

**An Investigation into the Implementation of the Bachelor of  
Education (Pre-Primary and Lower Primary) Curriculum in  
Namibia**

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## Declaration

I, Maria Elizabeth Mwala, declare, that the work contained in this dissertation, is my own work, and that I did not submit it before for any degree or examinations at any other University, and that all sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged.

Signature.....

Date December 2019

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the factors that enabled and constrained the implementation of the newly introduced B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. The theoretical framework of the study derives from critical social realism. The study looked at the structural, cultural and agential conditions of implementation and explored how these conditions interacted to support or constrain the implementation of the curriculum.

Data was gathered through Ministerial and University documentary analysis as well as interviews with teacher educators in four former colleges of education in Namibia. The analysis of the data showed that the implementation of the newly introduced B. Ed Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum was influenced by various structural and cultural factors. The structural conditions identified were: lack of teaching materials, lack of mother tongue expertise, and inadequate classrooms. The analysis indicated that teacher educators made some decisions in response to the structural challenges, for example the translation of teaching materials from English to mother tongue which was contrary to the pedagogy underpinning the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education and was time consuming on the side of the teacher educators .

The analysis of interview data also revealed some of the cultural influences constraining curriculum implementation such as power and control and an unfavorable environment/atmosphere in the campuses. The analysis further indicated that despite the structural and cultural constraints the teacher educators experienced, the teacher educators showed agency by taking decisions and actions in response to these constraints that enabled to some degree the implementation of the curriculum, for example collaboration with colleagues from other campuses and upgrading of qualifications, specifically in the area of Pre-and Lower Primary education.

The study adds to knowledge on curriculum implementation through insight into the enabling and constraining effects of various structural, cultural and agential mechanisms and on the ability of teacher educators to implement the curriculum successfully. This understanding contributes to knowledge that could be used by the Ministry of Education in Namibia, the University of Namibia and elsewhere to inform future decision making in relation to curriculum planning and implementation.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

### 1.1. Introduction

Namibia has witnessed extensive curricular changes in teacher education, which has been marked with complexities and criticisms. This has included concerns that teachers are not well trained to handle curriculum change and that they are also not effectively preparing the learners to contribute towards achieving the national goals of education in Namibia (Ministry of Education, 1993). The national goals that I am referring to are: access, quality, democracy and equity. These curricular changes occurred as a result of the new policy on education (Ministry of Education, 1993) that was adopted in Namibia. Namibia's new policy on education, at independence, in 1990 had predominantly two tasks: to move away from the past education and to put in place foundations for future education, in particularly the transformation of teacher education. The first move was to develop a common and national teacher education program that would fully prepare teachers to face and challenge the transformation process of teacher education in Namibia (Ministry of Education, 1993).

When Namibia emerged as an independent nation in 1990, educational reform as a priority was emphasized by the Sam Nujoma, the president of the Republic of Namibia argued that: "the only way we can redress the apartheid legacy is by a massive education and training program for our people" (Ministry of Education, 1993: ii). The primary goals for this reform were identified as access, equity, quality and democracy in education. After independence the Ministry of Education was faced with a daunting task:

The undoing of apartheid requires changing the purpose of schooling from that of selection and the education of an elite to that of education for all. This involves replacing the philosophy and practices of education in the past with a philosophy and practices appropriate to educating all citizens, a rethinking of what we do in schools and how we do it. (Angula & Lewis, 1997:237).

Furthermore, the Namibian educational reform was guided first and foremost by the policy statements in *Toward Education for all* (Ministry of Education, 1993a). The new educational system, as described by “*Toward Education for all*,” is built on learner-centred education and aimed at harnessing curiosity and excitement, and promotes democracy and responsibility in lifelong learning. The stated intents of this system are to employ a holistic view of learning valuing life experiences and to assist learners in integrating school and life outside school. The document identifies learning as an active process with participation from the learners in developing, organizing, implementing and managing learning (Ministry of Education, 1993a). The Namibian educational reform was and is, according to the above statements both a change of curriculum development process as well as products, but more than that, a translation from one system of education to another (Ministry of Education, 1993a).

In 1993, the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) was adopted in Namibian teacher education. The purpose was to fulfill the demand of Basic Education as stipulated in its policy document, *Towards Education for All*, (Ministry of Education, 1993) namely that of preparing teachers to face and meet the challenges of reforming and staffing the Namibian education system. In 2011 the Basic Education Teacher Diploma was replaced by a new degree program, the Bachelor of Education for Pre-and Lower Primary. The purpose of this program was to improve the quality of teacher education in Namibia.

The intention of this study is not to critically examine the differences or to make comparisons between the BETD and the new introduced programs. This study is concerned with understanding the forces that influence curriculum change and implementation. The focus of this study is an investigation into factors such as structure, culture and agency, how these factors interacted to support and constrain the implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education.

The study is framed within a critical social realist theory. According to this theory curriculum practice is a social phenomenon that is conditioned by other forces of social events and experiences and is not a phenomenon that operates in isolation (Archer, 1995). I opted for critical social realism because I believed it would help me understand better the implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-

and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia. In the next section I present the background to the study.

## **1.2. Background to the study**

Teacher education in Namibia was regarded as one of the most important areas of reform at independence in 1990, because it had a very important role to play in the transformation of the education system. The Namibian Ministry of Education, in its policy document, *Towards Education for All* (Ministry of Education, 1993: 137), stated that:

Perhaps the most important challenge in improving the quality of our education system is to ensure that our teachers are well prepared for the major responsibility that they carry. It is essential, therefore, that we help our teachers develop the expertise and skills that will enable them to stimulate learning.

Before independence teacher education was fragmented and uneven. The various teacher education programs had different entry requirements, scope, duration, organization, and focus. Some were very resource intensive, and provided relatively high level qualifications. Others were far more rudimentary, providing minimal qualifications (Ministry of Education, 1993:78). This was a problem for Namibia, in particular at independence in 1990. In this period, Namibia's priority was to develop a common, national, feasible and balanced teacher education program that would fully prepare teachers to face and meet the challenges of reforming and staffing the Namibian education system (Ministry of Education, 1993: 79).

In 1991, the Ministry of Education mandated the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), to guide and coordinate the design and implementation of the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) program in its four colleges of education (Windhoek College of Education, Ongwediva College of Education, Rundu College of Education, and Caprivi College of Education). The goal of the program was to provide a national and common teacher preparation from grade 1 up to grade 10 (Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture and Ministry of Higher Education Vocation, Training Centre, 1994; 1998). This system enables many Namibians to qualify for

further training and therefore it was intended to address the human resources needs of Namibia. The following is a brief summary of the main characteristics of the Basic Education Teacher Diploma Lower Primary Education:

- It is a three year diploma course.
  - The course is offered as a major option and prepares students to teach in the Lower Primary phases of Basic Education, Grades 1-4.
  - The course focuses on the development of learners specifically in language and concept development, and through these understandings to the development of literacy, numeracy and other content areas.
  - The approach for teaching and learning is based on learner-centred principles.
- (Summarized from the BETD Broad curriculum, Ministry of Education, 2007: 35)

In 2010, the Teacher Education Reform Plan (TERP) in Namibia indicated that all four colleges of Education would be merged with the University of Namibia (UNAM) under the Faculty of Education. This was because the general education system was performing poorly from grade 010 and not effectively preparing learners to contribute towards achieving the national goals. This argument sometimes points in the direction of teachers and their training.

In 2011, a new degree program called the Bachelor of Education for Pre-and Lower Primary and Upper Primary was introduced in the four colleges of education. According to the Ministry of Education, the purpose of the merger of the former Colleges of Education into the Faculty of Education was to improve the quality in education in Namibia, particularly through improvement of Pre-and Lower Primary education and improved quality of teacher education and training.

The B.Ed. (Pre- and Lower Primary) is a professional degree directly related to the demands of Basic Education. The following is a summary of the main characteristics of the B.Ed. (Pre- and Lower Primary):

- It is a four year NQF level eight degree program that prepares students to teach from the Pre-Primary to Lower Primary (grade 1-4)

- It integrates accepted educational theory and practice related to school subject content areas for pre-primary to grade 4.
- Student teachers are expected to effectively communicate the concepts and topics in a mother tongue which is the medium of instruction and in English as the official language.
- It provides a constructivist perspective on learning and a learner-centred approach building on the real needs in schools.
- Much emphasis is placed on the teaching practice as this is organized to create opportunity for critical inquiry and reflexivity.
- It provides students with opportunity to become self-confident, self-reliant, critical and knowledgeable professionals who will be able to deal with the realities of the educational system (Summarized from the B.Ed. Pre and Lower Primary Broad Curriculum, University of Namibia, 2010).

In any curriculum program implementation, the teacher educator has a crucial role to play in the preparation of student teachers. He/she is seen as a teacher, instructor, tutor, enabler and mentor. The student teacher is to be provided with the opportunities that will help him/her to master the subject matter/content in the particular area of specialization. Pring (1997) cited in Bines and Welton, 1995:46) pointed out that the main activity of pre-service training is “first and foremost, training about the practice of teaching.” The key questions are: how best do trainee teachers learn and what is it they need to learn?”

The above question can be answered by looking carefully at the design and development of the curriculum programs for teacher education. The design of the curriculum program allows for the learning of student teachers to be organized so as to enable and encourage student teachers to explore, formulate and to practice out what is learnt. It is through the design and implementation that the intended outcomes will be realized. However, much of the success for this lies with the way in which teacher educators conceptualize, interpret, understand and implement the curriculum program. This is what has motivated me to want to explore the experiences of teacher educators in the implementation of the new teacher education curriculum.

As a teacher educator who was involved with the implementation of the BETD curriculum program and coordinating the newly introduced B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum program, I have

had first-hand experience of the process of curriculum implementation. The following constitutes a comparison of the two programs.

It is first and foremost in the area of Namibian languages of teaching that the B. Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum differs from the BETD program. Namibian languages are taught in their specific languages, not in English as the case with the BETD program. Secondly, in the B Ed program, different subjects are taught by different teacher educators based on subject specialization; in the BETD program all subjects were taught by one teacher educator (class teaching). Thirdly, the subject matter has detailed content in the current program but pedagogical knowledge is lacking. This is due to a large number of students allowed in the program with a lack of infrastructure. Fourthly, pedagogical knowledge was strongly taught in the BETD program with insufficient subject content. This was due to the controlled number of students allowed. In the BETD Lower Primary program; the number of students allowed was only thirty. The medium of instruction for all academic subjects (school subject) are taught in English in both curriculum programs.

### **1.3. Rationale for the study**

As already mentioned, in 2010, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Namibia in collaboration with the University of Namibia (UNAM) took a decision to merge the four colleges (Khomasdal college of education, Ongwediva college of education, Rundu college of education and Caprivi college of education) of the Ministry of Education with the University of Namibia (UNAM) under the Faculty of Education. The main purpose of the merger was to improve the quality of teacher education in Namibia. This was because the general education system in Namibia was performing poorly from grade 0-10 and not effectively preparing learners to contribute towards achieving the national goals. This was followed in 2011 by the introduction of a new degree program called the Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary education and a Bachelor of Upper Primary education and the renaming of the four colleges of education.

During this period, I was a teacher educator at Rosmund campus and was appointed as a coordinator for the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education. As a coordinator I was given

certain roles and responsibilities. Some of these roles and responsibilities were to arrange internal and external workshops for the teacher educators in the department, to provide support and to make sure the implementation of the new curriculum moved into the right direction. I experienced many challenges as I was performing my responsibilities because I could not understand why the Basic Education Teacher Diploma had been phased out and how the new curriculum could effectively be implemented. Teacher educators in the department approached me also with matters of concern regarding the new changes, to which I failed to respond. I attended many workshops, but most of these workshops were subject related and could not help me understand pertinent issues on curriculum change and implementation. This was a serious concern to me because I felt lost and could not perform my duties as a coordinator as expected. Teacher educators in the department were also confused because no one could help them understand and solve their problems.

The main purpose for the changed curriculum, as I stated earlier on, was to improve the quality of teacher education in Namibia. Curriculum implementation is one of the factors that contribute to quality education. If teacher educators lack knowledge and understanding on curriculum implementation, then the issue of quality is compromised. Thus it was very crucial for me as a coordinator and a teacher educator at the same time to embark upon this study in order to better understand curriculum change and implementation. This would also help me perform my duties as a coordinator efficiently and effectively.

#### **1.4. Purpose of the study**

The study is not intended to make a comparison between the programs previously offered or even to explain why changes have taken place. The purpose of this study is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the elements that significantly influence curriculum change and implementation and how these elements interacted to support or constrain the implementation of the newly introduced B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. Margaret Archer (1995; 1996) argues that these elements in real life are not separable. They are closely connected and have a strong influence on social events and experiences. The elements referred to are: structure, culture and agency. In the context of my study structure refers to the policy requirement, i.e. the implementation of the language policy for pre-and lower primary education,

finance required for human and material resources i.e. physical resources such as infrastructure etc, culture refers to the beliefs and attitudes of teacher educators towards the new curriculum and agency refers to the choices or decisions teacher educators make that may either constrain or enable the implementation of the curriculum. In the longer term, the study hopes to contribute to generating a framework that would enable further program development in Namibia.

Several studies have been done on curriculum change and implementation in Namibia (Nyambe, 1996; Sibuku, 1997). These studies focused on the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) program and its implementation. This study is specifically focusing on the implementation of a new program that was introduced in Namibian teacher education in 2011. In other neighbouring countries, in particular in Swaziland, Pereira (2012) conducted a study on curriculum change and implementation. This is a very useful study to draw on, but the study is based on the Swaziland context, and thus it may not be a helpful solution in the context of Namibia. Critical realism argues that teaching and learning are open systems in the sense of responding to both external and internal factors (Brown, 2009). This implies that what worked well in Swaziland or elsewhere may not work in Namibia. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study that aims to investigate the factors that have influenced the implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia.

## **1.5. Research objectives**

1. To obtain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the curriculum implementation of the B. Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia.
2. To explain how these factors interacted to support or constrain the implementation of the curriculum in Namibia.

## 1.6. Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What factors enabled and constrained the implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia?
2. How have structure, culture and agency interacted to support or constrain the implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia?

## 1.7. Theoretical framework

This study is framed within a critical social realist theory, which is based on the work of Roy Bhaskar, 1978; 1989 (who is regarded as the founder of critical realism) and further developed by other various critical social realists such as Archer, 1996; Collier, 1994; Layder, 1990 and Sayer, 2000. Realism is explained as an epistemological approach that asserts that knowledge of social phenomenon is based on both what can be observed and recorded, and ‘hidden’ structures and mechanisms whose effects can be observed (Bob & Ross 2010).

Critical realism has several key concepts which had great relevance when formulating curriculum theory: Firstly, it posits a depth ontology which helps researchers to understand the existence of and nature of the mechanisms that support social events and entities. Secondly, it argues that these mechanism and their properties exist independently of our knowledge of them, for example social objects such as structures, customs and traditions are real in that they persist in time and spaces, existing independently of and anterior to the knower, and exerting causative influences on social events and the actions of people (Archer, 1995).

The positivist theorists regard curriculum as an independent phenomenon that is not conditioned by any social reality. According to Archer, “to the social realist there is no isolated micro-world – no lebens welt insulated from the socio-cultural system in the sense of being unconditioned by it, nor hermetically sealed domain whose day-to-day doings are guaranteed to be of no systemic

import.” (Archer, 1995:10). This is because critical social realists view social events and experiences, such as curriculum practices, as emerging from mechanism at the level of the real. Positivism is held to commit the ‘epistemic fallacy’ (Bhaskar, 1979: 16) of reducing questions about reality into questions about how we can know reality: What exists becomes what can be observed through measurements. Sayer (2000) also pointed out that critical social realist philosophy focuses on identifying hidden causal mechanism, how they work, whether they are active or not, and the conditions under which they become active.

Putting my study within a realist philosophy means that I view curriculum practices and experiences as a social phenomenon that exists as a result of other social realities in which it operates. This is what the study attempt to understand and explain.

Margaret Archer (1988; 1995; 2000) provides a useful epistemological framework for understanding these hidden causal mechanisms. According to Archer (1995; 1996) social reality such as curriculum practices consist of culture which she refers to as the ideational aspects of social life such as values, beliefs, theories etc., structure as the material aspects of social life such as resources, positions, roles etc. and agency as the human aspects of social life. She emphasizes that these elements in real life are not separable, they are intertwined, simultaneously influencing each other. But she advises that for analytical purposes, these elements should be separated, because they are different in form and each possesses unique power and properties. Separating them would help achieve a deeper understanding of their differences and influences on social reality.

## **1.8. Research design**

Critical realism is compatible with a range of research methods (Sayer, 2000; Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., & Jakobsen, L. (2002). According to Sayer, the method(s) a researcher will choose to use depend(s) on “the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it” (2000:19). Basically, all critical realist studies are concerned with explaining and understanding social events and experiences at a deeper level of reality

### **1.8.1. Methods and methodology**

The research design was guided by a qualitative approach. Qualitative research was chosen, as the study aims to elicit the views, beliefs and experiences of the participants in the process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:25) states that a qualitative research orientation “places individual actors at its centre, it will focus upon context, meaning, culture, history and biography.”

A qualitative approach therefore best suited my study as I was concerned with explaining and understanding curriculum implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia. The qualitative approach as I stated earlier on is mostly concerned with the meanings people are making regarding things in their lives and how they think and act in their daily lives (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). It therefore allows for an in-depth study of one or few cases focusing on specific circumstances.

In the context of my study I undertook a multiple case study approach (Yin, 2009; Duff, 2008) because I was investigating curriculum implementation at four different campuses (named for the purposes of this study as Hifemo campus, Kokalipi campus, Rosmund campus and Tikamo campus). These are the campuses that are offering the Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. Multiple-case designs refer to two or more cases that are researched in order to facilitate an understanding of something (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009). In the case of my study, my four cases were chosen in order to help me understand how they implement the new curriculum in their respective campuses. According to Yin (2009), multiple-case designs are preferred over single-case design (a “one case” case study) because they greatly support your findings compared to those from a single case. In my study I used multi-case study because the four campuses might implement the new curriculum differently and there was a need for me to explore and explain them separately.

### **1.8.2. Sampling**

The investigation was conducted with teacher educators from the four campuses (Rosmund campus, Tikamo campus, Kokalipi campus and Hifemo campus). I used twelve teacher educators (three at each campus). I selected the teacher educators to find out their insights about the implementation of the new curriculum in their respective campuses. Cohen and Manion (1994) define a sample as “a smaller group or subset of the population selected in such a way that the knowledge gained is a representative of the total population under study.” Also, Bieger and Gerlach (1996:67) claim that sampling refers to “choosing a portion of the target population for research, rather than studying the entire population.”

Purposive sampling was used to choose participants. Mathews & Ross (2010: 154) describe purposive sampling as a “sample of selected cases that will enable the researcher to explore the research questions in depth. “As teacher educators I expected them to provide me with in-depth information as they were involved in the implementation of the new curriculum.

### **1.8.3. Data-gathering techniques**

As the study was concerned with getting rich data from my participants and written sources, in the next section I will discuss the two methods I used to collect my data, namely, interviews and document analysis.

#### **1.8.3.1. Interviews**

Sherman and Webb (1990) indicate that the interview can help researcher to see situations through the eyes of participants. It also offers a flexible and accessible research tool which provides the means for collecting information about people’s knowledge, beliefs and attitudes (Powney & Watts, 1987).

I used semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview, according to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:157) is the one which “tends to be most favoured by educational researchers since

it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the respondent's responses." I used semi-structured interviews to ensure free and rich conversation during which participants could be openly explore their thoughts without the fear of being intimidated or limited by closed questions.

### **1.8.3.2. Document analysis**

Documents are a good source of data because they are "easily accessible, free, and contain information that would take an investigator enormous time and effort to gather otherwise" (Merriam, 1988: 125). Furthermore, Merriam (1988: 127) argues that "documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated." There are various kinds of documents that exist (Bell, 2010) but in this study I used written documents. These included documents such as the Broad Curriculum for Basic Education Teacher Diploma, the Broad Curriculum for the Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary Education and the National Curriculum for Basic Education in Namibia.

These documents were sourced to understand national influences on the change from the previous Basic Education Teacher Diploma program to the Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary Education. The documents were also consulted to verify and clarify information obtained from the other instrument, to obtain new information in order to understand what conceptions of curriculum and curriculum practices were privileged by the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia through the adoption of Bachelor of Education Pre-and Lower Primary education.

## **1.9. Data analysis**

Ely (1991) claim that the process of analyzing guides the researcher to "focus and refocus observational and or interview lenses, to phrase and rephrase research questions, to establish and check emergent hunches, trends, insights, and ideas to face oneself as research instrument."

The data collected through the various instruments such as individual interviews and document analysis were analyzed by means of content analysis. Content analysis is defined as a "careful,

detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases and meaning” (Berg & Latin, 2008: 18). A more detailed description on the process of content analysis will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Margaret Archer’s (1995; 1996) concepts of structure, culture and agency also served as analytical tools to help me explain how the structural, cultural and agential mechanisms have interacted to support or constrain the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education.

### **1.10. Ethical considerations**

Bell (2010: 49) has warned that when conducting research “what you can’t do is begin to collect data and contact participants before written approval is received.” This is done to avoid any problems that may arise during and after the time of data collection. A researcher might be accused of something that he or she did not commit during the process and after data collection period. Thus, approval needs to be granted before data has to be collected. The following ethical issues were addressed. Permission was obtained from the Campus Directors/ Deputy Deans to allow the study to be taken at the Campuses where the research was conducted. I wrote letters of consent to the Campus Directors/ Deputy Deans and to all my participants.

The issue of confidentiality, anonymity, time and venues was taken into account. I used pseudonyms to reference individuals and their discussions with herself/himself in order to protect them and the information they provided. Proper arrangements were made in advance regarding the time and venues when the data collection was done at the various campuses. I prepared the time schedule together with my participants which guided us through the process of data collection. This schedule helped me also not to interrupt the daily time table of the campuses.

### **1.11. Limitations of the study**

A potential limitation was my concern that my participants might find it difficult to reveal problematic areas, because they would not be sure to whom I would communicate the information. Participants were ensured that information would not be shared with any other person except themselves and the supervisor in charge of the study. Another limiting factor that affected the study was that teacher educators had some other campus commitments, e.g. workshops. In one case I was supposed to interview two teacher educators on a scheduled time, but just to discover that the teacher educators were attending a workshop and the interviews had to be postponed to other days. Distance was also another factor that affected the study. The distance from my working place to the other campuses where the participants are, was between 500-1000 kilometers. I planned to spend at least three days at each campus but the unforeseen circumstances of my participants could not allow me to do so. I had to add some more extra days to collect data. These caused some delays in the process of data collection.

### **1.12. Delimitation**

Although the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum program are found in other private Universities in the country, this study limited itself to one University, which is the University of Namibia. Studying the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum programs in all the Universities was not possible because of various constraints such as distance, financial constraints and availability of accommodation. Despite the fact that Primary education is available at other levels like Upper Primary education, this study limited itself only to Pre-and Lower Primary education. This is because each level has its specific curriculum that needs to be addressed differently. Although there are potentially also other factors that could influence curriculum implementation in the Pre-and Lower Primary education, this study limited itself to the three factors such as structure, culture and agency as they formed the theoretical lens of the study. The target population of the study was all the teacher educators that are involved with the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in all UNAM campuses which gives a total of 100+ teacher

educators, it is therefore hoped that the particular sample of this study can offer lessons that are useful to this broader population.

### **1.13. Significance of the study**

The study provides empirical data that could inform in future the curriculum developers, decision makers and curriculum implementers on the effective ways of looking at curriculum change and implementation, particularly in Namibia as a country. Furthermore, the study provides conceptual knowledge such as structure, culture and agency by Margaret Archer (1995; 1996) that is relevant and useful to curriculum change and implementation. This knowledge will be of most benefit to the teacher educators, who are the curriculum implementers, the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia who are the decision makers. To the teacher educators, these are new concepts and very important in the Namibian context; it will provide insight and make the teacher educators appreciate the roles they play in curriculum change and implementation. The analysis will also serve as a guide towards future curriculum planning and implementation.

People in other parts of the world may also find the study relevant and useful in understanding curriculum change and implementation in their own context.

### **1.14. Outline of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter One deals with an explanation of the background of the study, the rationale of the study, purposes of the study, the methodology, and the ways in which the study may be useful to all relevant stakeholders in Namibia.

