

FACTORS INFLUENCING MALE LEARNERS' CHOICE OF HOME
ECONOMICS IN THE //KHARAS EDUCATIONAL REGION.

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ABSTRACT

Home Economics is one of the pre-vocational subjects for the Junior Secondary phase. Statistical evidence indicated that male learners who wrote end of Junior Secondary phase (Grade 10) Home Economics examination were 15% in 2013, 11% in 2014 and 8% in 2015, while the rest were girls (MoE, 2015). Male learners are hardly seen in Home Economics programmes at all levels and females are dominating the class size in the subject. This study aimed at investigating factors influencing male learners' choice of Home Economics as a subject in the //Kharas Educational Region. The purpose of the study was to find out cultural/ traditional factors contributing to few male learners choosing Home Economics as a subject. The study further sought to find out whether parents, principals and teachers influence male learners' choice of the subject as well as the strategies that can increase the number of male learners choosing the subject. The study followed a mixed methods research design, where a sample of 50 Grade 8 male learners (non-Home Economics learners), 4 Home Economics male learners and 4 school managers was drawn from five schools that offer Home Economics as a subject in the region. In an attempt to get a representative sample of the population, purposeful random and criterion sampling were used for this study. Triangulation was used in the study by incorporating quantitative and qualitative data obtained from questionnaires, focus group interviews and standardised open-ended interviews. Findings confirmed a number of factors that influence male learners' choice of Home Economics as a subject. The study recommends enlightenment campaigns through seminars and mass media about the importance of Home Economics and career opportunities that the subject provides to learners and the society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	ix
DECLARATIONS	xi
CHAPTER ONE	12
INTRODUCTION	12
1.1 Orientation of the study	12
1.2 Statement of the problem	14
1.3 Research questions	15
1.4 Significance of the study	15
1.5 Limitations	16
1.6 Definition of Terms	17
1.7 Lay-out of the thesis	17
CHAPTER 2	20
LITERATURE REVIEW	20
2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 Theoretical Framework: Progressivism	20
2.3 Socio-cultural framework in general	21
2.4 Home Economics Education	22
2.5 Home Economics and National Development	25
2.6 Male learners’ perceptions toward Home Economics as a subject	28
2.7 Teachers’ perceptions towards male learners choosing Home Economics as a subject	30
2.8 The influence of parents on learners’ choice of subjects including Home Economics	31
2.9 Cultural and traditional norms and beliefs preventing male learners from selecting Home Economics as a subject	34
2.10 Strategies to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics	35
2.11 Summary	37
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	38
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Research Design	38
3.3 Population	39

3.4 Sample and Sampling procedures	39
3.5 Research Instruments	42
3.6 Pilot Study.....	45
3.7 Data collection procedures	47
3.8 Data Analysis.....	48
3.9 Ethical considerations.....	49
3.10 Summary.....	50
CHAPTER 4.....	51
PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH DATA	51
4.1 Introduction.....	51
4.2 Biographical information	52
4.3 Research question 1: Cultural/traditional norms perceived by boys that hinder their choice to study Home Economics.....	56
4.4 Research question 2: Parents', principals' and teachers' influence on male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase.....	70
4.5 Research question 3: Strategies to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics.....	78
4.6 Summary.....	80
CHAPTER 5	81
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	77
5.1 Introduction.....	81
5.2 Discussion of Results.....	81
5.2.1 Perceptions towards Home Economics as a subject.....	82
5.2.2 Traditional /Cultural norms towards Home Economics learning	83
5.2.3 Parents, principals and teachers' influence on male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase	84
5.2.4 Strategies to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics.....	85
5.3 Conclusions.....	87
5.4 Recommendations	89
5.5 Summary.....	90
REFERENCES.....	91
APPENDIX A: UNAM Ethical clearance certificate.....	97
APPENDIX B: Permission letter to the Regional Director	98
APPENDIX C: Permission letter to the school principal	99
APPENDIX D: Questionnaire sample.....	100

APPENDIX E: Standardised open-ended interview schedule	105
APPENDIX F: Focus group interview schedule.....	107

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Male learners and school managers who participated in the study.....	26
Table 3.2: Return rate of questionnaires	27
Table 4.1: Pre-vocational subjects at the five secondary schools	37
Table 4.2: Perceptions of male learners toward Home Economics as a subject.....	40
Table 4.3: Cultural/Traditional factors that hinder male learners' enrolment in Home Economics	41
Table 4.4: Male learners' beliefs on whether they will have careers if they choose to study Home Economics	42
Table 4.5: Parents' and teachers' influence on male learners taking Home Economics	52

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Age group of respondents	36
Figure 4.2: Pre-vocational subjects of male learners not enrolled for Home Economics	38
Figure 4.3: Home Language of male learners not enrolled for Home Economics ...	39
Figure 4.4: Male learners' beliefs on whether they will have careers if they choose to study Home Economics	43
Figure 4.5: Males' choice between Home Economics, Accounting, KWP, Agriculture and Design and Technology	46
Figure 4.6: Parental care regarding males' choice of subjects	53
Figure 4.7: Teachers' treatment to male learners during lessons	55

LIST OF ACRONYMS

DNEA	Directorate of National Examination
HOD	Head of Department
IFHE	International Federation for Home Economics
KKG	Khoekhoegowab
KWP	Keyboard and Word Processing
NASSP	National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
UNAM	University of Namibia

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DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to my mom Elizabeth Enkali for valuing education so much even though she never had an opportunity to finish schooling. The strong foundation she laid since my childhood is the reason I'm still climbing higher.

DECLARATIONS

I, Rebekka Enkali, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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Rebekka Enkali

Date

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the study

According to the National Curriculum for Basic Education (Ministry of Education, 2010b) Home Economics is one of the pre-vocational subjects for the Junior Secondary phase. The other elective pre-vocational subjects apart from Home Economics include Agriculture, Computer Studies, Accounting, Visual Arts, Design and Technology, Keyboard and Word Processing, Needlework and Clothing, and Entrepreneurship. Pre-vocational subjects are among the vital tools an individual can use to develop themselves. Azubuike (2012) emphasized that vocational subjects are training for useful employment in trade, industries, agriculture, business and home making, thus preparing learners for self-reliance. Pre-vocational subjects are actually the most suitable form of education capable of meeting the demands of national economic growth and the globalization of Namibia as a developing country (Ministry of Education, 2010b).

Home Economics is perceived by many as a course that deals with domestic affairs, hence a course for girls. The society, both educated and uneducated, look down on any male learner studying Home Economics (Nnubia, 2013). It is apparent that there is a gender gap in Home Economics. Male learners are significantly more likely to choose Science, Agriculture, Business, or Technical studies (World Bank, 2012). There are various theories as to why males lose interest in Home Economics. Azubuike (2012) emphasized that males perceive Home Economics as a subject that has to do with the

home, since it deals with different food preparations and serving of meals, decoration of the home and its surroundings, making of clothes and child care.

Not all schools offer Home Economics as a subject due to the fact that schools would rather select some of the other pre-vocational subjects on offer (Ministry of Education, 2010a). This is also because only certain schools in the country were built and equipped with venues like kitchens which can accommodate the pre-vocational subjects such as Home Economics. Learners are allowed to select two of the elective subjects offered at their school as they enter the Junior Secondary phase (Grade 8). However, some schools make certain subjects compulsory, depending on the availability of resources as well as the number of teachers qualified to teach these subjects.

The few learners that choose to study Home Economics as a subject appear to be girls in most cases. Many male learners feel that the subject is meant for girls only and so they prefer other subjects to Home Economics. Statistical evidence shows that out of 167 Grade 8 learners that have taken Home Economics in the //Kharas Educational Region in 2015, only 25 were male learners. This simply shows that only 15% of the total learners enrolled for Home Economics were male learners.

Okoh (2006) lamented that the short sightedness of male learners about Home Economics is compounded by the decision of their parents about their career. Teachers and learners seem not to understand what Home Economics is about and consequently develop some contempt for and aversion to the subject. According to Malgwi, Howe and Burnaby (2005), parents are more likely to influence learners' decisions than guidance

counsellors or teachers. This study therefore focused on the factors influencing male learners in selecting Home Economics as a subject in the //Kharas Educational Region.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Sinvula (2014) stated that unemployment has now become a threat to Namibia's peace and stability with the number of school dropouts increasing every year. He emphasized that persistent unemployment among the youth and women has also led to social evils such as the high rate of crimes and HIV/AIDS infections. Moreover, numerous reasons have been advanced explaining the high incidence of passion killings in Namibia. Such reasons include unequal power dynamics in relationships between men and women (Kaumba, 2013). Men are cultural providers for women and this creates dependency where women expect support financially from the household provider. Statistical evidence indicated that male learners who wrote Grade 10 Home Economics end of year examination were 15% in 2013, 11% in 2014 and 8% in 2015 while the rest were girls (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Namibia needs a functional education system that can provide its citizens with a source of livelihood. Home Economics could be one of the subjects that can improve the livelihood of the people because it emphasises personal development, decision making and intrapersonal skills (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Home Economics is a skills oriented field of study that is capable of equipping learners with abilities that can create room for self-reliance which has the ability to reduce unemployment and improve manpower development (Azubuike, 2012). Male learners are hardly seen in Home

Economics programmes at all levels of education while females are dominating the class size in the subject. Many young male learners leave school without employable skills and therefore become unemployed (Ekpenyong, 2008). Based on the above problems, the researcher wanted to discover the factors preventing male learners from choosing Home Economics as a school subject in the //Kharas Educational Region and make recommendations which will motivate more male learners to study this subject at the Junior Secondary level.

1.3 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What socio-cultural/traditional norms hinder male learners' choice to study Home Economics as a school subject in the //Kharas Educational Region?
2. How do parents, principals and teachers influence male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase?
3. What could be done to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics?

1.4 Significance of the study

The significance of this study is that it might identify the socio-cultural/traditional barriers that make it difficult for male learners to choose Home Economics as a subject in the //Kharas Educational Region. It might also contribute to the improvement of education policies that might address the problems learners have in selecting fields of studies. The findings may be beneficial to parents as it could make them change their

approach towards the study of Home Economics by their male children. In Namibia where youth unemployment is at its peak, the findings of this study can encourage male learners to study Home Economics in the Junior Secondary phase and in tertiary institutions for self-employment which could reduce the crime rate like passion killing in the society. Males will be able to create employment of their own if they are to study Home Economics. Finally, the findings of this study, may go a long way to correct the misconception regarding Home Economics as a girl's subject.

1.5 Limitations

Namibia has 75 schools in total that offer Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase (Ministry of Education, 2015). Due to the vast geographical distances separating these schools, time was a constraint. Therefore, the research was only carried out in five Secondary Schools only in the //Kharas Educational Region. Mention be made here that one of the school managers refused to participate in the research study. In addition, among the school managers who initially accepted to be part of the sample, one was no longer willing to be interviewed. The other limitation included that inherent to quantitative methods like the low questionnaires response rate (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Therefore, the 50 questionnaires that were dispatched to the five schools, were not all returned and the researcher considered the collected questionnaires only.

1.6 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms in light of this research were defined as follows:

Cultural/traditional factors: The set of beliefs, moral values, traditions/language and laws held in common by a community or other defined group of people (Bina, 2008).

Elective subjects: Optional subjects that are not compulsory which learners choose from (Gluga, Kay & Lever, 2010).

Passion killings: A murder which results from sudden anger or heartbreak (Kaumba, 2013).

Perception: The way that a person thinks about something or the impression a person has of something (Angus, 2011).

School managers: Professional personnel who are responsible for school management/administration. It includes principals, assistant principals and Heads of Departments (Esp, 2013).

1.7 Lay-out of the thesis

The study consists of five chapters.

Chapter 1 offers the orientation to contextualize the research problem, the statement of the problem, significance, limitations and research questions as well as the definitions of key concepts as they should be understood in this study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature regarding the factors influencing male learners not to choose Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase. This chapter further reviewed the literature on the reasons why male learners do not choose to study Home Economics.

Chapter 3 covers the research methodology and design. In this chapter, the research design, data generating methods, instruments used to generate data, the population, sample and sampling procedures, data analysis procedures as well as research ethics were explained.

Presentation of the research findings were done in **chapter 4**. The data collected from the school managers and learners were presented in this chapter according to the research questions.

