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The new market logic of the 1990s required universities to provide employment-ready programmes for graduates, with training in a variety of areas that were more practical than academic. In addition, the free market and neoliberal logics and principles became entrenched in universities in Africa, and competition was promoted as a strategy for increasing productivity and quality in HE (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Naidoo & Williams, 2015). In addition, the logic also advanced a managerial form of university administration. However, these logics and reforms started shaping HE so it became understood as exclusionary and elitist, with universities prioritising the recruitment of only the brightest and the best to sustain their reputational advantage, thus promoting competition (Reay & Hinings, 2005; Leathwood & Read, 2009). Similar trends were also picked up by Gumport (2019) as she tracked how the same industrial and market logic impacted American public higher education.

Although the marketisation of education demanded major adjustments from the universities in Africa, this did not stem the pressure of additional influences on HE. Here I highlight the logics of diversification, internationalisation and massification, which also opened access to a greater number of students from diverse backgrounds (Tomlinson, 2021). The work of Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) also highlights another important logic that has been reignited in African HE, the decolonial debate, and this has led to a transformational logic. This logic attempts to deal with the vestiges of colonial legacy in institutions and the structures of society. Scholars like, du Toit (2000), Jansen (2003) and Badat (2010) point out how this logic is making headway in HE, especially in some African contexts like South Africa that are still being haunted by

colonial legacies. The convergence of all these logics, shifts and events in HE spaces put increasing pressure on university spaces (Tomlinson, 2018). Questions of equity regarding gender, urban vs. rural areas, financial capacity, geographic and regional locations, ability and ethnicity, started to be raised (Altbach, 2010).

The above complex interplay of logics, events and influences unleashed a tug of war in HEI as they faced difficulties when trying to balance historically contentious terrains, which were characterised by demands driven by ethics, industries, market and knowledge economies, rights, interests, corruption and statutory obligations as referenced by Tomlinson (2013) and Jansen (2023). HE stakeholders, including academics, students, families and administrators, had to navigate their roles and identities within institutional contexts that were being pulled by different logics and trends. A classic example of this convergence is the #fees must fall and #Rhodes must fall movement that exposed financial and curriculum inequality in South African universities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). With such a loaded terrain of institutional interests, it is difficult for inclusive policies for students with disabilities to be positioned and operationalised (Moriña, 2017; Bunbury, 2020).

Notwithstanding the complex context that HE navigates, it is crucial to acknowledge that, in various nations, government policy initiatives have paved the way towards adjusting educational policy and practice to promote non-discriminatory practices by adjusting and expanding access for students with disabilities to HE (Tinklin et al., 2004). Institutions of higher learning now need a number of official procedures to be in place to support SWD in HE. Wray (2013) points to the following policies and procedures:

1. Equality policies (Disability Statement);
2. Reasonable adjustment considerations (e.g. additional time in exams);

3. Disability Student Assistance (covers extra disability related costs or expenses in HE - e.g. specialist equipment such as computer software or recording equipment; non-medical helpers such as readers, note takers or tutors; aid with travel costs or others aspects, such as photocopying);
4. Advisor(s) on disability support (or, otherwise, a named person responsible for organising support);
5. Departmental Disability Coordinator or other named person responsible for coordinating departmental support).

Official procedures allow a university to centralise the administration of its disability support services. To affirm this point, a study by Burgstahler (2020) highlights how providing these support services for universities is a delicate task that poses challenges with regards to equal access, funding, perceptions of disability, assessment and identification and the accessibility of resources and knowledge, owing to the complex shifts in HE. This difficult setting provides the context for reviewing research on the progress of policy support services for students with disabilities in various HE contexts, globally.

### ***2.6.2 Higher education disability policy support responses***

Globally, HE as a system has been gaining mileage in the provision of policy support for students with disabilities. Although it is far from ideal, legislation is in place to allow institutions all over the world to take any action to address the various needs of their students (Shevlin et al., 2004). Thus, tracking HEIs' responses to policies and provisions in various educational systems is crucial.

First, research by Tinklin et al. (2004), Harrison et al. (2009) and Redpath et al. (2013) from European countries such as Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland suggests positive policy responses to the needs of students with disabilities. These include universities having the

necessary structures and staff in place, enthusiasm and innovation amongst staff in helping students and students reporting timely delivery of provision. Good practice has been reported in both the teaching and learning aspects of HE (Fuller et al., 2004; Madriaga et al., 2008). In addition, a study about the learning experiences of students with disabilities in Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at six HEIs, reports that:

Perhaps the most surprising finding is that ... over half of disabled students, and often as many as three quarters of them, have not experienced disability related barriers with different forms of teaching and learning. Even field trips, where it might be expected that the barriers to learning would be highest, only one in five disabled students reported they had experienced difficulties. (Hall & Healey, 2004, p. 23)

Even outside the United Kingdom, positive experiences have been reported in Cyprus regarding extra time being given to students with disabilities during examinations (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008), while in African countries such as Namibia (Hugo, 2012) and Tanzania (Tuomi et al., 2015), positive disability policy experiences have been reported. The literature highlights policy inroads that have encouraged the embedding of inclusive cultures in HEIs.

However, challenges remain in policy provision for SWD. First, disability policy support services do not operate in a vacuum; they are influenced by broader, complex HE dynamics such as massification, quality assurance, marketisation of education and types of management and how these dynamics create tensions when implementing disability support. The literature reveals institutional dynamics including how language, quality assurance and internal audit processes influence how different HEIs, or the departments within them, respond to disability matters (Riddell et al., 2007; May & Bridger, 2010). Other factors impinging on policy provision for students with disabilities include complexities with defining disability, a lack of tutors with appropriate training, staff members who resist training, limited finances, lack of a

policy document, no guidelines for faculty, staff and students involved in services for students with disabilities, disclosure procedures and the management of data on students with disabilities (Singleton & Aisbitt, 2001; Barer, 2007; Harrison et al., 2009; FOTIM, 2011; Hugo 2012).

Research is showing how engaging in disability-related issues at policy level is complex and warrants an understanding of each HEI's history and culture from a multi-perspective view. Ultimately, this study argues that, with the major advancements in disability models and legislative policy frameworks, there has been progress in the framing of disability in the policy spaces of HE. The dynamics between these two variables are complex and have led to significant changes in university spaces.

The following sections will review literature that explores some of the many effects the disability policies have had on the experiences of students with disabilities, curricula, funding, the built environment, the role of assistive technology and disability units (DU).

### ***2.6.3 Personal student experiences of policy provisions***

University disability policy provisions have, as their core purpose, improvement of the lived experiences of students with disabilities. Therefore, it is worth reviewing literature that tracks students' experiences with these policies in universities. Research is generally observing positive experiences regarding timely delivery of timetables and library services (Redpath et.al., 2013), benefits from peer networking, study groups, social support and access to the built environment, especially housing on campus (Soorenian, 2013; Tuomi et al., 2015). Similarly, Matshedisho (2010) established that students with disabilities credited their supportive friends from their induction onwards for their accomplishments on their university journey. In addition, Magongwa (2008) notes benefits for deaf students resulting from institutional policy

and cultural commitment to deaf education, for example, through the availability of interpreting services.

I argue that the above pockets of positive experiences validate and confirm the importance of access and social support in boosting feelings of security, belonging and self-worth for students with disabilities, as is corroborated by Hadjikakou and Hartas (2008), Vickerman and Blundell (2010) and Couzens et al. (2015).

When reflecting on student experiences described in the literature, there are also disparities in how students experience the inclusive policy support given by universities. To start exploring this point, this study engages with research by Pansiri and Sinkamba (2017) who observed institutional complacency in funding academic programmes while neglecting the role of psychosocial support for students with disabilities. Here I also reference studies by McAllister et al. (2014), which report on the non-availability of counselling services for SWD at peak times, such as the run-up to examinations.

Roux and Burnett (2010) observed policy oversight on issues surrounding co-curricular activities, such as sport, that involved inaccessible infrastructure and exclusionary practices. To thrive in sport, students had to rely on their network of coaches, friends and relatives. Research also reflects on student accommodation, and student experience reveals assumptions about ability and preference when placing them in accommodation (Soorenian, 2013). In collating the above studies, one can argue that HE is haunted by the expectation that all students will comply with a predetermined institutional standard, despite their differences in ability. Furthermore, student experiences do not seem to be the best basis for evaluating the quality of education. To counter these oversights and the exclusions of ableism, Roux and Burnet (2010) suggest that students in HEI should be encouraged to participate in the decision-making and framing of policy.

Other studies also reflect the broader disadvantage that students with disabilities experience in relation to experiences with curriculum delivery, which include ignorance by professors about inclusive teaching practices and knowledge about disability (Crous, 2004). Mayat and Amosun (2011) also highlight the lack of understanding from lecturers towards students with disabilities and their accommodation after being accepted into a Civil Engineering programme. This study exposed a lack of training in embedding an inclusive culture into university functions such as teaching and learning. Similarly, Manungo and Dohwe (2023) point out how attitudes and stereotypes of students with disabilities affect their learning experiences and continue to disadvantage these students.

From the above review of studies done, there is clearly a need for more research that pays attention to the experiences of students with disabilities and gives them a voice to expose the hidden hurdles (Healey et al., 2006; Fuller et al., 2008; Getzel, 2008; Seale et. al., 2015; Mutanga, 2017b). Therefore, it is important to comprehend both the obstacles and the resources that influence how students with disabilities experience HE (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Quinlan et al., 2012; Hadley, 2014).

#### ***2.6.4 Higher education curriculum /pedagogical experiences***

An important aspect of any university experience revolves around the curriculum and the pedagogical methods employed. Therefore, a major part of the policy protection offered to students with disabilities involves pedagogical issues and assessment concerns. Studies show that there are tensions in debates about SWD regarding access to curricula that revolve around merit and equity (Reay, 1998; Read et al., 2003; Nkoane, 2006; Leach 2013). Other studies focus on what can be done. For instance, Terzi (2014) suggests a more holistic framework for curricula for SWD that considers aspects such as schooling, policy, curriculum, leadership, ethos and pedagogy. Others specifically look at accessible teaching approaches for SWD that

encourage physical changes in classroom arrangements and modes of communication that allow for independent interaction with the subject content (Habulezi & Pasha, 2012).

At the same time, research is reflecting challenges to the provision of support in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. The literature is highlighting staff resistance and lack of enthusiasm in adapting to curriculum and assessment practices (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010; McCluskey et al., 2011; Love et al., 2015). Other scholars are exploring how rigid curricula and attitudes affect students with disabilities and how HEIs prioritise their evaluation processes over areas such as the curriculum (Gelbar et al., 2015; Martins et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). In synthesising the above literature, one cannot fail to note how institutions may seemingly have good policies, yet often, these are not supported by appropriate staff training in their role of making education accessible. This is also highlighted by Vickerman and Blundell (2010). Moreover, this seems to imply that it is conceivable for students with disabilities to be admitted to HEIs without the curricula being modified to take into account their interests or fresh perspectives.

The literature also highlights good policy practices in this area (Fuller et al., 2004; Madriaga, 2008). Studies by Hall and Healey (2004) and Fuller et al. (2004) reflect student satisfaction and a lack of barriers with various forms of teaching and assessment. Other examples of good practice include studies by Hadjidakou and Hartas (2010) and Waterfield et al. (2006), which note the benefits of extra time given for assessment, spreading out modules across a semester and extending the duration of time for taking a course. The positive policy support shows the positive role of prioritising policy support that encourages inclusive pedagogical and curriculum practices.

McGregor et al. (2016) argue critically that the retention of SWD at university level is affected by the extent to which they feel included and integrated into the institutions' academic contexts.

Thus, curriculum and pedagogy are powerful influences on the retention and academic success of students with disabilities. Ultimately, Moisa & Phasha (2017) highlight a disjuncture between what policies articulate and the practical provision of the support when it comes to curriculum and pedagogy. Therefore, there is a need for further research in this area because curricula are centres of power and their framing is important to understand (Sayed, 2003; Kimball et al., 2017; Ahmad, 2018).

#### ***2.6.5 Higher education assistive technology policy progress***

The use of assistive technologies is crucial in the development of inclusive environments so that they do not continue with unfair practices. The role of technology, such as computers, laptops and mobile phones, is central to improving the learning and achievement of SWD within the classroom setting (Bond, 2014; Malcolm & Roll, 2017; Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022).

Studies by Borg et al. (2012) and Clouder et al. (2019) show how assistive technologies give students with disabilities the ability to enjoy their human right to learning in a class by affording them the independence to execute activities they previously could not. Furthermore, McNicholl et al. (2021) observe how the use of assistive technologies can help improve academic performance and the success of students with disabilities by enabling learning and engagement with educational content. Therefore, there are benefits to having policy provision for assistive technologies. However, there is very limited research in developing countries that explores the impact of assistive technology policy provision in HE (Malcolm & Roll, 2017).

Despite the commendable possibilities that assistive technologies offer, research has also looked at how policy support relating to assistive technology affects how students with disabilities learn. For instance, Mokiwa and Phasha (2012) and Sukhraj-Ely (2008) highlight challenges with software such as JAWS, PowerPoint presentations and other visual

technologies, which are challenging for students who are blind or visually challenged. Similarly, Kajee's (2010) research on an online and a face-to-face technology-based English course at a South African institution revealed that, as a result of pedagogical issues, the single student in the class who was blind felt helpless and alone the majority of the time. These findings emphasise the need for caution and scrutiny of the provisions intended to support students with disabilities because they may end up disadvantaging them. As a result, consideration for an inclusive disability policy must include a study of the environment, as opposed to being an afterthought.

At this point, it is important to highlight that assistive technologies are still a challenge in many developing countries because of several factors that include lack of funding, lack of relevant legislation and policies and lack of trained personnel (Tangcharoensathien et al., 2018; Munyoro et al., 2021). Strikingly, there is a considerable need for assistive technologies in southern Africa with only 15–25% of students in HE having access to them (Matter et al., 2016; Matter & Eide, 2018). Therefore, the provision gap in making assistive technologies available in HE has implications for the quality of the learning experiences that students with disabilities are afforded. This is further complicated by the fact that many students are unable to purchase the necessary devices on their own (Tangcharoensathien et al., 2018).

#### ***2.6.6 Higher education built environment policy progress***

Most African public HEIs have a colonial history and the built environment tends to be a challenge to access, especially for SWDs, who historically had limited access to and enrolment in education due to structural and social bottlenecks that ignored and overlooked their needs (Oyaro, 2015; Mubiru, 2022). The advent and recognition of inclusive education in the HE space also brought challenges for students with disabilities in relation to the physical location and structural design of universities (Riddell et al., 2005; Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007; Vickerman

& Blundell, 2010). However, research is advocating the importance of affording SWD access to HE that is similar to that of those who are not disabled (Bhattacharya, 2010; Dispenza, 2019; Tudzi et al., 2020). This has implications for the quality of learning experiences and retention of students with disabilities in HE. Campuses with accessible buildings and classrooms enable SWDs to finish their HE.

Although, HE is making headway in adjusting the built environment, as seen by the growing interest in evaluating a building's compliance and inclusivity towards SWD (Keerthirathna et al., 2010; FOTIM, 2011; Lau et al., 2016). Research is also showing how challenges with the accessibility of buildings and the related facilities persist. This, in turn, impacts on the inclusion of SWDs on campus, as highlighted by Chauhan (2021) and Losinsky et al. (2003). More specifically, Toutain (2019) points out how an inaccessible learning environment is a significant challenge. This includes a lack of dropped kerbs, a steep ramp gradient, rough and slippery surfaces, narrow pavements, a lack of handrails on ramps, a lack of resting areas or landings on stairs and ramps and poorly maintained facilities for the disabled (Baris & Uslu, 2009; Sarma, 2016). In addition, the evidence reveals a significant barrier to completion for students with disabilities due to physical access (Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007; Jameel, 2011; Majoko, 2018). Such obstacles prevent students from moving around the campus' constructed environment and limits the educational engagement of SWD.

Therefore, to realise inclusion for SWD, the relevance of accessible and inclusive public physical institutional structures and the social milieu in which they are located cannot be ignored (Lau et al., 2016). This will entail HE wrestling with considerations of crucial architectural components, especially ramps, staircases, pathways or walks, hallways, doors, and entrances, in trying to improve independent use of the facilities for SWD (Osman et al., 2015). Research also tasks institutions with the responsibility of making sure that buildings around campuses are accessible (Jameel, 2011; Cheryan et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2020).

### ***2.6.7 Higher education disability funding policy progress***

When considering any policy issue, funding is a critical component and research has not fully explored funding in HE for SWD (Yang & McCall, 2014). Funding is key to facilitating the inclusion of SWD by providing the type of help that SWD need to perform at their best in the HE living and learning contexts (Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019). It can, therefore, be reasonably concluded that SWD cannot simply be treated as a component of the larger and general funding discussion. Research on funding policies for SWD shows that some countries in the Global North are reporting steady growth of good policies and practices (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). For instance, in the UK context, the Funding Council provided approximately £150 million for roughly 60 000 students in 2012–2013, providing a variety of specialised tools and additional assistance for students with disabilities (Times Higher Education, 2015). On the other hand, HEIs in the Global South have been criticised for rarely prioritising spending on projects geared towards inclusive education, including funding for disability (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002).

Very limited research has tracked how African universities are navigating the funding of disability inclusion (Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019). The limited research available shows how one country, South Africa, through its implementation of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has led to noticeable changes in the HE sector, which, in turn, has led to a rise in the number of SWD enrolling at HEIs (University World News, 2011; Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2014; Wilson-Strydom, 2015; Hammond, 2015).

Reports in South Africa also highlight challenges with the funding scheme, as bursaries take longer to reach SWD and there is a constant reduction of financial resources for DU, causing institutions to replace preferred pricey options with inexpensive assistive devices (DHET, 2009). Ndlovu and Woldegiorgis (2023) also reflect on how inadequate funding in the Global South keeps students economically disadvantaged, including by placing SWD in debt.

Pockets of good practice in Africa were observed by Abrahams et al. (2023) in their study of student experiences in Ghana, Ethiopia and South Africa. This study revealed how SWD benefitted from the financial support they received in the form of scholarship funding for their education. Some students expressed their appreciation for this support as it provided an opportunity for them to attend university. Thus, both negative and positive funding complexities, especially in Africa, influence the learning experiences of SWD.

Similarly, research is highlighting how globally, government funding for universities is drastically declining, while student fees are rising, affecting how well universities are able to function (De Jager & Gbadamosi, 2010). For instance, McGrath (2014) discovered that reductions in public financing had a negative impact on fairness in admission for many students, including those with disabilities, in ten European HE systems.

However, these funding cuts have also increased reliance on private financing as a source of income for HEI (European Union, 2014; Dunn, 2016). Ryan (2017) observes that, as a result, SWD are now in debt and lack access to care, such as a personal assistant who would enable them to attend classes physically. Lastly, literature on funding challenges that DU and SWD face, especially in Africa, are limited and more exploration is required. In the above studies on funding, many of the studies reflect national initiatives and the dynamics of funding disability. However, there is a lack of research on individual institutional funding policies and practice.

#### ***2.6.8 Higher education disability units and policy progress***

As international, regional and national inclusive frameworks began to emerge, and universities became institutionally aligned and started framing policies, the role of DU emerged to coordinate efforts to ensure that all departments aligned with policy and served SWD (Nel et al., 2016). Studies in Africa are showing evidence of the benefits of having a DU. For example, research by Matshedisho (2010) in South Africa revealed that 25% of the study's participants

with disability felt at ease and welcome upon entering the university because of the assistance provided by the DU.

Literature on DU in Africa highlights their limitations and difficulties, despite their positive contribution to the inclusion of students with disabilities in HE (Howell, 2019). Studies by FOTIM (2011) and Naidoo (2010) show how DU have limited options and lack independent functioning because they can be placed under different departments, such as student affairs or counselling for students. Thus, most disability-related concerns are handled apart from other inclusion goals. For example, Lyner-Cleophas et al. (2014) observed that there are clashes of departmental strategies, definitions and visions; for example, those DU led by Counselling Services saw disability through a pathological lens and reinforced the idea that it is a medical issue. Such differences in the understanding of disability have implications for the categorisation and defining of SWD in HEIs. Subsequently, this promotes fragmented management of disability at many HEIs as DU position themselves reactively. In addition, others have pointed out that the establishment of a DU has kept students with disabilities out of mainstream HE activities (FOTIM, 2011; DHET, 2013; Pudaruth et al., 2017). It is important to acknowledge that not all HEIs offer accommodation to students with various disabilities.

Research in Africa is also pointing to variations in how DU operate. Chataika (2007) and FOTIM (2011) observed the tendency by some larger DU to cater for the majority of demands related to disabilities. However, Howell (2005) observed that the more seasoned, long-standing and well-resourced DU may not always follow best practices, thus having more resources does not always translate into using the best strategies for the SWD. Conversely, Chataika (2007) and FOTIM (2011) also picked up that the newer and smaller DU tends to cater for visually and physically challenged students. Specifically, the FOTIM (2011) research found that some of the smaller DU from historically Black universities in South Africa, although having limited financial resources, showed increasing best practice traits and innovation. This however, does

not negate how financial limitations also have an impact on how DU operate (Howell, 2005; Matshedisho, 2007a). Other challenges for DU include being understaffed and having a lack of resources, which impacts on provision for SWD (Sukhraj-Ely, 2008; Naidoo, 2010; Tugli et al., 2013).

The above review reveals a need for more study into the significance of the DU. It needs to engage with the employees of these units and discover how they interact with policy and implement the provisions in the policies. The role of a DU, in terms of inclusiveness and the requirements for students with disability to succeed in HE, requires research exploration around creating policy and policy provisions. This study gave priority to engaging with professionals from DU.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The above presentation of the reviewed literature shows that developing policies that are inclusive for students with disabilities is difficult and requires greater research attention. The review outlined the research on the contestations around defining disability, policy-framing models and legislation. It is clear that different policies and approaches to disabilities in HE exist at the international, regional, national and institutional levels and have influenced different HE contexts. The review also revealed variations in how different HEIs respond to the requirements of students with disabilities, and how there is a lack of integration between disability policies and practices. These differences highlight the need for comparative research to explore how the policy framing of disability unpacks itself in different institutional contexts.

The next chapter will detail an eclectic mix of the three conceptual frameworks used to guide this study.

## **Chapter Three: Conceptual Frameworks**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this research was to subject university policies to scrutiny by exploring the framing of student disability. This required an alternative theoretical approach, one that is expansive, eclectic and responsive to context and eschews the conventional rigid formulaic theorising of policy making across all nations. This research, therefore, advances a contextualised model of looking into the policy-framing space in universities. It took into account the policy itself, stakeholders, context-drivers and mediators, and how the relationship among stakeholders influences the framing of policy in unique university contexts and how this framing translates into experiences for those represented by the framing and those that administer the policy every day.

This chapter will discuss the three conceptual frameworks that include What's the Problem Represented to be? (WPR), Institutional Logics (IL) and Civic Epistemologies (CE) that contributed different dimensions that developed the framework used in this study. This framework provided a starting point for discussing policy framing in university settings. The next sections will go into detailed presentation of the frameworks used in the study.

### **3.2 WPR: What's the Problem Represented to Be?**

The first framework this study considered was WPR by Carol Bacchi. This lens shifts our attention from the traditional way of looking at policies as representing solutions to problems that have been identified in a society. WPR offers an alternative approach that focuses on problem-questioning rather than problem-solving. Underpinning its challenge to the traditional way of policy analysis, WPR follows the simple logic that proposals to do something reveal what we think has to change, hence our thinking about an issue or proposal is problematic: 'That is, what the "problem" is represented or constituted to be' (Bacchi, 2016, p. 8).

Central to the WPR approach is the way problem representations can produce ‘particular forms of subjectivity’ which has a strong bearing on how we see others and ourselves (Bacchi, 1999, p. 7). Therefore, the understanding and perception of problems inform what is attended to and what is not. Thus, policies contain both explicit (clearly defined) problems, and implicit (implied) representations of what is considered to be the problem. Drawing from this understanding of problem representations, this study used the thinking insights from Bacchi’s (1999) WPR approach on disability policy documents and it afforded this study a means to see more deeply than the explicit policy representations of problems and the suggested solutions. The framework was important for exploring the implications behind the thinking of policy issues ‘and for how the people involved are treated, and are evoked to think about themselves’ (Bacchi, 2009, p. 1).

In analysing policy, Bacchi also underscores that analysis has to shift from looking at policy as a solution to policy containing problems of understanding and interpretation of issues (Bacchi, 1999). WPR directed this study to look more closely into the implicit meanings of problems by analysing the solutions. Accordingly, Bacchi (1999), critically analysing solutions in policy documents, tends to reflect interpretations and representations of an individual or group’s (government for example) understanding of public issues. However, Bacchi (1999) also points out that other interpretations of these issues go unnoticed or undiscussed, as the individual or group’s interpretation of the issue is privileged over others and, in such cases, she encourages the recognition of the other interpretations of issues as a way to better understand the many and diverse ways of approaching public issues. This brings to the fore the role of discourse which Bacchi (1999) defines as language, concepts and categories used in framing an issue.

Thus, this study benefitted from closely exploring the role of language, concepts and categories pertaining to an issue in policy, and, importantly, also exploring how they can become

dominant representations of problems (Bacchi, 1999). Therefore, WPR buttresses the understanding that policy shapes problems and makes them exist as certain types of problems (Bacchi, 2009). Hence, this study focused on the knowledge that shaped the defining and understanding of disability as a university policy problem.

In addition, the WPR approach brings to the fore how the processes of framing problems are contestable and how the importance of questioning how policy issues tend to be problematised or shaped as a particular kind of ‘problem’ (Bacchi, 2009). This approach to policy enabled this study to look into disability policy-framing not as a process of problem-solving, but rather of problem construction. It also allowed this research to interrogate the conceptual foundations further of how student disability is represented in policy. WPR also helps question ‘truths’ or taken-for-granted knowledge in policies, and to explore what they ‘make happen’ with respect to governing practices and behaviours (Bacchi 2009). It is important to clarify that this analysis, using Bacchi’s WPR, does not intend to present solutions for policies, but to establish how problems are represented, the implications of such representations and their effects. The framework also helped this research to analyse the discursive elements of policy that are socially created, emerging at certain moments and, in particular, policy contexts (Goodwin, 2012).

Bacchi (2009) purposed WPR to be used to probe how policy communities represent and shape issues and the approach poses six questions as shown in **Appendix L**. The analysis of policy documents and interview transcripts in this study was done based on three questions selected from the six listed in Bacchi’s (2009) WPR approach, namely:

1. What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the ‘problem’?
3. What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?

The study only deals with these three questions since the purpose is to establish the problem representations in university disability policies and to analyse the effects of the problem representations. Below is a detailed description of each question.

### ***3.2.1 What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?***

The concept of problematisation in the WPR approach draws from and blends the works of Freire (1996) and Foucault (1998). The framework incorporates Freire's focus of interrogating taken for granted 'truths' so as to show how dominant groups in society use them to marginalise subordinate groups (Bacchi, 2012). Bacchi also added the dimension of problematisation, as used by Foucault (1998). The term refers to a method of analysis that sheds light on the thought behind particular forms of rule by questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, especially assumptions underpinning expert knowledge in modern societies. The method of analysis encourages interrogating the how and why certain practices and behaviours become problems (Foucault, 1985); in addition, how social phenomena and issues are shaped as particular objects for thought (Deacon, 2000; Bacchi, 2012). For example, in this study, 'disability' is constructed as a problem in particular ways, in particular, socio-political circumstances at universities, which become socially accepted as givens. Disability does not 'exist' as an object of thought until it is produced by practices (for example, policies, regulations, expert discourses) (Bacchi, 2012). This analysis of problematisation has a particular interest in the knowledge through which rules takes place, and 'how men govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth' (Foucault, 1991, p. 79).

This question is important for this study as it allowed the research process to do what Bacchi (2009, p. 2) refers to as a 'clarification exercise'. It allows this study to identify implicit problem representations of student disabilities. According to Bacchi (2009), if feelings about something can influence suggestions about issues, policy proposals can reveal how thoughts

about an issue are shaped. The policy analysis works backwards from what is stated as solutions to reveal the implicit problem in the policy documents (Bacchi, 2009). The clarification exercise, according to Bacchi (2009), helped this research move away from the assumptions that policymakers are the only ones who can fix and attend to public issues, and that problems only exist outside the policy process.

This research viewed policy documents as containing proposals, and therefore there might be more than one problem representation (Bacchi, 2009). This question also required the researcher to merge into the analysis of definitions the identifying of categories (also defined as concepts) that play an integral role in the governing process; for example, age categories and disease categories (Bacchi, 2009). However, Bacchi (2009) stresses that this question's analysis places more emphasis on 'people categories', mainly because of their importance in the governing process; for example, the role played by citizens, students and mothers. This study's analysis required the same in-depth analysis of categories of disabilities so that one can establish the role categories play in providing specific meaning to problem representations.

### ***3.2.2 What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?***

My study also relied on this question to develop an understanding of what has been identified as problem representations (Bacchi, 2009). I draw on the argument made by WPR that policy-making is a meaning-making activity, which produces particular understanding of 'problems'. The premise of this question is to identify the 'deep-seated cultural values' that underpin the policy discourse and the worldviews, forms of knowledge or 'assumed thought' on which it relies (Bacchi, 2009, p. 5). This premise opens up the possibility of different and potentially competing social constructions of a 'problem' at the policy table. In this context, Bacchi (2009) does not suggest that policymakers manipulate problem constructions (although this may be so). Instead, Bacchi (2009) emphasises how policymakers, because of their position and status,

play a significant role in producing and legitimising particular understandings of ‘problems’ in governing populations.

In this regard, Bacchi (2009:5) encourages us to ask questions like ‘What is assumed? What is taken for granted? What is not questioned?’ According to Bacchi (2009, p. 5) the term ‘presuppositions’ refers to background ‘knowledge’ that is ‘taken for granted’; in other words, the ‘epistemological and ontology assumptions’ (methodological and conceptual assumptions) (Bacchi, 2009, p. 5). Once these have been established, Bacchi (2009, p. 5) states that one can now ‘identify the conceptual premise (conceptual logics) that underpin specific problem representations’. The key focus is to identify the assumptions elicited by the problem representations as read in the policy (Bacchi, 2009). In this study, a WPR approach assisted in the interrogation of ‘taken for granted’ concepts and categories about disability in policies and interview accounts.

### ***3.2.3 What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?***

Informed by feminist body theory, Bacchi (2009) centres the concept of ‘lived effects’ or material consequences of problem representations on individuals’ daily lives. The framework also brings into sight the notion of the ‘lived materiality’ of subjectivity (Pillow, 2003; Beasley & Bacchi, 2007; Pullen & Tyler, 2007). Drawing from Pillow (2003), Bacchi underscores the role of discourse in policies shaping target populations as types of subjects (for example, men/women, nondisabled/disabled, and active/passive). This subjectification also has material impact (for example, financial circumstances, emotional distress) on daily life experiences. This study shifts away from the traditional methods of evaluating policy that primarily focus on outcomes to consider the effects of the policy discourses guided by Bacchi’s (2009) three categories of effects.

