BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Title: A framework on the dynamics affecting the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe. A case of Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa.

By

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A dissertation report submitted to the Department of Social Work, Bindura University of Science Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Work Honours Degree.

June 2025

DECLARATION FORM

I Emma Dandadzi **B210671B** studying for the Bachelor of Social Work Honours Degree, hereby declare that this dissertation titled: **A framework on the dynamics affecting the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe. A case of Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa** is my original work and that it has not been copied or lifted from any other source without acknowledgement. I have followed research ethics required in pursuit of Social Work research and I grant permission to the University to use this report for educational purposes.

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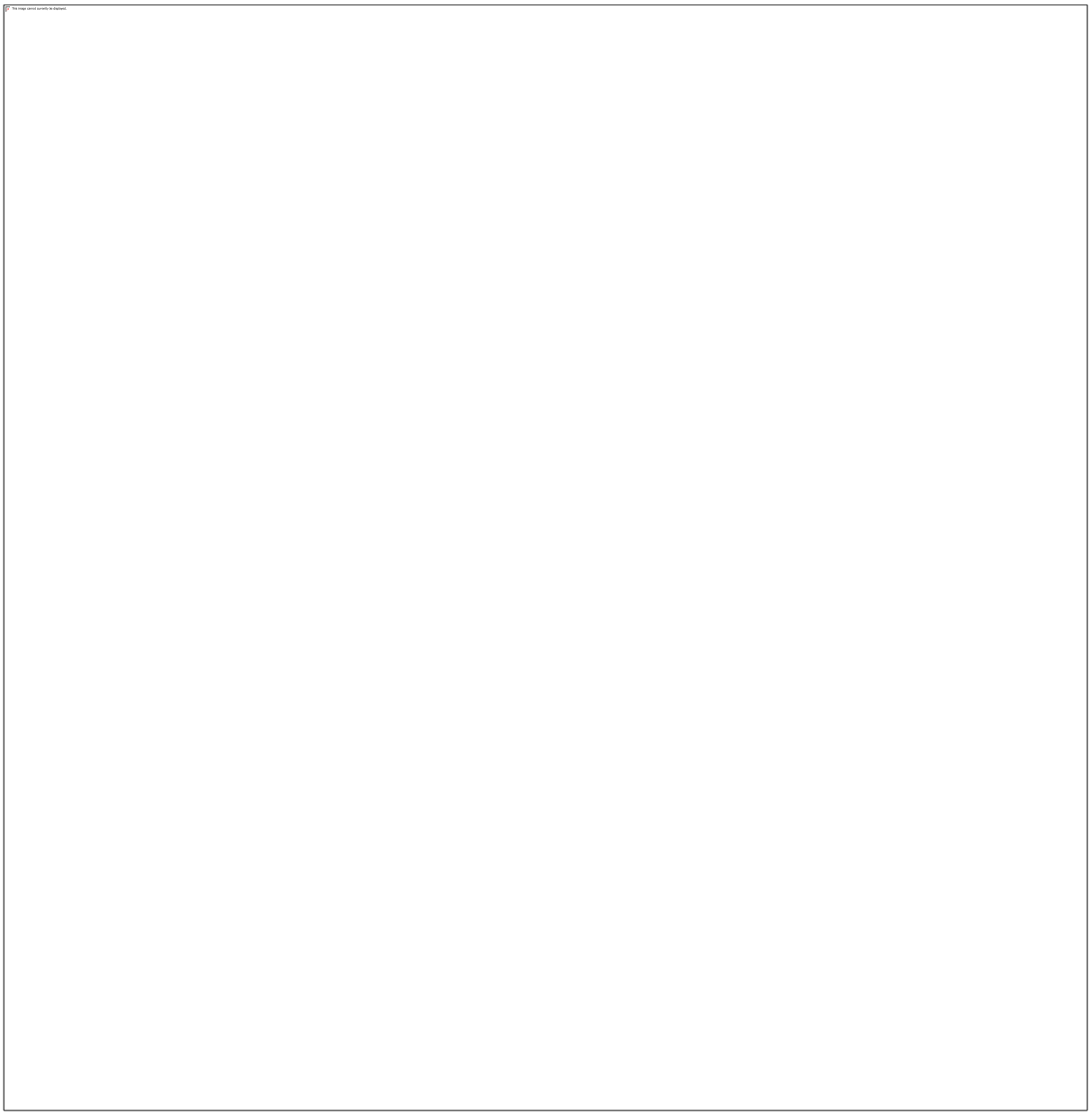

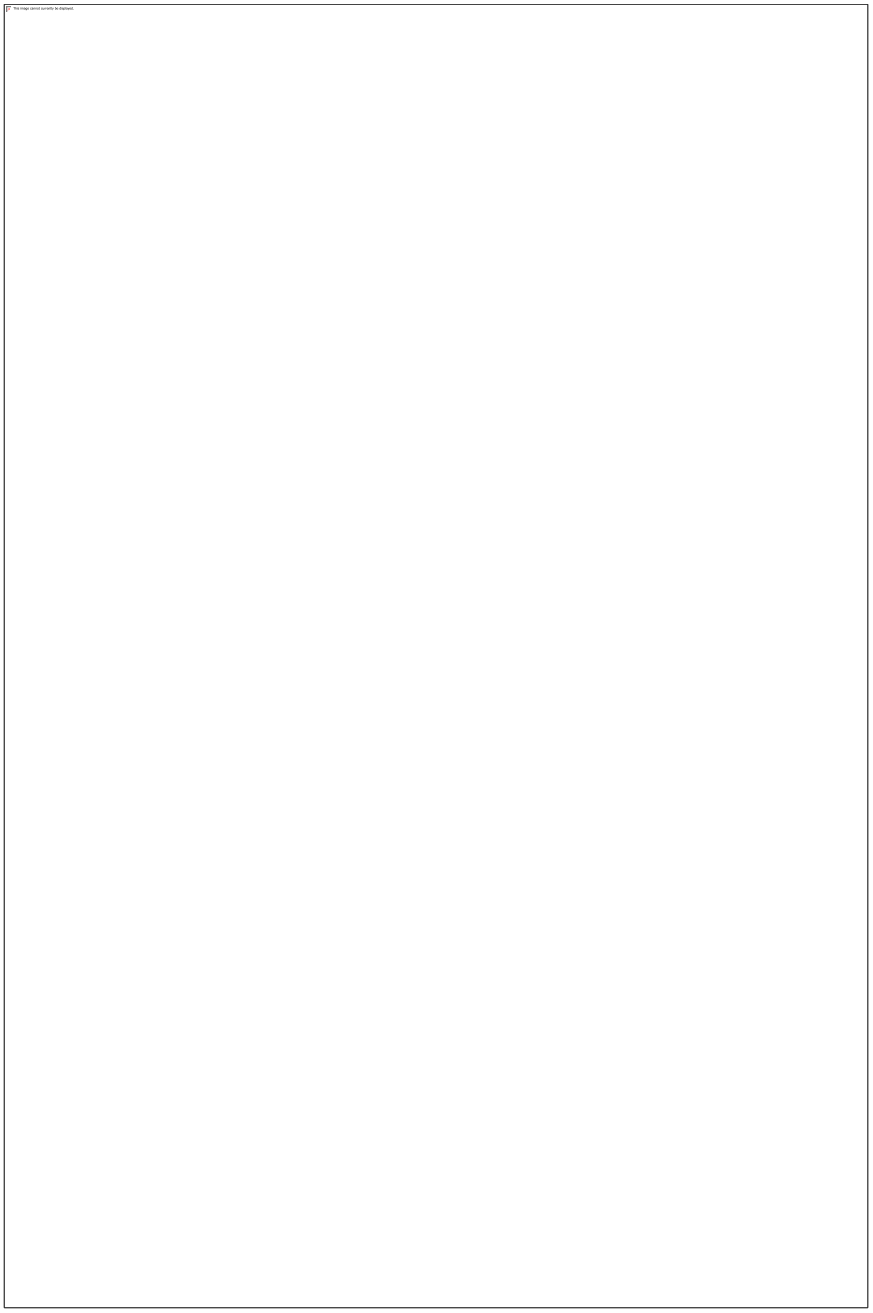

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DEDICATIONS

Special dedications go to the Almighty God for the unlimited grace. To my beloved parents, Joyman and Yvonne Dandadzi, thank you all for the love, inspiration, wise words, comfort and unwavering support. You are my pillar of strength, and you have truly shaped my life.

PLAGIARISM REPORT

MARKING GUIDE

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MARKING GUIDE: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	**Possible Mark**	**Actual Mark**
Abstract	**10**	
Background to the study- what is it that has made you choose this particular topic? Include objectives or purpose of the study	**20**	
Statement of the problem	**10**	
Research questions	**15**	
Assumptions	**5**	
Significance of the study	**15**	
Limitations of the study	**5**	
Delimitations of the study	**5**	
Definition of terms	**10**	
Summary	**5**	
Total	**100**	
Weighted Mark	**15**	

Comments……

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Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction- what do you want to write about in this chapter?	**5**	
Conceptual or theoretical framework	**10**	
Identification, interpretations and evaluation of relevant literature and citations	**40**	
Contextualisation of the literature to the problem	**10**	
Establishing gaps in knowledge and how the research will try to bridge these gaps	**10**	
Structuring and logical sequencing of ideas	**10**	
Discursive skills	**10**	
Summary	**5**	
Total	**100**	
Weighted Mark	**20**	

Comments……

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Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction	**5**	
Research design	**10**	
What instruments are you using to collect data?	**30**	
Population, sample and sampling techniques to be used in the study	**25**	
Procedures for collecting data	**15**	
Data presentation and analysis procedures	**10**	
Summary	**5**	
Total	**100**	
Weighted Mark	**25**	

Comments……

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Chapter 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction	**5**	
Data presentation	**50**	
Is there any attempt to link literature review with new findings	**10**	
How is the new knowledge trying to fill the gaps identified earlier	**10**	
Discursive and analytical skills	**20**	
Summary	**5**	
Total	**100**	
Weighted Mark	**30**	

Comments

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Chapter 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction- focus of the chapter	**5**	
Summary of the whole project including constraints	**25**	
Conclusions- have you come up with answers to the problem under study	**30**	
Recommendations (should be based on findings) Be precise	**30**	
References	**5**	
Appendices i.e., copies of instruments used and any other relevant material	**5**	
Total	**100**	
Weighted mark	**10**	

Comments

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SUMMARY:

	Actual	**Total**
Chapter 1		
Chapter 2		
Chapter 3		
Chapter 4		
Chapter 5		
Total		

LIST OF ACRONYMS

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
ADP	African Disability Protocol
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
ILO	International Labour Organization
LGBTQIA	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Asexual
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme (Australia)
NDSI	National Disability Support Scheme (Australia)
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEN	Special Education Needs
UN	United Nations
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
ZIMCARE	Zimbabwe Cares

ABSTRACT

The research examined the post-educational outcomes of disabled school leavers at Zimcare Trust in Dzivarasekwa, Zimbabwe. Its main goals were to look at these people's educational and social successes, find the things that made it hard for them to get jobs and fit in with society, and suggest a way to help them have better experiences after school. Utilizing the social model of disability and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the research examined the impact of social, economic, and psychological factors on the well-being and integration of graduates from special schools. Data were gathered via in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, utilizing purposive and snowball sampling methods. The participants comprised eight recent disabled school leavers (within five years of graduation), ten parents, and five key stakeholders. The study showed that disabled graduates couldn't fully participate in society and the economy because of problems like not having enough job opportunities, social stigma, and not having enough support systems. Conversely, access to specialized skills training, community support, and inclusive policies was recognized as a vital element fostering favorable outcomes. The study suggested that support systems should be made stronger, that awareness and inclusion should be improved, and that transitional services should be made better to help disabled school leavers integrate into society and be healthier.

Contents

DECLARATION FORM....ii

APRROVAL FORM.... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS....v

DEDICATIONS....vi

PLAGIARISM REPORT....vii

MARKING GUIDE.... viii

LIST OF ACRONYMS....xi

ABSTRACT....xii

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND....1

1.1 Introduction....1

1.2 Background of the Study....1

1.3 Statement of The Problem....3

1.4 Main Aim....4

1.5 Objectives....4

1.6 Research Questions....4

1.7 Assumptions....4

1.9 Significance of the Study....5

1.9 Limitation of the Study....5

1.10 Delimitations of the Study....6

1.11 Definition of Key Terms....6

1.12 Research Ethics....6

1.12.1 Informed consent:....7

1.12.2 Confidentiality:....7

1.12.3 Minimizing Harm....7

1.12.4 Right to Withdraw....7

1.13 Outline of the Study 7
1.14 Chapter Summary 8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 9
2.1 Introduction 9
2.2 Disability Concept 9
2.3 Intersectionality- A Conceptual Model of Disability 10
2.4 Theoretical Framework 10
2.4.1 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs 10
2.4.2 Social Model of Disability 12
2.5 Post-Academic Outcomes of School Leavers with Disability 13
2.5.1 Employment Access 14
2.5.2 Social inclusion and independent living 14
2.5.3 Discrimination 15
2.5.4 Access to resources 16
2.5.5 Poverty 16
2.6 Barriers That Hinder the Post-Academic Success of Disabled School Leavers 17
2.6.1 Inadequate Transition Planning 17
2.6.2 Limited Access to Post-Secondary Education 18
2.6.3 Unemployment and Underemployment 18
2.6.4 Inadequate Support Services 19
2.6.5 Stigma and Discrimination 20
2.6.6 Lack of Access to Assistive Technology 20
2.6.7 Inadequate Family and Community Support 21
2.7 Support Frameworks and Support Systems for School Leavers with Disability 21
2.7.1 Transition Planning 21
2.7.2 Positive Behavioural Supports 22
2.7.3 Post-School Planning 22
2.7.4 Family and Community Engagement 23

2.7.5 Person-Centered Planning 24
2.7.6 Technology-Based Supports 24
2.8 Policies or Acts That Support the Empowerment of People with Disability. 25
2.8.1 United Nations Convection on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) 25
2.8.2 The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDSI) in Australia 27
2.8.3 African Disability Protocol (ADP) 27
2.8.4 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development 28
2.8.5 Disability Rights Bill in South Africa 28
2.8.6 The Disability Act of 1992 29
2.8.7 The National Disability Policy of 2020 29
2.9 Chapter Summary 30
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 31
3.0 Introduction 31
3.1 Research Philosophy 31
3.2 Research Approach 31
3.3 Research Design 31
3.4 Study Setting 32
3.5 Target Population 32
3.6 Sample Size 32
3.7 Sampling Techniques 33
3.7.1 Purposive Sampling 33
3.7.2 Snowball Sampling 33
3.8 Data Collection Techniques and Tools 33
3.8.1 In-depth interviews 34
3.8.2 Focus group discussions 34
3.8.3 Document Analysis 35
3.9 Data Collection Procedures 35

3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation 36
3.11 Data Analysis Techniques 36
3.11.1 Thematic Analysis 36
3.12 Validity and Reliability 38
3.13 Limitations of the Study 38
3.14 Delimitations of the Study 38
3.15 Ethical Considerations 39
3.15.1 Respect for Autonomy and Informed Consent 39
3.15.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity 39
3.15.3 Non-maleficence and avoiding harm 39
3.15.4 Justice and Fairness 40
3.16 Assumptions 40
3.17 Chapter Summary 41
CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS 42
4.0 Introduction 42
4.1 Qualitative Data Presentation 42
4.2 Information on the participants' demographics 43
4.2.1 The demographic data of the primary respondents 43
FIG 4.2.2 Demographic, Information of Key Informants 45
4.3: The Post-Academic Outcomes of School Leavers with Disabilities 46
4.3.1: Employment 46
4.3.2: Access to education and training 48
4.3.2: Access to education and training 49
4.3.3 Community Engagement 49
4.3.4 Living on your own 50
4.4: Obstacles That Interfere with the Post-Academic Progress Of Disabled School Leavers 51
4.4.1 Lack of policy and legislative support 51

4.4.2 Negative effects of stereotyping and stigma 53
4.4.3: Limited access to assistive technology and resources 54
4.4.4: Physical and informational barriers to accessibility 55
4.4.5: Limited availability of support services 56
4.4.6: Inadequate transition planning and support 57
4.4.7: Intersectional barriers and experiences 58
4.5: Post Academic Outcomes for Disability School Leavers Framework 59
4.6.1: Access to career guidance and mentorship 60
4.6. 2: Transition planning and support 60
4.6.3: Training and awareness about disability 61
4.6.4 Stakeholder Engagement 62
4.7 Chapter Summary 63
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 65
5.0 Introduction 65
5.1 Summary of Findings 65
5.1.1: The Post-Academic Outcomes of School Leavers with Disabilities 65
5.1.2: Challenges That Hinder the Post-Academic Success of Disabled School Leavers. 66
5.1.3: Framework to Support Post Academic Outcomes for Disability School Leavers 66
5.2 Conclusions of the Findings 67
5.3: Implications to the Social Work Practice 67
5.4: Recommendations 68
Fig 5.4.1 Collaborative Care Framework on The Dynamics Affecting the Post-Academic Outcomes of Disabled School Leavers in Zimbabwe (CCF-DSLZ) 70
5.5: Areas of Further Study 72
5.6: Chapter Summary: 72
REFERENCES 73
APPENDIX 1: APPROVAL LETTER ix

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM.....x

APPENDEX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRIMARY RESPONDENTS.....xi

APPENDIX 4: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS OR GURDIANS ON THE DYNAMICS AFFECTING THE POST-ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF DISABLED SCHOOL LEAVERS IN ZIMBABWE.....xii

APPENDIX 5: GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH IDENTIFIED KEY STAKEHOLDERS xiv

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The transition to post academic life is an important phase for all young adults. It, however, presents unique challenges for school leavers with disabilities in Zimbabwe. Despite the country's commitment to inclusive education and the underlining principle of 'Education for All,' many disabled school leavers often face significant barriers that hinder their ability to achieve satisfactory post academic outcomes. This study examines the factors affecting post-academic outcomes of school leavers with disability in Zimbabwe through the case study of ZimCare Trust in Dzivarasekwa. Accordingly, the current chapter creates the foundation and set path for the study by discussing the background of the study, the problem statement, the aims, set objectives and the research questions. The chapter also provides the significance of the study, delimitations as well as well as limitations to the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Disability and disabled learners' definition are broad and vague concepts. They are mostly determined by the context and reason for their use. In this research paper, however, disability and disabled learners will be defined as follows: WHO (2023) asserts that a disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world? People with disabilities constitute approximately 15% of the world's population, a rising figure compared to the 10% prevalence rate estimated in the 1970s (WHO, 2021). Bill Watch (2024) noted that the prevalence of disability in Zimbabwe is estimated to be 15% according to the Zimbabwe 2022 Population and Housing Census Report. This translates to 1.44 million of the 15.18 million population; a significant number of the population (ZimStat, 2022)

Globally, the percentage of disabled individuals who are employed remains very low as compared to their non-disabled peers. Estimates by the World Health Organization (2011) put approximately 15% of the world's population in the bracket of people living with some form of disability. However, the disabled often face barriers in accessing education and employment opportunities. This background has led to joint international efforts to address the issue. Member states adopted a framework advocating for inclusivity in education and the workforce and other rights that provide the disabled with equal opportunities known as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006 (United Nation,

2006). The convention indicates that there is a need to ensure that individuals with disabilities can fully participate in their communities and enjoy equal opportunities. However, despite such frameworks, global statistics indicate that disabled individuals are often excluded from quality education, leading to high unemployment rates and social marginalization (UNICEF, 2018).

