EXPERIENCES OF ADULT LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME: A CASE OF UPPER PRIMARY PHASE IN OMUSATI REGION NAMIBIA.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of the adult learners with visual impairment of Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) programme in the Omusati Region. This research emanated from the assumption that a study is needed to inform stakeholders on how the AUPE programme may be implemented to provide inclusive and accessible quality education to the adult learners with visual impairment.

Ten (10) adult learners with visual impairment volunteered to participate in this study. A multistage sampling of purposive sampling and intrinsic case sampling was employed to select a desired sample. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and naturalistic observations. Using the interpretative phenomenological analysis method, data was grouped and categorised into themes to form meaningful patterns of the study findings. The study found the learning environment to be unconducive in several ways: **(a)** the programme lacked assistive devices and learning materials; **(b)** the relevant offices (i.e. district, regional and national offices) were not supportive enough of the literacy centres; and **(c)** the learners' challenges outweighed the best practices, elsewhere.

The study recommended to turn the presented challenges into opportunities for the program to provide quality, inclusive education to adult learners with visual impairment. It recommended future research on the assessment of the quality assurance of the adult literacy programme. It also recommended further study on the quality of life and livelihood for adult learners with visual impairment who completed the adult literacy programme.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents. My late father was a master in his own right. He is remembered for his ingenuity, hard work and commitment. The end-product of this study resonates a zeal and perseverance of my dear mother. She took good care of me with limited resources in trying times from the humble beginning.

This piece of work is further dedicated to Nangula (my spouse) for her unwavering support and encouragement; and to my bundles of joy including Grace, Angie Jr, Ndina and Nancy, whose presence motivated me to put more extra effort in my studies.

DECLARATIONS

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Waldheim Angula Uusiku ....

Name of student Signature Date

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

AUPE	Adult Upper Primary Education
CLC	Class/ Community Literacy Committee
NLPN	National Literacy Programme of Namibia
ASDSE	Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment
DABE	Directorate of Adult Basic Education
DAE	Directorate of Adult Education
DEO	District Education Officer
DST	District Support Team
EFA	Education for All
FLP	Family Literacy Programme
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
LLL	Life-long Learning
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NFVI	Namibia Federation of Visually Impaired
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSA	National Statistics Agency
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RPPD	Research, Planning and Programme Development
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinators
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the orientation to the study and gives the description of the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance, and limitation of the study as well as the definition of terms.

1.1. Orientation and background of the study

The role of adult education is critical in the development of society, thus as a signatory to international commitments such as Education for All (EFA), the United Nations (UN) Literacy Decade, the Millennium Development Goals, and Declaration of Human Rights, Namibia has an obligation to provide a good quality education that improves the life of all its citizens (UNESCO, 1994).

Whereas the third goal of EFA affirms that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes; the fourth goal is emphatic on equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport & Culture [MBESC], 2003). This proclamation is extended to the adult learners with visual impairment.

As part of the National Literacy Programme of Namibia (NLPN), the Directorate of Adult Basic Education (DABE) was mandated with the task of providing and promoting basic literacy and numeracy skills to adult people (MBESC, 2003). A research study by Bhola (1996) showed the need for a programme of lifelong learning after graduating from the adult literacy programme, in Namibia. The NLPN was evaluated three times, first in 1994, secondly in 1999 and thirdly in 2008. The first two evaluations recommended the development of post-literacy programme including the Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) programme (DAE, 2009).

The Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) through the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE) introduced AUPE as an extension programme for NLPN. The DAE responded to the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education which propagated for the inclusion of all learners in equitable quality education, and the first intake of the adult learners with visual impairment was accommodated in the programme (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2013).

The report by the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) shows that the blind and visually impaired form the highest proportion of people without formal education in Namibia (NSA, 2016). Further, the report indicates that the Omusati region have the highest number of people with disabilities (n=15,230), of which 18.2% were people with visual impairment. Based on the NSA report, several adult literacy classes at three different places in Omusati region including the villages of Oneeya, Omaandi and Otamanzi were established to address the issue of uneducated persons with disabilities in rural areas. Twelve (12) adult learners with visual impairment have been attending adult literacy classes at the mentioned places. It was at these three venues this study was conducted. It pursued the assumption that the highest proportion of persons with disabilities with no background of formal education were those with blindness and visual impairment.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Notwithstanding the fact that the AUPE programme had been evaluated three times (i.e. in 1994, 1999 and 2008), the adult learners with visual impairment were not part of these studies (Matengu, Nuujoma & !Haosemab, 2009). Consequently, adult learners with visual impairment have never been accorded a fair chance to express their experiences on the AUPE programme. The actual challenges and achievements

that the adult learners with visual impairment have experienced in the programme are yet to be identified. Although there were extensive activities taking place, there was no recorded information from the programme end-users, apart from the District Education Officers (DEOs)' monthly statistics (MBESC, 2003). It was thus the intent of this study to establish through the adult learners with visual impairment s' point of views about the actual experiences they encountered in AUPE programme in Omusati region, to propagate for possible changes in terms of value addition, needs identification and programme sustainability.