3.2.3.1 **‘Discursive Effects’** are the ways in which discourses ‘produce truths’ (Bacchi 2009, p. 92) through legitimising particular representations, and by delegitimising or silencing others. Thus, the problematisations in the policy create silences and close off other ways of thinking and have the potential to limit ‘what can be thought and said’, analysed and the social intervention that can be undertaken (Bacchi 2009, pp. 15–16).

3.2.3.2 **‘Subjectification effects’** refer to the ways in which policies produce certain kinds of subject positions and social relationships. The analysis of subjectification effects, according to Bacchi (2009), seeks to identify the implications resulting from how policy subjects are shaped and represented in the framing process. Bacchi (2009) also highlights how, sometimes, the constitution of political subjects can work to stigmatise some groups, exonerate others and define the limits of policy change, thus encouraging othering. It is also crucial to explore the effects of any such ‘implied attributions of responsibility’ (Bacchi, 2009, p. 17).

3.2.3.3 **‘Lived effects’**. Bacchi also incorporated the concept of ‘lived effects’ that focuses on the direct material impact of problem representations on people’s lives, referred to as ‘effects in the real’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 237). The role of exploring lived effects of the policy which differentiates WPR from other discourse analytic approaches that ignore considering non-discursive or structural factors of different subjects (Bacchi 2009). Pillow (2003) notes that discourse ascribes social value and meaning to bodies and, in public policy, notes that ‘bodies’ are for controlling, regulating and shaping in particular ways. Ultimately, this has implications for the proposed policy action and therefore the daily life circumstances of the target group, thus exploring how real bodies

and real people are living and experiencing the effects of policy discourses (Bacchi, 1999) is important. Bacchi (2009) points out, that the many approaches to discourse analysis overlook how people's lives are affected and how non-discursive factors like how society ascribes different values to how different citizens influence a person's lived experience

By way of example, Bacchi (2009) suggests that the differential social value and significance ascribed to female and male bodies shape how women and men think about themselves and others, but also shape problem representations in particular ways that can have real-life consequences for their day-to-day lives. In this study, the WPR approach provides a lens for exploring the types of subjects produced by identified problem representations in university disability policies and the real-life consequences of the policy on the day-to-day lives of students with disabilities and the operations of the university community.

### **3.3 Institutional Logics**

To explore the framing of disability in university policy further, this study also used the framework of institutional logics (IL). According to Thornton & Ocasio (2008), IL is a set of cultural constructs that includes values, beliefs, and normative expectations that are used to organise, understand and assess the daily actions in both time and space of people, groups, and organisations. This is dependent on the distribution of power among social actors, on their culture and the objectives. These cultural constructs are institutional because of their exteriority and objectivity (Durkheim, 1982) as well as communal representations of reality.

IL is social in nature and transmitted through a process of socialisation (Smets et al., 2012). It assists in providing categories for the things we see, do, and feel and this influences how we relate to things in the past, present and future, thus helping us make sense of the world around us (Weick, 1995). Therefore, broader societal discourses influence actors who bring them into

the organisation or institution, and may transfer their logics to the institution (Dunn & Jones, 2010; Pollitt, 2013; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2001). IL is also brought into an organisation through ideology-influenced experimentation known as ‘ab initio’ theorising and lastly, when organisations imitate from organisations at the top of their industry (Knocke, 1982; Ocasio et al., 2015; Bitektine & Haack, 2015;). IL, then, becomes a frame or lens to interpret and assess daily operations used by individuals, teams and entire organisations.

Skelcher and Smith (2015) observed how organisations sometimes accommodate more than one IL. Seo and Creed (2002) also picked up how a distinct ‘organisational logic’ may reflect an amalgam of different individual ILs. This blending of logics tends to exist in different circumstances. These include environments that temporarily accept a dominant institutional logic (Seo & Creed, 2002; Reay & Hinings, 2005), are in a stable collaborative fashion (Purdy & Gray, 2009), and are in a state of competitive dynamic tension (Pollitt, 2013), and may be in a territorial manner in the organisation (Reay & Hinings, 2005; Dunn & Jones, 2010). Similarly, Skelcher and Smith (2015) also identified plural ILs that manifest in segmented, segregated, assimilated, and blocked hybrid forms. These plural logics may take on lives of their own and develop their unique maintenance mechanisms with time (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Skelcher & Smith, 2015). Such logics in institutions tend to be ideational and can possess the capacity to be assimilated and acted upon by actors (Seo & Creed, 2002; Skelcher & Smith, 2015).

For example, a study by Guven-Uslu and Conrad (2008) that analysed benchmarking, revealed the diversity of meanings regarding the term ‘benchmarking’ for different groups in the same organisation. For accountants, benchmarking meant comparative cost measures, while for clinicians benchmarking meant learning from scientifically proven best practice and not cost comparison. Thus, plural logics provided the various groups with different frames of reference that influenced how they perceived and interpreted benchmarking (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

Therefore, when it comes to making decisions about problems, Bertels and Lawrence (2016) highlight how a multiplicity of logics affords an opportunity for there to be a variety in the cognitive orientation of institutional groups and actors.

Having established that institutions articulate their aim in terms of social systems, such as policy, this study prioritised exploring IL surrounding the framing of disability in policy. This study also benefitted from studying institutional interests and central and peripheral interactions (Weick, 1995). The university in this study is both an institutional entity and a collection of tasks performed by specific institutions and people (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Using IL helped the researcher explore how universities develop a structural theory of culture by focusing on the interactions among symbols, beliefs, norms, and behaviours surrounding disability and also how university members contextualise and translate logics for their time and location (Jones & Massa, 2013). This entailed exploring the use of IL by individuals, teams, and the entire university as an institution to interpret and assess their daily operations.

There are five principles that underlie the institutional logics, as presented in **Appendix N**. This research used one principle of the framework, which is principle 1.

- 1) Embedded agency – interests, identities, values, and assumptions of individuals and organisations are embedded in prevailing institutional logics.

### ***3.3.1 Embedded agency***

The rootedness of interests, values, identities and assumptions of individuals, departments and organisations is what characterises embedded agency. Embedded agency recognises the partial autonomy of individuals, organisations, and institutions in any society (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). This tenet of IL brings to attention societal functioning on three levels: the individual level, where the individuals compete and negotiate; the organisational level, where conflicts and coordination happen; and the institutional level, where contradiction and interdependency

are taking place (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). The embeddedness of the three levels is crucial to understanding institutional dynamics, where ‘organisations and institutions specify progressively higher levels of constraint and opportunity for individual action’ (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 104).

This brings into focus how individual agency, organisational agency and institutional structure interplay, and the variation of outcomes in their search for power, status and resources (Giddens, 1984; Sewell, 1992). According to Berger and Luckman (1991), it is important not to emphasise one level over another and how the levels interact and relate can be a significant mechanism for institutional change. This research prioritised exploring the relationship among different institutional levels when it comes to embedding disability in policy by the two universities in this study.

Lastly, a key idea of embedded agency reflected on in this research is the ‘institutional entrepreneur’, which involves a competitive dynamic among players in the institution in order to own and frame an idea in their own interest and direct how an idea is institutionalised (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

### **3.4 Civic Epistemologies**

Jasanoff (2005) contributed to the development of the framework of civic epistemologies (CE) as used in this study. This framework brought into consideration questions about what counts as ‘sound evidence’? What is ‘high quality information’? Who counts as an ‘expert’? Jasanoff (2005) points out how answers to these questions are dependent on the political and cultural contexts of different societies that develop collective and shared understanding about what counts as believable and authoritative knowledge practices. Such knowledge and practices about what constitute credible claims and how they should be articulated, represented, and defended is what she refers to as ‘civic epistemology’ (Jasanoff, 2005). Similarly, Miller (2005)

also refers to them as behaviours, methods, and institutional procedures in which communities recognise new policy concerns, produce knowledge to resolve the issue and use that knowledge in decision-making. Thus, according to Miller (2004), CE are modes of knowledge production or a lens to analyse the dynamics of interaction between knowledge and decision-making as well as the foundations of expertise.

CE shifts from an understanding of policy knowledge that is representational to a performative one, which is concerned with, in Pickering's (2000, p. 414) words:

*The emergent interaction of human and material agency, rather than being understood as being about representing, mapping, and articulating knowledge about the world in the performative idiom. According to this perspective, knowledge is "constitutively bound up with the dance of human and nonhuman agency ... rather than a self-contained matter for study in itself.*

Therefore, the performative idiom, according to Pickering (2000), pays attention to policy doings which places emphasis on how policy theory is understood by practitioners and how it influences their practice. This helped this study focus on the process of what constitutes proof and who is a credible expert and who has common understanding of an issue. Jasanoff (2005) also affirms how CE explores the privileged forms of knowledge, mechanisms of accountability, and types of expert demonstrations of proof. She also stresses the value of 'public knowledge' and the role of the public in validating evidence that is relevant for policy, especially in democratic societies. The framework also explores how knowledge and actors gain saliency within narratives (Jasanoff 2005; Miller 2005; 2008) and how this intertwines with ways of organising political order.

Thus, CEs emanate from a broader social and political context, hence knowledge and the socio-political order tend to be co-produced (Miller, 2001; Jasanoff, 2004; Miller, 2008; Mahony &

Hulme, 2018). This is validated by Beck et al.'s (2017) argument that expertise can be found in broader society as opposed to being contained in specific exercises of knowledge-making.

Characteristics of knowledge orders include being fairly stable over long periods of time, embedded in institutionalised epistemic, social, and political practices and are dynamic by being open to change through co-production that involves contestations that are epistemic, social, and political in nature (Miller 2008). CE, as highlighted by Jasanoff (2012), allows for analysis of the practices that make rules or structures of authority that produce knowledge orders that determine norms of appropriate discussion, or a political order that is difficult to challenge

This nature of knowledge orders that goes unchallenged in political debates impacts on how actors form identities, adopt various standards of evidence and maintain or challenge social hierarchies. For example, Hajer (1995) and Hajer (2006) observed how CE helped facilitate discourse coalitions among different political actors who disagree on cognitive points of interest but who share the same perspective on other themes. Goodman (1978) also highlighted how discourse coalitions often result in unseen acts of world-making, what Law (2011) called 'collateral realities' that impose unquestioned visions of cause and effect for problems in exclusionary ways. They also influence which events or actions are acceptable as evidence of cause and effect in practice.

One challenge of CE research is the predominant focus on 'national cultures of rationality' (Winickoff, 2012) that refer to the formal means of resolving conflicts such as lawsuits in the United States or spokespeople from trusted institutions in Germany (Jasanoff,2005). However, critics have questioned whether these national epistemologies are too general (Barry, 2013) or whether they leave sufficient space for less formal or non-state forms of civic epistemologies (Beck & Forsyth, 2015). These concerns are especially relevant for this study as it attempts to

explore civic epistemologies in institutional cultures on the policy framing of disability in universities, characterised by social divisions and different values, (Tickle & Welsh, 1998).

The above overview of CE helped the study pay particular attention to knowledge foundations that influence the making of decisions and the everyday practices performed in the pursuit of policy-relevant knowledge. Therefore, civic epistemologies helped this study explore from a unique angle how disability policies are developed and whose voice and assumptions are represented in policies. The co-production aspect of CEs is keenly explored in this study especially when it comes to the process of framing disability policies and the ‘knowledges’ that were consulted in the process of framing disability policies.

Universities as institutions are characterised by a distinct understanding of the types of knowledge they value, the types of expertise they privilege, the types of practices they seek to institutionalise, and the types of accountabilities they deem necessary. Jasanoff (2005, p. 259) identifies six dimensions of civic epistemology as detailed in **Appendix M**.

This study did not use all dimensions of the framework. The focus of my study was on two of the dimensions one (1) and five (5), namely,

- (1) The dominant participatory styles of public knowledge- making;
- (5) The accepted bases of expertise.

These two dimensions will be discussed below.

### ***3.4.1 Participatory styles of knowledge making***

This study prioritised exploring knowledge production practices in university policy spaces, exploring who participates in the constructing of knowledge and participates in decision making. Jasanoff (2005) chronicles how technocrats directed knowledge matters in the past and this resulted in knowledge monopoly in major sectors. She contends for more involvement

of civil society in the processes of knowledge production and decision making, which she believes could break monopolies in decision making and form civic epistemology in its society.

This study responded to the call by Jasanoff (2005) to answer questions like the following: What knowledge is needed to achieve policy closure? Whose responsibility is it to produce it; in what forms should it be codified? How should its validity be determined? Moreover, how can it be challenged?

This study also acknowledges that knowledge of ‘disability’ remains contested, despite all efforts to render it unproblematic. This research explores the decision-making processes in universities to discern some patterned approaches to knowledge making that appear to be characteristic of universities’ policy framing cultures and these are termed “styles” of public knowledge making (Jasanoff, 2005). The production and validation of knowledge for disability policies was important to unpack in this research.

#### ***3.4.2 Foundation of expertise***

This dimension of the framework explores the role of the expert in modern societies that relies on knowledge to address ignorance; conversely, experts also tend to be the biggest critiques of modernity’s democratic and managerial pretensions (Jasanoff, 2005). She points out how the modern condition is characterised by change and shifts in facts, what constitutes information and the unknown always looming. These shifts in what constitutes as knowledge plus the unknown factor impact on possible actions and outcomes and this becomes a challenge for governments and institutions who have to battle with the credibility of knowledge what counts as evidence to justify collective action. In this complexity, Jasanoff (2005) centres the role of experts, who she argues in uncertain times have to meet society’s needs for knowledge and reassurance.

The role of experts in policy framing of disability at universities was an important aspect for this study to explore, given that assumptions about what makes expertise legitimate vary from context to context. This study acknowledged how specialized knowledge is indispensable everywhere, however, knowledge alone is not synonymous with expertise. Jasanoff (2005) highlights how the expert is a social kind of person who not only provides information but also satisfies the desire for order in the management of uncertainty and thus has to be accountable as well as knowledgeable. Drawing from this understanding, this study was particularly interested in the experts consulted and their credibility in the framing of disability policies at universities.

### **3.5 Developing the Framework for the Research**

This research was interested in exploring how universities as institutional actors came to think of defining and categorising disability, and the range of inclusive solutions they provided when framing their disability policies. It also aimed to explore the accomplishments of the disability policy representation. **Table 2** shows the framework that was developed for the research using different dimensions from the above three frameworks, and the dimensions informed and guided the research questions. Lastly, a discussion of the possible contribution from combining concepts follows below **Table 2**.

**Table 2: Framing Student Disability in University Policy**

<b>RESEARCH QUESTION</b>	<b>RESEARCH DIMENSION</b>	<b>THEORETICAL ASSUMPTION</b>
<b>Research Question 1)</b> How are universities defining disability in their university policies?	<b>Selecting and Naming the Problem</b>	What is the problem represented to be in the specific policy or policy proposal ( <b>WPR</b> )?
<b>Research Question 2)</b> What knowledge influenced the framing of the disability policy?	<b>Policy Knowledge Foundations</b>	1) What presuppositions and assumptions underpin the representation of disability ( <b>WPR</b> ) 2) Embedded Agency ( <b>IL</b> ) 3) Who participated in the creation and appraisal of the knowledge ( <b>CE</b> ) 4) Foundations/Credibility of Expertise ( <b>CE</b> )
<b>Research Questions 3)</b> What effects have been produced because of this policy representation of disability?	<b>Policy Accomplishments/Effects</b>	Effects Produced by the Representation ( <b>WPR</b> )

In order to investigate the possible advantages of combining the IL, CE, and WPR frameworks, this study conducted a qualitative, comparative, empirical analysis of the representation of student disability in university policies. Because all three frameworks have social constructivist roots, working with theories from similar philosophical perspectives was less taxing. The three perspectives' emphasis on agency, sense-making, and attention to how choices are made, names are given, categories are constructed, and stories are conveyed, particularly about student disabilities, is another crucial justification for their integration. **Table 3** lists the three

viewpoints' philosophical traditions, theoretical underpinnings, important concepts, and basic levels of investigation.

**Table 3: Conceptual Frameworks**

Framework	Institutional Logics	WPR	Civic Epistemologies
Philosophical Tradition	Social constructivism	Social constructivism	Social constructivism
Theoretical Foundations	Institutional Theory	Feminist Theory Post Structuralism Government Studies	Science Technology Studies
Key Constructs	Institutional Framing	Policy Framing	Institution Cultural Practices on Policy Framing
Level of analysis	Language, symbols and materials	Texts, processes, practices, sites, actors	Texts, sites, processes, practices, actors
Research Methodology	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative

The negotiations, complexities, and conflicts that policy stakeholders face, necessitate a deeper comprehension of the micro processes by which, in this case, the framing of students with disabilities takes place in real-world situations (Stillman, 2011). Few avenues exist for exploring and challenging competing, contradictory tensions in HE policy according to current theorising, especially when seen from a comparative perspective (Armstrong et al., 2000; Liasidou, 2014; Howell, 2019). The framework developed for this research allowed for exploring prior assumptions made by policy actors about what constitutes data that inform policy.

Instead of attempting to provide solutions to the concerns raised above, this study concentrated on exploring what these questions may entail in order to understand what happens in university

policy environments. Importantly, the framework aided in the exploration of policy-related activities in universities, the creation of subjects through institutional rationalities, and what motivates those institutional representations according to the study's framework. Exploring how different types of knowledge, absences, and the revision of previously held beliefs influence policy framing was important to the study.

Lastly, Kogan (1975) noted policy included operational assertions of values and expressions of prescriptive intent that do not exist in a vacuum from the reality of policy stakeholders. This study questioned whether these values exist independently of their social setting. With the aid of the framework, this research was able to challenge common assumptions about rational policymaking, expose changes, reversals, and contradictions by specific formal policies.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the three theoretical frameworks that contributed to the development of the main framework used by this study. It is necessary to understand the ways in which ideas emerge and develop and how they may/may not reach the agendas of policy actors. All approaches are useful in tracing knowledge foundations, how policy issues are constituted as problems and who participates in policy framing.

## Chapter Four: Research Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology employed, and justify the approach and its relevance to the research questions. This chapter also details the research design, methods used, including the specific steps taken to identify, collect and analyse the data and, lastly, it considers questions of ethics.

### 4.2 Research Methodology/Approach

For this study, I used the qualitative methodological approach because the study developed a framework that blends three conceptual frameworks as highlighted in **Table 2** in Chapter 3. The research applies this framework to two distinct data sets: a selection of university policy texts from two universities, and 40 original semi-structured interviews. The following qualities deemed qualitative methodology suitable for this research. First, qualitative research methods enable researchers to make sense of, interpret and bring meaning to a phenomenon under study (Crotty, 1998). Similarly, it allows for deep, meaningful understanding of phenomena in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In addition, qualitative methods underscore the social nature of reality and the value-laden nature of inquiry (Schwandt, 2007; Hartas, 2010). Qualitative methods also explore how meanings are multiple, contingent and historically constructed (Gray, 2014). These characteristics made qualitative methodology an appropriate choice for this study, given its focus on understanding the meaning-making processes associated with the policy framing of disability in universities, and how those meanings are produced, interpreted and contested by a range of socially, politically and culturally situated players in a value-laden policy context (Bryman, 2012).

### **4.3 Research Design**

This research also explored the institutional and contextual variations in how disability is represented in university policies in two distinct country contexts by using a qualitative cross-national comparative research design. There has been a tendency in comparative research to assume that there is a single national perspective on the inclusion of students with disabilities and the generalisability of the practice across nations without consideration of varied contexts and meanings (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). More explicitly, King (2007) emphasised in his commentary on the broader area of education how naive dissemination of techniques and policy across contexts affects teachers and policymakers.

Noting the variations, this study employed a cross-national comparative research design, with the aim of making the case for the significance of contextualised understanding of phenomena in data analysis (Popperton, 1992). More specifically in this study, emphasis was on how universities in different contexts navigate framing disability policies, bearing in mind that as the concept of inclusive education is spreading, having been borrowed across nations, the ambiguities surrounding education for students with disabilities in nations are amplified. Therefore, the complexity surrounding the diversity of national situations, existing realities of each country with regard to disability have been neglected (Boxall et al., 2004; Pather, 2014; Carey, 2013; Johansson, 2014).

This study also recognised the importance of shifting from a homogeneous study across the two countries, to exploring the two selected universities in this research (University X and University Y) in their respective national, historical, cultural, and social settings (Hans, 2013). I utilised this design to analyse disability policy at the university level in light of the historical legacies left by both universities' involvement in colonialism and apartheid.

This study benefited from comparing the disability policies of two separate institutions in two different nations as it helped to better understand social phenomena by relating them to situations that are meaningfully distinct from one another (Bryman, 2004). In order to uncover factors that were likely to influence the framing, a larger range of experiences could be studied, thanks to the extensive research made possible by this contextual design. As a result, I was better able to explore the societies from which the institutions are a part, especially from a variety of perspectives and with a higher level of critical awareness and sensitivity, which helped me to understand the overt and covert processes and values relating to the framing of disability in universities better.

Another reason I used a comparative study method was that it made it possible to compile a detailed account of the problems, obstacles, and recommendations pertaining to the framing of disability in policy in the chosen universities in Zimbabwe and South Africa (Yin, 2014). In addition, it was important to look into the issue of adopting inclusive educational methods from western contexts that have an impact on disability policy in African universities (Aggarwal & Gasskov, 2013). By comparing Zimbabwe with South Africa, sufficient factors may be held constant, allowing for an in-depth explanation of interesting areas of resemblance and difference (Paige, 1999; Mahony & Dietrich, 2003).

It was particularly appropriate for this study since the universities being explored have a number of things in common that may shed light on current problems and suggest ideas for enhancing the educational access of students with disabilities. One characteristic that unites the nations in this study is their participation in international accords like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure equal access to education for all pupils and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This demonstrates how these nations' efforts to deliver high-quality education have been recognised by international organisations.

However, there are limitations to any comparisons because of the glaring contextual and cultural disparities. Despite the fact that the two countries have different cultures and languages, there is a lot of diversity in each of them, making it possible to explore how disability in different contexts interacts with exclusionary policies and practices.

Finally, conducting cross-national research provided the researcher with the opportunity to look into the subjectivity of the language used to describe the evidence selected for analysis and the influence of values and assumptions of various cultural contexts in framing processes. A document's meaning in one social context may be different from its meaning in another, or from a 'common sense' reading of the document (Grbich, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Busse & Teubert, 2014). The complexity, intricacy, and inconsistency in policies tend to be concealed by language employed in official documents or dominant discourses in educational settings and the public. Considering what they omit or indicate as opposed to what they appear to set down in terms of principles and procedures, formal and written policy in the context of institutional culture can therefore be tools of policy framing, which were important for this study.

#### ***4.3.1 Rationale for selecting universities***

The justification for the selection of the two universities used in this study rests on the following practical aspects that include the nature of the two universities: both are public universities in their countries, and both have made progress in including students with disabilities.

First, the chosen cases for this study are public universities, according to the definition employed by Douglass (2016). Public universities typically have large numbers of undergraduate students, post-graduate academic programmes, and senior academics. In turn, they produce a large number of graduates, research, and publications and play an important role in national capacity-building and innovation. In this study, they tend to draw more numbers

of students with disabilities because of the breadth of academic programmes they offer. The selected universities are University X (UX) from South Africa and University Y (UY) from Zimbabwe. Both are public universities with high student enrolments, thus higher enrolments of students with disabilities.

Second, both UX and UY have official policies and have considerable experience and institutional advancement in handling disability-related concerns. Both UX and UY have a broad goal of embracing disability in their institutional policy, revealed by:

1. A stated policy relating to disability.
2. The presence of an operational disability unit (DU) with staff to execute the policy in both institutions.

In addition to their stated policy objectives, both universities have implemented their policies for a sizeable amount of time ranging from 13 to 20 years, suggesting that modifications and lessons learned were possible throughout this time. Both universities have the necessary infrastructure to carry out their policy commitments, and have records that highlight the triumphs and difficulties each university had in framing their disability policy.

Furthermore, this study also answered the call by literature to research institutional practices in developing and perpetuating challenges based on disabilities that have been emphasised by several experts on disability inclusion, particularly when utilising comparative lenses (Armstrong et al., 2000; Liasidou, 2014). While Maruza et al. (2020) also point out that in order to remove barriers to equitable access to education for students with disabilities, it is necessary for the higher education (HE) sector in Africa to delve deeper into the historical, political, social, and cultural forces that have shaped and continue to shape educational policy. They also suggest this can be accomplished by giving careful consideration to examining HE policies

pertaining to student disability on the African continent, as it might help tease out the risk of replicating systems of education that marginalise.

Also, Howell (2019) highlights how HE institutional policies and practices relating to student disabilities need to be questioned and emphasised that institutional practices can unintentionally compromise the participation of students with disabilities in HE. Focusing on questioning different framing processes in public universities, therefore, was important in order to gain insightful data regarding the framing of disability policy in the university context.

#### **4.4 Research Methods**

This study applies the framework developed in **Table 2** to two sources of data that include a selection of university policy texts for document analysis and a series of original semi-structured interviews with diverse informants who have a particular interest or involvement in the framing of disability policy in the two universities. I particularly chose the incorporation of multiple data sources and perspectives into a qualitative analysis as a means to add breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to a research study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The use of multiple sources of data complements the conceptual framework in **Table 2**, given that this research is concerned with multiple perspectives and interpretations. The two research methods have different but complementary aims. The policy analysis of university policy texts helped this study identify the ‘conceptual logics’, knowledge foundations and problematisations that enable particular meanings to be made, and that shape dominant understanding of disability policy (Jasanoff, 2005; Bacchi, 2009; Matthews & Ross, 2010; Owen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018). It was important to juxtapose policy analysis of university texts with diverse stakeholder interviews to allow for an interpretive exploration. This study benefited from semi-structured interviews because they helped shed light on the relationship between the university’s policy texts and the various discourses, meanings, understanding, and

interpretations employed by a range of subjects who are differently situated in relation to the disability policy (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

#### ***4.4.1 Policy text selection***

The progress in legislative frameworks and models of disability creates an opportunity to track the framing of disability in near-real time, and understand it as an evolutionary process across time, issues, and communication avenues. This means that understanding framing as a phenomenon requires analysing policy text data well beyond what experts produce. For this study, I prioritised looking at policies as ‘prescriptive texts’ or ‘practical texts’ (Bacchi, 2009, p. 34) that contain ‘rules, opinions, and advice on how to behave as one should’, and that they are intended to constitute a ‘framework of everyday conduct’ (Foucault, 1985, pp. 12).

This study recognises that university policy – or any policy – is rarely contained in a single document and, for this reason, Bacchi (2009) suggests it is necessary to analyse a range of different kinds of relevant texts in order to build up a full picture of the problem representations associated with the policy. To collect the policy texts that would qualify for the study, documents were selected from publicly available government and university policy statements and reports, websites, news articles, ministerial addresses, press releases, and documents outlining HE policy for Zimbabwe and South Africa.

**Appendix J** details the inclusion criteria that I used to sift through the policy texts. It was important for this study to determine the aim and purpose of the document and the influence a document had on internal university processes and how it contributed to the institutional practices regarding disability.

I also opted to use Scott’s (1990) criteria for the quality control of documents using the following dimensions:

1. Authenticity: concerned with the document's veracity and establishing what it genuinely represents;
2. Credibility: focused on determining whether the document's contents exhibit any prejudice;
3. Representativeness: concerned with determining whether the document contains sufficient evidence to support the points made;
4. Meaning: concerned with the thoroughness and clarity of the information in the document.

After sifting through all the documents, I ended up with 18 policy texts from both universities as reflected in **Table 4** that included disability action plans, policies, documentation for people with disabilities (including websites, flyers), maps and general university documentation like strategic plans. The different types of documents, as shown in **Table 4**, enabled a document comparison. Regarding transparency, all of the used documents were open to the public, despite the fact that some of them were not widely disseminated and were not usually accessible.

**Table 4: Policy Documents Collected from the Universities**

University Y ZIMBABWE	University X SOUTH AFRICA
UY Disability Statement collected from archives	UX Disability Policy 2019
UY Disability Standards of Procedure collected from archives	UX Disability Action Plans collected from disability unit/department
UY Disability Annual Reports 2018–2019 collected from archives	UX Disability Annual Reports 2011–2018
UY DU Vision and Mission Statements and flyers	UX Disability Vision and Mission Statements and Flyers-Collected from disability unit/department
UY Website	UX Website

University Y ZIMBABWE	University X SOUTH AFRICA
UY Prospectus	UX Prospectus
UY paper and online application	UX online application
UY Map	UX Map
UY Strategic Plan	UX Strategic Plan

#### 4.4.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

The second source of data was a series of qualitative, semi-structured interviews conducted as fieldwork. I chose to use qualitative semi-structured interviewing because it was a suitable method for collecting a diversity of opinions and experience (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004; Dunn, 2005) and exploring the subjective, interpretive, and social process of meaning-making (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This research required both these characteristics since it began with a specific set of research questions for policy texts from the framework in **Table 2**, thus including the interviewees' perspectives and reflections helped provide more depth to the policy analysis. A semi-structured interviewing approach benefited this study because it allowed for some degree of predetermined format while at the same time giving room for sufficient flexibility to explore and follow leads and topics introduced by the interviewee (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

I also benefited from using interviews as they enabled me to explore the diversity and complexity of people's understanding of the universities' disability policy discourse. They afforded an opportunity for multi-vocality and for the research to focus on how disability policy might be thought about differently. This research acknowledges that interviewing a range of stakeholders with diverse perspectives on disability policy was the most effective way to achieve multi-vocality (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Similarly, Howell et al. (2019) stress the

importance of understanding disability in Africa through the experiences of people with disabilities themselves, and people working with them and their organisations on the continent.

In this regard, I capitalised on the potential qualitative interviewing results for providing perspectives on people's lived experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) since this research was also investigating the effects of policy discourse (Bacchi, 2009). However, I should note that it is problematic to assume that interviews give the researcher direct access to lived experience, or that interviewees attach a singular meaning to their experiences (Silverman, 2010). Nevertheless, interviews in this study helped to unpack that meanings of events, opinions and experiences differ among people (Dunn, 2005).

#### ***4.4.3 Selection of interviewees***

Participants for interviews were selected using purposeful or judgment sampling. This was guided by my knowledge of the research area, the help of universities' DU, attending key events with students with disabilities, and making contact with university staff, and with some personal contacts from organisations for people with disabilities. I purposively sought out participants who had relevant experiences to help answer the research questions (Patton, & Cochran, 2002).

For this study, I identified informants who could provide diverse understanding about disability policy at the two universities. The contention for this research was that to understand policy framing and how it represents disability at universities, thus different stakeholder perspectives, are very important. Stakeholders for this study included interviewees from the DU staff, university staff, students with and without disabilities, and civil society leaders from disability or government organisations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). As a flexible and emergent technique, rather than one based on strict rules (Patton & Cochran 2002; Creswell 2015), purposive

sampling allowed my own ideas about who may be a suitable informant to continue to develop as my knowledge and understanding of the issue evolved during the fieldwork.

As the data collection proceeded, the use of purposive sampling prompted some interview participants to suggest recruitment of other participants on their own accord, without my influence. They suggested participants they thought would benefit the study (snowball sampling) (Creswell, 2014) and four interview participants were recruited this way. Although not deemed appropriate for protecting participants' information, the natural flow of the interviewing process allowed participants to recruit more participants on their own volition, which ensured their full consent before contacting me, and ensured that the recruited participants engaged me on their own volition.