Post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers are influenced by many factors including societal attitudes, parental support, access to vocational training and discrimination in employment (OECD, 2020). Recent studies in developed nations have shown that inclusive educational practices and proactive support systems enhance the transition of disabled learners into meaningful employment (Wehman et al., 2020). This background shows why the African Union has made commendable strides toward promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. A directional framework that was created by the Union known as the African Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stands as evidence to this progress. However, challenges such as insufficient funding for education tailored to disabled individuals, inadequate infrastructure and social stigma remain prevalent on the continent of Africa as adherence levels to the protocol among member states vary (African Union, 2018).

The disabled in the Southern African region are also at risk from socio-economic factors, cultural attitudes, and inadequate policy frameworks that expose them to low employment opportunities. A report by the African Union (2020) reveals that the employment rate for disabled individuals in Africa is significantly lower than the global average. Many Southern African countries lack support systems for the integration of the disabled into the workforce. In light of this background, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has recognized the need for regional cooperation to address these disparities. SADC seeks to promote initiatives that enhance the employability of disabled individuals through education and vocational training (SADC, 2025). Zimbabwe has also made strides in establishing policy tools aimed at protecting the rights of disabled individuals. Examples of such policies in Zimbabwe include the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1996 and the National Disability Policy of 2013. Implementation, however, remains incomplete (Mavhu and Chikunda, 2020). The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat, 2022) reports that the unemployment rate among disabled individuals is as high as 80%.

Zimcare Trust serves as a case study to explore these dynamics. As a non-governmental organization located in Dzivarasekwa, Harare, striving to improve the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, the organization has dedicated itself to improve the

quality of life for disabled individuals through educational support and advocacy. The Trust focuses on empowering youth through skills training and employment placement services. Its efforts are in alignment with the national mandate to promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for disabled individuals. However, evidence suggests that even with such interventions, many disabled school leavers struggle to secure meaningful employment or engage in professional development opportunities. The issue is compounded by a lack of collaboration between educational institutions, vocational training centers, and the private sector in creating a seamless pathway for disabled school leavers (Mawere, 2021).

The intersection of socio-economic factors, educational barriers, and institutional frameworks creates a complex environment that impacts the transition outcomes for disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe. Studies indicate that disabled youth often experience a lack of tailored career guidance, limited access to information about available opportunities, and insufficient support from educational institutions (Mavhunga & Chikoko, 2019). These challenges necessitate a framework that not only addresses the educational needs of disabled individuals but also facilitates their transition into meaningful employment.

Understanding the dynamics affecting the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers is crucial for developing effective interventions. This study aims to explore these dynamics within the context of Zimcare Trust, focusing on the experiences and barriers faced by disabled youth in Dzivarasekwa. By examining the interplay of global, regional, and national factors, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, ultimately informing policy recommendations and practical solutions.

1.3 Statement of The Problem

Despite the increasing efforts to promote inclusive education in Zimbabwe, school leavers with disability continue to face significant barriers that hinder their post-academic success, transitioning to employment and integrating into society. In particular, at Batsirai Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific challenges these individuals encounter, including low academic achievement, inadequate support services, limited access to resources, limited employment opportunities and societal stigma. Existing research in Zimbabwe has focused primarily on the challenges faced by students with disabilities, but there is a lack of a comprehensive framework that address the specific needs of disabled school leavers, particularly in transition to post-school life. This

means that there is an urgent need to investigate the post-academic performance of disabled learners and the factors contributing to their challenges to effectively coin robust intervention and support framework.

1.4 Main Aim

The main aim of the research is to investigate the social integration and overall well-being of school leavers with disabilities who attended special schools using a case study of Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa. The research will explore potential benefits and challenges associated with specialized schools for individuals with disability with a focus on identifying factors that contribute to positive outcomes and areas that may require improvement.

1.5 Objectives

1. To assess the post-academic outcomes of school leavers with disabilities.
2. To assess barriers that hinder the post-academic success of disabled school leavers, as well as the transition to employment and integration into society.
3. To establish a support framework towards the improvement of post academic outcomes for disabled school leavers.

1.6 Research Questions

This study is premised on the following research questions:

i. What are the post-educational outcomes for school leavers with disabilities?
ii. What are the barriers that hinder the post-academic success of disabled school leavers in transitioning to employment and integration into society?
iii. What are the frameworks and support systems in place to protect and cushion them in the post-academic phase and how effective are they?

1.7 Assumptions

The research study will be based on the following assumptions:

i. The disabled school leavers face specific barriers that affect their post academic outcomes, including but not limited to social stigma, lack of accessibility and inadequate support services.
ii. Support systems including family, community organizations and government initiatives play a crucial role in shaping the outcomes of disabled school leavers after leaving school.

iii. Societal attitudes towards disability impact the opportunities available to disabled individuals, including employment, further education and inclusion in community activities.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform and enhance the post-educational outcomes of disabled school leavers at Zimcare Trust in Dzivarasekwa. The research shall identify the specific challenges these individuals face in the post-academic phase. The research will also provide invaluable insight that will guide policymakers in developing more effective inclusion strategies and support services for post-academic disabled learners. Additionally, the findings will raise awareness among educational stakeholders as families, teachers, disabled learner institutions and the broader community; critical towards fostering a culture of understanding and inclusivity. Ultimately this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on disability and education in Zimbabwe, empowering various stakeholders of disability and education in Zimbabwe. The research shall also advocate for the rights to equitable post-academic opportunities and improved quality of life.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

The study on the dynamics affecting the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, particularly through the lens of Zimcare Trust in Dzivarasekwa, faces several limitations that may impact the comprehensiveness and generalizability of its findings. Firstly, the research relies heavily on qualitative methods, which, while rich in depth, may introduce bias and subjectivity in interpreting the personal experiences of disabled individuals (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, limited access to a representative sample of disabled school leavers might result in skewed data, as those connected with Zimcare Trust may have different experiences compared to their peers from other institutions or communities (Mujere & Nyoni, 2016). Furthermore, the socio-economic and political context in Zimbabwe, such as economic instability and inadequate support systems, might complicate the application of findings beyond the specific case studied, as these factors could significantly influence the outcomes for disabled individuals (Chitereka, 2007). Finally, the potential for evolving dynamics in the educational policies and societal attitudes towards disability over time poses a challenge for the longitudinal relevance of the study's conclusions.

1.10 Delimitations of the Study

The study could focus specifically on the experiences of school leavers associated with Zimcare Trust, thus narrowing its scope to a distinct population that may not represent the broader community of disabled individuals in Zimbabwe. This targeted approach allows for a more in-depth examination of unique challenges and opportunities faced by these individuals; however, findings might be generalizable to disabled school leavers outside the Zimcare Trust context or those who attend different educational institutions. Furthermore, the study could limit its timeframe to post-graduation outcomes within a specific number of years particularly recent 5 years to ensure that the data collected reflects recent challenges and dynamics affecting this demographic (Chitereka, 2008). This focus could yield vital insights relevant to policy-making, but it may overlook long-term outcomes that extend further than the chosen timeframe.

1.11 Definition of Key Terms

- **Disability**

A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world (WHO, 2023).

- **Post-Academic Outcomes**

Post-academic outcomes refer to the various results achieved by individuals after completing their formal education, including employment status, further education, vocational training, and socioeconomic integration. These outcomes signal the efficacy of educational systems in preparing individuals for life after school (Schmid et al, 2016).

- **Child**

A child means any person under the age of 18 years (Children's Act Chapter One (Act No 38) of 2005).

1.12 Research Ethics

According to Bos (2020), ethics refers to an inquiry into what is right and wrong, and what researchers ought to do. Ethical considerations are crucial in conducting research particularly when involving vulnerable populations as individuals with disabilities. Ethical considerations can be defined as principles and standards that guide behavior and decision-making in various contexts. Beauchamp and Childress (2013), highlight the necessity of obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, striving to minimize any potential harm and the right to withdraw.

1.12.1 Informed consent:

Informed consent involves ensuring that participants fully understand the nature of the research, what their participation entails and any potential risks involved. The researcher is going to use accessible language and provide information in multiple formats for instance written and verbal to accommodate different needs. According to Beauchamp and Childress (2013), informed consent is a cornerstone of ethical research, practices, emphasizing that participants should voluntarily agree to participate based on adequate information.

1.12.2 Confidentiality:

The researcher is going to protect the privacy of participants by ensuring that their identities and personal information remain confidential. As noted by McLaughlin (2009), maintaining confidentiality is crucial for building trust between researchers and participants which is important for collecting data.

1.12.3 Minimizing Harm

The researcher will have an ethical obligation to minimize any potential physical, emotional or psychological harm that may arise during the study. The researcher will provide support resources such as counselling sessions for participants who may experience distress. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) argue that the principle of do no harm is essential in research ethics, particularly for vulnerable populations.

1.12.4 Right to Withdraw

The researcher is going to inform participants about their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing negative consequences. The researcher is going to clearly communicate the right to withdraw at the beginning of the study and remind participants throughout the research process. This will ensure participants to feel empowered to make choices about their involvement. Israel and Hay (2006) emphasize that the right to withdraw is crucial for ethical research practices, allowing participants to maintain control over their participation.

1.13 Outline of the Study

- **Chapter 1 <u>Overview of the study</u>**

This is the first segment of the research. It provides the background to the study, the study aims and objectives, the problem statement, assumptions of the study, definition of key terms justification of the study, limitation as well as the research ethics.

- **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

The chapter comprises of a presentation of other researchers on the dynamics affecting the post academic outcomes of school leavers with disability as channeled by the study objectives addressing them from a local, regional and global perspective. The theoretical framework of the study is also placed in this chapter.

- **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

The chapter provides the methodology that was utilized by this study. It deliberates the study approach, study population, research design, sample and sampling procedures and ethical considerations.

- **Chapter 4 Presentations of findings, interpretation and discussions of findings**

The chapter focuses much on the presentation of the study findings and discussions resulting from the data that was collected within the setting of the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework of the study.

- **Chapter 5 Summary, conclusions and recommendations**

The chapter encompasses of the closing remarks of the study. It delivers the summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

1.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the study's history, problem description, aims, research questions, assumptions, constraints, delimitation, research ethics and description of key words.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines existing material regarding the post-academic results of school leavers with disabilities, the obstacles that impede their post-academic achievement, and the frameworks aimed at enhancing their circumstances. This chapter will also explain the study's conceptual model and theoretical foundation.

2.2 Disability Concept

The understanding of disability has changed a lot in the last fifty years. It transitioned from paradigms centred on individual disability to frameworks emphasising societal impediments and human rights (Lawson & Beckett, 2021). Historically, the prevailing medical model perceived disability as a personal misfortune arising from physical or cognitive impairments inherent to the individual. The concept viewed disability as an anomaly requiring correction or rehabilitation (Pérez Dalmeda & Chhabra, 2019). The view that handicap was the same as a bodily condition was common until the middle of the 20th century. It resulted in institutionalisation and paternalism (Zaks, 2023). The advent of the social model, originating in the UK and the US, contested this perspective. A fundamental aspect of this concept was a the redefinition of disability. For the first time disability was viewed not as an individual deficiency but as the result of socially created impediments (Lawson & Beckett, 2021). This paradigm shift moved the "problem" from the person to society. The cultural model builds on the social model and sees disability as an identity that is shaped by cultural stories, symbols, and power relationships. These concepts have a substantial impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities (Zaks, 2023). For instance, studies conducted in Kenya indicate that public attitudes of disability are influenced by factors including religious beliefs, concepts of "difference," and visibility through assistive technologies (Barbareschi et al., 2021). These beliefs can result in stigma and discrimination, and in turn, the restriction of the disabled to access to opportunities (Barbareschi et al., 2021).

The understanding of disability is changing quickly as academics and governments try to figure out how to deal with it as a problem that has to be solved. The biosocial integrative approach has recently arisen as a novel concept, examining the interplay among health disorders, individual variables, and environmental contexts (Pérez Dalmeda & Chhabra, 2019).

International treaties and declarations have altered the understanding of disability. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, for example, makes it clear that disability is a matter of equality, non-discrimination, and intrinsic dignity. It calls for the elimination of societal obstacles and ensures the complete inclusion of individuals with disabilities (Perez Dalmeda & Chhabra, 2019)

2.3 Intersectionality- A Conceptual Model of Disability

Conventional frameworks for comprehending disability, including the medical and social models, have historically overlooked the intricate interactions between disability and other identities marginalised by race, gender, and sexuality (Lawson & Beckett, 2021). In actuality, disability is not a singular experience. Brinkman et al. (2022) assert that racism, ableism, and sexism constitute interrelated systems of power that influence disparities in health, social services, and policy. This is evident in healthcare in Western countries, where Black women with disabilities experience a significant reduction in care services relative to other demographics due to intersecting racial and gender discrimination (Warner & Brown, 2020). In essence, intersectionality elucidates the inseparability of disability from other social identities; it investigates how intersecting identities generate distinct forms of disadvantage or privilege (Thomas et al. 2023). For instance, in child welfare systems, parents with disabilities from racialised communities endure excessive scrutiny, not just because of ableism but also due to institutional biases that equate disability with parental incompetence while concurrently racializing risk (Thomas et al., 2023). This transitions methods from static classifications to dynamic interactions, shows how poverty imposes limitations on access to accommodations, or the exacerbated stigma faced by LGBTQIA+ adolescents with disabilities in foster care (Thomas et al., 2023; Warner & Brown, 2011).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The research employs the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs and the social model of disability as frameworks for examining the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, with a specific emphasis on disabled students at Zimcare Trust in Dzivarasekwa.

2.4.1 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs illustrates that motivation is a pyramidal and hierarchical psychological construct comprising, in order of significance, physiological needs, safety needs, love/belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). The idea is that people put their physiological and safety demands, such pay and job stability, at the top of their

list of priorities. At the summit of this pyramid are social, esteem, and self-actualization demands, which are frequently signs of belonging and success. Lower-level priorities must be met before higher-level goals may motivate behaviour (Robbins & Judge, 2022). The theory is pertinent to the present study as the hierarchy of needs is generally applicable to those with disabilities, who share identical underlying physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization wants as those without disabilities (Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020).

However, how these needs are satisfied often changes because of physical, sensory, or cognitive limitations that make it necessary to have support systems that are adapted to each person's needs. Ljubičić et al. (2023) conducted a study indicating that although all persons do not require aid in tasks such as eating or hygiene, individuals with impairments may necessitate adaptive tools, environmental alterations, or carer support to attain these objectives (Zhang et al., 2022). This means that nurses and carers need to understand this difference because the needs of both disabled and non-disabled people, as well as people with varied disabilities, are the same, but the approaches to meet those needs are different (Ljubičić et al., 2023).