Chapter Two provide the theories that shaped and informed this study. I discuss the theory of critical realism which guided my study, in particularly Margaret Archer's concepts of structure, culture and agency.

Chapter Three describes the design of the study and the methodology employed. The chapter describes how I chose to work within a qualitative design and how I applied research data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews and document analysis to develop cases on how teacher educators implement the new B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum in their respective campuses.

Chapter Four reports on the data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Chapter Five presents the discussion of the findings. A more in-depth analysis of the data is therefore presented in this chapter. The chapter discusses the factors that enabled and constrained the implementation of the curriculum and how structure, culture and agency interacted to support or constrain this implementation.

Chapter Six serves as a conclusion to the research process. I also discuss the possibilities for future study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

“A review of literature is one of the foundations on which any social research project is constructed. From a review of the literature associated with your research topic, a researcher is able to set his/her own ideas about the research topic in context.” (Mathews & Ross, 2010: 92)

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the literature that framed and informed my study on the implementation of a curriculum in Namibian teacher education. I will not only report on claims made by the chosen literature, but also critically examine and reflect why these claims are relevant for my research. My review is drawn from what Creswell (1994:37) suggested that a literature review is “to present results of similar studies, to relate the present study to the ongoing dialogue in the literature, and to provide a framework for comparing the results of a study with other studies.” By looking at these views enables me to differentiate what has been learned and achieved in the area of my interest and where I can provide additional insights through my study as to what still needs to be learned and achieved.

I begin this chapter by defining the three concepts that are relevant to this study: curriculum, curriculum implementation and curriculum program, followed by a discussion of the factors that have significant influence on curriculum change and implementation. I then present critical realism, a theory that underpins this study. Archer’s concepts of structure, culture and agency are also discussed as this provided me with the analytical tool for reaching a more in-depth understanding of how structure, culture and agency are connected and their influences on curriculum change and implementation. Finally, I include a brief discussion of the relevance of the theory for this study.

## **2.2. Defining curriculum, curriculum implementation and curriculum program**

### **2.2.1. Curriculum**

According to different sources available in the existing literature, the term curriculum has its origins in the running /chariot tracks of Greece (literally meaning a course) (Egan, 2003). In Latin curriculum is a racing chariot and the word *currere* means to run. It is about all the learning activities that are carefully planned and guided by the education institution involved and carried out by students in classrooms or off-classroom contexts (Mednick, 2006). As runners need a carefully crafted plan and guidance in advance, learning should be planned and guided in order to specify the target and methods to reach the desired learning outcomes.

According to Null (2011), curriculum is about defining or proposing which courses or subjects should be taken by students of a particular academic program, teacher educators preparing their assigned courses or subjects before the start of each semester, as well as providing learning outcomes that have a positive impact on the students. Furthermore, it is the foundation of the teaching and learning process- which involves developing programs of study (study plans), teaching strategies, resources allocations, specific lesson plans and assessment of students, and faculty development (Alberta Education, 2012).

A new curriculum has been described as an attempt to change teaching and learning practices which also include the transformation of some of the beliefs and understanding hitherto existent in the setting to be changed (Fullan, 2001).

### **2.2.2. Curriculum implementation**

Curriculum implementation, according to Okello & Kagoire-Ocheng (1996:124) “is a network of varying activities involved in translating curriculum designs into classroom activities and changing people’s attitudes to accept and participate in these activities. It is also refers to how teacher educators deliver instructions and assessment through the use of specified resources, guidelines

etc. provided in a curriculum (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Valero and Skovsmose (2002: 3) explain that implementation of a curriculum does not simply involve following a set of curriculum instructions or replacing “old” practices with “new” practice but it is a process of fashioning the curriculum in such a way that it becomes part of the teacher educator’s way of being.

Fullan (2015) provide further definition to curriculum implementation as “the process of putting into practice a program and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change. The change may be externally imposed or voluntarily sought: explicitly defined or developed and adapted incrementally through use; designed to be used uniformly or deliberately planned so that users can make modifications according to their perceptions of the needs of the situation” (Fullan, 2015: 21). From this definitions, two features can be explained: first is about changing campuses and the education system “in the direction of some sought- after change” (Fullan, 2015: 21). Orchestrated by public authorities, the process is thus expected to serve their purpose (i.e. bringing a desired change to education). Second, the author explain how curriculum implementation at the classroom level come to changing curriculum materials, pedagogical practices and beliefs of understanding about learning processes. As such, it also acknowledges that end users of curriculum such as teacher educators can shape the policy at their level, and that they may do so in a way that aligns with curriculum developers’ goals –or not (Fullan, 2015: 21).

### **2.2.3. Curriculum program**

According to Wiles & Bondi (2014), curriculum program generally provide courses of studies, instructional suggestions, modules or subjects to be offered in a specific year or years of study, assessment options, etc. related to a set of objectives. Furthermore, they state that a curriculum program focus on consistency to help teacher educators successfully implement and maintain the curricular structure in order to meet objectives.

## **2.3. Factors that enable or constrain curriculum implementation**

Curriculum is critical in providing high quality educational programs and services; however, there are in most instances gaps between how curriculum is developed and how curriculum is put into practice. This dilemma is further complicated by the fact that there may be huge differences between the curriculum published by the educational institutions and the curriculum actually taught by the teacher educators in their classrooms. Curriculum is considered as a foundation stone for the “well-being and effectiveness of teacher education” (Barnett & Coate, 2005:7). Regardless of how curriculum is defined and its scope and importance, it is one of the most significant matters in teacher education, however, little attention has been given to the evolution of curriculum, its review and transformation in the institutions of teacher education (Hyun, 2006, 2009). This notion is further strengthened by the fact that there is dearth of research works on the subject and the literature that exist is mostly focused on the design of the curriculum (Hicks, 2007).

Fullan and Pomfret, (1977) cited in Altrichter (2005: 2)) also argued that curriculum projects of the 60s and 70s have not been implemented in a way curriculum developers had hoped and that the implementers could not implement the curriculum as intended. Furthermore, little discussion is also present in the “literature about the challenges and problems that teacher educators encounter during the implementation process and how these challenges are overcome” (Shilling, 2013: 21). This brings to the focus of this section that of exploring possible factors that enable or constrain the implementation of a curriculum.

The next part of the chapter outlines the various factors identified in the literature as impacting on the success or otherwise of implementing a new curriculum.

### **2.3.1. The shared need for a new curriculum program**

According to Fullan (2004:6) the expression of need/feeling about a curriculum program is not a task that curriculum designers should do alone. He suggests that all the people involved, this includes the teacher educators, students, parents and the community at large to work together across the whole system as a “we-we collective to produce quality ideas and practices on an

ongoing basis, and to inspire collective effort to the extent that it becomes possible to achieve break through never experienced before.” Fullan (2004: 6) further expresses that in a “we-we collective” students, teacher educators, campus leaders, parents and the community all need opportunities to understand the active roles they play in such a curriculum program.

In the ‘we-we collective’ efforts, teacher educators see themselves as contributors to curriculum development and not simply workers who carry out information between curriculum designers and students. Teacher educators must be allowed to communicate their ideas to those who design curriculum and they must see the fruits of those ideas in the curriculum that they will implement as well as the teaching materials they will use to deliver the content of such a curriculum. This may give teacher educators a sense of responsibility, sufficient autonomy that will allow them to tailor the content of the curriculum to the needs, interest and abilities of the students in their classes.

Further to this is that a realistic view of curriculum implementation lies between teacher educators (who are the implementers) and curriculum planners sharing power equally (March, cited in O’Sullivan 2002). This in most cases does not happen. The top down procedure is followed. This means that the higher authority makes all the decisions without taking into account views / feelings of people at the grass-roots level. This approach has weaknesses in the sense that the implementers have little influence on the implementation process and they are to follow what has been decided by the authority - whether working or not working. The implementers have to follow prescribed guidelines of what is to be implemented.

In Namibia it might be of great important for curriculum developers (Ministry of Education and University of Namibia) and curriculum implementers (teacher educators) to understand the nature of changes. It seems as if most curriculum changes are implemented without a deeper understanding about the whole process of teaching and learning and the specific circumstances and strategies that are likely to promote it. A new curriculum program requires the involvement of both the developers and implementers to have knowledge and understanding on the use of newly revised materials, teaching approaches, teaching and learning practices. If curriculum developers want new curriculum programs to be effective and improve the quality of education, they need to share a common understanding of implementation to be able to work together on the process. It is

necessary that teacher educators have information about the nature of the changed curriculum as well as the understanding of the requirements of such a curriculum.

As most curriculum programs aim to bring a change, implementing the program requires facing multiple challenges in the process. These include among others, communication and co-ordination issues, consultation procedures, problems with institutional resources, capacity and compliance of the curriculum operators and targets (Weaver, 2010: 19). School change scholars suggest that unless teacher educators, campus managers and other actors in education understand and share the new curriculum program meaning, it is unlikely to get implemented (Fullan, 2015: 21). The process of implementation in itself is an opportunity to engage stakeholders, which can benefit them and the education system overall.

Moreover, Lieberman and McLaughlin (1996:72) argue that teacher educators are willing and eager to participate in “activities that challenge them and promote professional development.” Such activities can be initiated through collaborative and collegial networks providing opportunities for professional growth and social interaction. Networks can create discourse communities that encourage exchange amongst members and can provide leadership opportunities. They therefore can motivate teacher educators to challenge the implementation of the newly introduced curriculum program.

### **2.3.2. Curriculum program planning vs curriculum program implementation**

From the evidence supplied by the literature examined, there is a strong claim that the attention of planners has focused almost exclusively on the design of the reform rather than on the implementation. These according to the literature are external elements of change. Verspoor (1992) cited in O’Sullivan (2002:221) cited a review of 19 countries, which highlights this trend. A good example of this is the World Bank that used to spend 75% of its project time on planning and only 25% on actual implementation. Similar findings were further indicated in the review that was conducted by Havelock, Huberman, Psacharopoulos and deClercq (1997) cited in O’Sullivan (2002).

Furthermore, in an article entitled “the missing half of school reform,” education scholar Frederick M. Hess underlines how decision makers tend to focus efforts on formulating the curriculum program, with little or no follow-up on how to make the program take effect in education. Hess (2013: 5) argues that there is often a vast distance between policy and practice. He further stresses that educational programs seem to be developed with little consideration for the practical mechanisms necessary to their implementation. Questions such as “do teacher educators have the skills and necessary physical resources to implement this new curriculum?” are often overlooked. As a result, expectations concerning campuses’ capacity to implement often exceed reality (OECD, 2010: 16). This lack of focus on implementation can have serious implications. For example, citizens may start losing confidence and patience with policy makers and other actors in the education sector due to curriculum programs/ policy failing to be implemented as expected, a risk for education policy makers to always pass policies that fail to be implemented. It is therefore necessary to ensure that when planning a curriculum program, curriculum planners should focus and design effective strategies for the implementation process itself, taking into consideration that it is a complex change process rather than the execution phase of policy making (OECD, 2010).

In Namibia, it seems as if curriculum developers have overlooked many hindrance of curriculum, which might be the reason why the curriculum program is not reaching the goals that we have expected during the development of the new curriculum reform. Bantwini (2009: 169) and Rogan & Grayson (2003:1179) argue that well designed new curriculum fail because of ignorance on the implementation part and more focus has to be put on the desired educational change only. Curriculum developers may spend more time and money on the design of the curriculum without taking into account how such a design will effect implementation. For example, there is a need to take into account the issues of human and physical resources, capacity building programs etc. that are crucial during the process of implementation. Fullan (2001: 71) cited in October 2009: 5) also states that good implementation plans will provide clarity on how implementers should do the tasks, by whom they need to do these tasks, who must take responsibility for particular tasks, by whom such people will be supervised, and what kind of resources will be required. Coleman et al. (2003: 85), Fleisch (2002: 133) as well as Glatthorn (1997: 144), cited in Labane (2009: 5) concur with Fullan (2001) that suitable implementation plans specify the duties and responsibilities of the various role players involved in the implementation process. Thus, curriculum implementation and

curriculum plans are vital in ensuring successful implementation of a new curriculum as they would act as guiding tool which has to be revisited now and again to see if everything is still going according to plan (Fullan, 2001).

In addition, Brooks (2006:26) also identified six stages consist in curriculum planning and implementation. Which are:

- Review: What is working? What concerns should be addressed?
- Initiate: What needs to be changed? What strategies should be used?
- Plan: What steps do we need to take to prepare for change?
- Develop: How can we keep planning work on track?
- Implement: How do we work together to make the changes?
- Maintain: How can we provide the best programming for students?

The above-mentioned arguments also indicate how planning and implementation processes are very important and need to be equally addressed and attended to.

### **2.3.3. The curriculum program clarity**

It has been observed that the designers of curriculum programs have ignored the role of implementers as active participants of educational processes and change especially at the initial stages. As a result the implementers are not sometimes clear about the goals and means of such a curriculum as well as what they are expected to do differently. The fact that teacher educators have to deal with many changes, with them not understanding what is expected from them to make the change process succeed might be the cause of their resistance and negative attitudes towards the curriculum change endeavor. Wallace & Fleit (2005:191) state that acceptance dilemma happens when teacher educators have to deal with curriculum constraints such as texts, language acquisition, staffing etc. as well as systemic constraints such as curriculum guidelines calling for particular methods of instructions or assessment. Therefore, there could be a considerable mismatch between “what is said and what is done” in campuses.

Szabo (1996) (as cited in Altrichter & Salzgeber, 2000: 99) also expresses the view that new structures and practices “without mechanisms for building clarity and commitment to the new purposes and goals of reform, will result in little impact on improving learning.” According to her, changing formal structures is not the same as changing norms, habits, skills and beliefs. A process of what she refers to as ‘capturing’, alongside the process of restructuring, is necessary to ensure deep and lasting change, which will facilitate habits of reflection and inquiry from teacher educators. Lack of curriculum clarity, i.e. knowledge, approaches and terminologies that are used in a specific curriculum, leads to ineffective implementation and lack of confidence when teacher educators has to use them in their teaching and learning processes.

It is therefore important that all related aspects of a curriculum should be clearly defined and explained to the implementers, right from the initial stage in terms of ways of doing it and then materials needed for the implementation of such a curriculum should also be well thought through. Furthermore, such a curriculum program should not be “too linear and restricting in the sense that just one way of doing is advocated and no alternatives are possible” (Fullan, 2006: 4). This need for clarity has been interpreted as expression of a feeling of role ambiguity in a situation of uncertainty produced by the new challenges of the new curriculum on one side and by the partly lacking competencies on the teacher educator’s part (Bell, 2015; Causarano, 2015).

In addition, Stenhouse (1986) (cited in Altrichter & Salzgeber, 2000:99-110) also pointed out the importance of making the innovation clear. He advocated that the curriculum is an ‘intelligent proposal’ and with this he meant that the curriculum should be clearly defined because it will help foster its effective implementation by the teacher educators who in this case are the implementers of such a curriculum. He further suggested that the teacher educators should be encouraged and supported by resources and structure to evaluate the curriculum under specific circumstances and to develop it further.

### 2.3.4. Classroom realities

The success or failure of reforms in both industrialized and developing countries are in most cases influenced by the teacher educators. Teacher educator concerns play a part in the implementation of a new curricular, because their concerns sometimes direct the choices teacher educators make when choosing to add or omit items from the curriculum (Bell, 2015; Causarano, 2015). Gottesman and Jennings (1994) (cited in O’Sullivan, 2002:222) further state that forgetting “... that the desired change was to take place in the classroom” was responsible for numerous failed reforms in the USA. It is therefore important to note that successful implementation of curriculum programs depends ultimately on the extent to which planners take ‘classroom realities into account. Classroom realities have been described as objective realities and subjective realities factors (Verspoor (1991) cited in O’Sullivan, 2002). Objective reality factors refer mainly to the physical and personal context which the teacher educators work while subjective factors are concerned with teacher educator’s emotional and social context.

The table 1: Provides examples of classroom realities implementation factors.

<b>Objective reality factors</b>	<b>Subjective reality factors</b>
Resources	Relevance
Professional capacity	Desirability
Support services	Motivation
Personal obligations	Attitude/ perspective
Management capacity	Feasibility
Communication	Realism
Student teacher capacity	Time/space
	Complexity
	Flexibility

**Table: 2.2.3 Examples of different types of objective and subjective reality factors: Source: Adapted from the work of Verspoor (1991) and Fullan (1991) cited in O’Sullivan, 2002).**

Moffett (2000) (cited in Robinson, 2003) argues that successful implementation of innovation depends to a large extent on the existence of a reform-support infrastructure with open and functioning communication channels between different levels of the system, good use of human resources and strong district support. Findings of the review committee on curriculum implementation in South Africa also indicated that “there is virtually no ongoing support and development when teacher educators are back on sites after receiving orientation and training at workshops” (Robinson, 2003:27). Furthermore, lack of financial resources, bureaucratic procedures for accessing funding, shortages of personnel and problems in the organization structures were all cited as contributing to lack of support to teacher educators implementing the curriculum program successfully (Robinson, 2003: 27).

Dalin (1998a) (cited in Robinson, 2003:240) also pointed out that centrally regulated reforms depend not only on the government exerting pressure, but also on government providing support to those responsible for implementing the new policies. Without such support, teacher educators will only see problems, as they feel that they are being expected to shoulder vast responsibilities alone. As a result, this might also be the cause of them being frustrated and have negative attitudes towards curriculum change.

Subjective realities are also too often neglected. The teacher educators’ view of the proposed curriculum program should also be taken into account. Broadfoot, Osborn, Gilly, & Paillet (1987), cited in O’Sullivan, 2002) argue that teacher educators should view the introduced curriculum program as relevant and desirable. It must be perceived as feasible in the teacher educators’ context, as having advantage over existing practice, and posing little threat to identity.

Therefore, it is important that planners of curriculum programs seek to know how implementers are in fact responding to intentions of the program, rendering support in order to ensure the successful implementation of such a curriculum program. Lovat and Smith (2003: 195) emphasize that, at times of change even the well-adjusted individual or cohesive family or organization will require extra support. This means that despite the fact that some of the teacher educators have had their theoretical training they are often confused when faced with fast changes in their classrooms (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 314).

The new government of Namibia saw teacher education as the most important priority in the transformation of the education system inherited from the colonial period and teacher educators as prime movers in education delivery. For this reason, it is important to be cognizant of teacher educators' attitudes, inclinations, and competencies as these would, to a large measure, determine the quality and operation of an educational enterprise (Witz & Lee, 2009:427).

### **2.3.5. Quality and practicality of the curriculum**

Huberman & Miles (1984) cited in Altrichter & Salzgeber (2000: 99-110) explain "quality" with respect to curriculum implementation as "context suitability." This means that curriculum implementation must fit with available funds, specific student characteristics, the communities, language patterns, teacher educator's abilities, resources and much more. The availability of funds plays a vital role before and during the implementation process. If funds are not available to cater for activities such as staff development programs, physical and human resources this may hamper the effective implementation of a curriculum.

Furthermore, quality and quantity of teacher educators to meet the expectations of the intended curriculum is very crucial. Teacher educators are the most important human resources in curriculum implementation since they are the ones who adopt and implement the ideas and aspirations of the curriculum designers. Okello and Kagoire-Ocheng (1996:125) express that the quality of teacher training largely depends on the quality of teacher educators. This means that the quality of teacher educators determine the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

In addition, "quality" also means that a curriculum can pass the test of the practicality ethic of teacher educators (Doyle & Ponder (1979) cited in Altrichter & Salzgeber (2000: 99). They go on to say that teacher educators appreciate these ideas, curriculum which have proven to "work" in practice or which promise by their appearance of practicality to do so. Those proposals are considered as 'practical' which address salient needs, that fit well with the teacher educator's situation, that are focused and include concrete how-to-do possibilities.

### **2.3.6. Management of curriculum implementation**

Curriculum management includes the many administrative processes and procedures involved in maintaining accurate, up-to-date information about curriculum offerings. Cardno, 2003), cited in Kyahurwa (2013: 14) defines curriculum management as academic leadership, instructional leadership or management of the core business of the campus teaching and learning process. Curriculum management is the effort put by all stakeholders involved towards the successful implementation and attainment of set curriculum goals. Curriculum management requires curriculum managers to be well versed with the curriculum, teaching methods and approaches so that they can be able to provide instructional and curriculum leadership.

The attitude of leadership structures towards the curriculum implementation process is essential if change is meant to be serious. According to Mazibuko (2003:18), the management should assist teacher educators to alter, rearrange, and reinterpret the curriculum. They should organize an effective leadership role, create an enabling campus climate, exercise effective management behavior and overcome constraints from the community or handle the inputs from the community effectively. Mason (2004:21) also states that the campus management who are regarded as instructional leaders should provide curricular direction for the team, inspire and energize the team, motivate and mediate educational policy to the team, mentor and support the team and monitor the progress. The management must ensure that teacher educators have the necessary support system in place, such as resources etc. to implement the curriculum effectively. Furthermore, curriculum designers should also demonstrate active knowledge and understanding both of the attempted change and the process of putting it into reality, in order to provide conducive conditions for the implementation.

Blasé and Blasé (2004:162) identified three primary elements of successful instructional management leadership:

- Conducting conferences: This includes making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling, using inquiry advice and opinions of teacher educators.

- Providing staff development: It includes emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, support for collaboration, development of coaching relationships, use of research, provision of resources, and application of adult and development to all phases of the staff development programs.
- Developing teacher educator reflection: It includes modeling, classroom observation, dialogue, suggestions and praise.

The above discussion indicates that the management structures of campuses are vital to the success of the curriculum paradigm shift (October, 2009: 11). They are to provide direction, mentor and support to the teacher educators and student teachers emotionally and materially, monitor the progress and provide feedback on the teaching and learning and provide staff development. Therefore, there is a need that the management should work together with teacher educators to define curriculum goals and strategies to attain the curriculum goals. It is therefore important that campus managers should have good knowledge of the curriculum program and knowledge of how to motivate teacher educators because the implementation of a new program affects them emotionally. Teacher educators with low morale may perform poorly in their duties. As such, motivation is one of the roles of management leaders that should also be taken into consideration. Motivation is defined as a management strategy to inspire people with the vision, mission and goals of the institution so that attainment of institutional goals becomes the individual's driving force. Motivation helps staff members to accept curriculum changes (October, 2009: 11).

The campus management's role in regard to motivation is that they should be able to explain how individual members of staff and the institution will benefit from the changes. These benefits should suit the needs of individuals as much as possible to win acceptance of the new curriculum. Challenging duties could also be allocated to the staff members to allow them the opportunity to make decisions within policy guidelines. The tasks or duties allocated to staff should be meaningful. According to Burke and Krey (2003: 23) meaningfulness becomes one of the primary influences that campus managers can generate in helping teacher educators to work creatively, collaboratively and in a coordinated manner. It is a challenge on the side of the campus managers to know each and every individual's needs, but they should try to know the needs of the staff and integrate them with the needs of the campus. This will make the staff members identify with

changes. Burke and Krey (2003: 23) further indicate that people can move in harmony when their individual perspectives have been put into harmony with those of others. Part of this can be achieved through clarification of goals.

Mason (2004:61) identified among others, the following strategies in order to motivate the staff to cope with the new curriculum program:

- Create a comfortable and pleasant teaching environment: good classrooms, furniture, teaching and learning resources.
- Ensure a work environment that is physically and psychologically safe and free from external threats.
- Ensure a work environment through creation of policies, procedures and job descriptions.
- Be consistent and fair with everyone.
- Communicate information regularly.
- Introduce changes gradually and systematically.
- Create opportunities for teacher educators to work as a team.
- Involves teacher educators in planning processes
- Support personal and professional growth through continuous learning and training, as well as allowing individuals to perform.

Geysers, Slegers, Stoel and Kruger (2007), cited in Ifemoa (2010: 86) also state that the use of leadership power is crucial for continuous promotion of knowledge and skills of teacher educators through curriculum and instructional leadership. An environment should be created by leaders where teacher educators can make suggestions, offer advice and raise their opinions. Listening to teacher educators view and advice will not reduce leadership powers of the campus manager, but will pull together everybody to work as a team and to participate fully if they (teacher educators) know that their views are valued. October (2009: 11) articulates that a participatory management style is important, because although the campus manager is the guide of the educational change process, the entire campus shares the responsibility of taking ownership in the process of change. Curriculum changes need to be reinforced and campus managers have to guard against any form of resistance from teacher educators (October, 2009).