It is widely acknowledged that in qualitative research, the number of interviews conducted are less important than how the material is used (Denzin, 1989; Becker, 1999; Cohen et.al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the value of interview data has more to do with 'the information richness of the cases selected', and the researcher's interviewing and analytical capabilities, than with sample size (Patton & Cochran, 2002, p. 626). For this reason, I aimed not to determine a sample size at the outset.

Consistent with the objectives and theoretical basis of the research, the aim was to conduct sufficient interviews to capture a range of views about the framing of disability, and the effects of these problematisations from different actors. Of course, the number of interviews conducted were also constrained in a pragmatic sense, for instance, by time and resources available, since this study was a cross-national comparative study with some participants located in Zimbabwe, while others were located in South Africa, where I am based.

As the fieldwork continued, I ended up recruiting and interviewing 20 participants from each institution. Through the help of DU and attending key activities and events in both institutions,

I was able to purposively recruit ten students from each institution. Six students had disabilities and four students did not, for both institutions. The ten students from each institution were asked about their knowledge of policy initiatives and their experiences on campuses to gain their understanding of policy.

I then proceeded to recruit six members of staff at each institution that represented a range of levels from senior managers to junior practitioners with less than six months' experience to senior professionals with more than ten years of practice. Lastly, I recruited four participants in each country context from various civic organisations who work with the institutions to support students with disabilities. A summary of the participants that were recruited is shown in **Table 5** and **Table 6** below.

**Table 5: UY Interviewees (by Gender and Disability)**

<b>Interview Participants</b>	<b>Gender M</b>	<b>Gender F</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>With Disability</b>	<b>No Disability</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Staff</b>	5	1	<b>6</b>	1	5	<b>6</b>
<b>Students</b>	7	3	<b>10</b>	6	4	<b>10</b>
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>

**Table 6: UX Interviewees (by Gender and Disability)**

<b>Interview Participants</b>	<b>Gender M</b>	<b>Gender F</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>With Disability</b>	<b>No Disability</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Staff</b>	1	5	<b>6</b>	1	5	<b>6</b>
<b>Students</b>	3	7	<b>10</b>	6	4	<b>10</b>
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>	1	3	<b>4</b>	1	3	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>

#### ***4.4.4 Interview guide***

I developed questions with a structured and open-ended intent for students, staff and civic stakeholders, and written interview guides as shown in **Appendices F, G and H**. Questions were prepared, informed by an initial review of policy texts. The guides comprised a loosely ordered script of specific questions and general topic prompts. The convention of semi-structured interviewing (Bryman, 2004; Dunn, 2005; Travers, 2006) aimed to strike a balance between ensuring a structured focus on my research questions, and allowing sufficient conversational flexibility. I also tailored the guide slightly prior to each interview, usually by designing one or two additional questions based on my background knowledge of that interviewee's particular expertise or experience. I conducted four pilot interviews with four people I had identified as potential interviewees in South Africa. The interview guide was adjusted following these pilot interviews. The interview guide continued to be refined during fieldwork as new information was provided during interviews, which allowed for a dynamic design process that is appropriate for this exploratory, qualitative research (Dunn, 2005; Travers, 2006).

#### ***4.4.5 Interviewing process***

I officially started interviewing participants from both universities from March 2019 to July 2019. The majority of interviewees were interviewed in person during field trips to Zimbabwe and different locations in South Africa. I distributed a copy of the interview schedule to participants electronically. It was meant for participants to become comfortable with the questions by receiving them ahead of time, and interviewees had time to consider their responses before the interview. Thirty-seven of the participants selected in-person interviews at a location of their choice; one selected a Skype interview, and the remaining two selected telephone interviews.

All 40 participants gave their consent for an audio recording of their interviews. Using audio recordings afforded me the chance to listen to an interview again, consider it in its entirety, transcribe it, and verify its authenticity by playing it back and comparing the transcripts with the recordings. Interviewees were provided with an electronic copy of the transcript, given an opportunity to approve it, and make changes subject to any amendments. This practice improves the quality of the record, leaves interviewees with a copy, and helps continue their involvement in the research process (Dunn, 2005). Two interviewees took the opportunity to amend their transcript, typically to clarify or expand upon a point they had made. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to almost two hours, with the average being just over one hour.

I also had to pay particular attention to any unfavourable past experiences when interviewing students with disabilities (Riddick et al., 1999; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, it was crucial that I created a welcoming environment that gave the participants a sense of empowerment. Prior to the in-person meeting, I called the participants to establish a rapport and lessen their anxieties.

Owing to the various interviewing modalities, there were variances in the quality of the interviews. One of the participants who chose the telephone interview was more succinct, but I am unsure if this was due to the impersonal nature of the interview over the phone or to other unidentified variable(s) because the other participant who chose the telephone interview was franker and more detailed. Building rapport with interviewees is difficult when utilising telephone interviews because body language and non-verbal clues are not detectable (Hay-Gibson, 2009; Carter, 2011). Despite the fact that only some upper body language is visible on Skype videos, the interviews I conducted through face-to-face meetings and Skype videos were just as expressive (Carter, 2011).

## 4.5 Data Analysis

For this study, I undertook a policy analysis that comprised close and multiple readings of the university policy texts and interviews, and an iterative and integrated process of reflection on these two sources of data. This interpretive process included a comprehensive and systematic application of the framework in **Table 7** as different lenses for reading the texts.

The analysis process began with the preparation of an initial coding framework, a recognised method of organising, managing and categorising qualitative data, in order to generate concepts with and from that data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I was particularly interested in using the framework approach because it contributed to providing a clear account of the conceptual process through which interpretation of the data was generated, helping to ensure that the study undertaken is of a high standard (Mays & Pope, 2000). The three conceptual dimensions and subsequent questions in **Table 7** were used as a basis for the framework, augmented by other analytical categories and concepts drawn from the literature and my own thinking about the research questions.

I then proceeded to conduct the first reading of the university policy texts using the framework in **Table 7**. Using the predetermined analytical theme indicators and categories, I started the process of manually breaking down the policy data to fit the themes and categories for simplification, reduction, and compilation. This process also helped me to tease out new themes, the focus being not to simply sort the data in a mechanistic way, but to interact and reflect on it, and develop different ways of thinking about it (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Following this first round of data analysis, I then reviewed the framework and various categorical and conceptual relationships (thematic links/cross references and overlaps) were identified and resolved. The texts were then analysed a second time using this refined framework. Populating this framework with relevant data created a useful resource for the later,

critical stages of the analysis, enabling me to quickly locate sections of text, and identify multiple occurrences of particular themes and ideas.

During this second stage of the analysis, I focused on multiple close and reflexive readings of the university policy texts, in order to explore them at a discursive level, as meaning-making processes. As part of this policy analysis, I refined the conceptual framework in **Table 7** and applied it to the policy texts further by using different lenses through which to read the texts. I paid specific and critical attention to language use in the texts, seeking to identify recurrent themes with the interpretation of the university discourse as a whole, developing in complexity and sophistication over time.

I also used the same process of close and reflexive reading of the interview transcripts guided by the conceptual framework in **Table 7** and the insights already gained from the analysis of the universities' policy texts. The interviews were analysed both in their own right, and in relation to the university policy texts, with the analysis seeking not only to identify the meaning-making structures and processes in the interviews, but also to explore the similarities and differences between the interviewees' language and representations and those of the disability policy. In this way, the policy analysis of the universities' policy texts and interview data was both an integrated analysis and one that had the conceptual framework in **Table 7** at its core.

This study benefited from using a framework approach because:

1. It gave order and structure to disordered, qualitative material that would otherwise lack it (that is, interview transcripts).
2. It made systematic analysis possible, enabling the study process to be clear and repeatable.

3. Despite the innate structure, the abstraction and conceptualisation processes enabled me to engage thoroughly with the data (Roberts et al., 2019).

Table 7: Thematic Framework

Research question	Theoretical/framework Concept /Dimension	Theme of analysis	Theme Indicators /Indexes
Research Question 1) <b>How are universities defining disability in their university policies?</b>	<b>Theoretical Assumption.</b> What is the problem represented to be in the specific policy or policy proposal ( <b>WPR</b> )?	The Policy Problem / Disability Representation	<b>Definition/s</b> Impairment, handicapped and any other definitions <b>Categories</b> Physical, Emotional, Sensory, Cognitive, Neuro Biological etc.
Research Question 2) <b>What knowledge influenced the framing of the disability?</b>	Presuppositions and assumptions underpin the representation of disability ( <b>WPR</b> )? Embedded Agency ( <b>IL</b> ) Who participated in the creation and appraisal of the knowledge ( <b>CE</b> ) Foundations of Expertise ( <b>CE</b> )	Knowledge Foundations of the Policy Framing.	International, Regional and National Policy Frameworks and Models. 1. University Staff That Participated 2. Experts and Professionals That Participated/Professional Bodies and Organisations That Participated 3. Credibility of Experts-Experience, Rationality, Technical, Professional etc.
Research Question 3) <b>What effects have been produced as a result of this policy framing of disability?</b>	<b>Theoretical Assumptions</b> Effects Produced by the Representation ( <b>WPR</b> )	Policy Accomplishments	<b>Institutional Inclusive Policy Support</b> <b>1. University Accessibility</b> Staff support, curriculum/pedagogy, social support, technological support, admissions accessibility <b>2. Budget Allocations</b> University budget, scholarships for students with disability and any other funding initiatives

## **4.6 Determining the Quality of the Research**

Bearing in mind that my study was qualitative in nature, the traditional quantitative ways to establish reliability and validity could not apply to this study (Bryman, 2011). In order to demonstrate that every effort was made to guarantee that data collection and analysis were published in an appropriate and ethical manner, I must demonstrate that the study was credible. The study had to use numerous strategies prescribed for qualitative researchers to make their findings more credible or demonstrate ‘trustworthiness’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Carlson, 2010; Creswell & Poth 2016). Credibility or trustworthiness in qualitative research depends on the capacity to which the researcher can persuade the reader that the research is believable, as opposed to quantitative research, which mainly depends on the quality of the instrument produced. This study used audit trails, member checks, reflexivity, and thick, detailed description as the methods to strengthen the reliability and authenticity of this study (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2009).

### ***4.6.1 Audit trail***

To help show the research community the rigour involved in the research process, I employed the use of an audit trail that required meticulous documentation of all study components (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I kept thorough records of the procedures and choices I took both before and during the research that an external auditor could use to retrace my actions. An audit trail was used in this study by keeping a journal, taking field notes, interview notes, a timeline, communicating with participants in the process, and recording audiotapes (Carlson, 2010).

### ***4.6.2 Member checking***

I also used member checking that involves providing full or partial transcripts to participants for validation (Creswell, 2009). However, Carlson (2010, p. 111) sheds light on the importance

of partial and full transcripts, ‘so that participants can focus on their key contributions and not be distracted or ashamed in seeing spots where they were off subject’.

I opted that participants in this study received copies of full transcripts for fact-checking. Participants had the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the complete transcript or portions of the transcript relevant to the study objective through member-checking (Merriam, 1998). It was a ‘way of gauging if the data analysis is consistent with the experiences of the participants’ (Curtin & Fossey, 2007, p. 92).

#### ***4.6.3 Thick and rich description***

To strengthen the study's legitimacy, I utilised thorough, in-depth descriptions together with participant quotes. According to Creswell & Miller (2000), the purpose of using dense, detailed description in qualitative research is to draw the reader deeper into the narrative, to promote consistency, and to elicit sentiments and a sense of connection with the study's participants. Since this study was a qualitative, comparative study that follows the interpretive paradigm, I capitalised on the opportunity to provide rich, in-depth comprehension of potential similarities and contrasts among the two university contexts to make corroboration possible. It also helped the results of this study provide a detailed description of many viewpoints on the framing of disability policy thus enabling it to ‘become more realistic and richer ... and add to the validity of the findings’ (Creswell, 2009, p. 192).

#### ***4.6.4 Researcher positioning***

As the lead researcher, I have a wealth of volunteer experience working with students with disabilities in Zimbabwe, one of the study's country contexts. My motivation in focusing on disability for my PhD is a result of my background in child and family psychotherapy and my Master's degree. Therefore, my perspectives on encouraging student engagement and inclusion of students with disabilities influenced the study. It was challenging to stand back from the

obscure knowledge that I had obtained, and whose perspectives are identical to those of my culture in Zimbabwe, thus possibly creating analytical challenges (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). However, fieldwork involves the performance of social roles and relationships, which puts the self at the centre of the activity. Given this close association with the research focus, I had to ensure that biases were limited that could affect the study. To do this, I committed myself to continuous self-reflection as part of the research process.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

The qualitative fieldwork was in accordance with the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) Faculty of Education's Higher Degrees Committee that approved the study proposal. A clearance permit from the UWC Human and Social Science Ethics Committee was granted upon approval of the ethics application (**See Appendix A for approval**). I complied with the ethics directives of UWC's Human and Social Science Ethics Committee with regard to all interactions and the recruiting of participants. I presented my ethical clearance to the students and staff of the universities, civic organisations and the national archives that were selected for data collection. The study involved human participants; therefore, the ethical clearance was important. Throughout conducting this research, human respect and dignity were maintained. I ensured that the study followed the ethical procedures detailed below during the recruitment of participants and the data-collection process. It is also important to point out that the initial title of the thesis approved by the UWC ethics committee was revised owing to concerns over institutional anonymity highlighted below in data-collection challenges. To ensure anonymity in all ethical documents, I highlight in black the institutional names of both universities to ensure institutional anonymity.

##### ***4.7.1 Voluntary participation***

For this study, a consent form was developed and it contained information about the participants' agreement to take part in the study. Prior to starting the interviews, participants were asked to give their consent to participate and were informed that participation in the research was voluntary. I ensured that participants were aware that they were free to withdraw at any time, whenever they felt that they could not continue with the study. Interviews were conducted in suitable places suggested by participants. Lastly, participants were asked to sign the consent form (See **Appendices B, C, D, and E** for consent form and information sheet).

#### ***4.7.2 No harm to the participants***

In order to ensure that the participants were not subjected to any harm the interview tool was submitted to the Ethics committee of UY for review. It was indicated to the Ethics Committee that the study would not be harmful to the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The language used for interviews posed no potential harm to participants. To accommodate this, questions were reworded, simplified, and asked a second time without altering the substance of the content. The participants were allocated pseudonyms and their real names were not used. Overall, this study provided minimum risk to participants

#### ***4.7.3 Anonymity and confidentiality***

In this study, the data collected was reported in such a way that it cannot be linked to the study participants and the institutions. Anonymity guarantees that the readers should not identify the response with a given respondent. None of the participants and institutions approached declined to participate. However, all participants and institutions in this study stressed anonymity and I made sure the identity of participants and institutions was protected with pseudonyms. Furthermore, data collected was not manipulated and it was stored safely as per UWC data storage policy (Bryman, 2012).

#### ***4.7.4 Data-collection challenges***

Data collection for this study commenced from June to August 2018 for Zimbabwe. After having officially communicated with University Y, I started gathering data in Zimbabwe. I was first given approval by the Registrar's office to conduct the initial stage of my study, which included obtaining policy documents from university departments. However, because of the unforeseen, unpredictable violence surrounding the results of the Zimbabwean general election in August 2018, my data collection was suspended. I returned to South Africa and started working on obtaining University X's approval of my research in August 2018. I received approval from UX in October 2018 and I commenced with data collection after I had agreed to ensure institutional anonymity. Unfortunately, the academic year at UX was ending and would only reopen in February 2019. I then commenced my data collection to gather UX data from March through May of 2019 with the help of the Disability Unit (DU) department and attending key events and activities for people with disabilities. I was able to recruit students, staff and civic stakeholders. I also explored the archives to collect other policy documents. For UX, although they gave me clearance to conduct my study, they did not authorise the use of their institutional name, so this study has used a pseudonym to disguise the identity of the institution. Similarly, students and staff also raised concerns of anonymity and I assured them pseudonyms would be used.

I planned to return to Zimbabwe in May 2019 to finish my data collection of documents and interviews. Although I had accessed some documents online and from UY, it was important to be thorough in my search for documents. I was informed that the National Archives of Zimbabwe holds a collection of publicly accessible records of public government institutions, and that I could access more institutional records from there. I proceeded to get approval from the Zimbabwe National Archives as noted in **Appendix K** and started planning my second trip to collect data in Zimbabwe in June 2019.

I got approval at UY and I agreed to institutional anonymity before I started collecting interview data. Since the university was on holiday from May 2019 to August 2019, I was able to connect with disability organisations from my volunteer experiences with students with Autism. They, in turn, invited me to several events where students and staff from University Y participated. Attending the various events gave me an opportunity to network, to communicate and arrange meetings with staff and students face-to-face. UY students, staff and the institution also raised similar concerns of anonymity raised by UX. It is also important to highlight the fact that during the first ethical clearance in all institutions, all documentation relating to the study mentioned the names of the institutions as noted in the Appendices. Following their requests, this study agreed to institutional and participant anonymity when reporting the results of both institutions. These concerns were attended to by assuring the participants' names and the institution's name would be treated confidentially and anonymously. However, the challenges encountered did not compromise the credibility of the data collected and the findings.

I was able to conclude data collection for the study by July 2019 just before the pandemic started.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed the research methodology and justified the approach and its relevance to the research questions and conceptual framework being used by the study. This chapter also detailed the research design, methods used, including the specific steps taken to identify, collect and analyse the data and, lastly, consider questions of ethics.

The next chapter presents the data findings of the study.

## **Chapter Five: Findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This research set out to explore university policies with a focus on the framing of disability in university policy. This required discussion of some concepts related to institutional logics, civic epistemologies, and notions of policy problematisation, particularly as they pertain to discourse and framing disability policies in higher education (HE). This chapter presents data from two higher education institutions from policy document and semi-structured interview analysis. The study coded all interviewees and institutions for anonymity. For the university from Zimbabwe (UY), interviewees will be referred to as Respondents (R), while interviewees from the university in South Africa (UX), will be referred to as Participants (P). The interviewees include students with disabilities, students without disabilities, university staff, and civic stakeholders from both universities.

The objectives of the research were;

1. To explore how universities are defining disability in their policies;
2. To explore the knowledge foundations that influenced the policy framing of disability;
3. To explore the effects of the policy representation of disability.

These three objectives guide the data presentation. The data presented below is organised in the following three sections: Section A will focus on definitions of disability, Section B focuses on the knowledge foundations that influenced the policy framing of student disability, and Section C focuses on the effects of the policy-framing of disability.

### **5.2 Section A: Definitions of Disability**

### 5.2.1 Q1. How do universities define disability in their policies?

Inspired by What is the Problem Represented to be? (WPR) (Bacchii, 2009) in UY and UX disability policies, data presented in this section detail the definitions which include understanding and categories of disability that are reflected in the policy texts and interviews with students, staff and civic informants. Data for University Y from Zimbabwe is presented first, followed by data from University X from South Africa. Tables of comparison of policy and interview responses from both universities, and analysis of the data, are presented.

#### 5.2.1.1 University Y (UY)

The standards of operation procedures from UY, the Code of Practice, and UY Website seem to draw from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (UN 2006) in their understanding of disability that is described as an ‘evolving concept’. In addition, the Constitution of Zimbabwe’s core principles of non-discrimination and non-restrictive environments guide the definition. The Standard Operation Procedures explicitly state:

*The University Y is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for students with disability and aims to create an environment which enables them to participate fully in the mainstream of university life. For the purposes of this policy, disability is understood in the broadest sense and, in addition to mobility and sensory impairments, includes mental health problems, specific learning difficulties and medical conditions, which may have an impact on day-to-day activities. (UY Disability Statement, p. 1)*

The code of practice, inclusivity report and UY website all allude to how the university aims to provide special support to students with disabilities in a manner that respects and promotes human dignity, rights and opportunities. The above documents also recognise the obligation of UY to provide a safe physical environment in which students with disabilities and conditions

with the opportunity to realise their individual capabilities for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development through full participation in university activities.

Coupled to this framing of disability, UY has the following categories/groups of students with disability conditions articulated in the code of practice on UY website and the inclusivity report (2018).

- The visually impaired (totally blind /or partially sighted),
- The hearing impaired,
- The physically challenged (those with body deformities, wheelchair users),
- Conditions (mental illness, night blindness, epilepsy, albinism etc.).

Secondary research data from interview participants from UY staff indicate that disability is viewed by the general university population largely through medical, religious, and charity lenses. ‘Disability is seen as needing medical treatment, charity; people see students with disabilities as ‘beggars’, two staff informants noted:

*Some lecturers and staff, both new and old, believe that students with disabilities are not smart and are just a burden on the university system and should be treated like they are on welfare. (R5 and R 9: UY Staff)*

Another staff informant noted:

*Although our policy articulations and code of practice allude to helping students to inclusively participate in education, our responses tend to have a welfare, individualistic approach to the student’s challenges. We are still grappling with making our inclusive support to really be steeped in a rights-based approach, hence the underlying framing of disability issues and supports tends be welfaristic or pity and charity-directed, although the policy notes otherwise. (R7: UY Staff)*

Some students without disabilities pointed out that students with disabilities should engage in distance learning, especially at university level, as it will spare them the embarrassment of learning on campus. One particular comment stood out from a student without a disability:

*I pity these students and they should learn from afar because we normal students do not have time to give them charity; we are too busy with our studies to be bothered.* (R12: Student without disability)

Interviews with students with disabilities indicated that there is a general belief that disability is contagious and is a sin. As a result, one participant with albinism had problems accessing public places simply because their appearance was likely to raise alarm and panic from the university community that understood albinism to be a transmittable physical condition. One particular comment from a student who was blind, highlighted a disturbing comment by a classmate:

*You are cursed and you do not deserve to be in an accounts class; how does a blind student know how to account for things? Your parents should tell you who sinned.* (R 8: Student with disability)

One civic stakeholder informant explained that persons with disabilities are viewed as having had a misfortune or sinned in their past lives in Zimbabwe:

*Zimbabwean society defines disability as a barrier to perform daily activities such as studying, working, communicating and so forth. When people see persons with disabilities, they feel pity and want to offer help, and are keen to donate some money as, in many cases, those persons with disabilities are poor.* (R20: Civic stakeholder)

#### 5.2.1.2 *University X (UX).*

The UX disability policy (2011) details in its preamble that University X is committed to redressing past and present inequalities resulting from the legacy of the country's past. In this regard, it fully endorses the UNCRPD signed into South African law in June 2007. Section 2.1 of the UX disability policy defines Disability in the following way:

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007, P. 1) recognises that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers. It recognises persons with disabilities as those persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The policy also clearly defines in Section 2.2 of the policy what it means by discrimination based on disability:

Discrimination on the basis of disability refers to imposing any distinction, exclusion or restriction of persons on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, on all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field. It encompasses all forms of unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, including denial of reasonable accommodation. (p. 1)

It is important to highlight the policy focus that UX consequently recognises:

Disabled people have been and continue to be subject to multiple forms of marginalisation and exclusion; that as a result, the majority of persons with disabilities live in conditions of relative social, cultural and economic disadvantage; and the need to lend its full support to measures and programmes which provide for the social, educational, economic and cultural integration of persons with disabilities in our society.

Other primary data gathered from key institutional documents, such as annual reports, websites, vision and mission statements and pamphlets reflect and identify how UX acknowledges the power of language and terminology in helping to shape inclusive environments.

**Table 8** below is a checklist of the above policy documents of acceptable and unacceptable categories/terminology of disabilities being as accepted by the Disability Rights Movement of South Africa and Disabled People of South Africa.

**Table 8: UX Disability Terminology Guideline**

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Person with a disability</b>	Afflicted with/victim of/handicapped
<b>Person without a disability</b>	Able bodied
<b>Person with mental health concerns</b>	Mentally retarded
<b>Person with learning disability</b>	Slow learner
<b>Person with an intellectual disability</b>	Mongol/mongoloid
<b>Deaf/Hard of hearing</b>	Deaf-mute/deaf and dumb
<b>Person with congenital disability</b>	Cerebral palsied/spastic
<b>Person with epilepsy</b>	Epileptic
<b>Person of short stature</b>	Dwarf/midget

YES	NO
Visually impaired	Blind
Wheelchair user	Wheel chair bound/Confined to a wheelchair
Person with a physical challenge	Cripple/Crippled
	Deformed/deformity/birth defect

Informants and student interviews indicated that disability in the university community tends to be understood according to the medical model, social model, inclusive model and charity model. One student without a disability explained that:

*Disability means a physical, sensory, mental or other impairment, which has a substantial long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. (P2: student without disability)*

Moreover, staff from the university still had challenges engaging students with disabilities. One staff informant recalled how one administrative faculty staff member 'still believes that disability is caused by witchcraft, voodoo, demon possession or a curse from the gods' (P33: UX staff).

Another staff informant noted how some lecturers do not believe in any research-informed definition of disability. However, the same informant also recalled how some staff were adept with inclusive terminologies, like hard of hearing instead of deaf, short stature instead of dwarf and were aware of the role language plays in bringing about change. They also noted how some staff members' view of disability is based on compensating the individual.

For example, a staff informant cited the following situation:

*A third-year student had been unable to access a particular lecture room, but instead of approaching the Estates Department to discuss changing the lecture room to enable the student to participate in the lectures, the co-ordinator provided the student with video recordings. While recognising that changing lecture rooms can cause difficulties for departments because of timetabling and allocation of rooms, the co-ordinator did not seem to appreciate or recognise the exclusion the student was subjected to. (P15: UX staff)*

The same staff informant also shared a different viewpoint from the co-ordinator and it was observable in her comments:

*I think there has to be a shift from disability being seen as some kind of vaguely sordid kind of [pause], there are so many connotations about weakness and shame [pause] and irritation, that there are these people who make demands, instead of having needs; they are seen as people who make demands. ... I mean it's just the image really; I just wish that the progression from disability being seen in a negative way to a realisation that this is about basic respect, and equality, and I think it is really important for that perception to really move on. (P 15: UX staff)*

One informant from the civic space also shared that disability is understood as a:

*Physical condition with spiritual origins and soon after apartheid disability became highly medicalised and charity focused with disability becoming a commodity, and begging and NGO assistance becoming essential income streams. (P19: civic stakeholder)*

Students with disabilities revealed, through interviews, that they had a sense of being included especially by the support efforts provided by UX. However, sometimes they

encountered pity and charity from the attitudes of the university community. One student with a disability stated that:

*I appreciate the support UX provides for us to also learn and access an education. However, sometimes the staff and students still have biased views towards disability and it sometimes really affects me.(P1: student with disability)*

The study also presents a tabulated summation of how the two institutions specifically define disability in their policy documents. **Table 9** provides definitions and an understanding of disability in university policies.

**Table 9: Definition and Understanding of Disability in University Policies**

<b>POLICY SPECIFICS</b>	<b>UY</b>	<b>UX</b>
<b>Policy understandings /definitions informing the framing of disability in policy documents.</b>	Affirmative Action Model, Medical Model, Constitution of Zimbabwe, UNCRPD	Rights-based and Empowerment models, Constitution of South Africa, UNCRPD
<b>Policy definition of disability</b>	‘For the purposes of this policy, disability is understood in the broadest sense and, in addition to mobility and sensory impairments, includes mental health problems, specific learning difficulties and medical conditions, which may have an impact on day-to-day activities.’	‘It recognises persons with disabilities as those persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.’
<b>Categories/groups of disability</b>	The visually impaired (totally blind and or partially sighted)  The hearing impaired  Physically challenged (those with body deformities, wheelchair users)	It recognises persons with disabilities as those persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments.

POLICY SPECIFICS	UY	UX
	Conditions (mental illness, night blindness, epilepsy, albinism etc.)	

*Sources UX Disability Policy p1, Disability unit website, UX disability pamphlets*

*Sources UY website, UY inclusive report 2012–2018, p. 6–7, UY disability statement p. 3.*

This study also collated the responses of how the interviewed participants in both universities understood disability. **Table 10** shows the participants' views and understanding of disability during the interviews.

**Table 10: Interview Participant Views and Understanding of Disability**

<b>Understanding Disability Models</b>	<b>Medical Model</b>	<b>Social Model</b>	<b>Cultural Model</b>	<b>Religious Model</b>	<b>Inclusivity</b>	<b>Charity Model</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY Y IN ZIMBABWE</b>							
<b>Students without Disability</b>			1	1		2	<b>4</b>
<b>Students with Disability</b>	1		1	2		2	<b>6</b>
<b>Staff</b>	2			2		2	<b>6</b>
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>	1			2		1	<b>4</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY X IN SOUTH AFRICA</b>							
<b>Students without Disability</b>	1			1	1	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Students with Disability</b>	1	1			4		<b>6</b>
<b>Staff</b>	1	1		2	2		<b>6</b>
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>			1	1		2	<b>4</b>

The data in **Table 9** shows frameworks/models of disability used by both universities in an effort to define and understand disability and, in doing so, to respond to the question, ‘What is a disability?’ According to Scullion (2010), the focus on attribution or responsibility and the ensuing development of policies and practices can be used to track the definition of disability. Data presented in this section show that both university communities are applying and blending different models of disability for defining purposes because they are all representations of the needs and values of the defining group and, as a result, the perceptions and beliefs underpinning these models become widely accepted and an essential part of society (Smart & Smart, 2006). The findings above show that disability is a complicated, multifaceted term that defies an easy definition. Both universities use some similar and some different models and frameworks in framing how students with disabilities are defined, thus confirming research by Scott (2009) that highlights how disability is categorised and conceived by people using different disability models and frameworks and the complexity when it comes to policy, law, and practice. Thus, the above findings from both UY and UX show that conceptions of disability are limited by time and culture (Smart & Smart, 2006), and thus might not be appropriate in all socio-cultural contexts.

The findings from the interview responses reflect both negative and positive views and understanding of disability by different informants from both university communities. The findings concur with literature by Al Ju'beh (2015) and Grue (2015) that acknowledge the power language and definitions have in shaping societal interactions with persons with disabilities. They also note how language also reveals individuals’ opinions towards both themselves and other people, thus language used to describe disabilities can either support or contradict both positive and negative attitudes, assumptions and stereotypes as reflected in the interview responses from each institution.

### 5.3 Section B: Knowledge Foundations

#### 5.3.1 Q2. *What knowledge foundations influenced the framing of the policy representation?*

After establishing how UY and UX define disability in their policies, it is also reflected in policy research (Hall & Tinklin, 1998; Borland & James, 1999; O'Connor & Robinson, 1999; Holloway, 2001). This study concentrated on exploring the knowledge foundations of policy framing. The research prioritised three unique aspects that are not usually considered when looking into disability policy at universities and these include the assumptions and presuppositions that underpin policy representations (WPR), the role of embedded agency (IL) and who participated in the creation and appraisal of the knowledge and the foundations of expertise (CE). This section presents data from policy documents and informant interviews. The following table, **Table 11**, provides a summation of the knowledge foundations followed by the interview responses of each institution regarding the knowledge foundations and an analysis of the data.

