

THE EFFECTS OF OPPORTUNITY-TO-LEARN  
STANDARDS ON THE PERFORMANCE  
OF GRADE TEN LEARNERS IN  
NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS

By

FELIX KANDJIMI NYANGO

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Thesis Approved:

*wen-pong A*

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Thesis Adviser

*Fally Carter*

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*Nicolaus H. Als*

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*Wayne B. Powell*

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Dean of the Graduate College

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Colonialism in Namibia dates back as far as 1884 with the arrival of Germans. The country, Namibia, was then called German Southwest-Africa. After the defeat of the Germans during World War I, The League of Nations gave a mandate to the South-African white minority regime, which was by then part of the British Empire, to administrate and prepare Namibia on her way to independence. Severe maintenance and perpetuation of indigenous educational inequalities and disparities characterized the German and South-African rule from 1884-1989. The colonial masters never considered the indigenous people worthy for schooling. Educational opportunities for indigenous people were very limited and in some areas non-existent. The privileged ones who did go to school did not go far. The colonial masters used education as a tool of promoting white supremacy, evangelism and European cultural values. Generally, basic literacy and numeracy was deemed as sufficient for indigenous people. During the colonial era, education in Namibia was a privilege and not a right to the indigenous people as the Ministry of Education and Culture 1993, in Namibia observes:

Education in our country used to be enjoyed by the privileged few, whom apartheid and colonialism considered worthy of it. In other words, it was not the right of every citizen to have access to learning and its benefits (p.1).

Namibia gained her independence in 1990 after 105 years of German and South-African colonial occupation. The need and call for educational reform and development became evident and necessary among many concerned Namibian educators.

The Ministry of Education and Culture was thus created to facilitate, direct, manage, and supervise all educational reform initiatives. Education was immediately placed at the top of all other national priorities. The concept "Education for All" became the underlying philosophy of the future Namibian education system. To achieve "Education for All", access, equity, quality, and democracy were identified as major goals toward educational reform. Major reform programs that were introduced included the identification of a common and acceptable medium of instruction in schools. Other programs and projects for educational improvement, renewal, and reform, inter alia, included Language policy, Basic Education Reform, Teacher In-Service-Training, Examination and Assessment, Literacy Development, Distance Education, and the introduction of a national curriculum to enable and equip graduates from the school system to compete fairly after graduation on the global market (MEC, 1993).

Education is viewed in Namibia as a basic condition for human existence and should therefore be made accessible to all Namibians. Education is thus imperative in human existence as the Ministry of Education and Culture 1993, observes:

Education is important not only because we expect it to be useful. It is important to because we believe that to participate effectively in adult life of our society- to be part of our national community- all of us must be able to understand and communicate with each other. Like adequate nourishment and sound health, basic education is fundamental to our individual and social well being (MEC, 1993).

Three types of educational standards were identified: content standards, performance standards, and opportunity-to-learn standards. Despite many efforts made shortly after independence about educational reform programs, the quality of education with particular reference to Opportunity-to-Learn Standards has significantly deteriorated over the past few years in many Namibian rural area schools. The Opportunity-to-Learn Standards require staff members who are competent and fully committed, availability, and accessibility to different fields of study in schools, and other valuable resources needed in schools to enable students to meet the quite demanding and challenging content standards and performance standards (Noddings, 1997).

The most critical educational debate currently on the Namibian national agenda is the dismal performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. Current research statistics are showing that since the inception of the new grade 10 National Examination in 1993, there has never been a pass rate over 50 % in Namibian schools. Because of the dismal continuous performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools, efforts are underway to address this unwarranted situation.

Grade 10 results determine the future of learners in the Namibian formal process of schooling. It is a ministerial policy that learners who do not meet the pass requirement for grade ten are not allowed or given a second chance to improve in the formal process of schooling in order to proceed to grade eleven. Furthermore, grade 10 results are crucial and significant because even learners under the age of sixteen who do not meet the pass requirement for grade ten are subject to the ministerial policy despite a constitutional clause which obliges the government to provide educational opportunities to learners until that age.

## Statement of the Problem

The concept of Opportunity-to-Learn Standards was first introduced in the United States of America several decades ago and was defined by a narrow set of instructional components (Banks, 1997). Since then, concerned educators in Namibia have incorporated many additional criteria into the Opportunity-to-Learn Standards concept, some specifically to ensure an equal education for disadvantaged students in Namibian schools. Despite recent attention to Opportunity-to-Learn Standards most schools in Namibia do not view them as either standards to be met or as indicators of educational quality. In fact, a panel discussion in the Kavango region, Namibia revealed that most schools do not collect data related to Opportunity-to-Learn Standards, and some are not even aware of the concept (Nyango, et al., 1997).

The pass rate of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools has become a matter of great concern. The much evident gap found in the grade 10 results of the different schools is quite disturbing. In 1998, rural area regions such as Ohangwena and Oshikoto posted a pass rate of 34 %, while urban area regions such as Khomas, Otjozondupa, and Omaheke recorded an 80 % success rate. This state of affairs is viewed by many stakeholders in education as a matter of urgent concern, and therefore, the quality and equity of education that the learners receive in different schools is highly questionable. These concurrent bad results among grade 10 learners prompted the Namibia National Teachers Union to launch a school-by-school investigation to try and discover the causes. It was found that the poor results were caused by a combination of many factors, among them poor school management, lack of teacher professionalism, and unqualified teachers. Recent statistics

are showing that 80 % of teachers in Namibian rural area schools are unqualified (The Namibian, 1999).

Opportunity-to-Learn Standards are defined as the establishment and provision of curricular priorities to learners. Other elements of Opportunity-to-Learn Standards include the availability of textbooks, the presentation of curriculum materials to learners in a context relevant to them and the willingness from teachers to develop class materials on time. Content standards describe what teachers should teach and what learners are expected to learn. Performance standards define the degree of mastery or levels of attainment (Noddings, 1997).

The major questions developed to provide guidance in seeking answers to the study objectives include: why do grade 10 learners in Namibian schools perform academically poor in terms of achievement? What can be done to improve the performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools?

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. The second part of this study was to explore the availability of educational opportunities in terms of resources distribution in schools. An analysis was thus made with regard to the existence of opportunity-to-learn standards in Namibian schools.

#### Definition of Terms

In order to have a better understanding of this study the following terms were operationally defined and were integral to this study:

Opportunity-to-Learn Standards. A concept used to identify and demonstrate how factors such as income, access to knowledge, as well as variables such as quality of school facilities, availability of teaching materials, and teacher expertise can influence achievement (Banks, 1997).

Content Standards. Provide structure to guide curriculum and instruction by framing core academic content area in terms of what and how teachers should teach and what students should know and be able to do (Noddings, 1997).

Performance Standards. Provide concrete examples and explicit definitions of what students need to know and be able to do in order to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and knowledge specified by content standards (Noddings, 1997).

Indigenous People. The brown and Black groups in Namibia, which consists of the Namas, Coloreds, Bushmen, Basters, Owambo, Kavango, Herero, Damara, Caprivian, and Tswana.

Basic Education. Refers to grade 1-10 in the Namibian context.

Apartheid. Policy of discrimination and segregation introduced by the South-African government in 1948 when the National Party came to power.

Bantu Education. Education introduced for Blacks in Namibia and South-Africa for the purpose of preparing Africans for subordinate positions within the labor market.

SWAPO. Stands for Southwest-Africa People Organization and was a liberation movement that fought for the independence of Namibia.

### Significance of the Study

This study, by investigating the effect of opportunity-to learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools, reflected on the sometimes



## Assumptions

The underlying assumptions for this study were:

- There was a great gap in educational resources between Namibian rural area and urban schools.
- Most teachers in urban area schools were qualified and competent as compared to those in rural area schools.
- Educational administrators had a negative image about rural area schools.
- The national curriculum was culturally biased and did not completely address societal needs.

## Scope and Limitations

This study was carried out while the researcher was still living in the United States of America. Financial constraints made it impossible for the researcher to travel to Namibia to collect primary sources needed for the study. The distance between the two countries put the researcher in doubt about the cooperation to be received from research participants and possible delays were anticipated.

## Organization of the Study

This study which examined the "effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools" has five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction of the study. In it are stated background information about Namibia, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and definition of terms. Significance of the study, research assumptions, and scope and limitations conclude the opening chapter.

Chapter two contains a review of literature related to general background information about Namibia, Namibian education during the pre-and colonial era, education in independent Namibia, discrepancies in Namibian education, origin and relevancy of opportunity-to-learn standards, and development of opportunity-to-learn standards in Namibia. Excerpts from the Presidential Commission on education are included.

Chapter three is a presentation of the research methodology in this qualitative study, and contains an introduction that will give an overview of the chapter. The research design, research participants, procedures, instruments, and data analysis are described.

Chapter four is a presentation of findings that were determined by analysis of the data provided through questionnaires. A summary statement of the results is given also.

Chapter five contains the summary, discussion, and recommendations. The implications conclude chapter five, and followed by references and appendices.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an in depth review of previous work and literature which are related directly or indirectly to this study. The review includes references to several research studies. The selection further cites views and opinions of recognized institutions and individuals of this very important field of human existence. The major topics included in this review are 1. General background information 2. Namibian education during the pre-and colonial era 3. Education in independent Namibia 4. Disparities in Namibian education 5. Origin and relevancy of Opportunity-to-Learn Standards.

#### General background information

Namibia is twice the size of Germany and is the second largest country in Southern-Africa. The name Namibia is derived from the Namib Desert, which is said to be one of the oldest deserts in the world. Although the greatest part of the country lies North of the Tropic of Capricorn, the climate is typical of a semi-desert country. The largest ethnic group, consisting of seven different tribes each with its own territory and dialect, inhabits Owambo in the north. Then in descending numerical order come the Kavango, Herero, Damara, White, Nama, Colored, Caprivians, Bushmen, Rehoboth Basters, and Tswana. Namibia's population amounts to 1.7 million, giving it one of the lowest population density figures in the world.

English is the official language. All official documents, notices, and directional signs are in this language. However, German and Afrikaans are also widely used, being

spoken throughout the country that they enjoy a semi-official status and constitute an important lingua franca. There are too many indigenous African languages and dialects, but they fall into two main groups: Bantu and Khoisan. Owambos, Kavangos, Hereros, Tswanas, and Caprivians speak Bantu languages. Damaras, Namas and Bushmen speak Khoisan languages. However, most people of all race groups can speak either German, Afrikaans, or English and in many cases all three of these languages (Namibia Review, 1992).

The low but widely scattered Namibian population makes it difficult to administer education effectively. Salia-Bao (1993), explains the dilemma:

the relatively dispersed settlement patterns in rural areas make it difficult and expensive to provide primary schools, in terms of having sufficient children in one place. If schools were located so as to serve the population, they would tend to be too small and therefore expensive to run. If they are consolidated, children may often have walk long and unacceptable distances each day in any school. Population and distribution of educational facilities in Namibia show a big disparity (p.7).