In **chapter 5**, the discussions of the data were presented. The research questions were answered here as the data were made sense of. This chapter further provided conclusions and recommendations arising from the study. Suggestions for further research were also given in this chapter.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher presented the following: orientation of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, definitions of the terms and the lay-out of the thesis. In the next chapter the researcher reviewed the different sources of literature to shed light on the research questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature on factors influencing male learners from choosing Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase was reviewed. The review of literature is organised in such a way that it covers both the international and Namibian findings regarding socio-cultural, traditional factors, and the importance of Home Economics as a subject to both male and female learners.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: Progressivism

The study was guided by the Progressivism theory. The progressivism theory's proponent is John Dewey (an American philosopher who began his philosophical studies in the 19th century). With progressivism, gender equality and minorities are recognized, as well as the framework of learning by doing and experiencing (Field, 2001). According to Dewey, learning should directly relate to the interests of the learner and the teacher's role is not to direct but to advice. Instead of having an all-knowing teacher standing up front and talking, learners themselves should have active participation in their education (Dewey, 2010).

Dewey viewed the school as a miniature democratic society, where learners could learn and practice the skills necessary to live in democracy (Ellis, 1991). The foregoing makes

sense for this study since Home Economics as a subject allows learners to promote democratic principles and practices at school level and in civic life. Learners develop social responsibility towards other individuals, family life, the community and the nation as a whole over the study of Home Economics.

The basic principles of Progressivism as summarised by Field (2001) are that education should be life itself and not a preparation for living. Learning should be related to the interests of the learner. With the above mentioned principles, it can be derived that parents and teachers should allow learners to choose what subjects they want to study rather than influencing them.

The purpose of Progressive education is to give an individual the necessary skills and tools with which to interact with his/her environment, which changes constantly (Ornstein, Levine, Gutek & Vocke, 2016). Home Economics enable learners to obtain the knowledge and understanding, skills and competencies, attitudes and values needed for their personal development, related to the changes in the Namibian society. In Dewey's educational theory, the learner has an honest position of capability and involvement in activities that interest him or her.

2.3 Socio-cultural framework in general

Culture is the characteristic and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion and social habits (Zimmermann, 2015). Culture is

social because it is not an individual phenomenon, but it is the product of the society and it is developed through social interaction. Culture can be shared by common people of a territory through their shared customs, beliefs, traditions and values.

According to Mwamwenda (2005) culture is learned, it is created by people and it exists in time and space, that is, in an environment in which human beings act and respond upon their space, time dimension, their thoughts about things, themselves and others. Culture is essential to this study because learners' cognitive development and functioning are "highly influenced by social events that a person is exposed to and these originate from the culture, social environment and traditions that one is exposed to" (Mwamwenda, 2005, p. 89). Traditions are important to this study because they are seen as transferred knowledge, which can shape, change and control the choice for Home Economics as a subject by male learners.

2.4 Home Economics Education

2.4.1 Benefits of Home Economics in general

Home Economics is a subject studied around the world. It is defined by the International Federation for Home Economics (2008) as a field of study and a profession, situated in the human sciences that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. This shows that learners will broaden their awareness of the various dimensions affecting their well-being if they study Home Economics as a subject.

Anyakoha (2007) accentuated that education and knowledge in Home Economics empowers individuals to fulfil their fundamental needs and to manage everyday life's scarce resources. This simply means that education in Home Economics skills, like resource management and household finances combined with the psychosocial balance of the family, has the likelihood to lead to productive and reinforcement capacity of individuals. Anyakoha (2007) further noted that Home Economics is the only course of skills that are focused on family wellbeing as well as opportunities in the job markets. This is because Home Economics as a subject focus on family studies whereby it is concentrated on family life cycle stages and therefore relates to what each family member has to do in the family.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin [NASSP] (2016) pointed out that education for homemaking and family living is important today because society is becoming more complex and some traditional patterns of family life and homemaking are no longer relevant. Parents are less able to provide help in understanding the complexity of family resources and relationships.

Home Economics will enable learners to be responsible citizens and informed consumers willing to contribute to the well-being of individuals, families and society in terms of meeting basic human needs. This is correlating with what is stated in the Home Economics Syllabus (Ministry of Education, 2015) that it will enable learners to demonstrate good use of management and organisational skills in handling physical and socio-economic resources for self, family, community and society.

NASSP Bulletin (2016) further identified Home Economics as a subject that will enable individuals to create and implement strategies to solve complicated problems in technical contexts, in particular, food and fashion. Therefore, Home Economics will allow learners to further their studies and lifelong learning in food or fashion-related fields.

2.4.2 Benefits of Home Economics for male learners

One benefit of Home Economics for males is proper management (Ministry of Education, 2010). Males need to study Home Economics to enable them to know how to manage their available resources like money effectively (Anyakoha, 2007). Sometimes males are not likely to marry at an early age, therefore like everybody else, they experience a period of a single independent life. During such periods in life, males may be faced with choices and preparation of food, living within a budget, taking care of a house and their clothing. At this stage it is certain that some knowledge of Home Economics will be helpful to them (Osuala, 1998). Through the study of Home Economics males will be better equipped for every situation in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills useful to them in the present and in the future.

According to Azubuike (2012) everybody is a consumer and a money manager. Therefore, males need to know how to manage money wisely, prepare meals, make simple clothing choices and repairs, look after and play with children. It is only Home

Economics that can assist them in assuming the above multiple responsibilities. Since Home Economics is known to be a family oriented discipline. Since families are made up of males and females, both sexes should be exposed to Home Economics to attain the reasonable benefits (Anyakoha, 2007). Presently, many family members are more independent and affluent than decades ago, therefore, the need for value clarification could be taught through Home Economics.

2.5 Home Economics and National Development

Home Economics prepares boys and girls for home making and other careers. Some opportunities offer entry-level jobs which may be required on the job training for Secondary School leavers but others will require higher education. The following are careers that one can follow if they opt for Home Economics as an area of study:

2.5.1 Careers in Foods and Nutrition

One career in foods and nutrition is **Dietetics**. Dieticians work in hospitals, helping with diets for the treatments and prevention of diseases (Roberts & Witherspoon, 1978). **Nutritionists** is another career. These people can work in a health department, schools, hospitals and industries. They help people to improve their nutritional habits and status in order to remain in good health. People in the food and nutrition industries can also work as catering managers, supervisors and stewards depending on their qualifications. They also work in hotels, hospitals, schools and airlines.

Roberts et al. (1978) specified another career in food and nutrition to be a **caterer** who cooks for people such as in boarding schools, hospitals, hotels and offices. **Hotel**

management is also a career which involves running a hotel as a business. **Teachers** in this area, teach foods and nutrition while **researchers** work on food and nutrition problems and they discover new ways of planning, preparing and cooking food. A **food technologist** applies the principles of food, science and engineering in the development, production, processing, packaging and distribution of food.

2.5.2 Careers in Clothing and Textiles

Some of the clothing and textiles careers require higher education and others require special training after Secondary School. One of the careers in this occupation is **designing**. A person in this career is called a designer. A designer creates new designs for garments (fashion). There are also designers for fabrics/ textiles, and designers for clothing accessories and they are all known as **fashion designers** (Roberts et al., 1978). There is also a **pattern illustrator** who develops paper patterns for sale. **Beauticians** and **hair dressers** run salons where they take care of people's hair and perform other beauty treatments. **Dressmakers** and **tailors** sew garments for people. A **model** works in fashion industries and wears newly designed dress styles for people to see and buy. **Fashion merchandizing** is another career in clothing and textiles. People in this career select, buy and sell textile attires and other clothing accessories. **Weavers** construct fibres and yarns into fabrics or textiles. **Teachers** in this area teach clothing and textiles and **researchers** in this area work on clothing and textiles (Pendergast, 2009)).

2.5.3 Careers in Home Management, Family Living and Child Development

Some of the careers in home management, family living and child development require higher education; others are entry level jobs, while some require special training.

Interior decoration/designing is one career where people plan and decorate interiors amongst others homes, hotels, hospitals and offices. Another career is **institutional housekeeping** which involves working in schools, hostels, hospitals and other institutions as house-keepers (Roberts et al., 1978). **Advertising and promotion** is also a career where people in this area work as promoters of industries that manufacture items such as household equipment, furniture, health and grooming products as well as food textiles. They inform people about new products and convince them to buy. **Advertisers** and **promoters** require special training on the products they promote. **Child care** is another career where people work in child-care centres where parents bring their children for care while they are busy.

In conclusion, there are quite a number of careers in Home Economics which make it a valuable subject to choose. Most of these careers will enable individuals to work on their own. The most important aspect of a Home Economics education is that learners not only learn about subject matter that has relevance to their present lives, but will constantly be of use as they continue to grow (Azubuike, 2012). Another area of Home Economics that is considered to be among the most essential is the emphasis on personal development, decision making and intrapersonal skills.

2.6 Male learners' perceptions toward Home Economics as a subject

The gender of learners can often affect their enrolment in a class. Davies, Telhaj, Hutton, Adnett, & Coe (2006) indicated that boys and girls have different values and there are certain standards or expectations that vary between genders. The subject choices open to a learner depend on the average popularity of subjects in the school and this varies with the social mix of learners (Davies, et.al., 2006). This means that some schools offer varieties of elective subjects and the common norm is that learners tend to choose the subjects mostly enrolled for in the school.

Generally, a negative attitude towards a given subject leads to a lack of learners' interest in that subject and when subjects are to be selected, as in Junior Secondary, learners commonly avoid the subject or course (Egun, 2008). Smith, Feldwisch and Abell (2006) stated that the quality of a subject means that laboratories for this subject are well equipped and the subject is taught by qualified teachers.

A subject can be interesting to a learner but the class needs to be well executed for the content to actually be understood and beneficial. However, every learner has his/her own perceptions of the values attached to specific subjects that they would wish to undertake (Eze, 2001). A series of factors play important roles in the value associated with the subject lessons which can include the suitability in the job market and career choice. Male learners shy away from studying Home Economics fearing that there may be challenges when it comes to finding careers (Azubuike, 2012).

Dike (2006) expressed that the wrong perception of Home Economics can be dated back from the colonial era and this makes it difficult for the perception to change. Bound and Hapson (1989) stated that male learners are more concerned with careers that will make quick money while girls tend to pay more attention to future family improvement.

It is apparent that there is a gender gap in Home Economics. Male learners are significantly more likely to choose science, agriculture, business, or technical studies (World Bank, 2012). There are various theories as to why males lose interest in Home Economics. Azubuike (2012) emphasizes that males perceive Home Economics as a subject that has to do with the home, since it deals with different food preparations and serving of meals, decoration of home and its surroundings, making of clothes and child care. As such, male learners do not see Home Economics as a course for them because it deals with domestic affairs. Against the latter, therefore, male learners perceive Home Economics as a course that makes a person a servant and not a master (Azubuike, 2012).

A World Bank study (2012) indicated that males look at medicine, law and engineering as suitable fields of specialisation for them, because they feel these are worthwhile and prominent professions for reliable and successful men. Such professions make men to be proud, have prestige and become wealthy. Males from these fields are managers and directors not servants as it could be if they had studied Home Economics.

Furthermore, mention be made that the name given to the course also tends to discourage females and males, but mostly males, from studying the course (Azubuike, 2012). Both males and females are likely to prefer studying this subject if the name

given to the course could be changed since it is likely to motivate them to study the course. The foregoing is owed to the fact that the name Home Economic makes the course sounds as if it is exclusively for women or for those whose intention is to work in the houses (Egun, 2008).

2.7 Teachers' perceptions towards male learners choosing Home Economics as a subject

Teachers believe that family living should be taught in the home rather than at school, and they recognized that the organization of a co-educational class would need to be different from a girls' class (Schaffer, 1964). In addition to this, boys are more likely to be influenced by their male group members who might devalue schoolwork and so put them at odds with their academic achievements (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000). This shows that female teachers are expecting to have female learners in their Home Economics classes. That is why they do not allow learners to choose subjects themselves but help them to do so (Egun, 2008).

Most Home Economics teachers themselves do not encourage male learners to study the course, and they prefer girls rather than male learners studying Home Economics because most teachers see males as difficult learners to teach (Azubuike, 2012). This may be due to the fact that it is yet again females who prefer to major in Home Economics education at tertiary institutions, consequently many Home Economics teachers in most cases turn out to be females (Eze, 2001).