In conclusion, teacher educators should get as much information as possible on how to perform their duties and why they have to do so. Furthermore, the creation of a positive campus climate will motivate both the managers and teacher educators to face the challenges of the new curriculum with confidence. It will also foster the spirit of cooperation and collegiality whereby teacher educators can easily share their understanding of a new curriculum. In addition, good relationships may encourage educators to be more involved and dedicated to the implementation of a new curriculum as long as they are aware of what they are doing.

### **2.3.7. Training of both campus managers and teacher educators**

Training of campus managers and teacher educators in curriculum program implementation is a prerequisite for successful implementation of the curriculum. Campus managers will not manage the implementation if they are not well trained. McLaughlin (2002:187) states that training of managers and teacher educators in new curriculum is deemed to be ineffective if it is concentrated and scheduled to take place prior to implementation only, like in the form of once-off training. The process should be continuous. It is vital for the managers and teacher educators to know and understand the intention of bringing in such new change. In South Africa, Robinson (2003) argued that teacher educators who were expected to implement new programs had little to draw on from their past experience, as they would have been through a different schooling system and teacher education system. In such a context one would need to ask what resources teacher educators draw on to implement the new curriculum.

Campus managers may organize internal workshops at campus level and invite knowledgeable people in the implementation of the curriculum to facilitate training. Furthermore, continuous meetings, seminars and other related activities can be planned to make aware all members about the new curriculum. These types of initiatives will help instill commitments to changes on one hand and to minimize resistance during curriculum implementation on the other. Campuses with well-trained teacher educators stand a better chance of implementing the curriculum successfully.

### **2.3.8. Staff development programs**

Professional development is key for supporting teachers in new initiatives (Rezzonico, et al (2015); Smith & du Toit, 2016). One benefit of professional development includes teacher educators' increased comfort and skill levels for implementing new curricula. Lia (2016) pointed out that relevant and effective professional development has been found to promote confidence and a greater understanding of objectives. Having time and conducting research to develop meaningful professional development that will consider the needs, concerns and experiences of the teacher educators will be valuable and likely to influence positive growth for the teacher educators (Lia, 2016; Wabule, 2016). Coldwell (2017) and Attard (2017) have both found a connection between teacher educator confidence and professional development. Coldwell (2017) found that professional development increased skills and knowledge, which enabled teachers' confidence in specific content areas; this in turn led to increased job satisfaction and professional motivation.

Several studies have found that teacher educator efficacy stands out as area supported by effective and relevant professional development (Margolis, Durbin & Doring, 2017; Mukan et al., 2016). An assessment on teacher educator efficacy conducted by Drape, Lopez, and Radford (2016) in integrating new curriculum standards into content areas in classroom teaching, has found efficacy to be a primary factor in a teacher educators' competency level when integrating different areas in an Agriculture curriculum. They recommended ongoing and relevant professional development to meet the needs of midcareer teacher educators. Maintaining teacher confidence and reducing anxiety through deliberate choices in professional development content both help to support teacher educators through curriculum change (Drape et al., 2016; Mukan et al., 2016).

Kyndt et al. (2016) offer further insight into teacher educators' attitudes and beliefs as well as the concerns they experience from curriculum implementation through informal learning for professional growth. Teacher collaboration, team planning, or even monitoring may all be classified as informal learning opportunities. Informal learning though not organized (as formal professional development is), allows teacher educators to work together to reduce the feelings of isolation they often experience (Kyndt et al.,2016). Kyndt et al further express that experience and age do not appear to affect new learning as much as personal attitude does. Understanding the

differences in attitudes could help to break down the barriers to full curricular implementation. This situation indicates that professional development does not always need to be formal; most teacher educators hope that professional development will be relevant to their content areas and will allow them to collaborate and solve problems.

As the literature has pointed out, understanding teacher educators concerns helps campus managers / leaders when choosing the professional development that will be most relevant to the teacher educators (Bakir et al., 2016; Speering; 2016). Bautista et al. (2016) deliberated further on this notion through a study in which they investigated teacher beliefs, priorities, and professional development needs when implementing a curriculum. Bautista et al. (2016) and Whitenack and Venkatsubramanian (2016) both found that teacher educators commonly showed eagerness for opportunities to strengthen their expertise in curriculum areas, and they needed professional development to do so. Teacher educators' beliefs also influence their views of the curriculum. For example, if teacher educators perceive themselves as being unprepared or unfamiliar with a curriculum, then these beliefs will influence how they respond to and implement the curriculum (Bautista et al., 2016). Bautista et al (2016) recommend that professional development should require alignment with teacher educators' learning demands to achieve optimal effectiveness.

In addition, professional development plays a part in reducing anxiety when implementing a new curriculum (Hall, 2015). Cetin (2016) found similar conclusion as Bautista et al. (2016) regarding the benefits of professional development. Cetin (2016) included an increased understanding of science teachers' level of use for technology integration and the effect of professional sessions designed to improve comfort and proficiency. The teachers initially showed little knowledge on the subject area and a lack of training and skills necessary for successful integration. Cetin (2016) reported that following the professional development sessions for technology, 58% of the teachers developed increased confidence and positive outlooks about integration process. Cetin's study (2016) provides a concrete example of how professional development improves teacher proficiency as well as alleviates concerns through the practical application of the curriculum. Teacher educators become more likely to implement curriculum with fidelity when they feel well prepared through professional development and develop the knowledge and awareness required for effective implementation (Cetin, 2016).

The Namibian Ministry of Education pointed out that teacher educators from the pre-independence dispensation find the implementation of the new curriculum programs challenging and sometimes not willing to conform to it, because their own “professional development has not kept track with educational development and practice.” (Ministry of Education, 1993: 21-22). Thus, because of their limited understanding especially about the new curriculum program, they could not be effective with the implementation. In this case, continuous, relevant professional development programs are the key to address and break this gap.

Joyce and Showers (2002) also state that professional development activities help teachers learn and apply new skills and knowledge. They further reported that only 10% of teacher educators add new strategies to their repertoire without ongoing support, but when continual professional development assistance is provided, up to 90% of teacher educators master new strategies. Reitzug (2003: 124) also reported that:

Evidence abounds of the significance of the relationship between the content of staff development, the quality of staff development, and student achievement, so long as staff development adheres to certain principles that focus on student learning and instruction, a commitment of time and resources to implement development over an extended period of time, and the development of professional development styles that engage teachers collaboratively rather focusing them as individuals.

Furthermore, Darling–Hammond (2003:2) has also pointed out that “teacher educators learn best by studying; doing and reflecting; by collaborating with others; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see.”

Darling-Hammond, Aness and Falk (1995) further pointed out that professional development takes teacher educators out of the role of passive receivers of information and places them instead in the position of collaboratively and actively constructing knowledge about teaching. Meaningful change can only be realized when those who work in campuses have the opportunity to develop new knowledge, skills and attitudes and therefore professional development is the key in

facilitating this change. Lastly, Elmore (2002) stated that the main purpose of professional development should not only be the improvement of individual teacher educator, but the improvement of the whole training system. Therefore, professional development is seen as a driving force to a successful curriculum implementation.

In the next section, I discuss critical social realism, a theory that underpins this study.

## **2.4. Critical realism**

This study draws on critical realism (CR), in particularly Roy Bhaskar's work and the social theory of Margaret Archer (1988; 1995; 1996; 2000). One of the primary reasons for the emphasis on critical realism is that it can generate important insights into social phenomena such as curriculum practices and experiences. In this section I discuss CR as a framework for this study, and summarize some of the important key elements of CR, which are relevant to this study.

CR as a theory is associated with a British philosopher named Bhaskar (1978; 1979). It was later developed and employed in social science by Bhaskar (1989) and many others, most notably by Archer (1995; 1996; 2000), Sayer (1992; 1999), Layder (1994) and Collier (1994; 1998). The philosophical approach of CR has been an object of growing interest (Mingers, 2004).

When exploring various ontological and epistemological philosophies. I found that a positivist and idealist philosophy could not help me understand why Namibian teacher education changed its curriculum and why the change does not happen as intended in most of the campuses. Bhaskar (1978) explains that idealists regard objects of knowledge as human constructs imposed upon the phenomenon and positivists rely on a sequence of events in accounting for the world. Thus, using positivist and idealists' theories, this study could have provided an explanation of the curriculum change and implementation based on what the teacher educators think, know, and see or what I as a researcher observe, reducing the reality of the curriculum change and implementation to our knowledge of it (Roberts, 2001) or as other philosophers: Danermark, Ekstrom, Jacobsen and Karlsson, put it, collapsing ontology with epistemology (2002). Danermark, Ekstrom, Jacobsen and Karlsson (2002: 8) further argue that this "flat ontology" is rejected by critical realism and

Bhaskar (the founder of critical realism), refers to the “epistemic fallacy” (1978:16). Bhaskar explains that “epistemic fallacy” refers to the mistake of analyzing questions of being (ontology) in terms of our knowledge of being (epistemology) (1978). Therefore, in order to obtain a better understanding on curriculum change and implementation, I decided to opt for critical realism as a theoretical framework for this study rather than positivist or idealist theorists. More specifically, it has ontological depth which helped me achieve my objectives for this study.

Benton & Craib, 2001: 120) argue that for critical realists, the surface appearance of things is “potentially misleading as to their true character.” They further explain that at time, we may not even experience or observe some of these things that exist but that does not mean that they do not exist (Benton & Craib, 2001). We may as well perceive and experience the same phenomenon differently (Mingers, 2000). Our knowledge of reality is therefore unstable and unreliable, thus fallible and subject to change. Because of this, critical realists avoid empiricism and idealism. The purpose of critical realism is to understand and explain the world behind the misleading appearance (Mingers, 2000).

A distinctive feature of a realist philosophy is that ontology (the theory of being) is seen as distinct from epistemology (the theory of knowledge) which means that scientific theorizing is based on the assumption that there exists a mind-independent reality. In this respect realism differs from empiricism (the view that knowledge derives from experiences of the world) and also from idealism (positing thoughts and language over matter). In social studies this distinction conditions our analysis: how real is social reality, and how we can best study the complex social events such as curriculum practices and experiences.

Critical realism is based on the assumption that there is an external world that exists independently of our experiences of it (Bhaskar, 1978, 1991, 1998). What that world is and what it is like is not affected by our experiences, our feelings, and our perception of it, our beliefs about it and our desire of it (Bhaskar, 1978, 1991, 1998). Critical realists attach their description of the social world to this deep and relatively stable knowledge (Sayer, 2000, Danemark et al., 2002). Benton & Craib (2001) express the view that this external world does not only exist independently of our knowledge of it but it also quite often resists our attempts to understand and change it.

Davidson (2005) holds the view that critical realism differs from other philosophies on the basis that reality is grounded on the concepts of a differentiated and stratified reality. The concept of differentiated reality, according to Mingers (2000), ensures that the enduring causal mechanisms of the world are not conflated with the events and experiences they generate. The concept of a stratified reality was influenced by Marx. Bhaskar who explains that “Marx somewhere observed that the whole of science would be pointless unless there was a possibility of a distinction between essence and appearance, unless there was the possibility that what we thought about natural reality or any other form of reality was wrong.” (Norris, 1999; 4). Bhaskar developed the concept of stratification from this idea which is twofold. The first relates to the beliefs that reality consists of three levels: the real, the actual and the empirical. The second is the concept of emergence: meaning one layer is emergent from the one below it (Bhaskar, 1975). In the next paragraphs, I provide a brief explanation about these levels and how they are linked to this study:

The first level is the empirical reality. According to Danermark et al (2002), the empirical is reality is most accessible to us and refers to our observations and experiences of the world. Danermark et al. (2002) further explains that this type of reality contains our data or facts which are always mediated by our theoretical conceptions. Since theory changes, the empirical world consists of knowledge that is unstable and therefore fallible. In the case of my study, empirical knowledge consisted of knowledge that is documented by the developers of curriculum, teacher educators’ knowledge about the curriculum change and implementation in Namibian teacher education. Critical realism avoids the reliance on only this knowledge because it does not account for reality that exists independently of human knowledge of it (Bhaskar, 1975). Critical realism is of the opinion that this type of knowledge can be explored further to uncover what is responsible for people’s experiences and observation of the world.

The second level of reality is the actual which consist of the events of the world. Danermark et al. (2002) refers to this as events of the world whether they are experienced by people or not. They further stress that this events depends on specific conditions and cannot be reduced to what is observed at the empirical level (Danermark et al., 2002). In the case of my study, this could be the decision made by the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia to introduce a new

B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. According to Danermark et al., (2002) and Sayer, (2000), knowledge about this level of reality and about the empirical world is assessed through our senses and is therefore context dependent. For critical realists, the empirical and actual worlds generate unstable and unreliable knowledge which they call transitive knowledge (Bhaskar, 1975).

The third is the level of the real which is regarded as the deepest level of reality. Reality at this level is regarded as stable, as Bhaskar refers to this domain as the intransitive dimension of reality. Sayer (2000) explains that real refers to anything that exists, be it natural or social which has power to cause events and experiences at the level of actual and empirical respectively. Carter & New (2004) pointed out that in the natural science this is what was made by men, but is natural, while in the social science this is what was socially constructed by others in the past, which we are born into and which is therefore not of our own making. Houston, (2002) says that it refers to those underlying structures that have properties and mechanisms which, when they combine in sometimes complex ways, cause events at the level of the actual. Exstrom (1992: 114), states that the aim of critical realist research is to “arrive at knowledge of the content of the causal process.” It is at this level that my study is trying to find out. My study was focusing on investigating mechanisms at the level of the real that influence curriculum change and implementation events and experiences at the level of the actual and empirical. For example in the case of my study, resources, teacher educators’ inputs etc. are examples of mechanisms which contributed towards inability of teacher educators to implement the curriculum in the way intended by the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia.

Lastly, is the concept of emergence. Carter & New (2004:7) define emergence as “the way in which particular combinations of things, processes and practices in social life frequently give rise to emergent properties.” Structures and mechanisms at the level of the real have powers to cause events and experiences at the level of the actual and empirical. Mechanisms, according to Bhaskar, “combine to generate the flux of phenomena that constitute the actual states and happenings of the world” (Bhaskar, 1975: 47). Mingers (2000) explains that this form of stratification therefore suggests that each of the two layers in the transitive domain emerges from the layer before it. That is, the empirical emerges from the actual, and the actual emerges from the real, therefore both the

actual and empirical emerge from the real. It is important to note that it does not mean that reality at all three levels is the same, according to the concept of emergence, the combination of things gives rise to new emergent properties. Therefore emergent properties requires us to understand that mechanisms do not predict outcomes but produce tendencies (Houston, 2001). Critical realist argue against determinism (Houston, 2001).

Danermark et al., (2002: 161) argue that outcomes can only be predicted in closed systems. In open systems, more than one mechanism operate at any point in time because a social phenomenon has “many different socially important qualities” (Danermark et al., 2002: 161). For example, teacher educators are not just teacher educators, they have other responsibilities such as mothers/fathers, church members and many more. In addition, they are reflexive actors (Archer, 1995, 1996). This gives them the power to make decisions and act upon it. Houston (2001) further express that cause-effect relationships do not apply in social sciences but only exist in the natural science where natural phenomena cannot think, react and exert external influences on the experiment. In addition, to adopt a deterministic view is to conflate the worlds or realities, it is to reduce the level of events (actual) and experiences (empirical) to the level of the real (Houston, 2001). This means that it is to conflate the system with people’s lives in the system.

The theory of CR also recognizes the reality of the natural world as well as the events and discourses of the social world (Bhaskar, 1989). Bhaskar argues that we will only be able to understand – and so change – the social world if we identify the structures at work that generate those events and discourses (1989). CR focuses on social reality as consisting of social structures that exist “independently of the various ways in which they can be discursively constructed and interpreted by social scientists and other social actors located in a wide range of socio-historical situations” (Reed, 2001).

This way of thinking about science implies that reality is stratified. Events can be seen, but social mechanisms are not readily observable, they require theory and abstraction. Bhaskar (1989) argues that science should not be content to study only what we can empirically experience, but the aim of science is to discover (identify and describe) these hidden, or not readily observable structures and objects that have causal powers to produce effects.

Furthermore, CR philosophy also assumes that reality is composed of different levels (e.g. the biological, the psychological, the social, and the cultural levels). None of these levels, nor the causes of what occurs on these levels can be reduced to another level. This is a cornerstone for the analysis and implies that complex social phenomena such as curriculum practices cannot be explained in terms of mechanisms or processes working at just one level, be it personal, cognitive, discursive or socio-cultural. Moreover, CR also involves an emancipatory dimension (Collier, 1998). He argues that through an explanatory critique i.e. by providing an account of the generative mechanisms that give rise to certain events and institutions, one is simultaneously engaged in a critique of their role in and influence on social action (Collier, 1998). It is therefore important that social science needs to do more than give description of the world as seen by its members, it needs also to ask whether members have an adequate understanding of their world and if not to explain why not (Manicas, 1998).

Critical realism offers a comprehensive alternative to positivism and idealism. Bhaskar's work provides the foundation for a realist metatheory that is, in principle, compatible with a variety of social theories. But because of its stratified view of social reality, it is not compatible with upward, downward or cultural conflationism. That is to say, people cannot be reduced to society, nor society to people, social structures, cultural systems and human agents each possesses their own emergent properties which have to be taken into account when investigating social phenomenon. Bhaskar's (1989) (cited in Harvey, 2002) transformational model of social action, society does not directly create man [sic] any more than man directly creates society. An important assumption is that society can effectively socialize man if, and only if, a manifold of social relations are already in place. And although all social phenomena are dependent on human action, action requires structures. On the other hand, society is never the "unmediated transliteration of individual desire into structure, but human transformative power is always dependent on the facilities already in place." (Harvey, 2002: 168).

Archer's (1995; 1996; 2000) principles of analytical dualism which complements and develops Bhaskar's philosophy, provides an analytical framework in which the interrelationships between structure, culture and agency can be examined. Margaret Archer is a social realist; she explained

that ontological depth can only be achieved if structure, culture and agency are analyzed separately. Archer emphasize that these three elements in real life are not separable. They are intertwined, simultaneously influencing each other. But Archer advises that for analytical purposes these elements should be separated because they are fundamentally different in form and each possess unique properties and powers. Separating them would help achieve a deeper understanding of their differences and influences on social reality such as curriculum practices.

Before I discuss these concepts, let me take note of the fact that this study is drawn from critical social realism perspective and there are some limitations attached to this theory. Critical realist is a meta-theory rather a method of study (Danemark et al, 2000). It has therefore been criticized on those grounds. For example, Callinicos argues that “what critical realism did was to articulate best practice in critical social theory rather than offer a philosopher’s stone that allow us to resolve a whole series of anomalies, tension and crises in particular disciplines” (Callinicos, 2003: 91). So to bridge this methodological gab, I have brought in Margaret Archers’ principles of analytical dualism such as structure, culture and agency to serve as an analytical tool for data analysis, as well as the literature related to curriculum change and implementation to gain insight into workings of structures and mechanisms implicated in curriculum change and implementation in Namibia.

The next section provides a discussion of Archer’s concepts of analytical dualism.

## **2.5. Margaret Archer’s concepts of structure, culture and agency**

In this section, I explore how Margaret Archer’s concepts of structure, culture and agency are closely associated with the context of this study. According to Archer (1995; 1996), social reality, which includes curriculum practices, consists of three elements: structure which she refers to as the material aspects of social life such as policies, resources, positions, roles etc., culture, which refers to the ideational aspects of social life such as values, beliefs, theories, etc., and agency as the human aspects of social life, that is who is doing what to whom.

In the context of my study, structure refers to, for example, the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education, the roles of teacher educators and curriculum designers, as well as the resources

needed for the successful implementation of the new curriculum. Culture refers to the beliefs and attitudes of teacher educators towards the new curriculum and agency refers to the choices or decisions teacher educators make that may either constrain or enable the implementation of the new curriculum.

Archer developed analytical principles that recognize the differences of structure, culture and agency and their distinctive powers that each possesses which she calls analytical dualism. Analytical dualism is a method that recognizes that entities of social life, the ‘parts’ and ‘people’ are analytically separable (Archer, 1996: xvi). The ‘parts’ and ‘people’ here refer to structure, culture and agency. The concept of analytical dualism provides researchers with a methodological means of separating these elements of social life for purposes of analysis (Archer, 1988; 1995; 2000).

Furthermore, it allows us to disentangle the various aspects that contribute to the unfolding of a given social situation, enabling us to make a judgment as to the relative causative weight of structure, culture and agency towards curriculum change and implementation.

As discussed in the previous section, social reality - which includes curriculum practices - consists of three elements (Archer, 1995; 1996). Archer stresses that these elements in real life are not separable because they are closely connected and at the same time influence each other. Archer further advises that for analytical purpose these elements should be separated because separating them would help us achieve a deeper understanding of their differences and influences on social reality. A study which conflates these elements commits what Archer calls the “fallacy of conflation” (1996: xv).

Following Archer’s concept of analytical dualism allowed me to explore each of these elements in order to obtain a deeper understanding of their interaction and influence in enabling and constraining the implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education.

The next section discusses the analysis of what each of these elements entails in the context of this study.

### **2.5.1. Structure**

Archer (1995; 1996) refers to structure as the material aspects of social life which include: policies, resources, both physical and human, positions, roles etc. According to Archer, analysis at the cultural level entails exploring the kind of ideas, beliefs etc., operating in society, their relationship and the powers they have over the actions of people, whereas the structural level entails for example the identification of policies, materials and the powers they have over the actions of people, analyzing at the structural level includes the identification of material resources both physical and human, their relationship, and the powers they have over the actions of people. Structural property are explored independently of social interactions because they exist independently of what we know, thing and feel about them.

There are three important characteristics that should be considered when doing structural analysis. These are autonomy, anterior and causal influence (Archer, 1995:176). Autonomy means that structures are different from culture and people (though they are related and influence each other) and for analytical purposes, they should not be conflated with culture and agency.

Secondly, they pre-exist people in that people are born into them and “their prior existence frequently constrains the meanings which can be imposed or made to stick” (Archer, 1995:176). Lastly they exert independent causal influence on people’s actions. This means that the structural domain is an exploration of causal powers of the elements of structure. The causal powers may be exercised, unexercised or exercised but obscured at the level of the events “as people exercise their reflexive, innovative, and creative process” (Archer, 1995:174).

The relationship between structure and agency is therefore contingent because “the two exist on their own for they are existentially independent” (Archer, 1995:174). Structure possesses contingent powers as opposed to deterministic powers over people. Archer argues that structure is seen as structurally conditioning and not as structurally determining the actions of people

(1995:175). This shows that structures should not be confused with the way we think of what they are.

For example, in the case of my study, when I analyze structure my focus was on roles, policies and resources. According to Archer roles as a structural mechanism has constraining and enabling powers over people through roles expectations, (the dos and don'ts) and through penalties and promotions established to encourage compliance (Archer, 1995). Archer argues that roles do not necessarily program the behavior of their incumbents; people personify these roles in different ways (Archer, 1995). For example, the teacher educators' interpretations of their roles towards the implementation of the curriculum may differ from that of the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia. Archer argues that it helps to think of people as personifying roles as it enables one to differentiate between two sets of emergent properties, namely "the role itself (that is prior definition of obligations, sanctions and interests) and the personal qualities an actor brings to it" (Archer, 1995:187).

Policies on the other hand have also enabling or constraining power over people in terms of its implementation. Spillane, Reiser and Reiner (2002) pointed out that implementers of such a policy may lack the capacity, the knowledge, skills and resources necessary to work in ways that are consistent with the policy. Even if implementers may construct understandings that reflect the policy maker's intent they may not have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to do what the policy to be asking of them.

### **2.5.2. Culture**

Archer (1988) describes the term culture as beliefs, values, norms, ideas and other kinds of information. According to Archer (1988:154) "two types of relations exists within the cultural system." The first comprises "contradictions and complementaries that are logical or epistemic relations, internal to particular cultural forms." The second type comprises "social or political contradictions and complementaries that might occur between competing ideational systems or cultural forms." Archer argues that contradictions are "site(s) of cultural tension" which constitutes problem-ridden situations for human actions, leading to social elaboration. These relations

(consistency, contradictions) are therefore explored between the elements of the culture and agency.

