in support for teachers teaching learners with dyslexia. The findings signal the need to appraise existing support structures, potentially calling for more targeted and continuous strategies to enhance teacher efficacy.

4.4.2 Subtheme 2: Teachers' experiences of balancing district expectations with inadequate support

Teachers in full-service schools must implement inclusive education to accommodate learners with diverse abilities (Ladbrook, 2009). The objective is that, irrespective of the demands of educating diverse groups (Ladbrook, 2009), these teachers must enforce the rights of all learners to quality education as stipulated in the constitution. Teachers indicated that the expectation for them to implement inclusive education effectively is high. Teacher J aptly captured this sentiment by stating:

"... the district still expects a 100% pass rate, while the resources and support they provide are inadequate".

This illuminates the interplay between the district's high-performance expectations and the perceived lack of adequate support, a tension teachers must grapple with in their daily

practice. The finding is in line with previous literature that teachers are expected to respond effectively and accommodate learners with diverse learning needs (Memisevic & Hodzic, 2011; Dalton et al., 2012; Memisevic & Hodzic, 2011), even though the support is inadequate and inconsistent (Mavuso, 2013; Mahlo, 2017).

Another participant, Teacher Z, echoed the same sentiments about the overall achievement expectations of the district while also emphasising the standards and the level of support provided: *"It is really hard because they expect you to produce results, but the support doesn't match the standard they put."* The finding shows that the discrepancy creates a challenging environment for teachers, where they are tasked with achieving demanding goals without requisite resources or support. Teacher Z further alludes to the pressure they feel from higher authorities or bodies: *"We are under pressure from someone above."* This response highlights the top-down expectations placed upon teachers. This external pressure contributes to the sense of responsibility and stress experienced by teachers teaching learners with dyslexia.

To reinforce the notion that teachers are under pressure to raise the standard of achievement for learners, the educational psychologist stated: *"There is certainly pressure to ensure that one can produce learners that would be competent and ready for high school."* This perspective illuminates the broader societal expectations on teachers to remain competent despite their challenges.

Teachers' participation in inclusive education has been deemed a crucial factor in determining learner success. Congruent with previous literature, the findings in this study demonstrated that there is pressure exerted on teachers to implement inclusive education (Memisevic & Hodzic, 2011). This is in spite of the lack of support for these teachers, as expressed in the excerpts. To support these sentiments, various researchers have reported on the lack of support for teachers, particularly teachers tasked with implementing inclusive education (Ahmad et al., 2018; Nel et al., 2016; Tyagi, 2016). In terms of the teachers working with learners with dyslexia, very few studies have been conducted (Thwala et al., 2020), but the sentiments shared remain the same. The expectations from higher structures place pressure on teachers to appropriately accommodate learners with dyslexia despite failure to provide the requisite support. In accordance with the JD-R model, the finding illuminates an imbalance between job demands and job resources. The JD-R model posits that job resources are essential to counterbalance job demands (Bakker & Demerouti,

2017). However, the situation described by teachers in this study highlighted a discrepancy between district expectations (job demands) and the lack of adequate support (insufficient job resources). This incongruence makes it implausible for teachers to meet the district's performance standards effectively, which may lead to heightened job stress and the risk of burnout, as indicated by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