For school leavers with impairments, it is important to meet their fundamental physiological needs, such as access to basic health care, enough food, and mobility aids (Gréaux et al., 2023). People with disabilities who don't have enough healthcare may have long-term discomfort or disease, which can make it hard for them to focus on their personal growth, work, going back to school, and making friends. Given the historical stigmas associated with disabilities in Zimbabwe, it is imperative to address safety needs, encompassing both physical safety and emotional assistance in educational and social settings, to empower these individuals (Mashanyare et al, 2025). It is important to meet these levels of need for disabled leavers to move on to more difficult goals, as esteem and self-actualization, the top levels of Maslow's hierarchy, become more important (Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020). Needs for esteem include being recognised, respected, and feeling good about oneself. These are often compromised for disabled individuals due to society beliefs and the challenges these perceptions may create for them.

Vocational training and awareness campaigns are two examples of initiatives that can help close the respect gap by getting people in the community to recognise the skills and contributions of disabled people (Mashanyare, Garutsa, & Odhav, 2025). These school graduates are more likely to look for jobs that match their abilities and interests now that their self-esteem is higher. This helps them reach their full potential and become who they really

are. Thus, acknowledging the interdependence of these requirements is essential for formulating effective interventions that might beneficially influence the post-academic trajectories of impaired youth (Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020).

2.4.2 Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability asserts that disability arises from societal barriers and not individual impairments (Mladenov, 2022; Otieno, 2023). This model was pioneered by disability activists and scholars like Oliver (1990) to distinguish between physical, sensory or cognitive impairment and disability as a matter of the exclusion and disadvantage caused by inaccessible environments, discriminatory attitudes and oppressive social structures (Mladenov, 2022). The model shifts responsibility from the disabled individuals needing to be cured or fixed to a society with negative perceptions requiring transformation that eliminates barriers. These barriers are physical, for instance, stairs without ramps, institutional biases such as segregated education, and stigmatising attitudes (Chalise, 2024). This perspective is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which frames disability as resulting from interactions between impairments and social barriers (Mladenov, 2022)

The social model directly informs inclusive practices, particularly in education and policy. In education, it rejects segregated "special needs" approaches and advocates for inclusive systems where barriers like rigid curricula, inaccessible facilities, or ableist teaching methods are removed (Chalise, 2024). For example, inclusive education under this model advocates for Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which provides multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to accommodate all learners (Chalise, 2024, p. 4). The model also advocated for independent living, where support such as personal assistance is structured to leave room for autonomy and choice for disabled individuals. This contrasts with paternalistic care, which imposes control (Mladenov, 2022). However, while the social model seeks to instigate a societal change, it does not dismiss medical needs; instead, it argues that medical interventions address impairments, whereas disability requires social justice solutions (Mladenov, 2022; Otieno, 2023).

2.4.2.1 Relevance of the Social model of disability to the study

The social model of disability posits that disability is primarily a socially imposed limitation rather than an inherent physical or mental limitation (Oliver, 1996). It reveals that societal barriers such as physical, attitudinal, systematic are the real culprits behind the disadvantages

faced by disabled individuals. Instead of focusing on the individual's impairments, this model encourages a critical examination of external factors that contribute to their marginalisation.

In the Zimbabwean context, particularly in urban settings like Dzivarasekwa, the experiences of disabled school leavers are shaped significantly by societal attitudes and structural deficiencies. Access to education, employment and community participation is often hindered by negative perceptions and inadequate policies that do not cater to the needs of disabled individuals (Wright, 2014). By applying the social model, this study seeks to reveal how systemic inadequacies, societal stigma, and economic barriers affect the transition of these individuals from academic environments to the workforce.

Understanding the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers at Zimcare Trust can be enriched by the social model of disability. The study will investigate the key factors such as:

1. **Employment opportunities:** how societal attitudes towards disability affect job availability and empower perceptions.
2. **Access to resources:** the extent which disabled individuals have access to vocational training, mentorship and support networks.
3. **Community support:** the role of organizations like Zimcare Trust in mitigating the impact of societal barriers and facilitating smoother transitions into adulthood.
4. **Policy environment:** examination of governmental and legislative frameworks that either support or hinder the integration of disabled individuals into the labor market.

By exploring these dynamics through the lens of social model of disability. The study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers faced by disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe and highlight the necessary interventions needed to improve their life outcomes post-education.

2.5 Post-Academic Outcomes of School Leavers with Disability

The post-academic results for school leavers with disabilities constitute a significant domain of investigation, especially as society confronts issues of inclusivity and equity in education. Recent research (Glass, 2023; Witham, 2023) shows that people with disabilities experience specific problems that make it much harder for them to move from school to job and get involved in their communities. The progression of inclusive education policies has been crucial in influencing these outcomes; yet, obstacles remain that impede successful integration into both the labour market and social domains. As young school leavers manage the complexity of post-academic schooling, employment options, and independent living, the absence of a

supportive network can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and undermine their overall well-being. Recent scholarship (Papadopoulos, 2024; Tso, 2023)

2.5.1 Employment Access

Employment continues to provide a considerable difficulty for individuals with disabilities due to widespread stigma, inaccessible workplaces, discriminatory policies, and societal obstacles. Women with disabilities experience intersectional discrimination, wherein gender biases exacerbate difficulties associated with their disabilities (Neube et al., 2023). They have trouble getting an education and job training, which makes it harder for them to get formal jobs (Neube et al., 2023). Consequently, individuals frequently find themselves confined to informal sectors, such as street vending or begging, due to inaccessible workplaces and societal views (Neube et al., 2023). Chikuta's (2022) research on Zimbabwe's hotel industry revealed that individuals with disabilities experience near-total exclusion, primarily due to employers' erroneous beliefs on their physical fitness for demanding positions. Workers in this field sometimes worry about the expenses of making workplaces accessible for people with disabilities, even if these worries are not based on facts (Chikuta et al., 2022). These beliefs exemplify a charity model of disability, perceiving individuals with impairments as burdens rather than competent employees (Chikuta et al., 2022).

In Zimbabwe, cultural beliefs link disability to "curses or punishment" (Chikuta et al., 2022), which makes people feel even more excluded. Even while there are laws, including Zimbabwe's Disabled Persons Act (1992), that protect people with disabilities, they are not always enforced. For example, the Public Service Commission's demand for mental and physical health makes it harder for people with disabilities to get jobs in the government (Neube et al., 2023). The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) could help break down barriers with the use of assistive technologies. However, if proactive inclusion policies are not put in place, it could make disparities worse. For example, women with disabilities are still under-represented in STEM disciplines and digital economy (Neube et al., 2023). To make real change, we need to break down mental barriers, make sure that rules are fair, and use technology to make sure that everyone has equal access (Otieno, 2023).

2.5.2 Social inclusion and independent living

According to a report from the Global Disability Summit (2025), people with disabilities have an employment rate that is 25–30 percentage points lower than that of those without disabilities around the world. This big gap in Africa is thought to cost the economy from 2% to 3.5% of

its Gross Domestic Product (Global Disability Summit, 2025). Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) says that independent living is a right. To make this happen, we need to break down institutional dependencies through deinstitutionalisation, make community-based services easier to get to, and protect personal autonomy with things like supported decision-making (European Commission, 2022).

UNICEF's technical and financial support was very helpful in creating the National Disability Policy (2021) in Zimbabwe. The goal of the policy is to make housing, education, and infrastructure accessible to everyone so that people may live independently (UNICEF, 2023). Ndlovu and Mudzingwa (2022) say that this is not a long-term solution, though. The scalability of efforts like as assistive-technology distribution and inclusive cash transfers is constrained by fragmented coordination and dependence on external finance (Ndlovu & Mudzingwa, 2022). As a result, people with disabilities in Zimbabwe still face barriers to social inclusion, such as stigma, infrastructure that is hard to get to, and policies that are not being followed properly. This is despite the fact that there are progressive laws like the National Disability Policy (2021) and Section 22 of the Constitution, which says that everyone should be treated equally and with dignity (UNICEF, 2023). Negative social beliefs, such as attributing disability to spirituality and gender discrimination, frequently result in invisibility, hindering access to education, healthcare, and community engagement (Ndhlovu & Mudzingwa, 2022). In response, UNICEF Zimbabwe has championed rights-based approaches in accordance with the CRPD, endorsing community-based initiatives like youth ambassador programs and carer support groups that confront stigma and foster participatory inclusion in social services (European Commission, 2022; UNICEF, 2023).

2.5.3 Discrimination

Individuals with disabilities, especially those recently moving from educational environments, face a challenging landscape of discrimination, even with legislative progress across the globe (Global Disability Summit, 2025). Graduates with disabilities often confront obstacles that impede their career development and integration into the workforce. Upon entering the job market, these individuals frequently experience marginalisation due to their underrepresentation in leadership roles and the absence of necessary accommodations (Chalise, 2024). Chikuta et al's (2022) study on the Zimbabwean hotel industry concluded that this marginalisation is not just anecdotal; it is reinforced by widespread stereotypes that diminish their skills and potential for career progression. The implications are significant: numerous disabled employees express feelings of being overlooked or excluded in discussions affecting

their professional lives, leading to frustration and disengagement. Moreover, their limited access to professional growth opportunities exacerbates these issues, making it difficult for them to navigate workplace dynamics (Chikuta et al, 2022). The culture within many organisations often showcases an exclusionary stance on disability inclusion, fostering an environment where noticeable disparities in salaries and benefits persist.

2.5.4 Access to resources

A systematic review of literature on post academic education and disability reveals a notable increase in enrollment among disabled students, yet it underscores persistent challenges regarding resource accessibility (Madaus, 2024). Barriers to educational resources remain a primary concern; disabled students often encounter difficulties navigating complex systems designed to provide support (Witham, 2023). Mills (2023) highlighted that the availability of assistive technology is a crucial aspect that warrants attention, given its potential to enhance accessibility in workplaces and wider community resources. Also, the absence of mental health resources and counseling play an indispensable role in supporting the emotional well-being of these individuals during a time marked by significant change (Mills, 2023).

2.5.5 Poverty

Poverty worsens the educational and social exclusion of disabled learners through creating a cyclical relationship where disability increases vulnerability to poverty, and poverty, in turn, limits access to essential services and opportunities (Kim et al, 2021). In developing contexts like India, barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, discriminatory attitudes, and insufficient policy implementation prevent meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and employment. For instance, only 34 lakh of 1.34 crore employable people with disabilities in India have jobs, reflecting an unemployment rate exceeding 70%, often due to inaccessible workplaces and a lack of accommodations (Sarkar & Parween, 2021). Educational exclusion is particularly acute: children with disabilities face enrollment rates 10 times lower than non-disabled peers, with high dropout rates driven by factors like socioeconomic status, rural-urban divides, and rigid curricula. This exclusion perpetuates poverty, as limited education restricts future economic participation and reinforces social marginalisation (Sarkar & Parween, 2021).

In high-poverty U.S. schools, interventions for students with disabilities often fail to address systemic resource gaps, leading to inequitable outcomes. Research evaluating 18 school-based interventions reveals a predominant focus on language and literacy skills, neglecting broader

structural issues like underfunding, teacher shortages, and cultural insensitivity (Kim et al., 2021). For example, while programs like dialogic reading or phonemic awareness curricula showed positive individual results, they were undermined by inadequate staffing, high student-to-psychologist ratios, and a lack of culturally responsive practices. Consequently, students in under-resourced settings experience lower academic achievement and higher segregation, as schools cannot provide evidence-based supports or inclusive placements. For this reason, disabled students in Zimbabwe are confined to theoretical aspects of skills that they may not practically apply later, thus hindering their economic independence (Mukurazhizha et al, 2022).

2.6 Barriers That Hinder the Post-Academic Success of Disabled School Leavers

2.6.1 Inadequate Transition Planning

Inadequate transition planning from school to post-school life is a significant barrier to success for disabled school leavers (Migliore et al., 2020). A study by Carter et al. (2020) found that transition planning often focuses on employment but neglects other important aspects of post-school life, such as independent living and social relationships. Inadequate transition planning from school to post-school life is a significant barrier to success for disabled school leavers (Migliore et al., 2020). A study by Carter et al. (2020) found that transition planning often focuses on employment but neglects other important aspects of post-school life, such as independent living and social relationships. This narrow focus on employment can lead to inadequate preparation for the complexities of adult life (Trainor et al., 2020). For example, a study by Morningstar et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities often require support with daily living skills, such as managing finances, cooking, and cleaning, to achieve independent living. Furthermore, inadequate transition planning can result in poor post-school outcomes, including unemployment, underemployment, and social isolation (Katz et al., 2020). A study by Nguyen et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities who received comprehensive transition planning, including support with independent living and social relationships, were more likely to achieve positive post-school outcomes.

The importance of comprehensive transition planning is highlighted by the findings of a study by Schur et al. (2020), which found that students with disabilities who received transition planning that included support with employment, independent living, and social relationships were more likely to experience improved mental health and well-being. In addition, technology can play a crucial role in supporting transition planning for students with disabilities (Burgstahler et al., 2020). For example, a study by Lewis et al. (2022) found that the use of

assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software and mobile apps, can support students with disabilities in developing independent living skills and accessing post-school education and employment.

2.6.2 Limited Access to Post-Secondary Education

Disabled school leavers often face barriers to accessing post-secondary education, including lack of accessibility, inadequate support services, and discriminatory practices (Shapiro et al., 2020). A study by Nguyen et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities are less likely to enroll in post-secondary education, and are more likely to drop out. Disabled school leavers often face significant barriers to accessing post-secondary education, including lack of accessibility, inadequate support services, and discriminatory practices (Shapiro et al., 2020).

A study by Nguyen et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities are less likely to enroll in post-secondary education, and are more likely to drop out. This disparity in post-secondary education outcomes is often attributed to the lack of accessibility and accommodations in post-secondary education institutions (Waterstone et al., 2020). For example, a study by Lewis et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities often face barriers in accessing assistive technology, transportation, and accessible facilities in post-secondary education settings. Furthermore, inadequate support services, including counseling, academic support, and mentorship, can also hinder the success of students with disabilities in post-secondary education (Morningstar et al., 2022). A study by Migliore et al. (2020) found that students with disabilities who received comprehensive support services, including counseling and academic support, were more likely to persist in post-secondary education. Discriminatory practices, including stigma and bias, can also create barriers for students with disabilities in post-secondary education (Olkin et al., 2020). A study by Reid et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities often experience stigma and bias in post-secondary education settings, which can lead to feelings of isolation and marginalization. Overall, addressing the barriers to post-secondary education for students with disabilities requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving accessibility, providing adequate support services, and promoting inclusive and supportive learning environments (Schur et al., 2020).

2.6.3 Unemployment and Underemployment

Unemployment and underemployment are significant challenges faced by disabled school leavers (Katz et al., 2020). A study by Schur et al. (2020) found that people with disabilities are more likely to experience unemployment, and are often relegated to low-paying, low-

skilled jobs. This disparity in employment outcomes is often attributed to the lack of accessible and inclusive employment opportunities, as well as discriminatory practices in the workplace (Waterstone et al., 2020). For example, a study by Gold et al. (2022) found that people with disabilities are more likely to experience employment discrimination, including being paid less than their non-disabled peers for doing the same job. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the employment challenges faced by people with disabilities (Kaye et al., 2022). A study by Nguyen et al. (2022) found that people with disabilities were more likely to experience job loss and reduced working hours during the pandemic.

In addition, the lack of accessible transportation and workplace accommodations can also create barriers to employment for people with disabilities (Lewis et al., 2022). A study by Migliore et al. (2020) found that people with disabilities who received accommodations and support in the workplace were more likely to experience successful employment outcomes. Overall, addressing the employment challenges faced by disabled school leavers requires a comprehensive approach that includes increasing accessible and inclusive employment opportunities, providing accommodations and support in the workplace, and addressing discriminatory practices (Schur et al., 2020).

2.6.4 Inadequate Support Services

Inadequate support services, including counseling, mentorship, and job coaching, can hinder the post-academic success of disabled school leavers (Test et al., 2020). A study by Morningstar et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities often require additional support services to succeed in post-secondary education and employment. This need for additional support services is particularly evident in the areas of mental health and wellness (Olkin et al., 2020). A study by Reid et al. (2022) found that students with disabilities often experience higher levels of stress and anxiety than their non-disabled peers, and require additional support services to manage their mental health. Furthermore, inadequate support services can also lead to poor employment outcomes for disabled school leavers (Katz et al., 2020). A study by Schur et al. (2020) found that people with disabilities who received job coaching and mentoring services were more likely to experience successful employment outcomes.