Both male and female teachers tend to encourage non-participation and conformity in their female learners while at the same time valuing independence and individuality in their male learners (Golomboko & Fivush, 1994). This simply means that teachers allow boys to be naughtier because they think it's natural and for the same reasons, expect girls to take up domestic related activities such as caring for others or cleaning up the classroom. This causes male learners not to choose Home Economics as a subject because they value themselves more officious than female learners (Okoh, 2006).

Although research has indicated that learners have a larger preference for the knowledge that they can receive from a class rather than the teacher, it is the teacher who has significant impact on how useful the subject can be (Wilhelm, 2004). Learners prefer subjects that are taught by teachers who are enthusiastic, well spoken, knowledgeable, caring and helpful as opposed to teachers who are dry, inflexible and unclear (Curran & Rosen, 2006). If learners are concerned about a teacher, they are less likely to enrol in that teacher's class.

2.8 The influence of parents on learners' choice of subjects including Home Economics

According to Tenenbaum (2009), parents use double the amount of discouraging comments towards daughters than they do to sons when it comes to the subjects their children take. This enforces the stereotypes that already exist about gender differences leading females to feel less confident in certain subjects and opting to take other subjects. The influence of parents in the development of learners' interests in vocational/technical subjects cannot be over-emphasized because parents seem to have

much influence on children's choice of educational career (Davies et al., 2006). The socio-economic status of the parents of a child has the likelihood to determine the type of career one chooses to follow. Some parents have biased and rigid thoughts regarding the occupational choices of a child/children. As a result, it is usually common for learners from poor backgrounds to choose Home Economics as a subject (Nnubia, 2013).

According to Malgwi, Howe and Burnaby (2005) parents are more likely to influence learners' decisions than guidance counsellors or teachers. Learners are likely to enrol in more classes if they talk to their parents first, which implies that parents do have an effect on children's career decisions. However, parents look forward to their children having new teachers and classes with end results of them getting good grades (Smith et. al., 2006). Therefore, parents will encourage their children to take a variety of classes where they think they can excel. Tenenbaum (2009) further argues that fathers are more likely to discourage their children from taking certain difficult classes especially with daughters, which results in more female learners getting into the Home Economics field of study.

Canter and Canter (1991) alleged that it is best that parents are the most important influential people in a child's life. Parental views on gender roles, belief systems regarding genders, and actions towards both sexes will inevitably influence children. Children are sent strong signals about the world around them more specifically regarding men and women, from parents. Parents' actions and words send messages about the parents' beliefs. Therefore, parents should closely examine what they say with

their action or words. Okorie and Ezeji (1988) stated that some parents are not guiding their male children well to develop an interest in the study of Home Economics courses. They would want their children to develop an interest in law and medicine rather than in Home Economics. The effect of family background on the choice of subjects in the Junior Secondary phase may operate through relationships between ambitions and social backgrounds. Learners from high social class backgrounds can exploit their advantage by choosing subjects such as science, agriculture, business or technical subjects rather than the latter (Davies et al., 2006).

Ossai (2003) emphasizes that the influence of parents on the male's interest in the study of Home Economics is unquestionably one of the strongest and most persistent factors determining what the learner's interest in school would be. He also emphasizes that the socio-economic status of parents can influence males in their choice of a course of study to a large extent. In addition to this, parents are often more interested in occupations or professions that will bring money and prestige to the family, than what is suitable for their children for a particular career (Okoh, 2006). This simply means that parents from poor socio-economic background would always have greater expectations for the male child (Ossai, 2003) and as such would not want them to study Home Economics but other subjects like Accounting for instance.

2.9 Cultural and traditional norms and beliefs preventing male learners from selecting Home Economics as a subject

Eze (2001) found the factors that influence male learners in the field of Home Economics to be differential socialisation patterns of boys and girls at early stages of life. Male learners who choose to socialise with female learners at an early age are considered to be homosexuals. Sex-stereotyped occupation of girls over boys is a tradition which has socialized males into believing that it is a ridicule of manliness to venture into an occupation that is female reserved (Egun, 2008). Male learners who choose Home Economics are viewed as different from the culturally directed belief of maleness.

In the past, girls were expected to make marriage and motherhood their main concern while boys were expected to go on to work and support the family (Dike, 2006). Therefore, the school life reflected these expectations as girls and boys would be directed to take different subjects. However, girls now have greater confidence in their abilities (World Bank, 2012). Feminism has influenced cultural attitude change but also changes in education. Policies that promote equal opportunities in education and in careers have reduced bias in gender expectations (Erinosho, 1998). Boys and girls may choose different subjects because of early socialisation.

The different roles boys and girls assume during adolescence and the different ways by which they are socialized may render girls vulnerable to assimilation of the adverse identity and behaviour (Portes & Rumbant, 2001). Cultures continue to mark family

socialization practices vis-à-vis boys and girls. It continues to be a culture in which girls receive more family supervision and protection through childhood and adolescence than boys do. Parents tend to be even more concerned about the negative influence of culture on their female children than the male children (Nnubia, 2013). This will affect all children's academic achievement in Home Economics.

It is a common belief that Home Economics is an easy subject, and this results in school administrators placing low-performing learners into Home Economics classes (Azubuike, 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that male learners are not interested in Home Economics subjects/courses. Osuala (1998) emphasized that, at the heart of our society and economics problem is a national attitude that implies that vocational subjects (including Home Economics) are designed for somebody else's children and is meant primarily for the children of the poor, for the dropouts, and the less intelligent.

2.10 Strategies to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics

Tenenbaum (2009) lamented that the school has a great role to play in influencing learners' choice of subjects and so it should support subjects and career decision making. This will go a long way to encourage learners' choices of subjects. In addition, learners need information about the structure and content of the subjects they want to study.

Poor orientation is the reason why males are not interested in the study of Home Economics. If males in secondary schools are given good orientation about the study of Home Economics as a course in tertiary institutions, they may be interested to study it particularly (Eze, 2001). Dike (2006) suggested that if career days are organised by schools from time to time, it will help motivate and stimulate the interests of learners as the learners listen to some experts in the various areas of Home Economics.

If male learners are to be more involved in Home Economics, parents should be involved. There are many practical and easy ways that parents can encourage male learners to study Home Economics (Azubuike, 2012). Parents can begin at home to encourage male learners by exposing them to Home Economics at an early age. Male learners should learn cooking and homemaking; therefore, they should be made to see the subject as one of the many tools an individual should have to make life easier.

Parents should also buy household equipment that will help to make male learners develop interest in doing some chores at home such as labour saving devices like blenders, peelers and pressure cookers. Parents should help the male learners to develop these skills required in Home Economics. The one-on-one interaction between mother and son can be greatly beneficial to both the mother and the child. Discussing homemaking with their male children is another way parents could encourage them to study Home Economics (Azubuike, 2012). Parents should ask their children about their likes and dislikes of Home Economics and explain to them the importance of the subject (Dike, 2006).

Home Economics is one of the courses that has the individual and the family as its central focus (Azubuike, 2012). It is a subject of great value to the family and its members because of its ability to improve the well-being of the family members, since the family in all cultures is the corner stone of any society (Eze, 2001).

2.11 Summary

This section provided a review of studies carried out in Home Economics with regard to the factors influencing and hindering male learners from choosing Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase. From the literature gathered, it becomes evident that various experiences that male learners go through contribute largely to their perceptions, beliefs and interests in choosing Home Economics as a subject. Parents and teachers influence male learners both positively and negatively. Generally, some factors like cultural beliefs, self-concepts, child rearing and educational careers are main contributors to a small number of male learners choosing Home Economics as an area of study. The next chapter outlines the different methods and procedures that were followed in the process of collecting and analysing the data.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the different methods and procedures that were followed in the process of collecting and analysing the data for this study. Therefore, this chapter deals with the research design, the population of the study, the sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

Due to the nature of the problem under study, a mixed method research design that employed both quantitative and qualitative research was used. Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Under the mixed methods design, a convergent parallel design was used. Results from both questionnaires and interviews were collected at the same time or in a single phase and were analysed independently according to the research questions. The researcher used this design in order to triangulate the collected data by directly comparing and contrasting them during interpretation.

3.3 Population

Kasanda (2015) refers to the population, as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. The study targeted Grade 8 male learners from the five secondary schools as there are only five schools in the //Kharas Educational Region that offer Home Economics as a subject. The researcher wanted to carry out a research study at a school offering Home Economics as these learners may be more familiar with the existence of the subject. In addition, Grade 8 male learners are still at the beginning of choosing fields of studies and they were able to explain why they opt for other subjects and not for Home Economics. School managers and Grade 8 Home Economics male learners formed part of the population.

3.4 Sample and Sampling procedures

Johnson and Christensen (2012) define sampling as the process in which researchers draw a sample from a targeted population of the study. Therefore, from the population of 1006 Grade 8 learners in all the five schools of which 526 are male learners, a sample of 50 male learners was selected. To ensure representation of the population in the sample, a stratified random sampling procedure was used. A stratified random sampling involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata with members who shared same attributes or characteristics (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The stratified random sample was incorporated by using class lists of male learners enrolled for Accounting, Keyboard and Word Processing and Design and Technology. This was because, male learners not enrolled for Home Economics select the above mentioned

pre-vocational subjects and this was done to have an equal representation of male learners enrolled in other pre-vocational subjects. School managers assisted the researcher by randomly selecting 10 male learners not enrolled for Home Economics from each school. Male learners who did not choose Home Economics as a subject were believed to be knowledgeable regarding reasons why they could not take Home Economics as a subject.

Four male learners who have taken Home Economics as a subject in Grade 8 and four school managers (HOD and principals) also formed part of the sample. Male learners who have taken Home Economics as a subject were believed to be knowledgeable as to why they chose to study Home Economics as a subject. In addition, school managers play a major role at the beginning of the year when Grade 8 learners select fields of study.

Table 3.1 shows a list of the five schools as well as the total number of male learners not enrolled for Home Economics, males enrolled for Home Economics as well as school managers who participated in this study.

Table 3.1: Male learners and school managers who participated in the study

School name	Number of male learners		School manager
	Males enrolled for Home Economics	Males not enrolled for Home Economics	
School A	0	10	None
School B	0	10	Head of Department
School C	2	10	Head of Department
School D	1	10	Principal
School E	1	10	Head of Department
Total	4	50	4

The table shows that two schools did not have any male learners enrolled for Home Economics as a subject. However, all the male learners enrolled for Home Economics participated in the study. Both schools have more male learners not enrolled for Home Economics as a subject which resulted in the exact presentation of the sample (50 Male learners). Moreover, three Heads of Departments and one principal from the five schools participated in this study. At one school no school manager was willing to participate in the study.

With the help of the school managers in the targeted schools, class lists were used to select 10 male learners using a stratified random sampling. According to McMillan and

Schumacher (2001) a stratified sampling procedure involves dividing the population to be studied into subgroups of similar characters (usually characteristics such as age, ethnic background, gender, IQ scores and class). In this study, male learners were classified into strata which represented the pre-vocational subjects they have chosen. The school managers randomly selected male learners from each class group for all the subjects presented, for instance if three male learners are from the Accounting class, then two can be from Design and Technology, depending on the pre-vocational subjects offered at the school as well as the number of learners involved in those subjects. This resulted in 10 male learners in total from each school. Stratified random sampling yielded a path for the researcher to get views of male learners from different subject groups. Therefore, a total number of fifty male learners from five schools, four male learners enrolled for Home Economics, four school managers in the //Kharas Educational Region formed the study sample.

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher collected data using questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires were used to collect biographical data like age, pre-vocational subjects chosen, language spoken by participants and views of male learners on Home Economics as a subject. Interviews were used as a follow up strategy to clarify certain areas that were not clearly stated in the questionnaire. Interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to directly interact with the Home Economics male learners and the school managers. This was done to probe reasons why male learners do not opt for Home Economics.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

Johnson and Christensen (2012) define a questionnaire as “a self-report data collection instrument that each research participant fills out as part of a research study” (p. 162). In the quantitative phase, a questionnaire which comprised of both closed-ended and open-ended questions was used to collect data from male learners who did not take Home Economics as a subject. The questionnaire consisted of a Likert- scale ranging in four-point measurement, each indicating the degree to which the respondents either agreed or disagreed (where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree and 4 = Strongly Disagree) with a particular statement. This was done with the aim of striking a balance between the positive and negative statements. The questionnaire used gathered information regarding research question one (what socio-cultural/ traditional norms hinder male learners’ choice to study Home Economics as a subject?), as well as research question two (How do parents, principals and teachers influence male learners’ decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study?). (refer to appendix D).