Archer (1996:105) explains that analyzing culture is aimed at two things: The first is to understand what “thought processes” (ideas, beliefs, theories, attitudes, etc.) are contained in the society’s “propositional register.” The cultural system consists of “impositions” from those in power. It imposes constraints on the actions of people. Implicated impositions therefore are power relations (Archer, 1996). Archer further explains that power relations are causal elements in that they influence behavior (cultural consensus) but they do not guarantee behavior conformity. Instead they can provoke any kind of behavior within the causal consensus continuum; from ritualistic acceptance to outright rejection of the culture “imposed” (Archer, 1996).

It is therefore important to understand that the cultural domain consists of propositions about the behavior of people for society to be the way it is proposed. That is, it consists of the things held to be true or false in society at any given time or place (Archer, 1996). It does not mean that this is the way people actually behave in society. Archer (1996:104) explains that the cultural system refers to “all things capable of being grasped, deciphered, understood or known by someone.” Secondly, one needs to understand the power that cultural properties have in conditioning people’s actions. This entails “specifying which systemic relationship conditions action, how they do so and the range of possible reactions to such constraints” (Archer, 1996:144). It is concerned with “the effects of holding theories or beliefs which stand in particular logical relationships to other theories or beliefs” (Archer, 1996:144). Whether these beliefs are contradictory or complementary will indicate the kind of influence the properties of the cultural system have “on those who uphold ideas possessing them.” In this respect Archer, (1996:107) states:

The cultural system contains constraints (like the things that can and cannot be said in a particular natural language), it embodies new possibilities (such as technical applications undreamed of in the pure theory on which they are based), and it introduces new problems through the relationships between the emergent entities themselves (the clash of theories), between these and the physical environment (mastery and ruin), between these and human actors.

Furthermore, she argues that consistency and contradictions are most important because they are all important elements to account for cultural change and stability. The contradictions or complementary relations of systemic properties of people's beliefs condition their actions. Therefore, it is important to understand what beliefs people hold and what behavior is possible when such beliefs are held, and therefore what problems or possibilities could result from holding such beliefs.

In the case of my study, this level of analysis refers to the introduction of the new curriculum which was imposed on teacher educators by the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia. The purpose here is not to explain how the teacher educators responded to the new curriculum which was imposed on them, but to identify the cultural system and its power on the actions and behaviors of teacher educators at the level of the actual. This enabled me to understand whether the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia was enabled or constrained at the cultural level.

### **2.5.3. Agency**

Agency refers to the reflexive, creative, innovative, and purposeful actions of people. (Archer 1995; 1996). Furthermore, it refers to choices people make in their daily lives which has a strong influence over structure and culture. People are not objects that can automatically be moved by the forces of structure and culture. According to Archer, even though structural and cultural systems impose constraints on the actions of people, it is important to understand that people are reflective actors. They choose what they like and dislike what they agree with and disagree with, what they prefer and do not prefer, whether to be loyal, to be chauvinists, etc. (Archer, 1995; 1996). The people's action can be different from the socio-cultural system imposed upon them, not because of the differences between imposed ideas and ideas held by individual actors, but because people think and make own decisions about things. Archer therefore maintains that the actions of people do not reflect the cultural system, but "can show a significant degree of independent variation" (1996:185). Such deviations are crucial because they account for change or stability of structural and cultural. Therefore, people have emergent powers that cannot be reduced to those of structure and culture.

Archer (1995) differentiates between social agent and social actors to show the contribution people make in the process of changing the structure or culture. According to her social agents and social actors are not different people. “The distinction is temporal and analytical” (Archer, 1995:280). “We become agents before we become actors” (Archer, 1995:277). According to Archer, everyone is an agent but not everyone is an actor. Archer, therefore define social agents as “collectivities sharing the same life chances” (1995:257). People do not choose to belong to these social groups, we belong involuntarily. We acquire involuntarily our differentiated positions in society; those of being privileged and underprivileged in the stratified distribution of societal resources (Archer, 1995). Social agents have shown interests that arise from our privileged and underprivileged positions.

According to Archer an actor is someone who chooses to identify with a particular role and who actively personifies it in particular way (Archer, 1995). From the role, actors acquire social identities such as being teacher educators, economist etc. The concept of agency is vital. In this respect Archer (1987:187) states that:

Real actors bring their own ideals and objectives, skills and in competencies, dedications or distancing, inflexibility or creativeness to the role they occupy. All such features are not formed by the job (though they may be positively or negatively reinforced in doing it and undergo transformation through learning); otherwise we would be committed to the undesirable image of robotic executors ... only by examining the interplay between a role and its occupants is it possible to account for why some roles are personified in the routinized ways whilst others can be cumulatively transformed in the hands of their incumbents.

Agency is vital in this study because it refers to the choices or decisions teacher educators made which make them to either implement or not to implement the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum as required. Agency is therefore a necessary concept to look at when a researcher aims at understanding why people in their respective activities do what they do when the role does not require them to do it (Archer, 1995: 187). Teacher educators are the focus of this study and they are called social agents and social actors. They are social actors because they are the implementers of the curriculum. Teacher educators are also social agents because they are born into communities

characterized by particular structural and cultural systems which influence their choices of action (Archer 1995; Carter & New, 2004a, 2004b). The teacher educator's choices and decisions may either enable or constrain the implementation of the curriculum.

In conclusion, to obtain a deeper understanding of social reality such as curriculum practices requires that structure, culture and agency be examined separately in order to capture their unique and autonomous properties and powers to influence the lives of people (Archer, 1995). This enable a researcher to determine about conditioning mechanisms (the real domain) without giving advantage to one element of it (be it structure, culture or agency) (Archer, 1995, 1996). Structure, culture and agency have power to influence the lives of people because they have an objective existence. They exist "independent of anyone's claim to know, believe, to assert or to assent to them" (Archer, 1996: 107).

In the light of the discussion about what critical social realism is and Archer's analytical principles of culture, structure and agency in the literature reviewed, I explore the relevance of these theories to this study in the next sections.

## **2.6. The relevance of the theory to this study**

Critical social theorists argue that being realist about social movements means being clear on the theoretical foundations that one uses to examine the social world. The study made me aware that social reality which includes curriculum practices does not exist in isolation; it is connected to other parts of the social world. The fact that it exists as a result of other social realities means that it is connected and can be influenced by those social realities. According to Archer, "to the social realist there is no 'isolated' micro world no *lebenswelt* 'insulated' from the socio-cultural system in the sense of being unconditioned by it, nor a hermetically sealed domain whose day-to-day doings are guaranteed to be of no systemic 'import' (Archer, 1995:10).

The traditional view of curriculum is that it is a product that is transmitted to students by the teacher educators. This type of view treats curriculum as an independent phenomenon that it is not affected by other social realities. Putting my study within a critical social realist philosophy means that I view curriculum practices as contingent to other parts of the social world. This is because critical

realists view social events and experiences, such as curriculum practices as emerging from the mechanisms at the level of the real.

It is from this point of view, that curriculum should not be seen as disconnected from other social realities, rather been seen and understood as both a social practice and process (Grundy, 1987; Fairclough, 1989; Kelly, 1989). To view curriculum as both a social structure and a process means that it is part of other social structures and it is socially influenced by other part of the social structure (Kelly, 1989).

Margaret Archer's understanding of the social world as consisting of three analytically separate dimensions, namely structural and agential provided me with an even deeper understanding of the influences of mechanisms on events and experiences

Archer advises that to obtain a deeper understanding of these elements regarding how they work, whether they are active or not, and their influences on other social realities requires that they should be explored separately, because it allows a researcher to tease out the relative contributions of each to the unfolding of any given situation. For example, Archer's framework may allow a researcher to analyze how ideologies relating to accountability (cultural forms) enable the persistence of power that is an emergent property of certain roles and systems in a campus (social structure), how these roles constrain agency, and what teacher educators bring to bear on particular experiences and values in acting within these constraints (Archer, 1995).

In conclusion, critical social realism are underpinned by a depth ontology, it therefore provided me with an understanding of underlying mechanisms responsible of the way teacher educators in my study implement the B. Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined the literature that guided my research project. I presented key elements of curriculum change and implementation. Also in this chapter, I examined social realism and the relevance of this theory to this study. To analyze data I employ Margaret Archer's concepts of structure, culture and agency. In the next chapter I provide a detailed outline of the methodologies used for my research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Henning (2004: 36) describes methodology as a “coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the ability to fit to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the researcher’s purpose.”

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In Chapter One, I indicated that critical social realism offered the broad framework for this study. Critical realism is not a research method. It only offers guidelines for social science research (Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M. & Jakobsen, L., 2005: 73). Sayer (2000) argues that the method(s) a researcher decides to use depends on the object of study and what one wants to learn about it.

As I indicated in Chapter One, my study was concerned with understanding mechanisms or elements that enabled or constrained the implementation of the newly introduced curriculum for the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. The methods I chose to use were therefore ones that enabled me to reach the objectives of my study. Critical realism provides a promising analytical and explanatory framework for examining the interplay between structure, culture and agency within organizations and the way in which these interact with people’s subjective experiences.

On the other hand, qualitative research lies in the interpretive approach to social reality and in the description of lived experiences of human beings. Interpretive research “is often used synonymously with qualitative research” (Giorgi, 2003: 20). It is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social context. Interpretive researches rely heavily on qualitative data that derives from interview, observation and documentation. Furthermore, it is based on understanding the meaning of the participants’ experiences in order to provide a “thick description “or a rich narrative story of the phenomenon of interest that can communicate why participants acted the way they did.

In the next sections, I provided details of each of the methods. I begin by discussing the approach I took in carrying out this study.

### **3.2. Qualitative approach**

Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as the need to explore a key concept, or central phenomenon, surrounding a particular problem. The qualitative design selected for this research study was directly derived from the need to provide an in-depth inquiry into a specific problem as I indicated earlier on. This design supported the purpose of this study. A quantitative design was not used because the characteristic of such a study did not fit well with the objectives, purpose, or research questions of the proposed study. Creswell (2014) argues that quantitative characteristics include the examination of possible relationships between variables, which receive representation through numeric data collection. Generalizability was not a goal of this study, which instead sought a rich, descriptive examination of the specific perceptions that influence teacher educator behavior. Qualitative designs employ inductive techniques of reasoning, with the expectations that various viewpoints will materialize from analysis (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014).

Qualitative research was chosen, as the study aimed to elicit the views, beliefs and experiences of the teacher educators in my study and to understand the factors that enabled or constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:26) further state that:

Applied to educational contexts qualitative or naturalist research recognizes that what goes on in our campuses and classrooms is made up of complex layers of meanings, interpretations, values and attitudes. Campuses, classrooms and their participants have histories and careers, teacher educators and student teachers have their own educational and life histories, departmental members engage in interpersonal relations, conflicts and alliances emerge, responses to innovations and institutionalization ensures that campuses and classrooms have cultures and ethos. A firm understanding of these variations and the

ways in which they interact to create the politics and dynamics of educational change requires a qualitative appreciation of these facts.

In Sayer's (1984:222) view, research questions best suited answered through a qualitative approach include "what produces a certain change?, what did the agents actually do?" Qualitative approach is concerned with the meanings people attach to things in their lives and how they think and act in their daily lives (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). It therefore allows for "an in-depth study of one or few cases focusing on specific circumstances" (Danermark et al. 2002:167). The qualitative approach best suited my study as I was concerned with understanding and explaining mechanisms that enabled and constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. I now discuss the four cases in the context of my study.

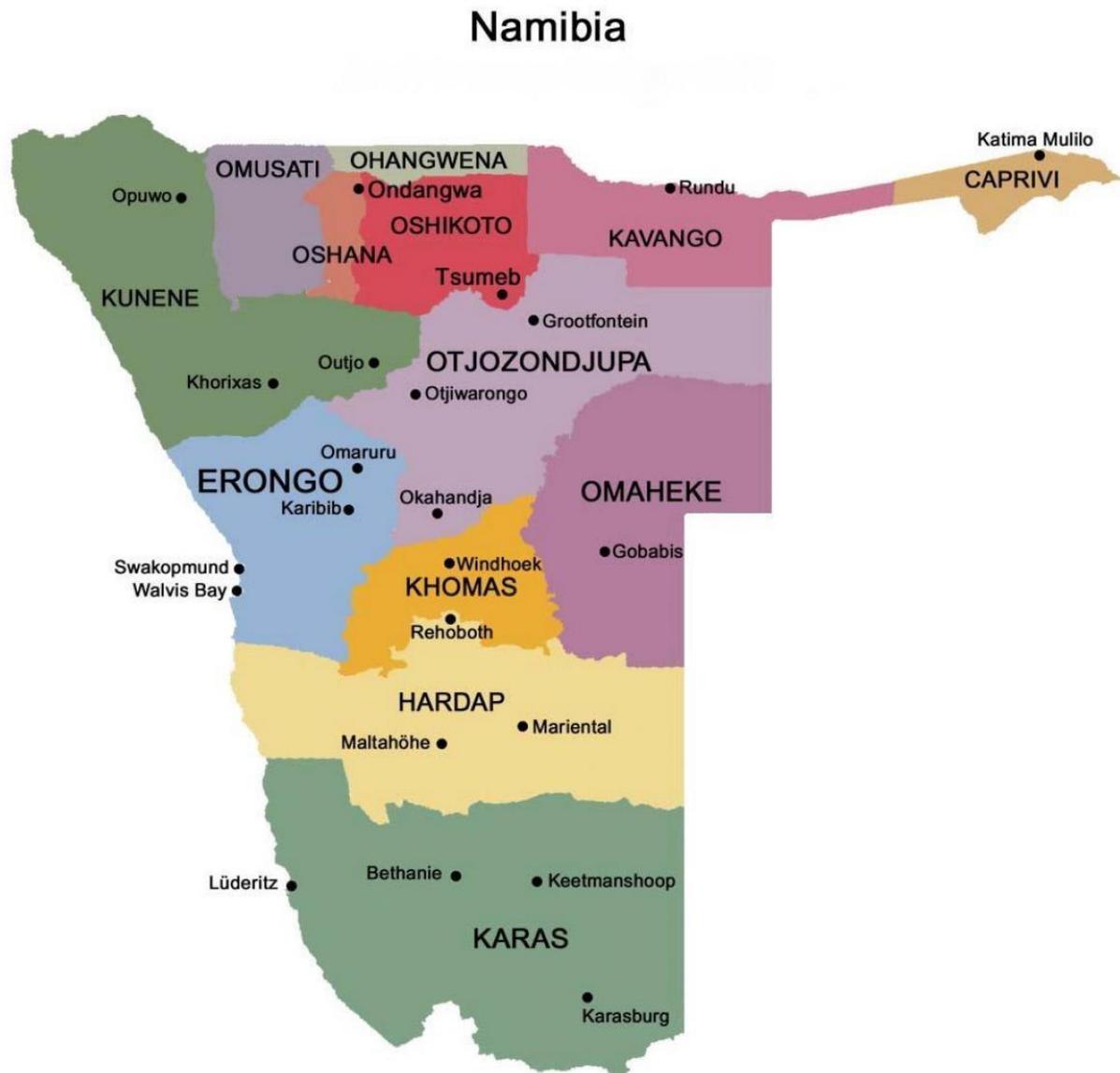
### **3.3. Case study approach**

A case study approach as a form of qualitative research is a data-gathering technique (Yin, 2009). The use of case study allows for an intensive investigation, they allow for a deeper understanding that leads to rich interpretation (Denscombe, 2007).

The case study I undertook was a multiple-case study (Yin, 2009; Duff, 2008) because I was investigating curriculum implementation at four different campuses (Hifemo campus, Tikamo campus, Rosmund campus and Kokalipi campus). Names of campuses have been changed for purposes of confidentiality. Multiple-case designs refer to two or more cases that are researched in order to facilitate an understanding of something (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009). In the case of my study, my four cases were chosen in order to help me understand how they implement the new curriculum in their respective campuses. According to Yin (2009), multiple-case designs are preferred over single-case design (a "one case" case study) because they greatly support findings compared to those from a single case. In my study I used a multi-case study because the four campuses might implement the new curriculum differently and there was a need for me to explore and explain them separately.

### **3.4. The research setting**

This study was conducted in Namibia. I selected four campuses of the University of Namibia that are located in different regions in Namibia: Rosmund campus in Kavango east region, northeast of Namibia; Tikamo campus in Zambezi region, northeast of Namibia; Hifemo campus in Oshanna region, far north of Namibia and Kokalipi campus in Khomas region, central of Namibia. The four campuses were selected because these are the campuses that are implementing the new B.Ed. Pre and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia, as I indicated in Chapter Two (see the map of Namibia in the next page).



**Figure 1. Map showing the regions and towns of Namibia**

In the next session, I provide in brief the characteristics of each of the sites.

### 3.4.1. Rosmund campus

Rosmund campus is situated in Rundu town, in the Kavango east region in the northeast of Namibia. This is where I come from, and where I work. Before the merger, Rosmund campus had a small student population of +-400. The resources (both physical and human) were not sufficient.

For example, there were inadequate library materials which were mostly written in English and Afrikaans, and only a few books were written in the local languages. The majority of the teacher educators had only undergraduate degrees and educational diplomas. The campus only offered one program, namely the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD). The students were trained in Lower Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary Education which allowed them to teach from grade 0-3 (Lower Primary), 4-7 (Upper Primary) and 8-10 (Secondary Education).

In 2010, colleges of the Ministry of Education were merged with the University of Namibia. A new curriculum was developed in 2010 and it replaced the BETD curriculum. In 2011, Rosmund campus started implementing the new curriculum named the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary education and the B.Ed. Upper Primary Education. During this time, the student population drastically increased from 400 to 2000 students. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the University of Namibia made some changes with regard to the physical and human resources. Infrastructures were renovated, and some additional buildings were also built to accommodate the number of students. Staff development programs were introduced for the teacher educators to improve their qualifications. Currently now the majority of the teacher educators have a Master's degree and some have PhD's. Rosmund campus is currently offering the following qualifications: Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum for teachers to teach from Pre Primary up to grade 3; Bachelor of Upper Primary Education for teachers to teach from grade 4 up to grade 7; Bachelor of Business Administration; Diploma in Junior Primary Education for teachers to teach from grade 1 up to grade 3; Diploma in Entrepreneurship and New Venture and Higher Diploma in Accounting and Auditing.

Rosmund campus uses English as a medium of instruction and a language for communication. Apart from English it also offers three mother tongues which are: Rumanyo, Rukwangali and Thimbukushu. The students who are admitted into the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary program should have one of these languages at grade 12 levels. In fact, all courses of Pre- and Lower Primary were supposed to be taught in mother tongues. This is mandated by the Ministry of Basic Education curriculum for Pre-and Lower Primary Education.

As I indicated earlier on, Rosmund campus is situated in Kavango east region. There are seven tribes in the Kavango east region namely Mbukushu, Gciriku, Sambyu, Kwangali, Mbunza, San and Nyemba. There are also five spoken languages which are: Thimbukushu, Rumanyo, Rukwangali, Runyemba and Khoisan. All the languages other than Khoisan are understood and spoken by the various tribal groups. The Kavango people live along the banks of the Kavango river where they earn their living through fishing and cultivating the wet and dry land of this region. The people are especially well known for their wood carving.

Like the rest of Namibia, education prior to Namibia independence in the Kavango east region did not prepare the majority of the people to become self-reliant and independent. In 1990 when the country became independent the region had the larger backlog in terms of education with the highest number of unqualified teachers. Thus, a college was established which provided basic teacher education allowing graduates to teach from grade one to grade ten. The ministry of Higher Education also established a vocational training to train young and adult people in the region to gain skills in various fields, for example plumbing, electronics, carpentry and others. There are also centres for adult learning, which accommodate school leavers and adult programs. This is to fulfill Article 20 of the Namibian constitution, which says, “All persons shall have the right to education” (Ministry of Education, 1993:3).

### **3.4.2. Tikamo campus**

Tikamo campus is situated in Katima Mulilo Town in the Zambezi region in the northeast of Namibia. It is 500 km from Rosmund campus. Tikamo had also a small student population of about 200 before the merger. The total number of students also increased when the merger took place. They also had some renovations done on the infrastructure as the case at Rosmund campus. The situation at Tikamo campus was the same as Rosmund campus with regard to the physical and human resources. They also had one program before the merger. Currently now, Tikamo is offering the same educational qualifications as Rosmund with an addition of the Bachelor of Science in Wild life Management and Ecotourism (Honours). The language of instruction and communication is the same as Rosmund campus. Tikamo campus offers one mother tongue which is Silozi. All the students who are admitted for Pre-and Lower Primary are compelled to do Silozi. The students

are also required to have Silozi as a language at grade 12 levels before they are admitted into the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary program.

The region has five tribes: Subia, Mafwe, Yeeyi, Totela and San. The languages that are spoken in the Zambezi region are: Subia, Sifwe, Mbalangwe, Siyeeyi, Silozi and Khoisan. The Katima Mulilo people live along the Zambezi River and their lives also depend on fishing and cultivation. The educational situation in Zambezi region was a bit better compared to the Kavango east region. Before independence, they had opportunities to do their education in the neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. They had a number of people who were trained and obtained qualifications in various field from the neighboring countries. After independence, the same training college and vocational training centres were also established which increased the level of qualified staff in the Zambezi region.

### **3.4.3. Hifemo campus**

Hifemo campus is situated in Ongwediva town in Oshana region in the far north of Namibia. It is 510 km from Rosmund campus. This is one of the biggest campuses of all the campuses. It had a student population of +-800 before the merger. This number increased when the merger took place. The campus had infrastructures that could accommodate the student population. Renovations on infrastructures were also done at the campus during the time of the merger. Hifemo campus is offering the same educational qualifications as Rosmund and Tikamo with an addition of the Bachelor of Education for Secondary (Honours). The medium of instruction and language of communication is the same as Rosmund and Tikamo. The mother tongues offer at Hifemo are: Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama and Oshikwambi. Students that are doing Pre-and Lower Primary education are required to do one of these languages. The student should have one of these languages at grade 12 level before they are admitted into the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary program.

Oshana region is one of the most populated regions in Namibia. It has three main tribes: the Ndonga's, Kwanyama and Vakwambi. The main three languages that are spoken are:

Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga and Oshikwambi. All these three languages are understood and spoken by the various tribal groups. The people from Oshana region also depend for their lives on farming with animals and cultivation. The educational situation of the people in the region before independence was also not up to standard. After independence, a college and some vocational centres were also established in the region, as was the case in the Kavango east and Zambezi regions.

#### **3.4.4. Kokalipi campus**

Kokalipi campus is situated in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia in the Khomas region. The distance from Rosmund campus to Kokalipi campus is +700 km. This is the second biggest campus of the four. Infrastructures are quite sufficient compared to the other campuses. The campus accommodates a large number of students. It also offered one qualification before the merger. Currently now, the following qualifications are offered: Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary and the Bachelor of Upper Primary Education (Honours). The medium of instruction and the language of communication is the same as other campuses. Kokalipi campus is offering the following mother tongues: Afrikaans, Khoekhoegowab and Otjiherero. The students for Pre-and Lower Primary Education are required to do one of these languages. The student are also required to have one of these languages at grade 12 level in order to be admitted to the B.Ed. Pre and Lower Primary program.

As the name indicates, Khomas region is situated in the capital city of Namibia. It has all the facilities (both physical and human facilities). The living standard of the people in Khomas region is very high. People from other regions are also moving from their regions to live in this region for better education and employment opportunities. The main campus of the University of Namibia is also located in Khomas region.

### 3.5. Sampling

Cohen & Manion (1985: 98) define a sample as “a smaller group or subset of the population selected in such a way that the knowledge gained is a representative of the total population under study.” Patton (2002:244) contends that “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources.”

The investigation was conducted with teacher educators from the four campuses (Hifemo, Tikamo, Rosmund and Kokalipi campus). As I indicated earlier on, these are campuses that are offering the new curriculum. In each of the campuses I had decided which and how many teacher educators would participate in this study. A purposive sampling methods was used in the selection of participants (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 1997; Maxwell, 2005). This allowed me to select participants with rich information to satisfy the need of study. The teacher educators were selected as follows: firstly, teacher educators that are teaching local languages (first languages) and English as a second language and secondly, teacher educators that are teaching Mathematics and Environmental Studies. The coordinators for the department were also selected as part of the participants, for the reason as they are regarded as leaders/ managers for the department and also as subject specialists. I also considered gender balance, because I intended to work with both female and male teacher educators that are teaching subjects in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary in all various campuses. In each of the four campuses I purposefully chose to work with three teacher educators who were both male and female teacher educators, making a total of twelve teacher educators (five male and seven female teacher educators). The gender breakdown per campus was as follow: Rosmund campus: 1 male and 2 females; Tikamo campus: 2 males and 1 female; Hifemo campus: 1 male and 2 females and Kokalipi campus: 1 male and 2 females. As teacher educators, I expected them to provide me with in-depth information as they were involved with the implementation of the new curriculum.