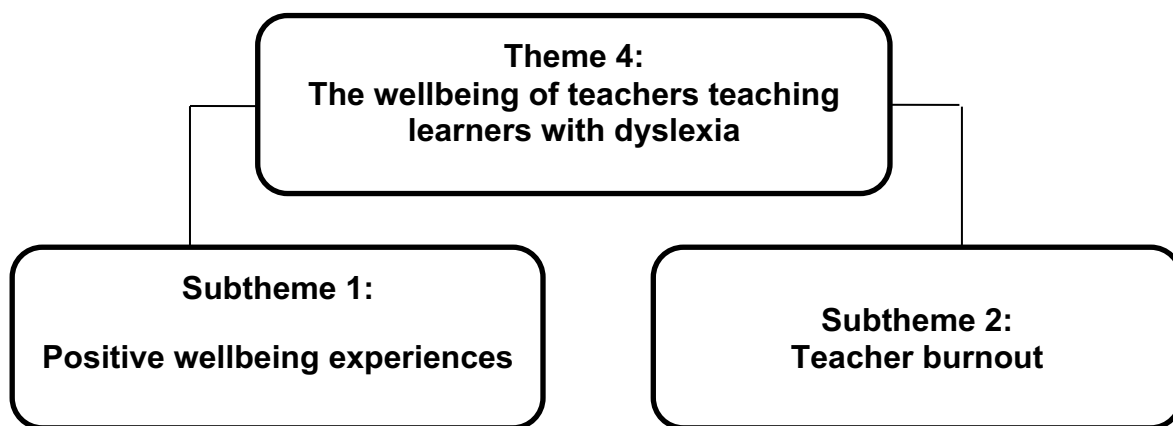
This subtheme brought to light a significant discrepancy between the high expectations set by the district and the inadequate support provided to teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The most prominent finding teachers reported was the pressure they are under with minimal support. This imbalance creates immense pressure on these teachers and places them at risk of burnout, as outlined by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The implications of the findings for the South African education system are that there is a necessity for re-evaluating the district's role in supporting teachers. This appraisal should align the support provided with the practical challenges faced by teachers on the ground, aiming to alleviate their burdens effectively.

Theme 4 explores the wellbeing experiences of teachers working with learners with dyslexia, with a specific focus on the role of support from the district in shaping their overall wellbeing.

4.5 THEME 4: THE WELLBEING OF TEACHERS WORKING WITH LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

Figure 5

Graphic Representation of Theme 4



This theme explored the wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia. It elucidated the role the district plays in providing support to promote the wellbeing of these teachers. While the study adopted the JD-R model and the positive psychology PERMA framework to gauge wellbeing and highlighted a few wellbeing indicators, the findings predominantly reflected negative experiences. It is not uncommon for research to exhibit a tendency to separate reports of negative and positive experiences, whereby negative findings are under-reported or not reported at all (Mlinarić et al., 2017).

This present study adopted an inclusive approach by recognising both the positive and negative wellbeing encounters of teachers working with learners with dyslexia. This is in line with the study presented by Lomas and Ivztan (2016) concerning the dual nature of wellbeing. The study acknowledged the dynamic interplay between positive and negative wellbeing experiences and recognised that contextual elements shape wellbeing (Wong, 2011). Moreover, the study acknowledged that both positive and negative wellbeing experiences contribute significantly to an individual's personal development (Lomas & Ivztan, 2016). To illustrate, Velázquez (2021) pointed out that positivity can be harmful when applied in a toxic environment, whereas negativity could drive transformative growth. The varying wellbeing experiences of teachers are further detailed in the subthemes discussed below.

4.5.1 Subtheme 1: Positive wellbeing experiences

Among the participants, only a few teachers conveyed a moderately positive perspective regarding the influence of district support on their overall wellbeing. Teacher Y demonstrated positive experiences regarding the support received from the district. Although the response was brief, Teacher Y highlighted that the support alleviates their pressure: *“The psychological support we get from the district is helpful. It decreases the pressure.”* This finding by Teacher Y supports the JD-R model, which states that balancing job resources and job demands prevents teachers from feeling strained, thus leading to wellbeing (Murangi et al., 2022; Mkhuma et al., 2014).

Similarly, another teacher reported positive encounters in their practice after receiving support from the district. Teacher T conveyed positive emotions and a sense of accomplishment. He shared:

“For me this [the workshops] has been helpful because I can tell you, I now know what to focus on when teaching my learners to read. It is not simple but I feel happy to see some of my learners improving in reading and then also understanding what they read.”

The above finding revealed the interplay between the JD-R and PERMA models. Notably, it was through access to job resources that this particular teacher experienced wellbeing, which was evident in the positive emotion he expressed, *“I feel happy”*, and a sense of accomplishment when he saw his learners succeed. This highlighted the positive influence that district-led initiatives have on the wellbeing of teachers (Kruger, 2019) and the overall significance of structural support to assist teachers working in inclusive classrooms (Mahlo, 2017; Nel et al., 2016; Ladbrook, 2009). According to research, teachers who experience a sense of motivation and wellbeing are more committed to their work (Ma, 2022; Kern et al., 2015), which can be seen in learners’ performance (Benevene et al., 2020).