#### Namibian Education during the Pre-and Colonial Era

Educational activities already existed in Namibia before colonialism and were organized and took place in formal and non-formal settings. To argue that Europeans introduced formal education in Namibia is a great misrepresentation of reality. Amukugo (1992), argues as follow:

The colonizers did not introduce education into Africa. They introduced a new set of formal education institutions, which partly supplemented and

partly replaced those, which were there before. It is a fallacy to believe that early pioneers moved into a complete educational vacuum. Every society has its educational system, if only to the extent that it is its concern to pass on the younger generation the value and beliefs, which give it the identity and preserve its existence. Not all have evolved the completely separate process, which might be termed 'schooling', but this fact does not detract from the essentially educational content of what is imparted (p.33).

A similar view is expressed by Salia-Bao (1991), who argues that:

Before colonialism in Namibia, there was an indigenous education and curriculum for the training of the young, which has persisted up to today. The goals and methods may differ from country to country. The curriculum has been the main instrument for transmitting the education. Its concern included character development, physical training, intellectual development, vocational, agricultural education and promotion of cultural heritage. Its main objective was for an immediate introduction of the young into society and a preparation for adulthood. It emphasized job orientation, social responsibility, religion, moral values, and political participation. The education took place at home, in the wider environment, community societies (where Namibian philosophy and science were taught), and apprenticeship places especially set-aside for training purposes. The young learnt through observation, imitation, folk tales, and practical activities (p.11).

With the arrival of Europeans, education in Namibia took a new turn. Various missionary societies started some educational activities by working with small numbers of indigenous people and eventually introduced Western education. The avant-garde of Western education in Namibia were Wesleyan missionary societies (1805), missionaries of the Rhenisch society (1842), and the Finnish missionary society (1870). The Catholic mission society later established their bases in Namibia. The rationale behind the introduction of Western education in Namibia was to evangelize indigenous people and also according to Amukugo (1992), "To convert Africans to Christianity and the political motivation to convince Africans of the need for state protection" (p.40).

The German imperial government officially established a German Namibian administration in 1890. Various treaties were signed with different African traditional kings and the intention was to establish German sovereignty. The content of African education was expanded and additional ones such as carpentry, brickmaking, and domestic science were introduced. There was great cooperation between government and missionary educational programs. Education for indigenous people was kept inferior at the lowest level as compared to that of the whites. New schools with hostel facilities were built for white children. School attendance was made mandatory for white children. According to Amukugo (1992), "While education for whites was thus upgraded, African education never progressed beyond simple literacy, and Bible study was emphasized during the German colonial era" (p.45).

German colonial administration in Namibia came to an end in 1915, with the defeat of German forces during the First World War. With the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Namibia was designated as a class C mandate to the Britannic

Majesty, to be governed on her behalf by the oppressive white minority government of South-Africa. The South-African government did not do much to improve education for Africans. They continued to perpetuate the discrepancies in education already created by their German predecessor.

To make matters worse, the South-African government introduced Bantu Education for Africans, which was just another element of their apartheid policy. The Ministry of Bantu Affairs was also created. The control, administration, and financing of African education became the responsibility of the Ministry of Bantu Affairs. Bantu Education was introduced in Namibia in 1962 with the recommendations made by the Odendaal Commission in 1958. The Odendaal Commission was instituted by the then South-African government to study and make recommendations for Non-European Education in Namibia. The recommendations that were made by the Odendaal Commission with regard to the introduction of Bantu Education in Namibia reflected the apartheid policy of the South-African government. According to Amukugo (1992), "The commission recommended that the African was to be equipped with the following skills and aptitudes: literacy in the official language, literacy in his/her native language, knowledge of hygiene, religious knowledge and good manner" (p.61).

The above-stated recommendations was clearly intended for the purpose of perpetuating and reproducing misery among Native Namibians at the hands of the South-Africans and Europeans. Literacy in official languages served the purpose of enabling Native Namibians to sign documents whose content they did not understand. With the introduction of Bantu Education, the curriculum for African children included reading and writing, singing, elementary arithmetic, handicrafts, environmental Studies, hygiene,

physical training, mother tongue, religious instruction, and English and Afrikaans as supplementary languages. At elementary level, the mother tongue was the medium of instruction (Salia-Bao, 1991).

According to Amukugo (1992), "The overall content of Bantu Education was therefore clearly in line with the objectives spelled out by Dr Verwoerd and others, namely to prepare Africans to join a semi-skilled labor force and fill the lower positions in the labor market" (p.64). Dr Verwoerd was minister of Bantu Affairs and later became South-African president. It should be noted that the introduction of Bantu Education was aimed at dominating the African people (Salia-Bao, 1991). According to Salia-Bao (1991), "Despite the objections from Africans and some missionary groups, Bantu Education was imposed against the will of the Namibian people" (p.19). Generally, the South-African government applied the divide and rule policy in Namibia as they had done in South-Africa. Eleven educational administrations were created comprising of the eleven ethnic groups in Namibia.

#### Education in Independent Namibia

Namibia gained independence in 1990. The SWAPO-led Namibian government embarked upon programs of restructuring educational activities in Namibia. SWAPO stands for South-West Africa People Organization, and fought for the total liberation of Namibia since 1959 until 1989. The Ministry of Education was thus created to coordinate and monitor educational reform programs. The eleven ethnic administrations created by the South-African government were abolished. Education during the German and South-African colonial administrations only served the interests of the white ruling class.



Therefore, the need for education to undergo fundamental changes became apparent and inevitable when Namibia gained independence. The commitment of the SWAPO-led Namibian government towards making education a priority to all Namibians was further highlighted and confirmed by the adoption of the Namibian Constitution (1989), with article 20 which states that:

All persons shall have the right to education. Primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge (p.16).

Other major educational developments in independent Namibia include expansion of tertiary education with the establishment of the University of Namibia as well as the Polytechnic of Namibia. The adoption of English as a medium of instruction in grades 4-12 was another major development in education since the Namibian population is quite diverse, with eleven ethnic groups. The home language, local language, or English still remain the medium of instruction in grades 1-3, with English taught as a subject (MEC, 1993). All indigenous languages are equally recognized and regarded as national languages.

#### Discrepancies in Namibian Education

Despite efforts from educational officials to remedy and redress educational inequalities created by the colonial dispensation, discrepancies still continue to haunt Namibian education. Discrepancies in Namibian education are quite evident and much observable with reference to examination results. Since the introduction of the National

Curriculum and Examination in 1993, there has been always a significant and quite distinct gap in terms of performance and achievement between schools in rural area and those in urban areas. There are a number of factors that has led to such unwarranted prevailing educational trends, and the colonial dispensation take a major share of the blame as the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993), observes:

First, they separated people on the basis of race. Then, within each group by that segregation there was a further selection of the few who would reach the higher levels of the separate education systems. The uneven allocation of resources ensured that a larger percentage of white than black children would be selected fore further education. And the segregation of the society ensured that with very few exceptions the Black elite remained inferior to the White elite in terms of its education, jobs, authority, influence, and incomes. For Black women, the situation was even worse (MEC, 1993).

When Namibia gained independence in 1990, the Ministry of Education and Culture faced a daunting task of how to address these unfortunate educational imbalances inherited. The Ministry of Education and Culture (1993), further observes:

Acute disparities, inequities, and tensions characterize the Namibian education system. Policies of racial discrimination have left a legacy of differential allocation of resources to different racial groups. Some schools have highly educated teachers, extensive equipment, and relatively small classes. At the same time, other schools have teachers who have limited training and classrooms that are overcrowded and poorly equipped (p.19)

Poor coordination of educational programs has also led to discrepancies in the education system. Despite the adoption and implementation of the national curriculum in Namibian schools, the coordination of programs still leaves much to be desired. It is interesting to note that schools use different textbooks for the same subjects. Schools in urban areas have been prioritized in terms of resources distribution, recruitment of teaching staff, at the expense of those in rural areas.

#### Origin and Relevancy of Opportunity-to-Learn Standards

An opportunity-to-learn standard is a concept that was introduced in the 1960's by researchers who were trying to validate cross-national comparisons of mathematics achievements in the United States of America. These researchers recognized that achievement is complex and influenced by many factors (Banks, 1997). Noddings (1997) argues for opportunity-to-learn standards and explain the concept by posing the following relevant questions:

How should these standards be determined? If all high school students in given district are required to take algebra, for example, do they thereby have an opportunity-to-learn" algebra? In particular, if students are not adequately prepared for algebra, if they see no reason to study it, if their teacher is not fully competent, if they are crowded in an unpleasant room, if they have to share outdated textbook, can the requirement be regarded as an opportunity-to-learn? (p.185).

The current trend in Namibian grade 10 Examination results reveal that the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards in education has been neglected if not well-addressed since independence. Proponents of opportunity-to-learn standards suggest a curriculum,

which should reflect the challenges of real life problems, present material in context relevant to students. Opportunity-to-learn standards are also met when teachers are qualified and competent for that matter. The proper and effective sustainability of opportunity-to-learn standards would also mean the introduction of pre-and in-service teacher training programs that can lead to mastery of course content and techniques to teach it meaningful with particular attention to the material in the content standards. Effective sustainability of opportunity-to-learn standards also demand schools to have an adequate number of teachers and classrooms to ensure optimum class size. Students should have access to textbooks and other educational facilities. The school buildings should be clean, safe from hazards, and in good repair. The school culture should foster learning and demonstrate concern for student's well being. Schools or communities should ensure that teachers, counselors, social workers, and other professionals work together to best meet student needs and to deliver comprehensive services (Oakes, 1989).

Opportunity-to-learn standards factors should be seen as the highlighters of inequalities and imbalances that exist in educational experiences of many low-income and disadvantaged students studying in rural area schools. Opportunity-to-learn standards also call attention to the differences in the quality and credentials of teachers of students who teach in urban area schools and those who teach in rural area schools. Students in rural area schools are more likely to be taught by teachers who have less experience and who are less qualified than urban area school teachers. Recent statistics are showing that 80 % of teachers in Namibian rural area schools are unqualified (The Namibian, 1999). According to Banks (1997), "Disparity in the educational resources affects the course

offerings, facilities, books, computers, labs, the quality of teaching in the schools they attend. School reform efforts that do not acknowledge these disparities will fail” (p.89).

#### Development of Opportunity-to-Learn Standards in Namibian Education.

Prior to independence the Namibian education system was highly characterized by the notion of banking education. Teaching methods were teacher-driven, and learners were perceived as empty vessels that needed to be filled with teachers’ knowledge. It implies that in all pedagogical settings the teacher was seen, as the only one who knew everything while the learner knew nothing. Freire (1970), explains the notion of banking education:

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and receive. This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filled away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those whom they consider to know nothing (p.53).