In the next session, I present a table, which gives a summary of my selected campuses and selected teacher educators' profile.

**Table 2: Summary of campuses and the selected teacher educators' profile**

Campuses	Teacher educators	Years at campus	Years in department Pre-and Lower primary	Modules & levels teaching in Department Pre-and Lower Primary	Qualifications	Gender
Rosmund	TE 1	15	4	1.English language ed. 1 & 2 2.Language in society	Diploma in English Ed. & B.Ed. Hons. degree	Male
	TE 2	8	4	1. Maths. and Numeracy ed 2 & 3 2. Learning Support 4	HEd Sec., B.Ed. Hons. In Maths & M.Ed. in Maths	Female
	TE 3 / <b>Coordinator</b>	15	15	Rukwangali (mother tongue) 1-4	ECP lower primary, Diploma in African languages, B.Ed. Hons. & M. Ed.	Female
Tikamo	TE 1/ <b>Coordinator</b>	4	4	1.Physical and health Ed. 1-2 2.Sport Admin and Organization 4	Education Diploma Primary, HEd. Primary, M.Ed.	Male
	TE 2	16	16	1. English language Ed. 2. Silozi (Mother tongue) 1-4 3. Literacy Dev.4	ED. Primary, HEd Primary, B.Ed. Hons & M. Ed. in Literacy and Lower Primary	Male
	TE 3	16	16	1.Environmental Ed. 1-3 2.Children's literature 1-4	B.Ed Hons. &M.Ed in Elementary education	Female
Hifemo	TE 1	24	4	Environmental Ed. 1-3	Diploma in Early childhood ed. & M.Ed.	female
	TE 2 / <b>Coordinator</b>	17	17	1.Children literature 1 2. English language Ed. 2 3. Early Childhood Ed.	BETD Lower primary, HEd. Primary, B.Ed. Hons.& M.Ed. in Early Childhood Dev.	female
	TE 3	19	4	Oshikwanyama (mother tongue) 1-4	Certificate Primary ed., Diploma in African language HEd., B.Ed. Hons. & M.Ed.	Male
Kokalipi	TE 1	4	4	Otjiherero (Mother tongue) 1-4	Diploma in Maths., HEd. Sec., B.Ed. Hons. In Psychology,	Male

	TE 2	33	4	1. Afrikaans (mothertongue) 1-4 2. Children literature 1-4	B.A Hons., HEd.	Female
	TE 3/ Coordinator	30	4	1. Literacy Education 1-4 2. Maths and Numeracy Ed. 1-4	B. A. B.Ed. Hons., & M.Ed.	Female

### 3.6. Negotiating access to campuses

Before I collected data, I first obtained permission from the University of Namibia to conduct the research. For ethical reasons, procedures and protocol were observed in gaining access to the campuses concerned. In October, 2014, I wrote a letter to the Research and Publication office of the University of Namibia stating my proposed research and at the same time requested permission to collect data at the selected campuses (see Appendix A). I was granted a letter of permission by this office (see Appendix B). This letter was used to make appointments with the Campus Director and the participants. The ethical points that were also observed on the side of the participants was by treating them as one would want to be treated (Myers, 2009: 46); Creswell, 2007: 141). I was honest with the participants, and did not force them into participating in the research through unethical means. This means that the participants and their information is anonymous and confidential (Myers, 2009: 47). Informed consent procedures were upheld and as indicated by Creswell (2007, 141), a consent form (Appendix C) was given to the participants to sign as to formally indicate that they were volunteers in the study. At the same time I also gave the participants the assurance that no person would be identified and that pseudonyms would be used to reference individuals, campuses and their discussions in order to protect them and the information they had provided. Pseudonyms were used for campuses, a code and a number, e.g. TE 1 for teacher educators.

### 3.7. Data-gathering techniques

As the study was concerned with getting rich data from my participants and written sources, in the next section I will discuss the methods I used to collect my data, namely, interview and document analysis.

### 3.7.1. The interview schedule

John & Rule (2011:64) and Biggan (2011:281) argue that interview has long been the most popular method in qualitative research and is often used in case studies. I decided to use interviews to collect data from the teacher educators who are implementing the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. Biggan (2011:28) further believes that interviews are essential source of case study information as most case studies are human affairs and can provide insights into complex situations. Although this technique is time consuming, the researcher tried to put more focus on it to give participants the chance of giving their own views and perspectives.

Through the use of interviews, I obtained verbal accounts of how participants in the study understand and implement the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. Because I was soliciting their views pertaining to the new curriculum it was important that the research participants be given the freedom to talk about it in their own time (Bell, 2010).

However, in an attempt to control the collection of data that may not be relevant to the study, the interview was piloted (Appendix D). This was done to develop my confidence as an interviewer as well as to see if it was necessary to make some amendments to the instruments in order to capture needed information. The pilot interviewee asked for some clarification as some of the questions were not clear and could not provide the needed information. The questions were rephrased and with the help of the interviewee, questions were adjusted and became clearer and understandable (Appendix E).

There are several ways in which interview data can be captured. I decided to audio record all the interviews I conducted. Permission to use the electronic tape recorder was granted before the interview. All the participants consented to its use. Recording the interview data enabled me to focus on the conversation without having to worry about noting down important information (Bell, 2010). I was also able to capture the exact wording of statements made by the participants during the process of transcription which allowed me to record accurate quotations from the interviews. Tape-recorded data was transcribed as soon as possible after the interview session when the responses were still fresh in the mind.

I conducted twelve semi-structured interviews (three teacher educators from each of the four campuses). The teacher educators were individually interviewed at their campuses. I believe this gave the teacher educators courage to talk freely without reservation. The individual interviews also provided the opportunity to find out more about the teacher educator: how she or he thinks and what she or he thinks. I used semi-structured interviews to collect data from selected participants. Semi-structured interviews allowed a specialized form of communication between people for the specific purpose associated with curriculum implementation (Anderson & Arsenault, 2000). According to Arsenault and Anderson (2000), one of the strengths of the semi-structured interview is to clarify questions and allow for probing of answers from the participants, providing more complete information that would be available in written form. De Vos et al., (2005) express the view that interviews are the predominant mode of data collection in the case studies of the qualitative research, it enable the researcher to probe further in certain questions for clarity and depth (Creswell, 2003). Face-to-face, one-on-one, in depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify the factors enabled or constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia.

The interview questions were classified in two sections: Section One contained contextual questions and Section Two comprised four sub-sections, including questions on the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. The questions were asked in English as all the teacher educators preferred to be interviewed in English. The timeframe chosen for interview was drawn from Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014), who recommend the 60 minutes timeframe for interview to allow time for audio recording, directions, and asking probing questions as well as to maintain clarity and gain rich responses. Yin (2014) discusses shorter case study interviews as a viable option when focused on a specific area and when following a protocol. Yin's (2014) recommended 60 minute timeframe was found to be suitable. Each teacher educator was interviewed within the timeframe of 60 minutes.

Interviews with the teacher educators were very crucial because it also provided a better understanding of what beliefs and values about curriculum practices were being promoted through the B.Ed. Spike (1992) argues that implementation of change is influenced by the beliefs and

values that teacher educators hold about education, teaching and life in general. It therefore served as a starting point for exploring the underlying mechanisms that influenced the adoption of the new curriculum and the reasons why the teacher educators implemented the new curriculum in the way they do. The interviews with the teacher educators were also used to supplement and verify the data obtained from written documents of the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia. This was very important because I had to understand the beliefs and what the teacher educators value in order to explore how their beliefs stand in relation to the beliefs that were favored by the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia. As Archer explains, such cultural relationships (complementary or contradictory) “respectively constrain or facilitate cultural agents – thus exerting a causal influence on their later actions” (1996: 148).

### **3.7.2. Document analysis**

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). Analyzing documents incorporated coding content into themes similar to how interview transcripts are analyzed (Bowen, 2009). Nieuwenhuis (2007: 82) further states that, when a researcher uses document analysis as a data gathering technique, the researcher focuses on all types of written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon being investigated. There are three primary types of documents that exist and they are public records, personal documents, physical evidence etc. (O’ Leary, 2014). In the case of my study, I used public records. These included documents such as the National Curriculum for Basic Education, Toward Education For All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training. These were documents from the Ministry of Education; and the Broad Curriculum for the Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary Education which was a document from the University of Namibia. Document analysis is an important research tool in its own right, and is an invaluable part of most schemes of triangulation, the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Bowen, 2009).

**Table 3: Summary of documents analyzed**

<b>Documents</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>
The National Curriculum For Basic Education	2010	Ministry of Basic Education
Faculty of Education: Bachelor of Education (Pre-and Lower Primary)	2010	University of Namibia
Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (ETSIP)	2007	Ministry of Education
The National Curriculum for the Pre-and Lower Primary Phase	2005	Ministry of Education
Lower Primary Phase: Policy Guide	2005	Ministry of Education
Towards Education For All: A Development Brief For Education, Culture and Training	1993	Ministry of Education

Document analysis was used in this study for the following reasons: first, to understand national influences on the change from the Basic Education Teacher Diploma for Lower Primary to the Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary Education; second, to understand what perceptions of curriculum and curriculum practices were favored by the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia through the adaption of the Bachelor of Pre-and Lower Primary Education; and lastly, to supplement and verify the data obtained from the interviews. Moore (1982:52 in Ross & Munn, 2008: 257) also argued that formal curriculum documents represents some kind of social consensus about what students are entitled to experience during training, and that it expresses what is valued for one reason or another in society. With document analysis I was also interested to identify if the implementation of the newly introduced curriculum reflected the intended program plans, because the review of documents may reveal a difference between the intended program purposes and the actual curriculum implementation. Document analysis was also one of the tools that enabled me reach the objectives of the study.

### 3.8. Data analysis

Freeman (1998: 91) defines data analysis as “the process of drawing responses out of the data or finding them in the data.” This means that to analyze is to find ways to sort out what one considers as essential meaning in the raw data in order to reduce, recognize and combine so that the readers share the researcher’s findings, in the most economical, interesting way.

It has been argued that data collection and data analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research as the data must be organized categorically and chronologically, reviewed repeatedly and coded continually (Merriam 1988; Marshall & Rossman, 2008). The analysis of data for this study was done while the data was collected. The data from the different sources were compared in order to establish patterns, and to determine similarities or contradictions. The data was also analyzed in relation to the research questions the study attempted to understand and explain. As the study was underpinned by the theory of critical realism, data collected was also analyzed within the framework of critical realism. The level of the empirical and actual provided transitive knowledge that served as base for looking at the level of the real.

I have drawn on Margaret Archers’ principle of analytical dualism (see 2.5) to understand and explore the underlying causal mechanisms that have shaped the way things are in higher education system of Namibia. Archer’s concepts of structure, culture and agency were the analytical tools I used that enabled access to the ontological depth of the mechanisms that constrained or enabled the emergence of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum and its implementation. As I described in 2.5, structure refers to the language policy implementation, resources etc. which had power to condition the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. I used culture to refer to the ideas, theories, beliefs and values held by people such as teacher educators, Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia as well as other people, and the classroom levels. Agency was used to refer to the choices made when the curriculum was implemented which resulted in either a change of practice or the reproduction of old practices. This separation was necessary for analytical purposes as Archer indicated so as to obtain a deeper understanding of the influences each one had and also to indicate which one had more influence on the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.

Furthermore, the literature examined in Chapter 2 also provided me with a language for re-describing what I have read from the documents, and what I heard from the interviews with the teacher educators. The knowledge I obtained from the literature enabled me to look at the data in terms of how the teacher educators' everyday environment impacted on their ability to implement the curriculum. The literature examined together with Archer's concepts enabled me to provide a different view on the curriculum implementation, which helped me to look deeper into the situation, moving from what is known and felt (transitive knowledge) to what is responsible for the situation (intransitive knowledge). These enabled me to relate and connect the level of the empirical and the actual with the level of real (2.4).

Creswell (2014) suggested six steps for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data, which are: collecting data, preparation of data for analysis, proofreading data to get a general sense, coding and labelling data into segments, coding text for descriptions in research reports and coding text for themes to be used in research. Creswell (2015, Merriam & Tisdell, (2016; Yin (2014) further point out that data analysis requires organization, time, reflection, and the ability to reduce bias. The steps were also useful, they guided me through the process of data analysis. In addition, I also used content analysis method to analyze the patterns emerging from the responses of the interview and the various documents that I used. Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages. Leedy & Ormrod (2001: 30), define it "as a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases." Hancock et al. (2009) also stated that responses to open-ended questions are on the basis of content analysis. I collected large amount of data consisting of various documents from the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia, interviews with teacher educators at various campuses. Creswell's steps with the content analysis method enabled me to analyze the data in a more manageable and organized manner. Next is a discussion on how I used the methods to analyze my data. Furthermore, deductive analysis was also applied as a method of analyzing my data. What happened here was that the themes from the data were linked to the central conceptual categories of structural element, cultural element and agential elements. Next is a brief description outlining the way the methods were used.

During the first step, I read my interview transcript together with the documents I collected for this study. I repeated this process by reading through my notes many times. As I read through each source, I noted down key themes in relation to my research questions and put them into categories. These themes were: structural elements, cultural elements and agential elements. Color-coding based on the themes (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014) was used to identify the different themes from the responses of the interviews with teacher educators and the documents I used. According to Creswell (2014), the purpose of coding is to make sense of the data using various strategies designed to glean meaning from participant responses and the written documents. Hsieh & Shannon (2005: 108) defines the process of data coding as the breaking down of data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships to understand the various elements. The responses of the teacher educators in my study together with the information from the documents were classified based on the identified themes. The themes were written on the table that was created with participants' identifiers. The table included spaces for notes and records of initial thoughts on the data. I used a code to separate the interviews of the teacher educators in my study e.g. TE 1 for teacher educator 1 under their specific campuses. This is a procedure that breaks the data down into manageable segments or names those segments.

Secondly, I started grouping the responses under the guiding questions which appeared under the themes that were identified. This process allowed me to make a summary of what each teacher educator in my study said and what I have read from the documents under the guiding questions. At this stage, I was able to give findings from the interviews and the document analysis.

### **3.9. Validity and reliability in the research process**

Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative research studies (Davies & Dodd, 2002). Reliability refers to the extent to which the selected procedures produce a similar picture when applied at a different time and validity refers to the extent to which the design of the research can provide credible conclusions (Joppe, 2000).

This study's validity and credibility, lies in the clarity and rich description of how data was collected, managed and processed, and the various strategies employed throughout the inquiry.

Cohen, Manion & Morris (2001: 104) argue, “if a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless.” Furthermore, they argue that “validity might be addressed through depth, richness and scope of data achieved, the participants approached and the extent of triangulation. To ensure validity and trustworthiness, I employed the following strategies in my study:

- Triangulation –triangulation means the attempt to get fix on a situation or phenomenon by combining different ways of looking at it (method triangulation) or different findings (data triangulation) (Silverman, 2010: 277). Triangulation of teacher educators with experiences on curriculum implementation in their various campuses, semi- structured individual interviews and document analysis were employed in this study to elicit information from participants (Silverman, 2009: 46). In this study, triangulation was used to confirm results produced by using different methods.
- To validate the interview, I piloted the interview data to ensure that there was a link between what I asked and the objectives of the study as well as to capture the data that would enable me answer my research questions. I also used audio recordings to ensure that I recorded data accurately. Detailed notes were written out of the recorded data. Bias with the interviewer regarding my role as a researcher and a lecturer whom some of the interviewer may refer to as a colleague was limited to an extent that my participants were explained right from the beginning of the interview process, the purposes of the research, my role as well as their roles in the research.
- Member checking - by sharing interpretations of the study with the selected teacher educators to verify my reporting , 1986). This was done when participants were given a chance to review and verify transcripts. In addition, my supervisor checked and discussed my interpretations and conclusions with me.

In addition, I avoided limiting myself to one data source through the use of a multiple case study approach in which participants from the four various University campuses took part in the study rather using only one campus. This widened the scope of the study and thus increased the chances

of producing deeper findings. All this effort was done so as to present credible and trustworthy findings.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented the main tenets of the research in which the inquiry was conducted. I have discussed the research design and methods of data collection. Data analysis, reliability and validity of this study is also discussed. I believe that conducting a credible and trustworthy research greatly depends on understanding theoretical framework, the various components and the interrelated nature of the components of the research. Data presentation and analysis will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

“Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” Marshall & Rossman, 2006: 11 .

#### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I report on the findings from an analysis of the semi-structured interviews and documents. I identified patterns from all my data, which I developed into categories. These were guided by my research questions:

- What factors enabled and constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education?
- How have structure, culture and agency interacted to support or constrains the implementation of the curriculum?

As I indicated in the previous chapter, the main focus of my study was not to investigate how the teacher educators who participated in the study implemented the curriculum, but to have an understanding of the factors that enabled or constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.

Data for this chapter consisted of twelve interviews which were conducted with teacher educators (three in each campus) from the four campuses of the University of Namibia. The campuses were: Rosmund, Tikamo, Hifemo and Kokalipi. These are the campuses that are involved with the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.

This chapter has four sections. In the first section, I explore the responses of teacher educators to the question about the structural influences which enabled or constrained the curriculum

implementation. I use structure in my study to refer to factors such as the infrastructure, language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education in Namibia and materials.

In the second section, I present responses of teacher educators to the cultural influences, how these have conditioned the implementation of the curriculum. The cultural elements in the context of my study are the beliefs, atmosphere and attitudes of teacher educators needed for the implementation of the curriculum.

In the third section of the chapter, I look at how the teacher educators in my study responded to the conditions they encountered. I called these as the agential conditions. I used agency in this context to refer to the decisions teacher educators take that may either enable or constrain the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower primary curriculum. Lastly, I present findings from the document analysis.

## **4.2. Structural elements enabling or constraining the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum**

Findings from the interviews indicated that the environment in which the teacher educators in this study were working showed structural properties that influenced them to implement the curriculum in ways which made them either repeat or change what they were doing before the new curriculum was implemented. The section below examines teacher educators' responses in this area:

### **4.2.1. Infrastructure**

Findings from the interviews revealed that some renovations were done to the infrastructure such as additional classrooms to accommodate the large number of students. But these classrooms in some instances were not appropriate for the training of student teachers for the teaching of Pre-and Lower Primary levels. The teacher educators made the following remarks in regard to these dimensions:

*Classrooms that are meant for the teaching of Pre-and Lower primary phase do not exist. Because this is where teacher educators can put student teachers in small numbers to demonstrate to them how they could group learners into smaller groups for practical activities (Tikamo TE 1).*

*Lack of classrooms that are specifically made for Pre- and Lower Primary to model student teachers on the teaching of learners at primary level (Rosmund TE 3).*

*Laboratories where student teachers could go and develop materials for Pre- and Lower Primary learners are not available (Hifemo TE 2).*

*Student teachers are not modelled into real Pre-and Lower Primary classrooms (Tikamo TE 3).*

From the responses, there is an indication that all the teacher educators believed that infrastructures that were recently built cannot help them prepare student teachers adequately for the teaching of Pre-and Lower Primary classrooms in the schools. The teacher educators felt that when the student teachers leave campuses they should be equipped with practical knowledge which will enable them to handle the Pre-and Lower Primary classrooms in the schools. According to the teacher educators this was not the situation during their training.

#### **4.2.2. The implementation of the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education**

Language policy is a structure that has power to either enable or constrain the implementation of a curriculum. All the teacher educators interviewed indicated that the policy is not implemented as intended due to the following reasons: Most of the teacher educators do not have expertise in the mother tongues that are offered at their specific campuses. The mother tongues that I am referring to are: Rumanyo, Rukwangali, Thimbukushu (Rosmund campus), Silozi (Tikamo campus), Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Oshikwambi (Hifemo campus), Otjiherero, Khoekhoegowab and Afrikaans (Kokalipi campus). Teacher educators from the different regions whose mother tongues are totally different from the ones offered at the campus are the ones recruited in the department of Pre- and Lower Primary education. The situation is that student teachers were supposed to do

subjects such as Mathematics, Environmental education and Social studies through the medium of the mother tongue which is not the case in most of the campuses.

The teacher educators made the following statements in this regard:

*I am Afrikaans speaking and teach Environmental studies. For me I just teach the content in English, because I do not speak or even understand any of the mother tongues offered at our campus. The challenge is that when my students go for teaching practice they are forced to teach Environmental Education in Ojjiherero which is a big challenge for them (Kokalipi TE1).*

*I still maintain the thinking that provision to be made in the curriculum for students to learn the subjects through the medium of instruction to avoid the challenges that they will experience in schools (Rosmund 1 &2).*

*We are not doing fair to our students. What we are doing here is not equipping students to be well prepared for the job (Tikamo TE 1).*

*Though students are taught in their various mother-tongues, this does not equip students with knowledge that they can use to handle other subjects such as Mathematics, Social studies and the rest through mother tongue instructions (Hifemo TE 2).*

*The policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education clearly states the importance of teaching mother tongues at this level, but this is overlooked (Kokalipi TE 1)*

From the responses, there is an indication that all the teacher educators feel that the actual implementation of the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary Education is not taking place as intended. All the teacher educators believe that the student teachers can be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills of mother tongue when they are taught through the medium of mother tongue specifically in subjects such as Mathematics, Environmental Studies and other subjects. Furthermore, they believe that through the teaching of mother tongue student teachers can be equipped with the contents and concepts that are used in mother tongue which they in turn will use to communicate very well with learners in the schools. This will benefit both the teacher

and learners in the class which will in the long run improve the learners' learning. The latter was an interesting comment as mother tongue in this regard was not only seen as a tool that is of value to the teacher and his practice, but also with direct application to the learners.

#### **4.2.3. Teaching materials**

Findings from the interviews revealed that there is a lack of teaching materials that are written in mother tongues offered in various campuses. These include the following mother tongues: Rumanyo, Rukwangali, Thimbukushu, Silozi, Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Oshikwambi, Otjiherero and Afrikaans. Teacher educators expressed themselves in the following manner on these issues:

*Before I met my students, I spent time on translating the content from the English version to Rukwangali. Course outlines are written in English, books are written in English, information on the internet is English. All these need to be translated. It is a big challenge because during the process of translation I sometimes miss a point. This sometimes leads to information wrongly communicated to the students (Rosmund TE 2).*

*The campus does not have sufficient books that are written in the mother tongues offered at our campus. This is a big challenge, I keep on translating from the English version into the mother tongue (Hifemo TE 3).*

As I indicated in Chapter Two, the use of mother tongue at Pre-and Lower Primary education has been decided around the notion that learning is best achieved through the medium of the mother tongue of the learner. Furthermore, it allows young ones to freely communicate with their teachers on various subject matters i.e. storytelling and reading. (Ministry of Education, 2005: 5).

The responses of teacher educators revealed that the implementation of the language policy is not taking place as required. This is due to the lack of expertise in mother tongues in both campuses and lack of teaching materials that are written in the mother tongues that are offered in the campuses. My analysis of the interview data indicates that teacher educators in my study are

confronted with the constraining influence on their ability to implement the curriculum mandated by the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. I therefore argue that most of the structures discussed above contribute to the issue of English being the dominant medium of instruction in the teaching of Pre-and Lower Primary education in both teacher education and in the schools. My analysis of the data shows that the language policy implementation has constraining power rather enabling power over the implementation of the new curriculum.

### **4.3. Cultural elements enabling or constraining the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum**

Culture, according to Archer refers to the beliefs, attitudes and atmosphere which has also a strong influence in conditioning curriculum practices (1995; 1996). The purpose of the interview in this section was to explore how the teacher educators in my study understand, experience and interpret the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. The teacher educators were asked whether it was necessary to adopt the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum for Namibian teacher education.