1.3. Research questions

The main purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of the adult learners with visual impairment of the AUPE programme in the Omusati Region. The main research question of this study was: "What are the experiences of the adult learners with visual impairment about the AUPE programme in Omusati region?"

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the best practices that adult learners with visual impairment have experienced in AUPE Programme?

2. What are the challenges that adult learners with visual impairment have experienced in AUPE Programme?

3. What are the intervention strategies to improve the AUPE programme?

1.4. Significance of the study

The findings of this study were expected to be significant in many ways. Once concluded, the study was expected to create a better and deeper understanding of the perceptions for adult learners with visual impairments toward AUPE programme. This would provide insights to programme implementers and policymakers at different level; for planning, monitoring and implementation of the literacy programme.

1.5. Limitation of the study

This study encountered noticeable limitations. The scarcity of relevant literature in the field of inclusive adult education gave this study a limited local and international literature review. This allowed the researcher to use the combination of both earlier and recent sources as well as tertiary sources such as web sites to access more literatures. Despite an introductory remark on the aims and objectives of the study, some participants answered questions on a charity perspective, with expectations that their challenges would be resolved by the researcher. Some participants provided out-of-context information to provide additional information. However, for the benefit of the research, the researcher had to redirect the questions by probing to generate the required data and mitigate the situation.

1.6. Definitions of Concepts

This section describes the operational concepts and terms that were used in this study. These concepts and terms are defined within the context of the study.

Adult education refers to any learning activity or programmes deliberately designed to satisfy any learning need or interest that may be experienced at any stage in the life

by a person who is over the statutory school leaving age and whose principal activity is no longer in education (Lind, 1995).

Adult learners with visual impairment refer to adult learners with *partial, functional* and *legal blindness*, who are 15 years old and above, whose visual disabilities may affect their normal academic performance (Knouwds, 2010). *Legal Blindness* is when vision "cannot be corrected to better than 20/400 in the better eye or when the visual field is 20 degrees or less, even with a corrective lens" (Hardman, Drew & Egan, 2005 p. 444; WHO, 2007). In this study, this concept has been used interchangeably with total blindness or severe vision loss. *Functional blindness* is the label given to a learner who is unable to use sight and must rely on his/ her other senses to learn and get around (Hardman et al, 2005). In this study, this concept has been used interchangeably with moderate vision loss. Learners who are *partially sighted* have a visual acuity of less than 6/18 but equal to or better than 3/60 in metrical terms (Resnikoff et al., 2008). They need spectacles and other devices to enhance their residual sight. In this study, this concept has been used interchangeably with mild or low vision loss.

Additionally, the term "blind" was used here and there, but not to dehumanize people but used as a referral term to the generally accepted term "people with visual impairment". In Chapter 3, 4 and 5, the terms "participants", "interviewees", and "respondents" were used interchangeably by referring to adult learners with visual impairment who participated in the study.

Assistive devices are arrays of learning support materials and equipment that facilitate effective movement as well as smooth grasping of the learning content among individuals with visual impairment.

Braille is the embossed six dots system of reading and writing used by the visually impaired, named after Louis Braille a blind French inventor (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

Inclusive adult education refers generally to the inclusion of the people with special needs into adult education programmes. In this study, the term refers to adult literacy education for adult learners with visual impairments.

Inclusive education refers to a form of education that addresses and responds "to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (Lewis, 2008, p. 39).

Learners with disabilities refer in this study to learners who differ from others in terms of sensory characteristics that pose specific limitations to learning.

Non-formal education is any educational activity organized outside the framework of established formal education system to provide selected types of learning to a particular group of people in the community, be they adults as well as children (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p.8).

1.7 Summary

This chapter started with an introduction and orientation to the study. The statement of the problem addressed the justification of the researcher on the current study and what the study strives to achieve. The research questions ensued, which acted as a guidance for stating the main purpose to be achieved. The significance of the study was highlighted in light of its contribution to the body of knowledge. Finally, the limitations of the study were stated; the key concepts from the study were defined and clarified to make the study more understandable to the readers.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a concise review of the literature on theoretical framework, legal documents, relevant research studies on the AUPE curriculum, and the nature of visual impairments in Namibia and elsewhere, and concluded with challenges and intervention strategies.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Socialization

Wadegaonkar, Sonawana and Uplane, (2016) defined socialization as the process by which humans begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functioning member of the society. They further postulated that socialization abilities are dependent on a person's acquired repertoire of learned social skills and behaviours. Their study shows that social deficits in adolescents can cause social isolation, low self-esteem and low mental health.