In addition, technology can play a crucial role in providing support services to disabled school leavers (Burgstahler et al., 2020). For example, a study by Lewis et al. (2022) found that online counseling and mentoring services can be effective in supporting the post-academic success of students with disabilities. Overall, providing adequate support services, including counseling,

mentorship, and job coaching, is critical for supporting the post-academic success of disabled school leavers (Test et al., 2020)

2.6.5 Stigma and Discrimination

Stigma and discrimination can significantly impact the post-academic success of disabled school leavers (Olkin et al., 2020). A study by Reid et al. (2022) found that people with disabilities often experience stigma and discrimination in education and employment settings. This stigma and discrimination can take many forms, including negative attitudes and stereotypes, lack of accessibility and accommodations, and discriminatory practices (Waterstone et al., 2020). For example, a study by Gold et al. (2022) found that people with disabilities often experience stigma and discrimination in the workplace, including being paid less than their non-disabled peers for doing the same job. Furthermore, stigma and discrimination can also impact the mental health and well-being of disabled school leavers (Olkin et al., 2020). A study by Lewis et al. (2022) found that people with disabilities who experienced stigma and discrimination were more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.

In addition, the media can also play a role in perpetuating stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities (Schur et al., 2020). A study by Reid et al. (2022) found that the media often portrays people with disabilities in a negative or stereotypical way, which can contribute to stigma and discrimination. Overall, addressing stigma and discrimination is critical for supporting the post-academic success of disabled school leavers (Olkin et al., 2020).

2.6.6 Lack of Access to Assistive Technology

Lack of access to assistive technology can hinder the post-academic success of disabled school leavers (Burgstahler et al., 2020). A study by Lewis et al. (2022) found that assistive technology can significantly improve the academic and employment outcomes of people with disabilities. This is particularly evident in the area of education, where assistive technology can provide equal access to learning opportunities for students with disabilities (Migliore et al., 2020). For example, a study by McKenzie et al. (2022) found that the use of text-to-speech software and speech-to-text software can significantly improve the academic performance of students with dyslexia.

Furthermore, assistive technology can also play a crucial role in supporting the employment outcomes of people with disabilities (Schur et al., 2020). A study by Gold et al. (2022) found that the use of assistive technology, such as screen readers and Braille displays, can

significantly improve the employment outcomes of people with visual impairments. In addition, the lack of access to assistive technology can also exacerbate the existing inequalities faced by people with disabilities (Waterstone et al., 2020). A study by Olkin et al. (2020) found that people with disabilities who lack access to assistive technology are more likely to experience poverty, unemployment, and social isolation. Overall, providing access to assistive technology is critical for supporting the post-academic success of disabled school leavers (Burgstahler et al., 2020).

2.6.7 Inadequate Family and Community Support

Insufficient family and community support can greatly affect the post-academic success of students with disabilities (Trainor et al., 2020). Research by Timmons et al. (2022) indicates that family and community support are vital for aiding the transition of students with disabilities from school to life beyond. This necessity is especially clear in transition planning, where such support is instrumental in helping these students set and fulfil post-secondary aspirations (Migliore et al., 2020). For instance, Morningstar et al. (2022) demonstrated that strong family and community involvement enables students with disabilities to develop essential skills and confidence necessary for succeeding in education and employment after high school. Additionally, a lack of family and community support can worsen the disparities that disabled school leavers already confront (Olkin et al., 2020). According to Reid et al. (2022), those students who do not receive sufficient support are at a higher risk of facing poverty, unemployment, and social isolation. Moreover, cultural and linguistic obstacles can hinder families and communities from adequately supporting disabled school leavers (Katz et al., 2020). Lewis et al. (2022) found that culturally sensitive support services can effectively address these challenges and enhance outcomes for students with disabilities.

2.7 Support Frameworks and Support Systems for School Leavers with Disability

2.7.1 Transition Planning

Insufficient family and community support can greatly affect the post-academic success of students with disabilities (Trainor et al., 2020). Research by Timmons et al. (2022) indicates that family and community support are vital for aiding the transition of students with disabilities from school to life beyond. This necessity is especially clear in transition planning, where such support is instrumental in helping these students set and fulfil post-secondary aspirations (Migliore et al., 2020). For instance, Morningstar et al. (2022) demonstrated that

strong family and community involvement enables students with disabilities to develop essential skills and confidence necessary for succeeding in education and employment after high school.

Additionally, a lack of family and community support can worsen the disparities that disabled school leavers already confront (Olkin et al., 2020). According to Reid et al. (2022), those students who do not receive sufficient support are at a higher risk of facing poverty, unemployment, and social isolation. Moreover, cultural and linguistic obstacles can hinder families and communities from adequately supporting disabled school leavers (Katz et al., 2020). Lewis et al. (2022) found that culturally sensitive support services can effectively address these challenges and enhance outcomes for students with disabilities.

2.7.2 Positive Behavioural Supports

Implementing positive behavioral supports is another key support framework for disabled school leavers. As noted by Morningstar et al. (2022), positive behavioral supports can help students with disabilities develop the skills and confidence needed to succeed in post-academic settings. This approach focuses on creating a supportive environment that encourages positive behaviors and reduces problem behaviors. The importance of positive behavioral supports in promoting post-academic success is highlighted by research from Katz et al. (2020), who found that students with disabilities who received positive behavioral supports were more likely to experience improved academic and social outcomes. This approach not only helps students develop positive behaviors but also promotes a sense of belonging and connection to their school community.

Furthermore, positive behavioral supports can also be tailored to meet the unique needs of individual students. According to Lewis et al. (2022), functional behavioral assessments can be used to identify the underlying causes of problem behaviors and develop targeted interventions to support positive behavioral change. In addition, technology can also play a critical role in supporting positive behavioral supports for disabled school leavers. As noted by Burgstahler et al. (2020), technology-based tools and resources can facilitate the implementation of positive behavioral supports, including data collection and analysis, progress monitoring, and communication with families and educators.

2.7.3 Post-School Planning

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2.7.4 Family and Community Engagement

Family and community engagement is an essential support framework for disabled school leavers. As emphasized by Katz et al. (2020), engaging families and communities in the support process is critical for improving post-academic outcomes for students with disabilities. This can involve providing resources and support to families, as well as fostering partnerships between schools, communities, and employers.

The importance of family and community engagement in supporting the post-academic success of disabled school leavers is highlighted by research from Morningstar et al. (2022). These researchers found that students with disabilities who received support from their families and communities were more likely to experience improved employment and education outcomes. This approach not only provides students with access to resources and support but also promotes a sense of belonging and connection to their community.

Furthermore, family and community engagement should also involve the development of culturally responsive support services. According to Lewis et al. (2022), culturally responsive support services take into account the unique cultural and linguistic needs of students with

disabilities and their families. By providing culturally responsive support services, educators and policymakers can help ensure that students with disabilities receive the support they need to succeed in post-academic life.

In addition, technology can also play a critical role in supporting family and community engagement for disabled school leavers. As noted by Burgstahler et al. (2020), technology-based tools and resources can facilitate communication and collaboration between families, communities, and educators, as well as provide access to resources and support services.

2.7.5 Person-Centered Planning

Person-centered planning is a key support framework for disabled school leavers. According to Schur et al. (2020), person-centered planning approaches prioritize the individual needs and goals of students with disabilities. This approach involves working collaboratively with students, families, and educators to develop personalized plans that support the student's transition to post-academic life. The importance of person-centered planning in promoting successful transitions for disabled school leavers is highlighted by research from Migliore et al. (2020). These researchers found that students with disabilities who received person-centered planning support were more likely to experience improved employment and education outcomes. This approach not only promotes student autonomy and self-determination but also ensures that the transition plan is tailored to the student's unique needs and goals.

Furthermore, person-centered planning should also involve the use of visual and interactive tools to facilitate the planning process. According to Lewis et al. (2022), visual and interactive tools such as person-centered planning maps and vision boards can help students with disabilities to identify their strengths, preferences, and goals, and develop a personalized plan that supports their transition to post-academic life. In addition, technology can also play a critical role in supporting person-centered planning for disabled school leavers. As noted by Burgstahler et al. (2020), technology-based tools and resources can facilitate collaboration and communication among stakeholders, as well as provide students with access to personalized learning and support.

2.7.6 Technology-Based Supports

Person-centered planning is a key support framework for disabled school leavers. According to Schur et al. (2020), person-centered planning approaches prioritize the individual needs and goals of students with disabilities. This approach involves working collaboratively with students, families, and educators to develop personalized plans that support the student's

transition to post-academic life. The importance of person-centered planning in promoting successful transitions for disabled school leavers is highlighted by research from Migliore et al. (2020). These researchers found that students with disabilities who received person-centered planning support were more likely to experience improved employment and education outcomes. This approach not only promotes student autonomy and self-determination but also ensures that the transition plan is tailored to the student's unique needs and goals.

Furthermore, person-centered planning should also involve the use of visual and interactive tools to facilitate the planning process. According to Lewis et al. (2022), visual and interactive tools such as person-centered planning maps and vision boards can help students with disabilities to identify their strengths, preferences, and goals, and develop a personalized plan that supports their transition to post-academic life. In addition, technology can also play a critical role in supporting person-centered planning for disabled school leavers. As noted by Burgstahler et al. (2020), technology-based tools and resources can facilitate collaboration and communication among stakeholders, as well as provide students with access to personalized learning and support

2.8 Policies or Acts That Support the Empowerment of People with Disability.

2.8.1 United Nations Convection on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) serves as a crucial international framework for the rights and empowerment of people with disabilities globally. Adopted in 2006, the CRPD articulates the obligation of state parties to recognize and promote the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities. It emphasizes dignity, autonomy, and inclusion in all aspects of life, aligning closely with concepts of empowerment. The CRPD addressed areas of empowerment such as

- **Equality and Non-Discrimination: Article 5**

The article establishes the right to equality and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. This legal recognition empowers individuals by affirming their rights to participate in society without barriers.

- **Accessibility:**

Article 9 mandates that states ensure access to the physical environment, transportation, public services, and information and communication. By promoting accessibility, the CRPD

facilitates greater participation in social, economic, and cultural life, which is foundational for empowerment.

- **Education and Employment:**

Articles 24 and 27 advocate for inclusive education and the right to work. Accessible and quality education equips individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive, while employment opportunities enhance financial independence and self-esteem.

- **Participation in Political and Public Life:**

Article 29 encourages the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life. This ensures that their voices are heard in decision-making processes that directly affect their lives, thereby fostering agency and self-determination.

Despite the robust framework offered by the CRPD, challenges remain that hinder the full empowerment of people with disabilities. These include:

1. Legislative Gaps: Many countries have not fully integrated the CRPD into national laws, leading to a lack of enforceability. For example, while the CRPD calls for non-discrimination in education, some nations do not have specific legislation ensuring inclusive education or enforcing accessibility standards for schools (Shakespeare et al., 2017).

2. Resource Allocation: There is often inadequate funding for disability services and support. Governments may commit to the ideals of the CRPD but fail to allocate the necessary resources to implement its provisions. This is particularly evident in low-income countries where budget constraints limit the development of inclusive programs and services (Kumar et al., 2020).

3. Awareness and Training: Even where laws exist, a lack of awareness among public service providers can inhibit effective implementation. For instance, educators and employers might not receive adequate training on how to accommodate individuals with disabilities, leaving potential barriers unaddressed (Mitchell, 2019).

4. Cultural and Social Barriers: Societal attitudes and stigma regarding disability can undermine the rights outlined in the CRPD. In many cultures, deeply rooted prejudices prevent the integration of persons with disabilities into society, thus limiting their access to education, employment, and community activities (Roulstone & Prideaux, 2020).

For instance, in Education, according to the Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2020), approximately 90% of children with disabilities in low-income countries are out of

school, starkly illustrating the gap between CRPD commitments and lived realities. Under employment, a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018) reveals that persons with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in the workforce, facing unemployment rates that are typically double those of their non-disabled peers.

2.8.2 The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDSI) in Australia

The NDIS is a groundbreaking policy launched in 2013 that provides financial support for Australians with disabilities. It aims to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by providing them with funding to access necessary services and supports tailored to their needs. The NDIS fosters individual choice and control, allowing participants to decide how best to use their funding (NDIS, 2021).

Despite its positive intentions, there are several gaps in the NDIS for instance, access and eligibility issues, and service availability and quality. Many people with disabilities particularly those with psychosocial disabilities or temporary conditions, encounter difficulty accessing the NDIS due to stringent eligibility criteria. This has led to a sense of exclusion for some who could benefit significantly from the scheme (Cares Australia, 2021).
In some regions, participants report issues with the availability and quality of services, particularly in rural and remote areas. There can be a lack of providers willing or able to deliver the required services, which undermine the scheme's intention of providing tailored support (Productivity Commission, 2020).

2.8.3 African Disability Protocol (ADP)

The African Disability Protocol was adopted by African Union in 2018 to strengthen the legal frameworks surrounding the rights of individuals with disabilities across the continent. It aims to complement existing laws by providing a comprehensive set of guidelines that are specifically tailored to the unique context of African nations, thus promoting the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. The ADP emphasizes the right to social, economic and cultural inclusion for marginalized groups, including individuals with disabilities. It promotes education, access to employment opportunities and the provision of assistive technologies to enhance participation in society (African Union, 2018).

One significant gap in the ADP its dependence on member states for implementation and enforcement (Ibrahimi, 2020). While the Protocol outlines the essential rights, lack of binding mechanisms means it may not have the desired impact if nations choose not to comply.

Additionally, there are inconsistencies in how states interpret and implement the guidelines leading to uneven empowerment outcomes across the continent.

2.8.4 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development adopted in 2008 emphasizes the importance of gender equity, gender-based violence prevention, and the empowerment of marginalized groups including people with disabilities. The protocol aims to ensure that all individuals, irrespective of their gender or disability status, have equal access to opportunities, services and protection under the law (SADC, 2008).

Given the dynamics affecting post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, particularly in the context of Zimcare Trust, in Dzivarasekwa, the dynamics can be informed through the lens of the principles of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which include inclusivity in education, empowerment and participation, advocacy and awareness and economic empowerment. For instance, under empowerment and participation, Article 5 of the protocol promotes women's empowerment and participation in decision making processes, which can be extended to include persons with disabilities. Empowerment initiatives that involve disabled individuals in community activities can foster skills development and enhance employability (Musarurwa and Mafunda, 2020).

Despite its ambitious goals. The protocol has certain gaps. While it emphasizes inclusive practices, the implementation often falls short. Many member states often lack the necessary resources or political will to translate the protocol into actionable results (AFRISTAT, 2019). Additionally, the ongoing societal stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities often inhibit the full realization of inclusivity and empowerment, resulting in limited participation in political and economic spheres.

2.8.5 Disability Rights Bill in South Africa

The Disability Rights Bill which is part of South Africa's commitment to promoting the rights of individuals with disabilities seeks to uphold the principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The Bill aims to eliminate discrimination, promote accessibility and ensure fair treatment of individuals with disabilities in various sectors including healthcare, education and employment (South African Government, 2021).

The Bill is crucial in fostering empowerment as it aims to create an environment where individuals with disabilities can achieve self-sufficiency and participate meaningfully in the society. By mandating the government to provide necessary support systems, the Bill seeks to

ensure that people with disabilities can access the same opportunities as their able-bodied counterparts.

However, the Disability Rights Bill faces challenges in terms of enforcement and the adequacy of resources allocated for its implementation. Many local governments lack the infrastructure and financial support to implement the provisions effectively. Furthermore, there is often a disconnect between policy and practice meaning that while legislation may exist, the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities do not always reflect these rights (Swartz and Watermeyer, 2006). This gap underscores the need for continuous advocacy and monitoring to ensure that policies translate into real change.

2.8.6 The Disability Act of 1992

The policy provides a legal framework for the rights of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe. It aims to promote their full participation in society and to prohibit discrimination based on disability. The Act also seeks to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to education, healthcare and empowerment opportunities.

Despite its strengths, the Act has several challenges for instance, implementation challenges. Although the Act is comprehensive its implementation has been weak due to a lack of resources, awareness and commitment at the local government level. Disabled school leavers from institutions like the Zimcare Trust may not fully benefit from the provisions due to these barriers (Masangananise, 2021).

Another gap of the Disability Act its focus on awareness and education. The Act does not fully emphasize public awareness campaigns to support persons with disabilities, leaving many uninformed about their rights and available opportunities (Chirenda, 2022). This limits the ability of disabled individuals to advocate for themselves effectively.