3.5.2 Interview

3.5.2.1 A focus group interview

In the qualitative phase, a focus group discussion was used to collect data from the male learners enrolled for Home Economics as a subject. A focus group is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose characteristics is defined with respect to the proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures (De Luca, Iofrida, Strano, Falcone & Gulisano, 2015). All respondents at each school were grouped in one venue and

predetermined questions were asked in the group discussion. A focus group interview was conducted to explore and probe participants' responses to get in-depth data regarding their experience and feelings (Gay et al., 2011). Each male learner enrolled for Home Economics at a school was interviewed at their own school. The discussion focused on research question one, (what socio-cultural/ traditional norms hinder male learners' choice to study Home Economics as a subject?), as well as research question two (How do parents, principals and teachers influence male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study?). (Refer to appendix F for the Interview schedule).

3.5.2.2 A standardised open-ended interview

Standardised structured open-ended interview was used to collect data from the school managers of the four schools in the region. Zimba (2012) defines a structured interview as a process whereby the researcher asks a pre-determined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule or protocol. The same open-ended questions on research question two (how do parents, principals and teachers influence male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study?) and research question three (what could be done to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics?) were asked to all the school managers respectively. (Refer to Appendix E for Interview schedule.)

3.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study may be defined as a standard scientific tool of research, allowing scientists to conduct a preliminary analysis before undertaking the real experiment (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). In this study, a pilot study was conducted in one of the secondary schools in Oshana region, in order to find out whether the research instrument would be understood or not. This also helped the researcher to know whether the questions asked were appropriate and relevant. The pilot study helped the researcher to modify and rephrase some of the questions that appeared too difficult for respondents to understand.

3.6.1 Results of the pilot study

The results of the pilot study indicated that the research instruments (questionnaire, focus group interview and interview schedule) were valid and reliable for the study and that the majority of the items were understood by the participants. As Cohen et al., (2013) indicated that there is possibility of errors in the designing of a research instrument, the pilot study revealed that there was a need to revise the questionnaire and the interview schedules. The following paragraphs indicate how the research instruments were changed and revised after the pilot study.

Questionnaire for learners: The pilot study revealed that gender does not really need to be directed in the questionnaire as the sample already indicated respondents to be male learners only. In question 3, the statement was changed from ‘choice subject’ to ‘elective

subject' to make it clear to the respondents because sometimes language subjects like Afrikaans, Khoekhoegowab (KKG) are also considered as choice subjects (Appendix D).

Focus group interview: Male learners enrolled for Home Economics as a subject were interviewed through a focus group discussion. Question 1 (a) and question 1 (b) were combined to become one question since learners were giving the same information for question 1 (b) as given in question 1 (a).

Standardized open-ended interview: The Home Economics subject teacher could not answer some of the interview questions, and therefore referred the researcher to the HOD for technical subjects. This gave a clear response to the researcher who changed the respondents for the standardised open-ended interview to be school managers (principal or a head of department). Questions 1 'a' and 'b' in the interview schedule were both combined as one question as it sounded similar to the respondents (Appendix E).

In administering the research instruments to the participants during the pilot study, the researcher experienced some challenges. For instance, one school where appointments were made for the pilot study, the researcher found the school with a school event which made it difficult to continue with the pilot study. Luckily, the researcher made

arrangements at two schools in the same region and so quickly proceeded to the next school, where everything went well even in the absence of the principal.

3.7 Data collection procedures

The following paragraphs explain in detail how the research data was collected.

Questionnaire for Learners: Randomly selected ten male learners at each school to participate in this study were made to sit in one venue to complete the closed and open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered in one lesson under the supervision of the teachers at the schools. The teachers collected the questionnaires and later handed them over to the researcher.

Focus group Interview: The researcher in a different venue (at each school) interviewed the Home Economics male learners. The researcher facilitated a discussion among the group and recorded it. Male learners were allowed to give clarity on certain issues. The same procedures were used at each school.

Standardized open-ended interview: The researcher in another different venue (at each school) interviewed the school managers. One school manager from each school was interviewed in his/her office and same interview questions were asked. The interview was also recorded for those who agreed to be recorded.

3.7.1 Return rate of questionnaires

Table 3.2 shows the number of questionnaires dispatched, number returned and percentages of the questionnaires completed per school.

Table 3.2: Return rate of questionnaires

School	Number of questionnaires dispatched	Number of questionnaires returned	Percentages
School A	10	10	100
School B	10	10	100
School C	10	10	100
School D	10	10	100
School E	10	9	90
Total	50	49	98

Table 3.2 shows that the questionnaires' return rate was extremely good with a 98% returned. The 2% of the total questionnaires given to the participants were not returned as they were reported to be lost.

3.8 Data Analysis

The quantitative data that were generated from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency tables and figures)

to identify general characteristics among the participants' views on factors influencing male learners' choice of Home Economics as a subject in the //Kharas Educational Region. However, the qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires and the interviews were analysed using the content analysis technique and was organised into categories. This method assisted the researcher to identify patterns, ideas and themes that emerged from the data (Neuman, 2011). The researcher then used methodological triangulation to triangulate the data by dividing the text data into meaningful categories that were guided by the research questions and the interview themes. In this study, data triangulation was more relevant thus different responses to the same questions from the open ended questionnaire, focus group interviews and standardised interview were compared with one another to help check the validity of the data. Finally, data triangulation was also employed by the researcher to compare multiple sources of data (male learners not enrolled in Home Economics, school managers and Home Economics male learners) to help finalise the themes.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Before the commencement of data gathering, ethical clearance was sought from the Research and Publications Ethic Committee of the University of Namibia. Boeije (2010) stated that researchers have to consider the moral accuracy of their research activities in relation to the people they meet along the way such as participants, hosts, funders and colleagues. The researcher wrote a letter to the //Kharas Regional Director to obtain permission to carry out research in the five selected schools in the region and permission was granted.

The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the principals of the selected schools and to the participants. The participants were informed about their rights to withdraw from participating in the study without fear of punishment. In order to ensure confidentiality, the research participants were assured that their identities will not be disclosed and will not appear in the research report. The information provided will be kept confidential.

3.10 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methodology of the study, explain the population, sample selection, describe the procedure used in designing the instruments, collect data, provide and explain the procedures used to analyse the data and lastly the ethical considerations. The next chapter (Chapter 4) presents the findings of the questionnaires and interviews conducted with the male learners not enrolled in Home Economics, school managers and Home Economics male learners.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings from the study. The fundamental aim was to investigate the factors influencing male learners' choice of Home Economics as a school subject in the Junior Secondary phase in the //Kharas Educational Region. The data in this section was collected through questionnaires and interviews.

In this chapter the data is presented according to the following themes in accordance with the main research questions:

1. Cultural/traditional norms perceived by male learners that hinder their choice to study Home Economics as a school subject in the //Kharas Educational Region.
2. Parents', principals', and teachers' influence on male learners' decision to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase.
3. Strategies to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics.

4.2 Biographical information

(a) Ages of male learners not enrolled for Home Economics

The ages of the male learners not enrolled for Home Economics in this study are presented in Figure 4.1. These were the Grade 8 male learners in all five Secondary Schools in the //Kharas Educational Region.

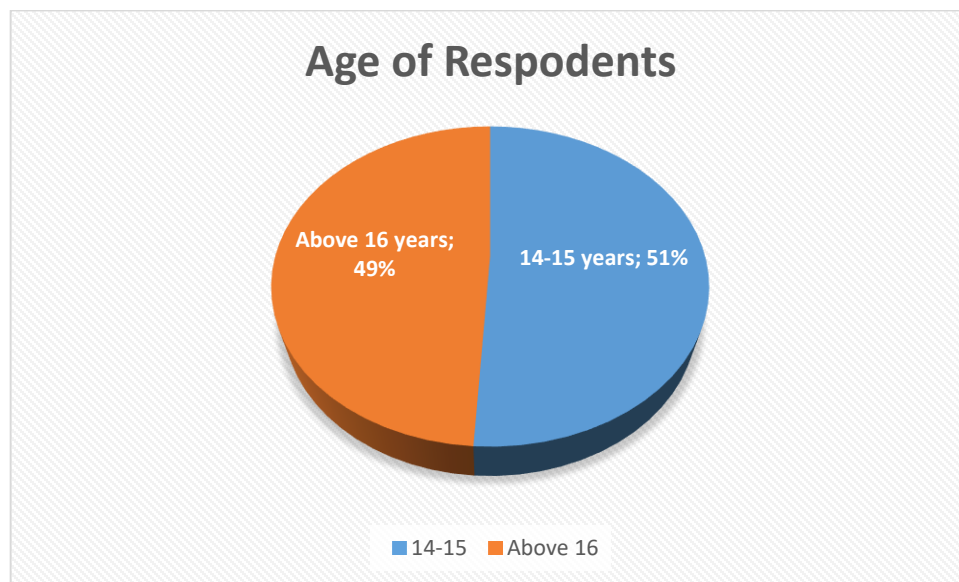


Figure 4.1: Age groups of the respondents

As can be seen from Figure 4.1, the majority of respondents, 25 (51%) fell in the age group 14–15 years, followed by 24 (49%) in the above 16 age group. The under 13 age group were included due to the possibility of learners who have started Grade 1 at the age of 6. This data was collected due to individual reasons regarding the choice of subjects that there may be repeaters due to pregnancies, failure of previous grades and

repeaters due to individual reasons or the learners started the school late in the rural areas.

(b) Pre-vocational subjects at the five secondary schools

A total of five schools participated in this study. Two schools accommodated Grades 8-12 learners, one school accommodated Grade 1-12 learners and the other two schools accommodated Grades 8-10 learners. Only one school among the five schools had no hostel. All five schools are equipped with Home Economics workrooms with all the necessary utensils and equipment. The five Secondary Schools offer different pre-vocational subjects. See Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Pre-vocational subjects at the five Secondary Schools

School name	List of pre-vocational subjects
School A	Entrepreneurship, Keyboard and Word Processing (KWP), Design & Technology, Home Economics, Agriculture, Accounting, Technical studies, Fashion and Fabrics, Hospitality
School B	Design & Technology, Home Economics, Needlework, Accounting, KWP and Entrepreneurship
School C	Home Economics, KWP and Accounting and Entrepreneurship
School D	Entrepreneurship, Computer studies, Design & Technology, Home Economics, Agriculture, Accounting and KWP
School E	Accounting, KWP, Entrepreneurship, Design and Technology and Home Economics

Four of the five schools offer more than four pre-vocational subjects. Only one of the five schools offer four pre-vocational subjects.

(c) Pre-vocational subjects of the male learners not enrolled for Home Economics

In order to determine the pre-vocational subjects of male learners not enrolled for Home Economics, they were asked to indicate their pre-vocational subjects. Their responses are summarised in Figure 4.2:

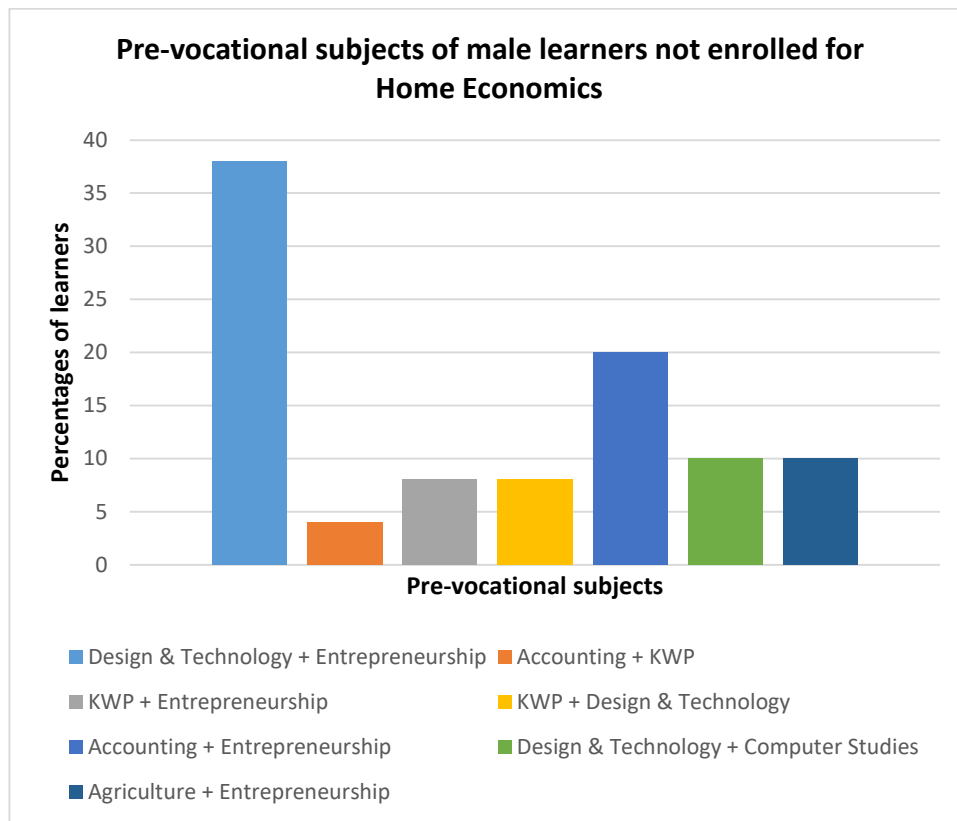


Figure 4.2: Pre-vocational subjects of the male learners not enrolled for Home Economics.