**Table 11: Knowledge Foundations of Policy Framing**

Theme Indicators	UY	UX
<p>1. What presuppositions and assumptions underpin the representation of disability <b>(WPR)</b>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International, Regional and National Policy Frameworks and Models.</li> </ul>	<p>Constitution of Zimbabwe focus on non-discrimination            UNCRPD – Inclusion Principles            Affirmative Action Model            Medical model  <i>Source: UY Disability report UY Website, UY disability statement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welfare /helper/helpee assumptions</li> <li>• Individualistic and pity assumptions</li> <li>• Marginalised by society/Oppression</li> <li>• Lack empowerment</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: policy documents and interview response</i></p>	<p>Constitution of South Africa focus on transformative agenda            UNCRPD – Rights-based and inclusion principles            Rights and empowerment Models  <i>Source: UX POLICY (2011)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marginalised by society/oppression</li> <li>• Lack empowerment</li> <li>• Individualistic and pity assumptions</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: policy documents and interview responses</i></p>
<p>2. Embedded Agency <b>(IL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional interests, values and assumptions that govern the institution</li> </ul>	<p>UY emphasises research, income generation, entrepreneurship, sustainable development interests, values and assumptions to guide the broad direction and governance of the institution.</p>	<p>UX has transformative and inclusive interests, values and assumptions that guide the broad direction and governance of the institution.  <i>Source: UX strategic plan</i></p>

Theme Indicators	UY	UX
	<i>Source UY Strategic Plan</i>	
<p>3. Who participated in the creation and appraisal of the knowledge (CE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experts and professionals that participated</li> <li>• Professional bodies and organisations that are consulted and participate</li> </ul>	<p>UY uses an in-house policy-framing process with minimal input from external stakeholders and relies on the institution's 30 years' experience in the field working with disability. The process is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The disability unit (DU) staff and lawyers' draft policy.</li> <li>• Policy is then submitted to the Vice Chancellor and approved.</li> <li>• Medical Personal especially a doctor</li> <li>• Organisations for PWD</li> <li>• Lawyers</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: policy and interview responses</i></p>	<p>UX follows a consultative institution wide and multi stakeholder policy-framing process. The process is as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DU staff drafts policy</li> <li>• Policy is submitted to Deputy Vice Chancellor Transformation for approval</li> <li>• Policy is then released to the broad university Staff, Students and external stakeholders for review</li> <li>• Revised policy is submitted to Council</li> <li>• Final policy is approved by Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Transformation</li> <li>• Psychometrics psychologist,</li> <li>• Researchers in disability studies,</li> <li>• Organisations for PWD</li> </ul>

Theme Indicators	UY	UX
		<i>Source: Policy and interview responses</i>
4. Foundations/credibility of expertise (CE)	Experience <i>Source: policy and interview responses</i>	Experience Rationality/Science Technical Professional <i>Source: interview responses</i>

*Sources: UX strategic plan, UX website, UX disability policy, UX disability annual*

*reports, interview responses*

*Sources: UY strategic plan, UY website, UY disability statement, UY inclusive report, interview response*

The following were the responses to the interviews.

#### 5.3.1.1 University Y (UY)

When informants were asked about the policy-framing and drafting process, their responses factored in all the above dimensions when responding to this question. Respondents said they were aware of it but acknowledged that at UY, the process was internal/closed and not even consultative at the level of the institution or the larger society. Informants noted that UY has played a significant role in the development of disability advocacy in the country. The university staff members were aware of the ad hoc nature of the framing process and the frameworks that influence their policies. The policy-framing process, the sources consulted, and the participants are described in the following interview excerpts.

One staff informant detailed the following:

*We rely on United Nations (UN) frameworks to guide our work, the constitution and the social model when framing the policy. We work with what is trending in the inclusive space from the affirmative action model to the social model. We also consult our strategic planning document and align with the values of the university in operations. We are currently using the 2016 to 2020 strategic plan that factors in the current economic situation that Zimbabwe is facing. The focus is on income generation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. So, our policy approach is also guided by the broad university vision and we try to engage income-generating activities and encourage entrepreneurship. In this regard, we also run photocopying services and get income from offering some of our services to other institutions like [Zimbabwe School Examination Council] (ZIMSEC) or any organisation that wants services like converting exam scripts into braille scripts for the blind. So, in our efforts to cater for students with disabilities, we have to also find ways of generating income*

*and this puts pressure on our efforts in trying to be inclusive. For example, when we face challenges like lack of braille paper for blind students, we have to work overdrive to get opportunities to get income to supplement these basic functional requirements. This distracts us from our main purpose of providing inclusive support. Juggling two visions not aligned is cumbersome. Zimbabwe's economic situation has driven most universities to develop income-generating models in their everyday operations ...*

*UY has 30 years' experience working with disability issues and when framing policy, we rely on our in-house capacity to contribute to the framing of the policy, as we are a national resource centre around disability issues. We rely on lawyers and lecturers in the field of human rights and disability studies at UY. We do not engage and consult external stakeholders when framing policy or standards of procedures but we rely on in-house stakeholders. Our historical experience in the field and engaging, most importantly, disabled lawyers that have been by-products of UY or former students of the university. Our policy-framing process revolves around UY staff. We sometimes engage a doctor and organisations for PWD like Dorothy Duncan braille library and National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) to assist in clarification of terms and technology. (R3: UY staff)*

Another staff informant stated that:

*The lack of a national disability policy in Zimbabwe impacts [on] how the framing of disability at UY is done as the current guidelines we use as a university are not steeped in a rights-based approach, hence making the services offered more like charity or pity and not as matter of a right. The policy guidelines currently available lack a broader imaginary and are more ad hoc and not steeped in a rights-based approach that makes the services offered by the university a matter of charity not a student's*

*right, leaving students vulnerable as services may be stopped depending on availability. Most of these guidelines have been ad hoc solutions by different university administrations and vice chancellors and not guided by a consultative and multi-stakeholder policy-framing process. Touted policy benefits [that] are not deliberate but are because of people feeling bad or preserving an image depending on the university administration. Some major concerns around the dignity of students and the services they are getting are not from a rights-based approach. There is a disconnect and no guarantee to the procedures articulated. I worry about the standard UY is setting for other institutions. We do not have to celebrate mediocrity because we have achieved ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). The university is hesitant to engage a full-on research-based, consultative process when framing how to represent disability. The current policy articulations on the website and Standards of Procedures have not yet been mainstreamed into the whole university. Although we use [the] language of inclusion, we tend to clash with the broader university vision that encourages us to model our unit with a focus of also generating income. Therefore, this creates dual pressure in implementing any inclusive support. It is difficult when the unit has its own expectations and has to try to align the university vision. These dual and diametrically opposed visions need more people to [do] research about them and how they affect our daily operations as disability units ... . Disability is an afterthought when it comes to policy-framing at UY. This disconnect in policy has resulted in disabled students not being able to have choices, for example in the courses they study. (R11: UY staff)*

Another civic stakeholder informant noted:

*We rarely are engaged by the university on any contribution towards policy framing; however, they do come to us when in need of diagnostic criteria. I think they would*

*benefit from a broader consultative policy-framing process that involves more organisations and the public even. (R4: civic stakeholder)*

While another civic stakeholder informant concurred:

*For an institution like UY, there is need for more civic engagement when framing policy or standards of procedures, although they occasionally reach out to us for assistance. For guidelines with technology more can be done by such an institution. (R6: civic stakeholder).*

#### *5.3.1.2 University X (UX)*

Staff informants acknowledged the extensive multi-stakeholder process that is involved in developing and evaluating the disability framing process when asked about the approach UX utilises when framing policy, including who and what is discussed. Respondents were aware of the frameworks that guide UX policy, including the South African Constitution's transformative agenda, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), White Paper on Education, and its Inclusion Principles. The process of formulating policies at UX is described in the following interview extracts.

One staff informant summed it up:

*When I came to UX in 2008, the policy-framing process was taking place. The disability unit consulted the following legislation and documentation: the White Paper in Education influenced the constitution bill of rights focusing on transformation, United Nations convention on Rights UNCRPD. UX uses a round table approach to framing and implementation. The process was a multi-stakeholder round table process. The process had several stages where the disability unit drafted the policy with staff and students with disabilities and then goes to the DVC of Transformation. From the office of the DVC of Transformation, the next stage is to open the policy for*

*discussion by marketing the policy to the deans and departments, executive heads to buy in and correct the policy. The draft policy is disseminated to the whole institution for feedback and all departments participate in the framing process. The framing process is spread wide on the campus with students, leadership, faculty, administration and all departments participating. After this process the findings are consolidated and then presented to the university council. The outcome from the council is then presented back to the DVC of Transformation. The DVC office then officially communicates the outcome to the disability unit and an official policy is then instituted. Although challenges are there in our everyday operations amongst departments over what is deemed inclusive, what makes this process more embraced by the institution as a whole is that both our vision as a unit aligns with the broader university vision of transformation, change and inclusion ...*

*Currently (2019), we are reviewing our policy and the same process is underway. Although there is a formal structured process to organise policy framing our biggest challenge in this process is the unconscious bias people bring when participating in the process and this impacts [on] the input we get from various departments on campus. Suggestions coming from a medical, pity and charitable mind-set are always brought into discussions. (P29: UX staff)*

Another staff informant elaborated on the stakeholders they consult when framing the policy.

*At the initial stages of the policy framing when the disability unit is drafting the policy, it engages and consults key stakeholders like psychometrics psychologist, researchers in disability studies and organisations for PWD like Deaf South Africa (DEAFSA), Higher Education and Further Disability Service Association (HEDSA) for admissions policy. The most important stakeholders for the university are HEDSA and*

*DEAFSA as they help align our thinking to the national requirements for the higher education space about disability. (P 31: UX staff)*

Moreover, a civic stakeholder informant noted:

*Different universities consult with us also including UX. However, as a key institution that focuses on providing support with regard to the inclusion of students with disabilities in HE, more consistent dialogue with universities is needed to really ensure students with disability are represented inclusively. More robust and regular engagement with universities is needed so as to improve on [the] monitoring and evaluating of the strategies and policies universities employ when including students with disability in mainstream university functions. (P25: civic stakeholder)*

A civic stakeholder informant noted:

*I think universities now need to be broader in their national consultative engagement with publics and different stakeholders when creating and appraising their policies since, as of 2018, we now have a national HE disability policy. Although UX consults us when framing their policies and procedures, the presence of a national HE disability policy demands a wider civic participation process when framing institutional policies on disability. This is a key factor in helping universities represent students with disability more inclusively. (P19: civic stakeholder)*

The findings in **Table 11** highlight the various and different blendings of disability frameworks and models used as knowledge foundations that have encouraged the embedding of disability inclusion cultures in both institutions' policies. These knowledge foundations of definitions of disability reflect the worldview of particular cultures, institutions and individuals (Drum, 2009). This means that how students with disabilities are defined in university policy spaces is influenced by various assumptions and preconceptions about disability. The interview

responses of both universities, however, reveal signs of inconsistencies and challenges in the current framing of provision for students with disabilities (SWD) that emanate from assumptions underpinning policy conceptualisations of disability in both universities. Al Ju'beh (2015) states that language used to describe disabilities can either support or contradict negative assumptions, attitudes and stereotypes. Thus, there are complex dynamics DU face from the assumptions and presuppositions that underpin the models/frameworks that are used in framing disability categories, terms and definitions, especially in both universities.

Second, of particular concern to my study is how the framing of disability policy support services are influenced by the broader complex HE dynamics like massification, quality assurance and types of management and how these dynamics influence the framing and implementation of disability supports. In both universities, global, national and institutional visions/frameworks are influencing disability inclusion-orientated change processes and influence how different departments within them respond to disability matters. These findings are similar to findings in studies by May and Bridger (2010) and Riddell et al. (2007) that revealed how agendas like language policies, audit policies and quality assurance tend to impact upon departmental internal affairs.

Lastly, findings in this section from **Table 11** and interviews reveal insights into who is involved in the policy framing of disability at both universities. The two institutions have some similarities and stark differences in who participated in the creation and appraisal of the knowledge and the credibility of their expertise. The research findings noted that UY has an enclosed system that places all trust on the experience of a few staff members with no further need for accountability to a wider public. A small body of university experts are expected to become involved in policy deliberations simply through the credibility of its member's experience, without any wider consultative processes. More so, the students with disability are not part of the framing process and other organisations and civilians are not consulted. UX has

both an enclosed and multi-stakeholder consultative process. UX has a hybrid reliance on professional experience of staff and academic/research credibility and the skills of experts also leave room for campus community participation. This opens up the UX policy-framing process for broader accountability to a wider university public. The above knowledge orders in both universities reveal who creates the norms of appropriate discussion and framing of disability (Jasanoff, 2012).

#### **5.4 Section C: Effects of Policy Framing**

Bacchi (2009, p. 43) points out, that the many approaches to policy analysis ‘tend to neglect the impact of discourses on how people live their lives on a day-to-day basis, and on how non-discursive factors interact with discourses. This section will present data from both policy analysis and interviews of students, staff and civic stakeholder informants on the discursive, subjective and lived effects of the policy articulations. First, to be presented is data on the theme of university accessibility. **Table 12** displays a comparison of articulated categories of policy effects. This will be followed by a detailed data presentation and analysis of policy effects of each category in **Table 12** from each university. Second, data on the theme of Budget and Funding as depicted in **Table 15** will be data presented by each university.

### 5.4.1 Theme 1: University accessibility

The policy documents articulate the effects of the policy representation regarding various aspects of inclusivity with regard to accessibility for SWD are represented in the following table.

**Table 12: Inclusive University Accessibility**

<b>Policy specifics for students with disabilities</b>	<b>UY</b>	<b>UX</b>
<b>Student recruitment</b>	✓	✓
<b>Admissions</b>	✓	✓
<b>Teaching and learning</b>	✓	✓
<b>Examinations and assessments</b>	✓	✓
<b>Access to built environment</b>	✓	✓
<b>Physical access to lecture halls</b>	N/A	✓
<b>Accommodation</b>	✓	✓
<b>Staff development</b>	✓	✓
<b>Student support (e.g. welfare)</b>	✓	✓
<b>Assistive Technology</b>	✓	✓

#### *5.4.1.1 Student recruitment/admissions*

Both institutions have articulated the inclusive visions regarding inclusive student recruitment and admissions. Although both similarly address this policy provision, there are unique institutional and contextual approaches regarding their approaches and effects. Below is a presentation of the different institutional achievements by institution.

##### *5.4.1.1.1 University Y (UY)*

Concerning admission of students with disabilities, UY code of practice details the following commitments as discursive effects:

Students with disabilities and conditions are encouraged to seek admission to University Y. Admission may occur through the routes that already exist in the university i.e. through standard, special or affirmative criteria. The university will only refuse a student a place on the grounds of their disability/condition where:

1. The content, structure or delivery of the chosen course of study is such that the student would be prevented from fulfilling a major port of the requirements of the course and the university is unable to provide suitable staff or facilities to allow the requirement to be met, or
2. The chosen course of study leads to a professional qualification and the relevant professional body has regulations, which would preclude membership by persons with particular disability/condition.

No applicant be refused a place at the university on grounds of disability alone before an opportunity has been provided for full consideration of the specific support or facilities required. Any decision to refuse a place to otherwise suitably qualified candidate will be subject to ratification by a committee chaired by the vice chancellor of the University Y.

UY has a strong affirmative action policy focus for SWD. Though minimum standards of entry into a course at the university will be followed, special consideration will be given to students with disabilities as a result of impairments for admission to courses of their choice, provided they have the minimum requirements at O-level and A-level. Such students may be admitted to courses if they have points less than the usual cut off points required for the course for that year.

When asked about policy details and everyday practices, staff informants noted that the application and admission process at UY is based on merit. They also noted they take into consideration needs of certain groups of people. One staff informant expressed the following:

*The university works with the Zimbabwe Examinations Board to assess how many students with disabilities write national exams. We also engage special schools to flag those students that qualify for university. Students with disabilities at UY also refer friends to apply and most students apply because a friend encouraged them to apply. Potential students are directed to apply online or contact the disability unit. (R 27: UY staff)*

Another staff informant also clarified that:

*Admission may occur via one of the following categories: **standard**, that is entrance on merit; **special**, where previous work experience is considered; **specific**, where certain criteria are stipulated which segregated other students due to health and safety and on affirmative action where other factors which disadvantaged a student during his/her studies are put into consideration. This last radical avenue applies only to disabled students. If a disabled student does not qualify through the first three avenues, affirmative action is used. The rationale behind it is that such an applicant may have suffered educational disadvantages because of his/her disability. For*

*instance, most Zimbabwean schools have an acute shortage of brailled and audio-taped books for blind students and hence students rely more on their sighted peers who read out for them. In such a case, the student is disadvantaged in that he cannot access the curriculum the same way as the rest of the students. (R7: UY staff)*

Another staff informant noted:

*It is important to reconsider their applications when they apply for admission into higher education as several students with disabilities in Zimbabwe come from poor backgrounds and have faced many challenges in high school. (R11: UY staff)*

The same staff member highlighted that a student has to disclose his/her disability on the application form in order to qualify through the affirmative route. In this case, UY may reduce the entry points by one or two.

The policy of inclusive education for students with disabilities has seen the university accomplish the following lived effects about applications and admission. Tracking took place from the year 2005, when UY adopted clear policy with specific application and admission provisions to cater for more categories of students with disabilities. These include students with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical challenges, as well as those with conditions like albinism and epilepsy, amongst others. The following enrolment statistics in **Table 13** demonstrate this.

**Table 13: UY Enrolment Statistics for Students with Disabilities**

Academic year	Number of students	Distribution by Nature of Disability							
		VI (Visually Impaired)		PC (Physically Challenged)		ALBINISM		HI (Hearing Impaired)	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
August 2003–2004	25	8	2	8	4	1	---	1	1
August 2004–2005	18	5	4	5	3	1	---	---	---
August 2005–2006	10	4	1	5	---	---	---	---	---
August 2006–2007	13	2	2	7	1	1	---	----	----
August 2007–2008	5	3	---	1	1	---	---	----	----
August 2008–2009	67	21	9	15	8	11	3	----	----
August 2009–2010	46	20	7	8	6	3	2	----	----
August 2010–2011	58	24	9	11	7	5	2	----	----
August 2011–2012	101	30	12	24	16	11	7	----	1
August 2012–2013	102	34	15	23	17	7	4	1	1
August 2013–2014	157	56	24	27	16	18	14	1	1
August 2014–2015	137	58	12	22	14	17	12	1	1
August 2015–2016	140	38	31	24	15	18	14	----	----
August 2016–2017	152	42	34	16	9	28	22	----	1
August 2017–2018	156	50	39	24	18	6	13	6	----

*Source: Inclusive Report 2012 - 2018 p 6-7*

One staff informant pointed out that, as of 2013:

*The facility registers and supports a minimum of 120 students annually, excluding students that volunteer to assist those with disabilities in reading, writing, and general chores such as washing and pushing of wheelchairs, where necessary. (R3: UY staff)*

Another staff informant revealed that the policy helped UY come up with solutions to cater for students with disabilities and the vice chancellor's scholarship is one such achievement. They noted the following:

*The growth in demand for tertiary education by students with disabilities as shown in the year-on-year statistics shows more has to be done at national level to cater for the educational needs of this disadvantaged group in our society. The phenomenal rise in enrolment figures since 2003 is thanks to the University Y introduction of the Vice Chancellor's full scholarship covering both tuition and accommodation fees to all students living with a disability. (R8: UY staff)*

SWD who were interviewed expressed gratitude towards the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship as they came from backgrounds that were characterised by poverty and would not have afforded a university education. One student noted that:

*I had passed my exams with flying colours but my parents informed that they could not afford university, if it was not for my friend from UY that told me about the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship I would be at home. (R38: student with disability)*

Other general challenges as mentioned by staff respondents included how the online application form assumed a potential student only has one disability and gave no option to declare another disability. UY Disability Unit (DU) was also not included in the signage of university directions; hence the office is very difficult to locate without directions and lack of in-house assessment specialists forced the DU department to rely on medical practitioners only

for assessments of applications. Staff raised concerns about the university's ability to embrace disabilities like autism and were concerned about the lack of adequate information around the disability in Zimbabwe.

#### *5.4.1.1.2 University X (UX)*

The UX disability policy of 2011 points out that the university acknowledges that inequalities of access to education throughout the education system for persons with disabilities means that learners with disabilities have in the past been and continue to be especially vulnerable to exclusion from higher education. Consequently, the University commits itself to developing admission, recruitment and retention practices and policies for persons with disabilities that will maximise participation in higher education at UX.

UX disability unit end-of-year reports from 2011–2015 show the effects of how UX has seen a steady increase in students with disabilities enrolling and registering with the Disability Unit (DU), as noted by the statistics below in **Table 14**.

**Table 14: UX Enrolment Statistics for Students with Disabilities**

<b>Disability Unit Student Walk-In Registrations</b>	<b>June 2011</b>	<b>July 2012</b>	<b>Feb 2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Chronic Illness</b>	21	14	7	18	15	-
<b>Psychological Impairment</b>	4	9	6	7	12	-
<b>Hearing Impairment</b>	3	7	5	10	13	-
<b>Specific Learning Disabilities</b>	99	220	122	187	163	-
<b>Motor Impaired</b>	23	17	22	30	25	-
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	9	4	7	14	17	-
<b>Wheelchair Access</b>	3		2	5	7	-
<b>Temporary</b>	23	26	9	29	33	-
<b>Speech Impaired</b>	1	4	2	4	2	-
<b>Neurological Impairment</b>	-	4	1	-	3	-
<b>Total</b>	186	305	183	304	290	

*Source: Disability Unit Annual Reports 2011-2015*

Staff informants all noted that admission is based on merit. One staff informant detailed the subsequent subjective effects:

*Application and admissions at UX are based on merit and the DS has networks with mainstream schools, special schools and NGOs. When the admissions department goes out to schools, the DS department works with schools and NGOs' external stakeholders to flag potential students and they start engaging with the students where they are guided on how to apply, how to register, and how to declare a disability. Provisional applications are tracked and once a student is accepted, they have a meet and greet where they determine the needs of the students. (P35: UX staff)*

Some SWD noted how UX was a prestigious institution and it was not easy to apply to, especially for SWD from a rural background that highlighted their challenge to access application and admissions information, and material, as noted in the following narration of the effects of their application experiences:

*I am from the Port Nolloth in the Northern Cape and, as [a] wheelchair-bound young woman, a lot of people did not expect me to pass. Even my matric teachers did not think [so]. I passed matric with four distinctions and no one at my school or at the education department in my town had information on the application and admissions requirements at UX. If it was not for my family and friends I would not have applied in time, this was such a frustrating process. (P34: UX student with disabilities)*

Both universities prioritise disability rights. From this framing, they centralise the role of the institution in realising disability inclusion through policy, programming and social provisioning. Thus, barriers to participation, inclusion and representation in the policy are framed to be outside, and external to, the impaired body (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). The evidence also shows that UY uses affirmative action for admissions. The approach does,

however, question the notion that a person with a disability seeks to have their impairment removed and instead places a strong emphasis on ‘valuing individuals and celebrating differences irrespective of colour, sexual preference, gender, age, and impairment’ (Swain & French, 2000, p. 580). It also promotes the gradual formation of an affirmative identity to counter the various stereotypes and discrimination people encounter in society especially poverty (Swain & French, 2008). Ultimately, the evidence shows that the intentional framing by both universities has led to a steady increase in the enrolment of SWD at both universities as shown in **Tables 13 and 14**, thus confirming literature on an increase in participation and access for SWD because of policy priority (Shevlin et al., 2004; Madriaga, 2007). However, one SWD interview response from UX revealed the challenges they faced with the application process coming from a small rural town, thus reflecting challenges that Morris (1993) points out that the idea that when people with disabilities seek to be someone else because of their impairment it can result in oppressive experiences for the disabled.

#### *5.4.1.2 Access to the built environment*

##### *5.4.1.2.1 University Y (UY)*

Data from UY shows access to the built environment has also been discursively prioritised. The institution has made progress according to the inclusive report (2018). Giving students with disabilities access to the built environment presents unique issues for UY. These include campus location on an elevated topography and some of the old structures from the colonial past, thus confirming literature by Oyaro (2015) and Mubiru (2022) on how historically in sub-Saharan Africa because of structural designs and social bottlenecks, the needs of SWD were overlooked. The university has identified and, when practical, removed barriers to its facilities and services. As an illustration, the university's campus accommodation for students with disabilities is tailored to their specific needs. In collaboration with the DU, the accommodation department arranges rooms that are simple to use and accessible. The policy's discursive effects

from the Standards of Operation make sure that students with disabilities are provided rooms that are convenient for them. This means that there will be less noise interference for individuals who use digital voice recorders, tape recorders, and book sensors, and have helpers to access lectures and navigate the campus's built environment. However, several of the footpaths and some of the older structures are difficult to modify. Every year, money is set aside for access-solution retrofitting. In addition, UY commits to develop and implement standards and procedures that will ensure that all new infrastructural construction adheres to the principle of Universal Design. All buildings, thoroughfares, facilities, security systems, information technology, and other infrastructures for which the institution is accountable are designed, built, and/or maintained using universal design principles.

The main campus of UY has a number of lecture rooms that are physically inaccessible to students with disabilities because the majority of the buildings are not designed with their needs in mind. The elevated geography of where the university is located also presents an issue for SWD. Additionally, the policy has discursive silences regarding clear guidelines and directives on how lecture halls should be organised, which causes lecturers to be obstinate and combative about the locations they choose. One staff informant noted the following discursive and subjective effects:

*We experience challenges in helping students with disabilities physically access lecture buildings. As a centre, we work with various departments to facilitate the scheduling of lectures so that they are held in accessible lecture rooms. It is a challenge without a university policy directive to get lecturers appropriately spaced venues, enabling students with mobility impairments to move at their own pace to the next scheduled lecture and, even more challenging, engaging lecturers and departments without policy backing. (R 27: UY staff)*

Students with disabilities shared their frustration with the access of some lecture halls. One student on crutches shared the following experience:

*I was informed of my lecture hall change two hours before the class and the new venue was not designed for a student with crutches and it was on the 3rd floor, I asked for help from the coordinator at the DU but the lecturer was stubborn and unyielding.*

(R20: student with disability)

One staff informant also noted other subjective effects:

*The Centre ensures that helpers/volunteers are attached to students with disabilities who might need assistance around the campus. Through the courtesy of a Scholarship, disabled students and DU helpers are exempted from paying accommodation fees. As mentioned earlier, most visually impaired students have helpers to assist with mobility and orientation and also serve as readers.* (R3: UY staff)

#### **5.4.1.2.2 University X (UX)**

The UX 2011 policy details discursive effects on access to the built environment. The policy highlights particular challenges providing access to the built environment for people with disabilities. These include old buildings, the elevated location and campus buildings in different locations. To try and address the challenges the university endorses the principle of Universal Design. In addition, UX tries to ensure that Universal Design Principles are applied in the design and construction and maintenance of all buildings, thoroughfares, facilities, security systems, information technology and all other infrastructure.

The UX disability policy, the disability annual reports from 2011–2016 emphasise significant achievements in enshrining rights for students with disabilities. The first accomplishment was in providing barrier-free access and adequate accommodation, keeping in mind that students may have trouble getting about owing to UX elevated location and several older buildings. The

university tries to develop and implement standards and guidelines that ensure Universal Design Principles are applied to the design and construction and/or maintenance of all buildings, thoroughfares, facilities, security systems, information technology, and all other infrastructure for which the university is responsible. The university supports the principle of Universal Design as a feature of all new infrastructural development.

UX recognises the relevance of accessible inclusive public institutional structures, the social milieu in which SWD are located and how they should not be overlooked and ignored in this regard, as highlighted in the literature (Lau et al., 2016). The institution has made it easier to enter inaccessible locations, provided accessible parking, provided accessible transportation between residences and classes, and provided accessible housing options for students. If a request for concession justifies it, the university will look for medical evidence of a disability. When this occurs, the Disability Unit will receive supporting documentation from a licensed physician in the event of physical and sensory impairments and from a clinical, educational, or psychiatric psychologist or psychiatrist in the case of cognitive and psychological impairments. The Disability Unit will have the right, at its own expense, to seek a second opinion regarding the requirement for a concession in the event that facilities and resources are limited. When temporary disabilities are accommodated, this is done for the entire calendar year and is reviewed every year by the head of the Disability Unit. In order to determine whether this provision is still necessary, the student will need the most recent records available.

The DU noted that it is still working on retrofit projects to make existing structures and facilities wheelchair accessible. Staff informants who were questioned regarding physical accessibility agreed that increasing access to inaccessible venues was a policy goal and that UX location presented access issues for students with disabilities, thus affirming literature on historical structural and social design bottlenecks that ignored and overlooked their needs in sub-Saharan Africa (Oyaro, 2015; Mubiru, 2022).

One staff informant provided the following details:

*One campus is situated on an elevated plane and this is a disabled student's nightmare to try and provide accessible transport, parking and residences for students is important and the demand is high. UX provides accessible bus services within a 10km radius and designated parking in line with UX traffic policy. (P31: UX staff)*

One international student in a wheelchair noted their lived experience of how UX campus was a nightmare for physically disabled students with disabilities as the access to old buildings and the elevated location affected their morale to attend class:

*I honestly hesitate going to my lectures on campus as I struggle to get to some of the lecture halls. (P28: student with disability)*

Both institutions in this study have made policy/discursive provisions regarding the built environment as highlighted by the above findings, thus aligning with research literature emphasising the importance of affording SWD accessible environments to HE (Bhattacharya, 2010; Dispenza, 2019; Tudzi et al., 2020). They approach their discursive provisions differently, for example, accommodation and classroom provision. At times they act similarly, for example, acknowledging and working with principles of universal design. Both institutions are making headway in making adjustments to the built environment to cater for students with disabilities on the campus and they are making an effort to evaluate a building's compliance and inclusivity for SWD, which is also highlighted in the literature (Keerthirathna et al., 2010; FOTIM, 2011, Lau et al., 2016). It is important to highlight the welfare/medical framing of volunteer services by using terms like *helper* and *helpee* at UY. UX also emphasises a medical evidence approach to providing support to students. The words used in the discursive framing evoke welfare and medicalised dependency at both institutions.

Finding from both universities also show both subjective and lived effects and evidence of how challenges with accessibility of buildings and related facilities persist and they affect the inclusion of SWD on campus, as observed in studies by Losinsky et al., (2003) and Chauhan (2020). However, evidence also shows the complexity of access to university is more than just participating in university activities, but also entails how SWD navigate and manoeuvre around the university campus environment to various locations (Hamzat & Dada, 2005; Keerthirathna et al., 2010; Maidin, 2012). In this regard UY discursive provisions are silent on provisions of how SWD navigate and manoeuvre the university campus environment to various locations such as classrooms, also considering the time and distance that SWD traverse on campus. Such obstacles at policy/discursive level prevent students from moving around the campus's constructed environment and limit SWD ability to engage in educational activities (Jameel, 2011).

#### *5.4.1.3 Teaching and learning*

##### *5.4.1.3.1 University Y (UY)*

According to the inclusive report (2019), disability statement (2019), and interview responses, UY offers a resource to academics to help them review their teaching and learning practices in order to improve their departments' ability to work with students with disabilities and, in turn, the quality of instruction for all students. The goal is for academics to share their existing strategies while noting areas for improvement and identifying distinctive approaches. The fundamental needs of a field or subject must be taken into account initially since only after they have been defined can alternative methods of evaluation that don't compromise standards be discovered.