Another teacher expressed a positive feeling about knowing that there is support from the district and that it serves as motivation for them to continue their work. Teacher T stated, *“... it is nice to see that we are thought about as teachers. It is motivating.”* This excerpt showed that teachers perceive the support provided by the DBST as valuable, highlighting that it contributes to their wellbeing and job satisfaction. The findings of this study align with the

concepts of positive emotions, positive relationships, and accomplishment outlined within the PERMA framework. For instance, the PERMA framework posits that teachers who experience positivity, support, and a sense of care in their work environments tend to demonstrate improved job performance (Toropova et al., 2021; Acton & Glasgow, 2015).

4.5.2 Subtheme 2: Teacher burnout

Contrary to the previous subtheme, this subtheme encompassed teachers with differing experiences of support from the district. The majority of the teachers participating in the study reported having poor mental health due to insufficient support. Teacher J shared his personal struggle with pressure and the absence of adequate support, emphasising how these factors contribute to his distress, *“It is very stressful to teach learners with dyslexia because I was not prepared for such learners.”* In this study, stress refers to situations where individuals perceive the demands placed on them to exceed their capacity to meet expectations or reduce those demands (Rajgopal, 2010; Lazarus et al., 1985). For instance, the present study established the way in which teachers seemingly feel pressured to accommodate learners with diverse needs in regular classes, as required by the EPW6 policy. However, the study also found that the support required to effectively address the needs of these learners was lacking, making it challenging for these teachers. According to the JD-R model, inadequate support to balance job demands may lead to burnout (Lopez-Martin & Topa, 2019; Schaufeli et al., 2014).

Another similar finding indicated negative emotions shared by teachers due to the frustration of working in an environment with little to no support to cope with the job demands. Teacher J explained:

“I sometimes feel frustrated and resort to taking out my anger on the poor learners. If I can tell you something, at one stage in 2022, I nearly went to court because of an almost misconduct I did.”

This present finding highlights how the poor mental health of teachers may lead to poor job performance, a lack of motivation, and hostility towards learners (Hussain & Sultana, 2022; Santoro, 2021).

For instance, another teacher reflected on one of the teachers who once experienced poor mental health and got admitted into a mental health institution to receive specialised support. Teacher N explained:

“We had one teacher last year, an English teacher who was institutionalised because of the pressure of the teaching profession. She was not taking it. She had to be admitted to one clinic, VISTA. She could not take the pressure anymore.”

This excerpt revealed the consequences of inadequate support for teachers in their demanding roles, particularly those who have to accommodate learners with diverse learning needs, such as dyslexia. The findings of this present study are consistent with existing research, which asserts that teachers frequently face elevated stress and burnout (Ferguson et al., 2022; Benevene et al., 2020). Moreover, the findings are also supported by the JD-R model, which emphasises that excessive job demands can lead to burnout when the necessary support is lacking (Santoro, 2021).

Once more, Teacher J conveyed his frustration and dissatisfaction, this time expressing a desire for an early resignation and a wish to pursue a new career elsewhere, aiming to escape the pressures imposed upon them. Teacher J stated:

“Sometimes, one wishes they were sixty years old, so they can exit the system or just change their career and do something different. It is tough, because they expect you to produce results, but the support doesn't match the standard they put. You know, this is just a personal observation.”

Fatima and Ali (2016) reported that excessive workloads can negatively contribute to teachers' wellbeing and performance. Moreover, job demands may lead to the inability to retain good teachers (Mc Callum, 2021), which is evident from this present excerpt where Teacher J expresses the desire for early attrition to be freed from the stress that comes with the demands of the profession.

Moreover, another participant discussed how the support they received, which they considered irrelevant, left them feeling frustrated. They mentioned that the support the DBST provides neither guides nor empowers them; instead, it makes them feel inadequate and worsens the demands placed upon them. Teacher Z explained:

“When facilitators come, they focus on finding mistakes in our work, but they do not empower us ... we are really frustrated as teachers ... the district not helping us. We are really frustrated that we are left to fend for ourselves.”

This finding by Teacher Z demonstrated teachers’ dissatisfaction and discontentment with the support the district provides during school visits. The general sentiment is that the DBST does not support them to feel at ease about managing their demands, such as accommodating learners with dyslexia in regular classrooms. The present finding is congruent with the study conducted by Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018, p.6), which showed that teachers felt that the support by the district was more about “surveillance or checking for compliance” rather than professional development and psychological support.