Socialization serves as the conceptual framework of this study; under it, are varied but interrelated branches of theories. This integrated theoretical framework was developed to connect to the existing knowledge and address the knowledge gap to explain, predict and understand various interrelated aspects of the socialization phenomena of adult learners with visual impairments in the pursuit of knowledge acquisition, as illustrated below:

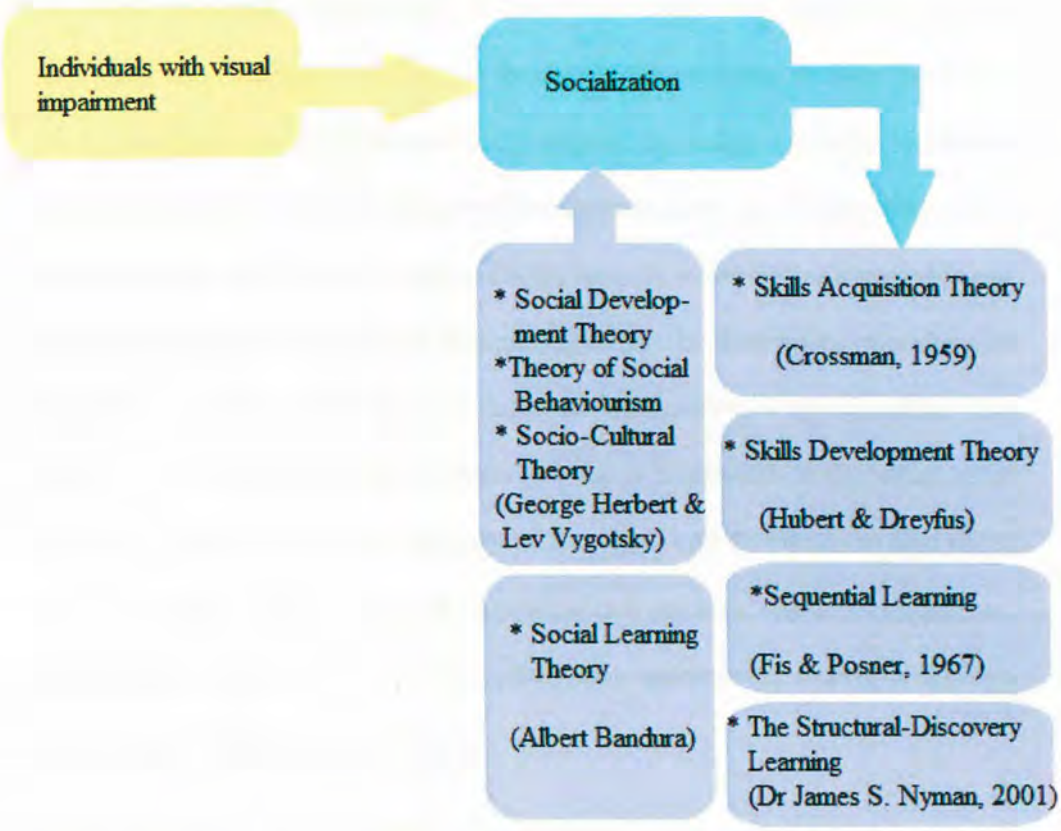


Figure 1: Integrated Theoretical Framework (Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016)

2.2.2 Social Development Theory

This study finds its roots on the principles of social development, which in many cases are virtually deficient on adult learners with visual impairments' daily social interactions with others.

Vygotsky (1978; cited in Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016) argued that social interaction precedes development, however, consciousness and cognition are the end products of socialization and social behaviour. The second aspect of Vygotsky's social development theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). The ZPD refers to the level of development attained when the range of skills are developed with adult guidance or

peer collaboration and exceeds what can be attained alone when learners engage in social behaviour. Mediation may occur through which teachers, parents, peers and other mentors may help learners to gradually acquire knowledge and skills. Mediation may take place within the ZPD and the full development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. Scaffolding is applied for the learners to internalize knowledge and environment around them until they become self-reliant. In other words, it can be said that social interaction among learners improves socialization. Vygotsky added that disability will change during development and that it is sensitive to the influence of remediation programs and social influences. Hence, this study intends to find out if there is a discrepancy between the literacy promoters/ teachers' capacity building and support mechanism the adult learners with visual impairments receive within the classroom and outside the institution.