Since learners are allowed to choose two pre-vocational subjects, schools have combined these subjects depending on their timetables. Figure 4.2 above shows that 38% of the male learners not enrolled for Home Economics as a subject had a combination of Design & Technology and Entrepreneurship. Only 4% of the sample had a combination of Accounting and KWP, while 8% had a combination of KWP and Entrepreneurship as well as KWP and Design & Technology. Another 10% had a combination of Design & Technology and Computer Studies as well as Agriculture and Entrepreneurship.

(d) Language spoken by male learners at home

In order to determine the home language of the male learners, and its relevance to cultural factors influencing them in choosing Home Economics as a subject, male learners were asked to indicate their home language by ticking in the appropriate box, as the common languages were provided in the questionnaire. This is because the language spoken at home signify the cultural and traditional background of an individual.

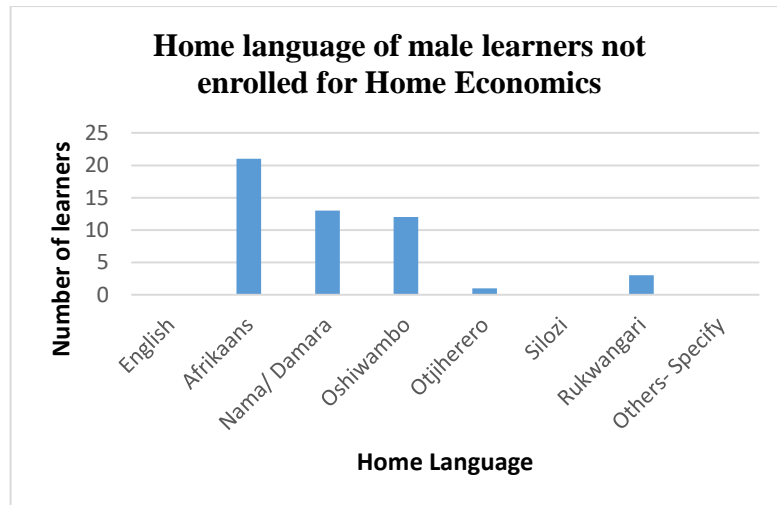


Figure 4.3: Home language of male learners not enrolled for Home Economics

Figure 4.3 shows that 21 male learners spoke Afrikaans at home; 13 spoke Nama/Damara; 12 are Oshiwambo speaking; 1 learner speaks Otjiherero at home and 3 learners speak Rukwangali. These findings seem to indicate that 42% of the male learners not enrolled for Home Economics in the five schools speak Afrikaans compared to the others who participated in this study.

4.3 Research question 1: Cultural/traditional norms perceived by boys that hinder their choice to study Home Economics

In order to gather data for research question one, the researcher made use of questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires were completed by male learners not enrolled for Home Economics, while interviews were used to collect data from male learners enrolled for Home Economics and school managers (head of departments and principals).

4.3.1 Results from male learners not enrolled for Home Economics questionnaire

A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed to the Grade 8 male learners not enrolled for Home Economics as a subject in the five Secondary Schools in the //Kharas Educational Region. Forty-nine questionnaires were completed and collected for analysis by the researcher. The questionnaire included statements that were answered according to the four-point Likert scale i.e., *Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree*. The male learners were asked to indicate the extent to which they Agreed or Disagreed with each statement regarding the factors they perceived to influence their choice of Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase.

4.3.1.1 Perceptions of male learners towards Home Economics as a subject

Table 4.2 presents the perceptions of male learners toward Home Economics as a subject. The data is presented quantitatively.

Table 4.2: Frequency of male learners' agreement on statements pertaining to their perceptions toward Home Economics as a subject.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Home Economics is a subject for girls.	10 (20.4%)	16 (32.7%)	19 (38.8%)	4 (8.2%)
2. Home Economics is an easy subject to study.	8 (16.3%)	26 (53.1%)	11 (22.0%)	4 (8.2%)
3. I see no career in Home Economics.	5 (10.2%)	10 (20.4%)	20 (40.8%)	14 (28.6%)
4. I love the other elective subject more than Home Economics.	23 (46.9%)	19 (38.8%)	6 (12.2%)	1 (2.0%)

For Statement 1 (Home Economics is a subject for girls), 53.1% of the respondents Strongly Agreed and Agreed with the statement. It is also interesting to note that 69.4% of the male learners were of the view that Home Economics is an easy subject to study.

From the other statements, especially the third one: “I see no career in Home Economics”, 69.4% of the male learners disagreed. However, 85.7% of male learners agreed that they love the other elective subjects more than Home Economics.

4.3.1.2 Cultural/traditional factors that hinder male learners’ enrolment in Home Economics

Table 4.3 shows responses regarding the cultural/traditional factors that hinder male learners’ enrolment in Home Economics in the //Kharas Educational Region and the data is presented quantitatively.

Table 4.3: Frequency of male learners’ agreement on statements pertaining to cultural/traditional factors that hinder enrolment in Home Economics

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. In my culture, male learners are not allowed to become chefs.	2 (4.1%)	4 (8.3%)	16 (33.3%)	26 (54.2%)
11. Some cultural beliefs in my community are in conflict with the opinion that male learners can do Home Economics.	11 (23.4%)	8 (17.0%)	14 (29.8%)	14 (29.8%)
12. In my tradition male learners are regarded as capable of learning Home Economics as girls.	6 (12.8%)	18 (38.3%)	12 (25.5%)	11 (23.4%)
13. I find it worthless to choose Home Economics because my future is not there.	14 (29.8%)	16 (34.0%)	11 (23.4%)	6 (12.8%)
14. In my culture, male learners are expected to take subjects that are related	3 (6.3%)	4 (8.3%)	29 (60.4%)	12 (25.0%)

to domestic science e.g. Home Economics.				
15. In my tradition adults motivate male learners to do Home Economics.	2 (4.1%)	6 (12.5%)	21 (43.8%)	19 (39.6%)

Table 4.3 shows that the majority of the respondents (87.5%) disagreed with the statement 10 (In my culture, male learners are not allowed to become chefs). In addition, 59.6% of male learners also disagreed with the view that cultural beliefs in the community are in conflict with the opinion that male learners can do Home Economics.

However, 63.8% of male learners were of the view that it is worthless to choose Home Economics because their future is not within this field. This table therefore shows that the respondents are not influenced by neither culture nor traditional norms not to choose Home Economics.

4.3.1.3 Male learners' beliefs about Home Economics

Table 4.4 shows the responses of the respondents regarding the beliefs male learners hold about Home Economics in the //Kharas Educational Region and the data is presented quantitatively.

Table 4.4: Male learners' beliefs about Home Economics

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. I underestimate my ability to do Home Economics.	4 (8.2%)	20 (40.8%)	16 (32.7%)	9 (18.4%)
17. Male learners in my school are willing to do Home Economics.	6 (12.2%)	17 (34.7%)	15 (30.6%)	11 (22.4%)
18. Home Economics is a subject for				

girls only.	6 (12.2%)	5 (10.2%)	16 (32.7%)	22 (44.9%)
19. I believe that it is a usual practice for girls to do Home Economics.	19 (38.8%)	19 (38.8%)	9 (18.4%)	2 (4.1%)

Fifty-three percent (53%) of the male learners in this study disagreed with statement 17 (Male learners in my school are willing to do Home Economics). This belief is further confirmed by a large number of male respondents (77.6%) who agreed that it is a usual practice for girls to do Home Economics, even though an almost equal number of males (49.0% versus 51.1%) agreed that male learners and females had equal abilities to do Home Economics. This shows that male learners strongly believed that Home Economics is a girl's subject even though male learners can perform equally well in the subject as the girls.

4.3.1.4 Analysis of open ended questions from learners' questionnaire

Question 1: *Do you believe that you will not have a career if you choose Home Economics as a subject? Give a reason for your answer.*

This question intended to find out the male learners' beliefs and their personal views on their future if they choose Home Economics as a subject. The data is presented quantitatively.

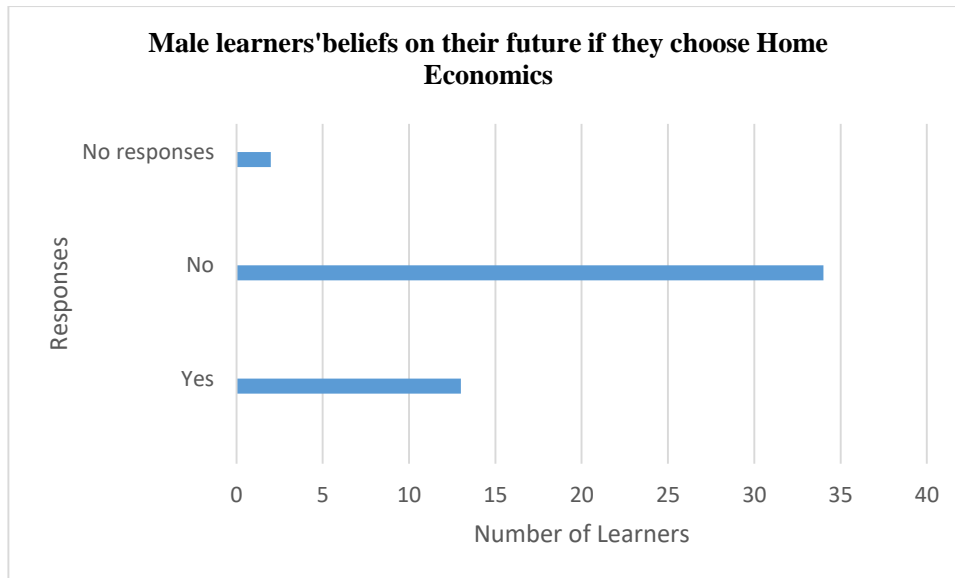


Figure 4.4 Male learners’ beliefs on whether they will not have a career if they choose to study Home Economics.

Figure 4.4 shows that the majority of male learners (69.4%) disagreed with the opinion that they will not have careers if they choose to study Home Economics as a subject compared to only 26.5% of the males who believed that they will have careers if they choose to study Home Economics. This shows that the majority of male learners believed that there are careers in Home Economics.

The respondents gave the following reasons to the question; “Do you believe you will not have a career if you choose Home Economics as a subject?” Those who opted for a “yes” said that (Answers are given verbatim):

Because later on, your male friends will tease you because you chose a career that belongs to girls;

Because most boys will call me a moffie;

Because Home Economics only unlocks one door which is becoming a chef;

A career as a chef is not easy to find in Namibia;

Not all people made it in life with Home Economics;

Almost everyone can cook.

The reasons given above by the respondents on why they think they will not have a career if they choose to study Home Economics showed that males are not free to choose the subject as they will be teased by fellow males for choosing a career that is associated with girls. Furthermore, the respondents stated that Home Economics is just about cooking and that the only career involved is becoming a chef. In addition, the participants acknowledged that “chef” as a career is difficult to find in Namibia. Finally, the respondents specified that not all people made it in life with Home Economics as they do not get jobs.

The participants who answered “No” said;

With Home Economics I can become a qualified chef;

Chefs and fashion designers are needed;

There are a lot of careers in Home Economics;

With Home Economics, I can open up a restaurant and be a successful businessman.