When Namibia gained independence many education policy makers felt that setting opportunity-to-learn standards will help schools, particularly those in poor urban areas,

appreciate their essentiality to the educational infrastructure and make developing them a priority. Therefore, those who were involved in the educational reform process strongly asserted that opportunity-to-learn standards are necessary to help close the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. The Ministry of Education and Culture thus embarked upon a comprehensive educational reform program that called for the effective establishment and sustainability of opportunity-to-learn standards in the Namibian education system.

A new teaching approach, called learner-centered education, was introduced in Namibian schools. Learner-centered teaching approach was to promote the idea of learning through understanding and practice directed towards the autonomous mastery of living conditions. Furthermore, provision was made for similar and uniform core syllabi and instructional materials to schools throughout the country.

To ensure that the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards was implemented the Ministry of Education and Culture set up a Technical Coordinating Committee on Curriculum Reform. The Ministry of Education and Culture (1993), explains major tasks of the committee:

Analysis of subject content and existing syllabi, selection of learning goals and instructional settings, and specification of performance outcomes; development of objectives and criterion tests, description of entry prerequisites, and determination of the structure and sequence of the instructional program; specification of learning activities or events, the instructional management plan and patterns of classroom activities, review and selection of materials, development of new instructional materials,

and assessment and evaluation of those materials; and conduct of internal and external evaluations of existing and new programs, and the subsequent review and revision of programs as appropriate (p.122).

The National Institute for Educational Development was established at Okahandja to coordinate curriculum development and revision. Subject teachers were also encouraged to participate in curriculum development programs throughout all its stages. Several school-feeding projects were initiated to address the problem of hungry children. To ensure equal access to educational opportunities, hostel fees were revised to benefit all children from different family backgrounds. School hostels were classified on the basis of their quality, state, and conditions. The intention was to ensure appropriate hostel payments in schools that was never considered during the colonial administration. Before independence many Namibian schools did not meet the minimum standard of teaching and learning conditions. Schools in rural areas were overcrowded, lacked basic textbooks, and other classroom equipment. To maintain and sustain effective opportunity-to-learn standards, the Ministry of Education and Culture embarked upon a Rural Physical Facilities Improvement Initiative. With this initiative, more classrooms, teachers' houses, and school public conveniences were built (MEC, 1993)

### Summary

The literature review presented an historical account of events and major educational developments in Namibia before the arrival of Europeans up to the present. It is apparent from the literature review that the colonial governments neglected education

for indigenous people. It is also evident that the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards was highly neglected in rural area schools thus resulting in poor academic performances among those students. The review also revealed how difficult it was for the Namibian educational authorities to redress the imbalances created by the colonial dispensation in the system.

The literature also revealed that educational inequalities still continue to prevail and persist in the Namibian education system and the quite distinct trend in grade 10 examination results is a testimony. The literature further strengthened the conviction that proper and effective sustainability of the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards can be an effective measure to redress the imbalances in performance between rural area and urban area schools.

On the other hand, it is disheartening to see that educational authorities are willing to prescribe standards that children must meet and yet are so unwilling to dedicate themselves and supply needed resources to meet content and performance standards. It is vital to acknowledge that education at its best requires familiarity with individual students and their needs. It requires conversation and cooperation in constructing opportunity-to-learn standards.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a review and description of the methods and procedures that were employed in conducting this study. The methods and procedures were dictated by the purpose of this study, which was to investigate the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. The research design, population and sample selection, data collection procedures, instrumentation, and data analysis is addressed in this chapter.

#### Research Design

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. The qualitative research approach was chosen in this study because understanding was of essential concern to the researcher. The researcher's choice was based on the conviction that research cannot be mastered, but can only be improved, and the qualitative research approach provided options in that regard. The researcher was interested in the ways different stakeholders in Namibian education make sense out of the process of schooling. The researcher was interested in what is called participant perspectives. By learning the perspectives of the participants, the researcher wanted to unveil the inner dynamics of situations that are often invisible to the outsider. The qualitative research approach, in whatever form conducted, is about how we see the world and what makes sense to us. It is contingent upon the individual's societal position and ranking. Glesne (1998) observes:

I believe that qualitative research can provide a forum for reflection and communication that results in better programs, gives voice to those who have been marginalized, and assists researchers, participants, and readers to see the world in new ways (p.xiii).

A similar view is expressed by Gay (1996), who argues that:

Qualitative researchers are not just concerned with describing the way things are, but also with gaining insights into the “big picture”. They seek answers to questions related to how things got to be the way they are, how people involved feel about the way things are, what they believe, what meanings they attach to various activities, and so forth. In other words, qualitative researchers attempt to obtain a holistic, in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (p.209).

Furthermore, the researcher was more interested in deriving at universal statements of general social processes. The researcher was not concerned with the question of generalizability. Truthworthiness and transferability were of major concern for the researcher in this study. By choosing the qualitative research approach, the researcher attempted to objectively study the subjective perspectives of the participants.

#### Procedures

The collection of data for this study began in June 1999. The region and high schools selected for this study were first contacted by telephone through the research assistants. The research study was thus explained along with the procedures for data collection in the selected region and schools respectively. Three research assistants were recruited in Namibia among individuals with a better understanding and deep insight

about educational problems to ensure study truthworthiness and transferability. Research assistants were individuals with qualifications from tertiary institutions in the field of education. Responsibilities of research assistants included inter alia; to guide research participants in completion of questionnaires, clarify questions, and attend to any other study-related concerns participants had. Research assistants were also responsible for collecting the completed questionnaires and returned them back to the researcher.

Questionnaire were send with DHL International courier services and took a maximum of four days to arrive in Namibia and the same applied after completion. There was money budgeted to cover the shipment services. Vital research related aspects such as ethics were explained to all intended research participants through the research assistants. Responsibilities of research assistants were explained through telephone interviews. Telephone interviews lasted 33 minutes. A letter detailing the specific of the study followed this. A pilot study was not conducted.

#### Institutional Review Board (IRB) Statement

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. The Oklahoma State University Office of University Research Services and the IRB conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with the Aforementioned policy, this study received the proper surveillance and was granted permission to continue and was assigned the research number: IRB #: ED-00-152. Verification of IRB approval is presented at the end of this document (Appendix A).

## Research Participants

This study was carried out in the Kavango, Rundu Region, one of the educational regions in Namibia. It is the second largest educational region in Namibia. Research participants were randomly selected from various established and recognized learning institutions with a balanced representation of the school structures. The population of this study included school principals, grade 10 teachers in different subjects, former grade 10 learners (those who passed and those who failed), and current grade 10 learners. A small balanced number of targeted individuals were selected for this study. All research participants were recruited from schools in the Kavango Region that have been performing poorly in the grade 10 national examinations. A small number of participants from selected Kavango schools that have been performing well in the national examinations also comprised the population. The intention was to gain an in-depth understanding about the prevailing trend in school performances. Preferably, teachers who have been in the system since its inception were considered. Gender balance applied for selecting participants. Participants were 99 % Black Namibians, because the majority of residents in the region were Black people. Only two participants were non-Namibians and they were both teachers.

## Instruments

In preparing the instruments to meet the aims of this study, the first step was to review and evaluate instruments used in related studies. The instruments selected for this study were document analysis and surveys (questionnaires).

Applying multiple research instruments helped to improve the truthworthiness of research and evaluation findings. According to Mathison (1988), multiple research

instrument application “is essentially a strategy that will aid in the elimination of bias and allow the dismissal of plausible rival explanations such that a truthful proposition about some social phenomenon can be made” (p 45). According to Cohen, et al., (1994) “Triangulation attempts to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint” (p.233). Furthermore, exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researchers’ picture of the particular slice of reality he/ she is investigating. Therefore, triangulation boosted the confidence of the researcher that the data generated were not simply artefacts of one specific method of collection. The more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the researcher’s confidence. Triangulation helped to overcome the problem of “method-boundedness”. The nature of the study also necessitated triangulation to be used in this study. It was the researcher’s profound conviction that because of the complexity of the problem under investigation, a single-method approach would yield only limited and sometimes misleading data. Triangulation was necessary in this study because of the complexity of the educational phenomena under investigation. Also, by applying triangulation, the researcher attempted to get a holistic view of educational activities. Permission to use these instruments was obtained from, Dr. Wen-Song Hwu, my advisor, during the last week of Summer 1999.

Document analysis enhanced the overall understanding of the situation under study. Documents collected included past academic records in schools, statistics with regard to teacher qualifications in different schools and subjects, statistics with regard to resources in schools, minutes of meetings, attendance records, budget reports, policy statements, memoranda, and photographs. According to Gay (1996), “Data from documents are

especially valuable because they are “unobtrusive,” i.e., not affected by the presence of the researcher. It must be kept in mind, however, that even if the documents are “public record,” the anonymity of those involved in their contents should be protected, for ethical, if not legal, reasons” (p.222). Furthermore, document analysis was chosen as a research instrument because the researcher was not interested in the “truth” as has been conventionally conceived. The researcher was not searching for the “true picture” of educational activities in schools, but rather to gain understanding how various people define school activities. In these documents, the researcher got access to the “official perspectives” as well as to the ways various stakeholders in Namibian education communicate.

Questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate research instrument for this study due to the number of questions, the diversity of the population to be questioned, and the size of the geographical area to be covered. Traditionally, questionnaire has been regarded as a quantitative research instrument. Considering the nature of the study being carried out and its complexity, the researcher felt that questionnaire could also be used in a qualitative study after careful considerations. The survey questions were structured in such a way that participants will be required to share personal views, opinions, and experiences. To adhere and meet qualitative research approach data collection techniques, the questionnaire comprised of open-ended questions.

Foddy (1993), provide positive hints on the usage of open-ended questions in research:

Open-ended questions allow respondents to express themselves in their own words. Open-ended questions do not suggest answers. Open-ended

questions allow complex motivational influences and frames of reference to be identified (p.128).

Before the questionnaires were mailed to research assistants for distribution to members of the study population, they were reviewed by the researcher's thesis committee members and by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board. In order to explain and interpret the responses of the research participants, the content of the questionnaire were addressed in seven parts:

Part I consisted of selected demographic questions containing 6 aspects. These questions focussed on gender, age, marital status, educational level, employment, and the name of school. Part II consisted of school administration related questions containing 6 aspects. These questions focussed on the overall school organization with particular reference to resources availability. Part III consisted of questions related to the school environment and culture. These questions focused on how schools demonstrate concern for learners' well being, the relationship between staff and learners, and the existence of violence practices in schools. Part IV consisted of questions related to ancillary services containing 4 items. These questions focussed on counseling in schools as well as services rendered in that regard. Part V consisted of questions related to teacher competence containing 4 items. These questions focussed on the application of the learner-centered teaching approach in Namibian schools, type of in-service training attended by teachers, and the number of teachers teaching subjects in which they received professional training. Part VI consisted of questions related to time utilization containing 4 items. These questions focussed on how time is spent and utilized in Namibian schools. Part VII

consisted of questions related to curriculum and instruction. These questions focussed on the relevancy of subject content and how content is presented to learners.