2.8.7 The National Disability Policy of 2020

The policy was launched through the Ministry of Labour and Community Development to promote the rights and welfare of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe. It focuses on inclusion across various domains, including education, employment, health and social protection. While the National Disability Policy provides an updated framework, it also has notable shortcomings which include resource allocation, and monitoring and evaluation. The policy lacks specific guidelines for resource allocation and ensure effective implementation. Consequently, initiatives for supporting disabled school leavers at institutions like Zimcare Trust may remain underfunded leading to inadequate vocational training and job placement

programs (Dube, 2021). Additionally, there is insufficient emphasis on developing concrete mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the policy. This gap makes it challenging to assess the policy's impact on the post academic outcomes of disabled individuals (Ndlovu, 2021). Without systematic evaluation, necessary adjustments to make the policy more effective may be overlooked. Lack of robust monitoring frameworks means that the challenges faced by disabled graduates may not be adequately captured or addressed.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored literature on the post academic outcomes of school leavers with disability, barriers that hinder the post academic success of disabled school leavers and frameworks towards improving their plight. The conceptual model and theoretical framework guiding the study will also be unpacked in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology implemented for the study. It covers the research philosophy, approach, and design, along with the study setting, target population, sampling techniques, and sample size. Furthermore, the chapter explains and justifies the research instruments utilized, outlines the data collection and analysis procedures, and discusses the study's limitations.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The study adopted a constructivists research philosophy, recognizing that the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe are shaped by a complex interplay of social, economic and institutional factors. By emphasizing the lived experiences of individuals and their interactions within the Zimcare Trust context in Dzivarasekwa, the research aimed to construct knowledge that reflected the realities faced by these school leavers. Utilizing qualitative methods, the study sought to gather nuanced insights from participants thereby illuminating the ways in which societal attitudes, policy frameworks and community support structures influenced their transition into adulthood (Schwandt, 2000). This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the systemic dynamics at play, ultimately contributing to the development of comprehensive framework that can inform better practices and policies to enhance the futures of disabled youth in Zimbabwe (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach adopted in this study is qualitative, which seeks to explore and understand the experiences, perceptions, and meanings attributed by the participants to the care and support services provided by Zimcare Trust Dzivarasekwa (Creswell, 2019). According to Patton (2020), qualitative research is particularly useful when exploring complex social phenomena, such as the experiences of OVCs, as it allows for an in-depth examination of the participants' perspectives and meanings. The qualitative research approach was deemed appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to gather rich, detailed data that provided insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions.

3.3 Research Design

The research design employed in this study is a case study design, which involves an in-depth examination of a single case or phenomenon (Yin, 2019). The case study design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore the care and support services provided by Zimcare

Trust Dzivarasekwa in detail, and to gather data from multiple sources, including interviews, observations, and documents (Baxter & Jack, 2019). According to Stake (2020), case study research is particularly useful when exploring complex social phenomena, such as the care and support services provided by NGOs, as it allows for an in-depth examination of the phenomenon in its natural setting. The case study design was deemed appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to gather detailed, contextualized data that provided insights into the care and support services provided by Zimcare Trust Dzivarasekwa.

3.4 Study Setting

The study is centered at Zimcare Trust, located in Dzivarasekwa suburb known for its socioeconomic challenges and diverse population. Zimcare Trust serves as a community-based organization dedicated to improving the lives of disabled individuals through educational support and vocational training. The research framework aimed to explore the dynamics affecting post academic outcomes for disabled school leavers, including societal attitudes, accessibility to further education and employment opportunities as well as the impact of local policies on the inclusion of disabled individuals in the workforce. The study utilized a qualitative approach to provide an understanding of the barriers and facilitators these individuals faced in their transition to adulthood (Mupindu, 2022.) This setting provided a rich context for exploring the challenges and opportunities faced by disabled school leavers and enabled engagement with stakeholders involved in their support.

3.5 Target Population

The target population of this study consisted of disabled school leavers (ages 18-35) who have recently completed their academic programs in Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa. This group included individuals with diverse disabilities such as physical, sensory, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. The study also included staff and volunteers at Zimcare Trust who worked directly with disabled individuals as well as family members of disabled school leavers to gain insight into their perspectives and support mechanisms. In this study, the participants were selected based on their experiences and perceptions of the care and support services provided by Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size of this study targeted approximately eight disabled school leavers, along with five key stakeholders for instance staff/volunteers and five 10 family members or caregivers to

constitute a total of twenty-three participants. This sample size is manageable for qualitative analysis and will provide rich, detailed data.

3.7 Sampling Techniques

3.7.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was used to select the participants for this study. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who possess certain characteristics or experiences that are relevant to the research question (Etikan et al., 2019). In this study, the researcher focused on school leavers with disabilities who had engaged with Zimcare Trust, ensuring that the sample was directly related to the objectives. School leavers with disabilities often faced barriers that were not adequately addressed in broader studies. The technique ensured that the voices of these underrepresented groups were heard, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of their challenges and successes in post academic life. This targeted approach enhanced the relevance and depth of the data collected.

3.7.2 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used primarily in qualitative research particularly hard-to-reach or vulnerable populations (Sadler et all, 2010). In this study, the process involved an initial participant within Zimcare Trust who had experienced post academic transitions. Disabled individuals, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, may not have been visible in broader societal contexts or may have been reluctant to participate in research due to stigma or mistrust and the researcher made use of snowball sampling to connect with individuals who may not otherwise have been identified through referrals from other participants. The researcher began by identifying an initial participant within Zimcare Trust who had experience or insights into the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers. This individual was then asked to recommend others from their network who also fit the criteria for my research. As these referred individuals were approached and interviewed, they contributed additional contacts, thereby expanding the sample. This method allowed the researcher to build a comprehensive participant pool rooted in shared experiences and knowledge. The initial contact was directed to me by a local advocacy group focused on disability rights in Zimbabwe.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Data collection for this study involved a multi-faceted approach, which included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis to gather a comprehensive

understanding of dynamics affecting the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe particularly in the context of Zimcare Trust, in Dzivarasekwa.

3.8.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are a qualitative research method aimed at exploring participants experiences, thoughts and feelings in great detail. An interview guide was developed to ensure that key topics were covered while allowing for flexibility in responses. The guide consisted of open-ended questions that encouraged participants to elaborate on their experiences. Participants for in-depth interviews included 10 disabled school leavers who were interviewed, along with 5 staff/volunteers and 5 family members, who were also interviewed. This diversity allowed a holistic understanding of the issues faced by disabled school leavers as they transitioned from education to employment. Interviews took place in settings that were comfortable and convenient for participants. The interviews were conducted in a private and comfortable setting, and the participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Possible locations included community centers like Zimcare Trust School, participants' homes and public spaces such as parks if preferred by participants, ensuring they felt safe and secure. Conducting interviews in participants' homes could create a relaxed atmosphere enabling more open and honest dialogue. A phone was used to record all the interviews. Each interview lasted approximately between 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

3.8.2 Focus group discussions

Creswell (2018) asserts that, focus groups are an explanatory research tool, a structured group process to explore people's thoughts and feelings and obtain detailed information about a particular topic or issues. In this research, two focus group discussions were conducted with five members in each group. The target population for focus group discussions included disabled school leavers aged (18 to 25), support organization representatives who worked with disabled youth and provided insights into the support systems available and educators like teachers and counselors who had experience working with disabled learners and who could contribute to discussions about educational transitions. Potential locations included community centers where participants felt safe and supported and Zimcare Trust Offices that was familiar environment for participants involved with the organization, providing a sense of belonging and community. The focus groups typically lasted between (60 to 90 minutes).

3.8.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a qualitative research method that involves systematically reviewing and interpreting various types of documents to gather insights relevant to the research objectives (Creswell and Poth, 2016). In this study which focused on the dynamics towards the academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, document analysis served to contextualize the findings from interviews and focus groups. The document analysis in this study provided a richer understanding of the challenges faced by this population. The documents to analyses included policy documents for instance national and local government policies related to education and disability, reports from NGOs for instance publications from organizations like the Zimcare Trust and also existing academic research studies. By examining relevant documents, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the policies, trends, contextual factors that influenced the academic outcomes of disabled school leavers.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures for this study involved a rigorous and systematic approach to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data. The procedures began with obtaining informed consent from the participants, which involved explaining the purpose and objectives of the study, the benefits and risks of participation, and the measures that would be taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (World Health Organization, 2019). The participants were also assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits (National Health Service, 2020). Once informed consent was obtained, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to ensure accuracy and reliability (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019).

The data collection procedures also involved analysing the documents related to the care and support services provided by Zimcare Trust Dzivarasekwa, which included reports, policies, and meeting minutes (Bowen, 2019). The document analysis involved using a thematic analysis approach, which involved identifying and coding themes and patterns related to the care and support services provided (Braun & Clarke, 2020). The document analysis was used to triangulate the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews and observations, and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the care and support services provided by Zimcare Trust Dzivarasekwa. According to Yin (2019), triangulation involves using multiple data sources and methods to verify and validate the findings, which helps to increase the validity and reliability of the study. By using a combination of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, this study was able to gather a rich and comprehensive

dataset that provided insights into the dynamics affecting the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers.

3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation

According to Field (2018), data analysis refers to the systematic process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data in order to derive meaningful insights, draw conclusions and make informed decisions. An analysis of data was made to allow the research to answer study questions and to reach empirical conclusions. The analysis that was carried out was highly descriptive. Thematic schemes based on question chronology were used to present findings obtained from key informants.

3.11 Data Analysis Techniques

These are methods used to in inspect, clean, transform and model data with the goal of discovering useful information, drawing conclusions and supporting decision-making.

3.11.1 Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data collected from interviews and focus groups were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns that emerged from participants' responses. Various steps in thematic analysis were followed for the study of the dynamics affecting the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, specifically in the case of Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa. These steps included familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

- **Familiarization with the Data**

The researcher began by thoroughly reading and re-reading the transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions. This step was crucial for gaining a deep understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. The researcher took notes on initial impressions and potential areas of interest that informed the coding process.

- **Generating Initial Codes**

After familiarization, the researcher systematically coded the data. This involved identifying significant segments of text that related to the research questions and assigning descriptive

labels (codes) to these segments. For instance, participants discussed challenges regarding the job market, the researcher created codes such as "employment discrimination," "lack of internship opportunities," and "insufficient vocational training."

- **Searching for Themes**

Once the initial codes were generated, the researcher grouped related codes into broader themes. This step involved collating all relevant coded data extracts under each potential theme. Codes related to employment challenges and training programs were combined under a theme titled "Barriers to Post-Academic Success." The researcher created a thematic map to visualize the relationships between codes and themes.

- **Reviewing Themes**

Under this stage, the researcher reviewed the identified themes to ensure they accurately represented the data. This involved checking if the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset. The researcher refined, merged, or discarded themes based on this review. For example, if two themes appeared too similar, the researcher combined them into a single, more comprehensive theme.

- **Defining and Naming Themes**

After refining the themes, the researcher clearly defined and named each theme. This step involved articulating the essence of each theme and determining how it related to the research questions. For example, a theme could be named "Overcoming Employment Hurdles," which encapsulated various challenges faced by disabled school leavers in the context of job seeking. The researcher ensured that each theme had a clear definition that captured its significance.

- **Producing the Report**

The final step involved writing a detailed report of the findings. This report presented the themes, supported by direct quotes from participants, and interpreted their significance in the context of the research. The researcher ensured that the report clearly conveyed how the identified themes contributed to understanding the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, providing recommendations for policy and practice based on the findings.

3.12 Validity and Reliability

The possibility of getting misleading answers can be reduced by paying attention to the aspects of research design which are validity and reliability. Triangulation, involving the use of different data collection methods and sources, was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the research outcomes.

3.13 Limitations of the Study

In conducting research, it is essential to recognise and articulate the potential limitations that may affect the validity, reliability and generalisability of the findings. In this study, which was designed to explore the various factors influencing the experiences and outcomes of disabled individuals transitioning from academic settings to post-academic life, several limitations had the potential to impede the depth and applicability of the research findings. These limitations were attributed to factors such as sample size and selection, which could have limited the generalizability of the results to the broader population of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe. The study's scope, being focused on a single organization, meant that it may not have fully represented the diverse experiences across different contexts or regions. Additionally, methodological constraints, reliance on qualitative data, the availability of resources, and the economic, political, social, and cultural dynamics prevalent in Zimbabwe posed further challenges to the interpretation of the findings.

3.14 Delimitations of the Study

The delimitation of this study focused on the specific context of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe, particularly within the Zimcare Trust in Dzivarasekwa, aiming to investigate the unique dynamics that influenced their post academic outcomes. The research was confined to the experiences and perspectives of disabled individuals who had recently completed their schooling, limiting the sample to those who were under 35 years to ensure relevance to the transitional phase from education to employment or further education. Moreover, the study primarily addressed socioeconomic factors, access to resources, and societal attitudes within the localized environment, while excluding the broader national policies on disability and education, thus honing in on the microlevel interactions that directly impacted the subjects' immediate post academic experiences. By narrowing its scope, this study aimed to provide a focused understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by disabled school leavers in this specific setting, which might not have fully represented the wider trends across Zimbabwe.

3.15 Ethical Considerations

According to Bos (2020), ethics refers to an inquiry into what is right and wrong, and what researchers ought to do. Ethical considerations are crucial in conducting research particularly when involving vulnerable populations as individuals with disabilities. Ethical considerations can be defined as principles and standards that guide behavior and decision-making in various contexts. Beauchamp and Childress (2013) highlight the necessity of obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, striving to minimize any potential harm and the right to withdraw.

3.15.1 Respect for Autonomy and Informed Consent

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process, with particular emphasis on respecting the autonomy and dignity of the participants. The researcher obtained informed consent from the participants before conducting the semi-structured interviews and observations, ensuring that they were fully aware of the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study (World Health Organization, 2019). The informed consent process involved providing participants with a clear and concise explanation of the study, including their role and responsibilities, and ensuring that they understood their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By obtaining informed consent, the researcher respected the participants' autonomy and dignity, and ensured that they were able to make informed decisions about their participation in the study.

3.15.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The researcher also ensured that the participants' confidentiality and anonymity were protected throughout the research process. The participants were assured that their personal information and responses would be kept confidential, and that their identities would not be disclosed in any publications or presentations arising from the study (National Health Service, 2020). The researcher used pseudonyms and codes to protect the participants' identities, and ensured that all data was stored securely and protected from unauthorized access. By maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher protected the participants from potential harm or exploitation, and ensured that they felt safe and secure in sharing their experiences and perspectives.

3.15.3 Non-maleficence and avoiding harm

The researcher was also mindful of the potential risks and harms associated with the study, and took steps to minimize or avoid them altogether. The researcher ensured that the participants

were not subjected to any physical, emotional, or psychological harm during the research process, and that they were not exploited or coerced in any way (American Psychological Association, 2020). The researcher was sensitive to the participants' vulnerabilities and took steps to protect them from potential harm, including providing support and resources for participants who may have experienced distress or discomfort during the study. By prioritizing non-maleficence and avoiding harm, the researcher ensured that the study was conducted in an ethical and responsible manner.

3.15.4 Justice and Fairness

Finally, the researcher ensured that the study was conducted in a fair and just manner, with particular attention to issues of equity and distributive justice. The researcher ensured that the participants were selected fairly and without bias, and that they were treated with respect and dignity throughout the research process (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2016). The researcher also ensured that the benefits and risks of the study were distributed fairly among the participants, and that they were not unfairly burdened or exploited. By prioritizing justice and fairness, the researcher ensured that the study was conducted in an ethical and responsible manner, and that the rights and dignity of the participants were respected and protected.

3.16 Assumptions

It is assumed that socioeconomic factors, including family income, access to resources, and community support systems significantly influence the transition of disabled individuals from education to employment or further training. Additionally, there is an assumption that the existing educational infrastructure including the availability of specialized services and inclusive policies plays a crucial role in shaping the academic experiences of these individuals. The study also presumes that societal attitudes toward disability may impact opportunities for integration and success in the work force. Furthermore, it is assumed that the level of individual agency and resilience among disabled school leavers affects their ability to navigate post academic pathway effectively. Together, these assumptions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by disabled school leavers in this specific context.

3.17 Chapter Summary

This section covered research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, validity and reliability aspects as well as data presentation and analysis procedure. The next chapter analyses, presents and interprets research findings.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter was mostly on how the study's data was shown and looked at. A complicated web of elements that are all connected affects the lives of school leavers with disabilities as they move on to college and the job market. The previous chapters have summarised the literature on disability, education, and employment, as well as looked at the methods used in this study. This chapter goes into further depth about the study's findings about the post-academic outcomes of school leavers with impairments.

This chapter gives a full summary of the study's findings on what happens to school dropouts with disabilities after they leave school. This chapter systematically delineates key themes and ideas derived from qualitative data obtained through focus groups, interviews, and document analysis methodologies. It examines the authentic experiences of disabled school leavers, highlighting the diverse challenges individuals have when transitioning to the employment, tertiary education, or independent living.

4.1 Qualitative Data Presentation

This study employed theme analysis to elucidate participant experiences and perceptions, aiming to examine the dynamics affecting the post-academic outcomes of impaired school leavers in Zimbabwe. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with five key informants and focus groups comprising parents of disability school leavers, alongside primary key participants, namely disabled school leavers. We also employed document analysis to make the outcomes better. The study aimed to analyse the post-academic outcomes of school leavers with disabilities, identify barriers to their success post-graduation, facilitate their employment and societal integration, and establish a support system to enhance their post-academic outcomes. To ensure a complete and coherent presentation, these goals were grouped into three primary themes, each of which has its own subthemes.

To make sure that the rich, contextual understanding of participants' lived experiences was successfully communicated, the presentation used thematic summaries, direct quotes, and tables to show how different dynamics were related to each other. This strategy not only showed how rich qualitative data can be, but it also made it easier to understand all the different things that affect impaired teenagers' success after school at the Zimcare Trust.

4.2 Information on the participants' demographics

This section shows the participants' demographic data in table form. The demographic profile enables comprehension of the backgrounds and characteristics of the study participants, including age, gender, handicap type, and educational background. The demographic data serves as the foundation for assessing the qualitative findings and developing educated recommendations tailored to distinct subgroups of Zimbabwe's impaired youth.