One staff informant gave an example

*Language experts, for example, must decide whether the ability to speak in the language is a fundamental requirement, in which case students with speech impediments may be excluded, or whether the ability to speak the language is a fundamental requirement, in which case alternative means of expression can be found. Additionally, a substantial portion of students with disabilities tend to be disadvantaged by UY emphasis on the written word in most fields. (R27: UY staff)*

One staff informant further noted that providing inclusive and accessible help involves more than simply utilising assistive technology. It also entails changing the culture of an organisation and winning the support of academics.

*People need help and training, and department heads must lead this initiative. It is a state of mind. Inclusion is the buzzword in HE right now. The basic concept is sound, but there are times when it requires extra explanation. At the moment, understanding varies; some people comprehend quite well, while others still require more training. I would like to improve the consistency of the positive behaviours and spread them throughout the university. (R11: UY staff)*

The same interviewee also noted:

*As UY, we are working to overcome individual (often subject- and course-related) fears and reluctance. To get staff to think beyond making reasonable accommodation for individual students and think about accessibility for all, and help staff recognise that inclusive practice is not just a technical issue that can and should be supported to recognise that changes can be small (for example, making the titles of essays clearer) yet still make a difference. (R11: UY staff)*

While there is progress at UY in the areas of admissions, examinations and assessments and student support, teaching and learning is an area where significant change is still needed.

Disability officers expressed difficulty in influencing developments in this area, since teaching and learning is regarded as the domain of academics. All respondents highlighted the attitudinal barriers and unconscious biases that are a challenge to inclusive practices.

One staff informant noted the following:

*It is difficult to teach an old dog a new trick. Academics in our case express the difficulty of providing 'extra' support for disabled students, in a context in which they experience mounting pressure and increasing workloads. Adjustments such as providing lecture notes in electronic format in advance are seen as problematic because students might not then attend lectures or because some lecturers do not routinely use notes and this would require a substantial change in practice. (R7: UY staff)*

Another staff informant noted:

*Concerns are expressed about lowering standards through providing extra support or alternative means of assessment. Some academics think equality means treating everyone in exactly the same way. (R5: UY staff)*

One student lamented their treatment by a lecturer who had given them the highest mark in the whole class but when they got to know it was a student with a disability, they engaged a full retractable process, accusing them of copying during extra time. Not only academics, but also members of the university community have tended to approach disability with mixed attitudes and perceptions. Testimonies from student participants revealed negative attitudes towards students with disabilities.

One student with albinism who had an eye infection noted:

*One administrative staff [member] at the faculty did not really like me. She was harsh to me and she sometimes commented badly about my condition. Some lecturers were irritable especially if I did not see well on the board. In addition to the challenge relating to short sight some students are scared of the physical appearance (albinism) to such an extent that they were always reluctant to associate with students with albinism. (R40: student with disability)*

#### **5.4.1.3.2 University X (UX)**

The UX policy with regards to teaching and learning for SWD notes that the university will provide for their learning needs. The policy recognises that this may in some cases entail modifying, substituting or supplementing curricula and course work requirements, including alternative but equivalent assessment modes, ensuring at all times that academic standards are not compromised and that students will graduate with the requisite skills and competencies.

Any modification of course requirements or assessment methods will be discussed and agreed on by the dean of the faculty (or nominee), the head of the disability unit and the student. If, after due consideration, the view is that in a certain discipline or course teaching methods and specific teaching environments pose insurmountable obstacles relating to a student's level of impairment, and a genuine attempt has been made by all role players to seek solutions. The head of the disability unit in consultation with the dean of the faculty may advise the student to register for a course with fewer access impediments. Should a student still feel that his/her rights have been violated, he/she would follow the procedure as set out in the policy. The university undertakes to encourage and support wherever possible, for example, offering Universal Design Principles in new course offerings and educating academic staff.

Staff Informant interviews revealed teaching and learning is a major topic of concern. Teaching and learning still have to be improved upon, notwithstanding the progress UX has made in the areas of admissions, tests and assessments, and student support.

One staff informant noted:

*Because teaching and learning are regarded as the domain of academics, it is difficult to have a significant impact on developments in this subject. Academics in our situation routinely emphasises how difficult it is to provide 'extra' support to students with disabilities while also managing increasing pressure and increasing workloads. The ideal situation would be for support for students with disabilities to be seen as an integral part of daily operations rather than an optional addition. A considerable adjustment would be required in practice for changes like alerting students in advance that lecture notes will be available in electronic format, as this could result in students missing lectures or certain lecturers not frequently using notes. (P29: UX staff)*

Another staff informant pointed out:

*Concerns were expressed about the possibility of standards being lowered through the provision of additional help or alternative evaluation methods. The establishment of accommodation for disabled students was also severely hindered by the belief of some academics that equality meant treating everyone similarly. (P33: UX staff)*

Students, those with a disability and those without, at UX pointed out how they observed lecturers tend to resist making adjustments for students with a disability and look at it as a burden.

Data from both universities shows evidence of positive discursive policy support for curriculum and pedagogy, thus pointing to the positive role of prioritising policy support that encourages inclusive pedagogical and curriculum practices. In line with this finding, McGregor

et al. (2016) argue that the retention of students with disabilities at university level are affected by the extent to which they feel included and integrated in an institution's academic context. Thus, curriculum and pedagogy are powerful influences on the retention and academic success of students with disabilities.

However, data from both universities show evidence of lived and subjective effects reflecting challenges to the provisions of support in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. Data presented also show how both institutions have policy provision but lack support by appropriate staff training in their role of making education accessible. This seems to imply it is conceivable for SWD to be admitted to higher education institutions (HEI) without the curricula being modified to take into account their interests as pointed out in the interview response at UY. This confirms research by Vickerman and Blundell (2010) on the students' lived experiences and opinions of the transition from orientation to employability at one HEI in the UK. The majority of staff were not enthusiastic about making significant changes to the curriculum and assessment, therefore reinforcing how a rigid curriculum and attitudes affect how students with disabilities access learning (Gelber et al. 2015). Also, research by Leach (2013) points out that there are tensions in the debates on the access to curricula (Reay, 1998; Read et al., 2003; Nkoane, 2006) that revolve around merit and equity as acknowledged in interview findings at both UX and UY. Ultimately, the evidence is suggesting that there is a disjuncture between what policies articulate and the practical provision of the support when it comes to curriculum and pedagogy, as also noted by Moisa and Phasha (2017).

#### *5.4.1.4 Examinations and assessments*

##### *5.4.1.4.1 University Y (UY)*

The standards of procedure at UY point out that examination concession is alteration to exam conditions to ensure that University Y students with accessibility need to have the opportunity

to demonstrate their knowledge of the material tested by an exam. Students whose disabilities or chronic health conditions impact processing and comprehending printed material, learning or concentration, and written expression, use exam concessions. Concessions may be accessed by students whose disabilities or medical conditions require rest periods as well. With reference to the writing of in-class tests and end-of-semester examinations, the following times shall be allocated to students with the following disabilities:

Disability/Health condition	Extra time allowable (Inclusive of rest breaks)
Severe physical disability	Double time
Moderate physical disability	20 minutes per hour
Albinism	20 minutes per hour
Totally blind	Double time
Partially sighted	30 minutes per hour
Chronic pain	15 minutes per hour
On-going i) medication ii) Mobility difficulties iii) Hearing impairment	20 minutes per hour

The examination concession is to ensure that University Y students with accessibility needs have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the material tested by an exam, according to UY inclusive report (2018) and DU pamphlet. Students who need to be accommodated for exams are those whose disabilities or ongoing medical problems affect how they process and comprehend written information, learn or concentrate, or express themselves in writing. Students with disabilities or medical issues that require rest times may also be accommodated.

One staff informant gave an illustration:

*Alternative examinations see students get examination scripts in the format that best suits them e.g. either in large print, Braille, or audio tape. Students can use word processors, Perkins brailers, tape recorders, or typewriters when writing examinations. Extra time is given to disabled students depending on the nature and severity of the disability. Usually, 15 minutes per hour is allowed. (R7: UY staff)*

Staff at UY explained how they were moving towards inclusive assessment in a gradual and incremental way. They stated that their strategy is to collaborate with departments that are receptive and enthusiastic, building up a collection of excellent practice examples that will serve as inspiration and motivation for others.

One staff informant member noted:

*The decision to offer alternative assessments to all students could be challenging in terms of education. Giving students more alternatives when designing multiple tests to meet learning objectives may help students, but it may also have an impact on staff effort and the range of methods that students [can use] to demonstrate their learning. By compiling examples of good practice relevant to different disciplines and taking into account the auxiliary materials, such as marking standards, change in this area is likely to be [implemented]. Investigating how calls for exams that improve employability skills could be reinforced by inclusive assessments would be worthwhile. (R5: UY staff)*

Students with disabilities who were interviewed at UY noted how they benefited from being accommodated in examinations and with oral assessments, although they expressed concern with some lecturers' bias and dissatisfaction with putting in extra work to accommodate them when they were asked to.

One student's comment reflected this:

*If it was not for extra concessions policy I would have failed. As a blind student, two of my lecturers during my studies out rightly declined to provide alternative assessments but the policy directive was so helpful in getting the lecturers to comply.*

(R18: student with disability)

#### **5.4.1.4.2 University X (UX)**

Students with disabilities at UX have access to alternative assessment methods, although they were often evaluated individually rather than given a general mark adjustment. UX offers a variety of additional alternatives including the ability to switch written assignments for tests or presentations and, if necessary, the ability to convert an essay or written assignment into an oral assignment, viva, or presentation. Other suggestions include giving students extra time on tests and homework, permitting video presentations and presenting lectures to smaller groups.

According to the UX Annual Disability Reports (2011–2016), UX improved accessibility in another area by enhancing assessment design. All staff members discussed their efforts to help tutors mark spelling and grammar correctly, especially for students with special needs, and to consider other methods of assessment (based on learning outcomes of the course and what is most appropriate for learners). UX, on the other hand, struggles with a variety of invisible disabilities, such as mental health, squint eyes, etc.

One staff informant member noted:

*Students tend not to disclose their disabilities during the application and admissions process, but disclose when they need exam concessions. (P21: UX staff)*

All students with disabilities noted how alternative assessments were a key factor for them to complete their studies and all noted how more support in this area of being offered an inclusive learning environment would help them. One student noted:

*I am so grateful for alternative assessments as a blind student. This helped me get assessed, I was always anxious [about] how I would be examined. The [assistance] provided by UX really helped me realise I would be able to complete my studies just like other fully functioning students. (P24: student with disability)*

The findings in this study from both universities show discursive effects on articulating policy for examinations. Students who derived great benefit from examination concessions showed evidence of positive results in the interview responses. This evidence corresponds with examples of good practice which includes evidence from a study by Waterfield et al. (2006), who noted that the extra time allocated for assessments, spreading out the modules across a semester, and taking the course over five years rather than the customary four, were all appreciated by the students who took part in my study. Extra time was also given to the students at examination time, according to a study on the experiences of students in Cyprus with physical disabilities (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2010). Thus, there is evidence of alignment of policy and practice in this area of examination assessment, although both institutions are working on improving policy provisions. UX, on the other hand, has challenges with late disclosures of disability that impact on the timely provision of examination concessions.

#### *5.4.1.5 Assistive technology*

##### *5.4.1.5.1 University Y (UY)*

UY documents procedures for hiring equipment at the Disability Unit, they note the following when handling any form of assistive technology equipment:

- The department identifies the needed equipment.
- The department needs to apply to the Dean of Students, justifying why they need to hire that equipment.
- The department then hires the equipment, after the dean's approval.

According to UY Inclusive Report (2018), students with disabilities are given mobility aids by UY so that they can move around. Among them are crutches, walking frames, wheelchairs, and white canes. The Disability Unit has money set aside for the upkeep and repair of certain devices. When a student brings a broken device to the Disability Unit for repair, the department covers the bill. However, these items are typically not easily available when students need them, forcing them to suffer when they are without them. This is because there is a lack of foreign currency and a sufficient departmental budget. It is important to keep in mind that the majority of students with disabilities come from extremely low-income homes, and it is unlikely that these families would purchase such mobility aids. This confirms research by Munyoro et al (2021) and Tangcharoensathien et al. (2018) which notes that assistive technologies are still a challenge in many developing countries as a result of several factors that include lack of funding, lack of relevant legislation and policies and lack of trained personnel. Strikingly, there is a considerable need in assistive technologies in southern Africa with only 15–25% of students in HE having access to them (Matter et al., 2016; Matter & Eide, 2018). Therefore, evidence shows the gap in provision, as in making assistive technologies available in higher education has implications for the quality of learning experiences students with disabilities will be afforded. This is further complicated by the fact that many students are not able to purchase the devices on their own (Tangcharoensathien et al., 2018).

The policy assisted in directing UY to give accessible services and tools to students with disabilities. According to the inclusive report (2018), significant progress has been made towards realising this objective, as seen by the resources and tools offered to students with disabilities to help them fully function physically, academically, and socially. The Centre has made use of a variety of amenities and makes sure that all enrolled students with special needs can access them. The university transitioned from manual typewriters to computers, advanced braille machines, and cutting-edge assistive equipment in order to promote full inclusion and

the realisation of the potential of students with disabilities and conditions through the provision of high-quality support. The university has made available, and is still working to add more, to the following list of assistive devices:

1. Two heavy duty braille machines,
2. Twenty laptops and twenty desktop computers.
3. These are fitted with JAWS (Job Access with Speech). JAWS is a screen-reading software that uses synthesised speech. Of the twenty laptops, ten are lent to students, especially those in their first year who may need to familiarise themselves with the technology.
4. Pearl reading camera. This works together with open-book software. It is used to convert print information to digital and then to braille formats.
5. Twenty book senses. These are used for recording materials used for reading purposes by students who are blind. The book sense is also used to record lectures.
6. Talking calculators to allow visually impaired students to hear keys they are pressing on their calculator as they do their academic work.
7. Hand-held and desktop magnifiers for students with poor vision. Hand-held magnifiers are also lent to students.

All students pinpointed the help of academic support they had received to help them on their academic journeys.

One student remarked:

*The laptop with JAWS I got for personal use from the university makes my study time manageable, plus my helper has been more than amazing in helping me get to lectures and just checking up on me. (R16: student with disability)*

The policy also helped the university prioritise establishing library services for students with disabilities. All students with disabilities interviewed highlighted how the library services were helpful for them when studying.

One staff informant revealed:

*Our unit boasts [a] well-equipped library services. These services are located in the main and departmental libraries. The departmental library is housed in the university's Teaching and Learning Centre Building. The departmental library is open to students until 16:30 with the possibility of later hours and public holiday and weekend services upon prior arrangement. Students are expected to use the main library after hours. The departmental library was refurbished and furnished with the latest technology in 2013, through a donation from a bank in Zimbabwe. The donation comprised furniture and assistive devices for students with poor vision and those who are totally blind. (R9: UY staff)*

The departmental library also has soundproof Reading Carrels, specifically for use by blind students who use Perkins braille machines. A special needs platform has been set up in the main library to cater for students with disability. The platform is located in a serene, easy-to-access area. Only students registered with the DU may access services at this platform. There are five computers equipped with JAWS and screen magnification software known as Magic. There is also a Merlin desktop magnifier for use by students with poor vision. The library is customised for students with disabilities, has ramps, elevators; and is open until midnight. Staff

in the main library have been trained to use the equipment to enable them to assist students in need of help.

#### *5.4.1.5.2 University X (UX)*

The policy and annual reports show that UX has 35 locations employing induction loop technology for student support. UX has a number of transportable hearing aids available. Students with disabilities can use PCs in the assistive technology laboratory that has Jaws, Zoom Text, Read and Write Gold, and Dragon Naturally installed on them. Students with disabilities can use note takers, scribes, student volunteers, braille support, audio transcription and software, and wheelchair accessible locations, among other support services. Services for students and events in sign language are provided.

One staff informant noted:

*UX is looking to expand access to software that was previously restricted to specific computers with students with disabilities receiving preferential access. In addition to designing internal programmes, extending licenses, and piloting new software, this may entail evaluating usage, increasing take up, and providing training to ensure effective use. The institution's library service and learning support staff are often essential to this process. These assistive tools were thought to significantly benefit students. This could limit access to other disability supports by prioritising the purchase of software licenses for both employees and students. (P15: UX staff)*

The UX disability reports (2013–18) detailed how they have invested in various kinds of software to assist students with a range of disabilities. These included induction loops, text to speech software, word prediction software, software to enlarge text and zoom in, programmes to support essay writing (guides with animated tutorials and tools such as subject dictionaries

and bibliographic references), recording software, notetaking software, mind mapping software, and software to help organise ideas graphically.

Students, both with disabilities and without, noted how assistive technology helped students with disability learn and write exams as one student without a disability noted:

*In my lecture I saw a sign language interpreter and I began to think there are deaf students in my class and I was grateful a disabled student was getting a chance to also get a qualification in psychology. (P30: student without disability)*

The above findings of discursive effects reveal how assistive/digital technology are central to the learning experiences of students with disabilities at both universities, thus affirming observations by Fernández-Batanero et al (2022) on the importance of assistive technology for students with disabilities. In this regard, the interview findings in both universities showed lived effects of how digital technologies such as computers and laptops have changed many students with disabilities' lives and learning experiences. These findings affirm observations from studies by Borg et al. (2012), Bond (2014), Malcolm and Roll (2017), and Clouder et al. (2019) that pointed out how assistive technologies gave students with disabilities the ability to enjoy their human right of learning in class by affording them the independence to execute activities they previously could not, while McNicholl et al. (2021) observed how the usage of assistive technologies helped improve the academic performance and success of students with disabilities by enabling learning and engagement with educational content. Therefore, discursively framing the use of assistive technologies for students with disability is crucial in the development of inclusive environments in HE.

#### 5.4.1.6 Staff training

##### 5.4.1.6.1 University Y (UY)

UY policy has prioritised training for both new employees and current employees as part of an action plan to move towards more inclusive practices, according to the disability statement and inclusive report (2018). UY has committed time and resources to assist with the expansion of inclusive practice. UY seeks to compile and disseminate best practices throughout the organisation and wider network, strengthen connections and interactions between disability unit and academic departments, and offer specialised staff training and information.

One staff informant noted:

*This resulted in UY under the faculty of education to offer qualifications in special needs education as part of its curriculum. (R3: UY staff)*

UY has prioritised training old staff and new staff to be informed about lecture capture, alternative assessments and assistive technologies.

Another staff informant also highlighted the following:

*The policy allowed for faculties to incorporate coordinated training efforts with the DU for alternative assessments, exams and assistive technologies. (R27: UY staff)*

Staff informants at UY reported that they have prepared resources for their intranets, developed instructions for staff, and routinely provided staff training. One staff informant detailed the training materials covered.

- *Details of how to spot signs of students at risk, coping with distressed students;*
- *How to highlight and share good practice across the institution;*

- *Information to help staff understand and anticipate the difficulties that students with a specific disability or condition may face accessing learning and teaching;*
- *Relevant policies and procedures;*
- *Services provided and what help and support is available for students with specific conditions such as autism, mental health conditions, and hearing impairments;*
- *Services provided to support all students and what to do in an emergency. (R9: UY staff)*

Aside from meeting with representatives of academic faculties and departments to discuss their concerns, those in charge of the inclusivity agenda to assist SWD also mentioned attending larger institutional meetings as a forum to address any staff concerns. UY is aware of the serious challenges academic staff members are under, and it requires time and effort to continuously develop inclusive approaches to helping students with disabilities. While there was some understanding that this would ultimately save time, the transition process was putting additional stress on the staff.

In addition, one staff informant responded:

*The unit acknowledges that some staff members may find the inclusivity approach challenging, so the UY is working hard to promote inclusivity and accessibility, increase understanding of the motivations behind and goals of inclusive learning and teaching, as well as what this means for specific staff members. (R11: UY staff)*

Staff informants were clear that disability issues needed to be mainstreamed across the institution and that further and significant progress for students with disabilities could only be achieved, in particular, through a greater emphasis on developing learning and teaching

policies and procedures in academic departments. Staff interviews noted that several departments considered their provision completely ad hoc and reactive in most provisional matters. Although the UY has plans to raise awareness among all staff of disability issues, to ensure that they meet the requirements of legislation, to provide all information for students and applicants in accessible formats, and to embed policy and procedures for SWD in all institutional procedures. Few departments fully comprehended what it entailed. In practice, support for students with disabilities remained largely the province of student support services, with the emphasis on providing largely individual support rather than on more fundamental institutional change.

#### *5.4.1.6.2 University X (UX)*

According to interview responses and UX policy documents, staff members received training to assist students with disabilities. One employee remarked that training levels were higher for technicians, research and research support staff; and for academics and library staff. Most often, training consisted of general disability awareness training and training for particular disability-related topics. Staff are trained in the following:

- Assistive technology training,
- First aid,
- General disability awareness,
- Safeguarding,
- Suicide prevention,
- Training about specific conditions e.g. mental health, dyslexia, autism.

Although some professional organisations, such as DEAFSA, or other outside providers may be involved in the delivery of training, UX typically provides training for specialised disability staff internally.

One staff informant noted:

*Staff with particular jobs aiding disabled students have access to a wide range of training like scribe, invigilation and safeguarding training. These assist in helping staff better serve the UX community. (P33: UX staff)*

One staff informant also responded:

*We have been able to provide academic personnel with greater direct support and direction on inclusive practice. We have the means to start assembling a collection of resources that will help academic staff to become more inclusive. Currently, every faculty has at least one tutor who is disabled. In addition to advocating for the need for an inclusive curriculum, the job of these tutors has also been updated to include responsibilities for raising disability awareness and providing assistance for impaired students in their respective faculties. They connect to the university's Disability Unit Centre as well. (P29: UX staff)*

The above findings show variations in policy support and reflect challenges with training and embedding the inclusive culture in university functions such as teaching and learning. Thus, attitudes towards and stereotyping of students with disabilities affect their learning experiences and continue to disadvantage students with disabilities (Harrison et al., 2009). First, the interview evidence from UX shows a lack of enthusiasm and innovation amongst staff and departments/faculties in efforts to improve the provision of training. Other studies also reflect a broader disadvantage that Crous's (2004) research showed, namely that 67% of students with disabilities thought their professors knew little about disability and appeared unhelpful. Students frequently attributed this to their ignorance of disabilities and a reluctance to assist them.

#### 5.4.1.7 Student support

##### 5.4.1.7.1 University Y (UY)

In addition to the activities listed above, the policy at UY has also included professional counselling and advisory services, sports and recreation, the development of life skills, student health, financial literacy, and ecumenical services.

Two civic stakeholder's responses noted:

*The DU works closely with the Department of Sports and Recreation in providing various sporting codes for students with disabilities. The DU offers competitive and non-competitive sports and recreational services. The students engage in a number of regional and local tournaments. Of note is the Danhiko Paralympics, Zimbabwe Universities Sports Association (ZUSA) and Zimbabwe Tertiary Institution Sports Union (ZTISU) games, the Zimbabwe National Paralympics Games and the Zone VI Games. (R8 and R20: civic stakeholders)*

All students, those with and without disabilities, acknowledged how students with disabilities represent the university well in sport and other recreational activities.

One student with a disability revealed:

*I was proud when I was asked to represent Zimbabwe and the UY at the Paralympics.*  
(R16: student with disability)

In an endeavour to assist students with disabilities, UY has engaged a number of partners. All staff highlighted how the policy has directed the university to reach out to other partners to be able to ensure policy provisions are met.

One staff informant noted:

*The UY disability inclusivity agenda has received tremendous support from banks, Leonard Cheshire, Disability HIV/AIDS Trust (DHAT), National Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH), director responsible for people with disabilities in the President's Office. These organisations are working closely with the university in resource mobilisation and student support and development. NGO play a critical role in training of students with disabilities in the areas of self-discovery, self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-efficacy, personal effectiveness and a whole range of employability, leadership and entrepreneurship skills. (R5: UY staff)*

Two students with disabilities from the UY in their interview responses noted how the UY DU had worked hard to get most government departments to be responsive to the inclusion of students with disabilities in their workforce. This advocacy enabled them to get internships and work placements in government ministry departments.

The UY Inclusive Report (2018) recognised the DU involvement in a range of outreach and advocacy efforts for the community. The Centre offers block release and weekend-based support services for the teaching of braille and sign language in collaboration with the Faculty of Education's Department of Educational Foundations. In addition to providing braille resources, the UY DU also offers advice on disability services, helping other universities and non-educational institutions build up their DU. The Centre provides braille services to other universities, Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) and Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). ZIMSEC Board meeting minutes are also brailled by DU. For Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the DU produces their voter education material in Braille.

#### 5.4.1.7.2 University X (UX)

Similarly, UX policy acknowledges the necessity of offering activities to students through events, sport, workshops, and courses, as well as wellbeing weeks and days to encourage wellbeing activities.

A staff informant provides examples of the promotional activities undertaken. These include:

*To promote wellbeing to all students in an interesting way, we have funds that the university wellbeing staff adopt to implement a very inclusive approach. Examples include joint activities with our sports department, like yoga and workshops on specific topics like stress management and assertiveness. Some activities, like support networks, take place once a week or many times per term. Various times a year, major activities like health days are organised. These could include wellness activities in which the students can take part as well as booths for outside organisations to advertise their own wellness initiatives and activities. Many of these programmes/activities are carried out in collaboration with the student union. (P29: UX staff)*

One student noted:

*Most students with disabilities enjoy joining us for yoga class. It's always great to see them easily enjoying the class like everyone else, and I thank the University for its Transformative Inclusivity Agenda that allows us to receive students and staff with different abilities. (P36: student without disability)*

According to UX disability reports (2011–2016), its counselling and wellbeing services were open to all students and with a strong focus on mental health conditions, learning difficulties, or other physical disabilities. Individual counselling sessions for students going through difficult times such as grief or bullying, group workshops, and more formal counselling to help

with ongoing issues such as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and relationship problems allowing for the exploration of various personal resources and coping mechanisms.

A staff informant noted:

*Students have a variety of ways of interacting with the university's student mental health and wellbeing department, which includes counselling and mental health support. These consist of drop-in times for students, online resources, workshops, and group sessions in addition to one-on-one assistance. All events are advertised via the student union, website, email, and student education service. (P 35: UX staff)*

University X is aware of its responsibility to the larger community, which includes persons with disabilities in broader society. It also acknowledges that it is in a position to take a leadership role in promoting and supporting projects that will enhance the quality of their lives across all spheres.

A staff informant recollected:

*Aside from the routine advocacy we are involved in annually like the transformation month, increasingly other HEIs are using the UX Disability Unit for benchmarking and for advice and guidance on best practice around establishing and running a service for staff and students with disabilities. In February, I spent two days at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) at their invitation to assist as they prepared to provide support for the first time to five blind students. In March, we hosted staff from four institutions coming to light candles from us around various aspects of disability support provision: Central University of Technology in the Free State, Mangosuthu University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal and Vaal University of Technology in Gauteng. (P33: UX staff)*

UX has made significant progress; however, barriers entail more than stairways, narrow doors

and inaccessible bathrooms. Social attitudinal barriers are the biggest challenge facing the university. These are deeply rooted in the unconscious fabric of all societies.

One staff informant noted:

*I am not sure that these can be overcome with sensitisation initiatives and advocacy, as we understand it. Because every time you sit at a table with a group of colleagues or fellow students, you cannot help but be aware of how they chat to each other about everyday things like movies, shopping, and restaurants. You, are lucky if they talk about your disability or inclusion. Even highly educated people find it hard to imagine the world people with disabilities (PWD) inhabit, and so they find it hard to imagine that their world has much more in common with their world than they can ever imagine. In addition, if this is still sometimes painful for me as a mature person closer to the end of my life than to its beginning, how much harder is this for SWD who are still desperate to belong, to matter in the way that other students matter? (P31: UX staff)*

Another staff informant noted:

*For all the gains we have made, SWD suffer in the worst possible way from the cruelty of fellow students. A disabled student was photographed and her photo displayed on Facebook for the edification and merriment of the perpetrator's friends. The person was reported and dealt with, but painful as this is, I feel it is necessary to mention it. (P21: UX staff)*

Findings from this theme reveal that both universities have psychosocial support services that are different and diverse for students and their broader communities in their respective country contexts. The interview responses reveal how the psychosocial support services allow students with disabilities to participate in sport, recreational activities and wellbeing activities. Students'

lived experiences from both universities applauded how their universities made an effort to include them. At the UY, some students were even representing their institution at the Paralympics. It is thus evident that both universities have prioritised counselling, sport and recreational activities, and wellbeing activities. These findings affirm similar findings to a study by Tuomi et al. (2015) in a Tanzanian study that reported how SWD had benefited from social support their peer networking and study groups provided via the university. These findings of positive lived experiences are because of discursive effects that prioritise framing psychosocial support for students with disabilities in both universities' institutional policy and culture. The findings validate and confirm the importance of access and social support in boosting feelings of security, belonging, and self-worth for students with disabilities (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010; Couzens et al., 2015).

When reflecting on lived experiences, student experiences from the literature indicate there are also disparities in how students experience inclusive policy support by universities (Pansiri and Sinkamba 2017). In this regard, UX interview findings also point out attitudinal barriers as the biggest challenge facing the university, deeply rooted in the unconscious fabric of people and this influences the lived experiences of SWD on campus. According to Humphrey (2008), it can be challenging for students with disabilities to succeed in their academics if they feel excluded by their peers and teachers.

5.4.2 Theme 2: University budget and funding

Table 15: Budget and Funding

<b>Policy Specifics</b>	<b>UY</b>	<b>UX</b>
<b>University Budget</b>	✓	✓
<b>Scholarships</b>	✓	✓
<b>Donor/Corporate Funding</b>	✓	✓

#### 5.4.2.1 University Y (UY) interview responses

Respondents were asked questions regarding the budget for disability unit and how it is spent, who in the institution has responsibility for deciding the budget for DU?

At the UY, respondents noted the DU is allocated a budget under the Student Affairs budget on an annual basis by the university. Core funding from the institutions' central budgets remains highly important for supporting SWD. It is not uncommon for disability unit teams to make requests for additional resources. Although funding requests are generally approved. This often requires staff collecting evidence to make a business case for additional resources.

A staff informant pointed out:

*The starting point is the previous year's allocation rolled forward, lifted for inflation and reduced for any efficiencies which need to be made. (R3: UY staff)*

Respondents also noted that it was the responsibility of the coordinator to make sure that money is put to good use. The disability unit is responsible for the provision of equipment and materials for SWD. The budget is intended to cover all the needs of the students and the DU as a whole. However, in most cases it is inadequate because most of the specialised equipment and materials are purchased abroad, which turn out to be more expensive. It is even difficult based on the current financial situation of the country. Below is an example of how the decision-making process for the budget for disability unit is carried out.

A staff informant pointed out:

*Our disability support service forms part of a much larger directorate which incorporates all student affairs' departments. The university leadership team, considering previous performance and ongoing challenges or opportunities, sets the budget for this larger directorate. This has to be balanced across the institution,*

*considering income changes and cost pressures in other areas. Once this high-level budget has been set, it is the responsibility of the director of that area to apportion the budget into service areas, again considering needs, risks and other pressures. This is mutually agreed upon with the director and finance department in conjunction with the relevant heads of service. (R5: UY staff)*

Funding and expenditure in supporting students with disabilities and embedding inclusive teaching and learning were described as challenging by both staff and civic stakeholders. Hence, the university engages with different corporate organisations and NGOs to help fund certain activities. The university also has a fundraising dinner that contributes to the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship that ensures all undergraduate students' academic, social and accommodation needs are catered for.