The majority (60.0%) indicated that if you choose Home Economics, you can become a chef. Thus, one can conclude that there is a high level of belief amongst male respondents in the //Kharas Educational Region that with Home Economics, you can

only become a chef, since it has to do with cooking. However, some respondents indicated that there are many careers in Home Economics and that one can even open up a restaurant and become a businessman. This indicated that some respondents were aware of the other career opportunities in Home Economics.

Question 2: *If you have a choice between Home Economics, Accounting, KWP, Agriculture and Design & Technology, which one of the five subjects will you choose to study and why?*

This question intended to find out whether the males would be interested to study Home Economics, Accounting, KWP, Agriculture or Design & Technology. The question further sought to find out respondents’ personal views on why they would either choose Home Economics, Accounting, KWP, Agriculture or Design & Technology. The data is presented quantitatively.

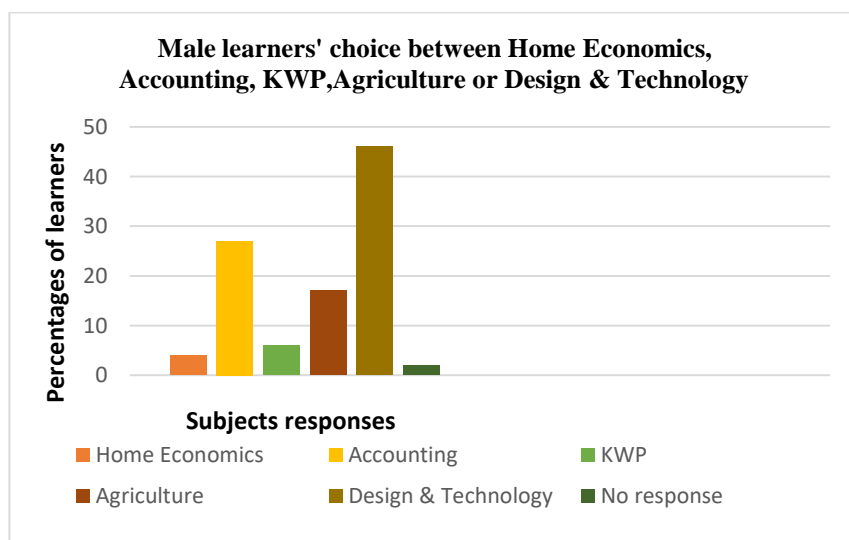


Figure 4.5: Males’ choice between Home Economics, Accounting, Keyboard Word Processing (KWP), Agriculture and Design & Technology.

According to Figure 4.5, 45.8% of the males indicated that they would study Design & Technology, followed by 27.8% who indicated they will study Accounting as well as 16.7% who preferred to study Agriculture. Only 6.3% indicated they preferred KWP and only a few respondents (4.2%) indicated that they would study Home Economics. Four comma seventeen percent (4.17%) of the respondents who indicated that they would indeed study Home Economics gave the following reasons:

Home Economics is easy to learn;

I like cooking.

From the given reasons, it is obvious that 4.2% of the respondents in the //Kharas Educational Region would opt to study Home Economics if they had a choice because they believed that Home Economics is easy to learn compared to the other subjects. Furthermore, some respondents gave reasons that they liked cooking and thus, they would choose to study Home Economics.

According to Figure 4.5, more than 45.8% of the respondents indicated that they would choose to study Design & Technology if they had a choice. The respondents gave the following reasons verbatim:

I will get better jobs if I study Design & Technology;

I love designing and working with sharp tools;

I want to be an engineer;

I can work for myself;

Design & Technology is a subject for boys because they are strong and they can handle pressure;

I have a dream to become an architect;

I have taken Design & Technology since Grade 5.

From the given reasons, it is obvious that the majority of the respondents would opt to study Design & Technology if they had a choice. These respondents believed they will have better careers if they choose Design & Technology as they believed there are many jobs like engineering, architecture and designs. In addition, respondents also gave reasons as to why they will choose Design & Technology such as believing that they will be able to work for themselves. Thus can be concluded that respondents would rather choose to study Design & Technology than Home Economics because they think there are more careers in Design & Technology than in Home Economics.

Furthermore, some respondents preferred choosing Design & Technology because it is a subject for male learners. Some male learners also indicated that they will choose to study Design & Technology because it's a subject they studied since Grade 5.

Another, 27.1% of respondents as shown in Figure 4.5 indicated that they would choose to study Accounting if they had a choice. The respondents gave the following verbatim reasons:

There are many career opportunities in Accounting;

There are more boys that are willing to choose Accounting;

Accounting is easy for me to study;

Accounting is a subject you can't learn at home like other subjects;

My interests are in Accounting than in the other four subjects.

From the given reasons, it clearly showed that respondents (27.1%) opting for Accounting would do so because they believe there are more career opportunities in Accounting. Some respondents also gave reasons that Accounting classes have more male learners than in the other four subject classes. Some respondents also indicated that Accounting is an easy subject to learn.

A total of 16.7% of the respondents indicated that they would opt to study Agriculture if they are given a choice. The following were their reasons verbatim;

I will have my own farm after studying Agriculture;

My uncle has a farm; I will be helping him with farm work;

I love working with animals;

I want to become a farmer.

From the given reasons, it showed that some respondents will choose Agriculture if they were given a choice because they want to become farmers and own farms if they study

Agriculture. Some participants indicated they will be able to assist their families with farm work and that they love working with animals.

However, 6.3% of male learners indicated that they would choose to study KWP if they are given a choice. The respondents gave the following reasons verbatim:

I want to become someone who work with computers;

There is not much studying in KWP like in other subjects.

From the given reasons, it showed that male learners would opt for KWP because they want to work with computers in future and that in KWP, there is not much studying like in any other subject.

4.3.2 Male learners enrolled for Home Economics interview results

Among the five schools where the study took place, only three schools had male learners enrolled for Home Economics as a subject in Grade 8. Participants were interviewed through a focus group discussion. The data from interviews is presented qualitatively.

4.3.2.1 Reasons for choosing Home Economics as a subject

During the interviews with the participants enrolled for Home Economics, the interviewees gave reasons as to why they chose Home Economics. Some male learners indicated they were struggling with other elective subjects and changed to Home

Economics as they believed it is an easy subject for them. They wanted to show other male learners that Home Economics is not a subject for girls only. These learners also indicated that they chose Home Economics because they loved the practical part of cooking and in general, liked the subject.

One participant enrolled for Home Economics remarked as follows:

I chose Home Economics as a subject because I love the part of cooking, cleaning and neatness. Home Economics is a way of me knowing more on how to help people in my community as well as my family members.

Home Economics enrolled participants also indicated that they were encouraged by their mothers to take Home Economics. This showed that some parents in the //Kharas Educational Region were involved in the subjects their male learners chose to study. Moreover, all respondents interviewed, agreed that they were happy to be studying Home Economics and that they loved it.

4.3.2.2 Home Economics as a subject for all

Interviewees provided reasons as to why they thought Home Economics should be taken by both male and female learners. They stated that Home Economics is actually a subject for all and that it is an important subject like any other subject. Respondents also stated the importance of Home Economics to teach everyone whether male or female on how to handle the environment, to know which foods are good for a balanced diet and learn about personal hygiene. One of the male respondents said:

Home Economics should be taken by everyone because some of the male learners even at the age of 15 do not know how to cook, and keep personal hygiene of which one can learn in Home Economics. Fellow boys should also take Home Economics so that they can learn things they never knew.

4.3.3 School managers' interview results

One principal and three HODs in the five schools were part of the study. They were all interviewed through a standardised open-ended interview protocol and the researcher used pre-determined questions as a guide. The results are presented qualitatively.

4.3.3.1 Male learners and Home Economics

School managers were interviewed on what they thought were the reasons why male learners at their schools were not enrolling for Home Economics. Two HODs indicated that it's a gender, cultural and an academic issue. They further explained that Home Economics is regarded as a subject for girls since it is traditionally believed that cooking is for women. One school manager indicated that male learners do not choose Home Economics as they are afraid to be teased by fellow male learners if they chose Home Economics as a subject. However, Home Economics was also regarded as an easy subject and so low-performing learners were placed in Home Economics classes. In addition, school managers also believed that there are no careers in studying Home Economics.

School Manager B1 remarked:

I believe it's about stereotyping that boys in this region believe cooking is for girls, and that's the reason why male learners do not choose to study Home Economics.

School Manager D1 similarly remarked:

It's the mind set of our learners. They believe that males should not do women's work like cooking for example.

The results given by the school managers supported the results given in the questionnaire for boys not enrolled for Home Economics that Home Economics is a subject for girls only.

4.4 Research question 2: Parents', principals' and teachers' influence on male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase.

To answer this question, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Questionnaires were completed by male learners not enrolled for Home Economics, while interviews were used to collect data from the school managers.

4.4.1 Results from male learners not enrolled for Home Economics

Male learners not enrolled for Home Economics were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement regarding the influence of parents

and teachers on their choice of Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase.

4.4.1.1 Parents’ and teachers’ influence on male learners taking Home Economics in the junior secondary phase.

Table 4.5 showed the learners’ responses regarding the parents and teachers’ influence on their decision to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase in the //Kharas Educational Region. The results are presented quantitatively.

Table 4.5: Parents’ and teachers’ influence on male learners taking Home Economics

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. My parents discouraged me to take Home Economics as a subject.	4 (8.5%)	3 (6.4%)	18 (38.3%)	22 (46.8%)
7. Teachers encourage girls to take Home Economics and not male learners.	6 (12.8%)	8 (17.0%)	15 (31.9%)	18 (38.3%)
8. I am not free to express my opinions in a Home Economics class.	6 (12.8%)	18 (38.3%)	14 (29.8%)	9 (19.1%)
9. I was already discouraged by my primary teachers not to take Home Economics as a subject.	4 (8.5%)	6 (12.8%)	17 (36.2%)	20 (42.6%)

The results showed that 85.1% of respondents disagreed with Statement 6 (My parents discouraged me to take Home Economics as a subject). However, 70.2% of respondents also disagreed that teachers encourage female learners to take Home Economics and not male learners. Additionally, the majority of respondents (78.8%) disagreed that they

were already discouraged by primary school teachers not to take Home Economics as a subject.

4.4.1.2 Analysis of open-ended questions

Question 3: *Do your parents care what subjects you have chosen to study? Explain your answer.*

This question intended to find out whether the parents cared what subjects their sons have chosen to study.

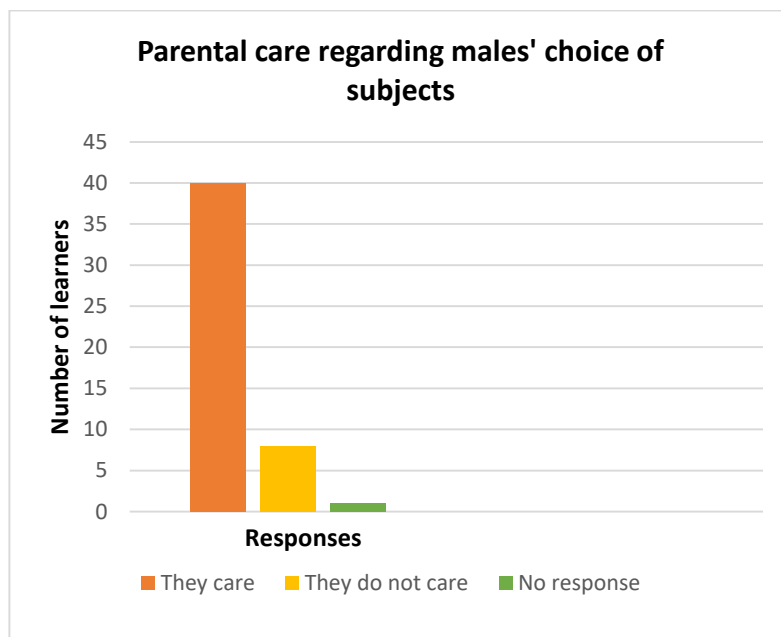


Figure 4.6: Parental care regarding males' choice of subjects.

Figure 4.6 showed that 40 (81.6%) of the respondents were of the opinion that their parents cared about what subjects they had chosen to study. On the other hand, only eight (16.3%) of the respondents indicated that their parents did not care what subjects

they chose to study. Respondents who opted for the “they care” answer gave the following verbatim reasons:

My parents care which subjects I had chosen regarding what I want to become;

My parents told me not to choose Home Economics because I’m not a girl;

My parents are concerned about me choosing subjects that I like;

My parents help me choose my subjects;

My parents believe Design & Technology is better than Home Economics;

My parents encourage me to choose a subject that will allow me to make a lot of money in the future to help the family;

My parents usually ask how I’m performing in the subjects I have chosen;

My parents encourage me to take subjects that will give me a good future.