#### **4.3.1. Improving the standard of teaching**

All the teacher educators commented that this curriculum will reduce the number of unqualified teachers in most of the schools in Namibia. Kokalipi (TE 1) mentioned in the interview discussion *“currently most of the schools are making use of Grade 12 drop outs to teach Pre-and Lower Primary phase.”* Furthermore, he said, *“Pre-Primary phase was previously not in a school system, it was just a program offered by the Ministry of Gender, but with the introduction of B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum more teachers will be trained to teach the Pre –and Lower Primary phases in the schools.”* Rosmund TE 2 also noted... *“the program will lift up the standard of Pre-and Lower Primary education in Namibia because most of the teachers will have the required qualification to teach at Pre- and Lower Primary phase.”*

### 4.3.2. Conducive atmosphere for change

The teacher educators in my study were also asked whether the atmosphere at their campuses was conducive for curriculum change at the time of implementation. All the teacher educators in my study noted on the issue of atmosphere as follow: The atmosphere at the time of the implementation was not conducive. This was due to a lack of infrastructure, teaching materials and mother tongue expertise which made the implementation of the new curriculum very difficult. The teacher educators also experienced a situation of ‘see for yourself’, whether they were qualified or not qualified. They commented that most of the activities were left in the teacher educators’ hands (This was whether at their level or beyond their level). The teacher educators made the following statements in this regard:

*The atmosphere was one of the stress, because I did not know how to do what was presented to me. Teaching a subject through a mother tongue instruction that myself do not speak well or even understand (Rosmund T2).*

*I was given to teach a mother tongue which I never taught before, no training received, because there was no one else at the campus to teach it, though I speak the language, I struggled alone, no one could help, and no one could understand what I was going through, a situation of see for yourself (Tikamo T2).*

*The program is relevant, but it seem lacking proper planning and preparation, it was done in a harsh manner, just rushed into the system (Kokalipi T1)*

The interviewees further expressed a view on the issue of job security. What the teacher educators were saying is that they were not sure whether they would be contracted again as lecturers, because most of them at the time of implementation did not have a Master’s degree, which was one of the requirements put for them by the University of Namibia. Rosmund (TE 3) stated, *I only have a Bachelor degree honors, and I am not sure whether I will be a lecturer or not.* Kokalipi (TE 2) also noted... *“I did not yet obtain a master degree, I might be told to go and join the Ministry of Basic Education as a school teacher.”*

However, the Ministry of Education in agreement with the University of Namibia gave teacher educators a grace period of five years to improve their qualifications through staff development programs.

#### **4.3.3. Overall impression of conditions for change**

The above descriptions, of factors influencing implementation, the analysis of the data, has shown that teacher educators who participated in this study and the planners of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum programs had some similar interpretation of the new curriculum. Three conclusions can be drawn. First, while the teacher educators and the planners of the new curriculum appeared to agree on certain discourse such as the reduction of the number of unqualified teachers, they did not consider other factors that would help support the program to be implemented successfully.

Secondly, it seems that many teacher educators in this study drew a great deal from the old way of implementing a curriculum, for example that of teaching subjects for Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum through the medium of English rather the mother tongue as they did in the previous programs which were not offered anymore.

Thirdly, the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia saw the introduction of a new curriculum as a solution to the problem of unqualified teachers without taking into consideration how these changes will manifest itself during the implementation. I therefore argue that the teacher educators in my study, even though they accepted the new curriculum, did not understand fully the requirements of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. Furthermore, the curriculum planners took hasty decisions. They did not do proper planning and consultations in advance. They just planned the curriculum without considering factors that may either enable or constrain the implementation of the new curriculum. A thorough investigation was supposed to be conducted to determine the structural conditions each campus had for the new curriculum program to be introduced.

Moreover, it is evident from the analysis of the interview data that the teacher educators in my study did not anticipate factors that could make them not to implement the new curriculum as expected.

In the next section I discuss how teacher educators in my study responded to the structural and cultural challenges that they encountered in their implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.

#### **4.4. Agential elements enabling or constraining the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum**

Agency, according to Archer, refers to the decisions and choices that people make in their everyday lives which either reinforce existing structures and cultures or transform them (1995; 1996). In this section, I explore the ways the teacher educators responded to the structural challenges they experienced with the implementation of the curriculum. My analysis of interview data indicates that despite the structural and cultural constraints the teacher educators in my study experienced, such as an unfavorable environment, atmosphere, resources and infrastructure, the decisions which the teacher educators in my study took in response to these constraints enabled to some degree the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. Evidence in this regard is provided in the next section.

##### **4.4.1. The decision to collaborate with other colleagues at departmental level and with colleagues from other campuses**

All the teacher educators in my study commented that the purpose of collaborating with one another is to share departmental findings with colleagues. The teacher educators at departmental level coordinated by the head of department decided to conduct more departmental meetings to discuss departmental challenges and the way forward. They also created some avenues i.e. through internet to collaborate with colleagues from the other campuses. Colleagues from other campuses could come up with suggestions that others could use to minimize the challenges.

All the teacher educators commented that they learnt a lot from this activity. Rosmund (TE 3) stated... *"I was really assisted by my colleague at Tikamo campus after mentioning to him some of the challenges I am experiencing."* Hifemo (TE 2) also noted... *"the collaboration with other colleagues helped me to move on with my teaching, because there are teacher educators from other campuses who give good advice and guidance on how we could overcome the challenges we faced i.e. teaching materials."*

My analysis of the data indicates that the practice of collaborating turned on teacher educators' success in accomplishing the difficult tasks of learning new knowledge and skills emerging out of the new curriculum program. The practice also created opportunities for all the teacher educators to engage in collective work and solving problems that they experienced in their campuses. These decisions and actions therefore seem to have had an enabling rather constraining effect on the implementation of the curriculum.

#### **4.4.2. The decision to conduct departmental retreats**

Responses from the interviewees indicated that all the teacher educators from different campuses gathered together for a week. Furthermore, expertise from other countries for example from Finland were also invited to have workshops with the teacher educators. These gatherings were taking place at one of the campuses that was decided upon by the departmental head. The retreats were most of the time initiated by the head of department for Pre-and Lower Primary education. During these retreat all the teacher educators from different campuses: Rosmund, Tikamo, Hifemo and Kokalipi gathered.

All the teacher educators in my study commented that the purposes of the retreats were to share departmental findings and challenges with colleagues from other campuses. Issues regarding the teaching and learning process were also discussed during the retreats. All the teacher educators in my study commented that these were fruitful retreats because they learnt a lot from colleagues from other campuses as well as the expertise from other countries. For example experts from other countries shared their knowledge, skills and experiences regarding the teaching and learning of

Pre-and Lower Primary phases. Hifemo (TE1) commented that, *“there are colleagues from other campus that are doing very well and during these retreats they share their experiences with other colleagues.”*

#### **4.4.3. The decision to upgrade qualifications specifically in the area of Pre-and Lower Primary Education**

All the teacher educators in my study noted that it is crucial for teacher educators to gain knowledge, skills and capacities that are required in order to take charge of their own teaching and learning process. The data obtained through interviews also indicated that teacher educators at the time of implementation did not have the required qualification to be lecturers for the university. Furthermore, some of the teacher educators were placed in the department of Lower Primary because of a belief that anyone can teach a module in this department, and that there was an issue of ‘see for yourself situation.’

Kokalipi (TE 3) noted that, *“when teacher educators are engaged in professional development programmes, new skills and forms of teaching and learning would be learnt.”* Furthermore, he said, *“teacher educators with negative attitudes towards new changes might also gain some insights towards the need for change.”* Hifemo (TE 2) also noted that, *“teacher educators should also be encouraged to do some upgrading courses in order to guide the student teachers correctly.”* She further noted, *“one of the constraints on the effective implementation of a new curriculum is caused by people who are not sure about what they are doing, because they do not know what to do and how to do it. That is why we decided to embark upon with part-time studies in order to improve our qualifications in particularly in the area of Pre- and Lower Primary education”* (Kokalipi TE 1). They all noted that this practice helped them find solutions to some of the challenges they experienced with the implementation of the new curriculum.

#### **4.4.4. The decision to translate from English version to mother tongue to teach subjects such as Mathematics, Environmental education, Social studies etc.**

Teacher educators in the study encountered a lot of structural constraints in their campuses. These included lack of books that are written in mother tongue, course outlines that the teacher educators used to prepare lessons are also written in English. The interview data indicates that the teacher educators in my study responded to the constraining condition by translating from the English version to the mother tongue:

*We get sources from the internet, books in the library, we translate everything and come up with own vocabulary in mother tongue (Rosmund TE 2).*

*Ask assistance from the teacher educators that are teaching mother tongue as a language to help translate information that are obtained on internet and the library books. I also make use of these colleagues to help translate the course outline before I present lessons to my students.*

*Furthermore, even notes are translated from English to mother tongue (Tikamo TE 1).*

The interview data seems to indicate that most of the teacher educators in the study felt constrained to implement the curriculum through the medium of instruction which is mother tongue. This was due to the time constraints as well as sometimes missing points during the process of translation. It would seem therefore, that the practice of translating from English version to mother tongue is contradictory to the discourses underpinning the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum (see chapter 2) which requires that student teachers upon completion are expected to effectively communicate the concepts and topics in a mother tongue which is the medium of instruction.

In conclusion, I argue therefore that despite teacher educators taking an autonomous action of translating from English to mother tongue, most of the student teachers are not properly guided during their course of studies. Student teachers may leave the campuses without mastering the concept and content in mother tongue as a result teaching in the schools will not be effective. This aspect will be considered in greater detail in Chapter Five.

In the following section data from the documentary analysis is presented.

#### 4.5. Analysis of policy documents

Data for this section was derived from the policy documents produced by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the University of Namibia (UNAM). The table below shows the details of the documents and their sources:

**Table 4: MOE and UNAM documents analyzed in this section**

<b>Name of document</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
The National Curriculum for Basic Education	Ministry of Education	2010
Faculty of Education: Bachelor of Education (Pre-and Lower Primary	University of Namibia	2010
Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (ETSIP)	Ministry of Education	2007
The National Curriculum for the Lower Primary phase	Ministry of Education	2005
Lower Primary Phase: Policy Guide	Ministry of Education	2005
Towards Education For All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training	Ministry of Education	1993

In this section, my focus was only on the statements that were used in the documents. I provide an example of some of the questions that I asked in my analysis: (i) Are the policy makers (MOE and UNAM) consistent with or contradictory to the meaning of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower primary curriculum implementation? (ii) Do the policy makers (MOE and UNAM) have the same understanding as the teacher educators on the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum? (iii) Are there any discrepancies between the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education and the actual curriculum program implementation?

I have separated the structural conditions from the cultural conditions in my analysis. Archer (1996) argues that to obtain a deep understanding on the two conditions, they should be discussed

separately and following the social realist concept of non-conflation these two conditions are not the same. Next is an analysis of the structural conditions.

#### **4.5.1. Structural conditions**

##### **4.5.1.1. The implementation of the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education**

What emerges from the data in the texts of the policy documents is that the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum requires mother tongues to be the medium of instruction. This means that student teachers should be prepared through the medium of mother tongue as a mode of teaching and learning in all the subjects apart from English as a subject. According to MOE and UNAM, the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum requires that teacher preparation should be done through the medium of mother tongue in order to meet the needs of Basic education in particularly at Pre-and Lower Primary phases. This includes well trained teachers who are capable of teaching through the medium of their own language. The following are the statements from the data texts:

“Learning is best achieved through the medium of the mother tongue of the learner, and mother tongue should be the medium of instruction throughout the first year three years of the child’s education” (Ministry of Education, 2005: 5).

“Furthermore, for pedagogical reasons, it is ideal for learners to study through their mother tongue, particularly in the early years of schooling when basic skills of reading, writing and concept formation are required. Moreover, it is important that their formal schooling starts with those languages of everyday life at home” (Ministry of Education, 1993: 65).

“The student teachers should effectively communicate the concepts and topics in a mother tongue” (University of Namibia, 2010: 7).

However, the majority of teacher educators in all the campuses never received training in the teaching of mother tongue. Furthermore, some of the teacher educators came from a

community/region whose mother tongue is different from the ones that are offered in the campuses. In addition, all these teacher educators were placed in the department of Pre-and Lower primary education who are expected to implement the curriculum through the mode of mother tongue.

Mutumba (1999:9) pointed out that:

There is a clear discrepancy between policy statements and the actual implementation process. Although the language policy ideally supports mother tongue, because of inadequate resources, such as teachers and text books, it is difficult to implement mother tongue instruction in Pre-and Lower Primary phase. The shortage of qualified teachers is a serious threat towards the successful realization of the language policy.

The language policy implementation as advocated by MOE and UNAM cannot be effective if teacher educators lack the necessary language skills and proficiencies in that particular language. It would seem therefore, that in the context of B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum implementation, mother tongue may have an enabling effect on the ability of teacher educators to implement the curriculum successfully. Yet mother tongue has constraining power over the implementation of the new curriculum. My analysis of the data indicates that there is inconsistency with the meaning of the curriculum implementation by MOE and UNAM as the data shows a discrepancy between the policy statements and the actual implementation of the curriculum. I therefore argue that MOE and UNAM should be very concerned about this. Harlech-Jones (1998:15) also argues that time is ripe for revision as the current situation “frustrates the attainment of educational aims...” He continues by saying “...that the focus should in future be on drafting a language policy in education that assists students to learn better...” (Harlech-Jones 1998:15).

#### **4.5.1.2. Finance**

In my analysis of the texts, it was revealed that the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum requires financial resources for the implementation to be as expected. It seems that the required infrastructure such as language laboratories, pre-and lower primary classrooms are not available in most of the campuses. Books that are written in mother tongue are also limited. The analysis of the data revealed despite, the lack of resources, there have been efforts made by

MOE and UNAM to meet the challenges of implementing the curriculum program. The following extract indicates this possibility:

We must also be resourceful in ensuring that our children have sufficient textbooks and instructional materials. Furthermore, our education system will be more resilient and adaptive if we improve our ability to develop instructional resources at the community and campus level. Moreover, our campuses must be creative and innovative in producing own materials, teachers educators and student teachers who rely on their own imagination and experience to design, construct, and collect the materials they need find learning exciting, empowering and relevant to their lives (Ministry of Education, 1993: 40).

Furthermore, though this lack of resources has the potential to constrain the implementation of the curriculum, it is therefore important to note that MOE and UNAM are not wishing for the program to fail, thus efforts are made by MOE and UNAM to ensure the successful implementation of the curriculum. The following data extract indicates this possibility:

Teacher education for Basic Education will first and foremost meet the needs for professionalization of the teacher - a person who has commitment, a sense of responsibility, and knowledge and skills, which will raise the quality of education through the use of various integrated technologies (TV, video, computers, internet, etc.) in the entire country. Furthermore, teachers should be able to use local and natural resources as an alternative or supplement to ready-made study materials, and thus develop their own and the learner's creativity (University of Namibia, 2010: 6).

In conclusion, the analysis of the data revealed that, even though the MOE and UNAM could not afford to provide the campuses with all necessary infrastructures, for the implementation to be as required, effort has been made to improvise so as to help the teacher educators to implement the new curriculum as expected. Drawing from my own experience, the efforts made include the renovations of some infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories and some additional classrooms to cater for the needs of teacher educators and student teachers.

In the next section I present the cultural conditions.

#### **4.5.2. Cultural conditions**

The cultural aspects of my analysis focuses on the discourses that underpin the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum as expressed in the statements used by the policy documents from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the University of Namibia (UNAM).

The B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum was introduced in 2011. The aim was to ensure quality teacher education for Basic education in Namibia. I indicated in a previous chapter (Chapter One), that curriculum programs that were previously offered before and immediately after the independence could not prepare children for the realization of the Namibian national educational goals. The majority of teacher educators were from the pre-independence dispensation and had limited understanding about what was expected of them with the new curriculum programs. The student teachers were not effectively modelled into the teaching and learning of Pre-and Lower Primary education. Secondly, there was lack of adequate facilities and materials to support their teaching and learning processes. Lastly, there was a lack of relevant professional development programs for teacher educators which could help them cope with new approaches required to implement the new curriculum

Zeichner & Dahlstrom (1999: 4) pointed out that teacher education has done little to foster genuine teacher development and to enhance the teachers' role in education reform. Thus, a new curriculum was developed for the realization of these goals and to improve the quality of education in Namibia, in particularly for Pre-and Lower Primary education. The goals that I am referring to include among others: democracy and quality.

There is evidence in the data that states that the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower primary curriculum program was underpinned by a "learner-centred approach" (Ministry of Education, 1993: 120). A learnercentred approach is understood within the Namibian context as an approach to promote learning through understanding, it encourages a high degree of learner participation, contribution and production and promotes learning, which is "an interactive, shared and productive process" (Ministry of Education, 1993: 2). According to this approach, the role of a teacher in a Namibian

context is supposed to be one of giving students center stage in the classroom and providing a setting in which the students play an inquiring role in their own learning.

According to MOE and UNAM it seemed that the above views were not visible in the previous curriculum programs which resulted into learners particularly from the Pre-and Lower Primary phases not being effectively prepared to contribute towards achieving the aforementioned national goals. It was not visible in the sense that the curriculum policy documents did not explicitly explain the objectives, methodologies etc. as to how the teachers could use them during the teaching and learning processes. For example, learner-centred teaching and learning as advocated by the Ministry of Education in its policy document “Towards Education for All” was misinterpreted by the majority teacher educators. The policy document preferred teachers to employ flexible and practical methods to different learners at different teaching stages of which teachers did not apply. The teachers adopted whatever methods they preferred or found very easy. These methods were contrary to the principles of learner-centred teaching.

Furthermore, mother tongue as a medium of instruction was not implemented at all. The teaching and learning was done through the medium of English. O’Sullivan (2002) in a study conducted revealed that teachers in Namibian primary schools did not implement learner-centred approach as advocated by the policy makers. This was caused by policy makers’ failure to take into account the classroom realities, teachers’ professional and linguistic capacity, learner capacity, support services and poor communication functioned as hindering elements. Hence the need to replace the old curriculum with the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum as suggested in the statements from data below:

“It is important to stress that even at an early age and perhaps especially then, children can and should be active partners in the learning process not just the passive recipient of information” (Ministry of Education, 1993: 73).

“Early childhood education must be learner-centred to enable our children to reach their potential.” (Ministry of Education, 1993: 71).

“Furthermore, improving the quality of our education requires that we understand learning to be an interactive process in which learners create, not simply receive knowledge” (Ministry of Education, 1993: 67).

The aim of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum program includes among others the following: to provide all the children and young people of Namibia with competent, fully qualified, committed teachers, so that their education is relevant, meaningful, of high quality, and is conducted in a stimulating and supportive atmosphere”( University of Namibia, 2010: 6).

My analysis of the texts revealed that the beliefs underpinning the discourses of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum were influenced by the discourses of learner centredness, which states that learner’s progress and achievement is possible if learners have an active role to play in their teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, competent and qualified teachers have the key role to play in this regard. Therefore, a curriculum is seen by MOE and UNAM as an alternative way of making education relevant and meaningful to the learners or young children.

It is evident from the data analysis that MOE and UNAM have the same understanding with the implementers (teacher educators) regarding the new curriculum as they all look at it as something to improve the quality of teacher education in Namibia and Basic education in general. Quality in this context means that, learning is seen as an interactive, shared and productive process where teaching is creating learning opportunities which enable learners to explore different ways of knowing and develop the whole range of their thinking abilities.

## **4.6. Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings obtained from semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The views and opinions expressed by the selected teacher educators were presented with my summary. The document analysis was also presented. Also in this chapter, I presented the structural, cultural and agential conditions that teacher educators experienced with the implementation of the curriculum. From the discussion during interviews it shows that a teacher educator needs absolute attention and support particularly from MOE and UNAM to implement

the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum successfully. In the next chapter I discuss the findings in the light of the literature review.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Successful implementation of curriculum programs do not “depend only on program developers exerting pressure, but also on developers providing support to those responsible for implementing the program.” (Dalin 1988a, cited in Robinson (2003:24).

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides a discussion of the main themes identified in the previous chapter. My research questions as well as the theoretical framework underpinning this study influenced these and will shape and inform the discussion of the results in this chapter.

The themes are:

- Structural elements enabling or constraining the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.
- Cultural elements enabling or constraining the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.
- Agential elements enabling or constraining the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.

#### **5.2. Structural elements**

There was evidence in the interview data that the environment in which teacher educators in my study were implementing the new B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum program produced structural emergent properties with generative powers that conditioned teacher educators to teach in ways which contributed to either reproducing the old way of teaching or changing it. I identified four key structures, namely: infrastructure, teaching materials, language policy implementation for Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum and translation from English version to mother tongue.

### 5.2.1. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a structure at the level of the real because it has the power to support or constrain events at the level of the actual. The interview data revealed that at the time of implementation of the new curriculum some renovations and additional buildings were built in their campuses (See 4.2.1.). This, according to the teacher educators, was done to accommodate the increased number of student teachers that were enrolled in their campuses. Yet at the outset, from the teacher educators' responses in the interviews, it became evident that these classrooms were not meant to prepare student teachers for the teaching of Pre- and Lower Primary levels.

According to the interviewees, the nature of these classrooms did not allow the teacher educators to model pedagogy for student teachers appropriate to the teaching and learning of Pre-and Lower Primary learners. One of the teacher educators indicated that the way the desks are arranged does not allow teacher educators to do practical activities with their students. The learners at Pre-and Lower Primary levels are expected to do more practical activities rather than just listening to the teachers and the lack of opportunity to show how this is done is a constraint to the teacher educators (Fox, 2001).

An example of such practical activities is as follows: When teacher educators deal with a topic in Mathematics such as counting, student teachers are supposed to sit in groups or pairs and use real objects such as bottle tops, abacus, or stones to do counting as the learners for Pre-and Lower Primary could do. The nature of this classrooms as indicated by most of the teacher educators in my study do not allow teacher educators to carry out these activities as required because there is lack of space for movement by both teacher educators and student teachers during the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, teacher educators are unable to put student teachers to sit into groups in order for them to exercise these practical activities.

Furthermore, the approach to teaching and learning for Pre-and Lower Primary levels, in the Namibian context is based on a paradigm of learner-centred education (Ministry of Education, 2005: 7). Learner-centred education in the Namibian context means that the learners should be involved in as partners rather than receivers of educational growth (Ministry of Education, 1993:

60). Learner-centred education as advocated by the Namibian educational policy includes a variety of attributes and characteristics. Some of these include a conducive learning environment, appropriate resources etc. Zeichner & Dahlstrom (1999) emphasize that the heart of the proposed reforms are teaching strategies that are learner-centred and interactive. This requires that teachers should have a holistic view of the learners and use the learners experience as a starting point. They further suggest that the teachers should be able to select content and methods on the basis of the learner's needs, use local and natural resources as an alternative to supplement to ready-made study materials and thus develop their own and the learner's creativity.

As discussed in Chapter Two, at independence teacher education was reformed in line with the four major goals of education, which are access, equity, quality and democracy that were to be realized through the educational principles of learner-centred education:

Learner-centred education presuppose that teachers have a holistic view of learners, valuing the learner's life experience as the starting point for their studies. Teachers should therefore be able to select content and methods on the basis of a shared analysis of learner's need, use local and natural resources as an alternative or supplement to ready –made study materials, and thus develop their own and the learner's creativity.....A learner-centred approach demands a high degree of learner participation, contribution and production.....It is based on democratic pedagogy; a methodology which promote learning through understanding, and practice directed towards empowerment to shape the conditions of one's own life" (Ministry of Education, 1993: 80-81)

The findings revealed that most of the teacher educators in the various campuses are from the pre-independence dispensation and find the implementation of education reform challenging, because their own "professional development has not kept track with new educational development and practice" (Ministry of Education, 1993: 21-22).

Schweisfurth (2011) also identifies several implementation barriers to learner-centred education which are: unrealistic expectations by the policy makers towards teacher educators,

misconceptions of learner-centred teaching by both policy makers and the implementers themselves, practical and material constraints.

The situation above is similar to the ones experienced in Limpopo Province (Tadesse et al, 2007), where the procedures for developing a curriculum program were complex, hence the need for better prepared teacher educators, many of whom, in the previously disadvantaged groups, were inadequately prepared for basic teaching, left alone comprehending the new curriculum process.

From the above statements, there is a need to provide adequate infrastructure in situations where it is lacking before implementation has to be initiated (Rogan & Grayson, 2003: 1196). These authors further indicate that there is no point of allowing implementers, in this regard teacher educators, to go on preparing student teachers into the teaching of Pre- and Lower Primary levels if the campuses do not have adequate classrooms to do so. Green et al. (2005: 108) also state that it is necessary to understand the change environment and the degree of resources available to support such change. For example, if as indicated in the interviews, campuses do not have adequate classrooms, the teacher educators may use any classroom that does not suit the purpose, and as a result they may not prepare student teachers as required.