Telephone interview were used to explore research assistants' views and perceptions about the dismal performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian rural area schools. Telephone interviews lasted 33 minutes.

### Data Analysis

Considering the nature of the study, the process of data analysis involved coding. Major themes were identified from data that was collected and they eventually became the major working codes. Each major code was assigned a letter of the alphabet, and subcodes thus followed with names and explanations. The researcher found these procedures fitting and helpful to analyze and summarize the data. According to Glesne 1998, coding is “ highly personal, meant to fit you: it need not be useful or clear to anyone else” (p.136). Glesne (1998), further substantiate about the coding process:

Coding is a progressive process of sorting and defining and sorting those scraps of collected data (i.e., observation notes, interview transcripts, memos, documents and notes from relevant literature) that are applicable to your research purpose. By putting like-minded pieces together into data stamps, you create an organizational framework. It is progressive in that you first develop out of data, major code clumps by which to sort the data. Then you code the contents of each major code clump, thereby breaking down the major code into numerous subcodes. Eventually, you can place the various data clumps in a meaningful sequence that contributes to the chapters or sections of your manuscript (p.135).



After collecting and coding all data scraps, the researcher proceeded to the next phase of data analysis which is arranging major code clumps into a logical order by determining which clumps, or parts of clumps, belong together in the final code arrangement of the manuscript. It is vital to state that the process of coding, categorizing, and theme-searching is a time when the researcher is engaged in the process of thinking about the collected data, reflecting upon what he has learned, making new connections and gaining new insights, and imagining how the final write-up will appear (Glesne, 1998).

Aspects that were coded in this study included variables such as persons, processes, events, recollections, thoughts, and opinions reported. Documents were reviewed and relevant portions were coded and later sorted as part of the synthesis effort (Gay, 1998). Furthermore, apart from reporting how data were analyzed, the researcher also reported on how the coding category was formulated once data was collected.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. This chapter will present the findings from this study. The findings were generated from multiple research instruments used in the study: document analysis and questionnaire. In this study a qualitative research approach was used. The study looked at vital elements of opportunity-to-learn standards such as school administration and organization, school environment and culture, school ancillary services, teacher competence, effective utilization of teaching and learning time, curriculum and instruction. This chapter will discuss response rates, the demographics of the participants, analysis of data, and the responses to the vital items of opportunity-to-learn standards addressed in the questionnaires.

#### Response Rate

The population of this study included five junior secondary schools that offer grade ten classes in Kavango, Rundu Region, in the Republic of Namibia. All five schools participated in this study. A total of fifty questionnaires were sent and the researcher received back forty-five. A total of nineteen junior secondary school teachers and seventeen grade ten learners responded to the twenty-eight open-ended questions in the survey seeking their views and perspectives of opportunity-to-learn standards in Namibian schools. Because of the distance of the research environment no follow-up of nonrespondents was attempted.

### Demographic Information of Participants

The demographics of the participants were addressed in the questionnaire. Six categories were included: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) name of school, (e) education level and, (f) employment. All participants were Black Namibians. Two participants reported their ethnicity and race as Nigerian and White and both were teachers.

Nineteen junior secondary school teachers participated in this study. Demographic characteristics from Part Two of the questionnaire indicate that thirteen teachers were male and six were female. Of the thirteen male teachers six were married and seven were single. Of the six female teachers five were single and one was married. The greater majority of the responding male teachers were between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-six. The responding female teachers were between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-one. All teachers were holders of the Basic Education Teachers Diploma and the Higher Education Diploma. Two were holders of the Bachelor of Science degree and they were both non-Namibians. Among the teachers one was a school principal and four were members of school management.

Twenty-six grade ten learners participated in this study. Demographic characteristics from Part Two of the questionnaire indicate that seventeen learners were male and nine were female. The greater majority of the responding grade ten male learners were between the ages of eighteen and twenty. Only two male learners were sixteen years while three were seventeen years of age. The responding grade ten female learners were between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. Of the nine responding female

learners three were ages fifteen, sixteen and eighteen respectively. All others were nineteen years of age.

### Analysis of Data

Chapter III described the process in which data was analyzed. However, a detailed review will be given. The analysis of the data followed the guidelines of Glesne (1998). Responses from learners were written first and were coded with the L-sign. Responses from teachers were written second and were coded with the T-sign. Looking at themes emerging from the data followed this. As themes were emerging major coding categories were developed. The coding categories were a means of sorting the descriptive data that was collected so that the material bearing on a given topic could be physically separated from other data.

#### Responses to the Vital Items of Opportunity-to-Learn Standards

The findings for each of the vital items of opportunity-to-learn standards in the questionnaires will be presented here.

School Administration and Organization. There were six aspects under this item. The first aspect was: "What is the student-teacher ratio in your school?" Teacher responses to this aspect placed the student-teacher ratio between the ranges of 1:20 to 1:50 in different schools. Responses from learners to this aspect placed the student-teacher ratio between the ranges of 1:40 to 1:50. Many descriptive statements were made by learners and teachers in response to the five other aspects under this item. Examples of some of the learners' and teachers' responses will be given here to provide further insight to the findings.

The second aspect under this item to be discussed will be “access to educational facilities”. Participants stated that there is a serious lack of educational facilities and resources in their schools. There is a lack of textbooks, exercise books, chairs, desks, microscopes, photocopy machines, posters, television, and video machines. One learner said: “In some classes learners sit on the floor because of a lack of chairs”. Another learner said: “Very few educational facilities and that is why there are fifty learners in a classroom”. One student commented: “The number of learners is increasing every year and the government is not giving enough books to schools”. Many teachers discussed the serious lack of educational resources in their schools. One teacher stated: “There is a shortage of laboratory and science equipment. The laboratory is out of order”. Another teacher stated: “Learning is in a sharing mode due to a lack of textbooks in subjects such as Geography, Business Management, and Physical Science. In Agriculture it is only the teacher who has the textbook”.

Both teachers and learners stated that educational resources in the schools were not satisfactory. The school libraries were not equipped with needed books. There was a lack of English books in the library. In most cases, some schools do not have libraries and laboratories. Most teachers described the current situation as terrible and felt that serious steps should be taken to rectify the shortcomings.

When asked about teacher shortage in their schools most learners stated that they had no teachers in subjects like History, Business Management, Mathematics, and Physical Science. Most teachers stated that the shortage of teachers were in subjects like Geography, Mathematics, Business Management, Physical Science, Rukwangali (mother tongue), English and Biology.

Participants reported that teachers do not have enough resources to teach learners. One teacher stated: “Teachers only have the prescribed textbook, but no other material and support staff. Teachers do not have overhead projectors, no private space because there is no staff room”.

Another teacher stated: “Private space is not available and time is not enough for proper preparations. We come to school at 7:00 in the morning and knock off at 12:40 in the afternoon. At 4:00 in the afternoon we return for extra classes and during school hours I have only one period off. Everyone is overloaded and we are working under pressure”.

Environment and Culture. There were six aspects under this item. The first aspect was: “Does your school demonstrate concern for learners’ well being?” One learner stated: “Never. Some teachers are lazy to teach and do not work hard”. The majority of learners felt that their schools do not demonstrate concern for their well being. Another learner stated: “No assistance when a learner is sick and you have to walk to the hospital, nothing like ambulance. They only give permission if a learner is seriously sick. They do not take learners to hospitals”. Some schools had no fence.

When asked about learners well being, most teachers stated that relevant educational committees were in place to look into those needs. Teachers reported that corporal punishment was still being administered despite a ministerial policy ruling against such practices. One teacher stated: “Learners hesitate to voice some problems. I think the school sometimes causes this”. Female teachers were tasked to advice girls on their sexual behavior.

In response to the second aspect under this item participants described the relationship between teachers and learners as not healthy. One learner stated: "Learners always use abusive language when talking to teachers". Another learner stated: "Some teachers intimidate learners and consequently learners do not respect teachers. Some teachers have a negative attitude towards learners".

In response to the same aspect teachers expressed different views. They described the relationship between teachers and learners as "normal", "healthy", and "cordial". One teacher stated: "Staff is concerned about learners passing, but learners show a lack of respect for the institution of education. They do not seem to see the need." Another teacher stated: "The only problem is learners do not express themselves in English (communication problem). Most learners see teachers as their enemies. They are rude to teachers and lacks communication skills".

Most learners felt they were not protected from potential violence. One learner stated: "Sometimes thieves come to steal mattresses and beds from the dorms during the holidays. There are no security guards or people who can stop theft in our school". Another learner reported a horrible incident and stated: "One day one of our teachers was nearly killed by killers and luckily enough we learners started to fight by throwing stones on them. Learners smoke dagga and nothing is being done to stop this. Some learners come with hangover to school".

When asked about potential violence in schools most teachers admitted the lack of protection. One female teacher stated: "Sometimes men come and beat girls in the dorms during the night". Another teacher stated: "Learners still roam quick freely and visit cuca

shops and drink, which has caused problems. Some potential border problems from Angola could occur”.

Asked about cleanliness, participants felt that the schools were dirty. Most learners stated that cleanliness among day students was not excellent. Female learners felt that dorms were not tidy, especially the dining hall and restrooms. One learner stated: “Cleanliness is bad, especially our toilets. You cannot go inside because of the smell”. Another learner stated: “There are so many rubbish around our school such as papers, bottle, tins, and our toilets at school are not being cleaned at all”.

When asked about cleanliness most teachers stated that the school environments were not clean. One teacher stated: “The school is clean, but the villagers’ cattle graze on the school premises”. Another teacher stated: “Cleanliness is a problem especially among learners. They are not always clean because of a lack of water from their homes”. Many teachers criticized the employment of school cleaners by the government: “Cleanliness is not satisfactory because the government employed workers who are to clean. This to my view has taken out learners’ responsibilities and they just litter around”.

In response to the sixth aspect under this item, condition of school buildings, participants expressed similar views. Both teachers and learners stated that the school buildings need urgent and serious renovations and there are inconveniences during rainy seasons. Participants reported that there was a lack of lights in classrooms, buildings were very old, and windows were broken. Several participants made comments dealing with inconveniences during winter and rainy seasons. Some examples were: “In some classes water leaks through the roof and learners have to move around”, “The buildings were never repaired since the school was build”, and “The buildings are in good condition, but



the problem comes in winter since that all windows are broken and learners really suffer from cold”.

Ancillary Services. There were four aspects under this item. In response to the first aspect under this item, physical and mental care services, most learners reported about the serious lack of such services in their schools. Some examples were: “No matter how a learner is seriously hurt, or having sudden sickness, it is up to him/her”, “No one will take you to the hospital by car when you are sick”, “Learners are not treated if they do not pay at the hospital”, and “No first aid when a learner is sick, unless hospital”.

In responding to the same aspect teachers expressed different views. Some examples were: “We have non-promotional subjects such as Physical Education for learners’ health and Religious and Moral Education for mental attention”, and “There is a hospital nearby”.