4.2.1 The demographic data of the primary respondents

The table below shows the qualitative data, with a focus on the biographical information of the primary key participants that is important for understanding the factors that affect the post-academic results of impaired school leavers at Zimcare Trust. Please be aware that pseudonyms are used and that keeping participants' identities secret is very important.

FIG 4.2.1.1: Demographic data of the primary key participants

Code	Pseudo Name	age	Gender	Type of Disability	Years since leaving school	Current employment status	Primary support System	Living situation
A01	Tinashe	19	Male	Cerebral palsy	3	Unemployed Seeking work	Parents, siblings	Lives with parents
A02	Mary	25	Female	Visual impairment	1	Unemployed	extended parents	Extended family
A03	Ruva	22	Female	Down syndrome	3	Studying Vocational course	Social worker from school, parents	Lives with parents
A04	Chipo	21	Female	Learning disability	2	Studying vocational course	Support worker, siblings, online support forum	Supported accommodation
A05	Tanaka	24	Male	Learning disability	3	Employed at factory	Employer Family	Lives independently
A06	Innocent	20	Male	Cerebral palsy	3	Unemployed seeking work	Family, caregivers	Lives with parents
A07	Tapiwa	28	Male	Spinal cord Injury	3	Unemployed	Support worker, siblings, online forum	Lives with parents
A08	Tambu	22	Male	Learning disability	1	Looking for vocational course	Family, support group	Lives with parents

The personal data above illustrates that Zimcare Trust has eight school leavers who need help. They are between 19 and 28 years old, and most of them live with family individuals, which appears that they have solid familial support systems. The incapacities shown incorporate cerebral paralysis, vision disability, hearing impedance, Down syndrome, learning issues, and spinal line wounds. This shows how distinctive this group of individuals is. Only two people are working or in assisted employment (like Tanaka). The others are seeking out for work, unemployed, or still in school. This demonstrated that students with disabilities who had just graduated from high school had a difficult time getting employments. Most of the people who took part live with their families. There are just two people who live in supported housing or on their own, which outlines that they are at diverse levels of autonomy. The qualitative experiences reveal broad challenges, such as constrained career prospects, decreased self-esteem, and insufficient participation in professional advancement activities. Individuals still think that community and peer support, customised enhancements at work, and campaigning are key things that can help them finish superior, indeed with these issues. The study stresses how critical it is to have customized support systems, comprehensive policies, and focused on interventions to improve the quality of life, independence, and work chances for kids with inabilities. It emphasizes that upgrading openness, bracing family engagement, and broadening professional preparing are all significant methodologies to help this defenseless statistic in navigating the determined challenges they have in transitioning from instruction to significant business and community cooperation.

FIG 4.2.2 Demographic, Information of Key Informants

Name	Gender	Age	Position/ Occupation	Highest Qualification
A1	**F**	**30**	**Teacher**	**Diploma in Special Education Needs (SEN)**
A2	**M**	**25**	**Teacher**	**Diploma in Special Education Needs (SEN)**
A3	**M**	**50**	**Social district Officer**	**1. Bachelor of Social Work Honours Degree** **2. Master of Social Work**
A4	**F**	**64**	**Zimcare Counsellor**	**Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work**
A5	**F**	**48**	**Teacher**	**Diploma in Special Education Needs (SEN)**

The table above presents a diverse group of five professionals, including teachers, a social district officer, and a counsellor, with varying ages, genders, and educational backgrounds. The

The above reveals that eight ZimCare Trust school-leavers require assistance. They range in age from 19 to 28 years, with the majority residing with their families, indicating a good family support structure. The disabilities detected include cerebral palsy, eyes problem, hearing problem, Down syndrome, learning problem, and spinal cord injury. This indicates just how varied this group of individuals is. There are only two employees or individuals aided in their job (i.e., Tanaka). The rest are jobless, seeking work, or studying. This indicated that students with disability who graduated from high school in the recent past had a hard time securing job. All of the participants live with their families. Two of them have their own or supported housing, which indicates that they do experience varying levels of independence. From the findings, it is clear that most of the individuals have problems such as limited employment opportunities, low confidence, and no opportunity to enhance their work skills. Individuals continue to hold beliefs that peer and friend support, work accommodation at an individual level, and activism are crucial in faring better in the wake of such adversity. The research stresses the importance of individualized services, definitive rules, and special programs to augment the life, independence, and employment prospects of disabled kids. It stresses that enhancing access, enhancing family engagement, and enhancing training for work are essential ways of assisting this group of individuals to cope with the residual problems being faced by them in the process of transition from school to securing work and entering society.

4.3: The Post-Academic Outcomes of School Leavers with Disabilities

The themes identified in this objective highlight significant post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers as they transition from school to employment and integration into the society. These outcomes include employment, access to further education and training, independent living and community engagement.

4.3.1: Employment

One of the critical post-academic outcomes for school leavers with disabilities is their transition into the workforce. The findings from this study highlight significant difficulties these individuals face in securing employment. Many participants reported prolonged and often unsuccessful job searches, underscoring ongoing barriers to employment access and inclusion.

> "*Ndinonzwa kusurukirwa nekuti ndukushaya basa."*(I feel lonely because I am unemployed.)

Another participant from Focus Group discussions noted,

"*Ini saamai ane mwana ane hurema, ndiri kunzwa kunetseka zvikuru nezvemabasa emwana wangu. Ndinonyatsoziva kuti mwana wangu ane hurema, asi ndinotenda kuti nekutsigirwa kwakakodzera, anogona kushanda. Semhuri, tinoda rubatsiro rwekuwana nzira dzekumubatsira kuti awane mabasa uye ave neupenyu hwakagadzikana. Zvakare, ndiri kutya kuti kana ndikafa nhasi, ndiani achamuchengeta kana asina basa? Izvi zvinondinetesa zvikuru.*" (As a mother of a disabled school leaver, and I am very worried about employment opportunities for my son. I know my child has challenges, but I believe that with the right support, he can work. As a family, we need assistance in finding ways to help him access jobs and lead a stable life. I am also afraid that if I pass away today, who will take care of him if he does not have a job? This worries me deeply.)

The above testimonies stirred up that although school leavers with disabilities have finished education, they face systemic barriers including few job prospects, lack of support, and possible discrimination. These hindrances are to blame for the frustration and disappointment of the participants, as well as impact their general well-being and independence.

This aligns with the intersectionality framework, which stresses the interaction between disability, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and mental well-being (Mills, 2024). Disabled children usually have minimal access to education and vocational training, and this lowers their credentials for formal work and ultimately end up in informal sectors, like street vending, or begging as a result of inaccessible workplaces and societal attitudes (Neube et al., 2023). This is also in keeping with the principles of the social model of disability, which asserts that disability is less a product of individual impairments, but rather a product of social barriers and inaccessibility (Oliver, 1996). The Maslow Hierarchy of Needs also sheds light on the school leaver with a disability experience, and the need to fulfill physiological and safety needs in order to facilitate individuals' aspirations for higher-order needs such as esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). The school leaver with a disability's limited access to employment is an acute issue. The researcher suggests that policymakers, employers, and educators must be more involved in granting accessibility and accommodations to allow people with disabilities to gain full access to the workplace.

4.3.2: Access to education and training

Availability of further education and training was cited as an important determinant of the post academic success of disabled school leavers. Some of the respondents indicated that they were unable to access further education or training because of inaccessible facilities or lack of facilitation. For example, an FGD participant lamented about access to education and training by stating,

"*I am so disappointed because my son wanted to do carpentry training to learn a skill that could help him become independent, but the training centre was not accessible for him. It's heart-breaking to see him miss out on opportunities simply because the facilities are not made for children like him***."**

Another Key informant participant highlighted that,

"*There are policies in place to support learners with disabilities, but implementation is often weak. Many schools lack the facilities or trained staff to accommodate students with special needs*."

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4.3.3 Community Engagement

Some participants reported that they had experienced negative attitudes and stigma from employers, educators, and other members of society. This had resulted in difficulties finding employment and accessing education and training. The findings found out that negative attitudes and stigma experienced by participants were attributed to a lack of understanding and awareness of disability issues among employers, educators, and other members of society.

One primary participant noted,

> "*Ini handina shamwari nekuti dzimwe nguva, vana vamwe vanondidana zita rekuti 'Zimcare' vachiti havade kutamba neni*"(I have no friends because sometimes, other kids call me the name 'Zimcare' and say they don't want to play with me.)

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants and other key informant participants emphasized the importance of promoting disability awareness and inclusion across all sectors of society to foster a more welcoming environment. One key informant participant highlighted the need for community-wide programs that educate the public about disability issues, aiming to reduce stigma and foster understanding.

> *"Creating a truly inclusive society starts with education and awareness. We need community-wide programs that not only inform but also change perceptions, so that people see disability as part of human diversity and treat everyone with respect and kindness."*

The foregoing stories illustrated how negative attitudes and stigma could negatively affect the professional goals and opportunities of individuals with disabilities. The participants' experiences reinforced the necessity for a shift in culture in society, from a paradigm that stigmatises and marginalises individuals with disabilities to one that respects and embraces them. This study discovered that stigma and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities have the potential to create huge problems in workplaces and schools, and this

creates a sense of being on the outside, excluded, and frustrated. The Global Disability Summit of 2025 stated that individuals with impairments, especially those who have recently graduated from school, are subjected to huge amounts of discrimination despite improved laws across the world. The author of this study suggests more awareness and understanding of disability issues for employers, teachers, and other segments of society. Lindsay et al. (2020) also observed that disability awareness training can have a strong effect on the behavior and attitude of employers, teachers, and other segments of society. Overall, results of this study confirm that stigmatization and negative perceptions have a far-reaching impact on job aspirations and career opportunities of those with impairments.

4.3.4 Living on your own

Empowerment for independent living was expressed as a key post-academic objective in enhancing their standard of living and fostering self-sufficiency. According to the survey, most school leavers with disabilities were not independently living but were assisted extensively by carers, donors, family members, school social workers, and other NGOs. These findings suggested that the majority of persons with disabilities were facing a lot of challenges to live independently despite having graduated. These challenges included inability to work, physical barriers including infrastructure that was not accessible, society being unaccepting, and poverty that made it hard for them to sustain themselves.

One FGD participant noted,

> "*As a parent of a child with cerebral palsy, I worry because we do not have enough support or resources to help him live on his own someday. We struggle to afford the proper care and equipment, and I fear he may never be able to care for himself without assistance*."

Additionally, the study revealed that the failure of schools and educational institutions to adequately prepare students with disabilities for post-academic life further hindered their ability to live independently. As one key informant participant expressed,

"*Our education system often overlooks the unique needs of students with disabilities, leaving them ill-equipped to manage life after school*. "

The study concluded that empowerment of independent living among individuals with disabilities is vital in improving the quality of life and promoting self-sufficiency. Most school leavers with disabilities were still dependent on family, caregivers, NGOs, and social workers

due to factors such as limited employment opportunities, infrastructure being inaccessible, societal attitudes, and poverty. These findings aligned with the social model of disability, emphasizing how environmental aspects and societal barriers rather than impairments of individuals are primary causes of their dependence. Disability is forced upon people by discriminations, prejudices, stereotypes and inaccessibility (Ndhlovu and Mudzingwa, 2022). The author argued that the social barriers are responsible for most of the issues of individuals with disability, essentially constructing and solidifying their marginalized status in society.

In addition, the study also highlighted how the intersecting social identities of poverty and social exclusion added to the disadvantages faced by people with disabilities, highlighting the importance of an intersectionality lens to understand their complex lived realities (Mills, 2024)

The results suggested an urgent need for systemic reforms, including inclusive education to empower students with life skills, improved accessible infrastructure, and social awareness to reduce stigma. These interconnected obstacles can only be tackled through an integrated approach that deals with both structural and social inequalities. The study recommended policy interventions aimed at shaping enabling environments that enable independent living, prioritizing interventions to challenge intersectional disadvantages of poverty and social exclusion in enabling individuals with disability to live more autonomous and dignified lives.

4.4: Obstacles That Interfere with the Post-Academic Progress Of Disabled School Leavers

The study found that different barriers prevented disabled school leavers from achieving post-academic success, hindering them from entering independent adulthood in a seamless way.

They ranged from social attitudes and prejudice to structural barriers such as inaccessible environments and limited employment. The study determined that although they had completed school, most disabled people still encountered an overwhelming number of obstacles that prevented them from achieving full independence and economic participation. Awareness of these barriers was necessary to conclude the effective methods to enable disabled school leavers to overcome these hindrances and reintegrate successfully into society.

4.4.1 Lack of policy and legislative support

Some participants said that they had experienced a lack of policy and legislative support towards disabled people.

In-depth interview participants stated that there was poor implementation of disability laws and policies, and therefore, there was weak support for individuals with disabilities. Weak policy and legal support faced by participants was the result of a lack of disability issues being prioritized by policymakers and legislators. Participants alleged that insufficient funding and resource allocation was provided to meet the needs of people with disabilities because policymakers and legislators did not prioritize disability issues. One in-depth participant noted,

> "*The **Zimbabwe Disability Act** is an example of a law in Zimbabwe aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities. It's a good example because it covers a range of issues, including access to education, employment, and public facilities, as well as protection from discrimination. While the law itself is important, the effectiveness of the law in practice is often a separate issue.* "

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants emphasized the importance of strengthening policy and legislative frameworks to support individuals with disabilities. They noted that policymakers and lawmakers should prioritize disability issues and allocate sufficient funding and resources to support individuals with disabilities.

One of the FDG participants expressed,

> "*It's like the laws are on the books, but nobody's actually enforcing them. There's no real will to make things better, no real push from the top down. Funding is always the first thing to get cut, and that means the programs and support services for people like our kids just wither away."*

The researcher inferred from the participant's response that what is required is a broader and more inclusive legislative and policy support for persons with disabilities. This entails making a commitment to give disability matters top priority and assign enough funds to support persons with disabilities.

The lives and outcomes of people with disabilities can be significantly impacted by a lack of legislative and policy backing, as Quinn et al. (2019) assert. Legislators should, in the authors' opinion, accord top priority to coming up with and enacting legislation and policies that facilitate participation and inclusion of people with disabilities. This is also consistent with the social model of disability, which emphasizes the necessity of social change and adaptations to allow individuals with disabilities to take full part in society (Oliver, 1996). This is also consistent with the approach of intersectionality, which also emphasizes how race, gender,

socioeconomic status, mental health, and disability can intersect in complex ways that compound school leavers' experiences of disability (Mills, 2024).

The results of this study also reveal how lawmakers and policymakers need to be better educated on disability issues. Disability awareness training can be instrumental in transforming the attitudes and behavior of lawmakers and policymakers, according to Lindsay et al. (2020). All lawmakers and policymakers need to be required to go through disability awareness training, suggest the authors. To facilitate effective implementation and assessment of the impact of disability policy and legislation, the researcher suggested putting in place effective monitoring and evaluation systems. The researcher also emphasized public awareness-raising campaigns as a means of increasing societal knowledge about disability issues. Such campaigns have the potential to increase community support and persuade policymakers to give inclusion initiatives high priority.

4.4.2 Negative effects of stereotyping and stigma

Disability stigma and stereotypes are common phenomena that have a profound impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Social exclusion, discrimination, and a decrease in the availability of opportunities to participate in all walks of life, such as education, jobs, and social activities, are likely to result from these negative attitudes. Participants shared their own experiences, focusing on how social attitudes can affect their self-esteem, confidence, and ability to access necessary services.

Most of the respondents talked about facing negative attitudes from peers, relatives, and neighbours, which are usually based on misconceptions about their value and capabilities. Besides limiting their social lives, such attitudes serve to further entrench their powerlessness and marginalisation.For example, one key informant participant stated,

"*Before, many people in our community believed that persons with disabilities could not contribute meaningfully to society. The awareness campaigns changed their perspectives, and now they see us as capable and valuable. This has made a huge difference in how we are treated and the opportunities we can access.*"

Another participant from FGDs noted,

"*In our community, persons with disabilities are often seen as cursed or burdens. This stereotype makes it difficult for our kids to be accepted and to find support.*"

The above testimonies depict the very serious impact stigma and negative attitudes might have on people with disabilities' lives, participation, and results. This aligns with a research work undertaken by Lewis et al. (2022), which is categorical that people with disabilities who endured stigma and discrimination were more likely to be depressed, anxious, and experience other mental issues. Having made this observation, the researcher emphasizes the need for policymakers and practitioners to give high priority to the development and operation of comprehensive programs intended to challenge and transform societal attitudes. These include developing mass public awareness campaigns and education programs that foster positive attitudes, integrating disability awareness in school curricula to foster understanding at an early stage, and making compulsory disability sensitivity training for employers, teachers, and public service providers mandatory. These tactics can be critical in eradicating stigma and establishing a better integrated society.