One staff informant acknowledged:

*One local bank helped equip our computer lab with laptops and desktops with various software needed by disabled students. The university could not purchase such resources but corporate partners are able to hedge and help fund the DU policy initiatives. (R11: UY staff)*

The first policy challenge was funding and financing policy provisions. Most staff informants all noted their concerns with funding.

One staff informant also noted:

*The ever-increasing number of students with disabilities has been received with mixed emotions. On the one hand, there is great joy that a previously disenfranchised group of citizens of Zimbabwe are being empowered and positioned for success, while on the other hand, there is anxiety about resources required for the continuation of the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship for Students with Disabilities. There is a need to*

*increase the number of desktop computers and laptops in the DU Library. There is also a need for more assistive devices, book sensors, white canes and magnifiers. Establishing the UY DU as a provider of assistive devices is also a viable option that will enable the UY to meet its needs and the needs of other institutions in the country. The tug of war over competing needs for the unit is a managerial nightmare for us.*

(R7: UY staff)

#### 5.4.2.2 University X (UX) interview responses

Respondents noted how the core disability unit fall under the office of inclusivity and change and their own budget is apportioned from this main budget. The DU from UX has autonomous control over this, being able to make decisions about how this could be best spent.

One staff informant noted:

*Budget is assessed on student numbers and demand for support. Uptake of support is monitored and budget is managed by both learning services and student services both of whom have responsibility for support for all disabled students.* (P29: UX staff).

One respondent described their annual budget setting, noting how finances are allocated to different activities and requirements (e.g. assistive technology, IT equipment, library needs). Another respondent noted how any shortfalls or underspend from the previous year are reviewed to see if lessons can be learned and mismatches avoided. One staff informant highlighted that the UX DS also draws its funding from donors that contribute towards students' fees and support services by working to improve accessibility, mainstream reasonable adjustments, and increased use and access to assistive technologies. It was also noted that sometimes, depending on the year, donor funding for students may be in excess because there are no students with disabilities to access the funding. The additional funding was most

commonly used to expand disability services and provide additional staff, training or resources, expand the use of assistive technology and improve the inclusivity of teaching and learning.

A staff informant observed:

*SWD who need additional support such as study skills, mentoring, equipment or assistive technology training have been provided with this, regardless of DSA eligibility. This is contentious in our department as all staff members do not agree on the use of excess funds. Some think it should be given individually to students for their upkeep, while others think improving departmental resources should always be a priority. I tend to agree with giving students extra stipends for their upkeep as SWD have more challenges to navigate. This is always a managerial tension in our unit.*

(P15: UX staff)

This theme's findings, as presented above, reveal how, at both universities, budget and other funding is key to facilitating inclusion of SWD and the type of help that SWD need to perform at their best in HE living and learning contexts, are also acknowledged by Chiwandire and Vincent (2019). However, from the interview respondents it is clear that the universities' budgets of the DU are treated as a component of the larger department budgets (at UY it falls under student affairs, while at UX, it falls under the office of inclusivity and change). Simultaneously, at the UY there are concerns about how government funding for universities is drastically declining, while student admissions are increasing. This confirms De Jager & Gbadamosi's (2010, p. 254) observations of public funding for universities declining globally, thus impacting on how well universities are able to function. McGrath (2014) asks: does the decline in external funding impact on fairness in admission for many students, including those with disabilities in HE systems?

However, these funding cuts have also increased reliance on other financing sources such as scholarships, corporate sponsorships and fundraising events for both institutions, also confirming similar trends in the literature (European Union, 2014, p. 28; Dunn 2016). Interestingly, UX sometimes has an excess of scholarship funds that they redirect to fund other provisions for SWD.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings from data I collected for this study from policy documents and interview responses relevant to the issue of policy framing of SWD at two HEIs, University Y and University X. The findings were presented in themes, representing key research objectives and questions. The themes were informed by the framework developed for the study.

The next chapter will provide an analysis and discussion of these findings, by grounding the findings using the theoretical frameworks and research literature to discuss the findings.

## Chapter Six: Analysis and Discussion

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and answers in detail the following research questions

Research Question 1

*How are universities defining disability in their university policies?*

Research Question 2

*What knowledge foundations influenced the framing of the policy representation of disability?*

Research Question 3

*What effects have been produced as a result of this policy representation of disability?*

The discussion categorised the findings under themes informed by the above research questions. Using data presented in Chapter 5, this discussion relates findings to the research literature and the theoretical frameworks used in this study.

### 6.2 Definitions of Disability in University Policies of UY and UX

Exploring the knowledge that is brought to the policy process to produce a definition and truth of a problem (Foucault, 1991) was the main thrust of this question. Findings from both universities revealed that both institutions use a variety of blended models and frameworks to produce an understanding of disability, although each used its own unique blend of models and frameworks to shape the knowledge of disability. Both institutions similarly recognise their country's constitutional approach to disability. In addition, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) definition had an impact on the problematising of disability by both universities. Critical analysis of the unique knowledge

both universities used to think of disability and to make it an object of thought (Bacchi, 2012; Bacchi & Bonham, 2016), is unpacked in the following discussion.

Reflecting on **Table 9** on the policy definitions and categorisations, UY derives its knowledge and understanding of disability from the UNCRPD, affirmative action, and medical models, all of which tend to emphasise the idea that a student's disability results from both individual and environmental factors. The policy understanding and definition of disability at UY also draws from human rights framing as reflected in **Table 9**. Thus, this policy's articulation according to Chikwature (2016), Majoko (2017) and the United Nations (2006) position the institution as being responsible for protecting the equity and equality of educational opportunities for students with disabilities, as reflected in international human rights instruments such as the UNCRPD (UN, 2006).

This question also particularly required the research to explore how language is used to provide concepts and this question's analysis places more emphasis on 'people categories', mainly because of their importance in the governing process (Bacchi, 2009:9). When it comes to categorisation, UY leans more towards an individualised medical categorisation of disability that is supported by the affirmative action and medical models as reflected in **Table 9**. This way of framing disability leads to policy interventions that focus on curing, correcting, remediating and taking care of students with disabilities (Finkelstein, 1996; Longmore, 2003) in a way they can achieve social acceptance and social assimilation, thus relegating them to individuals with problems. UY seems to lean towards similar definitions and understanding that have characterised Zimbabwe's contentious disability legislative history. In particular, the Disabled Persons Act (1992) was criticised for employing demeaning phrases that stigmatise and denigrate PWD, such as 'intellectually handicapped', 'imbecile', 'mentally deranged', and 'mental patients' (Choruma, 2007; Manatsa, 2015). These laws used the term 'disabled person', which, despite being frequently used by activists and academics, leans more towards a medical

understanding that largely ignores the influence of the societal environment, norms, and beliefs (Manatsa, 2015). Thus, the historical national legislative context seems to have an influence on the institutional framing of disability at UY.

This study found that UY was blending different models and frameworks in trying to define and categorise disability in its policy. This blending seems to allow the institution to communicate a rights and empowerment policy position, while, at the same time, categorising disability with a medical framing. Thus, the complexity of representing disability and the reliance of various models and frameworks affirms what Haegele and Hodge (2016) and Mitra (2006) observed about the difficulty of defining disability because there is not a single, widely accepted definition.

Findings from UX showed the policy drafters drew their understanding of disability from the South African Constitution, the rights-based model and empowerment model as shown in **Tables 8** and **9**. These frameworks and models, according to the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2012) and Forlin (2013), tend to lean on inclusive education being recognised as a basic human right and a basis for a fair and equitable society. This study's analysis required the same in-depth analysis of categories of disabilities so that one can establish their role in providing specific meaning to problem representation.

As seen in **Tables 8** and **9**, UX, on the other hand, classified disability according to the rights-based and empowerment models, as articulated by the disability rights movement in South Africa. Hence, the institution was consistent in using the same models in categorising disability. Although UX draws from different/varied human rights and empowerment models in their policy representation, they were consistent in using the same models in categorising disability.

Comparing the knowledge that both institutions used to shape the definitions and categories of disability reveals contextual variance in understanding disability at an institutional level. The UY is blending models that have distinctly different conceptualisations of disability in defining and categorising disability in its policy, while UX, consistently, in its definition and categorisation of disability, draws from the human rights and empowerment models. These findings of using varied and blended models/frameworks confirm Bacchi's (2009) view that there may be more than one understanding or several knowledge bases that can be used to shape a policy proposal. The findings also confirm research that highlights complexity in trying to define disability (Mitra, 2006; Haegele & Hodge, 2016) and how this complexity has also spilled over into the policy spaces where universities are framing disability.

Further reflection on the findings also raises concerns of how the blending of models poses challenges in claiming inclusion in the framing of policy solutions for students with disabilities, as it reflects ambiguity and a middle-of-the-road use of definitions of disability (Mutanga, 2017a). This finding of the use of different, blended, and varied definitions and categorisations of disability at two universities from two different country contexts (Zimbabwe and South Africa) also challenges the notion of there being a single perspective of inclusion or exclusion of students with disabilities (Booth & Ainscow, 1998), thus challenging the tendency in comparative research to implicitly assume a one-size-fits-all approach in the inclusion of students with disabilities.

The use of different blended models and frameworks to define and categorise disability by both institutions, importantly, reaffirms that the definitions of disability models/frameworks typically condense the concept into a single axis. In doing so, models emphasise some parts of real experience while disregarding others, which leads to their becoming reductionist, unidimensional, and incomplete (Smart, 2009). Given the complexity of language use in trying to understand disability, Al Ju'beh (2015) also states that language used to describe disabilities

can either support or contradict negative attitudes and stereotypes. Hence, it seems that universities in this study utilised different models and frameworks in shaping policy definitions of disability so as to navigate the different language tensions around disability in a bid to avoid being too reductionist.

This study's findings also revealed how both institutions seemed to draw upon their cultural, national and legislative narratives in influencing the framing of policy responses. The narratives in both university communities also tended to mirror and reflect some of the national discourse in disability policy. This was also corroborated by the different definitions and understandings of disability in the interview responses of students and informants in both institutions and contexts as reflected in **Table 10**. It was clear that, in the UY setting, staff informants and students with and without disabilities had different viewpoints about the meaning of disability. Responses reflected their understanding of the following models of disability: medical, religious, charity, and cultural models. On the other hand, understanding of the charitable, inclusive, and social models were also reflected in discussions with UX students and informants.

Furthermore, these findings also acknowledge how conceptions of disability tend to be limited by time and culture (Smart & Smart, 2006), and thus might not be appropriate in all socio-cultural contexts. The differences in institutional perspectives on disabilities attest to the complexity of this topic, as addressed by research on inclusive education, which demonstrates that there are notable differences in how various cultures problematise disability (Singal, 2006; Kim, 2013; Le Fanu, 2013). The aforementioned comparisons demonstrate what Pather (2014) and Johansson (2014) note, that understanding disability is context dependent, undercutting the notion that there is a single, all-encompassing understanding of disability that is applicable in all circumstances.

### 6.3 Knowledge Foundations of the Disability Policy Representation

The importance of questioning the framing of disability in university spaces is complex and wide ranging, but this study focused on the knowledge foundations of policy framing by prioritising three unique aspects that are not usually considered when looking at disability policy at universities. These include the role of assumptions and presuppositions that underpin policy representations (WPR), the role of embedded agency (IL), and who participated in the creation and appraisal of the knowledge and the foundations of expertise (CE).

The next sections discuss, in detail, how each of the aspects influence policy framing.

#### *6.3.1 Presuppositions and assumptions that underpin the representation of disability (WPR)*

In developing and shaping the understanding of disability in policies, the universities create particular representations of the ‘problem’ and what should be done about it. This understanding is underpinned by assumptions or beliefs that tend to be accepted as true (Bacchi, 2009). In this study, a WPR approach assisted the research in interrogating the underlying assumptions that shaped the implied meanings of the concepts of disability and their categories.

**Table 11** shows that UY blends its definition of disability from the following frameworks and models: the Constitution of Zimbabwe’s focus on non-discrimination, UNCPD, the Inclusion Principles, Affirmative Action Model and Medical Model. Having established the different knowledge bases used in the framing of disability and its categories, Bacchi (2009, p. 5) encourages the researcher to ‘identify the conceptual premise that underpins specific problem representations’.

Therefore, implicit in the frameworks and models used by UY are thoughts and ideas that are assumed to be true in UY definition and categories of disability (Bacchi, 2009). Although the UY policy broadly situates its commitment and aims in a rights-led, inclusive strategy, the

policy uses words such as impairment, helper/helpee, problems, and conditions in defining and categorising disability. These words are associated with the medical and affirmative action models/discourses. Thus, the policy framing of the problem is influenced by ‘individualised discourses of behaviour and responsibility’ as identified by Dunn and Andrews (2015). These discourses have implied assumptions of welfare and welfare as dependency. The assumption of welfare observed here contrasts with the positioning of inclusion as an educational right as suggested in the policy definition. The assumption of welfare/pity reflects a liberal political view and a knowledge that welfare is a safety net for those unable to provide for themselves. From this knowledge, the assumption of welfare as dependency arises.

Second are the assumptions that the care role will be undertaken by the institution, thus overlooking individual agency as commonly held in the medical model, while, at the same time, the overarching policy definition is drawn from rights-based frameworks. Undergirding this policy definition is the assumption of institutional obligation in ensuring that the rights and dignity of students with disabilities is upheld through centralising institutional policy, programming and social provisioning measures. Thus, the barriers to participation, inclusion and representation are outside, and external to, the impaired body (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). Interestingly, in the UY setting, one staff informant highlighted moving to the social model of operating, although nothing in the policy texts showed this shift. The social model assumes people become disabled because of their social environment (Oliver & Barnes, 2010; Retief & Letšosa, 2018) and that it is not the person who needs to be ‘cured’, but rather society, which has created obstacles (Haegele & Hodge, 2016).

The different assumptions implied in the blend of models used in the framing of disability at the UY demonstrate how the institution is trying not to be too reductionist in framing disability (Smart, 2009) and this is commendable, given the complexity of trying to comprehensively define disability. However, the findings at UY also point to a policy/practice conundrum that

affirms the everyday complexities and disjunctures between policy and practice (Mutanga, 2017a). For instance, in the UY case, the policy articulates a rights-based policy definition, medical and affirmative action direction and categorisation, while a staff informant who implements policy, will state another operational model, in this case, the social model in everyday practice. This finding is in tandem with research that seems to suggest disconnects between policies and practices (Angelides et al., 2006, Morgan, 2013; Quinn, 2013; Gibson, 2015; Thomas, 2016). This study could not delve deeper into why there are such intricate departures between policy and practice. However, it issues out a call for more critical research to unpack why such dissonance happens. This study advocates for studies that can identify these policy and practice misconnections and critically unpack why they happen.

It was evident from the interviews that staff and civic stakeholder informants and students had concepts about disability that reflected an understanding of the following models of disability: medical, religious, social, charitable, and cultural models. According to the interviewees' understandings, disability was typically viewed as a welfare issue requiring care, attention, and recompense. Students with disabilities at UY stated that disability was seen as something to be embarrassed about, to be hidden, and as a hindrance to 'fitting in' with both other students and lecturers.

Scholars such as Addison (1986), Chataika (2010) and Kisanji (1995) show how disability is linked with incapacity, seen as a form of punishment from ancestral spirits or is a result of bewitching. In addition, Devlieger (1998) highlights how indigenous African views of disability locate the phenomenon as existing somewhere between a human and an animal. The assumptions seem to imply that behaviour is just an 'inside the student' problem and that eliminating exclusion calls for an individualistic and welfare-focused framework and approach. The prevailing individual welfare and medical attitudes and understanding of disability were regarded as the default language used by university staff members, and it was reflected in the

way that students without disabilities thought of students with disabilities as ‘suffering’ and thought of impairments as ‘issues’. Therefore, by placing blame and responsibility on the individual, the individualisation of disability was strengthened. These findings concur with Riddell et al.’s (2015) study that came to the conclusion that staff were hesitant to shift their attention away from the individual impairment model when working with students with disabilities.

The findings from both the policy understanding and interview responses at the UY tend to place emphasis on student disability resulting from the need to overcome specific individual impairment issues, witchcraft, or the anger of the gods, rather than from inequality resulting from different structural/social problems. These views have influenced how society has believed that people with disabilities lack the ability to fulfil certain social roles. Chataika (2010), Addison (1986) and Kisanji (1995) note how, in Africa, such narratives contribute to the marginalisation of those with disabilities as second-class citizens. Although implied in a staff informant interview, the social model does not reflect itself in policy texts. The two extreme positions of the medical and social models have drawn criticism from literature (Low, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006). Low (2001, p. 4) argued against the social model's guiding assumptions.

*The complexity of the handicap issue is intrinsically beyond the scope of one-dimensional assessments and solutions. ... [I]t throws entire orphanages out with the bathwater, and its condemnation of opposing viewpoints causes errors in its policy recommendations.*

However, disability studies have taken note of these tensions. The social model of disability has a propensity to ignore bodily experience and claim that physical limitations and differences are wholly societal constructs. However, to say that this is all there is to it is to reject the human

experience of physical and intellectual limitations, disease, and the fear of dying. Thomas (2007), whose work is firmly rooted in the social model, who talked about ‘impairment’ effects, addressed these concerns. To deal with the relationship between ‘the impaired body’ and ‘disablism’ (Thomas, 2007, p. 137). Thomas argues that disability and impairment cannot be polarised between the opposing stances of biological/social or the natural/cultural.

Hence, in the UY policy there is representation of disability that blends different models with assumptions on either extreme to try and not polarise the two and not be too reductionist of disability. However, the UY policy articulation and culture tend to emphasise more of an individualised impairment assumption in its problematisation of disability with a blend of institutional obligation in ensuring the rights of SWD, which tends to be rhetorical on paper and not in practice. This study questions if it is for token representation in policy (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011), while in practice, the social model assumptions are used. Noting these blended assumptions and disjunctures in policy and practice, this study also issues out a call for more studies that explore what it means for different assumptions to converge in disability policy in higher education (HE). Thus, different and potentially competing social constructions of a ‘problem’ are possible according to (Bacchi 2009).

Findings from **Table 11** show that the UX Disability Policy (2011) also draws from the Constitution of South Africa focus on transformative agenda, UNCPD inclusion principles, and the human rights model and empowerment model. In this regard, Bacchi (2009, p. 5) encourages us to ask questions such as: ‘What is assumed?’ An analysis of the representations of disability using the WPR reveals a number of underlying assumptions in the framing of disability in UX policy. The understanding of disability as reflected in South African disability discourse has historically followed the main shifts from the medical model to the social model of disability and from a charity to a rights-based approach as reflected in the Constitution. UX, similarly, draws from the above national discourses as noted in **Table 8** that clarifies the

categorisation of disability from a rights-based and empowerment model. In the UX policy, the definition of disability is based on that of the UNCRPD, students with disabilities are those with various impairments, which in interaction with different barriers, may hinder their participation in society. UX disability policy presupposes students with disabilities as being subject to what Degener (2017) notes as compounded marginalisation from both social and structural factors and modestly emphasises disability as an individual problem.

Thus, UX policy acknowledges that there are various factors contributing to the exclusion of students with disabilities. The framing of issues as a matter of rights and responsibilities is both rhetorical and practical. Throughout its documents and interview responses, the university positions rights and responsibilities as being linked and reciprocal for all parties. Both the rights-based model and empowerment model underscore the importance of collaborative societal and structural support and responsibilities in capacitating PWD. In terms of policy making, the idea of rights and responsibilities rests on a number of implicit assumptions that underpin all university documents. The first is trust, and implicit in the notion of trust is a belief that the university represents a cohesive culture that is mandated and obligated to empower students with disabilities (Quinn et al., 2002) to be inclusively embraced in the university.

Second, the assumption evoked by the rights-based model is that, by virtue of their disability, certain students are 'marginalised' and 'vulnerable' and can tend to evoke a token involvement of people with disabilities and the neglect of their self-determination and equality (Albert et al., 2005). Mutua (2002) also validates how the metaphor of the victim underpins the human rights ideology and it primarily focuses on victimisation and powerlessness of people with disabilities in the face of endless challenges. Thus, this emphasis on the victim being the exception may also end up contributing to more exclusionary and dehumanising approaches towards people with disabilities, while actors, such as institutions, governments and charities

are associated with the metaphor of the saviour when they ‘rescue’ victims of human rights abuse from ‘savages’.

The above rights-based metaphors implied meanings were picked up in some UY interview responses. Furthermore, they point towards the complexity of using human rights frameworks and models in framing disability in the global south and how they can contribute to people with disabilities being seen as ‘victims’ of unsophisticated cultures and beliefs and how their lived reality can be distant from the legal rhetoric (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011).

This, according to Mutua (2002) may perpetuate how people with disabilities become the ‘victims’ of human rights rather than agents in their own social change. Pinto et al. (2012, p 8) have argued that labels such as ‘marginalised’ and ‘vulnerable’ are ‘value laden’ and reinforce a deficit paradigm. Similarly, looking at UY and UX policies and interview findings at both institutions, suggests a link between these metaphors in which the extent of student’s vulnerability becomes the basis on which priorities are established.

A knowledge of disability that spans the medical, social, cultural, religious, inclusive, and charitable models was evident in interview responses at UX. This blend of perspectives on disability across all the interview participants exemplifies the diverse range of understanding disability at UX. Contrary to the students at UY, UX students also understood disability as the outcome of wider social, environmental, and institutional implications. UX staff informants and students spoke highly of the university's initiatives to raise public knowledge of the institutional, social, and cultural barriers and causes of disability. This helped them understand disability from an inclusive and social perspective. One student with disability applauded UX emphasis on adopting a rights-led, inclusive strategy for enhancing the awareness of disability on campus, thus confirming what Sevo (2012) stresses as the importance of education in improving understanding of disability and its ramifications in African countries.

Consequently, it is clear from the UX setting that accepting difference and understanding the unfairness that results from a needs-led orientation is encouraging students and staff to be more open to understanding disability outside of the medical, religious and cultural paradigms. Some interviews with students, staff and civic stakeholder informants, however, exposed viewpoints based on cultural, religious and medical concepts of disability. These conceptual frameworks contend that personal impairment and functional constraint directly cause disability, which, in turn, cause individual insufficiency, incapacity, and abnormality (Finkelstein, 1980; Barnes, 1991; French, 1994; Crow, 1996; Morris, 1996; Oliver, 2009; Oliver & Barnes, 2012).

Overall, policy assumptions at UX demonstrate how a different understanding distinguishes between the physical impairment and the associated social circumstance. According to these viewpoints, institutional, environmental, and societal restrictions, as well as a person's impairment, are the primary causes of disability. Thus, UX findings confirm the importance of identifying the 'deep seated cultural values' that underpin the policy discourse and the worldviews, forms of knowledge or 'assumed thought' on which it relies (Bacchi, 2009, p. 5).

Comparatively, UY and UX findings reflect a varied reliance on individualised/medical/social and rights-based assumptions in the framing and policy strategy. The results from both institutions seem to point out that there is still a tendency to use assumptions that individualise the framing of disability; thus; students are labelled as being with problems (Nilholm, 2012). This was more pronounced at UY. These findings concur with research that shows individual deficits are more often emphasised before social and institutional obstacles to better understand students with disabilities in university environments (Clark et al., 1998; Skidmore, 2004; Vehmas, 2010; Shevlin et al., 2013). In this regard, Bacchi (2009) does not suggest that policymakers intentionally manipulate problem constructions (although this may be so), but rather, they play a significant role in producing and legitimising a particular understanding of 'problems' by virtue of their position and status in governing populations.

It is important to highlight that both institutions mention inclusion as a vision or goal, and as ‘the ultimate objective of mainstreaming’. Both institutions draw their definition from the inclusion of persons with disabilities that is named in the UNCRPD (UN, 2006/7) as a general principle (Article 3), as a general obligation (Article 4) and as a right (Articles 29 and 30). In this regard, UX policy prioritises strategies and implementation in their policies that contain the injunctive to ‘prioritise students with disabilities to ensure equitable access’, while UY rhetorically articulates this injunctive and does not actively/practically position its policy strategies this way.

This study revealed that the way inclusion was approached in the policy documents, especially at UY, could largely be described as being informed by managerial and legalistic assumptions to fulfil national policy requirements for HE (Williams, 2012). In both UX and UY policies, inclusion was defined in line with values that are themselves difficult to define (fairness and equality) and those of transformation. The vagueness and complexity of defining inclusion are highlighted in literature; for example, Felder (2018, p. 55) points out that:

*[A]lthough there seems to be broad consensus [on the meaning and significance of inclusion] at a superficial level, there is much more ambiguity if one looks deeper into the values often associated with inclusion.*

Therefore, both institutions acknowledge the ethical importance of inclusion but both institutions are met with challenges and tensions in defining what it involves and how to translate it in an educational context (Norwich, 2013; Norwich & Koutsouris, 2017).

The term ‘inclusion’ has become a buzz word in both institutions (Bines & Lei, 2011). However, buzz words come with challenges as they gain popularity and tend to have misused or obscure meanings. For example, in both disability policies, the concept of inclusion is posited as an antidote to exclusion, with the logic being that students who are excluded from

services and benefits need to be targeted so that they can be included. Acknowledging inclusion in policies therefore comes with convoluted assumptions that may perpetuate how SWD may become the ‘victims’ that are vulnerable and need saving by the institution rather than agents in their own social change (Mutua, 2002). However, the acknowledged definition in both institutions and research of inclusion refers to ‘all students’ (Booth et al., 2006).

Marshall (2012) notes that inclusion has historically been central to the disability rights movement, which frames disability as a form of exclusion. Use of the term ‘inclusion’ in university policies raises the question of what happens when such a concept ‘travels’, especially when used by the very structure that is sometimes seen as primarily responsible for exclusion (Macleod & Cebula, 2009; Hopkins, 2011; Black et al., 2015; Couzens et al., 2015; Moriña et al., 2015). Research goes on to further underscore how the use of the terms ‘inclusive/mainstream’ suggest that some students require inclusive services while others need more targeted, specialised services, as if these are two separate, distinct strands, rather than a continuum of support to be provided to students with varying needs (Marshall, 2012). Both university policies were silent on the tensions and vagueness of inclusion.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate how ambiguities, debates and tensions were largely ignored in the policy documents, and inclusion was treated as a ‘buzz word’ for the universities. This seems to reinforce concerns that highlight how inclusion presents challenges in translating into social and educational reform (Koutsouris et al., 2022). The inflection points of different models used in understanding and categorising disability reflect contextual and institutional differences that are also girded by varied and blended assumptions that should be wrestled with when engaging more research in understanding the framing of student disability.

Thus, there is a need for more theoretical lenses that are able to unpack more in-depth unique contextual differences pertaining to the understanding of disability. If, as argued by activists

with disabilities and academics in disability studies, the dominant view of disability tends to be based on meeting individual needs with inability stemming from an individual's impairment, then more should be explored on how to bring more visibility to disability being viewed in terms of other meaningful understandings.

### **6.3.2 *Embedded agency (IL)***

The findings above have unpacked how disability is being problematised and the underpinning assumptions influencing that understanding of disability. Therefore, it was important for this study to explore embedded agency, as a tenet of institutional logics (IL). From the informant interview responses, it was noted that for both institutions to be perceived as viable, the DU policy vision must work in line with the main strategic vision/ policy direction of the university and should try to adapt to changes to maintain support from the institutional environment.

The embedded agency tenet of IL focuses on the rootedness of interests, values, identities and assumptions of individuals and organisations in institutions. Interplays between individual agency and institutional structure vary in dimensions and outcome. This research prioritised exploring the relationship among different institutional levels when it comes to how disability policy is embedded in the two universities in this study. An important aspect is the intricate links of the DU's policy vision to their institutions' individual cultures/vision and the use of that culture to provide justification for the pragmatic measures in the policy.

Embedded agency brought focus to how institutional structures (universities) are built around institutional rules that should be used to legitimise their activities (Meyer & Scott, 1983) and how the main strategic vision or policy direction of either university influences operations and policy direction in the DU. Findings from **Table 11** reveal UY being identified as an entrepreneurial university that has strong links to the sensibilities of the marketisation of education (Hodkinson, 2012; Zeleza, 2021), while **Table 11** also shows UX emphasis on the

transformative vision that emphasises inclusivity and change. In these two different cultures, much of the language and actions around the disability plan are different – the entrepreneurial /marketisation logic from UY and a transformation logic from UX. Since logics establish a framework in which knowledge claims are situated and underpin the appropriateness in an institution (Scott, 1994; Greenwood et al., 2010), the DU have to comply with different expectations.

UY, as an institution, has marketisation and entrepreneurial logic that Bauman (2011) suggests tends to commoditise people and resources by their market value and advocates for managerial administration, while the UY disability unit has a blended logic influenced by the medical, affirmative and rights based framing models. These differences tend to create a duality of expectations and tensions in framing and implementing disability policy and practice in the institution. Furthermore, these tensions create a competition of interests and agency in their search for power, status or economic advantage (Giddens, 1984; Sewell, 1992). The tensions and added pressure during the implementation process create an ambivalent view of students with disabilities (skills, abilities and competencies) and appropriate policy support work methods (when, how, with which consequences). For example, a staff informant interview response highlighted a dual tension between UY DU trying to earn more money to fund its daily operations, while also trying to provide inclusive support for SWD. These tensions can be seen to push the DU's vision into a commercial and competitive take on inclusion (inclusion as a commodity).

This affirms what Seo and Creed (2002) observed about how a distinct 'organisational logic' may come up as a blending of different individual institutional logics. In the case of the policy visions of UY as an institution and its Disability Unit/department, the amalgam that is a result of this blending tends to exist in circumstances that temporarily accept a dominant institutional logic (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Seo & Creed, 2002; Reay & Hinings, 2009) or in a state of

competitive dynamic tension (Pollitt, 2013). This also contributes to hesitation about which and how concepts, norms and values should be operationalised in day-to-day work. This also promotes a fragmented management of disability at HEI, with DU taking a reactive stance and creates challenges for DU that can keep students with disabilities out of mainstream HE activities (FOTIM, 2011; DHET, 2013; Pudaruth et al., 2017).

Overall, the policy documents and interview response at UY show that disability inclusion was being informed by the institutions' entrepreneurial and market logic that encourage a managerial approach to inclusion that prioritises individual qualities over institutional capacity (Saunders & Blanco Ramírez, 2017). However, at the same time inclusion was also seen as a way of tackling social inequalities and discrimination, thus placing responsibility on the institution and thereby emphasising the broader social good and ethical significance of inclusion as a project that the institution is responsible for undertaking (Norwich, 2013).