The second aspect under this item, protection from unsafe and violent environments, showed great concern from all participants. Both participants stated the lack of protection from unsafe and violent environments. Some examples were: “Only during Life Science periods and if the topic is about it”, “Not happening, female learners who are pregnant can abort if they want”, “Sometimes teachers also propose learners by giving them money”, “Generally, most boys and girls are addicted to alcohol and drug abuse”, “They do not get pregnancy counseling because there is no school counselor”, and “Learners are able to go out if they really try so they can get a beer or drug and have sex”. One teacher stated: “It is done by teachers since we do not have sex education”.

Participants reported that social workers did visit their schools, but not on regular basis. In most cases social workers visited once in a year. In some schools social workers

never visited. Despite the visits many participants could not state the purpose of their visits. However, most learners reported about the AIDS campaign. Some examples were: “They come and visit, but offer no services”, “They used to visit but found learners doing gardening”, “they only spoke about malaria and AIDS”, and “They came once and only spoke to the student representative council about AIDS”.

Teachers reported about the lack of professional services. One teacher stated: “School inspectors come according to the regional program and only when Mathematics gets tough”. Another teacher stated: “Advisory teachers are of no help in most cases”.

The aspect that had the highest response rate was the one that asked about the need for such services in schools. On this aspect participants continually commented on the importance of such services in schools. Some learners shared their thoughts on the importance of such services: “It can upgrade the minds and standard of living”, “Learners need to get such services in order to study freely”, “I think they should come at least five times at our school to educate us”, “Exactly, we are thirsty for those things, especially we grade tens”, and “We will be happy if they can provide these services because we want also to teach our friends or brothers behind us”.

Teachers expressed similar views with regard to the importance of such services in schools. Some examples were: “Learners need to be counseled so that they can be good citizens”, “Many female learners are falling pregnancy while some are using drugs such as dagga and they do not know what the consequences are”, “Absolutely, our communities are saturated with social problems and these can easily spill over to schools because schools are part of the larger communities”, “We need these services because the learners’ attitudes towards teachers, sex, and hygienic concerns is very negative”, and

“We are facing many problems like teenage pregnancy amongst girls which later result in either illegal abortion or even murder”. These examples highlight the need and importance of such services in schools.

Teacher Competence. There were four aspects under this item. The first aspect asked: “Are all teachers teaching subjects in which they received training?” Most learners were not positive about teacher competency in their schools. Some commented: “Some of them are teaching subjects they are not managing”, “The performance is still poor. I do not know whom to blame”, “I’m not sure because some teachers teach very interesting while others just irritates and you can easily faint”, and “Some teachers’ teaching style is worse”. However, some learners felt that all teachers are qualified because they would not have been employed. Some comments were: “We know that if a teacher is teaching a subject unless he or she have the experience and training”, and “If they were not trained how could they teach and what is the process they can follow?”

In response to the same aspect, most teachers stated that Mathematics and Physical Science teachers are teaching subjects like Rukwangali (mother tongue) and Business management because of a lack of qualified ones in those subjects. Teachers put the blame on the regional educational authorities for making wrong placements of teachers in schools. Some comments were: “Some teachers have been misplaced by the regional office and thus teaching in the wrong phase”, “Some with primary training are teaching at the junior secondary phase, grade ten”, “Government does a poor job of delegating new teacher college graduates”, “We do have Needlework teachers who are forced to teach Agriculture or History where they have little knowledge”, and “Early childhood

specialists are now teaching at grade ten level”. These comments illustrate the degree to which wrong placements were made in schools.

All participants reported a great number of teachers teaching subjects in which they never received professional training. The number of teachers teaching subjects in which they never received professional training ranged between two to ten in schools.

Participants also reported that the Arts and Life Skills teachers never received professional training. One teacher stated: “The untrained teachers always have no option”.

Participants reported on teacher competency in individual subjects. One learner stated: “They are all competent except in Mathematics and Physical Science. The teachers in these two subjects are not serious to teach. There is no single learner in these subjects who got B or A grades”. Some examples were: “Few who can teach very good even though they are from colleges and universities”, and “Subjects like History, Business Management, and Physical Science unless you go through the book on your own”.

Some teachers felt that they were doing their level best and rated themselves as competent. Some examples were: “The majority are highly competent”, and “Teachers are well qualified and they are trying their level best”. However, some teachers expressed different views. A school principal stated: “Teacher competency is not really up to standard. As a secondary school one would expect to have teachers with tertiary qualifications, but this is not the case”. Some examples were: “Very low and this means that little knowledge in a subject from a teacher is not healthy for the nation”, and

“Teachers do not work together, each one minds his or her own business, no cooperation at all”.

The number of teachers who were currently attending in-service training in the schools reported ranged between ten to twelve. Participants reported that the in-service training programs were the Basic Education Teachers Diploma, Vista, Azaliah, and Open Learning. Azaliah and Vista were South-African in-service training programs. It was also reported that almost all teachers participate in workshops, but the effectiveness of the workshops was highly questionable.

Time. There were four aspects under this item. The first aspect asked whether teachers spend adequate time covering content in class. Many descriptive statements were made by the learners in response to the first aspect under this item. Examples of some of the learners' statements will be given here to provide further insight to the findings. Some examples were: “Time is supposed to be enough, but teachers are not using the time”, “No, the reason is that some teachers are very slow in their teaching and in some subjects, for example Accounting is very difficult to complete the content”, “Not always, a teacher can be called at anytime to the office”, “Other learners can also come and look for their friends and this will make the teacher to stop the lesson”, “Some teachers do not spend time teaching and sometimes they sit in class without teaching and tell you that it is your right to study”, and “No, teachers come very late to start their lessons”.

In response to the same aspect most teachers expressed similar views. Some examples were: “No, some teachers are lazy and most of the time absent from school without a valid excuse”. One teacher stated: “I believe the syllabus is too large by factual content to cover sufficiently in rural schools. Many learners are left behind. The syllabus

is nearly always covered completely, but not in depth enough. This is the fault of the ministry of education, not the teachers. Teachers are forced to finish in time – no time for depth”. Another teacher stated: “The syllabus is too much to be covered in five months”. These statements indicate the amount and how time was spend covering content in class.

The second aspect asked: “Are learners given reasonable times to learn content on their own?” In response to this aspect most learners felt that it was only in subjects like Physical Science and Mathematics where they were given reasonable times to learn content on their own. Teachers reported that there is no time, because after extra classes the learners are tired. One teacher stated: “ Where and how can they learn without textbooks?”

The third aspect asked: “Are teachers and learners on time during classes?” This aspect showed strong response from both participant groups. This aspect was apparently the most disturbing to learners in schools. Some learners elaborated more by stating: “Learners are always late for classes”, “A learner can leave the school yard and even go home and he or she is able to decide what time to return”, “Some learners walk five kilometers from their homes and reach school very late”, and “Teachers come on time, but show up late for classes”. It was also reported that in some schools a rule exist for learners arriving late for school to be returned until the next day.

In response to this aspect teachers shared similar views. One teacher stated: “Day students travel long distances to attend classes”. Some teachers felt that learners were the ones not adhering to school regulations with regard to punctuality. Some examples were: “Teachers are on time, but learners are late especially the first period”, and “Learners are always late during the first period and fifth period after break”. However, some teachers

felt that both teachers and learners were not punctual during classes. One teacher stated: “Both teachers and learners are not punctual, 80% of the time”. Another teacher stated: “Some teachers and learners come late for the first class due to long distances from home to school”.

Participants reported that learners are provided reasonable times to do general work on campus, but highlighted some impediments. Both participating groups felt that such activities were few in numbers. One learner stated: “Learners do not receive any time to practice any general academic, unless there is a competition for such stuff”. One learner said: “Yes, but it is not done accordingly and is not enough for learners”. Another learner stated: “Not much drama and debate are done here”. However, some teachers reported about the lack of interest and participation from learners in such activities. One teacher said: “They are given, but they are not interested in these type of activities”.

Curriculum and Instruction. There were four aspects under this item. The first aspect asked: “Does subject content meet the expected standard for grade ten? Elaborate”. In response to this aspect some learners felt that subject content does not meet grade ten standards. One learner stated: “In Physical Science the standard is not met because there are no apparatus for activities”. Some learners stated that subject content met grade ten standards. Some examples were: “As you know, grade ten subject contain grade ten work”, and “Things we are being taught is acceptable for grade ten”.

When asked about the same aspect most teachers reported that subject content did not meet grade standards. Some examples were: “I personally feel there is a need to improve the content, for example in English”, “Yes, although some topics in some subjects can be eliminated, since it does not reflect real life”, “No, the standard detailed



by the syllabus is too superficial. It does not allow you the time to teach underlying principles for real understanding. Thus, the questions given to the learners on the exams are too deep for their understanding”, and “No, a learner living grade ten is suppose to be at least self-reliant, but that is not happening. Unemployment is very high”.

The second aspect under this item asked: “Does subject content reflect the challenges of real life problems?” In response to these aspect participants strongly felt that subject content reflect real life problems. One learner said: “Some subjects give content about what happened to people before us”. Some examples from teachers were: “Yes, especially in Geography, the chapter on population reflect real life events”, “Yes, the content impart social skills, intellectual skills, and practical skills in order for learners to face real life problems”, and “Yes, the content reflect challenges of real life problems, but the level of the learners is low and they don’t cope with most of the time”.

In responding to the third aspect participants reported that subject content was presented in context relevant to students. Teachers stated that the National Pilot Curriculum and syllabus guided them in presenting subject content.

The fourth aspect under this item asked: “Do teachers apply learner-centered teaching approach during lessons?” This aspect reported strong positive response from both participating groups. Some learners commented: “Teachers allow learners to ask questions”, “Most of the talking is done by learners, while the teacher just act as a guide”, and “Teachers make us feel very useful and support our contributions in activities”. Some examples from teachers were: “Yes, grouping is being done. Groups outside the classes are being encouraged”, and “Yes, most of our teachers attended training which means that all the teachers are equipped with the approach”.



However, both participating groups reported some impediments in the application of learner-centered teaching approach. Some learners commented: “Some teachers teach and do not ask learners questions or what they do not know”, and “They do not do this always. You will find yourself not having a chance at all to talk or add some other information to the subject”. Some examples from teachers were: “There is still a lot of lecture and note taking classes. This is due to the large amount of information over a wide range of topics that the learners must know”, “Some do not apply it, but they have that mentality that only a teacher should talk for the whole period”, “Yes, but in these overcrowded classes it is difficult to supervise and control activities done by learners in groups or pairs, because there is no space to move”, and “Some lessons cannot be presented using a learner-centered approach, but a teacher centered approach”.

#### Summary Statement

Sound administration and management of schools is a vital aspect in education. The student-teacher ratio in the junior secondary schools investigated pose a serious impediment towards the effective realization and provision of opportunity-to-learn standards in Namibian schools. When educational necessities such as textbooks, science laboratory equipment, and school libraries are non-existent, proper learning and teaching is not taking place.