The new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum requires that teacher educators adopt teaching strategies that will equip student teachers whom they are preparing to teach learners for Pre-and Lower Primary with knowledge and skills. The interview data seemed to indicate a severe lack of adequate classroom limiting the teacher educators from practicing the strategies which are required in the new curriculum.

Curriculum as a set of education plans should be adequately prepared and based on the teaching and learning situations of the reform. This means that teacher educators' learning styles and needs must be given serious attention. As a result, this will enable teacher educators to internalize the use of various teaching and learning approaches and pedagogical knowledge in their teaching practice (Bantwini, 2009: 179). Furthermore, Sharp et al (2009: 250) point to the fact that many teacher educators possess neither the subject knowledge nor pedagogical content knowledge required to implement the new curriculum effectively, therefore a clear understanding of policy and practice

is needed. Fullan (2006: 6) also pointed out that change theory or knowledge can be very powerful in informing education change strategies and in turn, getting results, but only in the hands of people who have a deep understanding of dynamics of how the factors in question operate to get quality. Implementation of curriculum change without the relevant resource to teach it would cause frustration and discouragement on the side of the implementers (Singh, 2012). Infrastructure contributed in constraining the effective implementation of the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum.

The findings also pointed to the need to have laboratories where teacher educators together with their student teachers can develop instructional materials for the teaching of Pre-and Lower Primary phases. Most of the teacher educators indicated a lack of laboratories in their campuses. UNAM (2010), as described in Chapter Four, holds the view that teachers should be able to supplement ready-made study materials and develop their own materials, thus encouraging student creativity.

From the teacher educators' responses, it is evident that they acknowledge the importance of laboratories as venues where both the teacher educators and students can prepare and develop materials to support the teaching and learning of Pre-and Lower Primary classrooms. The process of materials development can inspire and motivate student teachers which in return will make them experts in their future professional careers as Pre-and Lower Primary school teachers. These laboratories could also serve as places where all the materials can be stored for use by both teacher educators and student teachers. Responses from the interviews indicated that these venues are not available in most of the campuses.

### **5.2.2. The language policy implementation for Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum**

My analysis of the interview data indicated some of the obvious contributing factors that have led teacher educators not to implement the language policy as required. First is the lack of expertise in mother tongues. Teacher educators in my study indicated that most of the teacher educators are not trained to teach subjects such as Mathematics, Environmental education, Social studies etc. in the medium of mother tongue as they are required to do so by the curriculum (See 4.2.2).

Secondly, the teacher educators teaching in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary were from different regions, where mother tongues are different from the ones offered at the campuses. One of the teacher educators indicated that she is Afrikaans speaking but given Environmental Studies to teach at a campus that offers Rumanyan which is the language of teaching and learning for Pre-and Lower Primary education (See 4.2.2).

Thirdly, the materials such as study guides, textbooks and course outlines are mostly written in English instead of the mother tongue. The teacher educators indicated that this is one of the biggest challenges that they are experiencing. Because before they present the lessons, they have to translate the content of the course outline from English to mother tongue. One of the teacher educators noted that through the process of translation, one can miss out the points which may lead to giving incorrect information to the student teachers (See4.2.3). Thus the student teacher's knowledge of their language and their metalinguistic skills may be very limited. They may not know in their own language the terminology needed for teaching at Pre and Lower Primary levels or even the correct orthography of their language.

Finally, the nature and the role of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum program preparation of teacher education need to be revisited as part of the problem. Most of the teacher educators in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education are from the pre-independence dispositions. The question thus is, to what extent did their training empower them with the appropriate knowledge and skills to prepare student teachers through the medium of mother tongue?

The evidence gathered has shown that using mother tongue in the classroom in particular at Pre-and Lower Primary levels enhances classroom participation, decreases attrition and increase the likelihood of family and community engagement in the child's learning. Furthermore, it also enhances the child's cognitive learning process (Ministry of education, 2005).

The structural elements of the language policy implementation for Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum indicates that teacher educators are encountering constraints which have a limiting

effect on their ability to implement the policy mandated in the new curriculum. The section on agency (see 4.4.4) explores how teacher educators in my study responded to some of the structural elements highlighted in this section. Even though, the decision taken was not a viable one because it is contrary to the policy implementation of the Pre-and Lower Primary education it seemed teacher educators in my study did not have any other choice rather to take such decisions.

It is also evident from the findings of the interviews that the majority of the teacher educators are from the pre-independence dispensation who were trained through the medium of Afrikaans. They find the implementation of the new curriculum very challenging in particularly by training student teachers through the medium of mother tongues which themselves never experienced before.

I argue therefore that teacher educators in my study should do training in their various mother tongues. The training for mother tongue should include both educational and linguistic components. The latter are indispensable for empowering human resources by equipping them with comprehensive knowledge about all aspects of the language, competence in as many skills as possible, reading, writing and communication, confidence in the subject matter and in the relevance of teaching mother tongue (University of Namibia, 2010). This is also very relevant to the student teachers and must equally be passed on to them in order for them to appreciate the role of mother tongue and to use the language adequately especially after they have completed their training (Harlech-Jones, 1998).

The findings also pointed to problems of the student teachers' initial development. The curriculum program should, therefore be re-looked at to assess how well student teachers are trained to be competent enough to handle classrooms of Pre-and Lower Primary through the medium of the various mother tongues as they are required to do. Teachers are the backbone of effective teaching and learning and they need sound knowledge and skills to base their judgments and to deliver meaningful teaching and learning to the learners.

### 5.2.3. Teaching materials

Teaching material is also a structure at the level of the real because it has the power to enable or constrain the implementation of a curriculum. The interview data revealed a lack of teaching materials that are required to teach the new B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum.

Spillane, Reiser and Reiner (2002), as described in Chapter 2, hold the view that resources such as teaching materials play an important role in the implementation of any curriculum program. Dele (2005: 59) also argued that education cannot be a bedrock of national development without adequate teaching materials usage. Saidu (2007) also highlights the contributions teaching materials can make to curriculum implementation. He argues that teaching materials contribute in making the curriculum implementation comprehensive, balanced, functional and relevant in nature. He further goes on to say that students' performances can also be enhanced through the good use of teaching materials because through the use of teaching materials difficult concepts, content and issues can be made clearer to the student. It is therefore vital that adequate teaching materials should be available and be used by teacher educators and student teachers to make their teaching and learning more effective.

From the teacher educators' responses, it is evident that the teacher educators acknowledge the importance of teaching materials in the enhancement of mother tongue instruction. One of the teacher educators indicated that although the language policy ideally supports mother tongue education, because of inadequate teaching materials in mother tongue it is difficult to implement the curriculum as required. Lack of materials that are written in mother tongue poses a serious threat towards the successful implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum program. Singh (2012: 595) states that providing essential materials allows teacher educators to focus their attention on teaching their students, rather than tracking down materials they do not have. So it would seem that that lack of teaching materials is a further constraining factor limiting teacher educators for effectively implementing the new curriculum.

#### **5.2.4. Translation from English to mother tongue**

The evidence gathered also indicated that teacher educators encountered a lot of structural constraints such as lack of textbooks that are written in mother tongue and course outlines that appear in English.

The interview data seems to indicate that most of the teacher educators in the study felt constrained to implement the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary through the medium of mother tongue. This was due to the following factors: time constraints and teaching materials that are written in English instead of mother tongue as well as missing points during the process of translation (See 4.4.4). One of the teacher educators noted that the process of translation was time consuming, because the teacher educators have to translate all the materials that they will use during the teaching and learning processes. The materials include textbooks, course outlines as well as the information that they will obtain from the internet.

It would seem therefore, that the practice of translation from English version to mother tongue is contradictory to the discourses underpinning the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum which states that student upon completion are expected to effectively communicate the concepts and content through the medium of mother-tongue (See 4.4.4). Furthermore, the student teachers' knowledge of their language and their metalinguistic skills may be limited as a result of not being prepared through the medium of mother tongue. Moreover, teacher educators may not teach student teachers the terminology in their own language that will be needed for teaching at Pre-and Lower Primary level or even the correct orthography of their language because this is beyond the teacher educators' level of understanding. Teacher educators are therefore required to have sufficient knowledge and skills in mother-tongue, to prepare student teachers appropriately during their training. Because this will allow the student teachers to effectively teach learners of Pre-and Lower primary phases after their training. However, it appears that the implementation of the newly introduced curriculum is not receiving sufficient structural support in Namibia. For example, it seems that the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia lacks some money to finance adequate infrastructure and provide teaching resources necessary to enable the implementation of the curriculum. However, there are structural efforts that have been made to support this initiatives.

For example, where there is no money to put up some new structure, renovations of buildings were done in all campuses, staff development funds were provided in order for teacher educators to upgrade their qualifications and some internal and external workshop have been conducted to help teacher educators implement the curriculum.

### **5.3. Summarizing the structural element**

My analysis of the interview data indicates that teacher educators in my study encountered constraining conditions which limited their ability to implement the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum as required, including a lack of adequate classrooms, teaching materials and mother tongue expertise. Despite the fact that the teacher educators applied agency in some of the instances. I argue that most of these structures contribute to the maintenance of the old ways of teaching rather than to the new ways of teaching as required by the new curriculum. This in itself means that they constrain rather than enable the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum.

### **5.4. Cultural elements**

The interview with the teacher educators in my study was to explore how they understand, experience and interpret the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum which was at the empirical level of reality. In this section, I want to go beyond the empirical level to the level of reality by exploring the underlying mechanisms from which the interpretations and experiences of the teacher educators emerge and the implications these have for their ability to implement the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum.

Findings from the interviews revealed that teacher educators in my study have a view of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum that is similar to those of the curriculum designers. Both the designers of the curriculum programs and the teacher educators believed that the new program will solve the problem of unqualified teachers for Pre-and Lower Primary levels in schools. The analysis further indicated that both the designers of the curriculum and the teacher educators in my

study felt that the new curriculum program will lift up the standard of Pre-and Lower Primary education in Namibia because most of the teachers will have the required qualifications to teach at this levels (see 4.3).

Furthermore, the analysis revealed a challenge of teacher educator engagement in the change processes. One of the teacher educators indicated that their inputs were not taken into account and what the teacher educators saw coming was a program that they were expected to implement whether understanding it or not. This type of a situation is one that was indicated as a “see for yourself situation,” as one of the teacher educators in my study noted (see 4.3.2).

It would seem, therefore that the curriculum designers did not understand the crucial role teacher engagement plays in the process of curriculum planning and implementation. Their understanding seems to have privileged the control of the teacher educators rather than interaction and negotiation. I therefore argue that this contradiction in the meaning of stakeholder engagement indicates that these teacher educators did not understand what was required of them from implementing the new curriculum and hence they did not seem to have a clear understanding of their roles in the implementation of the new curriculum. It seems their interpretation of the new curriculum was based on the old ways of teaching and learning the Pre-and Lower Primary levels, that of teaching through the medium of English instead of mother tongues as they used to do. Furthermore, the teaching and learning as advocated by MOE through a learner-centred approach was equally not facilitated due to the above-mentioned challenges.

Nsibandé (2002: 101) argues that the success of the curriculum design and implementation depends on the ability of teacher educators to understand curriculum change they face on a daily base. The interpretation of curriculum policy into practice depends essentially on the teacher educators who have the influence to change meanings in numerous methods. This means that teacher educators have the knowledge, skills, positive approach and passion for teaching. Glatthorn (2000: 22) further expresses that in most cases when curriculum reforms are being considered, teacher educators’ beliefs, values, practices and interests are normally not taken into account by curriculum planners. In the process, this hinders implementation because teacher educators may not understand the foundations for curriculum change. Van der Westhuizen (2004:72) holds the view that because

people are different, they also have different ways of adapting to new situations. Some teacher educators may willingly contribute in the process of new innovations, and some may not easily accept change. In most cases, this happens when they are confronted with changes that have to do with adjusting their personal values and beliefs that is rooted in past experiences and practices (Van der Westhuizen, 2004). These findings seem to be corroborated in this study.

Carl (1995: 92) identified factors that teacher educators find themselves in before a reform situation: This include:

- Uncertainty about what the curriculum changes imply,
- Poor motivation;
- Lack of clarity about development;
- Ambiguity and lack of understanding of nature and extent of the envisaged change;
- Insufficient resources to administer support and specialized knowledge;
- Insufficient support from education practice; and
- Security of the existing practices.

These factors may have a negative influence on the curriculum processes. For the curriculum to be effective, it is vital that campus managers/ leaders should influence teacher educators to respond positively to the curriculum change. It is the leaders' responsibilities to see to it that changed curriculum management processes are understood and accepted by all teacher educators involved. The issue of bureaucratic attitudes should also be avoided by campus managers when new curriculum changes are taking place.

It is important that teacher educators should be actively involved and empowered in the curriculum planning and design, because even those with minimal levels of education and training may be capable of dramatically changing their teaching behavior, the classroom, and improving the achievements of their student teachers. Conversely, when teacher educators are ignored or when curriculum planning comes from above or is not connected to the daily realities of the classroom, even the most expensive and well planned curriculum programs are almost sure to fail. One may ask a question about who implements a curriculum? The answer is very straightforward,

curriculum is implemented by teachers/teacher educators who should not be taken for granted or viewed simply as skilled technicians who dutifully realize a given set of teaching in accordance with the directives of a distant authority. Teachers/teacher educators are supposed to be active participants in the creation of classroom realities and they act in light of their own beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the relevant teaching situations.

Policy makers should no longer assume that curriculum implementation is a process that translates directly into classroom reality. They should identify, analyze and address any discrepancies between teacher educator's opinions and ideas offered for curriculum reform. As Ornstein & Hunkins (2009) have indicated, implementation is an interaction between those who have created the program and those who are charged to deliver it.

Handel & Herrington (2003) also stress the central role of the teacher educators in implementing the curriculum and call on policy makers to take teacher educators' attitudes and perceptions into account. Teacher educators are the major pillars in the teaching and learning process, with their knowledge, experience and competencies, teacher educators are central to any curriculum improvement effort, they are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom and outside the classroom as well. In fact, it is the teacher educators who know best, what the curriculum should look like, they work directly with the student teachers who are meant to benefit from the curriculum program. While the policy makers dictate the content covered by the curriculum, teacher educators can provide insight into the types of content, materials, activities and specific skills that need to be included. This can be done by teacher educators themselves through the process of collaboration to identify skills students need and ensure that the curriculum adequately prepares student teachers for the right knowledge, skills and attitudes to be used in schools after their training.

Teacher educator engagement in curriculum planning processes is crucial, as they do so they gain ownership in the product and feel more confident that the curriculum was created with their concerns, and the needs of their student teachers in mind.

Doll (1999, cited in Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009: 24-25) indicates that teacher educators should be involved in every step of curriculum making including the planning of specific goals, materials, content and methods. He maintains that teacher educators should have a curriculum coordinating body that helps to unify their work and develop relationships with other parts involved in curriculum implementation. This was also indicated by Fullan (2004) in his ‘we-we collective effort strategy’ (Chapter 2). If the curriculum change is externally imposed, teacher educators can view it as a threat, which can undermine their beliefs and shake their confidence in their established practices and feeling of self-efficacy (Chacon, 2003).

Sikes (1992: 43) expresses the view that as a result of such imposition, teacher educators “might lose their sense of meaning and direction, their “framework of reality; their confidence that they know what to do. It is only by individual teacher educators taking into action to alter their own learning environment that there is any change for deep change which encompasses teacher educators re-examining their beliefs by making them explicit which in turn, might require the collaboration of others (Fullan, 2007). This is further indicated by Chance and Chance (2002) that teacher educator’s involvement in decision making determines the level of effectiveness in implementing changes. In this regard there should be a plan of action that details what will be done how and where certain operations will be performed and who will do them. This can help institutions to come up with effective curriculum change, improvement and implementation. The involvement of teacher educators in curriculum planning and designs foster more effective implementation.

## **5.5. Summarizing the cultural elements**

The analysis of the data in my study has shown that teacher educators in this study and the curriculum designers of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum interpreted the new curriculum different from one another. Two conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, while the teacher educators in my study and designers of the curriculum appear to have similar interpretations such as the new curriculum will reduce the number of unqualified teachers - they do not share the same meaning with regard to, for example, stakeholder engagement. Secondly, it seems that the teacher

educators in my study drew a great deal from the old ways of teaching when they interpreted the new curriculum. This way of interpreting the curriculum was different from what they were required to implement the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum and as a result it challenged them for understanding fully the requirements of the new curriculum.

## **5. 6. The agential elements**

Findings from the interviews revealed that the teacher educators in my study experienced structural and cultural constraints such as an unfavorable environment, atmosphere, resources and infrastructure. My discussions of the findings in this section are based on the decisions the teacher educators in my study took in response to these constraints.

### **5. 6. 1. Collaboration and dialogue with colleagues**

On this issue, O’Sullivan (2002: 234) has argued that poor communication networks available to teacher educators, both for disseminating policy document and supporting their implementation efforts, results into curriculum implementation failures. O’Sullivan further suggests that the quality of working relationships among teacher educators is strongly related to implementation (O’Sullivan, 2002). The role of the teacher educators therefore is supposed to provide a setting /avenues in which they can collaborate, share, and synthesize individual knowledge and skills in order to make full use of the expertise within themselves as well as outside their community.

My findings revealed that the teacher educators conducted departmental meetings and created avenues through internet to collaborate with colleagues within their campuses and from those at other campuses. All the teacher educators in my study indicated that they gained knowledge and skills about the implementation of the new curriculum program through the process of collaboration.

The teacher educators’ views seem to be supported by an argument that says that professional learning and professional fulfillment are enhanced through collaboration (Fullan, 1994, cited in O’Sullivan, 2002). It is also further argued that individual teacher educator’s learning is socially

situated in a network of co-teacher educators. But one might ask the question of how effective these meetings are in making the teacher educators understand what they were teaching and the way they were preparing their student teachers. I therefore argue that despite the interactions with other teacher educators, the teacher educators in my study did not demonstrate that what they had acquired from other colleagues was actually applied in their particular professional context. These interactions appear to operate at the level of ‘tips’ for teacher educators and they continued teaching in the way they felt at ease.

### **5. 6. 2. Professional development**

Nelson & Hammerman (1996:81) have argued that the vision of practice that underlies the nation’s reform agenda requires most teacher educators to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about student teacher’s outcomes, and to teach in ways they have never taught before as well as never experienced as students. They further argue that professional development today means providing occasions for teachers to reflect critically on their practice and fashion new knowledge and beliefs about the content, pedagogy and students (Nelson & Hammerman, 1996).

The Namibian educational reform also demands of teacher educators to be critical inquirers, independent thinkers, problem solvers and so on. This can be real when teacher educators have got new knowledge, skills and attitudes which they obtain through staff development programs.

Findings from the interview revealed that at the time of implementation some of the teacher educators did not have the required qualifications to occupy positions as lecturers for the University. One of the teacher educators in my study noted that at the time of implementation she only had a Bachelor’s degree in education. The University of Namibia requires lecturers to have a Master’s degree in order for them to deliver content at the University level. Findings further indicated that teacher educators should also upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to guide and support the student teachers properly.

My analysis of the interviews revealed some obvious contributing factors that led the new curriculum implementation to remain a status quo. First is the lack of adequate infrastructure, comprehensive professional development programs/workshops for teacher educators. Despite the meetings /retreats that they had, it seems fewer opportunities were provided to the teacher educators to develop the sort of understanding that was needed.

Second is the guidance and support provided to the teacher educators. One of the teacher educators indicated that the situation which they found themselves was a “see for yourself” situation. It seems that the guidance and support provided to the teacher educators were not sufficient to equip them with appropriate knowledge and skills in order for them to prepare student teachers adequately as required by the new curriculum. Further probing revealed that the teacher educators in my study were left alone to deal with their problems (see 4.3.2).

From the above findings, it seems that the teacher educators in my study need relevant and effective professional development programs to upgrade and improve their qualifications, because these may allow them to challenge and conform to the new curriculum programs that come their way. According to Kyahurwa (2013:30), changes in education with regard to curriculum at all levels require teacher educators to expand their level of knowledge and skills. Professional development is most effective when it is an on-going process that includes suitable properly planned learning programs and individual follow-up through supportive observation and feedback, staff dialogue and peer coaching (Campbell, 1997: 26; Ho-Ming and Ping-Yang, 1999: 40). Teacher educators are the main implementation “tool” in any curriculum reform. They have to be capacitated adequately for the successful implementation of the curriculum. The aspects of policy clarity, content gap, resources constraints are a cause for concerns to the effective implementation of curriculum. According to Mahomed (2004: 3) “the more you know, the more you can be specific about what else you need training on.” If there is a content or teaching approach gap, it would be difficult for a teacher educator to identify an area on which he/she needs development. Smith, (2001: 77) pointed out that other teachers prefer more structure and guidance and some are even more rigid in their approach, and thus need greater support.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995:82) point out some of the characteristics for an effective professional development. This includes among others:

- It must engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the process of learning and development.
- It must be grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant-driven.
- It must be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among teacher educators and focus on teacher educator's communities of practice rather than on individual teachers.
- It must be connected to and derived from teacher educator's work with their students.
- It must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.
- It must be connected to other aspects of institutional change.

Professional development of this kind signals a departure from old norms and models of "preservice" or "inservice" training. It creates new images of what, when, and how teacher educators learn, and these new images require a corresponding shift from policies that seek to control or direct the work of teacher educators to strategies intended to develop campuses and teacher educator's capacity to be responsible for student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

## **5.7. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed the findings of the study in the light of my research questions and the literature review. I have discussed the elements that enabled or constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. The findings of the study show that the inability of the teacher educators in my study to implement the curriculum as required is caused by some structural and cultural elements. The structural elements are for example, lack of infrastructure, teaching materials, and the cultural elements are the teacher educators' understanding about the new curriculum program. Responses from the interviews indicated that the teacher educators misinterpreted the content and context of the new curriculum program. This according to the findings was caused by the teacher educators' non-involvement in the whole curriculum planning and design process. Furthermore, the teacher educators' agency was also not considered. This

means that the teacher educators did not have power and control. Responses from the interviews indicated that if the teacher educators had power and control as well as participating in the whole process, the teacher educators could have a better understanding, which could make the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum successful.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR RESEARCH**

“Teacher educators are the core of the curriculum implementation process; without their support and sincere involvement in the process, any curriculum implementation will stay at a superficial level, with either semi-implementation or even non-implementation.” (Carless, 1999: 374).

#### **6.1. Introduction**

This final chapter presents a critical overview and reflections of the study. This includes, firstly, a brief summary of the study and the research process; secondly, a discussion on the assumption about the newly introduced curriculum program; thirdly, the recommendations emanating from the study, and finally, the suggestions for further research.

#### **6.2. A brief summary of the study**

The aims of the research were: To obtain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing curriculum change and implementation in Namibia as well as to explain how these factors interacted to support or constrain the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum.

The study derived its theoretical foundations from critical social realism. Curriculum implementation based on this perspective is seen to be a social phenomenon which does not operate in isolation, but is interconnected to other parts of social realities which exist independently of what we know or believe of them. The reasons why I opted for critical and social realism is because of its ontological depth. It provided me with an understanding of underlying mechanisms responsible for the way teacher educators implement the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia.

The study was guided by the following questions:

- What factors enabled and constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education?
- How have structure, culture and agency interacted to support or constrain the implementation of the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education?

Archer's concepts of analysis such as structure, culture and agency were used to identify these emerging mechanisms. In the context of this study, structure refers to the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education, human and physical resources etc., culture is the beliefs and attitudes of teacher educators towards the implementation of the curriculum and agency is the choices or decisions of teacher educators that may either enable or constrain the implementation of the curriculum (see Chapter 2).

For the sources, of data, I examined various relevant literatures, read Ministerial and University documents and conducted interviews, all aimed at helping me identify mechanisms that are of structural, cultural as well as the agential nature

### **6.3. Reflection on the research process**

As I indicated in the previous section and particularly in Chapter Three, a multiple case study method was used because I was investigating curriculum implementation at four different campuses. A multiple case study helped me understand how the teacher educators in my study implemented the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in their respective campuses.

A number of instruments were employed to collect data during this study (see Chapter Three). This was necessary because it helped me get a holistic view of the process and to provide a "thick description" of the teacher educators, places and conversations. The various instruments were also used for triangulation purposes in order to verify findings and thus enhance validity and reliability.