The complex contestation and interplay of logics at UY affirms the challenges that Bessant (2012) and Tomlinson (2013) noted about what HEIs, especially in Africa, face in attempting to balance historically contentious terrains of demands, driven by ethics, industries, market and knowledge economies, rights, interests, and statutory obligations. This may be as a result of the influence of the institutional context, in which ideological, legal and moral issues stipulate expected activities and orientations. However, in daily practice, the DU is often confronted with more informal and pragmatic situations where DU staff have to respond to individual needs. This involves a formal/informal dichotomy, which further emphasises the ambivalence expressed by some of the university community as noted by UY staff informant interview response. This corresponds with Czarniawska-Joerges' (1992) duality of the "world of ideas" and the 'world of practice' in organisations/institutions. These dualities thus have a bearing on framing disability support and are key areas that research in HE should start critically exploring.

UX, on the other hand, has a transformation logic, which is characterised by values connected to ideological ideals such as equality and fairness that tend to be vague and more pragmatic. Similarly, UX DU has an inclusive and transformation agenda, which aligns with the main institutional logic, thus tensions of implementing the policy are minimised as noted by one staff interviewee. The aligning of both institutional and departmental policy vision framing at UX opens up possibilities for university actors to collaborate. Thus, in this case of UX and the DU, the inclusive and transformative framing logic tends to manifest itself in a stable collaborative fashion (Purdy & Gray, 2009).

However, a competitive dynamic tension (Pollitt, 2013) about the different meaning and understanding of transformation and inclusion by other institutional departments was highlighted in an interview response. For example, UX DU, in some cases with the institutional planning department, has to try to explain what it means by inclusive design and how it wants things done to physical accessibility for SWD. In this case, the plural understanding and interpretations of the transformative logic provided the different groups with different frames of reference that structured how they perceived and interpreted how to operationalise inclusive support for students with disabilities, thus confirming the same observations made by Thornton and Ocasio (2008). Therefore, logic multiplicity provides an opportunity for there to be a variety in the cognitive orientation of institutional groups and actors pertaining to what can be a legitimate response to a problem (Bertels & Lawrence, 2016). However, in the case of UX, a multiplicity of logics brought tension between departments.

This above finding affirms research in HE by Naidoo (2010) and FOTIM (2011) about how sometimes DU are not independent and fall under different departments (such as student affairs, counselling for students etc.), which limit their options. Thus, most disability-related concerns are handled apart from other inclusion and transformational goals. Some universities' departments' strategies conflict with the direction that some DU intend to use, for example,

those DU led by counselling services saw disability through a pathological lens and reinforced the idea that it is a medical issue (Lyner-Cleophas et al., 2014). Thus, students are categorised differently and disabilities are defined differently at HEIs. This confirms a key idea of embedded agency reflected on in this research the ‘institutional entrepreneur’, which involves a competitive dynamic among players in the institution in order to own and frame an idea in their own interest and direct how an idea is institutionalised (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

All these tensions highlighted in research literature confirm this study’s findings from UX that show that tensions and contestations in interpretation can still arise even when both institutional and departmental policy visions align. However, such tensions were not addressed in the policy documents. The policy documents appeared not to recognise the contentiousness and uncertainty that come with making decisions about disability inclusion and presented it as relatively easy to achieve at UX, while at UY, the focus on entrepreneurial and managerial language used in the context of inclusion appeared in some ways to absolve the institution from fully engaging with the challenges and tensions (Soliman et al., 2019; De Wit & Altbach, 2021). It is therefore apparent how policy framing of disability cannot be viewed and understood in a vacuum without paying attention to the views of different stakeholders and the intricate institutional dynamics such as logics, which are knowledge foundations and how they affect policy processes.

The above presentation reflects on how UX and UY DU align their departmental policy logics with the main institutional policy vision/culture. Therefore, this study has established that both institutions have different aligning experiences. Exploring these dynamics is especially important for the policy-framing process of students with disabilities as these tensions or advantages have a bearing on influencing the framing of policy support students with disabilities receive. Given that universities and the way their activities are organised can create opportunities and limitations for what is viewed as desirable and appropriate (Powell &

DiMaggio, 1991). This study advocates for more studies that explore these dual tensions/advantages that university DU face when framing disability policy support for students with disabilities in a broader institutional vision.

### ***6.3.3 Participation in the creation and appraisal of policy knowledge and the foundations of expertise (CE)***

This study prioritised exploring the participatory styles of knowledge-making that question who tends to be involved in the creation and appraisal of knowledge in the framing of student disability and merging the analysis with an exploration of what the basis of experts' credibility is (Jasanoff, 2005). Findings from **Table 11** highlight the policy appraisal process which the two universities consult and engage in the knowledge-production of their policies. Comparatively, UY uses an in-house/closed policy-framing process with minimal input from external stakeholders and relies on the institution's 30 years of in-house professional experience in the field working with disability, while UX actively involves a consultative institution-wide and multi-stakeholder roundtable policy framing process of professional, experienced staff, students, the broader administrative staff and campus community, and the technical skilled academic and research experts. Both UX and UY prioritise in-house professional experience of high standing when framing policy for students with disabilities.

In this study, how can universities ever know enough to act wisely or publics be persuaded that their universities are behaving responsibly when faced with an ever-changing array of issues and questions based on shifting facts, complex understanding of student disability, and unforeseen contextual and structural changes? In this regard, **Table 11** reveals UY prides itself on relying on in-house professionals from the disability staff, administrative and executive staff in framing disability. UY from this analysis relies on in-house experience and professional qualifications alone. In addition, UY rarely consults expert bodies in their knowledge-production of the policy and a large part of their deliberations are not actively open to the

broader civic campus and society's eye and it sometimes reaches out to a doctor and organisations for PWD for clarification of terminologies. The openness of this consultative process is not made public to the campus community, probably on the assumption that little scrutiny from all interested quarters is the best way to overcome personal bias and subjectivity.

Therefore, professional working experience is more heavily weighted as a defining element of expertise at UY as noted by its reliance on 30 years of experience. Largely, UY expertise remains tied to the person of the individual expert, who achieves standing not only through knowledge and competence, but also through a demonstrated record of service to the university. It is as if the expert's function is to discern the needs of students with disabilities and to define the policy response as much as it is to provide appropriate technical knowledge and skills for resolving the matter at hand. The reliance on in-house professional expertise can possibly be linked to how UY largely leans towards the medical framing of disability. This conceptualisation has been criticised for privileging the professionals' view in the care of people with disabilities and overlooking the role of social, structural and environmental factors (Gabel, 2005; Llewellyn et al., 2008; Haegele & Hodge, 2016). This results in a more isolated existence for many people with disabilities (Gill, 1999).

In this institutional cultural setting individuals/professionals ranging from the vice chancellor, registrar, disability lecturers, UY staff with a legal background, and disability staff all emerge as authoritative policy actors whose voice and assumptions are represented in policies as pointed out by Miller (2004). They all possess the transcendental capacity for discernment. It is hardly surprising that a staff informant interview response highlighted the lack of a broader policy 'imaginary' because of its ad hoc policy-framing process that does not fully factor in other framing models such as the rights-based approach.

The findings also show the consequences of the lack of a consultative and multi stakeholder framing process. One informant cautioned about celebrating mediocrity in policy framing and pointed out that the services offered by the university tend to be influenced by charitable assumptions thus leaving students vulnerable as services may be stopped, depending on the availability of resources. This also raises the question of rhetorical articulation about the rights-based definition in university policy, while, at the same time, posing challenges such as token involvement of people with disabilities and the neglect of their self-determination and equality (Albert et al., 2005). This affirms what Goodman (1978) states about how discourse coalitions result in unseen acts of world-making and what Law (2011) called ‘collateral realities’ that tend to impose unquestioned visions of cause and effect for problems in exclusionary ways. This study advocates for more studies that question more critically how this unique angle of knowledge-production and who participates and is validated as an expert impact on the framing of disability policy in universities.

Another concerning aspect of this policy-framing approach for students with disabilities is that the authoritative experience alone of UY experts, leaves no further room for citizen interventions and other experts. UY then becomes a closed system that places all trust in the professional working experience of a few staff members with no further need for accountability to a wider public. In such a system, a small body of university experts are expected to achieve standing in policy deliberations simply through the credibility of its member’s authoritative professional work experience. Wider consultative processes, more so with the students with disabilities, are not part of the framing process nor are other organisations, and civics are not consulted. These processes of participation and validating experts need to be questioned and challenged. Further, not interrogating these processes also influence how actors/experts form identities; adopt different standards of evidence, knowledge, and activism; and maintain or challenge social hierarchies (Jung et al., 2014).

Evidence from UX on the other hand shows that the university does not rely on professional work experience alone, although UX starts with an in-house framing process that comprises the experienced staff from the DU coming up with a draft policy. The university has a broader consultative and multi stakeholder process that consists of the university campus including the voice of students, with and without disability, and academic and administrative staff across the campus. The draft policy is also submitted to academically/research-trained and skilled stakeholders such as psychologists, speech therapists, neuroscientists, and staff from the HE department. UX also uses the researchers in disability studies and consults organisations of PWD such as DEAFSA and HEDSA, although deliberations are not in the campuses' eye, they are substantially more variable in their visibility practices, and it is generally left to the particular details to contingently determine whether to communicate with its university community.

Thus, in UX, because of broader involvement of stakeholders in the knowledge production policy process, a wider conception of what information is needed flows as compared to UY whose knowledge-production tended to be discrete, relying on authoritative professional working experience, thus avoiding public accountability. Therefore, the above UX findings show in the policy framing of student disability, who participates and what constitutes expert credibility are equally important (Jasanoff, 2005) to the university as an institution.

This multi-stakeholder consultative process affects who qualifies or is deemed an expert. To be an expert at UX one ideally has to have experience, be a working professional in the field, be academically research-trained/skilled and, lastly, by being an active participant of the university community. The nature of expertise reflects how UX values knowledge from trained and skilled professionals and experience from staff and the broader university civics on the campus. UX relies on both experience and knowledge of technical experts. One informant highlighted that UX relies heavily on experience and it comes with challenges during the

framing process. This then also challenges the notion of relying mostly on experience as this is met with the complex understanding and definitions of disability that university civics possess. This confirms the contested policy responses in education, as noted by Ainscow (2020).

The hybrid reliance by UX on work experience and academic research training of experts leaves room for broader ad hoc citizen interventions. This opens up UX policy-framing process to broader accountability to a wider university public. This also shows how in framing policy provisions for SWD, civic epistemologies contribute to shared visions of reality through helping to facilitate discourse coalitions among different political actors who disagree on cognitive points of interest but who share the same perspective on other themes (Hajer, 1995; 2006).

Ultimately, UX follows the ecosystem approach promoted by the empowerment model that prioritises capacitating different facets and members of society such as instructors, and community organisations with skills, knowledge, and attitudinal training to help PWD participate fully in society (Moran, 2014). Lastly, UX has a multi-stakeholder consultative process. However, the processes of participation and validating an expert's needs should always be scrutinised (Jung et al., 2014). In that regard, another civic stakeholder informant challenged South African universities since the enactment of the HE disability policy of 2018, on how they should make their consultative processes national when framing their policies for students with disabilities.

From the above analysis and discussion, this study establishes that both institutions share the characteristic of starting the framing process with professionally experienced staff from the DU. However, the variances in the framing processes of disability can be explained by differences in expert assessment, which is determined by the judgments, expertise and

composition of expert committees. In this regard, UX uses a more extensive multi-stakeholder consultative process from many experts and draws from the broader university community in the framing process. Whereas UY has a closed internal framing process that is limited to internal experts who are qualified based on experience serving the institution.

Consequently, the variance in the styles of consulting evidence in policymaking could also be linked to the science/academic research and policy nexus and how it is prioritised at both institutions. UX prioritises the role of academic research and consulting science experts such as psychologists in its framing processes, while UY does not prioritise this nexus because it relies on the institution's 30 years of in-house professional experience in the field working with disability. Thus, the status and the history of the university's experience regarding disability is prioritised more as evidence than the science and policy nexus.

This study also established that both institutions have challenges with transparency of different aspects of their framing processes. UX does not involve and engage the public in its deliberations with expert bodies and experts. However, it does involve the university publics in some parts of the framing process, while UY does not engage the public in any of its policy-framing processes. These variances point to the need for more forms of knowledge: local knowledge, future knowledge, diverse forms of governance, participation and consultation (Jasanoff, 2005). Thus, both institutions need to improve on how they structure heterogeneity of different knowledge resources and how to create institutional environments for processing the different forms of expertise (Jasanoff, 2005).

Lastly, given that there are cultural traits that are unique to the institutions in the study, they serve as a source of cross-cultural variance. When comparing the two universities, the key area of difference is how each achieves a balance between the expert's official credentials and personal or institutional experience. Therefore, there is a need for more engagement with

frameworks and theories to help unravel the complexity of how cultures, especially institutional ones, influence policy processes. Comparative approaches are especially important because they can help illuminate the diversity of civic epistemological cultures and how they approach issues such as framing students, especially those with disabilities, at the institutional level in their policies.

#### **6.4 Effects Produced by the Framing of Disability.**

This section will explore the effects of the above policy representation of student disability, focusing on two major areas of analysis and discussion and these are university accessibility and university budget/funding. Regarding university accessibility, both institutions claim to be making progress on the policy support agenda, and both UX and UY agree that the move towards inclusivity is a good one. However, this does not imply that there is a high level of commitment to or awareness of inclusive support in either institution. **Tables 12 and 13** illustrate how UY and UX view policy support for students with disabilities in terms of university accessibility and funding. Following, is a discussion of the effects of the policy problematisation of disability from both institutions on university accessibility and funding.

##### ***6.4.1 University accessibility***

‘Discursive effects’ are the ways in which discourses ‘produce truths’ (Bacchi, 2009, p. 92) through legitimising particular representations, and by delegitimising or silencing others. In line with this, both UY and UX have discursively been framing their application/recruitment and admissions policy, and they use a variety of strategies to attract students with disabilities to apply to their institutions. Both universities have a variety of strategies for encouraging students to apply, starting with their very first interactions with them during initial open days, etc. Services are promoted through a variety of channels, including websites and intranets, stands, talks, and presentations at institution-wide events (open days, induction week, and

fresher's fair), leaflets sent to schools, and NGO. Less common forms of promotion include word-of-mouth, which can result in referrals, targeted direct email contact from the disability unit, and opportunities for in-person meetings with the support team.

However, UY goes a step further by enlisting help from the Ordinary Level exam body, Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC), for assistance in recruiting students with disabilities who would have passed. It is therefore clear that discourses ascribe social value and meaning to bodies and in public policy. Pillow (2003) notes that 'bodies' are for controlling, regulating and shaping in particular ways and this has implications for the proposed policy action and therefore the daily life circumstances of the target group. According to the WPR approach it is important to explore how real bodies and real people are living and experiencing the effects of policy discourses (Bacchi, 1999). In this case, the lived effects of this intentional policy framing are that both institutions have increased their ability to admit students with disabilities because of these policy measures for recruitment and application.

This finding confirms what literature points out that globally; there has been a growth trajectory in the participation/recruitment of students with disabilities in HE (Kendall, 2016; Moriña, 2017; Majoko, 2019). Subsequently, this trajectory has been facilitated by the establishment of anti-discriminatory legislation and policy frameworks (Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Chitaika 2010; Mutswanga 2014, Moriña, 2017; Ramaahlo et al., 2018) and, in turn, this influenced policy framing at university institutional level (Howell, 2019). The admission statistics in **Tables 13** and **14** demonstrate this. Although UX only has limited admissions data from 2011 to 2015, it demonstrates the constant increase in admissions.

The analysis of subjectification effects, according to Bacchi (2009), pays particular attention to the ways in which the constitution of particular types of political subjects work to stigmatise some groups, exonerate others and define the limits of policy change. In this regard, UY has

been more deliberate, particularly with its emphasis on affirmative action that prioritises reaching those from low-income backgrounds. Prioritising affirmative action influenced the increase in admissions from 2003 to 2018 as detailed in **Table 13**. When framing policy responses for students with disabilities, defining disability from an affirmative action model allows institutions to take into account the poverty dimension of disability. However, caution must be exercised as it may also influence a pity and welfare approach to framing. Admission procedures make clear that there are differences in access to the institution between the two institutional environments.

To accommodate students who might not match the merit standards or who may come from disadvantaged backgrounds, UY uses both a merit model and an affirmative action approach. The interview responses also showed there are unintended and negative consequences/effects to this problematising. A staff informant response emphasised how the online application form presupposed a prospective student only has one disability and provided no option to report other disabilities.

In addition, UY DU was also left out of the university's signage, making it extremely difficult to locate without guidance during applications and admissions processes. These subjective effects point out to how framing policy from medical and affirmative action models can neglect or overlook seemingly insignificant environmental changes such as signage that can have an impact on a student with disabilities' application and admissions experience.

Additionally, because UY DU lacked internal evaluation specialists, it was obliged to rely only on medical professionals to evaluate application materials. This medical evaluation approach drew concerns from staff informants who voiced concerns about the university's capacity to accept disabilities such as autism and about the paucity of accurate information about the disability in Zimbabwe. Thus, sometimes the type of policy framing in the case of UY reveals

how at times the medical and affirmative action can limit the possibility of what could be possible in terms of recruiting and admitting students with disabilities.

The above findings confirm what Finkelstein (2001) asserts that our environment is designed by normal people for normal people and that prevalent customs exclude those who deviate from the norm. This, however, supports a pity and welfaristic perspective that equates disability with weakness and a lack of ability to perform tasks (Shakespeare, 2014). Since education that does not take into account of student diversity promotes inequity, the institution should develop an environment that is supportive of meeting the different needs of students (Read et al., 2003; Lone & Kumar, 2013). The institution's programmes must be modified to be accessible to everyone, and resources must be set aside for students whose sensory or physical disabilities make it difficult for them to be admitted (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013).

In contrast, UX referred to a strategy that prioritises equity, fairness, and merit when addressing admissions of students with disabilities. The rights-based framing is producing negative subjectification effects. For instance, an interview response from an SWD from a rural and remote place observed the difficulties in applying to the university and indicated certain barriers for students with disabilities in obtaining admission. According to a staff informant, entrance criteria encourage equity and fairness because students with disabilities must fulfil the minimum entry requirements and compete for open spots with peers who do not have a disability. Given that there has been an established correlation between social status and disability, UX admissions policy appears to be ignoring the fact that students with disabilities experience more obstacles, such as poverty, when accessing societal structures and institutions (Riddell, 2013). This study contends that because of compounded disadvantage, students with disabilities need to have their right to participate in HE preserved by encouraging recruiting strategies that pay attention to their obstacles. According to Odhiambo (2016), merit principles favour the socially privileged members of society. The rights-based approach to problematising

disability at UX ignores additional obstacles that make it difficult for students with disabilities, particularly the poverty dimension. A unique and flexible criterion that encourages the admission of qualified students with disabilities would therefore be in line with the first inclusive education value, which encourages presence (Humphrey, 2008).

The above unique contextual differences in UY and UX regarding admissions and recruitment reflect tensions between equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes and how they impact on rethinking inclusive provisions and practices. Thus, concurring with a study by Gunn et al. (2015) that reported equality and diversity in Scottish universities, reflected more equality of opportunity than equality of outcomes, thus reinforcing the battle between socio-economic inequality and identity-based inequality.

Policy framing regarding access to the built environment in both institutions has brought negative and positive lived, subjective and discursive effects. 'Discursive effects' are the ways in which discourses 'produce truths' (Bacchi, 2009, p. 92) through legitimising particular representations, and by delegitimising or silencing others. For instance, interview responses on this theme confirmed that both universities are working hard to frame policy that creates a welcoming and inclusive physical environment on their campuses. While policy initiatives have facilitated changes in both the institution's buildings, including the library and lecture halls which have ramps to make them accessible, others are inaccessible, despite the fact that students use the facilities for vital services provided by departments housed there. Bacchi (2009) encourages exploring how policy affects the lives of those it intends to govern.

UX and UY are both public universities, and some of their colonial historic structures are challenging to rebuild, according to Teferra (2016) and Douglass (2016). Similarly, scholars such as Mutua (2002) and De Sousa Santos (2008) observe how there is a tendency to overlook the historical impact imperialism and colonialism have contributed to the exclusion of people

with disabilities in the global south. In light of this historical context, both institutions observed that their social, housing, and recreational spaces were more easily accessible than their lecture and learning spaces that were the oldest structures. These findings affirm Bacchi's (2009) suggestion that points out how the differential social value and significance ascribed to bodies also shape problematic representations in particular ways that can have real-life consequences for their day-to-day lives.

Second, analysis of subjectification effects seeks to identify the 'political implications that accompany how subjects are constituted within problem representations' (Bacchi, 2009, p. 17). It pays attention to the ways in which the constitution of particular types of political subjects work to stigmatise some groups, exonerate others and define the limits of policy change (Bacchi, 2009, p. 42). Such practices 'set groups of people in opposition to each other' with the effect that they think and feel about themselves as different to others (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 16–17). For instance, UY findings support the observations made by Mubiru (2021) and Oyaro (2015) that historically, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, pre-existing structures and buildings have resulted in SWD having limited access to education. However, this may be the case at UY owing to the neglect in the policy design of some inclusive services/support the institution provides.

These results suggest that 'ableism' and 'normalism' are the guiding ideologies that shape how environmental accessibility is perceived and framed. However, as a staff informant at UY noted, if there was a rights-based problematisation of disability, there would be little room for lecturers to disagree because the students with disabilities would be granted the same rights as other students without disabilities. The problematisation of disability from the medical and affirmative action model conjures up welfare and pity assumptions, which is why there is a challenge with lecturers.

Finkelstein (1993) and Hunt (1966), proponents of the social model, contend that coping is required for everyone in a social situation, and failure to do so is viewed as abnormal. Additionally, staff informants at UY discussed how they deal with the physical accessibility of lecture halls and rooms, emphasising problems, particularly when academics favour certain facilities. They complained that it was difficult to persuade professors to comply and that this support was not stated in the official university documents, indicating their discontent, thus, validating the findings that one of the key obstacles to completion for students with disabilities is physical access (Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007; Jameel, 2011; Majoko, 2018).

Similarly, UX has a policy addressing physical accessibility. A staff informant interview response revealed how challenging it is to propose changes to buildings because of their status to the community thus, there is tension between global historical significance and the rights of the student to accessible learning. The informant also noted that the elevated plane the campus, is located, requires them to work ad hoc to gain access to parking for students with disabilities and buses that can transport them to various lectures, and that their current system still needs more input from various stakeholder groups.

The disjuncture between policy and practice with relation to the physical accessibility of lecture locations at UX concurs with findings by Beauchamp-Pryor (2012) and Morgan, 2013, thus affirming what the literature has noted, namely that students with disabilities in HE still have learning barriers (Macleod & Cebula, 2009; Hopkins, 2011; Black et al., 2015; Couzens et al., 2015; Moria et al., 2015). The challenge of physical accessibility at university campuses, particularly for lectures, reveal the complexity of policy support to facilitate inclusive education because of tensions that arise from history, location and type of framing.

The policy framing of curriculum /teaching and learning has also been articulated in university discourse. Discursive effects show that the problematisation in the policy creates silences and

closes off other ways of thinking, thus limiting ‘what can be thought and said’, and the kinds of social analysis or social intervention that can be undertaken (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 15–16) with regard to framing disability. Findings from both universities show that teaching and learning still have a lot to be improved upon, notwithstanding improvements achieved by both institutions in the areas of admissions, tests and assessments, and student support. Both institutions in the interview responses highlighted that, as a result of the academic autonomy and independence that exist among and in universities and faculties, individual faculties, schools, and departments might vary in their growth towards inclusive teaching and learning techniques. Staff informants noted how difficult it is to influence developments in this area because teaching and learning are considered to be the purview of academics and policy is silent on how to get academic staff to actively support inclusive teaching and learning for SWD.

Subjective effects pay particular attention to the ways in which the constitution of particular types of political subjects works to stigmatise some groups, exonerate others and define the limits of policy change (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 42). For instance, informants at UY noted how a rights-based approach to framing and problematising disability would help in enforcing policy provisions especially when dealing with academics who tend to be stubborn about opening up their subject areas. Staff informant interview responses also highlighted the challenges they had in trying to encourage staff to think beyond making reasonable concessions for individual students and think about accessibility for all, and help staff recognise that inclusive practice is not just a technical issue that can and should be supported and recognise that changes can be small (for example, making the titles of essays clearer) yet still make a difference. Such practices ‘set groups of people in opposition to each other’ with the effect that they think and feel about themselves as different to others (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 16–17), in this case, the DU vs academics and academics vs SWD. The aforementioned finding shows that UY as an institution and its policy framing that emphasises the medical and affirmative action models can influence

how the university academic culture and resources impact upon the learning environment of students with disabilities that needs to be adjusted.

Thus, the learning preferences and requirements of the students are not taken into consideration nor is the pace and style of the lectures as well as the learning tools, and, as components of a curriculum, do not reflect inclusivity. The findings from UY are comparable to that of Matlosa and Matobo's (2007) study at one tertiary institution in Lesotho, which found that lecturers who had not received training in curriculum differentiation did not take requirements for students with disabilities into account when planning their classes.

According to studies by Thurman and Fiorelli (1979) and Skirtic (1991), students with disabilities were required to perform normally in this regard and adhere to the same standards of practice as everyone else. When lecturers demand that students adapt to the way they teach rather than addressing their specific requirements, access is denied to such students. Therefore, it is difficult for academic staff to be inclusive of students with varied capacities owing to the effects of problematising disability from a medical and affirmative action viewpoint.

Discourses also ascribe social value and meaning to bodies and in public policy. Pillow (2003) notes that 'bodies' are for controlling, regulating and shaping in particular ways. Ultimately, this has implications for the proposed policy action and therefore the daily life circumstances of the target group. In this study, the focus has been on how the framing of disability in university policy has shaped the lived experiences of the university community and more so of the students with disabilities themselves. For example, at UX, although they had problematised disability from a rights-based approach, challenges were also surfacing as the policy was being effected on campus. Interview participants also raised similar complaints by academics as noted at UY. A staff informant from the UX noted that when lecturers assume that everyone should be treated equally in terms of ability while ignoring students who have diverse abilities,

the rights-based approach to conceptualising disability on its own might encounter challenges. The above rights-based tensions further point towards the complexity of disability in the global south and how it can contribute to people with disabilities being seen as ‘victims’ and how their lived reality is often distant from the legal policy rhetoric (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). This finding reflects a tension that was highlighted in earlier studies on students with disabilities in higher education in the UK (Reay, 1998; Archer & Leatherwood, 2003) and in South Africa (Nkoane, 2006) and suggests that the tension remains important to what is happening now in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

At UX, a student observed how they noticed a lecturer resisting making concessions for students with disabilities as they saw it as a burden. According to the students’ experiences, professors were unaware of their needs and conducted lectures in a way that they deemed appropriate as also observed by Madriaga et al. (2011). In this regard, Grenier (2007) contends that the lectures were set up to adhere to an ableist cultural conformism that HEI practice.

The findings from UX can be compared to a study by Gelbar et al., (2015) that shows that despite the existence of disability laws in a country, the majority of HEIs have rigid curricula and unfavourable staff attitudes that make it difficult for students to access tertiary education.

In this study, some students at UX described their experiences with lecturers who were unwilling to make concessions for students with disabilities because it was a burden. This showed how unlikely it is for lecturers who are not trained to support learning for students with disabilities to use flexible and equitable teaching and assessment methods. Ultimately, as part of policy protection offered to students with disabilities, pedagogical issues and curriculum are central. Tezri (2014) emphasises that when it comes to curriculum, a more holistic framework

that considers everything, such as schooling, policy, curriculum, leadership, ethos and pedagogy, when educating students with disabilities is needed.

The policy framing of assistive technology has been discursively prioritised in both universities as it plays a critical role in advancing more inclusion and accessibility to support SWD. Findings from interviews and policy analysis from both institutions show that there have been positive lived effects for students with disabilities. Recording lectures is the most popular type of assistive technology for learning, and both institutions use it for at least some of their lectures. These lectures may be focused on particular courses or subjects, recorded with the permission of specific academic staff (tutor discretion), or only offered in specific buildings or rooms. Students at both universities recognise the advantages of technology in improving their academic performance and learning experiences despite other differences in lecture equipment.

In this regard, the above lived effects affirm the studies by Bondi (2014), Malcolm and Roll (2017), Borg et al. (2012), Clouder et al. (2019) and McNicholl et al. (2021) that showed how assistive technologies gave SWD the ability to enjoy their human right of learning in class by affording them the independence to execute activities they previously could not and also helped improve their academic performance. However, there is very limited research in developing countries exploring the impact of assistive technology policy provisions in HE (Malcolm & Roll, 2017). The use of assistive technologies is crucial in the development of inclusive academic environments for students with disabilities.

However, interviews from both universities reveal students with disabilities also expressed negative lived effects. For instance, negative attitudes to the noise made by some of the technology from both staff and students and challenges with following PowerPoint presentations. These findings also confirm findings from the studies showing that HE practitioners tend to have less awareness of the complexities surrounding inclusion and how its

principles might be translated into practice (Márquez & Melero-Aguilar, 2020; Wise et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies by Kajee (2010), Mokiwa and Pasha (2012) and Sukhraj-Ely (2008) also reported SWD experiencing negative challenges from assistive technology that affected their academic performance and learning experiences.

Both institutions have been discursively framing alternative assessment in their policies for students with disabilities. Findings show that UX and UY both offer written assignments in place of tests or presentations, or do the opposite and convert an essay or written assignment into a viva, presentation, or oral assignment. Other options include giving a lecture to a smaller group or the tutor alone, using a video presentation, giving exams more time, and substituting course work for exams. They also provide advice for academic staff on how to grade work. Although alternative evaluations satisfy the criteria for a fair adjustment, both institutions have made just a small step towards more general inclusive assessment practices.

Findings from interview responses from both institutions reported lived effects that highlighted SWD from both universities benefited from the ways in which their policies problematised the availability of policy in this area. The results of this study present a positive narrative in the area of assessments thus offering an alternative to dominant narratives of research that highlight challenges (Allam, & Martin, 2021; Madriaga et al.'s, 2011; Tai, Ajjawi, & Umarova, 2021) raising the contention that students with disabilities studying at HE continue to be excluded by rigid assessment processes.

Although findings exposed some challenges with providing assessment that included problems with lecturer compliance at UY, while there were issues with students' late disclosure of their disability at the UX, making it difficult to provide them with the best alternative evaluation. At UY, it was emphasised how making all students eligible for alternative examinations is a potentially difficult educational choice.

Discursively framing psychosocial support at both universities involved providing extra curricula activities, psychosocial support and wellbeing activities. The findings from the study reveal that the lived and subjective effects of the problematising of disability in both institutions have been impactful to students with disabilities that even the broader university community acknowledges their participation in the provisions provided. For example, UY staff informant responses celebrated students participating in the Danhiko Paralympics, Zimbabwe Universities Sports Association (ZUSA), Zimbabwe Tertiary Institutions Sports Union (ZTISU) games, the Zimbabwe National Paralympics Games and the Zone VI Games.

The effects of such policy provisions were noted by students, those with and without disabilities, that acknowledged how students with disabilities represent the university well in sport and other recreational activities, such as the Paralympics at national and continental levels. These initiatives by UY challenge the notions that reflect an assumption that disability leads to life that is insignificant and not worthy to enjoy what the general population does (Finkelstein 2001). These findings contradicted those by Ebersold (2012), who found that colleges and universities paid less attention to how unresolved social and psychological issues could interact negatively to affect academic involvement. In fact, at UY, external stakeholders support numerous programmes for student welfare.

Additionally, UY has actively worked with several government agencies to support the hiring of graduates with disabilities. Although based on a welfare and pity logic, the problematisation of students by a medical and affirmative action model also produces positive lived effects because it enables individuals to see the differences in disability and adapt to include them in the community. For example, in their interview responses, students with disabilities mentioned how UY DU had worked hard to persuade most government agencies to be receptive to the inclusion of students with disabilities when hiring. They were able to obtain positions in government ministry departments because of their efforts. Psychosocial assistance is one of

many strategies, according to Salmi and Bassett (2014) that assist students with disabilities in overcoming their inherent and societal disadvantages. Particularly in this study, students with disabilities were able to overcome some of their obstacles and represent the nation in the Special Olympics.

UX, using the rights-based approach to problematising disability, has intentionally provided psychosocial support services, which are available to all students. A related inclusive agenda of wellbeing activities is also aimed at all students (although wellbeing is still strongly associated with central services rather than a feature of an inclusive curriculum). UX promotes wellbeing activities with their students, often through regular events, workshops and courses focused on particular issues (e.g. stress management), wellbeing weeks, yoga classes and days, and presence on social media.

According to Westwood (2007), reorganising resources to meet the requirements of students with disabilities is a crucial component of inclusive education. In this study, students with disabilities were given platforms to participate in a variety of activities such as athletics, music, yoga and debating. According to articles 24 and 26 of the UNCRPD there has been a call for better psychological wellbeing. Findings from this study reflect how the variation in problematising disability at both universities is producing good lived experiences for students in terms of social support.

However, even with a rights-based and empowering approach to student welfare for students with disabilities, interviews revealed social and attitudinal barriers are a big hurdle to overcome for students with disabilities at UX. Attitudinal barriers are the biggest challenge facing the university, deeply rooted in the unconscious fabric of all societies as noted by staff and stakeholders. According to Humphrey (2008), it would be challenging for students with disabilities to succeed in their academics if they felt excluded by their peers and teachers. Staff

at the university must therefore address obstacles to the student's cognitive and social development in order to assist the cognitive, social, and emotional growth of every student.

#### ***6.4.2 Budget/funding***

**Table 15** shows how both institutions rely on a range of funding sources to sustain their policy provisions, although they are increasingly using their core institutional finances to finance operations. Both institutions are recognising the need to explore various support strategies and to be more proactive in terms of fundraising. Discursively, however, there is policy silence on articulation by both institutions on budget and financing policy provisions/support. However, findings from staff informants at both disability units (DU) who were interviewed, highlighted that core institutional funding is the main source of income for supporting students with disabilities and the infrastructure for providing disability services. The number of students with disabilities, historical spending trends, and the availability of both internal and external funds typically determine budget levels for both institutions. The budget for services for students with disabilities typically forms a portion of a broader budget that includes a variety of student support services. Both DU also seem to have autonomous control over their budget, making decisions about how this is best spent

Interestingly, both institutions do not explicitly state in any of their policies how much money they get or how much is allocated to what. At UY there was some concern that external funding for supporting students with disabilities will continue to decrease further in the future. The additional funds from external funders are therefore appreciated but there is some lack of detailed accountability of these additional funds and/or how they are used. This is an issue of concern because funding from a range of sources tends to be aggregated into one overall budget for student support so tracking funding within this overall budget can be difficult.

At UY, funding for students with disabilities was patchy, although the institution had found ways of pooling funds to reach individuals and organisations to fund particular support services. The funding of support for students with disabilities was seen to be of critical importance at UY, with constraints on funding seen as a major barrier to implementing their policy, confirming research literature that has highlighted the fact that government funding for universities is drastically declining globally, while student fees are rising (De Jager & Gbadamosi, 2010) and that reductions in public financing might have a negative impact on fairness in admission for many students, including those with disabilities (McGrath et al., 2014).

In contrast, at UX there was also a difference in the use of funding. From the interviews, UX appeared to have well-resourced and stable provision that tends to have an excess of donor funds for students with disabilities that they do not use. However, some of the staff noted the additional funding was most commonly used to expand disability services and provide additional staff, training or resources, expand the use of assistive technology and improve the inclusivity of teaching and learning. One staff informant highlighted the tensions at management level over the use of excess funding. This normative ad hoc administration of finances confirms that the policy silence and practice alignment is challenging. A paradox existed at UX as some staff preferred funding that was directly channelled to students than a departmental channel. Thus, there was no agreement on the channelling of individualised payments into collective provision.

This policy silence and practice misalignment is worth noting since it heralds a reduction in services aimed at the individual, with an increase in generic support services provided across the institution. This also highlights tensions around problematising student disability using individualist vs welfare/social/rights-based blended models in the framing of policy provisions for students with disabilities. A key difference between both institutions was the use made of

the funds provided by the institution, government and external funders. This has had a severe impact on how well universities are able to function. This gap reveals that SWD tend not to be taken into account in comparative literature on funding in HE for previously excluded and disadvantaged students (Yang & McCall, 2014). This study proposes more research is required on how the DU are spending and regulating their finances.

Lastly, this question prioritised looking at how the framing of disability university policy shaped the lived, subjective and discourse effects/experiences of the university community and more so of the students with disabilities themselves. In this study, the WPR approach provided a lens for exploring the effects produced by identified problem representations in university disability policies and the real-life consequences of the policy on the day to day lives of students with disabilities and the operations of the university community.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This study has attempted to explore the intricate functions of framing disability policy at university institutional level. Overall, it is clear that there is a blending of various models being used in the framing of disability in policy initiatives and this has significantly influenced how students with disabilities are viewed in and experience HE at both institutions. In this study, I chose to move away from the traditional methods of evaluating policy that focuses primarily on outcomes. I chose to consider the effects of the policy discourses guided by Bacchi's WPR's categories of effects (discursive, subjectification, lived). It was necessary to research the effects of such framing processes on students with disabilities after the analysis of how, what, and who is framing student disability was done above. However, it is also evident that some of the policy framing used has had positive and negative effects, and both universities' policy framing cultures have a long way to go before they can be characterised as fully inclusive.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter draws conclusions from the discussion and analysis of questions and themes in Chapter 6. The chapter discussed how universities are defining disability in their policies, the knowledge foundations that influenced the policy framing of disability and the effects of the policy representation of disability. The discussed themes will help answer the main research question for this study: How are the universities framing disability in university policies? The limitations, directions of future research and recommendations of the study will also be explored in this chapter.

### **7.2 Framing of Disability in University Policy**

This study concludes that problematising disabilities is crucial since definitions and the understanding of them are influential and transmit societal norms (Thompson, 1998). In her explanation of the WPR strategy, Bacchi adds, ‘What we intend to accomplish shows what we think has to change’ (Bacchi, 2009, p. 263). According to Bacchi (2009), it is important to understand the issues that policy documents seek to address. It became evident throughout the research that universities were blending different legislative frameworks, models and understanding in an effort to problematise student disability in their particular institutions.

For instance, UY disability unit (DU) used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRDP), medical models, and affirmative action to frame student disability and, since language is not neutral (Spender, 1990), the language used in policy texts at UY reflects welfare terms such as ‘special needs’, ‘special treatment’ and ‘compensation’, and these terms are seen as patronising and demeaning. Although UY acknowledges that its goal is to reduce marginalisation and the need for equitable services, the welfare/pity assumptions persisted and were emphasised more, and staff at UY frequently mention and

advocated for a rights-based approach to policy framing. This highlights the need for a more expansive approach to problematising student disability that has the potential to instigate real change that is also dependent on the assimilation of new meanings and understanding throughout institutional practice.

In contrast, UX was also blending various models in their problematising of student disability that included the rights-based approach, International Classification of Functioning (ICF) model and the UNCRDP. UX recognises the marginalisation and oppression students with disabilities face in society. They prioritise a rights- and empowerment-based model of understanding and defining disability while actually affirming an individualised view of disability.

The use of various blended models in framing the categorisation and definitions of disabilities in the official policy documents reflects what Haegele and Hodge (2016) and Mitra (2006) note about how defining disability is a difficult task because there is no single definition that is universally recognised. This complexity in trying to problematise disability has also spilled over into the spaces where universities are framing disability. Furthermore, Seale (2014) emphasises that there is no consensus among academics working in higher education (HE) research on what constitutes a disability and that existing empirical studies have not sufficiently addressed this issue. My study established that universities are employing various models and blending understanding of disability to contextualise and define disability at their institutions.

However, this study warns that caution should be taken when applying models of disability for explanatory and defining purposes, because they are all representations of the needs and values of the defining group (Smart, 2009). Therefore, no paradigm can be seen as being morally sound or value free (Forhan, 2009). As a result, explanatory models significantly affect the lives of those with disabilities, albeit their nature is rarely acknowledged (Smart, 2009).

Therefore, utmost caution and care should be taken when blending models and frameworks to problematise disability in framing processes.

Second, also affecting the framing of disability is the knowledge foundation that underpins and influences the problematising of disability. Exploring unique dimensions such as implicit assumptions (What is the Problem Represented to be? or WPR), embedded agency (Institutional Logics or IL) and participatory styles of knowledge-making and foundations of experts (Civic Epistemology or CE) also helped shed light on the knowledge that undergirds the policy representation of SWD. When problematising disability, all these aspects have a bearing on how universities are framing student disability. For instance, implicit assumptions of both the policy understanding and interview responses at UY emphasise more how student disability is perceived as resulting from the need to overcome specific individual impairment issues, witchcraft, or the anger of the gods. There is less focus on inequality resulting from different structural/social problems, thus drawing on welfare/pity/charity assumptions of framing policy initiatives.

The findings at UX illustrate that disability was understood in terms of oppression, but was viewed not as a direct consequence of ‘inability’, but with a subsequent focus on individual ‘need’. UX Disability Policy sees students with disabilities as being subject to compounded marginalisation from both individualisation, social and structural factors. Thus, UX policy acknowledges that there are various factors contributing to the exclusion of students with disabilities. The framing of disability as a matter of rights and responsibilities is both rhetorical and practical. Throughout its documents and interview responses, the university positions rights and responsibilities as being linked and reciprocal for all parties. In terms of policy making, the idea of rights and responsibilities rests on a number of implicit assumptions that underpin all university documents. The first is trust, and implicit in the notion of trust is a belief that the university represents a cohesive culture that is mandated to empower students with

disabilities to be inclusively embraced in the university. The second assumption is the deficit assumption. Because of its policy articulation of marginalisation, a deficit assumption is presumed in which the extent of student's vulnerability becomes the basis on which priorities are established, something which clashes with a rights-based approach that tends to espouse equality, fairness and merit.

The problematisations and assumptions of disability at both universities are inextricably linked and operate in the broader and main university policy vision. Using the lenses of embedded agency (IL) in the two different institutional cultures, the study established UY has the marketisation logic and UX a transformation logic. IL establishes a framework within which knowledge claims are situated and underpin the appropriateness in an institution (Scott, 1994; Greenwood et al., 2010). The DU have to comply with the expectations of the institutional policy vision. This study established there could be dual tensions/advantages that university DU face when framing inclusive support for students with disabilities within a broader institutional vision. These tensions have a bearing on the problematisations and assumptions of student disability and influence everyday policy practice, thus affirming studies pointing out the challenges HE practitioners are faced with when navigating inclusion principles, and how to translate them into practice (Márquez & Melero-Aguilar, 2020; Wise et al., 2020; Jansen, 2023).

This study also explored the policy-framing process and its bearing on the framing of student disability by exploring who participated in the creation and appraisal of the knowledge (CE)/ experts and professionals. The research findings noted that UY has a closed system that places all trust on the experiences of a few staff members with no further need for accountability to a wider excluded public. A small body of university experts are expected to achieve standing in policy deliberations. This standing is simply through the credibility of its members' experiences, without any wider consultative processes. Also, students with disabilities are not

part of the framing process and other organisations and civics are rarely consulted, while UX has a hybrid reliance on professional work experience and academic/research skills training of experts, and has room for broader university ad hoc citizen participation. This opens up the UX policy-framing process to broader accountability to a wider pool of a potentially excluded public.

The aforementioned complexities and dimensions in the policy framing/problematising of student disability also have effects on how the policy is experienced in the institution. The consequences of the policy (Bacchi, 2009) in both institutions are reflected in the findings that point out that access to education for students with disabilities has brought commendable policy achievements in admissions, accessing the built environment, assistive technology, teaching and learning, alternative assessments and funding by both institutions. Students and staff attest to the benefits of problematising/framing student disability in policy. However, there are some constraints, and, in some cases, denials about the areas that need critical attention. These include admission criteria and processes that currently do not promote the principle of equity to influence a high participation of students. Once admitted, the students have to deal with institutional barriers such as physical challenges with buildings and funding that are not easily accessible. Though all aspects of the university life are important, some of the institutional structures, physical buildings, curriculum and attitudes remain rigid, despite policy-framing efforts.

In addition, funding challenges in terms of the lack or an excess of funds need to be addressed by both institutions. Interviews highlighted the need to challenge dominant perceptions about disability in the university case studies and the importance of legislation in creating a new framework of understanding. Admittedly, a fundamental worry persists about the genuineness of change at the institutions, for instance, whether the new language of inclusion is merely

verbally adopted to ensure legal compliance, whereas, in reality, it is not actually assimilated in the institutional culture

Lastly, the problematisation and framing of student disability is arches in the inclusion value, has been included as a value in both institutional policies at both universities, and entails a focus on education development (UNESCO 1994; Ainscow, 1998; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Studies indicate there are problems in establishing more inclusive practices (Ekström, 2004; Nilholm et al., 2007; Hausstätter, 2014). This study has picked up several more challenges and opportunities especially in the policy-framing spaces of universities. Therefore, inclusive education involves both opportunities and threats when framing disability policy. There are opportunities in terms of increased stakeholder cooperation and the possibility to support students with complex needs and improve the quality of their learning. There are threats in terms of ambiguity in relation to roles and responsibilities and how to understand, interpret and implement the very idea of disability within an inclusive education framework. This study advocates that educational policy at both UX and UY should continue to contextually refine important values such as inclusiveness.

### **7.3 Contributions and Limitations of the Study**

Research into the impact of global, regional and national conceptualisations of disability as offered by existing disability models and frameworks, for example, the CRC (United Nations, 1982), The World Declaration Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) and the ICFH on HE policy, is limited. This study recognised that research into the framing of disability in university policy settings is underdeveloped, especially in Africa. The research thus set out to explore empirically how two HEIs on the African continent have been framing disability in their respective policies.

In light of the gaps identified, this research proposed treating university policy as text that can be subject to interpretation, while acknowledging that policy is an outcome of discursive practices and contexts (Bacchi, 2009). The research also noted that these processes, contexts and practices should be subject to critical scrutiny. Hence, the task of this study was to ‘problematise’, ‘question’ or ‘interrogate’ university policy-framing processes and practices in relation to disability. Having gone through the research process the following are the thesis contributions.

Firstly, from a theoretical perspective, the study advanced conceptual frameworks that were able to question disability policy framing in order to understand what counts as data and how they are key to thinking about what and who is included in the context of framing policy for students with disabilities. I applied the WPR, IL and CE frameworks to the framing and understanding of disability in the HE context in Africa, and in Zimbabwe and South Africa in particular, in an empirical manner. The eclectic mix of the frameworks made it possible to expansively explore and to develop a more layered and sophisticated understanding of policy and practice.

This approach took into account the policy itself, stakeholders, context drivers and mediators and how relationships between stakeholders influences the framing of policy in the African university context, and how this framing translates into experience for those represented by the framing. I believe this will ‘advance the frontiers of knowledge’ regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in HE. I hope it will lay a foundation on which further studies can build when trying to grasp the complexities of framing policy for students with disabilities in African HE.

The qualitative cross-national comparative methodology was able to reveal nuanced institutional cultural differences in the framing of disability in the local contexts. The

comparative angle of the study contributes to challenging the notion that there can be a universal one-size-fits-all policy approach to framing students with disabilities in HE systems. Also of significance is the comparison of policies from units such as universities relative to a broader national and regional policy analysis.

In terms of limitations the current comparative study used two public universities one from Zimbabwe and one from South Africa out of the many tertiary institutions in both countries and its findings may not be generalised beyond experiences of these institutions. Additionally, as a study, which used a qualitative approach, its findings may not be generalised to reflect experiences of other institutions' population either. In particular, the comparative analysis brought nuanced contextual analysis that cannot be generalised for the continent at large. In addition, the interview sample sizes of 20 participants per institution restrict the generalisability of the findings.

#### **7.4 Directions for Future Research**

The framing of disability policies in universities on the African continent is still an emerging area of research and thus replication of this study in other African contexts will be important to the study of policy and inclusion of students with disabilities. This study cracked open some of the different angles/ African HE research can unpack policy framing of disability and more can be done in this area. Therefore, prioritising the policy-framing spaces of student disability in universities is important, as more exploration of university norms and practices needs to be critically questioned.

This study also advocates for more empirical research focusing on the funding of DU and the dual tensions/advantages that a university DU faces when framing inclusive support for SWD within a broader institutional vision. In addition, a more nuanced in-depth study of the who,

why, what and how of policy processes regarding students with disabilities in African universities would be welcome.

Lastly, this study also advocates for more comparative research in these areas with the help of critical theories and frameworks such as the Disability Inclusion Institutional Framework (DIIF), a conceptual framework developed for HE institutions to encourage research to support institutional approaches to disability inclusion (Evans et al., 2022). Methodologies such as the Q-methodology, which explore perspectives of participants who represent different stances on a similar issue, will benefit disability inclusion in HE, given the diverse perspectives that inform policy and practice. Engaging more critical theories and methodologies will be able to shed more light on the role institutional cultures play in framing inclusive policies for students with disabilities.

## **7.5 Recommendations**

This study tracked the journey of how two African universities are thinking about disability and the insights from the research may possibly inform how framing disability policy may be improved inside institutions. To accomplish this complex and challenging process, it will need time, effort, and a refinement of how we learn about values, beliefs, and meanings. Senior management must, however, actively facilitate and promote robust conversations among academics and staff who work in HE as well as on campus as a whole as part of their responsibilities. A few of the important topics that can be covered are understanding institutional policy, complex definitions of disability, inclusion, active participation, actual involvement, language use, accountability, and the monitoring and assessment process. Finding out who knows, and what is known, about policy and how it is disseminated and effected is crucial.

It is also important to have a dialogue about what inclusion means from the perspectives of both staff and students with disabilities, what an inclusive learning environment might resemble, and how inclusivity might be accomplished. When higher education institutions (HEI) respond to policy and take steps to respect individuals who are members of differently abled groups, they must acknowledge these considerations. It is not about eliminating diversity; rather, it is about broadening our policy imaginary to recognise what is ignored, overlooked and neglected about difference and how it can or may lead to exclusion, especially in policy-framing spaces.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: UWC Ethical Clearance



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
T: +27 21 959 4111/2948  
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20 July 2018

Ms FM Maruza  
Faculty of Education

Ethics Reference Number: HS18/5/21

**Project Title:** An analysis of disability representation in university policies: A comparative study of the University [redacted] and the University [redacted]

**Approval Period:** 20 July 2018 – 20 July 2019

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josias'.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

**PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049**

## Appendix B: Letter to Participants

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION

University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2649 / 3888  
Email: 3746223@myuwc.ac.za  
Website: [www.uwc.ac.za](http://www.uwc.ac.za)



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently undertaking a research project for my doctoral studies at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa. The research is entitled 'An Analysis of Disability Representation in University Policies: A Comparative Study of the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]'. In this study, I intend to examine how disability policies are framed at institutional level in African universities. This study will be significant because it seeks to elucidate implicit assumptions and underlying rationale used in the inclusion of students with disabilities in university policies.

This study cannot be successfully completed without the participation of the Head of the Disability Unit, administrative staff in the disability unit, Head of Student Affairs and administrative staff in student affairs office, policy experts who help frame the university disability policy and final year students with disabilities at the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]. I trust that as participants, you may have knowledge about disability representation in your university policies and practices and your contribution will be of immense value to this study. Therefore, I kindly invite you to participate in this study as an interviewee. If you need further details on this study, feel free to contact me at [3777831@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3777831@myuwc.ac.za). If you accept the invitation to participate in this study, I will be glad if you could communicate with me the date, time, and venue for the interview. I intend to start in early June 2018.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Fadzayi. Marcia. Maruza

## Appendix C: Contacts for Information on Project



### FACULTY OF EDUCATION

#### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC)

*This document is for people who are participants in the research project.*

#### CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION ON PROJECT AND INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

<b>Project Title</b>	An Analysis of Disability Representation in University Policies: A Comparative Study of the Uni [REDACTED] the [REDACTED]
<b>Approval Number</b>	

The Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee monitors all the research projects that it has approved. The committee considers it important that people participating in approved projects have an independent and confidential reporting mechanism, which they can use if they have any worries or complaints about that research.

1. If you have questions or problems associated with participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the researcher.

<b>Name</b>	Fadzayi.Marcia.Maruza
<b>Phone</b>	0027793417770
<b>Email</b>	3777831@myuwc.ac.za

2. If you wish to discuss with an independent person matters related to:

- making a complaint, or
- raising concerns on the conduct of the project, or
- the University policy on research involving human participants, or
- your rights as a participant,

contact the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee on [info@uwc.ac.za](mailto:info@uwc.ac.za) | +27 21 959 2911.

## Appendix D: Consent Form

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION



### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC)

#### CONSENT FORM

I have read the attached Information Sheet and agreed to take part in the following research project:

<b>Title:</b>	An Analysis of Disability Representation in University Policies: A Comparative Study of the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]
<b>Ethics Approval Number:</b>	

The project has been fully explained to my satisfaction by the research worker. My consent is given freely.

Although I understand the purpose of the research project, it has also been explained that involvement may not be of any benefit to me.

I have been informed that, while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will not be divulged.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I agree to the interview being audio. Yes  No

I am aware that I should keep a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, and the attached Information Sheet.

**Participants** (Head of the Disability Unit, administrative staff in the disability unit, Head of Student Affairs and administrative staff in student affairs office, policy experts who contribute to the framing of the university disability policy and final year students with disability) **to complete:**

Name: Signature: Date:

#### Researcher to complete:

I have described the nature of the research to

*(print name of participant)*

and in my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature: Position: Date:

## Appendix E: Information Sheet

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION

#### INFORMATION SHEET



**Title:** An Analysis of Disability Representation in University Disability Policies: A Comparative Study of the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

#### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to elucidate implicit assumptions and underlying rationale used in the inclusion of students with disabilities in university policies. This research intends to highlight similarities and differences between them. Insights from the comparison will be used to explore how university policies position and govern students with disabilities with differential disadvantages and need.

#### **What will be asked of the participant?**

Participation in this research is voluntary and a participant has the right to withdraw from this research at any time. To be part of this study, a consent form needs to be signed.

#### **Duration of interaction**

Semi-structured interview: Approximately 1 hour.

#### **Possible benefits from the study to the participants and/or the community**

The study will serve as a platform for participants to share their views on how disability is represented in university policy and practices.

#### **Assurance of confidentiality**

Data acquired from the field will be treated in a way that protects the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Codes will be assigned to participants to prevent their identification in the research report or any other subsequent publications from this study. Records of the project will be stored on the main researcher's computer protected by a password. However, the data collected will be archived on compact disc and securely stored for five years as prescribed by the University of the Western Cape regulations.

#### **Measures that will be taken in the event of an adverse event**

If at any stage a participant experiences discomfort, please inform the researcher. The activity will be stopped immediately. If this request is made by a participant, all data collected up to that time will be deleted and disposed of permanently. After completion of an interview, a participant can contact the researcher by email and request the removal of his/her data from the research. Upon receiving such a request, data collected from the participant will be removed and disposed of. Participants will be assured that no adverse effect will result from such requests. Please refer to the independent complaints sheet attached.

## Appendix F: Interview Guide for Staff

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

#### **The Interview Guide for staff**

*General Information*

**Interview Date:**

**Gender:**

**Background of the Interviewee:**

#### *Interview Questions*

1. Can you please tell me when the university developed and adopted a disability policy?
2. Who was involved in the process of framing the policy?
3. Are there any viewpoints, for example, international and national policies, attitudes, beliefs, myths and legends that influenced the ideas about disability in the policy-framing process?
4. What role does the institutional vision play in the function of the disability unit?
5. What challenges does the Disability Unit (DU) face when framing or implementing the disability policy within a broader institutional vision
6. What are the problems with the ideas/views about disabilities in current university policy?
7. How would you compare the experiences of students without disabilities with those of students with disabilities?
8. What is your opinion of the ability of students with disabilities being able to fully participate in university life?
9. With the existence of a university policy, how does the university community view disability?
10. Have you seen any visible changes in the lives of students with disabilities in recent years?
11. Who participates in the framing of the policy?
12. What stages does the policy-framing process follow?
13. What qualifies a person to take part in the framing process?
14. What is your overall opinion of the current university policy on disabilities?

## Appendix G: Interview Guide for Civic Stakeholders

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

#### **The Interview Guide for Civic Stakeholders**

*General Information*

**Interview Date:**

**Gender:**

**Background of the Interviewee:**

#### *Interview Questions*

1. What is your connection to the university as an institution?
2. Have you been invited to any policy-framing activities?
3. What legislation on, declarations and definitions of disability do you know?
4. Who participates in the policy framing of the university's policy?
5. Who is regarded as qualified to participate in the policy framing-process?
6. What can be improved about the policy framing at the university?

## Appendix H: Student Interview Question

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION

#### Student Interview Question Guide



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

#### *General Information*

**Interview Date:**

**Gender:**

**Background of the Interviewee:**

#### **Interview Questions**

1. How does the university respond to disability?
2. What do you think influences this response?
3. Are you aware of the existence of a University Disability Policy?
4. How would you describe the support provided for students with disabilities at your university?
5. Are you familiar with any specific clauses/procedures/restrictions for students with disabilities when applying for admission at the university? If yes, please elaborate
6. How would you describe the accessibility of the study environment at your university (e.g. lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, campus etc.) and other environmental adaptation (e.g. toilet, and cafeteria/restaurant.)?
7. What facilities do students with disabilities have in their residential accommodation? Do they have adapted rooms and assistance for daily living (e.g. household assistant, nurse, and transport assistant)?
8. How do students with disabilities use transportation to, from and on campus?
9. Are there any adjustments made for students with disabilities (for example exam arrangements)?
10. Do students with disabilities get any educational support (e.g. a tutor/technical equipment/adapted study materials)?
11. How does the university encourage students with disabilities to participate on an equal basis in academic and/or social activities?
12. Do you have career services/counselling in general? And for students with disabilities?
13. Are you aware of any future plans with regard to students with disabilities at your institution?
14. What could be improved by the university in the way it includes students with disability?

## Appendix I: Policy Analysis Framework Developed for the Study

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION



#### **Policy Analysis Framework: What is the Problem Represented to be? (WPR)/Civic Epistemologies (CE)/Institutional Logics (IL)**

The framework consists of six interlinked dimensions from the above theoretical frameworks. These are:

##### **WPR**

1. What is the 'problem' (for example, 'disability') represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?
3. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?

##### **IL**

4. Embedded agency – interests, identities, values, and assumptions of individuals and organisations are embedded within prevailing institutional logics

##### **CE**

6. Participatory styles of public knowledge-making: who is involved in the creation and appraisal of knowledge?
7. Visibility of expert bodies: how open are the decision-making processes to the public?

## Appendix J: Policy Document Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION



#### Policy Document Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

##### Inclusion Criteria

**International and national policies or practices addressing inclusion or exclusion of students with disability in higher education.**

This includes any decision, plans and actions that have been taken by global or international organisations and national, either governmental or non-governmental, public or private, institutions having an impact on the inclusivity of students with disability in Zimbabwe and South Africa. This impact may be direct (documents that address higher education specifically) or indirect (documents with a global/worldwide scope). It is recognised that policies may focus on either inclusivity or disability and therefore, both types of policies will be included.

**All documents must be in English and be fully accessible online**

Documents in any other language cannot be included because the researcher is not familiar with the local languages.

Provides specific recommendations for university policy or implementing policy; for example, disability policy, admissions policy, protocols and procedures or best practices.

Published higher education documents that are responsible for overseeing programmes and services related to inclusion of disabled students in higher education.

Publicly available and accessible documents on government and university websites.

##### Exclusion Criteria

**Documents which do not mention disability or inclusiveness**

It is desirable that those documents which focus on either disability or inclusivity at least mention the relationship between the two phenomena.

**Documents that do not define disability or their target population**

Since it is an essential goal to evaluate the underlying problem definition in the identified policies, it is a necessity that the policies

**Documents that do not target South Africa and Zimbabwe**

mention their definition of disability or their target population.

Disability is an issue which needs to be dealt with in the context. Therefore, it is important that policies are included that target at least those regions which are applicable to the Zimbabwean and South African local setting.

## Appendix K: National Archives Clearance



All communications to be addressed to In reply please quote: A3/5/3/2  
“THE DIRECTOR”

Telephone: 792741-3 Private Bag 7729

Fax: 263-04-792398 Causeway

*E-Mail: nat.archives@gta.gov.zw Zimbabwe*

ZIMBABWE

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZIMBABWE**

28 June 2019

688 Gletwyn Road

Chishawasha Hills

Harare

Re: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to confirm that Fadzayi. Marcia. Maruza student number 3777831 from the University of the Western Cape in South Africa has been granted access to the National Archives of Zimbabwe as of June 2019 to October 2019. For purposes of her PhD research on disability policies she has been given clearance to access any documents regarding her research.

As an Institution we are pleased to assist in any research endeavour. For any inquiries you are welcome to contact us on +263 4792741-3 and email us on [archives@archives.gov.zw](mailto:archives@archives.gov.zw).

Yours Faithfully

B. Mamvura

FOR: DIRECTOR

## **Appendix L: What's the Problem Represented to be? (WPR)**

The framework consists of six interlinked questions. These are:

1. What is the 'problem' (for example, 'disability') represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?
3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'? How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?
6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?

## **Appendix M: Civic Epistemology (CE)**

The framework is broken down into six aspects as detailed below:

- i. Participatory styles of public knowledge-making: who is involved in the creation and appraisal of knowledge?
- ii. Public accountability: how is credibility of experts and policymakers before the public established?
- iii. Demonstration practices: how is credibility of knowledge claims demonstrated to the public?
- iv. Registers of objectivity: how is objectivity of public decisions demonstrated?
- v. Foundations of expertise: what is the basis of experts' credibility?
- vi. Visibility of expert bodies: how open are the decision-making processes for the public?

## **Appendix N: Institutional Logics (IL)**

The framework has five principles detailed below

- i. Embedded agency interests, identities and values and the assumptions of individuals and organisations are embedded within prevailing institutional logics.
- ii. Society as an inter-institutional system - [draws on Friedland and Alford individuals are located in a diverse range of high-level institutions like family, market, religion,].
- iii. The material and cultural foundations of institutions - each of the institutional orders in society has both material and cultural characteristics.
- iv. Institutions at multiple levels – institutional logics may develop at a variety of different levels. This flexibility allows for a wide variety of mechanisms to be emphasised in research and theoretical development.
- v. Historical contingency – [the approach emphasises the ways in which institutions at every level take shape as a result of historically contingent events and actions].