If learners are expected to achieve academic excellence their well being should be a matter of great concern among those entrusted with such a noble responsibility. The notion of opportunity-to-learn calls for the recognition of learners' well being in learning institutions.

Most learners still believe that anybody entrusted with teaching responsibilities is automatically capable and competent. Corporal punishment continues being administered nine years after it was abolished. There is still a tendency among male teachers to engage into sexual activities with female learners.

50002 This chapter discusses the results of the present study generated from questionnaires

## CHAPTER V CHAPTER V: A SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools. Not much is written about the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards in Namibian schools in contemporary educational literature. Many Namibian schools do not recognize items related to opportunity-to-learn standards as vital for academic excellence. However, many teachers and learners who participated in this study acknowledged the importance of opportunity-to-learn standards for progress in education. Despite some impediments towards academic excellence, efforts are underway to redress the poor academic achievements among grade ten learners in Namibian schools. For example, a decision was taken by the Namibian cabinet to appoint a Presidential Commission on Education towards the end of 1998. Even though the terms of reference of the Presidential Commission on Education were very wide, it can be stated that the poor performance among grade ten learners was one of the crucial issues that was addressed.

The findings of this study were generated from two components: document analysis and questionnaires. Documents were obtained to help analyze the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools. Questionnaires were sent to school administrators, teachers, and learners to gain their views and perspectives about the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards in Namibian

schools. This chapter discusses results of the present study generated from questionnaires and documents, and offers recommendations and suggestions for further research.

### Discussion

An analysis of the data collected revealed many different themes. The following is the findings about the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards in Namibian schools. Each theme that emerged is addressed separately.

Poor educational facilities and resources. Data revealed that the schools did not have enough physical space to accommodate all their students safely. Data revealed that learning took place in a sharing mode. It was reported that schools did not have an adequate number of teachers and classrooms to ensure optimum class size. From the data collected it was reported that the teacher-student ratio in schools ranged between 1:30 – 1:58. Furthermore, data collected revealed that learners did not have access to educational facilities such as textbooks, chairs, desks, and summary books. In some subjects, data revealed that only teachers had textbooks while in some subjects four learners shared one textbook. Also, it was reported that teachers had no time, materials, private space, and support staff needed for lesson preparation and professional development. It was also reported that schools were poorly equipped with laboratory apparatuses such as microscopes. In two schools, data revealed that science laboratories and libraries were non-existent. Data revealed teacher shortage in individual subjects. Data revealed that in three schools staff rooms and working rooms were non-existent. The above-stated unwarranted school situations can be said to be a result of poor planning from those entrusted with the responsibility to manage schools. Another interpretation could be that

school administrators are not fit and competent to run those institutions. It is evident from data that those entrusted with the noble responsibilities of managing learning institutions do not value the task at hand. They continue to promote and propagate the myth of teaching: "Everybody can teach and manage a school". Document collected also revealed that there was a substantial shortage of classroom facilities in the Kavango region. In 1991, the estimated number of classrooms needed was 500 (Annual Report, MEC, 1991).

Unhealthy student-teacher relationships. Data collected revealed that the school environments were not safe and clean. It was reported that some schools were not fenced thus resulting in theft during the holidays. Also, it was reported that all schools had no security guards. Cases of harassment from villagers were reported among female learners. Many respondents indicated that it was not the responsibility of the schools to look after sick learners. The school buildings were reported as being in dire need of renovations. Teachers were reported as still dating female learners and this was probably because of a high number of single male teachers in schools. From the data collected it was revealed that corporal punishment was still being administered despite a ministerial ruling against such practices. Data revealed the lack of respect between teachers and learners and schools. It was interesting to note that teachers were more defensive when asked about their relationship with learners. Furthermore, it was revealed that schools did not have mechanisms in place to protect teachers and learners from discrimination. The above-highlighted school situations demonstrate the notion of "old habits dies hard". It can be said that many teachers still believe that the only way to discipline learners is by administering corporal punishment and this is because of the orientation during youth

days. The fact that teachers cannot think of any other measures to maintain discipline in schools brings into question the type of training they received. Teachers were defensive in most cases because they believe that after training they knew everything about teaching. It is a dangerous attitude because teaching is an eminently practical activity, best learned in the exercise of it and in the thoughtful reflection that must accompany that.

Lack of ancillary services. Data revealed the lack of ancillary services in schools. Learners were treated like outsiders and felt unwelcome in the schools. In case of sudden sickness, schools had no first aid services and it was entirely upon learners to approach nearby hospitals or clinics. Learners were required to pay at the clinics and hospitals. Sex Education was not talked about in schools, but only during Life Science periods and if the topic was about it, thus leaving female learners vulnerable to teenage pregnancy and many sexual transmitted diseases such as AIDS. Schools had no counselors and social workers. Government social workers and counselors rarely visited schools and spoke only to student representative council members when they visited. In four schools, both teachers and learners revealed that learners were addicted to drugs and alcohol. Data revealed that learners and teachers dearly needed the services of social workers and school counselors and the impact such services would bring were revealed. The serious lack of ancillary services in schools demonstrate the fact that many teachers still believe that their role is that of only teaching inside the classroom. It can be further interpreted that teachers believe that outside the school premises the child's concerns were the sole responsibility of the parents. They forgot that a teacher is 24 hours on duty thus justifying the notion "once a teacher always a teacher", unless you quit. The fact that many learners

were addicted to alcohol and drugs brings into question teacher supervision in schools. Poor management of educational activities leads to anarchy. A serious lack of teacher supervision can lead to chaos in schools. Data collected from documents highlighted teacher absenteeism and lack of professionalism as major impediments towards conducive learning environments in schools (The Namibian, 1999). Therefore, the researcher is of the opinion that teachers in schools also engage in the same activities thus making discipline control impossible. This assumption can be justified by the fact that some teachers came to schools unprepared. Teachers cannot talk about sexual transmitted diseases during lessons because of some cultural beliefs. It is a cultural belief among many indigenous Namibian communities not to discuss openly about sex related issues with children. It can be interpreted that such cultural beliefs were playing out in schools. It is a dangerous tendency considering the impact of AIDS in the region and the country as a whole. The lack of visits by social workers and school counselors is because of the unavailability of such professionals at the Rundu regional educational authority. Document collected revealed that by 1991 of the 218 regional education office posts, only 113, or 52 % were filled (Annual Report, MEC, 1991). Considering the duration such training can take, it can be concluded that the positions are not yet filled. The same can be said about the lack of advisory teachers. Document collected revealed that by 1991 of the 35 advisory posts, only one has been filled (Annual Report, MEC, 1991). Therefore, it can be said that poor staffing levels at the subject adviser levels greatly contribute to the poor performance among grade ten learners in Namibian schools.

Poor teacher competency due to wrong placements. Data revealed that most teachers were not teaching subjects in which they received training because of wrong

placement by the regional educational authorities. The most prominent cases of wrong placement were revealed in subjects like Rukwangali (mother tongue), Business management, Agriculture and History. Also, cases of wrong placement at phase levels were reported. It was reported that early childhood specialists were teaching at grade ten levels. Learners rated teachers as competent but were teaching at wrong levels. School managers found their teachers as below average. Data also revealed a lack of teamwork in most schools. Furthermore, many schools still had teachers without tertiary qualifications. It was reported that the majority of teachers were still attending in-service training from some recognized Namibian and South-African institution. Data revealed dissatisfaction among stakeholders with those attending in-service training with South-African institutions. The preparation of teachers who are still attending in-service training with South-African institutions is not considered relevant to the Namibian education context. South-Africa imposed Bantu Education on Namibian people and was later rejected. Teachers who are still attending in-service training with those institutions are doing it for convenience purposes. The quality of training is highly questionable. Namibia introduced many changes in education after independence, inter alia, new curriculum, new teaching approach, just to mention a few. Therefore, it can be interpreted that those teachers still receiving training with South-African institutions are not being prepared to face Namibian educational realities thus making stakeholders suspicious about them. The above-stated situations in learning institutions reveal the dangerous human error that teaching is every man's job. The wrong appointment and placement of teachers in schools reflect the notion of nepotism and tribalism in educational practices. Despite the guidelines provided with regard to teacher appointment, those in power look



at their relatives and appoint them in any schools without considering their qualifications. The intention is for their relatives to be employed rather than providing quality education to learners in schools. It is for that reason schools have “professionals” who are not accountable to the school communities. Documents collected also revealed that there was a substantial shortage of qualified teachers in the Kavango region (Report: The Presidential Commission on Education, 1999). In most cases, documents revealed that teachers were either unqualified, or under-qualified. The shortage of qualified teachers can be interpreted to be the colonial legacy that is still haunting Namibian education. Few Namibians received educational training during the colonial era. During the colonial times Namibians were recruited to teach at grade ten levels with a grade twelve certificate. It can be interpreted that the majority of grade ten teachers today are those from the colonial dispensation.

Ineffective utilization of learning and teaching time in schools. Data revealed that time was not well utilized in schools. It was reported that both teachers and learners arrived late during the first periods and the periods after break. Incidents of disturbances during lessons were also reported. It was reported that teachers could be summoned anytime to the principal’s office thus leaving the learners unattended. Also, it was reported that learners caused disruptions during classes by moving to other classes and chat to friends. Data also revealed that absenteeism was a common occurrence among teachers. Data revealed that the scope of content in subjects like Accounting was too large to be covered in five months. Furthermore, data revealed that many teachers and learners arrived late for school because of the long distances they had to walk. The aspect of poor time utilization can be interpreted as embedded in the cultural belief of “African

time". It is a common and acceptable practice in many Namibian communities not to start activities on the exact given time. It is likely that such cultural orientations were playing out in schools. The fact that teachers could be summoned anytime to the principal's office reveals the serious lack of commitment and dedication from school management. Such an attitude ties in with wrong appointment and placement of teachers in schools. Furthermore, it can be interpreted that many teachers still do not realize the value and magnitude of academic impact the loss of a single minute can have on a learner in a classroom. This is because of the nature of training teachers received.

Curriculum and instruction. Data revealed that content being taught met grade ten standards. Also, data revealed that content was logically integrated with grade nine and eleven coursework and was on continuum. It was reported that grade ten-subject content reflected challenges of real life problems. However, the need for improvement in the English curriculum was acknowledged. It was reported that in some subjects content still reflected the memorization of facts and not problem solving skills. Data revealed that the National Pilot Curriculum was still being used in schools. The National Pilot Curriculum for Basic Education was adopted in 1993 to facilitate with the process of developing a most suitable and acceptable curriculum. Subject content was presented in context relevant to students since the National Pilot Curriculum strictly guided those teachers and syllabus. Furthermore, data revealed that teachers were not satisfied with their student's level of comprehension. Almost every teacher and learner who participated in the study reported that the learner-centered teaching approach was being applied during lessons. Data revealed that learners were given opportunities during lessons to bring in their lived experiences. Also, data revealed that teachers acted as guides and facilitators during

lessons. It can be interpreted that many teachers simply believe that by following the National Pilot Curriculum they were applying the learner-centered teaching approach. Furthermore, it can be interpreted that the learner-centered teaching approach meant only group work. Also, allowing learners to ask questions meant the excellent application of learner-centered teaching approach. However, it should be stated that the notion of learner-centered teaching approach goes hand in hand with careful planning thus reflecting the notion of pedagogy.