From the reasons given above, one could deduce that parents indeed cared about which subjects their male learners chose. Some respondents stated that their parents encouraged them to choose subjects that will allow them to make a significant amount of money in future. Those respondents who opted for “They do not care” said:

My parents do not ask which subjects I have chosen;

Because it is up to me to choose the subjects I want to study;

I am the one who fill in application forms including the subjects I want to study.

From the reasons given, one might assume that some parents do not care which subjects their male learners had chosen to study, and this was supported by 16.33% of the males. This showed that learners are given freedom by their parents to choose which subjects they want to study.

Question 4: *Do your teachers treat male learners differently from the way they treat girls during all subjects' lessons?*

This question sought to find out whether teachers treated boys differently from the way they treated girls, and data is presented quantitatively.

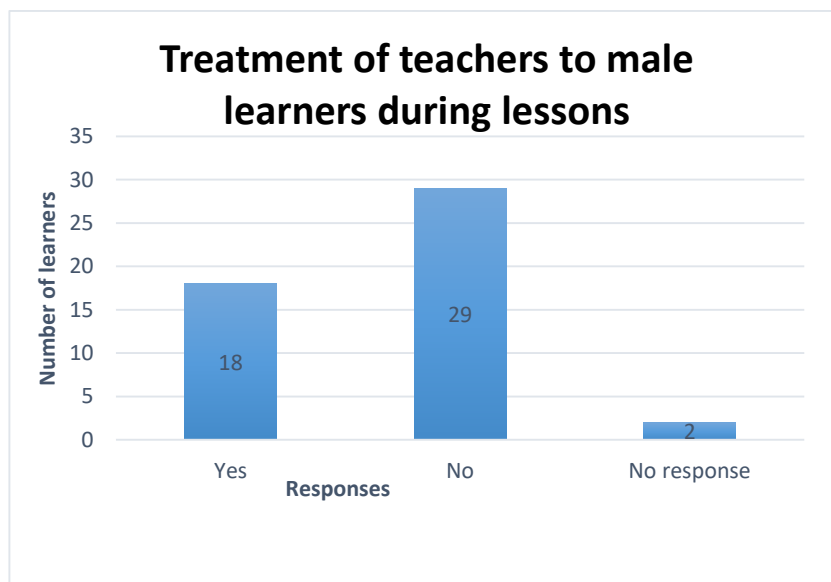


Figure 4.7: Teachers' treatment towards male learners during lessons.

According to Figure 4.7, 18 (38.3%) of the respondents indicated that teachers treated them differently from the way girls are treated during all subject lessons. Those who opted for a 'yes' option gave the following reasons verbatim:

Girls are treated softly and assisted more than boys;

Girls are treated well than male learners;

Male learners are told bad things by subject teachers especially about why they didn't choose certain subjects like Design & Technology;

Male learners are beaten in class when they talk while girls are only given warnings.

From the reasons given above, it shows the perception among some respondents that teachers in the //Kharas Educational Region treat girls better and with better care than the way they treat male learners. These respondents indicated that when they speak in class during lessons, they are beaten but when girls speak, they only get warnings. However, some respondents also indicated that teachers say negative words to them especially if they have chosen subjects that are believed to be female-related, like Home Economics or KWP.

Those who opted for a 'No' option gave the following reasons verbatim;

Teachers treat us equally because we all have equal rights;

Teachers treat us equally at all times.

A total of 61.7% of the respondents who participated in this study indicated that teachers treat them the same way that they treat girls. Thus, one might conclude that there was a perception of no favouritism for girls over male learners during lessons among most of the respondents since only few indicated they were treated differently.

4.4.2 School managers' interview results

School managers were interviewed on the current procedures in place at their schools regarding the choices of pre-vocational subjects as well as the advice they gave to learners regarding subject choice. The following data is presented qualitatively.

4.4.2.1 Procedures regarding subject choice

During the interview with the principal and the three HODs, these school managers indicated that pre-vocational subjects were grouped on the application forms that are sent to the Primary Schools for Grade 8 enrolment at their schools. One HOD remarked that such arrangements were made to help learners make the right choices with the help of their parents. Another HOD indicated that parents were invited to a meeting before applications were released to explain the elective subjects to the parents, regarding their benefits and what they entail. However, all HODs conceded that when Grade 8 learners show up for the new academic year, they were all taken to a venue where the subject teachers explain to them the structures of the pre-vocational subjects in order to encourage learners to make right choices. One HOD said:

When it comes to subject choice at my school, we look at the interest of the learners as well as the symbols. For instance, those learners who had passed Mathematics with good symbols are placed in the Accounting class. There is a myth that is not proven that learners performing well in Mathematics are believed to perform well in Accounting. However, with Home Economics we allow learners who have done Home Ecology in grade 4-7 to proceed with Home Economics in Grade 8.

It can be concluded from the results that male learners were provided with information regarding subject choices and they were encouraged to make right choices.

4.4.2.2 Advice to learners regarding subject choice

The school managers were interviewed on the advice they give to learners when they approach them when confused about which subjects to choose. The school managers indicated that they first talk to such learners about their interests and what they wish to become, as these are regarded as career-driven subjects. The school managers clearly indicated that they do not force learners to take subjects they do not want to take, but usually consult their parents with regard to what subjects they should choose. However, one school manager indicated that at their school, learners not performing well in Accounting or KWP classes are requested to change to Home Economics classes. He remarked;

We encourage learners to make a choice, and to see whether they are coping with the subject, or if they are interested in the subject. We allow changes to be made but only before the end of February of each academic year. Subject teachers are also approached in this regard if a learner wants to leave their subjects' classes.

The results to some extent showed that learners were given a choice to make decisions on the subjects they want to study.

4.5 Research question 3: Strategies to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics.

In order to gather data for research question three, the researcher conducted interviews with school managers. One of the research questions was to get a deeper understanding of the views on what could be done to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics. The results that emerged from the interviews were presented qualitatively below:

4.5.1 School managers' interview results

4.5.1.1 Reasons to have more boys in Home Economics classes

School managers indicated that male learners have the chance to become chefs too, either in hotels and holiday resorts for instance on ships. The tourism industry in the country is growing and therefore, there would be better opportunities for them if they chose to study Home Economics as a subject.

School managers indicated that male learners should be encouraged to take Home Economics through community awareness. One school manager remarked;

The myth of Home Economics being taken as a girls' subject begins at home. Awareness through meetings and mass medias should be made among parents regarding the misconception of the subject. I believe if parents get to understand that Home Economics is for everyone, male learners will take Home Economics.

Another school manager said;

The community is not aware of what the subject really entails, and that's the main reason learners do not take the subject. And not only male learners, Home Economics is usually taken by few learners. Therefore, the community should be made aware of what Home Economics is, what careers are involved and why the subject is important to both male and female learners.

Results showed that parents and the whole community at large should be enlightened on what Home Economics is all about and the careers involved in it.

4.5.1.2 Stigma towards male learners enrolled for Home Economics

School managers were asked to state if there has been a stigma against male learners choosing to study Home Economics or those enrolled for the subject at their schools, as this might be the reason male learners shy away from choosing Home Economics as a subject. School managers indicated that male learners who were enrolled in Home Economics were labelled as girlish. One school manager emphasized that a male learner seen wearing an apron is being teased by other male learners that he was a lady. Male learners are also mocked by other learners that there was no future in Home Economics. One school manager remarked;

At my school, we usually deal with issues of learners being mocked or teased by others that there are no careers in Home Economics. Even though we find it a little bit difficult

to deal with these kind of issues, we usually call in those learners teased by others and encourage them that they have the right to take subjects they like.

Results indicated that there is stigma towards male learners enrolled for Home Economics and school managers dealt with these cases. This showed that the mocking and the teasing from peers could be the reason male learners do not take the subject.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the results from the questionnaires completed by male learners not enrolled for Home Economics and interviews with Home Economics male learners as well as with school managers. Data was presented quantitatively and qualitatively in themes according to the three main research questions. The next chapter will focus on the discussion of research data presented in this chapter as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research findings. In this chapter, the research findings are discussed, summarised and recommendations are made. The discussion of results includes answering the research questions of the study.

5.2 Discussion of Results

The purpose of the study was to understand the factors influencing male learners' choice of Home Economics as a subject. Therefore, the questionnaire and the interview questions were designed in such a way as to answer the following research questions:

1. What cultural/traditional norms do male learners perceive can hinder their choice to study Home Economics as a school subject in the //Kharas Educational Region?
2. How do parents, principals and teachers influence male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase?
3. What could be done to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics?

The layout of this section is based on the themes identified from the research questions.

5.2.1 Perceptions towards Home Economics as a subject

In both quantitative and qualitative results, participants agreed that Home Economics is perceived and regarded as a subject for girls only. According to the literature, male learners perceive Home Economics as having to do with the home, since it deals with different food preparations and serving of meals, decoration of the home and its surrounding, making of clothes and child care (Azubuikwe, 2012). It can therefore be concluded that Home Economics in the //Kharas Educational Region is perceived to be a subject for girls.

Male learners participating in this study in the //Kharas Educational Region also perceived Home Economics as a “moffie” subject. Egun (2008) indicated that sex-stereotyped occupation of girls over boys is a tradition which has socialised males into believing that it is a ridicule of manliness to venture into an occupation that is traditionally female reserved.

The results indicated that male learners prefer the other pre-vocational subjects more than Home Economics. This preference can be ascribed to the fact that some schools in the //Kharas Educational Region offer a variety of pre-vocational subjects and therefore learners choose subjects that most learners enrol for in the school. Davies et. al. (2006) lamented that the choices open to a learner depend on the average popularity of subjects in the school and this varies with the social mix of learners. This could be the reason male learners do not choose to study Home Economics as a subject in the //Kharas

Educational Region, as there existed a number of pre-vocational subjects to choose from at their schools and because Home Economics was perceived as a female subject.

5.2.2 Traditional /Cultural norms towards Home Economics learning

The study found that male learners in the //Kharas Educational Region were not influenced by culture or tradition to not choose Home Economics as a subject. This was shown in Table 4.3 where male learners indicated that they were allowed to become chefs in their culture. Results also showed that cultural and traditional beliefs in male learners in this study's communities were allowing them to take Home Economics as a subject. It can therefore be concluded that cultural beliefs were not in conflict with the idea that male learners can become chefs or that they could do Home Economics as a subject.

The majority of male learners (45.8%) indicated that they would rather choose Design and Technology instead of the other pre-vocational subjects offered. Male learners believed that they would have better careers and that they would be able to work for themselves in future if they choose to study Design and Technology. Learners also believed that Design and Technology is a subject for male learners since they were strong enough to do the hard work.

Results indicated that male learners who are enrolled in Home Economics were labelled as girlish. This showed that there is a stigma attached to male learners choosing to study Home Economics or those enrolled for the subject and this might be the reason why

respondents shy away from choosing Home Economics in the //Kharas Educational Region. This could be concluded that tradition and cultural influenced male learners to choose Home Economics as a subject due to lack of careers or perhaps careers that are more feminine.

5.2.3 Parents, principals and teachers' influence on male learners' decisions to take Home Economics as an area of study in the Junior Secondary phase

The participants' responses in the questionnaire indicated that most of the respondents' parents cared about which subjects they chose to study. This was because the parents encouraged their children to take subjects that will allow them to make more money in order to assist the family in future. This was supported by Okoh's (2006) findings that parents were often more interested in occupations or professions which would bring money and prestige to the family.

Based on the results, it was possible to assume that teachers in the //Kharas Education Region were not as involved in the selection of subjects for their learners. It appeared that male learners make choices of their own regarding which subjects they wanted to study.

Furthermore, the results indicated that school managers believed that learners who performed poorly in the previous grade should be placed in the Home Economics class as it was believed to be an easy subject. This was further supported by Osuala (1998) who emphasised that Home Economics was believed to be designed for the less

intelligent learners since it is easy. This could be the reason there seemed to be few or no male learners in Home Economics classes in //Kharas Educational Region. The latter was owed to the fact that it was believed that boys were more intelligent than girls (Nnubia, 2013).