The social realist approach of Margaret Archer was drawn on to help me interpret these elements. Archer's concepts of analytical dualism such as structure, culture and agency enabled me to explore and identify the elements that enabled or constrained the implementation of the curriculum. Through the adoption of this theory I have been able to show in this thesis that curriculum events and experiences do not just happen as we plan them, but that because curriculum events and experiences occur in open systems, there are a number of mechanisms that operate in reality which may be enabling or constraining such curriculum events and experiences.

The study also indicates that in reality there are a number of conflicting mechanisms in the case of curriculum implementation. When the mechanism such as discourse systems conflict, and the implementation is often constrained, this can cause a reproduction and maintenance of old way of implementation of events and experiences. Successful implementation occurs when the mechanisms are more consistent. I thus argue that it is very important to be conscious of such conflicts and tensions so that those who are involved in the curriculum design and planning can understand the challenge of curriculum implementation and are therefore able to make conscious efforts to address these conflicts.

#### **6.4. An overview of the key findings**

The result presented in Chapter Four and the analysis of these results in the light of the shaping literature have identified various structural and cultural constraints hampering the teacher educators from optimally implementing the curriculum in accordance with the Namibian educational reform intentions, including:

- A lack of focus from policy makers on the complexity of the implementing processes and the conditions required for implementation i.e. physical and human resources.
- A challenge of engaging people effectively in change processes.
- The fact that teacher educators can be agents of change, even within constraining circumstances.

## **6.5. The lesson learnt from the research**

The research has provided me with useful insights into:

- The ways in which the selected teacher educators understand and implement the curriculum. I have learnt that there are deeper issues that contributed to the teacher educators not implementing the new curriculum effectively, for example, not that there was a lack of resources only. Findings revealed some of the attributes which are: lack of engagement in the design/planning processes, lack of relevant continuous professional development. This finding supports the literature that suggests that on-going and relevant professional development should be facilitated to enhance the effective implementation of the curriculum.
- Teacher educator agency: Here I have learnt that despite the numerous challenges teacher educators in my study experienced, they took decisions to enable the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum including: translating materials from the English version into mother tongue, upgrading qualifications in the area of Pre-and lower Primary education as well as collaborating with colleagues from other campuses. The literature has shown that collaborative dialogue with colleagues enhances professional learning and personal fulfilment. The issue of taking initiative around translating materials is more complex; this was not a viable decision because it is contrary to the pedagogy underpinning the language policy in the Namibian context, but this was done in order for the implementation to take place instead of just not doing it.

## **6.6. Conclusions about the newly introduced B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum**

The results presented in Chapter Four and the analysis of these results in the light of the literature led me to make the following conclusions regarding the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education:

### **6.6.1. It may not be possible that the new B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum will be implemented as planned by its designers**

The fact that there are inconsistencies between the structural and cultural conditions underpinning the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum indicates that it will be a challenge for the teacher educators to implement the curriculum as required. Findings revealed a lack of human and physical resources needed for the successful implementation of the curriculum (See 4.2). The literature examined indicates that lack of resources may constrain the implementation of a curriculum.

Furthermore, the teacher educators' understanding about the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum is also one of the important findings of this study. It would seem that their interpretation was based on the old way of teaching the curriculum, for example that of using English as a medium of instruction instead of mother tongue instruction which they are required to use. It would mean that the teacher educators would need to acquire knowledge and skills that could allow them to implement the new curriculum as required. This may not be easy considering the way in which most of the teacher educators were prepared. Most of the teacher educators are from the pre-independence dispensation and their own practices were through the medium of English and not through their own languages.

Findings also revealed that some of the teacher educators who are teaching in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary are from other regions whose mother tongues are totally different from the ones offered at the campuses. For example an Afrikaans speaker teaching in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary and is expected to prepare student in Thimbukushu or Rumanyo which is the medium of instruction. The question is, how will this be possible? Thus because of this, they will not be able to prepare student teachers to teach subjects such as Mathematics, Environmental Education, Social studies etc. through the medium of that mother tongue. The student teachers very often do not even get a chance to do their practice teaching in schools using their language as medium of instruction in particularly for the said subject and those that are forced to do so are not effectively doing it. This means that the status quo remains and the new curriculum may not be implemented as required.

### **6.6.2. It may not be possible for Namibia to achieve its aims of improving the quality of education at Pre-and Lower Primary levels with the introduction of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum program**

In Chapter 4, I indicated that the implementation of the new curriculum was inspired by some of the major educational goals in Namibia – that of ensuring quality in its educational systems in particular at Pre-and Lower Primary levels. Quality refers to in this case as having qualified and competent staff to teach the learners through their own languages as well as adequate materials to support the teaching and learning process. This may not materialize, because there is evidence in the study that the structural and cultural conditions that many teacher educators encountered in their various campuses may constrain rather enable the implementation of the curriculum.

The shortage of human and physical resources poses a serious threat towards the successful realization of the educational goals. The campuses may as a result of the above-mentioned challenges not be able to produce competent teachers for the goals of the Namibian education to be realized.

By making these arguments, I am not suggesting that the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum may not happen. Rather the point of this thesis is to show that curriculum implementation processes and experiences in Namibia are not neutral but are influenced structurally, culturally and agentially, and therefore its results may be different from what was planned.

## **6.7. Recommendations**

### **6.7.1. The need for teacher educator engagement**

MOE and UNAM who are the planners of the curriculum program should make sure that teacher educators who are the implementers of curriculum are fully engaged into curriculum change processes. The findings of this study indicate that the teacher educators misinterpreted the new

curriculum. Instead of applying what the new curriculum required them to do, for example teaching subjects such as Mathematics, Environmental studies, Social studies etc., through the medium of mother tongue, they continued using English as a medium of instruction. The challenge is that the student teachers are totally not prepared to teach these subjects through the medium of mother tongue after their training which is the requirement for Pre-and Lower Primary education. As I indicated earlier on, student teachers may not have the terminology and content of these subjects and this will result into learners being provided with unfounded or inappropriate knowledge. Furthermore, student teachers may not feel at ease to handle classes at these levels.

It is therefore important for MOE and UNAM to establish and maintain channels of communication with the teacher educators and to provide an understanding as to what is expected of them with the implementation of the new curriculum. This should be done when the curriculum is planned and designed not during the implementation stage. I believe that it is not enough for the curriculum planners to say or inform the teacher educators that we are going to introduce a new curriculum for the quality in particular at Pre-and Lower Primary level to be achieved, without engaging the teacher educators fully in the whole process. This may also result into the quality being compromised.

The teacher educators are the key players in curriculum planning and implementation and their participation and decision making in the whole process may bring good and positive results. However, while it is evident that the participating teacher educators do indeed have a shallow view of the curriculum implementation, I believe that what this study has done is to reveal some of the contributing factors that have resulted in the views and implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. These are further illuminated by the challenges that the teacher educators identified in implementing the new curriculum.

Further to this I believe that this study has helped to provide insights that help to identify key factors related to developing the desired understanding of the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum. Furthermore, such insight may enable agency in that it may empower teacher educators to make conscious decisions about the way of implementing the curriculum

which may also help instill in teacher educators a positive attitudes towards the whole curriculum implementation process.

### **6.7.2. The need to acquire resources**

There is evidence in the study that most of the campuses do not have adequate resources which are needed to implement the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum as required. Findings revealed lack of mother tongue expertise, inadequate classrooms which the teacher educators could use to model student teachers into the teaching of Pre-and Lower Primary phases, none or limited laboratories for materials development and storage, unavailability of materials that are written in the mother tongues that are offered at all campuses. Lack of these resources makes it difficult for teacher educators to implement the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum as required.

The study however also indicates that teacher educators took a decision to translate materials such as textbooks, handouts, course outlines from the English version into mother tongues to enable the implementation of the curriculum. I therefore argue that this was not a viable decision - as one of the teacher educators' commented that through the process of translation one could miss a point which contribute to student teachers not being properly prepared to understand and use the language effectively when they are in the field of teaching. Therefore, it is vital that resources, both human and material, be made available before and during the process of implementation to enable the process of implementation to move smoothly and effectively.

### **6.7.3. The need for the language policy for Pre-and Lower Primary education to be implemented as required**

Teacher educators in the Department of Pre-and Lower Primary education should understand and acknowledge the importance of mother tongue instructions and the role it plays in the educational development of both Pre and Lower Primary learners. It would seem that mother tongue instruction is being interpreted by some of the teacher educators as something that student teachers will start practicing when they are in schools after their training. The literature examined indicates that

developing the learners' language is the most fundamental aspect of Pre-and Lower Primary levels and learning is best achieved through the medium of the mother tongue of the learner (Chapter 5).

This study suggests the following:

- The Ministry of Education (MOE) in collaboration with UNAM should release adequate funds for the procurement of resources such as infrastructure, teaching materials necessary for the effective implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary teacher preparations in all campuses.
- Mother tongue instruction along with other features of quality education such as appropriate curriculum, teacher capacity and effective campus leadership is central to successful implementation, therefore, this study further suggests that MOE and UNAM must think and act collaboratively so that the crucial features of quality education, including mother tongue instruction will be successfully addressed.
- The National Institute of Education in Namibia (NIED), the body responsible for curriculum design and planning in collaboration with UNAM and local bodies must give significant attention to the development of written forms of local languages and their suitability for pedagogical use.
- NIED in collaboration with UNAM should also facilitate serious discussion and exchange of experiences regarding mother tongue and Pre-and Lower Primary education across the campuses. The very real issues of mother tongue need to be thought through, and policy goals need to be shaped around those issues. This type of dialogue could provide encouragement and resources to national decision makers.
- All campuses should admit student teachers to Pre-and Lower Primary courses only if they are literate and proficient in at least one Namibian language besides English offered in that particular campus.

- Campuses should appoint suitable teacher educators in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education- those that will prepare student teachers through the medium of mother tongue.
- Teacher educators whose mother tongue is totally different from the ones offered at the campuses should only be appointed to the department to teach subjects that do not require the use of mother tongue instruction.
- UNAM should ensure that instructional materials of high quality are available in all the Namibian languages.
- UNAM should arrange training for Pre-and Lower Primary teacher educators presently in the system, so that they can train student teachers through the medium of their home language rather than English.
- All Namibian languages should be adequately developed so that they can be fully acknowledged as media of instruction in the Pre-and Lower Primary Phase. This implies the upgrading of the language proficiency of speakers of these languages as well.

#### **6.7.4. The need to recognize teacher educator agency**

The literature examined points to agency as the reflexive, creative, innovative, and purposeful actions of people. Furthermore, it is the decisions or choices they make in their daily lives which has a strong influence over whatever activities they may encounter (see Chapter Two). This study has revealed some of the attributes that made teacher educators not to implement the curriculum as required. One good example regarding this was the weak relations of power and control. It is vital to note that teacher educators are not passive beings who should accept anything that is given to them by the power of structure and culture. As reflective actors, teacher educators think and make their own decisions about something, they choose what they agree or disagree with, what

they prefer and do not prefer which may either enable or constrain the implementation of any activity given to them.

Findings in the study indicate that the structural and cultural conditions that were imposed to the teacher educators in my study posed many challenges. The study further indicates that the teacher educators in my study took decisions in response to these challenges which were more constraining than enabling for the implementation of the curriculum.

This implies, therefore, that there is a need for the MOE and UNAM to recognize the power that teacher educator agency has in contributing to the successful implementation of a curriculum. Furthermore, MOE and UNAM should develop alternative ways of responding to structural and cultural constraints which may bring positive results. Even though the teacher educators may not have had adequate training on implementing the new curriculum, the concept of agency shows that teacher educators have the ability to work out and overcome their problems that will allow them to implement the curriculum as required. MOE and UNAM should put in place mechanisms and structures that will enable this power to be exercised. This may include the identification of challenges that may arise, workshops and many more strategies.

The study also calls for the need to review current curriculum planning and implementation approaches in order to assess if they can support the development of professional practices that can contribute to the effective curriculum implementation, particular in Namibia as a country and elsewhere else.

The study highlights those professional practices that can contribute to the practice of curriculum implementation being effective. Examples are:

- Policy-makers understanding the conditions on the ground.
- Professional communities working together
- Stakeholder engagement
- Good leadership
- Teacher educator agency

- Dialogues between curriculum designers and curriculum implementation on the change processes

Lastly, it is also important to note that when it is known which mechanisms constrain and which enable change and implementation, strategies for removing constraints may be established and what enables may be reinforced.

## **6.8. Suggestions for further research**

The study has highlighted a number of researchable aspects that could be pursued further by those involved in curriculum design and implementation:

- A similar study that will focus on student teachers specializing in Pre-and Lower Primary education, rather than on teacher educators.
- A study that will focus on how the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary graduates implement mother tongue instruction in schools.
- A study that will investigate the impact of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum program in improving the quality of primary education in Namibia.
- A study that will focus on teacher educator agency in curriculum planning and implementation.

## **6.9. Conclusion**

This chapter provided the conclusion for this study. First a brief summary of the study was given, secondly, a critical reflection of the research process, why I selected the research design and then how it worked. Thirdly I have provided conclusions regarding the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum followed by the recommendations. Finally, suggestions for future research have also been made to conclude this study.

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## **APPENDIX: A**

### **Consent letter**

**To the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Academic Affairs and Research – University of Namibia**

**Dear Sir**

#### **Consent to conduct Research Interview**

I am a lecturer at the University of Namibia – Rundu Campus. Previously a departmental coordinator for Pre-and Lower Primary education at UNAM-Rundu Campus, taught African Language (Rumanyo) in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education. I am currently a departmental coordinator for Educational Foundations and Management, teaching subject such as Philosophy of Education, Sociology of Education, Educational Management, Professional and Community Development and School Leadership and Management. Currently, I am doing a PhD study in Education at the University of Stellenbosch on a Part time basis. My focus area is Curriculum study. My research is “An investigation into the implementation of the Bachelor Education (Pre-and Lower Primary) curriculum in Namibia. This study will enable readers to understand in more depth the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary) curriculum in Namibia teacher education.

My research project involves investigating the following:

1. What factors enabled and constrained the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia?
2. How have the structure, culture and agency interacted to support or constrains the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia?

I therefore, kindly request your permission to interview twelve teacher educators (three each campus) in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education at the four campuses of the University of Namibia. The campuses are: Rundu campus, Katima Mulilo campus, Khomasdal campus and Hifikepunye Pohamba campus.

The interview will cover the above-mentioned issues on curriculum implementation. This exercise will happen between January and April 2015.

It is my wish no to interrupt classes during the data collection process. The interviews will be conducted after the normal classes.

The campus and teacher educators are assured of anonymity in the finale research report. I promise that the information from the interview will be treated with great confidentiality and that your name, the campus will not be used in the study and will not be revealed to anyone.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at: 0811472521 or via email [mmwala@unam.na](mailto:mmwala@unam.na)

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated

Yours sincerely

.....

Mwala Maria Elizabeth

## APPENDIX: B

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Inspiring minds & shaping the future

**RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS OFFICE**  
OFFICE OF THE PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & RESEARCH

4<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

Mrs Maria Elizabeth Mwala  
Rundu Campus  
University of Namibia

Dear Mrs Mwala

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT UNAM FOR PhD STUDIES**

Your application for permission to conduct research at UNAM dated 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2014 refers.

- **Title of Study:** An investigation into the implementation of the Bachelor of Education: (Pre-Primary and Lower Primary) curriculum in Namibia
- **Level of Study:** PhD
- **University of Registration:** Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Your application was evaluated in accordance with the relevant UNAM Policies and related guidelines to check for any possible infringement of their provisions. The following were observed:

- (a) The proposed research will be important for UNAM since it may lead to the improvement of the effectiveness of the implementation strategies of our curricula, particularly the B.Ed. Pre- and Lower- Primary curricula.
- (b) The methods you will use were adjudged not to be burdensome or inconveniencing to the interviewees at the selected Campuses, through proper timing and your sampling strategy.
- (c) Proper ethical considerations have been made and ethical clearance from your institution of Registration was noted.
- (d) You, being one of our staff members, the University Management fully supports your efforts to professionally capacitate yourself and achieve higher qualifications. This will not only be a personal achievement but of our institution as well.

Your application to conduct this research at UNAM is therefore **approved** on the following conditions:

- (a) In the course of your research, you will observe the required procedures, norms, and ethical conduct in accordance with the relevant policies and guidelines, and as outlined in your proposal.

- (b) No inconveniences or disruptions to the normal duties and operations of the participants and other processes will be caused at the selected Campuses.
- (c) Results/findings of this research will be shared with the PVC (AA&R) (and/or his appointees) before they are disseminated in the public domain.
- (d) On completion, a copy of the PhD dissertation should be lodged with the UNAM Library, and, notwithstanding the Stellenbosch University conditions, an electronic copy should be lodged with the UNAM Institutional Repository.
- (e) Proper acknowledgement of the University of Namibia and participants shall be done in the dissertation and any subsequent publications arising from this research.
- (f) You must liaise with the Management of the respective Campuses before going to collect data to ensure proper coordination of your activities.

If you accept the above conditions, please sign and date a copy of this letter and return to the Research & Publications Office at your earliest convenience.

You are free to contact the Research & Publications Office if any of this is not clear to you.

I would like to wish you all the best in your studies.

Yours sincerely



Prof. I. Mapaure

**UNAM RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

C.c.: Prof. O.D. Mwandemele, PVC: Academic Affairs & Research  
Dr. G. Likando, Director: Rundu Campus

.....

**I accept the above conditions.**

NAME: .....

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

## APPENDIX: C



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jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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Research Title: **An investigation into the implementation of the Bachelor of Education:**

**(Pre- and Lower Primary) curriculum in Namibia**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Mrs. Mwala Maria Elizabeth, HED SEC (UNAM), B.Ed. Hons., M.Ed. from the Education department at Rhodes University. The results will contribute to finalizing my PhD studies. You were selected as a possible participant in this study.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To obtain an in-depth understanding of the elements that significantly influence curriculum change and implementation and how these elements interacted to support or constrains the implementation of the newly introduced B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia teacher education. The study also aimed at generating a framework that would enable further program development in Namibia

#### 2. PROCEDURES

Data collection

The investigator would like to conduct an interview with the teacher educators of approximately one hour long. This exercise will happen between January and April 2015.

#### 3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The teacher educator's normal teaching time and campus time table will not be interrupted during the data collection process. The interviews will take place after normal classes.

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

The study will provide empirical data that could inform in future the curriculum developers and curriculum implementers on the effective ways of looking at curriculum change and implementation, particularly in Namibia as a country. Furthermore the study provides conceptual knowledge such as structure, culture and agency that is relevant and useful to curriculum change and implementation. This knowledge will be of most benefit to the teacher educators, who are curriculum implementers, the Ministry of Education and the University of Namibia who are the decision makers. It will provide insight and make the teacher educators appreciate the roles they play in curriculum change and implementation. The analysis will also serve as a guide towards future curriculum planning and implementation.

#### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

N/A

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of the data being kept by the researcher. It will not be shared with any other person except the teacher educators and the supervisor in charge of the study.

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Prof. Maureen Robinson at –email address: [mrobinson@sun.ac.za](mailto:mrobinson@sun.ac.za)

## 9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to .....by..... in *English* and *I am* in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to *me*. *I* was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to *my* satisfaction.

*I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.* I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ and/or his/her representative \_\_\_\_\_ *name of the representative*. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and *no translator was used*.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

## **APPENDIX: D**

### **Semi-structured interview schedule: Teacher Educators (Pilot)**

#### **Introduction**

I am interested to find out more about your view on the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum at your campus.

The information required from you is for the research I am conducting on the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibia teacher education. The information provided by you will be treated in confidence in such a way as to ensure that it will not have negative implications for you.

Thank you for your time, willingness and openness to respond on the questions.

**Date of interview:**

**Name of interviewee**

**Venue:**

**Questions:**

**SECTION A:**

**BACKGROUND/BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS:**

1. How long have you been a teacher educator at this Campus?
2. How long have you been a teacher educator in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education?

3. What subject and year level do you teach in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education?

## **SECTION B:**

### **FOCUSED QUESTIONS:**

#### **1. About the structural elements of the curriculum**

1. As a teacher educator for the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education involved in the implementation of the Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum- What is your evaluation of
  - (i) The principles underpinning the language policy for Pre-and Lower primary education and
  - (ii) The implementation of this policy?
2. What role did you play in the implementation of this policy
3. How do you implement this policy at your campus?
4. What challenges are you facing at your campus with the implementation of this policy?

#### **2. About the cultural elements of the curriculum**

1. In your view, as a teacher educator, was it necessary to adopt the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum for Namibia teacher education, if so how much does it contribute to the teacher's professional development and the quality of teacher education in general?
2. Could you please describe your vision of how the implementation of the curriculum could improve for the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary program?

### **3. About the agential elements of the curriculum**

1. What training programs did you attend to help you understand the implementation of the curriculum?
2. Do you think these training programs supported you understand the implementation of the curriculum and your role in it? What makes you think so?
3. What could have been done to prepare the teacher educators for the implementation of the curriculum?
4. What challenges, if any, are you facing at your campus with the implementation of the curriculum?
5. Are there any support programs in place for helping you to implement the curriculum at your campus?

## **APPENDIX: E**

### **Semi-structured interview schedule: Teacher Educators (Final)**

#### **Introduction**

I am interested to find out more about your views on the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum at your campus.

The information requested from you is for the research I am conducting for my doctoral study on the implementation of the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum in Namibian teacher education. The information provided by you will be treated in confidence.

Thank you for your time, willingness and openness to respond to the questions.

**Date of interview:**

**Time of interview:**

**Name of interviewee:**

**Campus:**

#### **SECTION A:**

##### **BACKGROUND/BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS:**

1. How long have you been a teacher educator at this Campus?
2. How long have you been a teacher educator in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education?

3. What subject and year level do you teach in the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education?
4. What qualifications do you hold?

## **SECTION B:**

### **FOCUSED QUESTIONS:**

#### **A. About the structural elements regarding the implementation of the B Ed Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum**

##### *EXPLANATORY NOTE TO INTERVIEWEES:*

*The structural elements referred to in this section of the interview focus on the **language policy** as well as on **infrastructure** and **materials** needed for implementation of the curriculum.*

5. As a teacher educator for the department of Pre-and Lower Primary education involved in the implementation of the Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum- What is your evaluation of
  - (iii) The principles underpinning the language policy for Pre-and Lower primary education and
  - (iv) The implementation of this policy?
6. Can you briefly describe how the language policy is implemented at your campus?
7. What challenges are you facing at your campus with the implementation of this policy?
8. Is the necessary infrastructure (buildings, administrative support, laboratories, technology, etc.) available to support the implementation of the curriculum?
9. If yes to question 4: Explain how the different aspects of the infrastructure support the implementation of the curriculum?
10. If your response to question 4 is no. Please explain the challenges you are facing with the lack of infrastructure at your campus?
11. Does the department have adequate materials to support the implementation of the curriculum?

12. If yes, please explain how the materials are used at your campus to support the implementation of the curriculum.
13. If your response to question 7 is no. Please explain the challenges you are facing with the lack of materials at your campus.

**B. About the cultural elements regarding the implementation of the B Ed Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum**

*EXPLANATORY NOTE TO INTERVIEWEES:*

*The cultural elements referred to in this section of the interview focus on the **beliefs, attitudes, atmosphere and ethos** needed for implementation of the curriculum.*

14. In your view, as a teacher educator, was it necessary to adopt the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary curriculum for Namibia teacher education? Please explain your answer.
15. At the time of implementation, was the atmosphere at your campus conducive to curriculum change? Please explain.

**C. About the agential elements regarding the implementation of the B Ed Pre- and Lower Primary curriculum**

*EXPLANATORY NOTE TO INTERVIEWEES:*

*The agential elements referred to in this section of the interview focus on **choices, decisions and initiative** needed for implementation of the curriculum.*

16. What training programs did you attend to help you understand the implementation of the curriculum?
17. Do you think these training programs supported you to understand the implementation of the curriculum and your role in it? What makes you think so?
18. Are there any support programs in place for helping you to implement the curriculum at your campus?

19. What initiatives, if any, have you taken to improve your own understanding or the implementation of the curriculum at your campus?

#### **D. General**

20. Could you please describe your vision of how the implementation of the curriculum could improve for the B.Ed. Pre-and Lower Primary program?

21. What, if anything, could have been done to better prepare the teacher educators for the implementation of the curriculum?

22. In your view, does the new B Ed curriculum contribute to the quality of teacher education in general? Explain your answer.