4.4.3: Limited access to assistive technology and resources

Some participants reported that they had limited access to assistive technology and resources. This limited access mostly hinders their ability to effectively perform tasks, engage in learning activities, and smoothly integrate into the labour market. Lacking the proper help equipment such as mobility aids and communication aids, most disabled school leavers have difficulty gaining independence and self-esteem, which are crucial in succeeding after school. The study found that, this lack of support not only limits their possibilities of meaningful engagement in the labour market but also affects the overall quality of their lives and socioeconomic integration in the long term. For instance, one FDG interviewee stated,

"I wish my daughter had a proper wheelchair, it would make such a big difference in her life."

One of the other key informant respondents noticed

"Many lack access to assistive devices because they are not readily available, which prevents them from being able to contribute as much to learning, work, and their daily lives."

Limited access to assistive technology and resources influenced the lives and post-academic success of individuals with disabilities (Burgstahler et al., 2020). The researcher found that without proper assistive devices, individuals with disabilities were at risk of significant challenges in independence, participation, and inclusion in society.

The study evoked that such barriers are in accordance with the social model of disability, wherein it is emphasized that environmental and societal barriers and not impairment are

predominant causes of disability. Lack of access to resources perpetuates social exclusion and limits the potential of valuable participation, thus affecting their quality of life. Additionally, the study is in agreement with Maslow's hierarchy of needs and suggests that in the absence of access to primary resources such as mobility aids and communication tools, people's safety, physiological needs, and belongingness are disabled (Maslow, 1943). This prevents them from progressing to higher-order needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization.

The author recommends that policymakers and practitioners place the development and utilization of measures to increase access to assistive technology high on their agendas. This can involve the establishment of funding schemes and service delivery models that will equip individuals with disabilities with assistive devices. The author also urged the implementation of a rights-based approach, whereby access to assistive technology is made a central pillar of social inclusion and disability rights.

4.4.4: Physical and informational barriers to accessibility

The lack of accessibility and accommodations was the major identified barrier. The study found that physical barriers, such as inaccessible buildings, transport, and environmental barriers, restricted people with disabilities from accessing essential resources such as schools, employment, and community centres, with the lack of ramps, lifts, and accessible toilets being a significant practical barrier. informational barriers brought about by ineffective communication, lack of access to information about support services, source of funding, and source of employment further constrain the choices and add to the frustration and feelings of isolation. These barriers not only constrain people's participation in mainstream activities but also complicate their making informed decisions about their future when service provider and employer consciousness is still low.

FGD participant stated the following

"The school never really taught us for what we were getting into when we left school. We did not know what was out there, or how to access it. It was like they threw us into the deep end, and we were completely lost."

One other key informant said,

"A great deal of the student population we serve has trouble finding information on grants, scholarships, and job training. Application processes are typically complex and not disability-accessible, presenting a significant barrier to such opportunities."

This physical barrier accessed by many highlights the need for more investment in physically accessible facilities, such as ramps, elevators, and accessible toilets. As noted by Waterfield and Biasini (2020), the lack of accessibility and provisions is among the main impediments to participation for people with disabilities. The authors hint that it is due to the low level of awareness and understanding of issues related to disability. This is in accordance with the social model of disability, as it argues that disability is not just a result of individual impairment but also a result of social barriers and inaccessibility (Oliver, 2016). The social model of disability emphasizes the need for society to transform and accommodate in order to enable individuals with disabilities to participate fully in society. The intersectionality model also highlights the complex interplay between disability, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and mental health that exacerbates the situations of school leavers with disabilities (Mills, 2024). In light of the foregoing challenges, the researcher calls for interventions such as policy reforms for the enforcement of accessible infrastructure requirements, more public awareness campaigns to promote further appreciation of disability issues, and specialized training of service providers and employers to promote inclusive dispositions. In addition to incorporating disability-based planning and including people with disabilities in decision-making, inclusion of community-based planning is also important to ensure accessibility steps actually meet their needs and allow them to participate socially and economically effectively.

4.4.5: Limited availability of support services

The majority of participants reported that they had limited availability of support services such as career guidance, mentoring, and job placement. Inadequate access to support services is a significant obstacle to the post-graduate success of school leavers with disabilities. It may lead to inability to gain essential skills, obtain relevant work, and access required accommodations, which ultimately discourages their independence and socio-economic development. The study found that the absence of individualized support services is a factor leading to increased feelings of frustration, loneliness, and low self-esteem that act as a barrier to their positive post-school experiences. The limited access to support services for participants was attributable to the inaccessibility and availability of the services. As explained by one of the FGD participants,

"*I believe my child might have benefited from more individualized counseling and guidance during the transition out of school. Job placement and social skills training would also have assisted significantly in preparing him to become more confident and better suited to enter the workforce."*

A prominent key informant noted,

"There are some schemes in place that strive to empower disabled school leavers, such as vocational training and mentoring schemes. Their strength is that they impart practical skills and a feeling of confidence to the learners. But these schemes are mostly small in scale and scope, and most of the learners do not get to avail themselves of them due to location or due to being ignorant. To improve things, we need to expand the scale of these schemes, make them more reachable to all, and tailor them to the personal needs of each individual."

Yet another expert informant proposed,

"We need an integrated system of personalized career guidance, ongoing mentorship, and job placement services that are accessible and affordable, given the needs of students with disabilities. There needs to be integration of schools, government, and community organizations to build sustainable support channels."

The above narratives brought forth the call to see that individuals with disabilities are provided with resources and support services, for instance, employment placement services, resume writing classes, and interview preparation training. This agrees with Reid et al., (2022), who discovered that students with disabilities have higher levels of anxiety and stress than their non-disabled peers and require additional support services in terms of mental well-being. The findings of such research demand increased investment in the provision of support services and facilities for people with disabilities. Schur et al., (2020) conducted research that found people with disabilities who were provided with job coaching and mentoring services had a higher chance of achieving employment success. The researcher recommends the use of personal plans for support as an efficient way of meeting the specific requirements of individuals with disabilities to enhance their opportunities of employment. The researcher also recommends that early intervention programs need to be implemented in schools in order to prepare pupils with disabilities for the workforce. These are essential ways of making personalized support and skill building from the early stage.

4.4.6: Inadequate transition planning and support

The study found that inadequate planning for support and transition remain significant barriers to further education of disabled school leavers.

The result indicated that the majority of students do not receive appropriate guidance or customized assistance to facilitate their transition to further education, employment, or

community involvement. This lack of formalized transition processes can lead to difficulties in becoming a good fit in new environments, accessing opportunities, and accessing necessary resources, ultimately impacting their independence and socio-economic development. For instance, one of the key respondent participants stated, "It was hard to access opportunities or access the resources I needed to become more independent."

Another FGD respondent stated,

"My daughter did receive some assistance, including career information and information about appropriate training programs she was interested in and capable of, but it was not enough. I was not able to afford everything, so the assistance was partial and not sufficient enough to help her successfully transition."

It was revealed by the study that inadequate transition planning and assistance impacts the post-secondary success of individuals with disabilities.

Transition planning and support should be personalized based on the unique goals and needs of each student. This aligns with the social model of disability that concentrates on social change and adjustments to enable participation of individuals with disability in society (Oliver, 1996). Further, the findings of this study highlight the need for greater collaboration and communication between employers, post-secondary education and training, and schools. This agrees with Schur et al., (2020) who found that disabled students who were given transition planning with support for employment, independent living, and social relationships were more likely to have better mental well-being and mental health. The researcher recommends individualized transition planning, staff specialist training, and more cooperation among employers, colleges, and schools. The researcher also proposes the requirement of inclusive policies, planning resources, and active engagement of students and families. Awareness and inclusive practices are also required strategies. These interventions aim at building support and outcomes for individuals with disabilities at transition.

4.4.7: Intersectional barriers and experiences

It was found through the research that intersectional experiences and barriers is one of the barriers to the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers. The disability experience was noted by the participants as intersecting with other aspects of their identity, such as race, gender, and socio-economic status. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) respondents noted that these barriers manifested into bespoke challenges and experiences which were poorly addressed by existing support mechanisms.

A member of FGD noted,

It hurts me as a black mother to see the way my daughter's disability is exacerbated by our poverty. The support systems are totally inadequate in understanding or helping us with these intersecting challenges.

A detailed participant noted,

"The other thing we are faced with is that our disabilities are made more difficult to accommodate due to our poverty, race, and gender. These intersectional barriers create issues that the current support systems are unaware of or cannot support, and therefore, we are left to fend for ourselves."

The findings identify that intersectional barrier significantly contribute to the lives and outcomes of individuals with disabilities from diverse backgrounds.

Policymakers and practitioners are required to adopt an intersectional response to address their needs and experiences in a way that is effective, as per the intersectionality model that identifies the complex interplay between disability, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and mental health (Mills, 2024). The research also emphasizes the importance of greater representation and participation of individuals with disabilities across the spectrum in policymaking and decision-making. According to Connor et al. (2018), such inclusion results in more inclusive and equitable programs and policies. The researcher recommends that special outreach and empowerment programs need to be created that involve people with disabilities from marginalized groups proactively in spaces of decision-making so that their voices can be addressed and the specific needs can be addressed. Besides, developing sophisticated training for policymakers and practitioners in intersectionality and cultural competency can make them more aware of the various barriers that various people with disabilities face, leading to more inclusive policy development.

The research strategies also include forming coalitions with community organizations that reflect marginalized communities and applying intersectional analysis when evaluating policies to uncover and dismantle systematic barriers effectively.

4.5: Post Academic Outcomes for Disability School Leavers Framework

A post-academic outcome for disability school leavers framework was developed. It was intended to provide for the unique needs and concerns of these students as they transitioned from school into further education, employment, or independent living. The model was

developed to provide a seamless transition by delivering targeted support, strategies, and resources that build inclusion, independence, and overall well-being. It was framed on the basis of existing research and best practice in disability education and transition planning so that it was supported by evidence-based practices to facilitate school leavers with disabilities to achieve successful post-academic outcomes.

4.6.1: Access to career guidance and mentorship

Participants emphasized the need for accessible and inclusive career guidance and mentorship services to support individuals with disabilities in their school-to-post-secondary education or employment transition. These services, participants proposed, should be tailored to respond to the unique needs and interests of individuals with disabilities and provide ongoing advice and support as they progress along their career paths. As stated by one of the participants,

"I had nobody to guide me or help me in finding employment. I was lonely and perplexed. I didn't know where to start or who to approach for help. It was quite frustrating."

One of the FGD members also opined that,

"My child needs somebody who knows their challenges and can guide them step by step towards a future where they will be independent and successful."

These perceptions highlight the need for individualized support to facilitate seamless career transitions in individuals with disabilities. This aligns with the social model of disability that considers disability to be an outcome of environmental barriers in society (Nguyen et al., 2022). By breaking these kinds of barriers in society and facilitating equal access to support systems, marginalization can be minimized and greater degrees of inclusion and independence can be fostered for individuals with disabilities.

4.6. 2: Transition planning and support

Participants emphasized the importance of extensive transition planning and support for facilitating a smooth transition from school to post-secondary education or employment. Participants indicated that schools and support services need to provide individualized transition planning and ongoing support to allow people with disabilities to be adequately prepared and supported in their transition to the next stage of their lives.

A FDG participant explained,

"*We need proper planning right from the beginning someone to guide my child step by step so that they can transition smoothly and confidently."*

In-depth interview key informant also indicated,

"Transition planning needs to be initiated early, with personalized goals and regular follow-up to address any problems along the way."

Another key informant commented,

"Without proper support and personalized programs, students with disabilities are not prepared, and this can close off possibilities after school."

Participants' perspectives underscore the urgent necessity of comprehensive and individualized transition planning and support to facilitate best possible post-school results for students with disability. The findings find accord in the intersectional framework that recognizes disability as intersecting with other social identities such as gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity in influencing access to support and effectiveness of transition processes (Carter et al., 2020). The need for careful transition planning is highlighted by the findings of the study by Katz et al. (2020), in which they determined that inadequate transition planning can culminate in adverse post academic results like unemployment, underemployment, and social isolation. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends that schools implement early, individualized transition plans with multidisciplinary teams, and design ongoing support systems that are responsive to the diverse needs of students. Policy makers also need to ensure the fair allocation of resources to combat intersectional inequalities, providing inclusive settings to facilitate successful transitions for all students with disabilities.

4.6.3: Training and awareness about disability

Participants emphasized the need for more disability awareness and training for employers, teachers, and the general public.They recommended that disability awareness and training programs be made mandatory for all persons who interact with individuals with disabilities, with the aim of promoting a culture of inclusivity and accessibility. This training should cover such areas as disability etiquette, accessible communication, and how to make reasonable accommodations. By increasing disability awareness and training, the participants believed that individuals with disabilities would encounter fewer barriers and more accessible surroundings in education, employment, and society in general. One of the in-depth interview participants identified the following; FGD participant clarified,

"People treat my child with more respect and patience when they know more about disabilities; it makes a big difference."

One of the key informants also commented,

"Compulsory training can alter attitudes and practices so that inclusion is actually implemented rather than being a mere policy on paper."

The study underscored that disability awareness-raising and training are crucial to creating genuinely inclusive environments in education, employment, and society as a whole.

This is consistent with the original tenets of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which dictate that physiological and safety needs must be met before individuals can achieve social belonging and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). As persons with disabilities are in environments where their respect, understanding, and accessibility needs are honored and met through proper training, they experience more of a sense of safety and belonging. Besides, the study supports that ongoing education and training improve attitudes and behaviours towards persons with disabilities in building environments in which their safety, belonging, and esteem needs are met.

Therefore, the researcher recommends that policymakers implement mandatory, ongoing disability awareness programs in all fields. The programs need to be contextualized and include practical components to guarantee attitude change that is meaningful. In addition, integrating disability awareness into broader diversity and inclusion initiatives can persist in fostering societal acceptance and equal treatment, further facilitating the overall well-being and self-actualization of disabled individuals.

4.6.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Some participants credited stakeholder engagement as a significant factor in easing the post-academic life of disabled school leavers. Effective involvement of diverse stakeholders like educators, employers, government agencies, community organizations, and families is paramount in creating a cohesive system that facilitates smooth transition from school to employment or further education. By taking an active role, stakeholders can pool resources, provide tailored assistance, and design comprehensive policies that address the unique needs of disabled young people, thereby enhancing their chances of realizing meaningful and long-lasting post-academic achievement. One FGD member stated,

"Ndinofunga kut zvikoro, mhuri, uye vashandirwi vanofanira kushanda pamwe chete kuti vave nechokwadi chekuti vechidiki vakaremara vanowana rutsigiro rwakakwana uye mikana yekubudirira kunze kwechikoro." (I think that schools, families, and employers need to work together to ensure that disabled youth are adequately supported and given opportunities to succeed post-school.)

One in-depth key informant noted,

"*Working collectively with all the stakeholders ensures that we can identify gaps, pool resources, and create individualized pathways to enable disabled young people to flourish post-school."*

The findings of this research highlight the pivotal role stakeholder involvement plays in enabling disabled school leavers' post-school outcomes.

Participants emphasized that partnership among schools, employers, government agencies, community organizations, and families is essential in creating a supportive and inclusive infrastructure that facilitates easy transition from school to employment or higher education. This echoes the social model of disability that contends that it is the environmental barriers and lack of inclusive support mechanisms, rather than the impairment itself, that marginalize disabled individuals from participating (Oliver, 1996). By active participation, stakeholders can chart gaps, trade resources, and devise tailor-made policies that address the peculiar needs of disabled youth, thereby maximizing their autonomy and integration into society. Also, the findings also reflect principles of the intersectional model in that they recognize more than one social identity and systemic structure that intersect to influence disabled young people's experiences and life chances (Thomas et al., 2023). In this respect, cross-sector working is vital to address disabled people's complex, intersecting barriers and ensure equitable access to life chances.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents and discusses data from a study that examined dynamics configuring post-academic pathways for school leavers with disabilities. Some of the data was displayed in tables by the researcher. It identifies key themes and conclusions derived from interviews, focus group discussions, and document analyses. The chapter explores the experiences, challenges, and opportunities that school leavers with disabilities encounter in making the transition to employment, further education, or independent living. The analysis brings out the roles of stakeholders, the effects of inclusive policies, and systemic barriers that these

individuals have to deal with. Overall, the findings give a complete picture of the factors affecting post-school outcomes for school leavers with disabilities with implications for policy and practice interventions to improve their outcomes.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter sought to provide the overview of the findings of the research on dynamics determining the post academic destinations of school leavers with disabilities in Zimbabwe in line with a case of Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa. The chapter reviews the study findings and acknowledged the research objectives that involved a study of the post academic accomplishments of disabled school leavers, in order to assess barriers that are hindrances to post-academic accomplishment of disabled school leavers, and progressing to work and integration into society and to conceptualize a support system towards the improvement of post academic accomplishments of disabled school leavers. Lastly this chapter also makes recommendations to stakeholders in an attempt to strengthen the policy and support frameworks for school leavers with disabilities.