The results also emphasised that a male learner seen wearing an apron was often teased by other male learners. Dike (2006) emphasized that the wrong perception of Home Economics can be dated back to the colonial era where men were servants in the houses of the masters. This made it difficult for the perceptions to change. In addition, male learners were being mocked by other learners that they had no future in Home Economics.

It could thus be concluded that in the //Kharas Educational Region, parents cared which subjects their male learners chose to study while teachers were not involved in the choice of subjects. Parents therefore discourage male learners to take Home Economics as a subject as they cared which subject their children take. Poorly-performing learners were placed in Home Economics classes as it was believed that Home Economics is an easy subject.

5.2.4 Strategies to change the perceptions and increase the enrolment of male learners in Home Economics

School managers' interview results indicated that pre-vocational subjects were grouped on the application forms that were sent to primary schools for Grade 8 enrolment at their

schools. This was in accordance with the revised curriculum for the Junior Secondary phase which states that Grade 8 learners should at least have two pre-vocational subjects (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Usually, parents in these schools were invited to a meeting before the application process so that pre-vocational subjects were explained to them. This showed that both parents and learners were aware of the availability of different pre-vocational subjects and what they entail. Parents are more likely to influence learners' decisions than the guidance counsellors (Malgwi et. al., 2005) and this could be the reason why parents are well informed about the importance of the pre-vocational subjects before they make decisions with and for their children.

It was clear from the findings that learners were requested to consult their parents when it came to choosing pre-vocational subjects. School managers indicated that they do not force learners to take subjects they do not wish to take. This clearly showed that learners' interests and what they wished to become was put into consideration since pre-vocational subjects were regarded as career-driven subjects.

As noted by Anyakoha (2007), Home Economics was the only course that taught skills that were focused on family well-being as well as opportunities in the job market. The results from male Home Economics learners from the present study indicated that Home Economics was a subject for everyone, both males and females.

Results further indicated that Home Economics was seen as a foundation for male learners to also learn important topics needed for their futures. This was further explained by Anyakoha (2007) who stated that education and knowledge in Home Economics empowered individuals to fulfil their fundamental needs and to manage everyday life's scarce resources.

Results showed that there was stigma towards male learners studying Home Economics as a subject. Learners are teased and mocked by others that there are no careers. School managers however enlightened parents and the community to be made aware of the subject's importance and careers involved in it.

5.3 Conclusions

Findings of this study revealed that most participants perceived Home Economics as a subject for girls. Male learners would rather choose to study Design and Technology as they believed that it was a subject meant for males. Although Home Economics had been available for many years in schools, participants viewed the subject differently and lacked information regarding what Home Economics really entails. According to the data collected, Male learners that chose to study Home Economics in the study in the schools in //Kharas Educational Region were teased and mocked by fellow male learners. Remarks such as; "being not men enough" were often directed to them because they are accused of having ventured into a school subject that is meant for girls. The results further indicated that Home Economics was believed to be an easy subject and

that was the reason why low-performing learners were placed in Home Economics classes.

However, the data also showed that male learners were not influenced by culture/tradition to not take Home Economics as a subject. Cultural beliefs in the community were not in conflict with the idea that males can become chefs.

Parents were in most instances involved in the selection of their children's subjects as evidenced by the results. Parents cared about what subjects their children chose to study. Parents encouraged their children to study subjects which would allow them to make more money in the future. On the other hand, results pointed out that teachers treat male learners differently during pre-vocational subject lessons and this resulted in male learners opting not to choose subjects that were believed to be female oriented like KWP and Home Economics.

Research findings further indicated that pre-vocational subjects were grouped on the application forms for Grade 8 enrolment at schools, which gave both parents and their children the opportunity to choose the pre-vocational subjects they preferred. Parents were invited for a meeting before the school application process and pre-vocational subjects were explained to them in details. Added to this, in situations of choosing pre-vocational subjects, learners were requested to consult their parents before they made a final decision. Findings also revealed that Home Economics male learners were teased

by other learners even though the subject was seen as a foundation course for male learners to learn important topics needed for their futures.

5.4 Recommendations

In order to address the factors influencing boys' choice of Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase, the researcher recommends the following actions:

- Male learners should be sensitized by teachers and parents to give up their negative views about studying Home Economics, that is, their view of the subject as a feminine course.
- There is a need for a campaign through seminars and mass media about the importance of Home Economics and the career opportunities that the subject could provide to learners and the society. This was necessary because many people are not aware of the importance of the subject in national development.
- Career days should be organised from time to time at both primary and secondary school levels to motivate and stimulate the interests of learners in pre-vocational subjects such as Home Economics.
- The Government should encourage males studying Home Economics through incentives for example scholarships or bursary awards.

- Learners should be taken on excursions/field-trips to various establishments in the industry of Home Economics such as food processing industries, textile mills and sewing institutions. This will give them the opportunity to see both males and females employed in these areas.
- A similar study is recommended to investigate the selection of pre-vocational subjects in the Senior Primary phase where there exists a choice between Elementary Agriculture, Home Ecology and Design and Technology.
- Further research should be carried out on a large scale including other educational regions in Namibia to investigate the factors that influence learners' choices of other pre-vocational subjects.

5.5 Summary

Chapter one dealt with the background of the study, statement of the problem as well as research questions and the limitations of the study. Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical framework and reviewed literature relevant to the study. Chapter 3 on the other hand outlined the methodology used to collect data in this study, while in chapter 4 the presentation of the data was done. Chapter 5 dealt with the discussions of the results as well as conclusions and recommendations.

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APPENDIX A: UNAM Ethical clearance certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE/267/2017 **Date:** 10 October, 2017

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: Factors Influencing Male Learners' Choice Of Home Economics As A School Subject In The Junior Secondary Phase In //Kharas Educational Region

Researcher: Rebekka Enkali

Student Number: 200918257

Faculty: Faculty of Education

Supervisors: Dr. C. Villet (Main) Dr. D. Wolfaardt (Co)

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

Prof. P. Odonkor: UREC Chairperson

Ms. P. Claassen: UREC Secretary

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR

P O Box 110
Keetmanshoop
Namibia
12 July 2017

The Director of Education
//Kharas region
P/Bag 2160
Keetmanshoop
Namibia

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN FIVE SCHOOLS IN THE //KHARAS EDUCATION REGION.

I am Rebekka Enkali, a grade 10–12 Geography teacher at Suiderlig Secondary School in the //Kharas Educational Region. At present, I am in my final year of my Master of Education program at the University of Namibia. As a requirement for the fulfilment of the degree, I am required to complete a research paper. It's for this reason that I am hereby requesting a permission to conduct a research study in five Secondary Schools in the //Kharas region.

The purpose of my study is to find out factors (traditions, culture, norms and beliefs) influencing boys' participation in Home Economics as a subject. Hence, the title of my study is

“FACTORS INFLUENCING MALE LEARNERS’ CHOICE OF HOME ECONOMICS AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT IN THE JUNIOR SECONDARY PHASE IN THE //KHARAS EDUCATIONAL REGION.” The findings and recommendations will be shared with the schools involved as well as the Ministry of education.

I will be delighted if I am granted the permission.

Yours Sincerely,

.....
Rebekka Enkali
(Student: 200918257)

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

P O Box 110
Keetmanshoop
Namibia
12 July 2017

The Principal

Dear Principal

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN YOUR SCHOOL.

I am Rebekka Enkali, a grade 10 – 12 Geography teacher at Suiderlig Secondary School in the //Kharas education Region. At present, I am in my final year of my Master of Education program at the University of Namibia. As a requirement for the fulfilment of the degree, I am required to complete a research paper. It's for this reason that I am hereby requesting a permission to conduct a research study in your school.

The purpose of my study is to find out factors (traditions, culture, norms and believes) influences boys' participation in Home Economics learning. Hence, the title of my study is

“FACTORS INFLUENCING MALE LEARNERS’ CHOICE OF HOME ECONOMICS AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT IN THE JUNIOR SECONDARY PHASE IN THE //KHARAS EDUCATIONAL REGION.”. The findings and recommendations will be shared with the schools involved as well as the Ministry of education.

I will be delighted if I am granted the permission.

Yours Sincerely,

.....
Rebekka Enkali
(Student: 200918257)

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for learners

Introduction

My name is Rebekka Enkali, a student enrolled for a Masters in Education Degree at the University of Namibia. I am doing a research to determine your views on factors influencing males' choice of Home Economics as a subject in the Junior Secondary phase, in the //Kharas educational region. Please answer the following questions as sincerely as possible.

Section A: Biographic Information

1. Your age:

Under 13 years old	
14-15 years old	
Over 16 years old	

2.

Male	Female

 Your sex:

3. What elective subjects are you currently enrolled for?

4. What languages do you speak at home?

English	
Afrikaans	
Oshiwambo	
Nama/Damara	
Otjiherero	
Silozi	
Rukwangari	
Others-Specify	

Section B: Closed-ended questions

1. For the following statements, mark with an x in the appropriate box your agreement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Home Economics is a subject for girls.				
2. Home Economics is an easy subject to study.				
3. I see no career in Home Economics.				
4. I am not a 'moffie' to choose Home Economics.				
5. I love the other elective subject more than Home Economics.				

2. For the following statements, mark with an x in the appropriate box your agreement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. My parents discouraged me to take Home Economics as a subject.				
7. Teachers encourage girls to take Home Economics and not boys.				
8. I am not free to express my opinions in a Home Economics class.				
9. I was already discouraged by my primary school teachers not to take Home Economics as a subject.				

3. For the following statements, mark with an x in the appropriate box your agreement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. In my culture , boys are not allowed to become chefs.				
11. Some cultural beliefs in my community are in conflict with the opinion that boys can do Home Economics.				
12. In my tradition boys are regarded as capable of learning Home Economics as girls.				
13. I find it worthless to choose Home Economics because my future is not there.				
14. In my culture, boys are expected to take subjects that are related to domestic science e.g. Home Economics.				
15. In my tradition adults motivate boys to do Home Economics.				

4. For the following statements, mark with an x in the appropriate box your agreement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. I underestimate my ability to do Home Economics.				
17. Male learners in my school are willing to do Home Economics.				
18. Home Economics is a subject for girls only.				
19. I believe that it is a usual practice for girls to do Home Economics.				

Section C: Open-ended Questions

1. Do you believe that you will not have a career if you choose Home Economics as a subject?

Yes	
No	

Give reasons for your answer:

2. If you have a choice between Home Economics, Accounting, KWP, Agriculture and Design and Technology, which one of the 5 subjects will you choose to study and why?

3. Do your parents care what subjects you have chosen to study?

They care	
They do not care	

Explain your answer:

4. Do your teachers treat boys differently from the way girls are treated during all subject lessons?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Give reasons for your answer:

Thank you for your participation!!

APPENDIX E: STANDARDISED OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A Standardised Open-ended Interview

Interview schedule: Teachers and Principals

Section A: Biographical Information of the Participants

A1: Gender of the participants

A2: School role of the participants (Principal, HOD, subject head, Subject teacher)

A3: Area of Specialisation

Section B: Questions

1. (a) What procedures do you have at your school regarding subject choice among new grade 8 learners?

(b) How do you organise your new grade 8 learners when it comes to selection of the elective subjects?

2. (a) How do you feel about the procedures you currently have at your school regarding grade 8 learners' selection of subjects?

(b) Do you think there are changes that need to be made?

3. What procedures do you recommend to be put in place when it comes to learners choosing subjects at the beginning of the junior phase?

4. What advice do you give to learners when they ask your opinion regarding selecting elective subjects?

5. Why do more girls enrol for Home economics than boys at your school?

6. (a) How do you feel when you have more girls in all your classes than boys?

(b) Do you wish to have more boys in Home Economics classes? Why?

7. Do you think there is a stigma to boys enrolled for Home Economics as a subject? Why?

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A focus group Interview: Boys enrolled for Home Economics as a subject

Section A: Biographical Information of the Participants

A1: Age of the participants

A2: Grade of the participants

A3: Elective subjects

Section B: Questions

1. What made you choose Home Economics as a subject when you first entered grade 8?

2. Who encouraged you to take Home Economics?

3. Do you feel happy that you have taken Home Economics as a subject? Explain why?

4. What do you think are the important topics you have learned in Home Economics that other learners who never did Home Economics as subject will not know?

5. Do you think Home Economics should be taken by everyone? Explain why?

Thank you for your time!