### Conclusions

The findings from these data address various vital elements of opportunity-to-learn standards, and when taken together, give an overall status of views and perceptions of grade ten learners, teachers, and administrators about the notion of opportunity-to-learn standards as effective tools to achieve academic excellence in Namibian schools. The following conclusions were based upon the review of the literature and the interpretation of the findings of this study:

1. Based upon the findings, it can be concluded that there is a combination of major factors that contribute to the poor performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools. The lack of educational resources and teacher commitment was identified as major impediments. Both learners and teachers identified this area as one major contributing factor to the poor performance among grade ten learners in Namibian schools. It is unfair to expect good academic results when four learners are sharing one textbook. Specifically, data from the open-ended questionnaires strongly showed this area in the learner and teacher responses. In addition, the cost of going to school, lack of ancillary services in schools, and the long distances from home were serious hindrances for

learners to perform well in the grade ten national examinations. This agreed with the studies of Oakes (1989) and Banks (1997) and is supported in the literature review.

Educational authorities should realize how critical this is.

2. Both learners and teachers in the qualitative open-ended questions found the placement of teachers in schools by the regional educational authorities as a major contributing factor to the poor performance in the national examinations. It was evident that a great number of teachers were teaching subjects in which they never received professional training. These responses agreed with the findings as reported in the literature review (The Namibian, 1999). School administrators should be aware of the negative effect such practices can have on the performance of grade ten learners in the national examinations. The regional educational authorities should be aware of creating a situation of "the blind leading the blinds" in schools.

3. Both learners and teachers stated about the prevalence of poor student-teacher relationship in the schools. An excellent student-teacher relationship is vital for academic progress in any educational institution. When learners' presence in schools is not valued and appreciated by those entrusted with the noble responsibility of pedagogical tact, true learning and teaching cannot be said as taking place. School administrators should realize how important it is for learners to feel at home in schools. This agrees with the study of Oakes (1989) as supported in the literature review.

4. Data addressed the application of learner-centered teaching approach in schools. Allowing students to talk during lessons does not simply imply the application of learner-centered teaching approach. Neither does the mere division of learners in-groups during lessons mean the application of learner-centered teaching approach. Teachers should

strive for in-depth understanding and application of the new teaching approach in Namibian education.

5. Based on the findings it can be seen that most learners and teachers do not realize the importance of maximum and effective utilization of time during lessons. Teachers should develop a sense of urgency and sensitivity with regard to the notion of time in schools. Losing one minute during a lesson is extremely costly to effective teaching and learning.

6. Based upon the findings it can be seen that corporal punishment is still being administered in some schools. Thus it can be concluded that many teachers are not positive about new changes in education. The literature spoke of the abolishment of corporal punishment when Namibia became independent. The administration of corporal punishment came to an end in Namibian schools when Namibia became independent. Teachers should be aware that administering corporal punishment in independent Namibia is unconstitutional and a criminal offence.

7. Based upon the findings, it can be concluded that some male teachers still date female learners by bribing them with money. Teachers all over the globe are viewed as acting in schools in the capacity of *in loco parentis*. When female learners become teachers' wives the purpose of teaching is totally defeated. Teachers should always contemplate about their societal roles when attending to professional duties. Teachers should realize that they have moral and ethical obligations in the teaching profession.

8. Based on the findings, it can also be concluded that many teachers are still receiving in-service training with South-African institutions. Since Namibia is an independent country with its own education system, the nature and quality of in-service

training being offered by those South-African institutions becomes highly questionable. Educational authorities should realize that interpretation and implementation of educational theories varies in different countries and is contextual and situational.

9. Based upon the findings it can be concluded that there are still teachers without tertiary qualifications teaching at grade ten levels in many schools. Educational authorities should move away from the myth that has been dominating the teaching profession that anybody can teach. It is a fallacy to believe that anybody can teach. Many have tried to reduce the teaching profession to a simple formula, but never succeeded. This study found that the number of unqualified teachers in schools were very high.

10. Based upon the findings, it can be concluded that teachers were defensive in their responses. The majority of teachers believed they were carrying out their responsibilities exceptionally well. Considering the trend in current grade ten examination results such teacher conviction becomes questionable. Also, it can be concluded that both teachers and learners doubted about the purpose of the study. Despite explanations made by research assistants, participants still went ahead to portray their schools as problem free institutions. Thus it can be concluded that participant's attitude towards the study reflected the colonial legacy attached to research. It is a common view among Africans to shun researchers because of how they have been portrayed through research during colonial times. Generally, research has portrayed Africans as "backward" and "primitive".

#### Recommendations

This study provides insight into why grade ten learners in Namibian schools perform poorly in the national examinations. The dismal performance of grade ten

learners in national examinations has become an issue of national concern in Namibia. If not dealt with accordingly, this unwarranted trend might rob Namibia of her future leaders. In order to improve the performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools, the investigator made some vital recommendations.

True learning and teaching is said to be taking place in learning when participants have access to primary and secondary crucial educational resources and facilities. Data collected revealed that learning in most schools is in a sharing mode. It is beyond human comprehension how four learners can study or prepare for an exam using one textbook. The fact that these learners walk long distances from different villages to school complicates everything. A school without a library could be compared to a tree without branches and roots. A school offering science subjects should at least have a laboratory or basic science equipment such as a microscope, thermometer, etc. Data revealed that schools lack all the aforementioned educational facilities and resources. Namibia is part of the global community and cannot stand aside and look while other nations are educationally advancing. Therefore, it is recommended that money should be generated to buy textbooks and all other necessary learning and teaching facilities. Libraries and laboratories should be built in all schools. School administrators are thus urged to take a leading role in efforts to raise funds to provide learners and teachers with necessary learning and teaching materials. This study also recommends that school fees paid by learners should be utilized to buy needed textbooks. School administrators should not only rely on government to provide all learning supplies. The building of libraries and laboratories will enhance learners' studying and reading habits.



It was evident from data collected that teachers' competency is an issue of major concern in schools. Therefore, it is recommended that teacher competency should be tested. It is suggested that standardized tests for teacher certification should be introduced and adopted in the education system. After graduating from colleges and universities, teachers should write certification examinations testing their competency in individual subjects before being appointed. This would mean that individuals should not get appointed as teachers without passing the teacher certification examinations.

From data gathered, it was reported that many grade ten teachers did not receive appropriate professional training to teach at those levels. Data gathered revealed that the regional education authority was responsible for the wrong placements of teachers in school. The draft Education Bill makes provision for each school to have a school board. Therefore, it is recommended that teacher appointment should be done in accordance with the existing policies and guidelines of the Ministry of Basic Education. The implication is that every school should have a school board. It is suggested that the task of recommending and recruiting teachers in schools should be the responsibility of school board members. The school board members are in a better position to know the needs of schools. However, this study recommends that school communities should elect individuals with a better understanding of educational activities to serve on these boards.

For any school to excel, sound management is a pre-requisite. Data collected revealed that most schools were not fenced and had no security guards thus endangering and risking the lives of learners. When learners are openly exposed to the dangers of nature, their hopes and aspirations to study diminishes. Therefore, it is recommended that all schools should be fenced in order for those learners to feel protected and cared for in



school environments. Furthermore, it is recommended that schools should employ security guards. It is vital to employ security guards since that the implications might be academic appealing.

This study recommends that teachers re-examine their professional responsibilities in schools. Data revealed that teachers viewed themselves as perfect. It is further recommended that teachers should seriously reflect about the poor performance of grade ten learners in their schools. It is suggested that teachers should view the dismal performance of grade ten learners from a broader context.

Data revealed that sex education is not taught, and issues related to teenage pregnancy and other social evils are not talked about in schools. Therefore, it is recommended in this study that effective teaching on these issues should be strongly considered in schools. Considering the devastating social impact of teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexual transmitted diseases, it is recommended in this study that the regional education authorities should provide schools with necessary ancillary services. Furthermore, this study recommends that the curriculum of the subject Life Skills should be further developed to include content on topics such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, career guidance, and effective studying techniques for learners.

It was reported in the study that inspectors and advisory teachers were of no great help in most cases. Data also revealed that there was a serious lack of teacher support in schools. Furthermore, it was reported that inspectors and advisory teachers only visited schools when things were not going well. School inspectors and advisory teachers should realize that their main role is that of providing teacher support. Considering the nature of professional responsibilities of inspectors and advisory teachers, it is recommended in

this study that appointment of individuals in those positions should be based on intensive academic scrutiny. This study recommends that only individuals with specialized educational training in certain subject areas should be appointed to those positions. The role of inspectors and advisory teachers is not merely that of only distributing memos, but more than that.

The condition of many school buildings was quite devastating for effective learning and teaching. It is a fight against the wind to expect learners to pay attention during lessons when suffering from cold and water is leaking on them. This study recommends that serious renovations should be done with immediate effect and government should pave the way in those efforts.

It is rather strange that teachers are still receiving in-service training from South-African institutions. When the quality of training teachers is receiving does not reflect and address curriculum content, the validity of their qualifications becomes worthless. Namibia cannot produce functional illiterates in the education system. Namibia has developed its own educational programs to cater for. It is recommended that all Namibian teachers in the Basic Education programs should at least receive their training in Namibian educational institutions. Foreigners should be employed in Namibian schools, but is recommended that they should apply for certification in Namibian education. The ministry of education should formulate policies to guard against the business-oriented South-African educational institutions.

This study suggests that the type of teacher training in the Basic Education phase prospective teachers are currently receiving in Namibian institutions should be revisited. It appears that the institutions are training generalists instead of specialists. The

researcher in this study is of the opinion that a period of three years is not enough for individuals to effectively specialize in both elementary education as well as junior secondary education. Therefore, it is recommended that the curriculum of the Basic Education Teachers Diploma should be restructured not to allow prospective teachers to do a double major, because the end result is that individuals are half trained. Field experience or student teaching is a vital element of any teacher-training program. It is imperative that prospective teachers are introduced to the real demands and challenges of the teaching profession during training. Allowing prospective teachers to student-teach only in urban area schools is not educationally appealing. This study recommends that prospective teachers must be deployed in rural area schools to get a sense in advance of what to expect, because that is where the majority of them will end up teaching.

Data collected revealed that discipline is a major problem in schools. Where there is anarchy and chaos, true learning and teaching cannot be said as taking place. Data revealed that both teachers and learners were guilty in this regard. This study suggests that the most effective remedy to combat disciplinary problems in school is that of employing dedicated teachers. Unfortunately, the teaching profession is full of individuals who do not value the noble responsibilities entrusted upon them.