Structural support is crucial to the development of teachers (McCallum, 2021), particularly teachers who have to implement inclusive practices. A lack of such support may be detrimental to the wellbeing of such teachers. Sharing her perspective as the DBST, the EP highlighted that teachers implementing inclusive education are likely to experience a range of emotions, particularly when they have not been supported or prepared to do so:

“But I believe that if, for example, the teacher has not been exposed to learners with special needs, they will feel overwhelmed, especially with learners with special needs in such a grade, building up to high school. There is undoubtedly pressure to ensure that one can produce learners that would be competent and ready for high school.”

Moreover, the SES also indicated that teachers working with learners with reading difficulties are bound to be frustrated due to the increased responsibility.

“It is frustrating to teachers that one of their learners who is supposed to be able to read is not yet able to do so at a higher grade, such as Grade 6 or Grade 7. Moreover, these learners are between 12 and 13 years. So, it frustrates them to start from the beginning. Those who know how they try to help, but there is no time, and it frustrates teachers because there will be a high rate of failure.”

The SES further emphasised that teachers also experience frustration when they cannot help these learners improve. The SES shared:

“What frustrates them is the high failure rate, and the lack of skill to help those learners. And those learners believe you, me, will enter the next grade because of the pass requirement by the department, such as the age.”

This present finding demonstrates how the absence of wellbeing in terms of the pillars of the PERMA framework may contribute to poor mental health in teachers, thus leading to burnout as stipulated in the JD-R model.

The present findings revealed that the majority of teachers working with learners with dyslexia are grappling with stress and burnout while striving to implement inclusive education and cater to diverse learning needs. Despite their challenges, tailored support is absent to aid them in their challenging endeavour. These findings are vital to the South African education system, highlighting the urgent need for the DBST to intervene strategically. There is a pressing need for specialised assistance designed specifically for these teachers to alleviate their burdens and enhance their overall wellbeing.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter summarised the findings of this study, using IPA analysis. The critical aspects of teachers' experiences of support and their wellbeing when working with learners with dyslexia were brought to light. The main themes of multifaceted structural support, inadequate support, and teacher wellbeing were identified and provided a clear direction for addressing the primary research question. To validate the findings of this study, the researcher conducted a thorough comparison with existing literature. This comprehensive discussion of previous research not only confirmed the relevance and significance of the identified themes but also unearthed new insights and implications for the South African education system.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an overview of the study's key findings is presented. Additionally, the chapter addressed the limitations and provided recommendations for practice, future research, and policy development. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the researcher's personal journey during this endeavour, providing insights into their experiences and highlighting key moments.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The primary objective of this study was to explore the perceptions of structural support by teachers working with learners with dyslexia and their wellbeing experiences in the context of the support they receive. The study set out to highlight the nature of structural support from the DoE district for teachers working with learners with dyslexia and the pivotal role of this support in enhancing teacher wellbeing, especially considering the challenges associated with meeting the diverse learning needs within regular classrooms. The literature related to the themes assessed was reviewed, and the conceptual framework, incorporating the JD-R model and the PERMA framework, was used as a lens to understand the study's findings.

5.2.1 Theme 1: Narratives about dyslexia as a learning difficulty

The findings in this theme revealed that among learners who experience learning difficulties, dyslexia is the most common learning difficulty experienced. The findings are indicative that dyslexia is complex and, as such, manifests in many ways. There was also evidence that most learners with dyslexia lacked foundational skills, especially from their earlier schooling age, as they had gone to schools with limited resources. Furthermore, the findings showed that most learners with dyslexia do not receive appropriate help at home, despite needing more support. Moreover, the study found that teachers believe active parental involvement is potentially instrumental in increasing the success of their children with dyslexia. Overall, this study found that many teachers have a fair understanding of what dyslexia is and how it manifests. Additionally, it was evident in the findings that teachers working with learners with dyslexia have a negative perception of parental involvement and are challenged by the lack of collaboration.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Multifaceted structural support

The findings highlighted that teachers have knowledge of the existing support mechanisms, both professional and psychological, available from the district to assist them in teaching learners with dyslexia. However, a significant challenge lies in the delivery of such support by the district, particularly the tools and resources to enable effective teaching and learning in this context. Psychological support was seemingly underutilised, primarily due to limited accessibility due to inadequate information dissemination by the management or the district. This situation resulted in a gap concerning the proper procedures for seeking such assistance. Moreover, the study offered critical insights by presenting teachers' suggestions for additional support that the DoE district should consider integrating. These suggestions included the need to involve remedial teachers who can assist with teaching such learners.

Additionally, one teacher highlighted the need for psychologists who can provide information about conditions such as dyslexia to help them understand how to care for and support learners who present with the condition. Overall, the study uncovered a notable gap in the district's provision of resources and a lack of dedicated tools and training on intervention strategies to assist teachers in supporting learners with dyslexia in Grade 7. In addition, the findings further uncovered that teachers know the kind of support and resources they need to enhance their experience working with learners with dyslexia. Future research can build upon these insights to explore effective ways to provide tools and resources for teachers working with learners with dyslexia.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Teachers' experiences of inadequate structural support

The study uncovered discrepancies among teachers concerning the district's support. Some teachers acknowledged receiving useful support from the district, aiding them in their roles. However, a majority of teachers were aware of the district's support but didn't utilise it, stating that the provided support was irrelevant as it didn't address the specific challenges associated with working with learners with dyslexia. Additionally, the findings further revealed that the district makes a lot of demands on teachers despite the deficient support. The perspective shared by the DBST revealed that the district is aware of the challenges that teachers working with learners with dyslexia experience and indicated how the district supports such teachers. However, the DBST also indicated that support for such teachers cannot be continuous due to factors related to the workload of district officials. This finding

confirmed the claims made by the teachers that there is an imbalance between the support and expectations of the district.

Numerous studies have consistently highlighted a discrepancy between policy intentions and the practical support available to teachers (Opoku, 2022; Dalton et al., 2012; Ladbroke, 2009). The present study highlighted the pressing need for more effective and targeted support systems for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. Moreover, while the study primarily examined teachers' experiences, it also shed light on the burdens faced by district officials who struggle with excessive workloads. This resonated with existing research documenting the challenges confronting the DBST in their role to support teachers effectively (Kruger, 2019; Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). The findings of this study highlighted the importance of allocating adequate support staff at the district level to ensure teachers, particularly those working with learners with diverse learning needs, receive adequate guidance and support and the necessary resources. The study aims to contribute to understanding the adverse consequences of inadequate structural support on teachers' performance. The implication for the South African education system is that there need to be urgent reforms and targeted interventions to bridge the gap between policy objectives and the actual support provided to teachers in inclusive educational settings.

5.2.4 Theme 4: The wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia

This theme sheds light on the implications of inadequate psychological and professional support for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The study uncovered different views from teachers regarding their experiences with support provided by the DoE district officials. Firstly, only a few teachers reported positive wellbeing experiences. The study showed that appropriate job resources, such as workshops and psychological support from the district, contributed largely to their wellbeing. Participants who had experienced some form of support from the district tended to report positive emotions and wellbeing. These participants believed that the support offered by the district positively influenced their ability to effectively manage learners with dyslexia in their classrooms. In accordance with the JD-R and PERMA models, this study revealed that teachers experienced various dimensions of wellbeing when they have access to resources and psychological support.

On the contrary, other teachers expressed dissatisfaction about the support or lack thereof and reported encountering challenges related to poor mental health due to elevated stress

and frustration. In accordance with the JD-R framework, the findings in this section indicated that teachers' wellbeing is significantly influenced by the demands placed upon them, such as workload and lack of support. What came up from this theme is that the majority of teachers working with learners with dyslexia are experiencing challenges navigating their job demands. Moreover, most of these teachers have not had any experience of support. This leads to another finding that some teachers are more inclined to contemplate leaving the profession due to their negative experiences of support, as reported by Benevene et al. (2020) and Mc Callum (2021).