5.1 Summary of Findings.

The above chapters presented the background of the study, literature review, methodology and presentation of data, analysis and discussion. The study sought to assess and provide an outline on the dynamics that affect the post academics achievement among school leavers who are disabled in Dzivarasekwa, Zimbabwe. The study was guided by three goals which were to investigate post academic lives of school leavers with disabilities, to assess obstacles hindering post-academic success of disabled school leavers, and employment transition and societal integration and to develop an outline of support towards increased post academic success for disabled school leavers. Social model of disability and Maslow's hierarchy of needs were utilized as theoretical frameworks of this study. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from purposively and snowball-sampled research participants. These comprised eight principal participants with different disabilities, ten FGD members whose parents are disabled school leavers and five key informants to comprise a total of twenty-three participants

Subsequently thematic data analysis was utilized in order to come up with main and sub themes for the research.

5.1.1: The Post-Academic Outcomes of School Leavers with Disabilities

The study explained that the post-educational outcomes of school leavers with disabilities were the core areas of employment, education and training access, social integration, and independent living.

Participants talked about the necessity for facilitating inclusive chances for work through accessible workplaces and facilitating policies and continued education and training access. Participants also indicated the need to overcome infrastructural as well as societal barriers, social acceptance and stigmatization reduction to promote social participation, and independent living facilitation by providing necessary resources, infrastructure, and life skills training. The study highlighted that, positive outcomes among school leavers with disabilities after schooling take a holistic perspective in regards to systemic reforms, improved awareness in society, and targeted support to enable full inclusion and independence in society.

5.1.2: Challenges That Hinder the Post-Academic Success of Disabled School Leavers.

The study elicited that disabled school leavers' post-academic success is hindered by several challenges, such as limited policy support, stigmatization, limited access to assistive equipment and facilities, physical and informational inaccessibility, inadequate support services, poor transition planning, and intersectional issues of race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

The study has shown that such barriers impact their independence, participation, and socio-economic integration. The study further deliberated on the fact that far-reaching policy reforms, a change in society's attitude, affordable infrastructure, personalized support, and an intersectional approach are required to eliminate such barriers for disability school leavers.

5.1.3: Framework to Support Post Academic Outcomes for Disability School Leavers

The study synthesized that facilitating post-school success for disabled school leavers requires a comprehensive framework premised on accessible career guidance, tailored transition planning, disability education and training, and effective stakeholder engagement.

The study credited successful collaborations among educators, employers, families, and policy makers to create inclusive environments that address diverse and intersecting needs of disabled individuals. The study also explained that the framework needs to give priority to early, personalized support, ongoing training towards the promotion of positive attitudes, and united action to ensure equal opportunities, ultimately towards independence and inclusion for disabled people.

5.2 Conclusions of the Findings

According to this study's evidence, it is evident that the post-school destinations of school leavers with disabilities in Zimbabwe are significantly influenced by a wide range of society, structure, and individual factors.

Barriers such as inadequate access to employment, inadequate support services, social stigma, infrastructure that is inaccessible, and inadequate policy implementation pose significant barriers to successful integration into society. Despite all efforts towards inclusive education and policy, far too many disabled young people continue to face systemic barriers that hinder their transition towards independence, quality work, and community participation. According to these findings, the study resolved that positive post-school outcomes for school leavers with disabilities require a multi-stakeholder approach that is comprehensive and inclusive in nature.

This must be led by an inclusive support system premised on accessible infrastructure, supportive services at the individual level, and a positive engagement of stakeholders. The framework must comprise policies for promoting disability awareness, adapting to societal attitudes, and addressing intersectional social disparities. Upon the use of a comprehensive framework, it is possible to create an inclusive society that promotes independence, productive work, and active social participation for disabled persons.

5.3: Implications to the Social Work Practice

This part will demonstrate the relevance of the study to social work practice. This will be achieved through describing social worker duties and how they affect successful outcomes for school leavers with disabilities.

Conducting awareness campaigns and imparting education on disability, reducing stigma and enhancing understanding in the society, is one very important duty. Through raising awareness on disability, social workers facilitate open-minded attitudes supporting participation of disabled youths in the full potential of society. The other key duty is advocacy. Social workers can promote the rights of individuals with disabilities by advocating to influence policies and ensure that their needs are prioritized. Through advocacy, they can obtain access to necessary resources, care services, and employment and social engagement opportunities. An active role has a key function in creating inclusive settings in which disabled youth can excel. Social workers are also brokers who refer young people to the right services, resources, and support structures that will facilitate successful school-to-work or school-to-further-education transition. They assess individual youths' needs and link them with specialist programs such as

vocational training, counselling, or health care. This way, they can ensure each youth receives tailored assistance aimed at achieving independence and integration into society.

Lastly, social workers facilitate stakeholder collaboration. They coordinate collaboration initiatives among schools, employers, community organizations, and families to create whole-person support networks. Through developing partnerships and building a holistic orientation, social workers influence systemic reform that promotes better post-educational outcomes and enables youths with disabilities to become empowered to participate fully in society.

5.4: Recommendations

•To the Families

Families must work together and provide primary support to disabled individuals whether emotional or physical. Active engagement of families in helping disabled youth is required. This will result in improved learning outcomes and motivation and help the disabled school leavers gain confidence.

•To the Community

The community is second to the family. The researcher postulates that communities need to be educated on disability so as to reduce stigmatization and improve acceptance and integration of disabled people. The community should provide a welcoming and conducive environment for people with disabilities.

•To the Government

The government must also ensure that it gives priority to equality in a manner where people with disabilities are provided with access without oppression by the able-bodied. The government must also carry out evaluation to ensure that the assistance they provide to people with disabilities reached the targets. The researcher also recommends the government to provide and assist people with disabilities with grants and funds for them to establish their income-generating projects that will enable them to be independent. The researcher also recommends the government to establish orderly transition support programs.

• To Relevant Stakeholders (NGOs, Community Organizations, Employers)

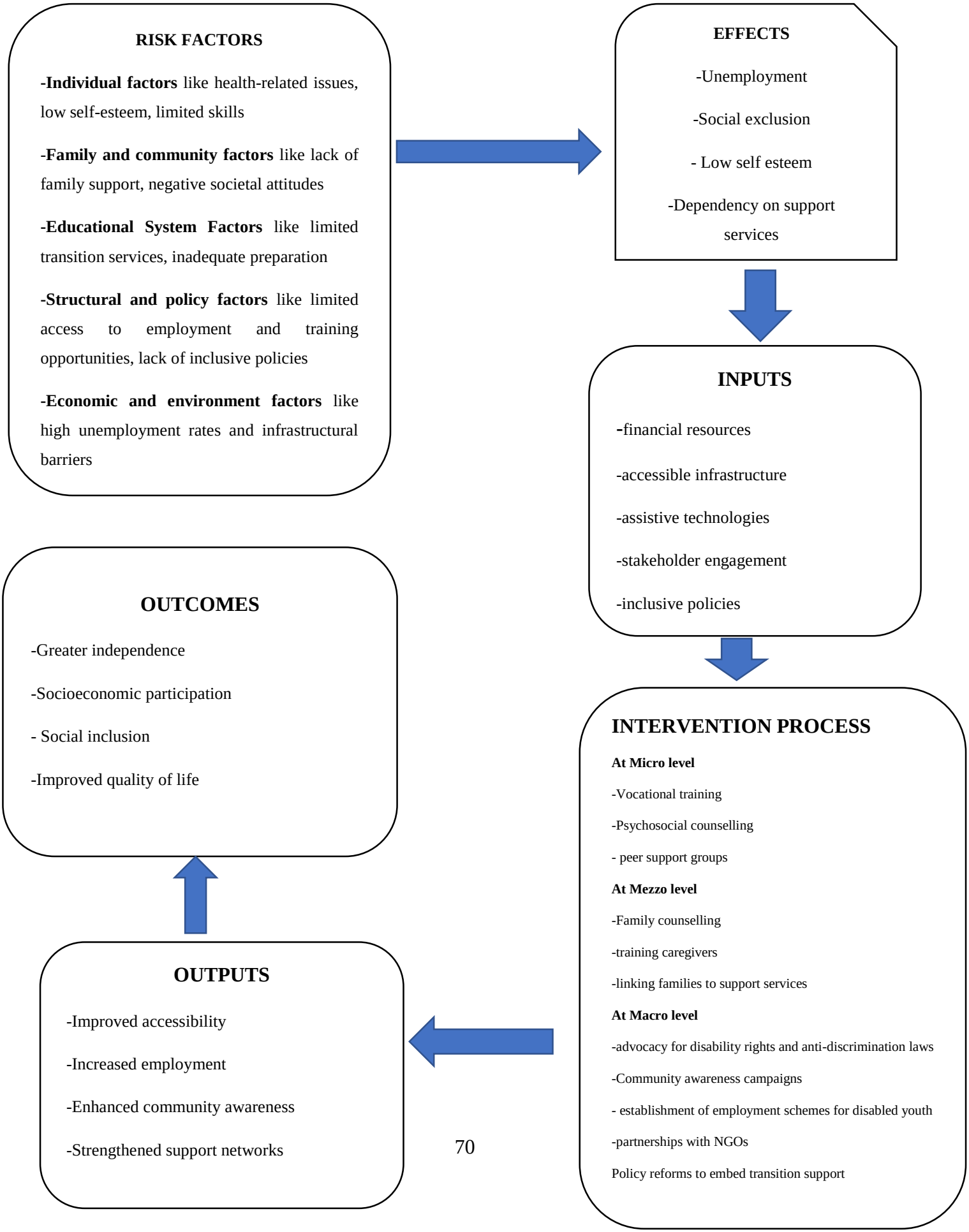
There should be more coordination among relevant organizations. This is likely to result in the establishment of an environment that is more inclusive and enabling to disabled people. Inclusive and enabling environment has the potential to reduce stigma and isolation, promote

a sense of belongingness to disabled school leavers thereby promoting better outcomes among disabled school leavers. All the stakeholders and NGOs have to come together and create a framework or strategic plan with defined roles, common goals, and resource allocation, and coordinated activities to support disabled school leavers. For instance, there is a need to increase employment opportunities.

- **To the Social Work Practice**

Periodic training of social workers in disability rights and assessment has to be undertaken. Social workers must be qualified enough to effectively advocate for and support disabled young people. For instance, social workers must perform most of the linking of disabled school leavers to resources.

Fig 5.4.1 Collaborative Care Framework on The Dynamics Affecting the Post-Academic Outcomes of Disabled School Leavers in Zimbabwe (CCF-DSLZ)



The Collaborative Care Framework on the Dynamics Affecting the Post-Academic Outcomes of Disabled School Leavers in Zimbabwe (CCF-DSLZ) was designed after the researcher managed to collect data so as to come up with a practical collaborative framework that can be used to address the complex challenges faced by disabled school leavers.

The first stage of the framework shows various risk factors affecting the transition and outcomes for disabled school leavers, and these are grouped into individual, family and community, educational system, structural and policy, and economic and environmental factors. These factors lead to the second stage which are the effects. Participants mentioned effects such as limited employment opportunities, social exclusion, low self-esteem, and dependency on support systems. The third stage comprises of the necessary inputs like resources, policies, and stakeholder commitments including financial support, accessible infrastructure, assistive technologies, stakeholder engagement, inclusive policies, and disability awareness training.

The fourth stage involves targeted interventions at macro, mezzo, and micro levels. At macro-level participants suggested interventions which advocacy, anti-discrimination laws, and employment schemes, at mezzo-level family counselling, caregiver training, and linking families to support services; and micro-level interventions suggested includes vocational training, psychosocial counselling, and peer support groups to empower individuals directly. The fifth stage focuses on outputs which are the immediate results o fthe intervention process and these include improved accessibility, increased employment, greater community awareness, and stronger support networks, while the final stage comprises of the long-term outcomes like enhanced independence, socioeconomic participation, social inclusion, and improved quality of life for disabled school leavers.

This framework is important because it helps individuals and stakeholders to visualize or picture the dynamic process involved in improving the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers. If taken into consideration, this framework provides a clear roadmap for how risk factors can be addressed through targeted interventions at different levels which include micro, mezzo, and macro so as to attain successful and sustainable outcomes. Because disabled people are generally part of the vulnerable population, the researcher aims to be the voice of those vulnerable individuals, especially disabled school leavers, to advocate for their needs and to establish a comprehensive support framework that promotes their successful transition and improved post-academic outcomes.

5.5: Areas of Further Study

The study was confined to a Zimcare Trust school in Dzivarasekwa, it was not readily translated to the objective reality of other special schools sharing the same cosmology with that of Zimcare Trust in Dzivarasekwa or of different setting altogether. Thus, the findings laid herein are a summary of a microscopic dimension of the possible picturesque of outcomes that can be realized in all special schools in Zimbabwe. A country wide survey on this theme could found the basis for generating a comprehensive and mandatory policies targeting the promotion of post academic outcomes of school leavers with disabilities. The researcher also recommends that further research should be done on the strategies to effectively implement and improve these policies to better support disabled school leavers.

5.6: Chapter Summary:

The preceding chapter gave a summary of research findings, it made conclusions and gave recommendations for improving the post academic outcomes of school leavers with disability. The chapter also addressed study findings linking them to the study objectives. The chapter identified challenges like limited access to assistive technology, insufficient policy and legislative support, negative impact of stigma and stereotyping, limited access to support services and inadequate transition planning and support as major factors affecting the post academic outcomes of school leavers with disabilities. These therefore led to solutions like access to career guidance and mentorship, transition planning band support, disability awareness and training as well as stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The chapter also offered recommendations to the families, community, government, relevant stakeholders as well as to the social work practice in advancing the framework and improving the post academic outcomes of these individuals. The chapter also highlights research gaps and how they inform future studies.

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APPENDIX 1: APPROVAL LETTER

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF INTERVIEW GUIDES

Researcher: Dandadzi Emma **B210671B**

I am student at Bindura University of Science Education studying for Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work. As a requirement for the fulfilment of my degree program, l am carrying out research on the topic**: "A framework on the dynamics affecting the post-academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe. A case of Zimcare Trust, Dzivarasekwa."**

I am kindly asking you to assist by completing the attached guide and may you please give honest answers to the best of your knowledge

The guide is designed purely for academic purposes, and the information provided shall be furnished to Bindura University of Science Education for marking. Your confidentiality is guaranteed as the information on drafts will not disclose any names. The use of pseudo names is also advised for the upkeep of your confidentiality.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, please feel free to contact Emma Dandadzi at emmadandadzi@gmail.com or 0783810019

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Participant Signature …….

Researcher's Signature……

APPENDEX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRIMARY RESPONDENTS

1. Name and gender
2. Age and marital status
3. What are your experiences in finding employment or pursuing further education after leaving school?
4. Can you identify specific challenges or barriers you faced during your transition from school to employment or post-secondary education as a person with a disability?
5. What type of support or resources (from schools, community organisation or employers) do you feel would have been beneficial during your transition from school?
6. In your opinion, what strategies or changes could be implemented to improve the post academic outcomes for school leavers with disabilities in your community?

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX 4: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS OR GURDIANS ON THE DYNAMICS AFFECTING THE POST-ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF DISABLED SCHOOL LEAVERS IN ZIMBABWE.

Section A: Participant Background Information

1. Name
2. Role or relationship with the disabled school leaver (for example, parent, foster parent, caregiver).
3. How long have you been in this role?

Section B: Understanding Dynamics or Factors Affecting the Post Academic Outcomes of Disabled School Leavers

1. How would you define disability and also post academic outcomes?
2. In your experience what are some of the factors affecting the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers.
3. What are your observations on the post academic outcomes experienced by your child after leaving school? Please share any achievements, challenges or experiences related to their employment, further education or skill development.
4. What are some of the programmes that have been put in place to enhance the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers.

Section C: Existing Intervention Strategies

1. What intervention strategies are currently being used to support disabled school leavers?
2. How do you think these strategies are helping disabled school leavers?
3. How do you perceive the role of organisations like Zimcare Trust in supporting school leavers with disabilities? What are additional initiatives or improvements would you suggest to enhance their support framework for disabled school leavers?

Section D Challenges and Barriers

1. What are some of the challenges faced by disabled school leavers?
2. What are some of the factors affecting the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers?

Section E: Measures That Can Be Utilised to Address the Challenges Faced and Recommendations for Improvement

1. What forms of support do you think are necessary to improve the post academic outcomes for disabled school leavers? Are there specific resources, programs or community services that you believe could be beneficial?
2. What role do you think government, NGOs and the community should play in improving the post academic outcomes of disabled school leavers in Zimbabwe?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!

APPENDIX 5: GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH IDENTIFIED KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. How do you define disability in your context?
2. What evidence do we currently have regarding the post academic outcomes of school leavers with disabilities in our community? How do these outcomes compare to those of their non-disabled peers?
3. What are the most significant barriers that you believe impact the successful transition of disabled school leavers into employment or further education? Are these barriers systemic, societal or personal in nature?
4. In your opinion, how well are schools and educational institutions prepare students with disabilities for post academic life? What improvements could be made in this area?
5. From an employment standpoint, what challenges do employers face in hiring individuals with disabilities? What misconception or biases exist that might hinder the employment of these individuals?
6. Are there any existing programs or support initiatives that you believe that you believe are effective in assisting disabled school leavers? What are their strengths, and what areas could use improvement?
7. What specific recommendations do you have for establishing a comprehensive support framework aimed at improving post academic outcomes for disabled school leavers? What key elements should this framework include?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE