

**FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO POOR PERFORMANCE AMONG
GRADE 10 LEARNERS IN ONAMUTAI CIRCUIT, OSHANA REGION IN
NAMIBIA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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APPROVAL PAGE

This research has been examined and is approved as meeting the required standards for partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Education.

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DECLARATIONS

I, Sicilie Namupala, hereby declare that this thesis: *Factors that contribute to poor performance among Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit of Oshana region* is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My husband: Leopold Namupala

My children: Appolos Tanga-Omwene Namupala, Junias Pendukeni Namupala and
Lineekelomwene Meameno Namupala

My mother: Justina Filepus

For the major role they played in my life. I thank them for their patience, love, encouragement and support they offered me during the carrying out of this study.

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May God bless you all!

ABSTRACT

The academic performances among grade 10 learners become a matter of concern in Namibian schools since independence, despite deliberate effort made by the government. Many of the learners perform poorly in their grade 10 examinations, especially in the Onamutai circuit. This situation frustrates everybody and creates a blaming spirit among the Onamutai circuit stakeholders. The public have blamed educators for the failure of learners and the educators on the other hand, have blamed the environment in which schools are located. However, few studies have addressed the factors that contribute to poor performance among learners in urban areas and no study was conducted for the rural schools. Therefore, the focus of this study was to find out the factors that contribute to poor Grade 10 learners' performance in the Onamutai circuit in Oshana region.

A mixed research methodology was utilized to gain an understanding of the views of the learners, teachers, principals and parents on the factors that contribute to poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit of Oshana Region. Stratified random sampling was used to select 252 learners and 22 teachers from eight Combined schools and one Senior Secondary school in the Onamutai Circuit, Oshana Region in Namibia who participated in the research by completing questionnaires. Out of 252 only 176 learners returned their questionnaire and only 18 out of 22 teachers returned their questionnaire. Maximum variation sampling was used to select 24 teachers for interviews, and only 16 accepted the interviews. All 12 principals were supposed to be interviewed, but only eight principals accepted the interviews. Homogenous sampling was used to select parents for interviews. Parents were supposed to be 12, but only six accepted the interviews. The

actual total sample for the study was 224 participants, this consisting of 176 learners, 34 teachers (for both questionnaire and interviews), 8 principals and 6 parents. Questionnaires and structured interviews were utilized to collect data from the sample.

The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used to sort and analyze quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the questionnaires for teachers and learners. Interpretative data analysis was used to ensure that important constructs, themes and patterns emerged from the data. The results from the analysis of questionnaires showed that the teachers did not use teaching aids when teaching; overcrowded classes resulted in behavioural problems and the home environments for many learners were not conducive for studying.

The results further showed that low English proficiency for teachers and learners, lack of resources, ineffective teaching strategies, negative teachers' and learners' attitudes toward learning, low socio-economic status of learners, lack of parental involvement and lack of motivation and support contribute to learners' poor performance. Some of the strategies that might be used to reduce poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in schools included teaching Life Skills to learners, building more school hostels in rural areas so that learners cannot travel long distances, educating parents about the value of education in order to be actively involved and carrying out further in-depth research and comparative studies on ways of improving the performance of learners in schools in the circuit.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ARV	=	Anti-Retroviral Virus
CASS	=	Continuous Assessment Sheets
EMIS	=	Education Management Information System
HOD	=	Head of Department
ICT	=	Information and Communication Technology
JSC	=	Junior Secondary Certificate
MBESC	=	Ministry of Education Sport and Culture
MEC	=	Ministry of Education and Culture
NANTU	=	Namibia National Teachers Union
NBC	=	Namibia Broadcasting Corporation
OVC	=	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
TV	=	Television

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the Study

There is a general concern among stakeholders of the Onamutai Circuit about the low academic achievement of Grade 10 learners at the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) level (A. Iyambo, personal communication, April 10, 2010). The former Minister of Education Nangolo Mbumba had this to say: “we are not producing citizens who are capable of making Namibia a knowledge based economy as it is expected of us, as per vision 2030” ((Ministry of Education, 2007, p.v). Mbumba’s statement echoes those by South African educationists (Legotlo, Maaga, & Sebengo, 2002) who note that the low internal efficiency of the education system implies more wastage and increase in the cost of education. This means that the social cost of secondary education increases without necessarily increasing the social benefits. The consequence of not producing capable citizen leads to social costs of billions of dollars of the nation (Legotlo et al., 2002). Parents and government also affirm that their huge investments in education are not yielding the desired results (T. Tweya, personal communication, September 02, 2009). According to Tweya, parents and government believe that secondary education is the most important thing that the vast majority of youth will receive for the foreseeable future and must provide the foundation for lifelong learning. Tweya further added that good quality general education (Grades 1-12) builds the foundation skills required to increase the numbers of school leavers who can enter high education institutions in the country.

Moreover, parents and other community members in Namibia, complain that some teachers are unprofessional and tend to have a negative attitude towards their (teachers) work. Parents and other community members observed that teachers lacked commitment and are negligent as demonstrated by poor attendance of lessons, termination of lessons prematurely, application of poor teaching methods and delaying giving feedback to learners, among other factors (Matjila, 2004; Nakale, 2011).

However, teachers who play a pre- eminent role in the education arena and who have the responsibility of imparting the necessary knowledge and skills to learners on the other hand are also aware of the learners' low performance in both external and internal examinations but they are blaming other stakeholders (learners, parents and education officers) (Nakale, 2011). Teachers said that the bad state of the Grade 10 examination results is attributed to a low level of regional support given particularly to rural schools, by the inspectorate and subject advisory services (Matjila, 2004). Besides lack of regional support, teachers also blame the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners on the learners themselves because of their low retention levels, association with wrong peers and low achievement motivation (Ngaujake, 2002). An example of this low performance was illustrated by the reports on the examination results of 2006 and 2007 (Ministry of Education, 2007 & 2008). The reports indicated that the examination results of Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) of 2006 and 2007 do not show significant improvements compared to those of 2005. The 2006 results were even lower than those of 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Besides the blaming spirit which erupted between parents and teachers, Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU) also blamed the Ministry of Education for learners' poor performance (Nakale, 2011). According to Nakale, NANTU's spokesperson, Loide Shaanika attributed the failure of learners at Grade 10 to the inability on the part of the Ministry of Education to provide Informational and Communication Technology (ICT) such as internet services which are critical source of information. The internet is an important source of information which can enhance the quality of learners' academic results.

The preceding points seem to suggest that urgent measures are needed to remedy the situation. Due to the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit which is in Oshana Educational Region, the researcher as a teacher in the Onamutai circuit became interested in trying to determine the factors that contributed to the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the circuit (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Onamutai circuit is one of the five circuits in the Oshana Education Directorate. It was established as a separate Circuit from both Oshakati and Oluno Circuits and has 13 schools offering Grade 10 (Ministry of Education, 2006). Before its establishment, some of the schools that are now within the Onamutai Circuit were performing well, such as: Oshekasheka Combined School, Omupanda Combined School and Onamutai Combined School (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBESC], 2003). Since 2004, the majority of the schools in the circuit have been performing poorly (see Table 1).

Table 1: The average pass rates of the three circuits 2004-2010.

Pass rate in Oshana Region							
Circuits	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Onamutai	35.5%	47.6%	29.9%	32.8%	38.3%	42.8%	45.9%
Oluno	44.3	38.5	43.3	46.1	51.2	49.4	48.4
Oshakati	57.6	48.4	52.0	49.0	58.8	51.1	51.0

(Source: Ministry of Education (2011 Oshana Region Grade 10 Promotions 2004-2010)).

As a result of the poor performance, the circuit has been ranked last in the Oshana Education Directorate as from its establishment up to 2009, resulting in the Circuit being labeled “a circuit of concern” in the region (D. Shinyemba, personal communication, April 10, 2010). In 2008, community members also raised their concerns during “Ewi Lamanguluka” (Open Talk) in the Oshiwambo Radio of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) about the quality of education rendered in schools in the circuit and why the circuit always performed poorly.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The academic performance among Grade 10 learners has become a matter of concern in Namibian schools since independence. The annual release of Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) Examination results of 2006, 2007 and 2008 revealed the general poor performance of the schools in the four northern regions, including Oshana where the Onamutai Circuit is situated (Ministry of Education, 2007, 2008 & 2009). The report of 2009 revealed that only 43% of the Grade 10 graduates from the four northern regions qualified for entry into senior secondary schools in the national examinations compared with over 46% in the rest of the country. Onamutai scored 42.8% in that 2009 (Ministry of Education, 2010). Although the Education Management Information System [EMIS] of 2008 has shown that Oshana education region has about 98% of teachers who have pedagogical training and qualified teachers, it seems as if they still lack competencies to improve learners' learning (Ministry of Education, 2008). For example, the Examiner's report for 2007 indicated that in 2006, no school in the Onamutai Circuit reached 50% average pass rate (Ministry of Education, 2007) (see Appendix 5). The highest pass rate obtained by a school was 43.8% and the average pass rate of the Circuit was 29.9% (Ministry of Education, 2007). In 2007, only one school out of 13 managed to obtain above 50% average pass rate (Ministry of Education, 2008). To reverse this trend will require bold strategic intervention, learner support system and parental involvement. To put it in another way, all the stakeholders in the Onamutai circuit need to put more effort in their responsibilities of moulding children.

This study therefore, sought to find out the factors contributing to the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit as viewed by learners, teachers, principals and parents. In addition, the study sought to find out the views of the learners, teachers, principals and parents on the attitudes of learners and teachers toward learners' performance. Lastly, the study also sought to identify strategies that could be implemented to improve the Grade 10 learners' performance in the Onamutai circuit in national examinations.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the views of learners, teachers, principals and parents on the factors that contribute to the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners, in the Onamutai Circuit in national examinations.
2. Determine the views of learners, teachers, principals and parents on the attitudes of learners and teachers toward learners' learning.
3. Suggest measures and strategies that could promote high performance of Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit in national examinations.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study might help to determine the factors that contribute to poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit and what intervention the stakeholders can come up with as measures and strategies that might be implemented by teachers and principals to help learners perform better.

The teachers in the Onamutai Circuit might benefit from the findings of this study, since they might be aware of the factors that contribute to learners' poor performance. This might guide them in making changes in their teaching methodology and attitudes toward teaching and learning. The principals might also benefit from the findings of this study in the sense that they might institute reforms in their schools that might result into better Grade 10 learners' performance in national examinations. With the knowledge of the factors that contribute to Grade 10 learners' poor performance in examinations, a definite programme of action could be implemented to ensure better Grade 10 learners' performance.

Other beneficiaries of the findings of the study will be neighbouring circuits, the Oshana Education Directorate and the Ministry of Education, because both the Oshana Directorate and the Ministry in their research approval letters of this study proposed the sharing of research findings in the region and beyond. The learners might improve their individual academic performance and be promoted to senior secondary level, which eventually open doors for them to enter high education institutions. Parents especially school board members might benefit by gaining insight into school related matters and thus become more interested in school

activities. The circuit might also improve its ranking and overall performance. Furthermore, the study might also serve as a source of information for future researchers in this field.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Some constraints affected the carrying out of this study. The chief limitation of the study was the floods. It was difficult for the researcher to start collecting data soon after the approval of the research proposal because of the floods. It was not possible to pass through the flooded plains (Oshanas) and reach some of the intended schools. The researcher had to wait until the Oshanas dried up, to start data collection on the last day of June 2011.

Time was also one of the hindrances, as schools were far apart and the researcher was not able to visit two schools in a day because the collection of data was done after school hours. As a result, the data collection process was prolonged. Insufficient finances also caused delays for the carrying out of the study. Lack of finances made it difficult to make photocopies of the instruments. Many schools also postponed interviews on numerous times. Refusal of participation by teachers and principals also disrupted the study. There were a number of non-returned questionnaires from both teachers and learners even after several reminders.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The study was carried out in the Onamutai Circuit. It focused only, on the 13 schools that offered Grade 10 classes. The participants were Grade 10 learners, teachers, principals and the parents who were chairpersons of the school boards.

1.7 Definition of terms

The following terms should be understood as defined in this section:

Poor performance: In this study, refers to the grades E, F, G and U obtained by the Grade 10 learners in the Junior Secondary Certificate Examinations (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Remedial teaching: In this study, refers to the methods used by teachers to assist learners who face learning challenges by re-teaching topics where they have not mastered some basic competencies in normal teaching time (Mushaandja, 2002).

Socio-economic conditions: Refers to the differences among groups of people influenced mainly by their financial status. Parents or guardians from low socio economic status often find it difficult to render necessary support to their children in terms of education (Ngaujake, 2002).

Circuit: Refers to the educational centre where schools in the region are clustered.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the background to the problem of the poor performance among the learners. The statements of the problem, objectives, significance, limitation and delimitation of the study were also discussed. The last part of the chapter defined the key terms used in the study. In the next chapter, the focus will be on theoretical framework and the reviewing of literature.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework on which this study was based and also reviews the literature on the causes of learners' failure, attitudes of learners and teachers toward learners' performance and strategies which can be employed to improve the learners' performance in schools.

Although a great deal of debate surrounds learners' poor performance in Namibian schools, particularly on the Grade 10 National Examinations, little research has addressed the factors that contribute to poor performance among the Grade 10 learners (Matjila, 2004). The available data on factors that contribute to poor performance among learners were conducted in schools in towns and not in the rural schools. Therefore, there is still a need for research to be conducted in rural schools to get an overall picture of the causes of poor performance among Grade 10 learners in Namibia.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents theories on which this study was based. These are Constructivism as articulated by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky and the Social Learning theory postulated by Albert Bandura.

2.2.1 Constructivism Theory

Constructivism learning theory is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn (Woolfolk, 2010). Glaserfiled (1997) observes that constructivism is a broad term used by philosophers, curriculum designers, psychologists to describe a “vast woolly area in contemporary psychology epistemology, and education” (p. 204). According to Glaserfiled, constructivists’ perspectives are grounded in the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, and the Gestalt psychologists, Bruner, John Dewey and Jean Lave among many others. There are many diverse constructivist theories of learning (Woolfolk, 2010). Constructivists theories tend to hold the following common points that:

- a) Learners are active in constructing their own knowledge.
- b) Social interactions are important in the knowledge construction process.

Constructivism holds that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. According to Jean Piaget, children learn through a process known as adaptation which is the ability to adjust to the environment (Miller, 2002). According to Miller, Piaget proposed that human development occurs in stages of cognitive development which are namely sensori motor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage and finally the formal operational stage. The stages which are applicable to this research are the concrete operational and the formal operational stages. The other two stages sensori motor and preoperational stages occur prior the age of seven and for that reason we will not scrutinize them closely.

2.2.1.1 How does Constructivism view learners in the learning setting

According to Wertsch (1997), constructivism views each learner as a unique individual with unique needs and background. He notes that the learner is seen as a complex and multidimensional being. Constructivism thus emphasizes the importance of a learner being actively involved in the learning process. Mason (2007) elaborates that Vygotsky who is considered to be a proponent of social cultural theory believed that human activities take place in cultural settings and cannot be understood apart from those settings. One of his central ideas is that specific mental structures can be traced to our interactions with others. Mason notes that Vygotsky believed that cultural tools such as rulers, graph paper, computers and psychological tools such as Braille, sign language and maps play an important role in cognitive development (Woolfolk, 2010). This point underscores the importance of both cultural tools and psychological tools in the cognitive development of the learners at Grade 10.

One of the most important contributions of Vygotsky in understanding how children learn is his ideas on the zone of proximal development (Berger, 2006). Berger submitted that at any particular time the learner is on the verge of being able to solve certain problem. Then, there are those problems that the child is unable to solve because the child finds them very challenging. The problems that the child is on the verge of solving may require help such as help in the structure and way material is organized and encouragement. If teachers teach at a level the learner is already familiar with, then the child will get bored and if they (teachers) teach beyond what the child is able to understand, then the child will get discouraged. Effective teaching

takes place when teachers teach in the magic middle called ‘the zone of proximal development’ Wertsch, 1997).

Moreover, constructivism encourages a learner to arrive at his or her version of the truth, influenced by his or her background and culture (Wertsch, 1997). Wertsch further noted that historical developments and symbol systems, such as language, logic, and mathematical systems are inherited by the learner as a member of a particular culture and they are learned throughout the learner's life. Wertsch (1997) stresses the importance of the nature of the learner's social interaction with knowledgeable members of the society. This interaction can be clearly observed in learners in rural and urban settings, with learners in urban areas being more likely to be exposed to social interactions with most knowledgeable members of the society as compared to their rural counterparts. This study took the assumption that the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit lack exposure to interact with knowledgeable members of the society, hence their historical developments and symbol systems are somehow. This might also one of the contributing factors to learners’ poor performance.

Prawat and Floden (1994) argue that without social interaction with other more knowledgeable people, it is impossible for a learner to acquire social meanings of important symbol systems and learn how to utilize them. They added that from the constructivist point of view, it is important to take into account the background and culture of a learner throughout the learning process because the background also helps to shape the knowledge and truth that a learner creates, discovers and attains in the learning process. For example, a learner from an urban background can easily

learn how to use a computer than the one from a rural background because he or she might have grown up using one. While a learner from a rural background will find it difficult to learn to use a computer because of limited exposure. The influence of exposure counts when it comes to learning different concepts. One can therefore, conclude that greater exposure can partly explain why learners in urban settings perform better than rural counterparts.

Moreover, Kukla (2000) indicates that constructivism also emphasizes the importance of meaningful discussions in the learning process. Kukla (2000) rightly pointed out that the meaningful discussion occurs when learners are seated in a circle, discussing and controlling their own discussion with the teacher acting as a facilitator. The teacher's main function here is to observe, although he or she might initiate or shift or even direct a discussion. Learners get the discussion going, direct it and focus it. They act cooperatively as a team to make it work. They all participate, but not in a competitive way.

2.2.1.2 The role of the teacher in the Constructivism classroom

According to Woolfolk (2010), the role of teachers in the classroom situation is to act as a facilitator instead of acting as a lecturer/preacher. A facilitator has a role of aiding learners to excel in their learning. Mason (2007) stresses that the resources and lesson plans that must be initiated for constructivism teaching and learning should take a special approach, different from traditional teaching, which makes lessons interesting. These lessons should integrate real life information. Mason further elaborates that in constructivism teaching and learning, teachers pose questions and problems, and then guide learners to help them find their own answers. He also

stressed that teachers should be continually in conversation with learners, creating the learning experience that is open to new directions depending upon the needs of learners as the learning progresses.

Gamoran, Secada, and Marrett (1998) noted that in constructivism, the emphasis is turned away from the teacher to the learners. This change of role implies that a facilitator needs to display a totally different set of skills than a teacher. Rhodes and Bellamy (1999) describe the differences in roles between a teacher and a facilitator as follows:

a teacher tells, a facilitator asks, a teacher lectures from the front, a facilitator supports from the back, a teacher gives answers according to a set curriculum, a facilitator provides guidelines and creates an environment for the learner to arrive at his or her own conclusions, a teacher mostly gives a monologue, a facilitator is in continuous dialogue with the learners (p. 216).

The above quotation shows that in constructivist learning, the teacher's traditional role of being a director of the learning process is changed to that of being a facilitator or a helper. A facilitator should also be able to adapt the learning experience by taking the initiative to steer the learning experience to where learners want to create value. The learning environment should also be designed to support and challenge learners' thinking. While importance is given to the learners' ownership of the problem and solution process, it is not always the case that any activity or any solution given by the learners is adequate. But, the most important goal is to support learners in becoming effective thinkers through the teacher's coaching. However, in Namibia as far as the researcher knows, in most teaching settings, teachers are not trained to be good coaches; they only become good at coaching through experience.

The problem that arises in such a situation is that some teachers who do not possess that much experience, struggle in taking the coaching role. The study was grounded on the assumption that the teachers in the Onamutai circuit do not help learners to become critically reflective and introspective learners as it was indicated in chapter four by interviewed educators that the majority of teachers were just using teacher-centred approach.

2.2.1.3 The nature of the learning process

Kukla (2000) examines the nature of the learning process and found that social constructivist scholars view learning as an active process where learners should learn to discover principles, concepts and facts for themselves, hence, the importance of encouraging guesswork and intuitive thinking in learners. In fact, for the social constructivist, reality is constructed by our own activities and that of other people together as members of a society.

Holt and Willard-Holt (2000) examine the interactions between a learning task, the teacher and a learner and found that a teacher and learners are equally involved in the learning process. This means that the learning experience is both subjective and objective and involves the teacher's culture and values. Holt and Willard (2000) also found that background becomes an essential part of the interactions between learners and tasks in the learning process. Kukla (2000) concurs with Holt and Willard-Holt (2000) and adds that learners compare their version of the truth with that of the teacher and fellow learners to get to a new socially tested version of truth and this further creates a dynamic interaction between the task, teacher and learner. This means that learners and teachers should develop an awareness of each other's

viewpoints and then look to their own beliefs, standards and values, thus being both subjective and objective at the same time. Several studies on the constructivist model Gamoran et al. (1998); Prawat & Floden (1994) have emphasized the importance of the relationship between learners and teachers in the learning process. One can conclude that at the end of each learning process, it is very crucial for a teacher to make sure that all learners end up with the “real” truths about concepts.

Learners with different skills and backgrounds should collaborate on tasks and discussions to arrive at a shared understanding of the truth in a specific field. Most constructivist models also stress the need for team work among learners (Duffy & Janssen, 1992). With team work, learners can learn from each other as compared to when learners learn individually. One can also conclude that, through teamwork learners who understand certain concepts quickly can also explain to their classmates who are struggling. This is important because learners learn to share information and materials through team work. Team work is also very important to learners especially when they prepare for examinations through discussion groups.

Moreover, learners should constantly be challenged with tasks that refer to skills and knowledge just beyond their current level of mastery. Brownstein (2001) pointed out that when learners are constantly challenged with tasks that refer to skills and knowledge beyond their current level of mastery, they are motivated and build on previous successes to enhance their confidence. Brownstein further noted that to fully engage and challenge learners, the task and learning environment should reflect the complexity of the environment that the learner should be able to function in at the end of the learning. He furthermore noted that it was important for teachers to realize that

although a curriculum may be set down for them, it is shaped by them into something personal that reflects their own belief systems, their thoughts and feelings about both the content of their instruction and their learners so that the learning experience becomes a shared activity. The emotions and life contexts of those involved in the learning process must therefore be considered as an integral part of learning (Martin & Loomis, 2007).

2.2.2 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Ormrord, 1999).

The theory is based on what a child learns in his or her environment as he or she interacts and observes others (Mwamwenda, 1993). Such learning assists him or her in becoming socialized, so that what he does is congruent with norms and expectations of his or her society. Further, in this study social learning is used because it posits that people learn from one another, and may include observational learning, imitation, and modeling (Reid, 2007). Bandura (as cited in Mwamwenda 1993, p.124) also pointed out some of the factors that influence social learning: self-discipline, helpful studies and hard work. This implies that for effective teaching and learning to take place, a teacher should be a living example of what he or she teaches. It is unrealistic to expect pupils to be hardworking and studious if their teacher does the contrary.

Moreover, Cherry (n.d.) and Wollfolk (2010) analysed the three core concepts at the heart of social learning theory. The first one is the idea that people can learn through

observation. The second one is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of observation. The third one is that this theory recognizes that because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in a change in behaviour. Bandura (as cited in Mwamwenda, 1993, p.73) also demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviours they have observed in other people. Therefore, learners learn through observation.

Finally, for social learning to be effective, the teachers of the Onamutai circuit need to find out what learners' social learning preferences are. For example, whether learners prefer working on their own or working with others. Therefore, learners need to be motivated to imitate good behaviours that promote their desire to excel so that they can improve their academic performance.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews literature on the factors that contribute to poor performance among learners, attitudes of teachers and learners toward learners' performance and strategies that could be used to promote effective learning.

2.3.1 Factors leading to learners' poor performance in examinations

There are many factors which can affect learners' academic performance (Legotlo et al., 2002). In this research the factors have been grouped into teacher, school and learner factors.

2.3.1.1 Teacher factors

a) Quality and shortage of teachers

For learners to perform well there is need for quality teachers who are well trained, well behaved and well-motivated (Clarke, 2005). Clarke believes that teachers are the driving force in schools. He furthermore added that to be able to drive schools in the right direction, teachers need to be well trained, competent, knowledgeable and highly motivated. Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) concur with Clarke by saying that good teachers are those who are knowledgeable in their subjects and know how to explain the subject matters to learners and vary ways they teach to suit learners in their classes. They also indicated that good teachers present work in a way that interests and motivates pupils, making sure that pupils understand the work and helping pupils with learning difficulties.

Hen (2008), notes that a good teacher is one who enters the classroom with teaching and learning materials available, knowledge, capability and the ambition to take one more child up to the standard than he/she did yesterday. This implies that the quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction delivered by teachers in classrooms.

On the other hand, poor teachers confuse learners and little learning results (Legotle, 2005). Legotle quotes one learner who said: “teachers who are not qualified do not know how to explain some calculations and had difficulties in explaining concepts in

subjects such as Mathematics and Physical Science” (p. 78). Learners further indicated that instead of these teachers teaching them, they ended up confusing them.

Ingersoll (as cited in Ormrod, 1999, para. 3) concurs with the above observation and adds that learners are taught by teachers who lack knowledge and skills necessary for quality instruction. Dimmock (2012) also indicates that academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence, and skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have impact on the teaching and learning process. According to Dimmock students’ achievement is associated with teachers’ experience and education. However, teachers at rural schools have less experience if compared to urban teachers (Lippman, Burns & McArthur, 1996).

Moreover, in Legotle’s (2005) study, it was also found that overcrowding in some classes were caused by the shortage of suitably qualified teachers. He also found that headmasters complained that when teachers went on sick leave or on maternity leave, there often tended to be no replacement from the Ministry of Education due to the shortage of teachers, and learners went up to three months without teachers. This situation leads to demotivation and compromises the quality of service offered by available teachers as they have to cover up for vacant posts.

Clarke (2005) also adds that quality improvement in education depends upon proper training of teachers. Teachers cannot play any of their roles unless they are properly trained as teaching is regarded as an art. Teaching can be refined by training and

practice. Therefore, the availability of competent teachers at any school is very important for better learners' academic performance.

Lastly, the researcher supports what was said by Dimmock (2012) that in order to improve learners' performance, teachers may not use the same instructional strategies for all members of the class as learners learn at different paces. Consequently, teachers must always consider how to adapt strategies to learners' differences.

b) Poorly motivated teachers

It is often argued that the poor performance by learners is caused by teachers' poor motivation (Legotlo et al., 2002). Teachers are usually poorly motivated to do their work of teaching because their basic needs are not met. Legotlo et al. further note that when teachers are poorly motivated their service delivery will be compromised. According to Akyeampong, Djangman, (2007) and Matjila (2004), teachers in rural areas are more demotivated and frustrated than those in urban areas because of their working conditions and living standards which are usually poor. Poor motivation of teachers leads to poor commitment to service delivery and as a result, learners end up performing poorly in national examinations.

According to Akyeampong et al. (2007), teachers' motivation depends critically on effective management of the school. They further indicated that if systems and structures set to manage and support teachers are dysfunctional, teachers are likely to lose their sense of professional responsibility and commitment. Legotlo (2005) adds that the lack of educator discipline, commitment and morale were some of the major causes of poor learner performance. He observed that some educators were in the

habit of coming late to school or missing teaching lessons and this greatly reduced the time for instruction delivery. Matjila (2004) attributed this to poor working conditions, inadequate curriculum materials, and unclear and confusing government policies.

c) Use of English as a Medium of instruction

English has acquired the status of a global language. Keeping in mind the growing need and importance of English language in everyday life, Matjila (2004) notes that the performance of learners might also be affected by the medium of instruction used in the teaching and learning process. Olivier (2011) asserts that the high failures rate of the Grade 10 learners in Namibia is related to the low levels of English proficiency skills, by both teachers and learners in the country. The Director of the American Cultural Centre, A. Deaton (personal communication, May 26, 2011) speaking at the opening of the English Workshop for Namibian English Teachers at Safari hotel in Windhoek, warned that if learners have a sub-standard or rudimentary grasp of English, then they will always be at a disadvantage when it comes to taking examinations in English. One can only conclude that, since most of the examinations are taken in English in Namibia, this might be negatively affecting the performance of learners in examinations.

Swarts (2002) shares the same sentiments expressed by Deaton that the effectiveness of learning and teaching is limited by the fact that teachers and learners are working in a second language area, in which exposure to English in the community is low. Olivier (2011) adds that in a country like Namibia, especially in the northern regions

where parental literacy and school resources are low, it becomes difficult for both teachers and learners to use English. Another reason that hinders the English language usage as a medium of instruction among teachers is the fact that some of the teachers were trained during the pre- independence period in which the language of instruction was Afrikaans (Matjila, 2004).

Swarts (2002) further notes that in the Namibian education system, teachers struggle to give instructions in English particularly in remote areas, because of limited exposure to the English Language. Makuwa (2004) also concurs with the above points and indicates that most subject-teachers in sub-Saharan Africa are not well trained in language-sensitive practice at their teacher education colleges. Hence, it is difficult for these teachers to be fluent in English and also the children they teach. Although the majority of post- independence teacher-trainees are good at English, they are reluctant to apply learner-centred methods which they view as taking a lot of time and requiring elaborate preparation (Makuwa, 2004; Matjila, 2004). Thus, they hardly apply the learner-centred paradigm which is regarded as an effective method that can alleviate the English language problem.

Enos (2007) suggest the need for in- service training for old teachers to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge that could make them competent. Luckily, the English proficiency problem is being addressed by the current Minister of Education. The Minister has proposed English courses to be taken by teachers who did not meet the minimum requirements in the English proficiency test being written

annually to test teachers' proficiency in the country. This move is expected to provide a remedy to teachers' English proficiency problem.

2.3.1.2 School factors

a) Relevance of curriculum

Curriculum is a list of subjects, learning areas and courses of study (Enos, 2007). According to Enos, curriculum should provide learners with meaningful experiences that engender deep and significant learning. Makuwa (2004) has argued that much of the curricula used in Namibian schools are either foreign or not relevant to the needs of Namibian learners as such learners are not provided with "meaningful experiences". Levine and Ornstein (2000) also note that in curriculum materials and instructional strategies in Namibian primary grades, learners are taught vocabulary which they are not familiar with and also in which they have little or no exposure. Clarke (2005) argues that as learners proceed through grades, terminologies and concepts become increasingly abstract and many learners fall further behind, because their level of mastery is rudimentary to allow for fluent learning. This mainly affects learners from poor backgrounds and it indicates the reason why learners from poor backgrounds perform poorly as they proceed with their education.

Arends, Winick, and Tannebaun (2001) and Clarke (2005) emphasize the importance of revising and adapting school curriculum to its immediate environment that matches learners' qualities in terms of commitment, thinking and expertise. However, a school principal has a role to see to it that the curriculum of his or her school is in line with the teachers' development in terms of commitment and expertise.

Mostert and Wahome (1998) correctly state that when information being learned is important to learners and match their needs, they tend to put more effort in wanting to know more. They add that learners are more likely to participate in learning experience where the benefit outweighs the cost. Therefore, in order to bring about a high level of motivation, a school should take the interests of learners into consideration and try to relate subjects and activities to those things in which learners have interest (Mostert & Wahome, 1998).

The above points make one to conclude that the relevance of the curriculum is important in learners' understanding of subject concepts. Learners can quickly grasp concepts where they see some of the learning materials in practical use than concepts which are totally foreign. Therefore, the researcher supports Makuwa 's (2004).view that curricular should be revisited to take into account the local conditions, but also balancing it with learning materials of some internationally accepted standards, otherwise learners will not be internationally competent when they go to foreign universities.

b) Resources

The availability of educational resources is believed by educationists to influence the learners' performance (Legotlo et al., 2002). Learners with access to more educational and non-educational resources are more likely to perform better than their counterparts that are less resourced (Arends et al., 2001). Legotle (2005) noted that the lack of resources was rated by all his respondents as the major cause of learners' poor performance. He further noted that the shortage of physical and material

resources was a major problem. According to Legotlo only few schools which participated in his survey were well equipped with electricity, libraries, laboratories, water and toilets, and in some schools learners attended lessons, whilst standing because the chairs were not enough. In addition to these, some classrooms had no chalkboards, doors and windows.

Moreover, Legotlo et al. (2002) indicated that the shortage or unavailability of relevant textbooks was one of the major problems in all schools that participated in his study, which prompted one of his participants to say: “The department of textbooks suppliers leaves much to be desired, the supply came late in the year, as a result, our Grade 9 and 10 learners were without textbooks for almost the rest of the year” (p. 67).

Makuwa (2004) notes that nearly all teaching materials used in Namibian schools were produced externally and many teachers have the tendency of regarding them as the final answer to teaching. The researcher as a teacher has also noted worse situations at the school she teaches, whereby learners do not have a single textbook in some subjects and mainly depend on notes provided by the teachers. This shortage of necessary textbooks, negatively affects the performance of learners as learners have nowhere to read. The shortage of resources not only affects learners, but also demoralizes the teachers.

According to Matjila (2004) the lack of other resources such as audiotapes, computers, internet and television (TV) also affects the learners’ performance. Legotlo (2005) indicates that some of the schools he visited during his study had facilities which were clearly inadequate and poorly maintained.

The learners' background relates to the availability of educational resources at home like books, electronic resources such as televisions, computers, study desks or tables are crucial to support their academic performance (Asikhia, 2010). It is also acknowledged by some educationists that learners, who have access to such resources, are at an advantage compared to those who come from poor families (Arends et al., 2001). Arends et al further note that learners who have access to such resources are more informed about the latest developments around them, and this assists them to improve their performance at school, while those from poor families with no resources are not informed about developments in their local areas. Therefore, the learners' non-exposure to educational resources affects their performance compared to those who have access to such resources. In most cases, the schools in rural areas are not properly resourced with learning materials and they are severely affected by this situation.

Matjila (2004) also argues that unequal distribution of resources to schools contributes to poor performance and that resource allocation in Namibia favours urban regions. He added that in Africa, many schools do not have libraries, computers and internet, although such facilities and services are very important in the learning process, they are predominant in urban areas to the detriment of the rural learners.

2.3.1.3 Learner factors

a) Socio-economic conditions of learners

According to Legotlo et al. (2002) social background of learners is an important variable in determining learners' background because many aspects of life are

reflected by it. Legotle's (2005) study states that many learners in Southern Africa came from low socio economic background. This implies that the importance of parents' abilities to intervene in the education of their children cannot be overemphasized. Mwamwenda (1993) concurs with Legotle's point and adds that many learners in rural areas come from previously disadvantaged families. This makes it difficult to concentrate on learning activities because their thoughts are preoccupied with how to satisfy their hunger. According to Avila and Gasperine (2005) and Enos (2007) some learners in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Namibia, have to work as labourers to survive and pay their tuition fees. As a result learners come to school tired and hardly concentrate on lessons. They also tend to absent themselves from school to do work.

Hamunyela (2008) notes that socio-economic disparities influence children's academic learning. She further notes that children who are in discomfort pay less attention than children who are comfortable.

The effects of HIV and AIDS also affect children's performance at schools, in situations where learners take the roles of parents and become caregivers (Avila & , 2005). Avila and Gasperine further state that the girls are more at risk than boys, because they are more likely to be kept out of school to become caretakers. According to Singh, Mbokodi, and Msila (2004) children need a stable emotional environment to assist them to learn. They further added that circumstances like divorce, maternal unemployment, lack of caretakers, staying with single parents are

known to affect learners' performance at school in the same way as poverty and family conflict.

b) Parental involvement in the education of their children

According to Hamunyela (2008) parental involvement in their children's education is multi-dimensional, ranging from parents directly helping their children's with homework to parents establishing high expectations for their children's learning in schools. The researcher supports what was said by the Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC] (1993) and Mushaandja (2002) that quality parental involvement in the education of their children is an important factor in determining the performance of the learners. This is consistent with the observation by Hamunyela (2008) that parental involvement is rooted in the belief that in order for schools to educate all youth effectively, parents and families should become fully involved in the process of educating learners. Asikhia (2010) also concurs with Hamunyela and adds that a family is the primary socializing agent of which a child is a member since it is in the family that he or she was born, therefore, children's performance depends on the type of the family they were born in. He further noted that teachers cannot do their work effectively without the support of parents. Asikhia further adds that parents need to know what is happening in school in order to support the school.

For the above points to materialize, schools need to work in partnership with parents to set up high and appropriate expectations (Dimmock, 2012). According to Singh et al. (2004) parents or guardians also need to keep lines of communication open with teachers and school principals. They note that parents should make sure that school

attendance of their children is steady and need to ask their children what they have learnt at school so that they can help the children with homework. It is also the responsibility of the parents to provide children with lighting, including lamps and candles if needed. Hamunyela (2008) states that, if parents show that they are interested in their children's learning, the learners will see the value of education and this can motivate them to work hard.

Enos (2007) states that children need love and care from their parents in order to excel in their school work. However, this is not the case in rural Namibia as many parents or guardians do not care much about their children. Parents and guardians tend to send the boys to look after livestock, while girls are expected to attend to domestic chores such as cooking, fetching water, washing and cleaning the house (Avila & Gasperine, 2005). According to Avilla and Gasperine these activities take much of the time for school going children in the rural areas. The children concentrate on the domestic duties and as such do not have enough time for their school work, resulting in lowered performance of learners in the rural schools in comparison to their counterparts in the urban areas.

Another point associated with parents' involvement in their children's education is the number of times that parents meet with school teachers to discuss the progress of their children in education matters (Makuwa, 2004). Makuwa blames the Namibian Education System for not having policy in place which stipulates the number of times a parent can or is supposed to visit the school. He found that only 40% of parents meet with teachers to discuss learners' performance and related matters. A. Iyambo

(personal communication, January, 2011) agreed with Makuwa and stressed that schools or teachers need to meet individual parents at the end of each school term to discuss the performance of specific learners who may be underperforming. According to Makuwa (2004) the problem of low parent-teacher's meetings continue to be experienced more in the Hardap, Karas, Kunene and Oshana regions. Onamutai circuit is in the Oshana region. Without follow-up and involvement of parents in the school work and in school activities of their children, the children's desire to excel will not be there. Parental involvement in their children's education is therefore, very important in increasing the performance of learners.

2.3.1.4 Attitude of stakeholders in education

There are different stakeholders in education which include learners themselves, their teachers, parents and school communities at large. The different stakeholders are supposed to work together to ensure good results when it comes to learners' performance. The positive attitudes of all stakeholders are important and are believed by educationists to influence learners' performance (Makuwa, 2004). In this section the focus was on the learners' and teachers' attitudes towards learning and school culture.

a) Attitudes of learners toward their learning

Attitude is the particular way in which a person responds to people and events (Swan & Fisch, 2010). Attitudes usually lead to positive, negative or neutral behaviour. The attitude of learners toward learning is important in determining their level of performance. Nwihim (2007) says that in general, people's attitude and beliefs have great impact on directing and maintaining one's motivation. Moreover, Makuwa

(2004) points out that families today have changed a great deal from previous years, as most parents do not stress the need for good morals, respect, discipline and hard work in schools as was the case in the past. He further indicated that many learners lack respect and discipline and quotes one respondent who remarked that: “when learners are asked to do class work, they protest and refuse to carry out the instructions. Most of the learners abuse the so called “rights” and teachers are unable to curb this situation, as corporal punishment is abolished” (Legotlo et al., 2002, p. 113).

Legotle (2005) carried out a study on the perception of various stakeholders on the causes of poor performance of Grade 12 learners in South Africa. He notes that the levels of disruptive behaviours had increased and this has a negative impact on the learners’ attitudes toward school work. He further noted that some learners were more concerned about political activities and were leaders of disruptive organizations’ outside the school. These types of activities lead to uncontrollable learners in classrooms and some learners intimidated teachers and other learners. Such learners tend to leave classrooms during lessons, come late to school and disappear before knocking off time. This ill-discipline often leads to teacher chasing a learner out of the class and as a result the learner loses a lot and the possibility of him or her doing well in the examinations will be next to impossible. On the other hand, learners claim that their misbehaviours are mainly due to unclear teacher-centred lessons and teachers’ difficulties in using English language as a medium of instruction (Legotle, 2005).

b) Attitudes of teachers toward teaching and learning

Knapp, (2012) indicates that some educational critics like John Holt blamed children's failure in school on the teachers. Knapp claims that nowadays teachers lack discipline, commitment and moral standard and as a result, high rates of teachers absenteeism and truancy are recorded in schools. This reduced teaching time and the possibility of learners doing well in examinations is hampered.

Teachers on the other hand felt that their negative attitudes were mainly fueled by over-worked, uninterested and dull learners as well as by trouble makers (Legotlo et al., 2002). They also added that poor working conditions, inadequate teaching and learning materials contribute to bad teachers' attitudes toward teaching.

c) School Culture

Closely associated with the attitudes of learners and teachers toward learning and teaching is the influence of the school culture on learners' performance (Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2002). A learner's educational outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. The school one attends indicates the extent to which the learner's performance can go.

Patterson, Purkey, and Parker (1986), believe that the school culture affect the behaviour and achievement of elementary and secondary school learners though the effect of classroom and student variables remain greater. Schools' cultures are different, whatever their commonalities, no two schools have the same culture. The school culture provides a focus and clear purpose for the school. Some cultures can

be counter-productive and an obstacle to educational success. A school culture can also be oppressive and discriminatory for various sub groups within the school. For example, it will be very difficult to change a culture of a school because teachers and learners are used to the status quo. A school with a culture of teachers and learners who abuse alcohol is likely to continue, despite its (alcohol) negative effects on the learners' performance.

According to Engelbrecht and Green (2001), the attitudes of school principals and teachers are also part of a school culture as they influence the performance of learners. Poor administration can translate into poor performance. Legotle (2005) found that one of the causes of the poor performance of the learners in South Africa was poor management and ineffective policies at the schools. He emphasized that the responsibilities and accountability of the principal needed to be clearly defined. Engelbrecht and Green (2001) support Legotle's findings and claim that if principals do not execute their responsibilities accurately, there will be no control of both learners and teachers, resulting in chaos and low performance.

2.3.1.5 Strategies needed to improve the performance of learners in examinations in schools

In order for a school to improve its learners' performance in examinations, there should be strategies to be adhered to by teachers, principals, parents, advisory teachers, inspectors and the learners themselves.

a) Motivation and Support received by learners and teachers

Motivation can be defined as the desire to accomplish a goal or to participate in an endeavour (Fourie &Smit, 2010). It starts with a need or vision; dream or desire to achieve a goal. Reid (2007) adds that motivation is a solid foundation for teaching and learning. He compares motivation to fuel and said: “a car will not run without fuel”. Learning is the same, learners will not learn without motivation. Here motivation is regarded as “the fuel of learning” (p. 57).

Mushaandja (2002) and Nwihim (2007) indicate that if a school is to improve learners’ and teachers’ performance, then attention should be given to their level of motivation. They further note that motivated learners are higher achievers than unmotivated ones. For a learner to achieve a desired goal and succeed, he or she needs to be intrinsically motivated (Pottas, 2011). Pottas notes that if motivation comes from within ourselves, we do something, because we like to do it or because we want to do it and we feel it is important to us.

Due to the circumstance that not all learners are intrinsically motivated to learn, some learners need extrinsic motivation (Reid, 2007). They need to be rewarded either with words such as “well done, excellent work or with tokens. Therefore, teachers have to develop means and methods that make learning interesting to motivate learners to want to learn. For example, teachers need to prepare interesting and stimulating lessons, use colourful visual aids such as posters and praise and give prizes to learners (Fourie &Smit, 2010). Parents also need to do the same as teachers depending on what they can afford.

Moreover, Reid (2007) emphasizes the need to motivate learners with immediate feedback to be given to take place in every lesson to ensure that learners are on the right path. He warns teachers to reduce pressure on learners that can result in their demotivation and reduce their desire to learn.

Fourie and Smit (2010) encourage parents and guardians and other influential leaders in society to help develop learners' capacities for self-motivation. The researcher is of the opinion that to improve the academic performance of learners, Learning Support mechanism which was recently introduced by the Ministry of Education need to be fully implemented in all schools. Learning Support mechanism includes mentoring; coaching; guiding; counseling; advising and tutoring as well as giving remedial lessons which are facilitated by knowledgeable, experts, dedicated teachers and parents.

The influence of peer pressure on learning outcomes can also not be overemphasized because it is a form of motivation and support for learners (Wood, 1994). Therefore, it is advisable for learners with similar interests to form social groups to coach and support each other in learning school work (Fourie & Smit, 2010).

b) Improved school management and leadership

Effective school management and leadership are necessary ingredients for poor performing schools to improve their academic performance. According to Mushaandja (2002), the fundamental roles of leadership are to bring people to work as a team, to inspire their loyalty towards the group and to make meaningful contribution to the achievement of the school goals. He adds that school managers

and leaders need to be visionary and innovative so that they can turn their schools into centres of excellence. For a school to be regarded as a centre of excellence, the principal has to seek assistance and cooperation of the community and business people to improve the quality of education provided by the schools. Nicodemus (2010) supports Mushaandja's view and adds that quality managers and leaders are those who can identify the potential of their subordinates and encourage them to translate the potential into something tangible. Quality managers always motivate their followers not to settle for the average, but to produce excellent work.

For school managers and leaders not to tolerate indiscipline and non-commitment among their subordinates both teachers and learners, they should have systems in place to ensure effective teaching and learning and should provide a suitable atmosphere needed for curricula delivery at school. This can be done through monitoring and evaluation of programmes implemented at schools (Reid, 2007).

Musaazi (1988) argues that only principals who do actual teaching in their schools can be able to know and see what is happening in their schools. He encourages all principals to have subjects to teach at their respective schools. Legotlo et al. (2002) notes that not all school principals have a wide range of managerial skills and clear policies relating to the instructional programme such as classroom visits, homework policy and assessment policy among others. Such principals need to upgrade themselves by furthering study in order to sharpen their managerial knowledge and skills.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the theoretical framework underpinning this study and helped in setting a clear picture of how learners can learn to the optimum ability. The literature review highlighted several factors that contribute to poor performance among learners. The chapter also reviewed literature on the attitudes of learners and teachers toward learners' learning and ended by identifying strategies needed to improve learners' performance in examinations. In the next chapter the research methodology is described.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodology used by the researcher to carry out the research. It focuses on the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), a research design is an outline, plan or strategy one intends to use to seek an answer to his or her research problem. It focuses on the end-product; the kind of study being planned and the kind of results aimed at (Johnson & Christensen 2004).

This research used a mixed method research design because it is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The purpose of using mixed methods research is to build on synergy and strength that exist between quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than using either qualitative or quantitative method alone (Gay, Mills, & Airasian 2009). The QUAN-QUAL model which is also referred to as triangulation mixed methods design was chosen as the best method in conducting this study (Gay et al., 2009), because both quantitative and qualitative data are equally weighted and collected concurrently through the same study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999). A survey research including questionnaires and interviews was conducted. Data collected from the interviews are qualitative in nature while data collected from questionnaires are quantitative in nature (Koshy, 2010).

3.3 Population

Gay et al. (2009) defined population as the larger group from which a sample is drawn. Bryman (2001) concurs and adds that a population refers to a universe of units from which a sample is selected.

In this research, the population was made up of Grade 10 teachers, principals, parents (school board chairpersons) and all 2011 full time Grade 10 learners of all 13 schools that offer grade 10 in the Onamutai circuit. The 13th school was excluded from the main study because it was used as the pilot study. Therefore the population for this study comprised 700 learners, 62 Grade 10 teachers, 12 principals and 12 parents who were the school board chairpersons at the 12 schools. The total population was 786 people. The researcher chose Onamutai circuit because of the circuit's poor performance in Grade 10 external examinations.

3.4 Sample and sampling procedure

According to Shark (2006) sampling is a process of selecting participants of the study. Johnson and Christensen (2004) defined a sample as a group of individuals, items, or events that represents the characteristics of the larger group from which the sample is drawn.

In this study, stratified sampling was used in the selection of teachers and learners who filled the questionnaires in order to ensure a fair representation and also to have a proportional representation of participants (Gall et al., 1999). At each school, the researcher was given the Continuous Assessment Sheets (CASS) by the Grade 10 teachers and identified sub-groups based on learners' performance and then randomly

selected learners from each sub-group. The lottery method was used to draw the sample (Hunt & Tyrrell, 2001). Each member was assigned a unique number, then put them in a box, shook it to thoroughly mix up, then randomly selected the required number. Consequently a sample of 36% of learners was drawn from each school (which gave a total of 252 learners). The total numbers of the Grade 10 learners at each school as well as the actual number represented by 36% are indicated in the below table:

Table: 2 Sample of learners per school

School name	Total number of Grade 10 learners	Actual Number of participants
School A	70	25
School B	28	10
School C	73	26
School D	39	14
School E	47	17
School F	80	29
School G	84	30
School H	33	12
School I	81	29
School J	42	15

The sample of learners involved three strata which were: learners from low abilities; learners from average abilities and learners from high abilities. Out of the 252 only 176 returned their questionnaire which is a 69.8%. Among the non returned questionnaire, 15 were lost or misplaced by the principal of school J (that is why the school's name does not appear in Table 3) and the rest were from other schools including those schools that refused to take part.

Apart from the learners, 36% of teachers were also picked from each school to participate in the survey questionnaire which gave a total number of 22 teachers, but only 18 teachers returned their questionnaires. The sample of teachers comprised experienced teachers and less experienced teachers. Teachers were drawn from the list of teachers' performance categories provided by the principals. Lottery method was used too. They were just selected in the same way as learners.

For the qualitative part, the Maximum variation sampling was used to select teachers for interviews (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The teachers who were sampled for interviews were the same as those who completed the questionnaires. Johnson and Christensen describe Maximum variation sampling as a form of sampling whereby a range of cases (individuals, groups, settings, or other phenomena) are purposively selected in order to include all types of cases in a research and this is exact reason for using this sampling in this research. The interviewed teachers were also assigned random numbers and then selected the required number from both categories (less experienced and experienced teachers' categories). According to List and Dennis (2004) Maximum variation is suitable to be used for small sample (less than 50), therefore, for this study, only 24 teachers were aimed to be interviewed (two teachers per school, one from each category) and only 16 accepted the interviews. Moreover, Maximum variation was used to help the researcher during the data analysis to search central themes that occurred across the cases (Depoy & Gitlin, 2011). All the 12 principals of the schools that offer Grade 10 in the Onamutai circuit were also supposed to be interviewed and only eight had taken part and four declined.

Homogeneous sampling was used to select parents who had participated in the interviews. The purpose for using this sampling was to select small and homogenous group for the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Participating parents were chairpersons of the school board from the 12 schools. A total of 12 parents were supposed to be interviewed, but only six accepted the interviews and the rest refused. Parents were selected homogeneously. Hence, the actual total sample was 224 participants. This consisted of 176 learners, 34 teachers of which 16 were later interviewed, eight principals and six parents.

3.5 Research Instruments

In this research, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), “a questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that research participants fill out as part of research study” (p.164). In this study, questionnaires were given to learners and teachers at 10 schools because two schools refused to participate. The questionnaires had close-ended items with a three point Likert Scale (Agree, Not sure and Disagree). Each questionnaire had a section for biographical profiles of the respondents and the other section for structured questions.

The Grade 10 teachers and the Grade 10 learners filled in the questionnaires with little guidance from the researcher. The researcher first informed the respondents that information provided would be treated with utmost confidentiality, and their names would not appear anywhere and that they must feel free in answering questions.

At all 10 schools, the questionnaires were administered by the assigned teachers (one per school) and were collected by the researcher after five days. The researcher used the questionnaires in this study because of the following reasons as indicated by Gay et al. (2009):

- It is a quicker way of obtaining information from a large group of people (194 people in total).
- The researcher was in financial problem, therefore she opted this affordable means of data collection.
- Questionnaires require less time to administer than other methods of data collection.
- Questionnaire responses are also easy to analyze.

According to Koshy (2010) an interview is a systematic way of talking and listening to people and is another way of collecting data from individuals through conversations. They further note that the questions for an interview should be carefully planned and precisely worded to yield the kind of data the researcher needs to answer for the research questions or objectives. In this research, the structured interviews were used to collect data from the teachers, parents and principals. Questions addressed experiences and feelings of the teachers and learners regarding the factors that contribute to poor performance among the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit. Gay et al. (2009) define structured interviews as a specified set of questions that elicit the same information from the respondents. Johnson and Christensen (2004) add that in the structured interviews, the questions are all written out, and the interviewer reads the questions exactly as written and in the same order

to all the interviewees. This is what happened during this study when interviews were conducted. Probe questions were posed when necessary to the participants in order for them to verify and clarify their answers. The interviews were used because the researcher believed that the questionnaires alone could not give the in-depth information.

The native language (Oshiwambo) was used to gather information from the parents who did not understand English. The data was later translated into English. A voice recorder, researcher's cell phone and handwritten notes were used to record the conversations during the interviews. The reason for using a voice recorder, researcher's cell phone at the same time was to rescue the researcher from missing information in case one was malfunctioning. The researcher got permission from the interviewees to use the voice recorder and the cell phone to record the interviews.

3.6 Pilot study

To ensure reliability and validity of the questionnaires and interview questions, a pilot study was carried out on the 33 Grade 10 learners, four teachers, one principal and one parent (the chair-person of a school board) at school X where the researcher is currently teaching. The school X is one of the schools that offer Grade 10 in the Onamutai circuit. Both instruments were tested on the same respondents. The reason for piloting the instruments was to determine whether the instruments were understandable and appropriate to the needs of the study in order to make some adjustments or retain them as they were (Dipoy & Gitlin, 2011). Both questionnaires

and interviews were tested on the same respondents as indicated above. During the pilot study the researcher did all the duties which she was expected to do in the main study.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data to determine which items needed to be discarded and which ones to be retained and/or improved. The only changes done after piloting were the reformulation of some statements in the learners' questionnaire which were not clearly understood (1.1, 2.1 and 2.2) and reduction of columns from five to three point scale (Agree, Not Sure and Disagree). The reason for reducing columns of extent of agreement was that the five point scale was confusing to both teachers and learners. During the analysis of the pilot study, the researcher found that some respondents ticked more than one answers for one question. The adjustments made after piloting the study positively affected the final instruments because the researcher did not experience misunderstood of the questions and statements during the data collection of the main study from both learners and teachers.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The letters of permission to carry out the study was granted by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and also by the Director of the Oshana Education Region (refers to appendices 3 and 4). After being granted permissions, the researcher also wrote letters to the school principals through the office of the inspector to request school permission and attached the approval letters from both the Permanent Secretary and the Regional Directorate.

Then, the researcher made appointments with schools and briefed the participating learners and teachers separately about the purpose of her visit and that of the study. During briefing sessions, the learners and teachers were asked to feel free to participate and were also assured that the information gathered would be used for research purposes only. Arrangements for interviews with the teachers and principals were also made on those days. Teachers and principals were given consent letters to read and sign before the commencement of every interview. All activities concerned with data collection were carried out after school hours. The researcher was also given the names of the school board chair-persons and their contact numbers by the principals, and then the researcher made appointments with them and visited them at their houses where interviews were conducted. Only one parent was found at school and interviewed there arranged by the principal.

Upon arrival at each school, the researcher randomly selected a number of learners and teachers from the CASS and list of teacher performance categories. Then the researcher briefly explained to both selected teachers and learners on how to answer the questionnaires. This was done to ensure that valid data were collected. At all 10 schools that were participated in the study, the questionnaires were left with the assigned teachers and were collected by the researcher after five days. At each school, interviews with teachers, principals were conducted individually in a separate room in order to promote trust and data confidentiality.

3.8 Data Analysis

The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used to sort out and analysis quantitative data. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used to analyze the data collected from the questionnaires for teachers and learners. Tables were used to present demographic information and also to illustrate the number of learners that accepted or rejected a particular view. For interviews, interpretational analysis was used in order to ensure that important constructs, themes and patterns emerged from the data (Galla et al., 1999).

The data analysis began with preparing the database containing all the data collected during the fieldwork. This was in form of completed questionnaires, field notes, transcripts and records from cell phone and voice recorder. Data collected was numbered and divided into meaningful segments. For example each question and the participants' response were separate segments. According to Gay et al. (2009), coding is the process of categorically marking or referencing units of text with codes and labels as a way to indicate patterns and meaning. Themes occurring most frequently were put together and discussed and became the major findings of the study. The Chi-square statistic was used to compare some of the research findings from the teachers and learners to find out whether there were differences in their responses regarding the factors and the causes of poor performance in examinations among the Grade 10 learners.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Before starting with interviews and filling out of the questionnaires, the researcher briefly explained the aim and objectives of the study to the participants. The teachers and principals were given the consent letters to read and sign to indicate their willingness to take part in the research. All Participants were also assured of confidentiality and that their responses would only be used for research purposes and would not be disclosed to any other people (American Psychological Association, n.d.). To ensure anonymity, names of participants were not required on questionnaires and schools were given letter names. Participation in this study was voluntary as no one was forced to take part. The participants were also informed of their right to decline or withdraw from the study any time they felt coerced or pressured from the questions asked. The research participants were assured that refusing to participate or withdrawing from the study would have no adverse effect on them.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research methodology used to collect the data from the participants. The research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, pilot study, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations were discussed. The next chapter presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study conducted in the Onamutai Circuit of the Oshana Education Region. The results are presented in accordance with the research objectives and include information collected using the questionnaires which were given to both learners and teachers in the schools that participated in the research. The researcher also conducted interviews with teachers, principals and parents. The main purpose was to find out their views on the causes of poor performance among the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit. The data from the learners' questionnaire is presented first followed by data collected via teachers' questionnaires. The last part presents the data collected from interviews conducted with teachers, principals and parents.

4.2 School characteristics

All the schools that participated in the study were rural schools. A total of 10 schools took part in the whole study, but only nine schools took part in completing the questionnaires, the tenth school lost or misplaced the completed questionnaires as indicated in the sample and sampling procedure section. Two schools refused totally to participate in both instruments (questionnaires and interviews). Nine schools that took part were Combined Schools and one was a Senior Secondary School. Combined Schools are those that accommodate Grades 1-10, while a Senior Secondary is a school which accommodates Grades 8-12. Three schools out of 10 had no electricity and the rest had electricity. Only one school among the visited schools had a library. It

seems that in most cases rural circuits have mainly Combined Schools rather than Secondary Schools due to the fact that the cost of secondary schools is burdensome.

Table 2 gives the total number of learners per school and number of learners who participated in the completion of the questionnaire.

Table 3: Learner participants per school

School name	Total number of Gr.10 learners	Frequency	
		Number	%
School A	70	24	13.6
School B	28	10	5.7
School C	73	24	13.6
School D	39	14	8
School E	47	17	7
School F	80	27	15.3
School G	84	23	13.1
School H	33	12	6.8
School I	81	25	14.2
Total	535	176	100

Table 3 shows that the highest number of learners who participated in this study came from school F and the lowest number were from school B. It could be that school F maybe is located far from other schools, hence it had a high number of learners.

4.3 FINDINGS FROM LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

4.3.1 Biographical Information of the learners

As indicated in Table 2, a total of 176 learners took part in filling in the questionnaire.

In the questionnaire, learners were asked to indicate their ages, gender and the distances they travelled from home to school every day.

4.3.1.1 Age of the learners

The ages of the learners who participated in the study ranged from 15 to 25 years as shown in Table 3.

Table 4: Learners' ages

Age groups of learners	Frequency	
	Number	%
15-16years	58	33
17-18years	87	49.4
19 -20 years	25	14.2
21-25 years	3	1.7
Missing	3	1.7
Total	176	100

Table 4 shows that of the 176 learners who participated in the questionnaire filling, 33% were between 15 and 16 years old, 49.4% were in the age group of 17 to 18 years old, 14.2% were in the age group of 19 to 20 years, 1.7% were 21 to 25 years old and 1.7% did not indicate their ages. The table shows that the majority of learners were in the age group of 17 to 18 years of age.

4.3.1.2 Gender of the learners

Out of 176 learners who participated in the study, 105 were female, 69 were male while two did not indicate their gender. This shows that there were more females than males in the study.

4.3.1.3 Distance travelled from home to school each day

Table 5 presents the data regarding the distance walked by learners to and from school each day.

Table 5: Distance travelled by learners from home to school

Distance from school	Frequency	
	Number	%
0-5km	86	48.8
6-10km	54	30.7
11-15km	15	8.5
15km and above	20	11.4
Missing	1	0.6
Total	176	100

Table 5 shows that 48.8% of the learners travelled a distance of 0-5km one way to school, 30.7% travelled 6-10km, 8.5% walked a distance of 11-15km, 11.4% travelled a distance of more than 15 km and 0.6% did not indicate the distance travelled. The reason of having learners travelled distances of up to 15km might be due to the sparsely populated rural areas.

4.4 LEARNERS' VIEWS OF THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE EXAMINATIONS

The Grade 10 learners were asked to indicate the extent (Agreed, Disagreed and Not Sure) to which they agreed with each statement regarding the factors they perceived as contributors to poor performance. The perceived contributing factors were: teachers' competencies, attitudes of learners toward learning, relevance of the curriculum and resources, learners' socio-economic conditions and the involvement of parents in their children's education.

4.4.1 Teachers' competencies

The results presented in Table 6 indicate how the learners rated their teachers in terms of their professional conduct and their competencies in their taught subjects.

Table 6: Teachers' competencies

Section	Statement	Responses							
		Agree		Disagree		Not sure		No answer	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1.1	Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects	126	71.6	17	9.7	27	15.3	6	3.4
1.2	Teachers use teaching aids to enhance subject understanding	56	31.8	48	27.2	61	34.7	11	6.3
1.3	Teachers express themselves well in English when teaching	113	64.2	34	19.3	18	10.2	11	6.3
1.4	Teachers display positive attitudes toward learners	91	51.7	42	23.9	36	20.5	7	3.9

Table 6 shows that 71.6% of the learners had confidence in their teachers' knowledge of the subject they taught. They agreed that teachers were knowledgeable about their subjects. About 10% disagreed, 15.3% of the learners were not sure, while 3.4% did not answer. The results agree with the views of Clarke (2005) and Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) who indicated that teachers need to be competent and knowledgeable

in their subjects to be able to explain the subject matter clearly and understandably to the learners.

Table 6 further shows that only 31.8% of the learners agreed that their teachers used teaching aids to enhance subject understanding while 27.2% of the learners disagreed and 34.7% indicated that they were not sure whether their teachers used teaching aids or not to enhance learners subject understanding. Six point three percent of learners did not answer. It can be seen that a total of 68.2% learners who chose disagree, not sure and those who did not answer had indicated that their teachers did not use teaching aids to enhance subject understanding. Moreover, this finding sent the message to principals, advisory teachers and inspector to conduct class visits and render professional guidance that help teachers to improve the quality of their delivery including the usage of teaching and learning aids. According to Hen (2008), a good teacher is one who always enters the classroom with teaching and learning materials. This implies that teaching and learning aids make it possible for a teacher to take one more child up to the standard than he or she did the previous day.

Table 6 also shows that 64.2% of the learners were of the opinion that the majority of the teachers in the Onamutai circuit did not have a problem of expressing themselves in English as a medium of instruction. This finding seems to contradict the view by Matjila (2004) who indicated that teachers in remote areas struggled to teach in English due to limited exposure. Despite the fact that a higher percentage of learners agreed with the statement that their teachers had no problem of expressing themselves well in English, it is possible that learners might not have been able to differentiate between good usage and bad usage of the English language due to the fact that they

are also not proficient in English. During the interviews, 10 teachers listed English proficiency as a major challenge for the teachers and learners at their schools.

Table 6 further shows that 51.7% of the learners agreed that teachers displayed positive attitudes toward them, 23.9% disagreed, 20.5% were not sure while 3.9% did not answer the question. These findings seem to indicate that the learners were pleased with the attitudes of the teachers toward them.

4.4.2 Attitudes of learners toward learning

Learners were asked to indicate their attitudes toward their learning. Their responses are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Learners' attitudes toward learning

Section	Statement	Responses							
		Agree		Disagree		Not sure		Not answer	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2.1	My attitude towards learning influences my performance	95	54	44	25	27	15.3	10	5.7
2.2	I lack discipline during lessons	41	23.3	102.	58	24	13.6	9	5.1
2.3	I spent most of my time on schoolwork	128	72.7	29	16.5	10	5.7	9	5.1
2.4	I only study during exam time	33	18.8	121	68.8	14	8	8	4.5

Table 7 shows that 54% of the learners agreed that their attitudes toward learning influenced their performance, 25% opposed the idea, 15.3% were not sure and 5.7% did not answer. Although a high percentage of learners indicated that they were aware

that their attitudes toward learning influenced their performance, the results did not show whether their attitudes were positive or negative as it was not even investigated. It might be possible that those learners who disagreed, were not sure or did not answer the question were not aware that their attitudes toward learning are important in determining how well or how badly they could performed.

On the point of lacking discipline during lessons, 23.3% agreed, 58% disagreed, 13.6% were not sure, while 5.1% did not answer. This finding contradicts what was said by the teachers during the interviews, that many learners in their classes lacked discipline. During the interviews one teacher remarked: “Learners tended to be aggressive during the lessons, they also did not like to do class works but instead they liked to make noises and left classrooms during lessons without teachers’ permission.” Even though only low percentages of learners (23.3%) indicated that they lacked discipline during lessons, the above remarks given by the teachers confirmed that learners lacked discipline during lessons.

Moreover, 72.7% of the learners agreed that they could improve their performance as they spent most of their time on school work, 16.5% disagreed, 5.7% were not sure while 5.1% of the learners did not respond. Although, the majority (72.7%) of learners indicated that they spent most of their time in doing school work, there is still a question of why they did not perform well in the national examinations.

With regard to only studying during the examination time, 18.8% of the learners agreed, 68.8% disagreed, 8% were not sure, while 4.5% did not respond. According to

Reid (2007) learners need to be intrinsically motivated to help them start preparing themselves in advance for the examinations and this is what exactly needed by the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit.

4.4.3 Relevance of the curriculum and resources

Learners' views on the relevance of the curriculum and resources at their schools are given in Table 8.

Table 8: The relevance of the curriculum and resources

Section	Statement	Responses							
		Agree		Disagree		Not sure		No answer	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
3.1	I enjoy the subjects that I do at school	149	84.7	15	8.5	9	5.1	3	1.7
3.2	We have enough textbooks in the library	57	32.4	53	30.1	63	35.8	3	1.7
3.3	We share textbooks	100	56.8	62	35.3	9	5.1	5	2.8
3.4	We do not carry textbooks home	31	17.6	125	71	14	8	6	3.4

In Table 8, 84.7% of the learners agreed that they enjoyed the subjects they do, 8.5% disagreed, 5.1% were not sure and 1.7% did not answer the question. According to Arends et al. (2001), if learners enjoyed the subjects they do at schools, then it means that such schools adapted curricula to their immediate environments to match learners' needs and interests.

With regards to the sufficiency of books in the school library, 32.4% agreed, 30.1% disagreed, 35.8% were not sure while 1.7% did not answer. Although 32.4% of the learners agreed that they had enough books in their schools' libraries, these percentages exceed the number of schools that had libraries. During the data

collection, only one school among the visited schools had a library unless they were referred to classes used as libraries. This finding sent a message to education fraternity that rural schools should receive priority when it comes to giving libraries.

Furthermore, Table 8 shows that 56.8% of the learners agreed that they shared textbooks, 35.3% disagreed, 5.1% were not sure and 2.8% did not answer. Legotlo et al. (2002) noted that the problem of sharing textbooks affects learners' learning and also demoralizes teachers. In addition, inadequate textbooks caused learners not to do their school work.

On the point of not carrying textbooks home, 17.6% agreed, 71% disagreed, 8% were not sure and 3.4% did not answer. Although the majority of the learners indicated that they carried books home, this did not seem to yield good result on examinations. Even though the learners took books home, they probably did not make use of them. According to the teachers, in their interviews, the learners were given a lot of domestic chores by their parents at home and as a result they did not get enough time to study.

4.4.4 Socio-Economic conditions of the learners

Learners' responses on their socio- economic conditions are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Socio economic conditions of the learners

Section	Statement	Responses							
		Agree		Disagree		Not sure		No Answer	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
4.1	I often go to school without eating breakfast (and this affects my concentration during lessons)	78	44.3	85	48.3	10	5.7	3	1.7
4.2	We do not have electricity to enable me study at night at my house	139	79	33	18.7	4	2.3	0	0
4.3	I do part time jobs to support myself and my family	49	27.8	98	58.7	22	12.5	7	4
4.4	Both my parents/guardians earn an income every month	30	17	128	70.7	13	7.4	5	2.8

Table 9 shows that 44.3% of learners agreed that they often went to school without taking breakfast, 48.3% disagreed, 5.7% were not sure, while 1.7% did not answer. The 44.3% of learners who agreed that they often went to school without eating breakfast seem to support Mwamwenda's (1993) view that many learners in rural areas tended to go to school without eating breakfast. This makes it difficult for them to concentrate on learning activities during lessons because their thoughts are just on how they can satisfy their hunger. This problem of not taking breakfast made one to suggest the extending of school feeding programmed or any other supplementary food programme to more schools including all learners, so that children from poor families can benefit and this will help them to concentrate in lessons.

Table 9 also shows that the majority (79%) of the learners agreed that they did not have electricity at their houses that might enable them study during the nights, 18.7% disagreed while 2.3% were not sure. The lack of electricity might impact negatively on the learners' desire to study at night and may consequently lead to reduced performance on school work.

On whether the learners worked part-time to support themselves and their families, 27.8% of the learners agreed, 58.7% disagreed, 12.5% were not sure and 4% did not answer. Avila and Gasperine (2005) are of the view that some learners in Sub-Saharan Africa including Namibia have to work as labourers to survive and also to pay their school fees. The researcher is of the opinion that working part-time leaves learners with less time for studying and sometimes causes learners' absenteeism from school.

When it came to the statement of whether the learners' parents or guardians earned a monthly income, 17% agreed, a very high percentage of learners (70%) disagreed, 7.4% were not sure and 2.8% did not answer. The high percentage of learners who disagreed with the statement was an indication that the majority of the learners in the Onamutai circuit came from a low social background. This also indicates that these learners might have difficulties paying undivided attention on their learning, because they might be pre-occupied with those things that could enable them satisfy their basic needs (Mwamwenda, 1993).

4.4.5 Parental involvement in the education of their children

The results presented in Table 10 show the learners' views regarding parental involvement in their education.

Table 10: Parental involvement in the education of their children

Section	Statement	Responses							
		Agree		Disagree		Not sure		No answer	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
5.1	My parents/guardians understand the value of education	129	73.3	27	15.3	16	9.1	4	2.3
5.2	I miss classes doing household work	39	22.2	117	66.5	17	9.7	3	1.7
5.3	My parents/guardians attend school meetings all the time when the school requests them	126	71.6	40	22.7	7	4	3	1.7
5.4	My parents/guardians assist me with school homework	97	55.1	66	37.5	10	5.7	3	1.7

Table 10 illustrates that a significant percentage (73.3%) of the learners agreed that their parents or guardians understood the value of education, 15.3% disagreed, and 9.1% were not sure while 2.3% did not answer. If the high percentage of learners (73.3%) indicated that parents understood the value of education, an unanswered question is still pending on why some parents did not offer effective assistance to their children' learning including homework as it is indicated in the statement 5.4 by the total of 44.9% of the learners.

On the statement which asked learners whether they missed classes to do household work, 22.2% of the learners agreed, 66.5% disagreed, 9.7% were not sure and 1.7%

did not answer. Some teachers indicated during the interviews that some learners absented themselves from school to do house work, such as cultivating and harvesting. When teachers were asked about some of the socio economic conditions that affect the learners' performance, one teacher insisted: "Poverty is killing us here, we experienced a lot of learners' absenteeism especially during the rain season because parents or guardians gave them work to do at home such as cultivating, harvesting, looking after cattle. Learners used to tell us (when asked why they were absent) that if they refused to adhere to their parents' rules than there were no ways to get their food because field work was only the source of their food."

On the point of parents/guardians attending school meetings, 71.6% of the learners agreed, 22.7% disagreed, 4% were not sure and 1.7% did not answer. This finding seems to indicate that most parents/guardians tended to turn up for teacher-parents' meetings to discuss learners' performance and other related matters. Perhaps this shows that parents viewed the education of their children as important.

Moreover, more than half of the learners (55.1%) indicated that their parents/guardians assisted them with school homework, 37.5% disagreed, 5.7% were not sure while 1.7% did not answer. This result seems to support the view by Hamunyela (2008) that in order for the school to educate the youth effectively, the parents and families should become fully involved in the process of educating the learners. This suggests good school-parent relationship that can lead parents to provide assistance and offer help with learners' school work.

4.5 LEARNERS' VIEWS ON MEASURES AND STRATEGIES THAT COULD PROMOTE HIGH PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS ON EXAMINATIONS

The results presented under this section show the views of learners regarding the strategies used by different stakeholders (teachers, friends and parents/guardians) in order to promote high performance among them.

4.5.1 Motivation and Support

Learners were asked to indicate who motivates them and what support they received in order to improve their performance in national examinations and class work. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Motivation and support received by learners from different groups in the community

Section	Statement	Responses							
		Agree		Disagree		Not sure		No answer	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
6.1	Teachers encourage learners to be serious with studies	167	94.9	7	4	2	1.1	0	0
6.2	Teachers give clear work instructions	134	74.1	26	14.8	11	6.3	5	2.8
6.3	Teachers give feedback on completed tasks	138	78.4	16	9.6	16	9.6	6	3.4
6.4	My friends and peers motivate me to study harder	132	75	31	17.6	8	4.5	5	2.8
6.5	My parents/guardians support and motivate me to work hard in my school work	155	88.1	11	6.3	5	2.8	5	2.8

Table 11 shows that 94.9% of the learners agreed that they received encouragement from their teachers to be serious with their studies, 4% disagreed and 1.1% chose “not sure”. This finding seems to confirm what was noted by Mushaandja (2002) and Nwihim (2007) that if a school wants to improve learners’ and teachers’ performance then attention should be given to their level of motivation and should be encouraged to expand more efforts in their work.

Learners were also asked to indicate whether their teachers gave clear work instructions during lessons. A high percentage (74.1%) of the learners agreed that their teachers gave clear work instructions, 14.8% disagreed and 6.3% were not sure while 2.8% did not answer. Despite the fact that the majority of the learners agreed that they were given clear work instructions by teachers, some learners contradicted themselves later in other comments where they indicated that some teachers did not give clear explanations and instructions.

Table 11 further shows that 78.4% of the learners agreed that teachers gave feedback on completed tasks (see Reid, 2007), whereas 9.6% disagreed and another 9.6% were not sure, the remaining 3.8% did not answer. In most cases, many educational stakeholders complained that teachers were hardly marked learners' work as a result, they could not give feedback on completed tasks. This high percentage (78.4%) of learners who indicated that teachers gave feedback on completed tasks is therefore, a certainly move that is to be applauded

On the effect of peers and friends on learners' performance, 75% of the learners agreed that peers and friends motivated them to study harder, 17.6% disagreed while 4.8% were not sure and 2.8% did not answer. The positive influence of peers on learning is also indicated by authors such as Wood (1994) and Fourie and Smit (2010). Wood (1994) and Fourie and Smit (2010) advise learners to form groups that couch and support each other in terms of learning.

Moreover, learners were asked to indicate whether they received assistance and motivation from their parents or guardians to work hard in their school work. A high percentage (88.1%) of the learners agreed and 6.3% disagreed. The assistance and motivation that learners receive from parents might help to improve their performance on school work and examinations. This finding supports the views of Singh et al. (2004) who states that parents should help children with school works to enhance their learning.

4.6 FINDINGS FROM THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

In each school, the teachers who were teaching Grade 10 were selected to fill in the questionnaire. The teachers were asked to indicate their age, sex, highest qualifications and their teaching experience in years. They were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement about the factors that contribute to poor performance, the attitudes of both learners and teachers toward learning and strategies to be used to improve learners' performance.

4.6.1 Biographical Information of the teachers

A total of 18 teachers completed the questionnaire. They also indicated their ages, gender, highest qualifications and their teaching experience.

4.6.1.1 Ages and gender of the teachers

The ages of the teachers who took part in the study ranged from 26 to 49 years. Their ages are presented in Table 12.

Table12: Teachers’ ages and gender

Ages	Male	Females	Total
26-30	2	3	5
31-35	5	1	6
36-40	1	1	2
41-45	-	1	1
46-49	-	4	4
Total	8	10	18
Total %	44.4%	55.6%	100

According to Table 12, out of the 18 teachers who participated in the study eight were male, while 10 were females. The table also shows their ages. The table shows that a total of five teachers were in the age group of 26-30 years, six teachers were in the age group of 31-35 years, two were in the age group of 36-40 years, while one was in the age group of 41-45 years and four teachers were in the age group of 46-49 years. It can be seen from the table that the majority of the Grade 10 teachers were female. According to the researcher’ observation as a teacher and also a HOD, generally, female teachers are not so strong in maintaining discipline in their classrooms if compared to their male counterpart, therefore there is a possibility for ineffective teaching to occur in their lessons which can contribute to poor learners’ performance.

4.6.1.2 Qualifications of the teachers

The teachers who participated in the study had different qualifications (see Table 13).

Table 13: Teachers' highest education qualifications

Qualifications	Number of teachers
Basic Education Teaching Diploma (BETD)	4
Diploma in Education for African Languages (DEAL)	1
Bachelor of Education degree (BEd)	2
Higher Education Diploma (HED)	1
Further Diploma in Management (FDMA)	2
Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)	3
National Higher Education Certificate (NHEC) + Diploma in Mathematics	1
BETD + Further Education Diploma (FED)	1
Bachelor of Education Honors degree (BEd hon.)	1
BETD + Mathematics and Science Teachers Extension Program (MASTEP)	2

Table 13 shows that all the teachers who participated in this research had teaching qualifications and were qualified teachers. Four of the teachers had the BETD, three had BETD plus other qualifications, two had B.Ed, one had BEd Honours, one had HED, two had FDMA, three had ACE, one had DEAL, and another one had NHEC plus Diploma in Mathematics. These findings indicated that Onamutai circuit had qualified teachers teaching Mathematics, African Languages and others had managerial skills. This finding seems to be contrary to the view held by Lindeke, (2006) and Matjila (2004) who indicated that there was a shortage of qualified teachers in schools in Namibia and in Africa as a whole. From the above presented results one can therefore, concluded that teaching qualifications cannot be regarded as a contributing factor of learners' low performance in the Onamutai circuit.

6.1.3 Teachers' years of teaching experience

The teachers had varied years of teaching experience (see Table 14).

Table.14: Teaching experience of the teachers

Teaching Experience in Years	Number of teachers
1-5yrs	4
6-10yrs	7
11-15yrs	3
16-20	2
20-24	2
Total	18

Table 14 shows that four teachers had 1-5 years teaching experience, seven teachers had six to 10 years teaching experience, three teachers had 11 to 15 years teaching experience, two teachers had 16 to 20 years teaching experience while another two teachers had 20 to 24 years teaching experience. Table 14 indicated that the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit were taught by experienced teachers (14) whose years of experience ranged from 6 to 24 years. The fact of having a high number of experienced teachers in Onamutai circuit as indicate by this results contradict Lippman et al.' (1996) view that rural teachers had less teaching experience when compared to urban teachers because experienced teachers tended to transfer to urban schools.

4.7 TEACHERS' VIEWS ON FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO POOR PERFORMANCE AMONG THE GRADE 10 LEARNERS

The results presented under this section are obtained from the questionnaire filled in by the teachers. The teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed (Agree, Disagree and Not Sure) with each statement.

4.7.1 Teachers' instructional strategies

The questionnaire had six statements on teachers' instructional strategies. The teachers were asked to choose from agree, disagree or not sure. Their responses to the six statements are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Teachers' instructional strategies

Section	Statement	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
1.1	The methods of teaching school subjects contribute to the learners' performance	12	2	4
1.2	I am teaching subjects that I am specialized in.	14	4	0
1.3	I am not comfortable with using English when teaching my subjects.	2	16	0
1.4	I prepare all my lessons in advance	14	4	0
1.5	I give a test after every chapter taught	15	3	0
1.6	Some teachers do not finish the syllabi before the final exam	8	3	7

Table 15 shows that 12 of the teachers agreed that their teaching methods contributed to learners' performance while two disagreed. This finding is in line with the views by Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) and Dimmock (2012). Even though the teachers indicated in the questionnaire that their teaching strategies contributed to learners' performance, it seemed as if they employed strategies that did not arouse learners' interests and they only employed one strategy in all topics they taught as shown by the teachers and principals in the interviews.

Fifteen of the teachers agreed that they were teaching subjects in which they were specialized in, while four felt that they were teaching subjects in which they were not specialized in.

When teachers were asked whether they were not comfortable with English when teaching their subjects, only two teachers agreed that they were not comfortable, while 16 teachers disagreed. This seems to indicate that the teachers did not have a problem of expressing themselves in English as the medium of instruction. This result supports what was revealed by 64.2% of the learners through the questionnaire that their teachers did not have a problem of expressing themselves in English. However, these findings are contrary to the views by Makuwa (2004) and Matjila (2004)' that teachers in Namibia's remote areas struggle to teach school subjects in English, the medium of instruction, thus English errors were transferred to learners from teachers.

Further, Table 15 shows that 14 of the teachers indicated that they prepared their lessons in advance while the remaining four disagreed. Preparing lessons in advance might help teachers to deliver lessons that accommodated all learners in the class.

A large number of the teachers (15) agreed that they gave learners tests after every chapter taught and only three disagreed. This finding seems to suggest that the teachers tried to find out whether learning had taken place by testing their learners frequently.

With regards to finishing the syllabi before the final examination, eight teachers agreed, three disagreed and seven were not sure. The need to complete the syllabus

well before the final examination date may lead to superficial coverage of the content which might lead to low learners' performance on the final examinations.

4.7.2 Attitudes of learners toward learning

The information presented in Table 16 shows the teachers perceptions of the learners' attitudes toward their learning.

Table 16: Attitudes of learners toward learning

Section	Statement	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
2.1	The majority of learners in my class are undisciplined	3	15	0
2.2	Most of my learners show interest in their school work	9	8	1
2.3	My class size is large resulting in behavioural problems.	10	8	0

Table 16 shows that the majority of the teachers (15) disagreed with the statement that their Grade 10 learners were undisciplined, while three teachers agreed. This finding seems to indicate that most learners in the Onamutai circuit were disciplined. This finding is contrary to the views expressed by the teachers during the interviews that their learners lacked discipline (see sub topic 4.10.2.4, p.).

Furthermore, nine of the teachers agreed that most learners in their classes showed interest in their school work, while eight disagreed and one teacher was not sure (see Table 16). Even though half of the teachers agreed that most learners showed interest in their school work, an almost equal number of teachers disagreed, and this create unclear picture regarding the learners interest in their school work

When teachers were asked if the sizes of their classes were large resulting in behavioural problems, 10 of the teachers agreed, while eight disagreed. Looking at the number of the teachers (10) who indicated that their classes were overcrowded, it seems that this finding opposed the view of Lippman et al. (1996) that rural schools are typical small if compared to schools in more populated community (urban schools). In many ways large classes are not effective as small classes.

4.7.3 Relevance of the curriculum and resources

Information given by the teachers on the relevance of the curriculum and resources used in teaching school subjects is presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Relevance of curriculum and resources

Section	Statement	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
3.1	All the subjects offered at our school are liked by the learners.	5	5	8
3.2	I always have adequate teaching and learning materials.	4	14	0
3.3	I use my reference materials in both preparation and teaching.	14	4	0

Table 17 shows that five of the teachers agreed that all the subjects offered at their schools were liked by learners. This finding is in line with what was indicated by Arends et al. (2001) and Clarke (2005) that curricula need to be adapted to the learners' immediate environments so that they might like the subjects offered at their schools. Another five of the teachers disagreed while eight teachers indicated that they were not sure.

On the availability of resources, 14 teachers disagreed with the statement, while four agreed that they had adequate teaching and learning materials. According to Makuwa (2004) the access to educational resources such as technology can greatly enhance the learning capabilities of students particularly those in isolated areas (rural) where educational resources are not available in their immediate environment. Therefore, the lack of teaching and learning materials may negatively affect learners' performance. The researcher supports Makuwa's view and adds that teaching and learning can be only enhanced if all learners have textbooks which they can also take home in order to use them for studying and doing homework.

Furthermore, 14 teachers agreed that they used reference materials when preparing their lessons and also when teaching their subjects. Four teachers disagreed with the statement.

4.7.4: Teachers' views on Socio-economic conditions of the learners

The results of the teachers' views about the socio-economic conditions of their learners are presented in Table18.

Table 18: The Socio-economic conditions of the learners as perceived by the teachers

Section	Statement	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
4.1	Some learners in my class come from poor families	14	2	2
4.2	Some learners in my class work as labourers after school to earn money or food	5	5	8
4.3	The home environment for many learners is not conducive for studying particularly during the night	13	1	4

Table 18 indicates that the majority (14) of the teachers agreed that some learners in their classes came from poor families, two disagreed and another two were not sure. This result seems to support what the learners indicated in their questionnaire when they were asked if they often went to school without eating breakfast and also whether they had electricity at their houses that would enable them to study during the night. In the case of going to school without eating breakfast, 44.3% of the learners had agreed with the statement. While 79% of the learners had also indicated that they had no electricity at their houses. During the interviews with the teachers, 13 teachers (see page 115) also revealed that most of the learners in the Onamutai circuit came from low socio-economic backgrounds, which made it difficult for parents to render help to their children's education activities (Legotle, 2005).

In addition, five teachers agreed that some of the learners in their classes worked as labourers after school to earn money or food. Another five disagreed and the remaining eight indicated that they were not sure. These findings seem to confirm what was revealed by the teachers during the interviews that some of their learners tended to be absent from schools to work as labourers or to work in the fields to cultivate and harvest Mahangu. Moreover, a large number of teachers (13) agreed that the home environment for many learners was not conducive for studying (see Table 18).

4.7.5 Parents involvement in the education of their children

The results presented in Table 19 show how the teachers rated parental involvement in their children's education.

Table19: Parental involvement in the education of their children

Section	Statement	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
5.1	Most of the parents do not understand the value of education	12	4	2
5.2	Parents give children work at home which cause learners to miss classes frequently	9	8	1
5.3	Few parents come to school to check the children's progress	15	3	0
5.4	Most parents do not attend parent teacher meetings	15	3	0

Table 19 shows that 12 teachers agreed that most of the learners' parents did not understand the value of education while four disagreed. This finding contradicts the learners' responses regarding the parents' valuing of education. About 73% of the learners indicated that their parents understood the value of education (see Table 10). The teachers' views that most of the parents did not understand the value of education was echoed in the interviews with them and the principals also. Parental involvement has been identified as an important predictor of learners' success (Lippman et al., 1996), therefore, schools should try by all means to build good relationship with parents.

Table 19, also indicates that nine of the teachers agreed that learners were given work at home, hence they frequently missed classes, eight disagreed and one was not sure. This result is in accordance with what was revealed by the teachers during the interviews that the learners tended to be absent from school to do field work. According to the interviewed teachers, learners who missed classes frequently were

the children that are orphaned and vulnerable (OVC), who stayed with guardians or grand-parents.

Table 19 further, illustrates that 15 teachers agreed that few parents came to school to check their children's progress while three disagreed. This is an indication that parents did not value the education of their children. Therefore, they did not see the importance of viewing their children's work.

With regards to the parents' attendance of the parent-teacher meetings, a significant number (15) of the teachers indicated that most parents did not attend these meetings. It seems that teachers' and learners' answers (see also Table 10) contradict each other on the attendance of parents to the parent-teacher meetings. Chi-square statistic (hypothesis 4) also indicated that there was a difference between the teachers' and learners' answers regarding the attendance of parents of the parent-teacher meeting.

4.8 MEASURES AND STRATEGIES THAT COULD PROMOTE HIGH PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS IN THE ONAMUTAI CIRCUIT

The results presented under this section indicate the views of the teachers about the strategies that could be used by the different stakeholders in order to promote high performance among the Grade 10 learners.

4.8.1 Motivation and Support

Teachers were asked to indicate how motivation and support were received by both learners and teachers in order to improve their performances. The results are presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Motivation and support needed by learners and teachers to improve learners' performance

Section	Statement	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
6.1	The principal always motivates learners to do their best	17	1	0
6.2	Learners and teachers at our school are appreciated through awards	13	5	0
6.3	Efforts are made by advisory teachers to conduct workshops for teachers	9	8	1
6.4	I use different teaching methods in teaching my lessons	17	1	0

Table 20 shows a very high number of teachers (17) who agreed that principals often motivated learners to study harder. This finding is in accordance with the views expressed by Nicodemus (2010).

Further, Table 20 indicates that the majority of the teachers (13) agreed that learners and teachers were appreciated by school managers through awards and price giving, while five disagreed. Although 13 teachers agreed that learners and teachers were appreciated through awards and price giving, during the interviews with the teachers, there were some teachers who complained that the teachers and learners were not appreciated for the job well-done by the school management. Appreciation through awards and price giving is regarded as extrinsic motivation that could motivate learners to study hard just because they know they will be rewarded.

A total of nine teachers agreed that efforts were made by advisory teachers to conduct workshops for teachers, while eight disagreed and one teacher was not sure. Advisory teachers' support is always needed to provide pedagogical support and guidance to

teachers on subjects' related matters, teaching strategies and the implementation of the curriculum.

Table 20 also shows that 17 teachers agreed that they used different teaching methods in their lessons with the aim of making every learner understand the subject content. Nonetheless this was not supported by the interviewed teachers and principals (see 4.9.2.3).

Lastly, the findings of the learners' and teachers' questionnaires found that both learners and teachers perceived negative attitudes of learners toward their learning; inadequate teaching and learning aids; low socio economic conditions of learners and lack of parental involvement in their children's education as contributing factors to learners' poor performance. In addition, the researcher selected four statements that have the same meaning from both learners and teachers' questionnaires to compare in order to see whether they have different perceptions. Their comparison is presented in the next section.

4.9 COMPARISON OF LEARNERS' AND TEACHERS' RESPONSE ON SELECTED QUESTIONS

Comparisons were made between some of the learners' and teachers' answers to see if there was a significant difference in what they viewed as the causes of poor performance among the Grade 10 learners. Their responses on four statements were compared. Three comparisons indicated that there were significant differences in the teachers' and learners' answers. These significant differences indicated that what is perceived by learners as contributing factors to their poor performance is different from the teachers' perception (see Table 22-24).

Table 21: Learners and teachers' answers about how learners' behaved during lessons

	Responses						Total
	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure		
	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	
Learners	41	39.9	102	106.1	33	29.9	176
Teachers	3	4.1	15	10.9	0	3.1	18
Total	44	44.0	117	117.0	33	33.0	194

The following hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square statistic to find out if there was a significant difference or no significant difference among the tested items.

Hypothesis 1:

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the learners' and teachers' answers about the learners' behaviours during lessons. Thus, the findings for both learners and teachers indicated that most learners in the Onamutai circuit were disciplined.

H_1 : There is a significant difference between learners' and teachers' answers about the learners' behaviours during lessons.

The Chi-square calculated value= 5.435 and a df =2 gives a p value of 0.066. The p value is greater than the cutoff value of 0.05, thus, we accept the null hypothesis (H_0) and conclude that learners' and teachers' answers were not different with regard to learners' behaviours during lessons.

Table 22: Learners and teachers' answers about the school-subjects that learners liked at their school

	Responses						Total
	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure		
	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	
Learners	149	139.7	15	18.1	12	18.1	176
Teachers	5	14.3	5	1.9	8	1.9	18
Total	154	154.0	20	20.0	20	20.0	194

Hypothesis 2:

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the learners' and the teachers' answers about the school subjects that learners liked at schools.

H_1 : There is a significant difference between the learners' and the teachers' answers about the school subjects that learners liked at schools (refers to statements 3.1 in both learners' and teachers' questionnaires).

The Chi-square calculated value= 34.954 and $df = 2$, gives the p value of 0.000. The p value of 0.000 is smaller than the cutoff value of 0.05, thus we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and conclude that the learners' and the teachers' answers were different with regard to the subjects that learners liked at school.

Table 23: Learners' and teachers' answers on whether learners missed classes or not

	Responses						Total
	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure		
	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	
Learners	39	43.5	117	113.4	20	19.1	176
Teachers	9	4.5	8	11.6	1	1.9	18
Total	48	48.0	125	125.0	21	21.0	194

Hypothesis 3:

H₀: There is no significant difference between the learners' and the teachers' answers with regards to the frequent missing of classes by learners.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the learners' and the teachers' answers with regards to the frequent missing of classes by learners.

The Chi-square calculated value =6.855 and a 2df gives a p value of 0.032. The p value is less than the cutoff value of 0.05, thus, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀) and conclude that the learners' and the teachers' answers were different with regard to the frequent missing of classes by learners.

Table 24: Learners' and teachers' answers about the attendance of parents - teacher meetings

	Responses						Total
	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure		
	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	Count	Expected Count	
Learners	126	117.0	40	49.9	10	9.1	176
Teachers	3	12.0	15	5.1	0	0.9	18
Total	129	129.0	55	55.0	10	10.0	194

Hypothesis 4:

H₀: There is no significant difference between the learners' and the teachers' answers about the attendance of parents of the parent-teacher meetings.

H₁: There was a significant difference between the learners' and the teachers' answers with regards to the attendance of parents of the parent-teacher meeting.

The Chi-square calculated value =29.588 and a df =2 which gives a p value of 0.0001. The p value is smaller than the cutoff value of 0.05, thus, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀) and conclude that their answers were different with regard to the attendance of parents of the parent-teacher meetings.

The comparisons were made among the four different statements from both learners' and teachers' questionnaires to see if there were differences between the learners' and teachers' responses on what is perceived to be the contributing factors of the Grade 10 learners' poor performance. However, three comparisons showed that there

were differences between their answers. These significant differences made the researcher to conclude that throughout this study, what is perceived by the learners as the contributing factors to their poor performance might be different from what is perceived by the teachers.

4.10 TEACHERS', PRINCIPALS' AND PARENTS' INTERVIEW RESULTS

This section presents the results obtained from the interviews with the 16 teachers, eight principals and six parents in eight of the 10 schools which participated in the study. Principals of School A and School G declined to participate in the study. Teachers from school A were also forbidden by their principal from participating in the study.

4.10.1 Pass rates of the eight schools

The first question on the principals' interviews asked them to indicate the Grade 10 pass rates of their schools for the past two years that is (2009 and 2010). Their responses are given in Table 25.

Table 25: Schools' pass rates of grade 10 learners for 2009 and 2010

Name of school	2009 Pass rates (%)	2010 Pass rates (%)	Variation (%)
School B	59.6	48.6	-11
School C	48.3	36.9	-11.4
School D	13.1	41	27.9
School E	38.6	45.2	6.6
School F	28.9	45.5	16.6
School H	34.5	51.8	17.3
School I	69.1	65.6	-3.5
School J	50	68	18

Table 25 shows that in 2009 only three schools managed to obtain 50% and above. The results improved slightly in 2010 because five schools increased their results while three other schools went down, but the number of schools passing with 50% and above remained three as in 2009. Two schools that performed well in 2009 also performed well in 2010 (school I and J) and the third school that performed well in 2009 (school B) dropped 11% in 2010.

4.10.2 Causes of poor performance in Onamutai circuit among the Grade 10 learners as perceived by teachers, principals and parents

A number of questions related to the factors that contributed to poor performance among the Grade 10 learners, the learners' and teachers' attitudes toward learners' performance and the strategies that could be employed to promote high performance of the Grade 10 learners were asked. The findings that emerged from the interviews with the teachers, principals and parents are presented under the following headings: poor English proficiency (teachers and learners); lack of resources; ineffective teaching strategies; negative attitudes of teachers and learners toward learners' performance; socio-economic conditions; lack of parental involvement and lack of motivation and support. These factors are discussed in the next section.

4.10.2.1 Poor English proficiency

During the interviews with the teachers, principals and parents, the majority (23) of the respondents rated poor English language proficiency as the major cause of poor performance among the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit. During the interviews with the teachers, the majority (10) of the teachers lamented that many learners in their classes could not express themselves well in English, and that they

could not even read something in English with understanding. One teacher when remarking on the challenges experienced in her teaching, said: “Most of our learners have language problem. They do not read something in English with understanding; they do not even construct sensible sentences. This indicates that they cannot answer questions in English.” Another teacher remarked: “Learners have poor English language. During teaching and learning process, learners do not understand what they were taught. This caused them not to understand the subject matter and as a result they could not answer examination questions because they did not understand what is asked or what the questions required them to do.”

During the interviews with the principals, four of them concurred with what was said by the teachers that many learners had problems in using English as a medium of instruction. The researcher is of the opinion that learners had limited English proficiency because they do not spoke English at home, with their friends or even using it when shopping.

The principals further indicated that the language problem was also encountered among some teachers. The principals noted that the majority of teachers who had problems in using English during instruction used the mother tongue (Oshiwambo) in teaching, with the aim of making learners understand the content and complex concepts. One principal remarked on the lack of English proficiency among teachers as follows: “The usage of English is a problem in both learning and teaching. Some teachers use their vernacular to teach their subjects because they cannot express themselves well in English. This kind of practice disadvantaged learners because when it comes to the examinations, they would be expected to answer questions in

English.” This finding seems to support Matjila (2004) who says that teachers in the remote areas of Namibia struggle to give teaching instructions in English. The researcher is of the opinion that the sub-standard grasp of English of the teachers influences learners’ English proficiency negatively.

This is contrary to what was indicated in the data collected through the learners’ and teachers’ questionnaires. In both cases (learners’ and teachers’ questionnaires) a high percentage of learners and teachers indicated that the teachers were comfortable with using English as a medium of instruction when teaching their subjects. Statement 1.3 in Table 5 of the learners’ questionnaire shows that 64.2% of the learners agreed that their teachers expressed themselves well in English when teaching. In the same vein, statement 1.3 in Table 14 of the teachers’ questionnaire also indicated that 16 teachers disagreed with the statement which said: “I am not comfortable with using English when teaching.”

4.10.2.2 Lack of resources in schools

The second major contributing factor to poor performance noted by the participants was lack of resources. Shortages of physical facilities such as laboratories, libraries, electricity, water and school hostels were experienced at some schools that participated in this study. During the interviews with teachers, one teacher remarked angrily: “Onamutai circuit is big, but we do not have even a single school with a hostel and we have a lot of children that are orphaned and vulnerable children who travel long distances to and from schools. At home these children had no one to look after them as a result they often came to school on an empty stomach. How can one expect them to do well at school?”

Moreover, nine of the teachers also identified the shortage of relevant textbooks and visual teaching aids such as computers, TV, overhead projects and others at schools as contributing to poor learners' performance. One teacher lamented: "Many learners did not have all the required textbooks, and sometimes a class of 35 learners was required to share five copies of textbooks. Yet they are expected to do well in examinations." Four teachers indicated that in worse situations, learners depended only on the notes provided by the teachers and no textbooks were available at all. One teacher remarked: "At our school, we mainly relying on "Excellent" textbooks bought by the school itself and one copy is shared among five learners, yet we are expected to have good performance."

In addition, nine teachers and four principals believed that the shortage of resources led to problems of low morale and lack of commitment by both learners and teachers. One teacher remarked: "The shortage of resources forced us to compromise the quality of teaching." When the principals were asked about the factors that contribute to poor performance of the Grade 10 learners at their schools, one principal insisted: "We are staying in the bush and we have no electricity. If we want copies we have to travel a distance of about 10 kilometers to the cluster centre to make copies. If we can talk the truth how many times can we manage to go there? Yet they are demanding quality delivery. Therefore, long distance between schools and cluster centre, lack of electricity are the main hindrance to our performance." Matjila (2004) concurs with the above finding. He argues that many schools do not have libraries, computers and internet which are essential in the learning process. Lippman et al. (1996) support

Matjila's view and say that learners need to watch English programmes on TV in order to improve their English usage.

Six teachers also suggested that learners needed to be exposed to educational resources such as books, electronic resources (TVs, computers, radios and others) in order to improve their academic performance. Five teachers suggested the need for electronic resources, while two principals and two parents complained that the issue of technology including TVs, radios and cell phones blocked learners' study time. One principal lamented: "Many learners at our school have cell-phones, and they used to chat to friends throughout the nights, as a result they ended up with no time to study or do their homework." One parent added the following remarks to the problem of owning cell phones among learners. She remarked: "Cell phones promote sexual relationship among learners which take up a lot of their study time." Another parent also complained that watching TVs unlimited used up learners' study time.

4.10. 2.3 Teaching strategies employed by the teachers

The principals and teachers were also asked to list the teaching strategies employed by the teachers when teaching and how these contributed to learners' performance. Five principals and seven teachers revealed that even though there were number of teaching strategies that could be used by the teachers that accommodated all learners' abilities, not many teachers applied them. The 12 educators (five principals and seven teachers) claimed that most of the teachers were just using one method in all topics they taught. Ten of the interviewed teachers argued that many teachers employed the teacher-centred approach which does not allow learners to be actively involved in the

lesson through asking questions, doing experiments and forming group work with fellow learners whereby they could discuss and share ideas about the topic(s). This view supports Makuwa's (2004) and Matjila's (2004) views that the majority of Namibian teachers hardly applied the learner-centred strategies due to laziness and lack of proficiency in English. Nonetheless, the principals and the teachers who were against the use of teacher-centred method regarded it as an ineffective method because it did not test the pre-knowledge of the learners and did not indicate where the learners needed help.

Parents also reiterated the point of ineffective teaching strategies used by the teachers. One parent said: "teachers are not serious with their calling, because some teachers do not prepare their lessons in advance." This supports what was said by the four principals that the teachers did not prepare their lesson plans in advance. One principal when remarking about the factors that contributed to poor performance said: "teachers do not want to plan, they just pick up their textbooks and go and teach." One parent gave an example of one incident of a teacher in the circuit who was caught without lesson plans for a month. This parent believed that teachers of that nature were just going to school to fulfill government working hours so that they will be paid at the end month even though they deserved no payment.

This parent was of the opinion that such teachers did not have the desired objectives that they wanted to achieve. Another parent remarked: "When I asked my children about what was taught at school, two of my children told me that some teachers' explanations are not clear, and this is an indication that teachers do not have knowledge about their subjects." This parent further complained that teachers were

just confusing their children rather than teaching them. Another parent said: “Teachers do not have adequate information on their subjects, thus have difficult to explain their subject matters.” According to this parent, this contributed to learners’ poor performance.

Further, three parents indicated that mal practices of the teachers such as giving little work to learners, not marking learners’ work on time and delaying feedback were all ineffective teaching strategies and contributed to poor learners’ performance.

Although the majority of the interviewed participants (seven teachers, five principals and three parents) indicated that teachers employed ineffective teaching strategies, this is contrary to what was indicated in the data collected through the learners’ questionnaire. A high percentages (71.6%) of the learners indicated that their teachers were knowledgeable about their subjects (See Table 6).

4.10.2.4 Views of the teachers and principals on learners’ performance

Seven principals indicated during the interviews that in most cases teachers had positive attitudes toward learners’ performance. According to these principals, many teachers felt sad when learners performed poorly because they understood that learners’ performance was a reflection of what they had taught during the course of the year. One principal remarked thus: “Most of the teachers feel very bad when learners failed, they want learners to perform well to show outsiders that they were taught.” Another principal replied as follows: “Nobody anticipated the poor performance of learners. Last year when the results were released and we obtained 48.6%, our teachers were shocked and one of them ended up being hospitalized

because it was not what she expected.” This finding supports what was said by (51.7%). of the learners (in the questionnaire) that most of their teachers displayed positive attitudes toward their performance (see Table 7).

Four of the eight principals said that the teachers taught the learners on Saturdays and also during weekends and holidays in order to improve the performance of their learners. Although seven principals and 51.7% of the learners indicated that the teachers displayed positive attitudes toward their performance, 11 learners indicated in other comments that some teachers did not care about their learners’ performance. They further indicated that instead of going to class to teach, teachers were just went there and told funny stories and sometimes played music in class with their cell phones. One learner wrote: “we are discouraged by some of our teachers because they do not like to be asked by learners who failed to understand some aspects presented during lessons or if teachers in question are answering learners, they used bad tone language.” One principal also said: “When learners failed, some teachers blamed learners.” This principal further said that those teachers (who blamed learners for failing) had forgotten that their own absenteeism, class cutting, harsh language, unpreparedness also contributed to learners’ failure.

The teachers were also asked their views about the seriousness of the Grade 10 learners towards their education. The teachers’ responses through the interviews seemed to support what they had indicated in the questionnaire. The teachers indicated that 50% of the learners showed seriousness with their education. The teachers further indicated that serious learners tended to come to class lessons on time; they were willing to learn even though the majority was hampered by English.

The teachers also indicated that serious learners tended to ask and answer questions during lessons. These learners even followed teachers to the staff rooms with previous question papers that they sometimes found themselves in order to be provided with answers or to be guided on how to tackle the questions.

However, the not serious learners tended to spend most of their time on things that were not related to school work. One teacher said: “The learners who are not serious do not do their school work, you reprimand them, you punish them but next day they do not improve. “Another teacher remarked: “To this type of learners, the atmosphere of not doing school work was the order of the day and the expectation for them to do well in the examinations will always be impossible.” One teacher referred to them as “alcohol and drug abusers.” Six teachers and two parents also indicated that not serious learners tended to be absent and dodged classes when there was a test to be written. One teacher remarked angrily: “Learners are not serious with their education, you teach them something, give them something to do, next day they cannot pass your test or even dodge your test.” This finding seems to be in accord with the views expressed by Makuwa (2004) and Legotle (2005), who note that the level of disruptive behaviours among learners in recent times had increased and became uncontrollable, and that learners tended to protest and refuse to do school work.

Although 68.8% of the learners disagreed with the statement that they only studied during the examination time, seven teachers indicated that the majority of the not serious learners only tended to start studying during the examination time which was too late. One teacher remarked on the not serious learners thus: “Learners are difficult

people to work with, they are not doing their work and they are playful and behave like the Grade 1 learners, who do not write examination.” These learners only become serious after August examination, which is too late. “Generally it is observed in many schools that learners did not want to learn even though some of their teachers had tried their best. The researcher is of the opinion that if learners can start to behave, come to school on time, do school work and start to concentrate in class as well as being serious with their studies, then their academic performance might improve.

4.10.2.5 Socio-economic conditions of the learners

According to the teachers’ interview results, many of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit came from a low socio-economic background and only a small proportion (29.3%) came from the middle class (see also Table 9 and 18). This finding is supported by the learners themselves. Close to 71% of the learners said that their parents or guardians did not earn a monthly income (see Table 9). When the teachers were asked about the socio-economic conditions that affected learners’ performance, 13 of the teachers pointed out poverty as the main hindrance to learners’ performance. One teacher remarked: “we have a lot of orphans and vulnerable children at our school and the majority of them are staying with grand-parents who are just depending on pensions grants.” Another teacher said: “Poverty leads learners to be quite in the class and sometimes makes learners to stop half way before reaching school because they look for wild fruits and roots to eat.” Mwamwenda (1993) indicates that hunger makes it difficult for learners to concentrate on learning activities because their thoughts are preoccupied with how to satisfy their hunger after school.

Furthermore, the teachers revealed that some of their learners were heading homes. When one teacher was asked about the socio-economic conditions that had a negative impact on the learners' performance, he replied: "The majority of learners who head homes are mentally affected by the situation and in most cases they are no longer coping with education." Teachers stressed that to head a home was not easy because it forced learners to work in the field during the cultivation and harvesting periods before coming to school and when they came to school, they were very tired and did not concentrate in lessons. This state of affairs negatively affected their performance.

The Teachers also indicated that some learners came from homes which experienced domestic violence, fighting, divorce and alcoholism. During the interviews, one teacher lamented: "At home learners do not do their homework because sometimes their parents or guardians are violent or they disturbed them when came home under the influence of alcohol." This view was also shared by one learner who wrote: "some learners lose concentration during lessons because they are just thinking bad things like assault and fighting that happened at homes."

In addition to domestic violence, teachers also mentioned that since Onamutai was a rural circuit, almost all learners came from houses that had no electricity. Therefore, it was difficult for learners to study at home especially during the night.

Six teachers also indicated that some of their learners were disturbed by the lack of school uniforms. One teacher remarked: "poverty is killing us here, how can one expect a Grade 10 learner to pass if he or she can come to school with torn clothes or come without shoes." This finding supports Hamunyela's (2008) finding that socio-economic disparities influenced learners' academic learning because learners who are

in discomfort pay less attention in lessons than learners who are not in discomfort. Some of the learners in this study were of the view that they were not well cared for. One learner wrote: “None of my parents paid my school development fund, except for my brother who sells wood to the community members in order to earn some money that enabled him to pay for my school development fund.” This implies that the academic performances of these learners were negatively affected by the parents’ low income. If parents cannot afford to provide their children with the needed education materials such as stationeries, textbooks and others that are needed for their children’s success (Onzima, 2010), then, their educational attainments will most likely be affected negatively.

Furthermore, three teachers revealed that some learners were on Anti Retroviral Virus (ARV) treatment, therefore, they hardly learned anything in the class because they were just counting the number of days they are left with. These learners sometimes experienced discrimination from the other learners and as a result were not free to actively participate in school activities. This had a negative effect on their performance and school work (Avila & Gasperine, 2005).

4.10.2.6 Lack of parental involvement in their children' education

All the interviewed teachers, principals and parents, indicated that lack of parental involvement in their children' education was one of the major contributing factors to poor performance among the Grade 10 learners at their schools. They indicated that the majority of parents did not understand the value of the parents being involved in the education of their children. When teachers were asked to what extent the parents were involved in the education of their children, one teacher remarked: "Parents do not really play the major role in their children's education due to lack of understanding the importance of the education. Only few women involved but not men."

When asked the factors that contributed to learners' poor performance, one parent said: "Parents lack understanding about the importance of education, because they do not give enough time to their children to study." Moreover, one principal said: "Parents do not properly supervise learners at home, they often leaving such responsibility on the shoulders of the teachers and they have no role to play in this regards."

Further, 11 teachers and five principals claimed that parents often did not come to school to check their children's progress (that is viewing their children's work and hearing from the teachers about the progress of their children). During the interviews with teachers, a question was asked about the extent of parental involvement in the education of their children. One teacher lamented: "Last week I instructed my learners to give their books to parents or guardians to check through and put their signatures, to indicate that they have seen their children's books, but only two books

returned signed.” This is an indication that parental involvement in the education of their children was very low in the schools studied. A better relationship should be fostered between the schools and the parents to enhance learner performance. On the other hand, parents could not sign their children’ books due to the fact that they might not know how to read and write, as a result they may not be able to sign.

Besides checking learners’ work, both parents and teachers claimed that many parents did not provide learners with basic needs such as enough food, lighting, learning aids like calculators, pens, pencils and others. When parents were asked about the role they played as parents in improving learners’ performance, one parent emphasized: “Parents should provide learners with basic needs such as food, school uniforms and learning materials.” But the provision of basic needs depends on the economic status of parents. A high number of learners and teachers indicated that many of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit came from low socio-economic background (see 4.10.2.5), thus, it is hardly for them to provide their children with basic needs. Teachers also complained that in most cases the majority of the parents did not turn up when invited to the teacher-parent meetings. It was therefore, difficult for the parents to know and understand the importance of their involvement in their children’ education because this information tended to be shared and stressed at teacher-parent meetings which they never attended.

Another point raised by the teachers that was responsible for the lack of parental involvement in the education of their children was alcohol abuse. One teacher said: “we use to be told by some of our learners that at home, none can take care for them because parents use to go to shebeens as from 07h00 up to midnight.”

4.10.2.7 Lack of motivation and support among learners and teachers

Through the interviews, a total number of 19 respondents (11 teachers, five principals and two parents) indicated the lack of motivation among learners as one of the causes of learners' poor performance. This finding from the teachers seems to support Fourie and Smit's (2010) views that learners do not learn if they are not motivated. The teachers felt that for their learners to excel, they needed outside motivators such as councilors, famous people in education to supplement the motivation they received from their teachers and principals. When probed further as to why learners needed outside motivators, one teacher replied: "Learners are more likely to accept the ideas of people whom they do not know. They are tired of us." However, some learners indicated that they were demotivated by some bored lessons. This might be due to lack of preparation of lessons in advance by the teachers as complained by some of the parents. In addition, about 12% of the learners claimed that their teachers did not mark their work on time and they were not given feedback on tasks done and this demoralizes them.

Although 50% of the teachers indicated that the learners and teachers at their schools were appreciated through awards, five teachers felt that there was a need for awards at schools to motivate both teachers and learners. Apart from motivation received through awards and price giving, three teachers believed that learners also needed to be encouraged to inculcate a spirit of friendship and peers motivation in order to mitigate low motivation among them. This finding supports Fourie and Smit (2010) who indicate that learners with similar interests might form social groups to coach and support each other in terms of learning and studying.

Based on the information collected through interviews with the principals, it was clearly indicated by the six of the interviewed principals that their schools were in dire need of inspections and advisory visits support. The data collection for this study was done in July-August months but only two principals indicated that their schools were visited by the inspector. This seems to support what was said by 10 teachers when asked to list the support strategies that might contribute to improving learners' performance. Both principals and teachers believed that the only way for the advisory teachers to know teachers' problems was when they visited their classes and observed them teaching. They further added that once the advisory teachers acquainted themselves with what was needed by the teachers and the challenges they faced, then they would know where to focus when conducting workshops or even render special help to needy schools. When probed by the researcher to shed more light on what they regarded as helpful workshops, five teachers singled out workshops that entailed interpretation of the syllabi, guiding teachers on how to set standard activities and also how to mark learners' activities. This situation needs to be attended to by the Regional Directorate, because advisory teachers guide and support schools and teachers to help improve the quality of service delivery which culminates in better performance of the Grade 10 learners.

Another point raised by four teachers when interviewed as a support method needed by the Onamutai Grade 10 teachers, was the exposure of teachers to the national examinations marking. One teacher remarked: "As far as I can remember up to today, there is no single teacher from the Onamutai circuit who participated in the national examination marking." Teachers were of the view that teachers who used to do

national markings were equipped with skills and techniques of teaching and setting activities including examination questions that enhanced their learners' performance.

Moreover, seven principals revealed the need for all school managers to do proper class visits regularly in order to improve learners' performance. When the principals were asked how often they provide professional support in their schools, one principal replied: "The policy on class visit indicates that each teacher must be visited at least once per term, therefore, I use to delegate my two Head of Departments (HODs) to class visit teachers who are under their supervision at least once per term. I believe that if teachers were well coached and take the given advices positively, then obviously the result will also be positive." It is therefore, of utmost importance for the principals and teachers to double their efforts in order to change their schools into centre of excellence that produce quality learners.

Another point raised by the three teachers as contributing factor to the poor performance was automatic promotion. Automatic promotion is a system implemented by the Namibian Education Ministry which promotes learners who repeated a grade at one phase for more than one time (for example a learners who stayed at upper primary phase [grade 5-7]for more than three years) or a learner who is over age and is in lower grade. One teacher insisted: "Learners are not willing (especially the over age ones) to study because they used to be transferred to the next grade although they did not meet the minimum requirements."

As was indicated by 10 teachers in the questionnaire, the sizes of their classes were large resulting in behavioural problems. Two of the interviewed teachers also raised up this point of overcrowded classes.

Moreover, another point raised up by two parents and three teachers as a contributing factor to learners' poor performance and have a negative effect was the influence of the media such as television and radio. Although nine interviewed teachers revealed that TV was one of the needy teaching and learning aids in schools, these two parents and three teachers complained that some of the programs and movies broadcasted by the two mentioned media promote negative behaviours among children that made them not to want to be guided or advised toward their learning.

4.11 Conclusion

The study found that the major causes of poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit were lack of English proficiency by both teachers and learners; lack of resources in schools; ineffective teaching strategies employed by the teachers; unseriousness of learners toward their learning; overcrowded classes; low socio-economic conditions of the learners; spending most of learners' time in field work; non-exposure of teachers to the national examinations marking; lack of proper regular class visits done by school managers; lack of parental involvement in their children's education and lack of motivation and support for both learners and teachers. In the next chapter the focus will be on the summary; conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, the conclusion and the recommendations arising from the study.

5.2. Summary

The study sought to find out the views of learners, teachers, principals and parents on the factors that contribute to the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit on the national examinations. It also sought to determine the views of the learners, teachers and principals about the attitudes of the teachers and learners toward learners' learning. The study also tried to identify measure and strategies that could be used by classroom teachers in teaching the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai Circuit to promote learners' high performance.

The following three objectives were addressed in this study:

1. To determine the views of learners, teachers, principals and parents about the factors that contribute to poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai Circuit.
2. To determine the views of learners, teachers and principals on the attitudes of teachers and learners toward learning.
3. To suggest measures and strategies that could promote high performance of Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai Circuit.

In order to seek answers to the stated objectives, this study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently. The study used numerical scores to present demographic information and also to illustrate the number of respondents (learners and teachers) accepted or rejected particular view, hence it had characteristics of quantitative study. Qualitative design was used for the interviews. Questionnaires with close-ended questions and structured interviews were utilized to collect data from the participants (teachers, principals and parents) (see Appendices 6-10).

The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used to sort and analysis quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the questionnaires for teachers and learners, while the interpretational analysis was used for qualitative data (interviews).

The following were some of the major findings of this study:

The shortage of resources was one of the major causes of poor performance in the Onamutai circuit. The shortage of resources manifested itself through the inadequacy of teaching aids, textbooks, the absence of libraries, hostels and electricity. The shortage of such resources made teaching and learning difficult which negatively affected the performance of learners.

The study found that though the majority of learners indicated that their teachers did not have a problem with expressing themselves in English during instruction, the

teachers, principals and parents were of the view that the teachers were challenged by the use of English as a medium of instruction.

The study also found that, the majority of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai Circuit came from low Socio-economic background. Their home environments were not conducive for studying as they lacked basic needs such as food, electricity and study materials.

The principals, teachers and parents indicated that lack of parental involvement in the education of their children was one of the major causes of poor performance in the Onamutai circuit. In addition, the majority of the parents did not seem to understand the value of education and as a result they did not take an active part in their children's education.

The study showed a contradiction between the principals and some learners' views on the attitudes of teachers toward learners' learning. The principals indicated that the teachers had positive attitudes toward learners' performance because they tended to feel sad when the learners performed poorly. While the learners indicated that the teachers did not care about their academic performance because some teachers wasted teaching and learning time by telling funny stories and playing music on their Cell phones.

5.3 The findings of this study highlight the following points

- Most of the learners came from low socio-economic background and the majority of them were staying with their grandparents.
- The teachers revealed that some of their learners were heading home which forced them to work in the field before going to school and when they came to school, they were tired and could not concentrate in the lessons.
- Principals indicated that their schools were in dire need of inspections and support.
- It was raised by the teachers that none of the teachers in the Onamutai circuit were exposed to the national examinations marking, hence, they were lacking skills and techniques of teaching and setting up standard activities.
- It was observed by the teachers that the majority of the Grade 10 learners only start to study during the examination time.
- Moreover, learners indicated that some teachers were just went to classes to tell funny stories and played music with their cell-phones.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings of this study can only be generalized to the Onamutai circuit and not to the whole region.

The study revealed that the majority of learners were of the view that their teachers were not struggling with the use of English as a medium of instruction. This can be attributed to the fact that to the learners, the teachers are always correct, even when wrong. The use of English as a medium of instruction seems to be a contributing factor that caused poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit.

The study found that most of the teachers in this study were just using one method in teaching all topics taught. According to the teachers, many teachers employed teacher-centred approaches which did not allow learners to be actively involved in the lessons, doing experiments and forming group discussions with fellow learners. It can be therefore, concluded that the use of ineffective teaching method (s) is one of the contributing factors to the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit.

The study also found that almost all the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai Circuit came from low Socio-economic backgrounds. Most of the learners came to school without having eaten breakfast and this affected their concentration in class. Further, some of the learners were orphans and the vulnerable, who were heading homes or living with grandparents. It can therefore, be concluded that home environments for the learners were not conducive for studying.

Lack of parental involvement was also identified as one of the major contributing factors to poor performance among the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit. The majority of the parents did not seem to understand the value of being involved in the education of their children. The teachers and principals claimed that the parents did not come to school to check their children's progress and listening from the teachers about their children's work. This caused low morale among learners which eventually resulted in poor academic performance. It was also found that both teachers and learners lacked motivation and support from the educational inspectorate and regional directorate. Therefore, the lack of parental involvement in their children's education,

the lack of motivation and support from the regional directorate and inspectorate contribute to poor performance of the Grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit.

5.5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made that could be implemented to alleviate the poor performance of the Grade 10 learners on the national examinations:

1. Teachers should use different teaching strategies depending on the subject matter and topic being taught. This arouses learners' interest in the subject and fosters a better understanding of the topics covered.
2. English proficiency programme should be offered on a continuous basis to teachers in order to improve their use of English as medium of instruction. Teachers and learners should be encouraged to read newspapers, novels, short stories and watch educative TV programmes in order to improve their English proficiency.
3. The Ministry of Education needs to build school hostels in the Onamutai circuit to accommodate learners who travel long distances such as orphans and vulnerable children, who have no one to look after them at home.
4. The circuit should introduce support programmes such as the feeding programme, home work assistance and peer tutoring programmes for the orphans and vulnerable children. The support programmes should also help the needy learners with physical resources needed for their learning such as supplementary textbooks and emotional support such as counseling where there is a need.

5. Parents need to be encouraged to attend the teacher-parent meetings to understand the value of education and the need for their involvement in the education of their children. This will enable them to supervise their children to study at home.
6. Different famous people in the community including inspectors of education, governors and councilors need to visit schools to motivate learners to take their studies seriously.
7. Advisory teachers should visit each school in the Onamutai circuit at least once per year, so that they can acquaint themselves with what is needed by teachers and the challenges they face. This will help them to know what to include in teachers workshops.
8. Further researches are necessary and should focus on a variety of possible areas raised in this study such as:
 - a) The impact of English proficiency by teachers on learners' performance.
 - b) Teaching strategies that can be employed by teachers in both rural and urban schools in order to improve learners' performance.
 - c) Discipline procedures used by teachers in Namibia and the impact on learners.

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Appendix 1: Letter requesting permission

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Private Bag 13301, 140 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pionierspark, Windhoek, Namibia



15 October 2010

To

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
P/Bag 13186
Windhoek

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Request for permission to conduct educational research study in Onamutai circuit

This letter serves to inform your office that Ms. Sicilie Namupala, is a registered Masters student at the University of Namibia since 2008 to date. Part of the university requirement is that the student must do research in his/her area of interest. Her topic is *"Factors that contribute to poor performance among Grade 10 learners in Onamutai Circuit"*. She needs to collect the data from various schools in the stated school circuit. In light of this, please grant her permission to collect the data as required.

Thank you very much for your co-operation in this regard.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HM Kapenda', written over a horizontal line.

Dr HM Kapenda
Co-supervisor
Lecturer Faculty of Education, UNAM

Tel: 061-06 3642

Fax: 061- 206 3980

Email: hkapenda@unam.na



Appendix 2: Permission request from the researcher

Cell: 0811287965

P.O Box 208,

E-mail: nalweendoo@yahoo.co.uk

Oshakati

Enquiries: S Namupala

13 May 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research at your school, I am already granted the permission by the permanent secretary and regional directorate (see the attached copies). I am currently enrolled in the Master of Education degree program at the University of Namibia and I am in the process of writing my Master's thesis. My research topic is: *"Factors that contribute to poor performance among grade 10 learners in Onamutai circuit"*.

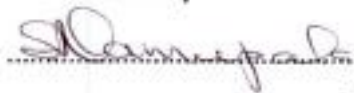
The study is only targeting the 13 schools offer grade 10 in the circuit. It will be done through questionnaires (for grade 10 teachers and learners), interviews (with teachers, principal and some members of school board). As it stated in both letters from Permanent secretary and regional Director, I also want to assure your good office that no classes will be interrupted during data collection process as all the activities will be carried out after school hours. Moreover, let me also assure you that information collected/research results will be held in strictest confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes.

Although there is no specific dates set up this time around, I am expected to start soon on the second term of this year, once the research schedule is provided by my supervisors. Other related information will be revealed when I visit your school.

I would be happy to answer any question or concern that you have in whatever means.

Thank you

Yours faithfully



Sicillie Namupala

Researcher

Appendix 3: Consent letter

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

University of Namibia consent to participate in research titled: Factors that contribute to poor performance among Graded 10 in the Onamutai Circuit of the Oshana Education Region. You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Sicilie Namupala a Master of Education Degree student from the Department of Educational Foundation and Management at the University of Namibia. The results of the study will contribute to the thesis degree. You are selected to participate in the study because you are one of the Onamutai Educational stakeholders.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

Is to determine the factors that contribute to poor performance and also the causes of poor performance among graded 10 learners in the Onamutai Circuit.

PROCEDURES:

The information gathered will be used in the thesis. No named or addresses will be disclosed. All the information obtained in the study will remain confidential. Besides the researcher herself, only her supervisor will have access to information.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAW

Participation is voluntary and if you wish to withdraw, you can do it without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to any questions you do not want to answer. There will be no payment for the participation.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCHER

If you have any questions or concern about the research, please feel free to contact Sicilie Namupala at 0811287965. E-mail address Nalweendoo@yahoo.co.uk / namupalas@iway.na home address ERF No.4608 Four Square Street, Valombola Ongwediva. You can also contact my supervisors Prof. C.D. Kasanda and Dr H.M. Kapenda, Faculty of Education, Department of Mathematics and Science Private Bag 13301, Windhoek Namibia, Tel No.: 264-61-2063726. E-mail address: hkasanda@unam.na / hkapenda@unam.na.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

I confirm that I have read and understand the above information for the study. I hereby consent voluntary participated in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE:_____

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

Appendix 4: Permission letter from Permanent Secretary



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PROGRAMMES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Tel: 264 61 2933200
Fax: 264 61 2933922
E-mail: mshimho@mec.gov.na
Enquiries: MN Shimbopileni
File: 11/2/1

Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
NAMIBIA
22 October 2010

Ms Sicilie Namupala
P. O. Box 208
OSHAKATI

Dear Ms Namupala

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT 13 SCHOOLS IN OSHANA REGION

Your letter dated 13 October 2010 requesting permission to conduct a research at thirteen (13) secondary schools in Oshana Region, has reference.

Kindly be informed that the Ministry does not have any objection to your request to carry out a research project at the schools concerned.

Nevertheless, you are advised to approach the Regional Council Office, Directorate of Education, for permission to go into the schools. It is advisable also to have schools you intend to visit, identified already before you approach the regional office for them to know which schools you intend to visit. This will enable them to coordinate information to the schools concerned.

Kindly take note that the research activities should not interfere with the normal school programmes, and participation should be on a voluntary basis.

By copy of this letter the Regional Council Office: Directorate of Education is made aware of your request.

Yours faithfully

A Ilukena

PERMANENT SECRETARY

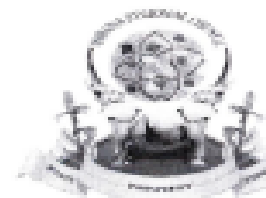
cc: Regional Director: Oshana Education Region



Appendix 5: Permission letter from the Oshana Region Directorate



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
Aspiring to Excellence in Education for All

Tel: 065-230057
Fax: 065 – 230035
E-mail: otrc_physical_science@yahoo.co.uk
Enquiries: Maria Udjombala
Ref 12/2/1
To
Ms Secilie Namupala
Box 208
Oshakati

Private Bag 5518
Oshakati, NAMIBIA

9 November 2010

Dear Ms Namupala

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
STUDY IN ONAMUATI CIRCUIT**


Your letter dated 13 October 2010 regarding the above mentioned subject has a reference.

The Office of the Permanent Secretary has granted you permission to conduct educational research in the schools in the Onamutai Circuit, Oshana Region.

However, please kindly take note that the research activities should not interfere with the normal school programmes and participation should be on a voluntary basis.

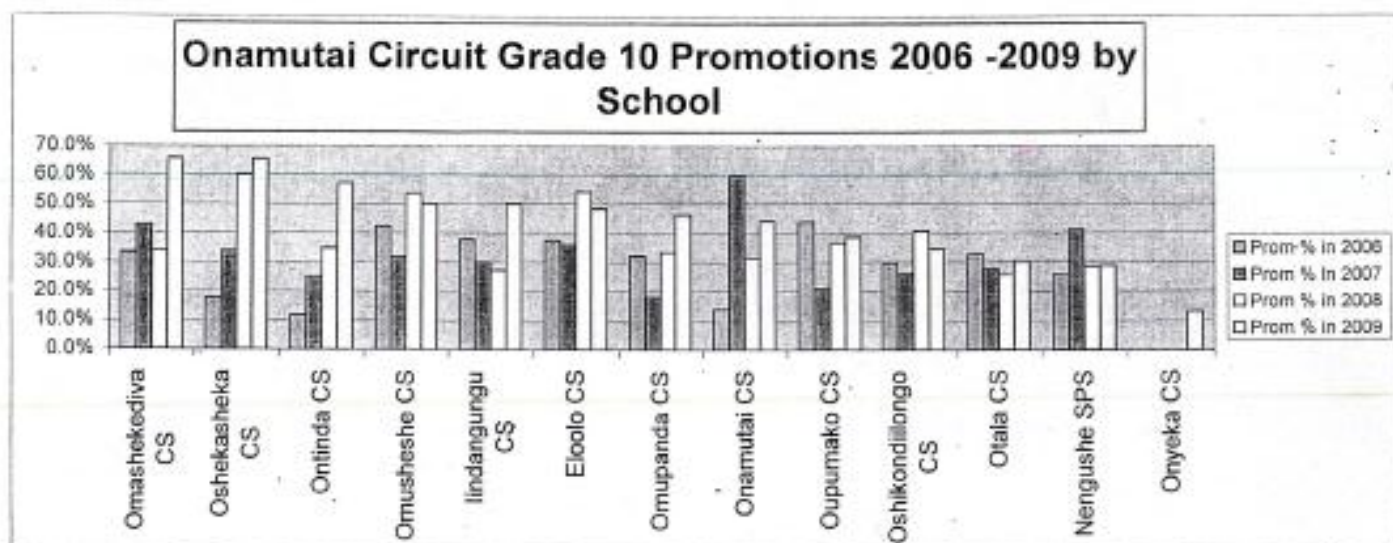
We wish you the best of luck in with your studies and hoping that your findings will be shared with other stakeholders in the circuit, region and beyond.

Yours Sincerely


Mrs Dutte N. Shinyemba
Director of Education
Oshana Region



Appendix 6: Onamutai Circuit Grade 10 promotions 2006-2009 by schools



Ranking	Code	School	Prom % in 2002	Prom % in 2003	Prom % in 2004	Prom % in 2005	Prom % in 2006	Prom % in 2007	Prom % in 2008	Prom % in 2009	% Not Prom	Prom	Not Prom	Total	Increase/decrease	Circuit
1	47	Omashekediya CS	67.6%	25.3%	52.5%	34.1%	33.3%	42.7%	34.0%	66.6%	34.4%	40	21	61	31.6%	ONAMUTAI
2	36	Oshakashaka CS	33.3%	43.5%	69.8%	49.2%	17.7%	33.8%	60.0%	66.4%	34.6%	53	28	81	6.4%	ONAMUTAI
3	33	Ontinda CS				43.8%	11.9%	25.0%	34.8%	51.1%	42.9%	24	18	42	22.3%	ONAMUTAI
4	19	Omusheshe CS	6.0%	18.4%	25.0%	56.6%	42.4%	32.0%	53.7%	50.0%	50.0%	20	20	40	-3.7%	ONAMUTAI
5	24	lindangungu CS	57.6%	22.5%	26.2%	54.1%	37.8%	30.0%	27.4%	50.0%	50.0%	22	22	44	22.6%	ONAMUTAI
6	13	Elidolo CS	49.2%	38.9%	40.9%	68.3%	37.5%	35.9%	54.1%	46.3%	51.7%	43	46	89	-5.7%	ONAMUTAI
7	15	Omupanda CS	43.3%	45.2%	38.6%	46.7%	32.3%	18.0%	33.3%	42.2%	53.8%	18	21	39	12.8%	ONAMUTAI
8	22	Onamutai CS	59.0%	23.1%	26.4%	48.3%	13.7%	59.7%	31.3%	44.1%	55.9%	30	38	68	12.8%	ONAMUTAI
9	51	Oupumako CS	36.0%	18.5%	44.4%	47.2%	43.8%	21.1%	36.6%	36.6%	61.4%	17	27	44	2.1%	ONAMUTAI
10	26	Oshikondilongo CS	42.2%	21.2%	15.0%	42.3%	29.7%	26.2%	40.5%	34.5%	65.5%	19	36	55	-6.0%	ONAMUTAI
11	21	Otala CS	31.9%	39.5%	26.2%	41.9%	32.7%	27.9%	25.6%	30.4%	69.6%	17	39	56	4.8%	ONAMUTAI
12	38	Nengusha SPS	4.6%	9.6%	26.7%	38.1%	25.0%	41.3%	28.6%	26.9%	71.1%	41	101	142	0.3%	ONAMUTAI
13	66	Onyeka CS								12.1%	66.9%	8	53	61	13.1%	ONAMUTAI
		Total	39.2%	27.9%	35.5%	47.6%	29.3%	32.8%	36.3%	42.8%	57.2%	352	470	822	112.5%	

Appendix 7: Questionnaire for learners

Introduction

My name is Sicilie Namupala a student doing Masters in Education Degree at UNAM.I am doing a research to determine the views of learners, teachers, principals, parents and circuit inspector regarding factors that contribute to learners' poor performance. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Please answer questions individually and don't discuss them with other learners. Do not write your name on this paper.

SECTION A: Biographic information

1. Name of school: _____

2. Age_____

3. Sex: Male /Female _____

Please mark the appropriate box with a tick (✓).

5. Distance from home to school

0-5km	
6-10 km	
11-15km	
More than 15km	

SECTION B: Learners' perceptions of the factors that contribute to poor performance of grade 10 learners. Indicate with a cross (x) the extent to which you agree with the statement.

1. **Teachers' competencies**

Statement.	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
1.1 Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects			
1.2 Teachers use teaching aids to enhance subject understanding.			
1.3 Teachers express themselves well in English when teaching.			
1.4 Teachers display positive attitudes towards learners.			

2. **Attitude of learners towards learning**

Statement.	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
2.1 My attitudes toward learning influence my performance.			
2.2 I lack discipline during lessons.			
2.3 I spend most of my time on school work.			
2.4 I only study during exam time.			

3. Relevance of Curriculum and Resources

Statement.	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
3.1 I enjoy the subjects that I do.			
3.2 We have enough textbooks in the library.			
3.3 We share textbooks.			
3.4 We do not carry textbooks home.			

4. Socio-Economic conditions of the learners

Statement.	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
4.1 I often go to school without eating breakfast (and this affects my concentration during lessons).			
4.2 We do not have electricity to enable me to study at night at my home.			
4.3 I do part-time jobs to support myself and my family.			
4.4 Both my parents/guardians earn income every month			

5. Parents involvement in education

Statement.	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
5.1 My parents /guardians understand the value of education.			
5.2 I miss classes doing household work.			
5.3 My Parents/guardians attend school meetings all the time when the school request them.			
5.4 My parents/guardians assist me with school homework.			

6. Motivation and support

Statement.	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
6.1 teachers encourage me to be Serious with studies.			
6.2 Teachers give clear work Instructions.			
6.3 Teachers give feedback on completed tasks.			
6.4 My friends and peers motivate me to study harder.			
6.5 My parents/guardians support and motivate me to work hard in my school work.			

Any other comments:

.....

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THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.

Appendix 8: Questionnaire for teachers

Introduction

My name is Sicilie Namupala a student doing Masters in Education Degree at UNAM. I am doing a research to determine the views of learners, teachers, principals, parents and circuit inspector regarding factors that contribute to poor performance among grade 10 learners. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Your age_____ 2. Your Sex_____
3. Highest Educational Qualification_____
4. Teaching Experience (Number of years)_____

SECTION B: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO POOR PERFORMANCE AMONG GRADE 10 LEARNERS.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below by ticking (✓) one box only.

1. 1 Teachers' instructional strategies

Statement.	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
1.1 The methods of teaching school subjects contribute to learners' performance			
1.2 I teach subjects that I am specialized in.			
1.3 I am not comfortable with using English when teaching my subjects.			
1.4 I prepare all of my lesson plans in advance.			
1.5 I give a test after every chapter taught.			
1.6 Some teachers do not finish the syllabi before the final exam			

2. Attitude of learners toward learning

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
2.1 The majority of learners in my class are in disciplined.			
2.2 Most of my learners show interest in their school work.			
2.3 My class size is large resulting in behavioural problems.			

3. Relevance of curriculum and resources

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
3.1 All the Subjects offered at our school are liked by the learners.			
3.2 I always have adequate teaching and learning materials.			
3.3 I use many reference materials. In both preparation and teaching.			

4. Socio economic conditions

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
4.1 Some learners in my class come from poor families.			
4.2 Some learners in my class work as labourers after school to earn money or food.			
4.3 The home environment for many learners is not conducive for studying.			

5. Parents involvement in education

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
5.1 Most of the learners' parents do not understand the value of education.			
5.2 Parents give children work at home which cause them to miss classes frequently.			
5.3 Few parents come to school to check their children's progress.			
5.4 Most parents do not attend the parent-teacher meetings.			

6. Motivation and support

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
6.1 The principal always motivates learners to do their best.			
6.2 Learners and teachers at our school are appreciated through awards			
6.3 Efforts are made by advisory teachers to conduct workshops for teachers.			
6.4 I use different teaching methods in teaching my lessons.			

Any other comments.-----

Thank you so much for your time.

Appendix 9: Interview questions for teachers

Introduction

My name is Sicilie Namupala a student doing Masters in Education Degree at UNAM. I am doing a research to determine the views of learners, teachers, principals, parents and circuit inspector regarding factors that contribute to poor performance among grade 10 learners. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

1. What are the factors contributing to poor performance of grade 10 learners in the Onamutai circuit?

2. (a). What teacher strategies contribute to learners' better performance?

(b) Explain how these contribute to learners' performance.-----

(c).What challenges do you experience in your teaching?

(d).How do you overcome these challenges?

3. How serious do the grade 10 learners take their education? Serious ----- Not serious-----Very serious-----

Motivate your answer.

4. What are the socio economic conditions that affect learners' performance?

5. What challenges do you face in teaching learners from different economic backgrounds?

6. To what extent are parents involved in the education of their children?

7. What role(s) should parents play in ensuring better learner performance in the Onamutai circuit?

8. In your opinion, what support strategies may contribute to improving learners' performance in the Onamutai circuit?

Why?.....
.....
.....

Appendix 10: Interview questions for principals

Introduction

My name is Sicilie Namupala a student doing Masters in Education Degree at UNAM. I am doing a research to determine the views of learners, teachers, principals, parents and circuit inspector regarding factors that contribute to poor performance among grade 10 learners. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

1. What are the pass rates for the grade 10 learners in your school in the previous two years?

2. What factors contribute to poor performance of grade 10 learners at your school/ circuit?

3 How do teacher strategies contribute to learners' performance?

4. What are the attitudes of teachers toward learner performance in your school?

5. What has the school done to improve learners' performance at grade 10 level?

6. What professional supports (e.g. class visits, inspections and advisory visits) exist in your school for grade 10 classes?

7. How often are these professional supports, carried out?

8. What impact do they have on learners' results?

9. In your view, what can parents and teachers do to improve learners' performance in school subjects?

Appendix 11: Interview questions for parents

Introduction

My name is Sicilie Namupala a student doing Masters in Education Degree at UNAM. I am doing a research to determine the views of learners, teachers, principals, parents and circuit inspector regarding factors that contribute to poor performance among grade 10 learners. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

1. What are the factors which contribute to learner performance in the Onamutai circuit?

2. As a parent what is your role in improving learner performance in the Onamutai circuit?

3. What is the role of the school development committee in improving the grade 10 learners' performance in the Onamutai circuit?

4. In your opinion, what should the schools do to improve learners' performance?

Thank you for your help