These findings are pivotal for the South African education system, as they highlight the significance of safeguarding the wellbeing of teachers experiencing high job demands due to working with learners with diverse learning needs, such as dyslexia, in regular classrooms. Additionally, the present study provides insights into the importance of strengthening support systems to enhance the wellbeing of these teachers. By so doing, the South African education system can ensure their retention and prevent premature attrition, ultimately fostering a more supportive and sustainable teaching environment.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Upon reflection, several limitations of this study came to light. This study only considered the perspectives and experiences of teachers at schools in Hammanskraal, Tshwane North. While the participants provided valuable insights into their perceptions and experiential accounts of teaching learners with dyslexia, it is important to acknowledge that experiences and perceptions are limited in terms of generalisability. Consequently, it should be acknowledged that this study may not have encompassed comprehensively the wide-ranging perceptions and experiences among teachers working with learners with dyslexia in other schools and district contexts. However, the findings may be relatable, as teachers across different contexts may face challenges when teaching learners with dyslexia due to inadequate structural support.

Furthermore, the researcher experienced challenges in recruiting the intended number of participants. This was primarily due to certain institutions exhibiting reluctance to participate and requesting extra documentation despite possessing an approval letter from the head office. Due to the limited time remaining for data collection, the researcher could not fulfil the request, and participants from those institutions were excluded. This limitation may have

impacted the diversity of perspectives represented in the study and potentially introduced selection bias. Nevertheless, this limitation was mitigated by achieving data saturation.

In addition, not all participants consented to audio recording during interviews, and the researcher respected their wishes. This limitation might have affected the richness and accuracy of the data based solely on written notes or transcripts, which may not have captured all the nuances of the participants' responses. However, the researcher employed a detailed note-taking technique encompassing rigorous recording of verbal responses, non-verbal cues, and contextual information throughout the interview to ensure accurate data collection.

Moreover, despite assurances of privacy and confidentiality, some participants, especially teachers, were reluctant to share their perceptions fully. This reluctance may have resulted from concerns about sharing sensitive information or a fear of exposing oneself to potential risk despite having the reassurance of anonymity. This might have limited the depth of insights gathered. To counteract this limitation, efforts were made to create a supportive and comfortable environment during the interviews, emphasising the confidentiality of their responses. It is essential to note that the researcher was mindful of these boundaries, ensuring that participants' comfort and privacy were respected throughout the study.

Lastly, the researcher acknowledged the limitation of using IPA analysis, recognising that the interpretation of the findings can be influenced by the researcher's subjectivity. To address this concern, the researcher employed reflexivity and bracketing techniques, which involved continuous self-reflection and awareness to ensure objectivity during interpretation. Consequently, it is important to note that the interpretation of qualitative data in this study might vary depending on the researcher.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the aim of the study, which was to investigate the experiences of wellbeing and the perceptions of structural support among Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia, the following recommendations are made:

5.4.1 Recommendations for future research

This study highlights the need for continued exploration of the role of the DoE in enhancing the wellbeing of teachers working with learners with dyslexia. Based on the findings of the present study, future research should investigate the experiences of district officials and their capacity to provide adequate support to teachers working with learners with dyslexia. A deeper understanding of the roles and responsibilities of district officials and the implications for teacher wellbeing is warranted. Comparative studies across different regions and educational systems can provide valuable insights into best practices and areas that require improvement.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Practising Educational Psychologists

Educational psychologists are pivotal in supporting teachers and learners in inclusive education. To enhance practice in this area, it is recommended that educational psychologists collaborate closely with teachers to develop and implement tailored interventions that address the specific wellbeing needs of teachers working with learners with dyslexia. These interventions should encompass strategies for reducing stress, building resilience, and fostering a positive classroom environment. Educational psychologists should also facilitate workshops and training sessions for teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to support learners with dyslexia effectively. Furthermore, the involvement of educational psychologists should extend to parental guidance, to provide psychoeducation to parents of learners with dyslexia to strengthen the home-school partnership.

5.4.3 Recommendations for policy development

Policy development is instrumental in shaping the educational landscape. DoE policymakers at the district and national levels must acknowledge the importance of teacher wellbeing in dyslexia education and develop practical guidelines on how teachers can access psychological support. Moreover, the striking imbalance between support and the department's expectations inhibits the effective implementation of inclusive education; therefore, policies should be crafted to ensure the effective implementation of psychological and professional support for teachers. This includes allocating training and professional development resources for teachers working with learners with dyslexia. In addition, policy developers should consider reducing the responsibilities of district officials to enable them

to manage and support teachers on a continuous basis. Finally, policymakers should prioritise research-informed decision-making and collaborate with researchers, teachers, and educational psychologists to bridge the gap between policy intentions and on-the-ground support for teachers.

5.5 REFLEXIVITY

Engaging in this research journey as the researcher, a student, and an educational psychologist in training profoundly influenced the lens through which I made sense of the data. As a student, I approached the study with a hunger for learning and a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical curiosity. This allowed me to delve deep into the actual experiences and challenges teachers face in inclusive education, an experience that has been both enlightening and thought-provoking. Simultaneously, being an educational psychologist in training meant I was cognisant of teachers' psychological challenges. This awareness fostered empathy, enabling me to connect deeply with the emotional aspects of their experiences. As revealed during the research, the narratives of the teachers I interviewed became more than data sets. They reflected stories of dedication, resilience, and, in most cases, frustration.

My positioning as a student and an educational psychologist in training created a sense of responsibility, urging me to advocate for teachers' wellbeing using my academic knowledge and the authentic stories unveiled during the research process. This personal connection to the subject matter increased my determination to understand teachers' challenges when working with learners with dyslexia. My position allowed me to view the data through a multidimensional lens; hence, using a conceptual framework was essential to enriching my analysis with theoretical insights and genuine empathy.

Furthermore, reflecting on the application of the methodology, I found that the qualitative approach, particularly through semi-structured interviews, provided a profound understanding of teachers' perceptions of structural support and their wellbeing experiences while working with learners with dyslexia. However, during data analysis, there were moments when I felt that I didn't probe deeply enough to extract the most insightful responses from the participants. This self-awareness became a crucial point of reflection, prompting me to acknowledge the importance of refining my probing techniques for a more in-depth exploration of participants' experiences in future studies. Despite this challenge, adopting the qualitative methodology proved effective in uncovering valuable insights,

emphasising the need for continuous improvement in my interviewing techniques to enhance the depth of understanding in my research endeavours.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study aimed to explore the perceptions of structural support and wellbeing of Grade 7 teachers working with learners with dyslexia. The primary objectives were to understand the nature of structural support, assess teacher wellbeing, and explore the intricate interplay between these aspects. The findings revealed that inadequate support from education districts stood out as a critical concern. Furthermore, teachers' wellbeing emerged as a dialectical phenomenon, with a small number enjoying positive experiences of support while the overwhelming majority of teachers grappled with stress and burnout due to the absence of relevant support. It became evident that structural support emerged as essential to the needs of teachers working with learners with dyslexia, significantly influencing their overall wellbeing. Therefore, it is important to urgently address the identified gaps in structural support to foster an environment where teachers and learners survive and thrive.

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Appendix A: GDE Research Approval letter



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	30 November 2021
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2022– 30 September 2022 2021/366
Name of Researcher:	Ledwaba KS
Address of Researcher:	72 Belle Monte complex Equestria Pretoria
Telephone Number:	082 709 7810
Email address:	<u>ledwabakarabo@yahoo.com</u>
Research Topic:	Structural support to promote the wellbeing of Grade seven teachers working with learners with Dyslexia
Type of qualification	Masters –Learner Support
Number and type of schools:	5 primary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Appendix B: Consent Form for Teachers



Study: Structural Support to promote the wellbeing of Grade Seven Teachers working with Learners with Dyslexia.

Name of the researcher: Karabo Sharon Ledwaba

Faculty: Educational Psychology

Departmental telephone: 012 420 5583

Email: u18234748@tuks.co.za

Supervisor Email: bontle.kgopa@up.ac.za

Co-Supervisor Email: Angelina.wilsonfadiji@up.ac.za

Informed consent for participation in the above-mentioned study.

Dear participant (Teacher)

My name is Karabo Ledwaba, and I am a Master's student at the University of Pretoria, Department of Educational Psychology. I humbly invite you to take part in my research study; the title has been indicated above. The aim of this study is to try and establish the wellbeing experiences of teachers working with learners with dyslexia, as well as the extent of structural support provided to them by the Department of Education, particularly at the district level. The study will be conducted through individual interviews. Therefore, I ask for your permission to allow me to audio record our conversation during the interview.