The researcher of this study believes that human phenomena are complex and difficult to comprehend. The researcher is of the opinion that research could help solve and understand many educational problems in Namibian education. Therefore, it is recommended in this study that professional educational research associations should be established in the country. Lecturers in the colleges of education should engage into serious educational research initiatives. To ensure that the research culture is cultivated in

tertiary institutions, it is recommended that preference should be given to individuals with educational research background and knowledge with regard to appointment as lecturers in educational institutions.

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APPENDIXES

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

1

2000

IRB # 11-0915

STANDARDS ON THE  
PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

2000  
12

**APPENDIX A**

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

**FOR  
HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**

IRB # 11-0915



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Date: August 25, 1999 IRB #: ED-00-152

Proposal Title: "THE EFFECTS OF OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN STANDARDS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS IN NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS"

Principal Investigator(s): Wen-Song, Hwu  
Felix Kandjimi, Nyango

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited (Special Population)

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

August 25, 1999

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

Dear research assistant,

I am conducting a research study entitled "The effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools". The research is being done as part of my program as a master's student at Oklahoma State University in the United States of America.

I am requesting you to assist me in carrying out this very important study for the benefit of the Namibian educational system and the society at large. I am not able to carry out the study myself in certain areas, because of the distance where I'm studying.

Therefore, I humbly request you to use the best of your abilities to make the study successful. You are requested to help me with the following tasks: distribution of questionnaires to relevant research participants, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. I am confident that you will be able to do this because of your excellent academic performance and your ability to work independently. I am sure that you will be able to do this because of your excellent academic performance and your ability to work independently.

I am sure that you will be able to do this because of your excellent academic performance and your ability to work independently.

I am sure that you will be able to do this because of your excellent academic performance and your ability to work independently.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dear research assistant,

I am conducting a research study entitled "The effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools". The research is being done as part of my program as a master's student at Oklahoma State University in the United States of America.

I am requesting you to assist me in carrying out this very important study for the benefit of the Namibian educational system and the society at large. I am not able to carry out the study myself in certain areas, because of the distance where I'm studying.

Therefore, I humbly request you to assist me to the best of your abilities to make this study a success. Your responsibilities will include inter alia, distribution of questionnaire to relevant research participants, collection of completed questionnaire, as well as giving clarifications on questions participants might find difficult to respond to. Remember that I am pinning my hopes on you. Furthermore, you are requested to return all completed questionnaire to me not later than September 30, 1999. Your honest cooperation in this regard is highly appreciated.

Fraternal regards,

Felix Kandjimi Nyango

Dear Learners,

My name is Felix Kandjimi Nyango. I am Namibian, currently in graduate school at Oklahoma State University in the United States of America. I am doing research about the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. You are invited to participate in this research study. I am requesting you to participate because I believe that your views, thoughts, and experiences about opportunity-to-learn standards would help me better understand the effects the lack of opportunity-to-learn standards has on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. Opportunity-to-learn standards identify and detail school-level factors such as inclusive

### APPENDIX C

#### COVER LETTER TO LEARNERS IN NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS

of the school's location, in the school building,

what the school's location and building have done to help

opportunity-to-learn standards in your school

personal letter

not an official school document, so please do not write on it

Tip

do not sign it

Dear Learners,

My name is Felix Kandjimi Nyango. I am Namibian, currently in graduate school at Oklahoma State University in the United States of America. I am doing research about the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. You are invited to participate in this research study. I am requesting you to participate because I believe that your views, thoughts, and experiences about opportunity-to-learn standards would help me better understand the effects the lack of such standards can have on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools. Opportunity-to-learn standards identify and demonstrate how factors such as income, access to knowledge, as well as variables such as quality of school facilities, availability of teaching materials, and teacher expertise can influence achievement. It should only take a few minutes to answer the simple questions in the enclosed questionnaire. Remember that in this study you are the expert, and do not hesitate to share all your views, thoughts, and experiences about opportunity-to-learn standards. It is not compulsory to respond to all questions. Feel free to respond to questions that you are comfortable with. The research assistants are there to assist you in completion of the questionnaire. Please, do not hesitate to ask for clarifications should you encounter difficulties. Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty for refusal.

Fraternal Regards,

Felix Kandjimi Nyango

Dear teachers,

I am conducting a research study entitled "The effects of opportunity-to-learn state standards on the performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools". The research is being done as part of my program as a master's student at Oklahoma State University in the United States of America.

I am requesting you to participate in this very important study for the benefit of the students and the society at large. I am requesting you to contribute your time and thought and experience about

the current state of affairs in your schools and how they affect the learning of the students. Your responses will help me better understand the factors that affect the learning of the students in your schools.

**APPENDIX D**  
**COVER LETTER TO**  
**TEACHERS IN**  
**NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS**

I am conducting a research study on the effects of the current state of affairs

on

the learning of the students

Dear teachers,

I am conducting a research study entitled "The effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools". The research is being done as part of my program as a master's student at Oklahoma State University in the United States of America.

I am inviting you to participate in this very important study for the benefit of the Namibian educational system and the society at large. I am requesting you to participate because I believe that your views, thoughts, and experiences about opportunity-to-learn standards would help me better understand the effects the lack of such standards can have on the performance of grade ten learners in Namibian schools. I am not able to carry out the study myself in certain areas, because of the distance of the place where I'm studying.

Remember that in this study you are the expert, and do not hesitate to share all your views, thoughts, and experiences about opportunity-to-learn standards. The research assistants are there to assist you in completion of the questionnaire. Please, do not hesitate to ask for clarifications should you encounter difficulties.

Fraternal regards,

Felix Kandjimi Nyango

## CONSENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to perform the following  
 procedure:  
 I will provide you with a consent form which will provide demographic data and social  
 functioning and experience to be an opportunity to learn standards. My name will not be part  
 of the data and information. My participation should take approximately 1

to be used to determine the effects of interventions on the  
 growth of language in low-income areas

at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as follows:

### APPENDIX E

### CONSENT FORM

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## CONSENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby  
authorize or direct \_\_\_\_\_ to perform the following  
procedure:

I will complete a questionnaire, which will provide demographic data and views, thoughts, and experiences about opportunity-to-learn standards. My name will not be part of the data in order to preserve anonymity. My participation should take approximately 1 hour.

This is done as part of a study entitled “The effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools”. This study aim at contributing to education in Namibia by serving as an eye-opener and eventually necessitate and pave way for further research with regard to opportunity-to-learn standards in schools. The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I’m free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the research assistant.

To Whom It May Concern

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give permission to my daughter/son  
 participate in the research & thesis study currently being researched by Felix Kandjini  
 regarding the impact of the new learning standards on the  
 performance of grade 7 students in the public schools.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

#### APPENDIX F

#### PARENT CONSENT FORM

### To Whom It May Concern

I, ----- give permission to my daughter/son to participate in the master's thesis study currently being researched by Felix Kandjimi Nyango. The study is about the effects of opportunity-to-learn standards on the performance of grade 10 learners in Namibian schools.

-----  
Signature

-----  
Date

A. Demographic details:

1. Age

2. Gender

3. Education level

4.

APPENDIX G  
QUESTIONNAIRE  
MAILED TO  
PARTICIPANTS IN NAMIBIA

**A. Demographic details:****B. School administration and organization**

1. Your sex : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the student/teacher ratio in your school?
3. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Education level: \_\_\_\_\_  
What materials (text books, journals, etc.) and facilities such as textbooks and other
6. Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do teachers have the necessary materials, time, private space, and support staff they need for lessons?

**B. School administration and organization**

1. What is the student-teacher ratio in your school?

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2. Do all learners have access to educational facilities such as textbooks, and other necessities? Specify.

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3. Do you have enough classrooms for all learners in the school?

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4. How would you describe the present situation of educational resources in your school?

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5. Is there any teacher shortage at your school? Specify subjects.

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6. Do teachers have the necessary materials, time, private space, and support staff they need for lesson preparation and professional development?

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**C Environment and Culture:**

1. Does your school demonstrate concern for learners' well being? Elaborate.

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2. How would you describe the relationship between staff and learners?

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3. Are teachers and learners protected from potential violence? Explain.

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4. Does your school promote respect for diversity and protect student populations from discriminations? Explain.

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- 
- 
5. How would you explain cleanliness at your school? Is your principal/parents visit your

- 
- 
- 
- 
6. Are the school buildings in good repair? Any inconveniences during rainy seasons?
- 
- 
- 
- 

**D Ancillary Services:**

1. Does the school offer any physical and mental health care services to learners?  
Specify.

- 
- 
- 
- 
2. Do learners receive protection from unsafe and violent environments, substance abuse, sex, and pregnancy counseling? How often?
- 
-



- 
- 
3. How many times did social workers, counselors, and other professionals visit your school, and what services did they offer?

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4. Do you think there is a need for such services in your school? Explain.

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**E Teacher Competence:**

1. Are all teachers teaching subjects in which they received training? Give details.

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2. How many teachers teach subjects in which they never received professional training?

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- 
3. How would you describe teacher competency in your school?

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4. How many teachers are currently attending in-service training in your school?

Specify type of in-service training.

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**F Time:**

1. Do teachers spend adequate time covering content in class? Explain.

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2. Are students given reasonable times to learn content on their own?

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THINK OF CONTEXT TO A ... DOES?

3. Are teachers/learners on time during classes?

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4. Are students provided reasonable times to do general academic work on campus?  
(debates, drama, etc.)

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**G Curriculum and Instruction:**

1. Does subject content meet the expected standard for grade 10? Elaborate.

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2. Does subject content reflect the challenges of real life problems?

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3. Is subject content presented in context relevant to students?

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4. Do teachers apply learner-centered teaching approach during lessons?

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## VITA

Felix Kandjimi Nyango

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE EFFECTS OF OPPORTUNITY-TO-LEARN STANDARDS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF GRADE TEN LEARNERS IN NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction/Supervision

### Biographical:

Personal Data: Born at Bunya, Namibia, on March 2, 1970, the son of Herman Nyango Kandjimi and Hildefonsia Naita Nekongo.

Education: Graduated from Rundu Secondary School, Rundu, Namibia in December 1987; received Higher Education Diploma for Secondary from the University of Namibia, Windhoek, Namibia in April 1996. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction at Oklahoma State University in December 1999.

Professional Experience: Elementary school teacher at Kahenge, Namibia, 1988. Senior secondary school teacher at Rundu Secondary School, Namibia, 1990 – 1992. Clerk with First National Bank of Namibia, Rundu, Namibia, 1992. Language trainer with USA Peace Corps Windhoek, Namibia, 1993 and 1995. Lecturer at Rundu College of Education, Rundu, Namibia, since 1996.

Professional membership: Namibia National Teachers Union.