The interview can take place either virtually or physically. Please note that if you prefer a virtual interview, there are quite a number of online platforms that we can use, and you can choose whichever one you feel comfortable with. However, if you decide that you want to have a face-to-face interview, please note that all the COVID-19 rules and regulations will be observed. This includes, but is not limited to, keeping our masks on for the entire duration of the interview and keeping a safe physical distance between myself as the researcher and you as the participant. This will be done outside working hours to avoid disturbing your work schedule.

I also request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria and, where relevant, project funders. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy agreement applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Lastly, I would like to inform you that there will be no compensation or reimbursement for your participation in my study, as the participation is voluntary. I will, however, ensure that I do not intentionally expose you to any harm, such as distress, embarrassment, or anxiety. However, should you feel distressed during the interview, note that you can immediately withdraw from participating, and with your consent, I will also be able to share with you the contacts of relevant people, such as clinical psychologists from the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), who will be able to assist you at no cost.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research study, please complete the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me or any of my supervisors.

	Yes	No
I hereby confirm that I am participating out of my own free will		
I give my permission for the interview to be taped (audio recorded) to make sure that the information is recorded and written in a detailed and truthful way.		
I give permission for direct quotations from the interview will only be used in a confidential anonymous manner in the write up of the research report should the researcher wish to include them.		
Given the recent COVID-19 pandemic, I will make all attempts to adhere to the government COVID-19 regulations during data collection. In this case, I am open for the possibility that the individual interview take place online.		
I am aware that I may stop the interview at any point and that I may withdraw at any time prior to the write up of the final report with no negative consequences.		
I freely give permission to the researcher and by extension the University of Pretoria to use any data produced, with confidentially to be maintained, for further research purposes.		

I understand further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. (The confidentiality applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.)		
I understand that my real name will not be used to protect my identity.		
I am aware that I may choose not to answer any question I feel uncomfortable with and that I may ask any questions I need to.		
I understand that should I have any questions about this research, I am free to contact the researcher on their provided contact information as provided permission letter.		
I understand that his study will be written up in popular academic domains which will be available online through the university library website. If I wish to receive a summary of this report, I know I can request it from the University of Pretoria repository (as optional to my choice).		

I consent to voluntary participation in this study:

Participant Name and Surname: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer Name and Surname: _____

Interviewer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Name and Surname: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Co-Supervisor Name and Surname: _____

Co-Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Consent by the School Principals



Consent by the Principal

I, _____ (your name), the undersigned, in my capacity as a principal at _____ (name of school), hereby grant permission for Karabo Ledwaba to conduct the above-mentioned research at our institution.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- Voluntary participation* in research, implies that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- Informed consent* means that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- Safety in participation* means that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.
- Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Interview questions for teachers

Section A

Biographic Information

1. What is your highest qualification?
2. Which module/s did you major in during your undergraduate studies?
3. How many years have you been employed as a teacher?
4. Which subjects do you teach in the school?

Section B

Interview Questions

5. Can you tell me what you know about the condition 'Dyslexia'?
 - a. Would you say that you have previously taught or are currently teaching a learner who has this condition? (probe)
6. How has your experience of teaching learners with dyslexia alongside learners without dyslexia been?
 - a. How do you ensure that you accommodate all learners without compromising the standard of assessments?
 - b. Who provided you with the support?
7. Is there enough support provided to enable you to perform well in your duties?
 - a. What makes you say that there is enough/ not enough support?
 - b. Who provides or is supposed to provide you with the support?
8. Can you please describe any nature of support received from the Department of Education (DoE) to support you in working with dyslexia?
9. How does the support received from this entity (DoE) facilitate your teaching and wellbeing experiences while working with these learners?
10. How does the presence or absence of support from the Department of Education affect your performance in teaching learners with dyslexia?
11. Is there any kind of support that you still feel is lacking that can help you in your practice when working with learners with dyslexia in an ordinary classroom?
12. How would you rate your wellbeing? (Probe)
13. Would you like to add, or tell me anything else?

Appendix E: Interview questions for District officials

1. What is your role in providing support for teachers working with learners with dyslexia?
2. What specific kinds of support do you provide to these teachers?
3. How does the support provided facilitate the work of teachers working with learners with dyslexia?
4. What areas of support do you deem necessary but are currently unavailable for the teachers?