According to Trent, Artiles and Sue-Englert (1998), social development has emerged as a theory that has the potential to make instruction in special education more holistic and, relevant. It emphasizes the strengths and knowledge that students bring to the classroom setting.

2.2.3 Socio-cultural theory

Vygotsky (1995, cited in Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016) introduced the core concepts of the "primary disability" and "secondary disability", and their interactions. He defined "primary" disability as an organic impairment due to biological factors such as loss of vision by diseases, and "secondary" disability refers to distortions of higher psychological functions due to social factors such as stigmatization. He maintained that an organic impairment prevents a child from mastering some or most social skills and acquiring knowledge at a proper rate and in

an acceptable form. He stated that the child is socially deprived if the path of development diverges from normal social development because of the child's disability. He further stated that social deprivation leads to the emergence of delays and deficiencies, i.e. secondary handicapping conditions and inadequate compensatory ways of coping with disability. This makes the disability to become sensitive to remediation and social influences. Therefore, this theory may guide this study to establish if the degree of visual impairments has any secondary influence on ones' social well-beings.

2.2.4 Theory of Social Behaviourism

George Herbert Mead (1967), explained that people develop self-images through interactions with other people. In a nutshell, a person's personality which consists of self-awareness and self-image is a product of social experience. Hence, a person develops solely through social experience. The planned and organized experiences help develop the person's self-image which could lead to an improved socialization process. It further suggests that the mark of successful socialization is the transformation of social control into self-control. It shows that the development of self and identity in the context of intimate and reciprocal relations is important for socialization. Therefore, this theory ought to answer *question 1.3* that aims to find out how the community perceives the adult learners with visual impairment who are attending AUPE programme.

2.2.5 Social learning theory

Bandura Albert (1977) explained that people learn new behaviours through overt reinforcement or punishment, or via observational learning of the social factors in their

environment. He stressed that observational learning can occur in relation to three models, such as; *Live model* in which an actual person is demonstrating the desired behaviour; *Verbal instruction* in which an individual describes the desired behaviour in detail, and instructs the participant on how to engage in the behaviour; and *Symbolic* in which modelling occurs by means of the media, including movies, television, Internet, literature, and radio. This theory was used in this study to identify the gap on how the abovementioned type of instructions may influence learning of the adult learners with visual impairment.

2.3 Skills Acquisition Theory

Crossman (1959) provided an early view of how practice leads to performance improvements. Crossman's model qualifies as a theory which proposes that practice leads to more efficient procedures for performing a task. Skill acquisition theory postulates that, when individuals acquire skills through external instruction, they normally pass through five stages: *Novice, Advanced Beginner, Competent, Proficient,* and *Expert.* This theory is crucial for this study because it bridges the gap between the status quo and the desirable skills transfer' mechanisms which are relevant to the adult learners with visual impairments. A brief description of the elements of the skills acquisition theory, which are discussed separately follows;

2.3.1 Transfer of learning

Skill development is based on the concept of transfer of learning (Hubert & Dreyfus, (nd) cited in Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016). If the influence is on a new skill being developed then this is said to be proactive and if the influence is on a previously learned skill then this is said to be retroactive.

2.3.2 Transformational learning

According to Mezirow (1990) cited in Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016), transformational learning is the process of learning, analysing and making deliberate changes to the assumptions that we have. This causes us to think act and behave in certain ways that enable us to accommodate change and transform our practices.

2.3.3 Active Learning

Active learning explains that immediate repetition enables the student to store the information gained from the experiences in his memory. The activity-based program should be considered while designing the intervention to help visually impaired students to learn social skills (Shafer, 1995).

2.3.4 Sequential learning

Fitts and Posner (1967) explained that there are three stages to learning a new skill, these are; *Cognitive phase* - identification and development of the components of the skill involves the formation of a mental picture of the skill. *Associative phase* - linking the parts into a smooth action involves practising the skill and using feedback to perfect the skill and *Autonomous phase* - developing the learned skill so that it becomes automatic involves little or no conscious thought or attention whilst performing the skill, however, not all performers reach this stage. The learning of physical skills requires the relevant movements to be assembled, component by component, using feedback. Rehearsal of the skill must be done regularly and correctly.

2.3.5 The Structured-Discovery Learning

Nyman (2001) suggested two approaches for providing training to blind people. The *science model* by which the counsellor plays a central role in modifying the

individual's behaviour. The student does not need to know the science behind the training; they only need to execute the acquired skills to a prescribed standard. The *philosophy model* by which most of the environmental knowledge is derived from reflection by generations of visually impaired people on their shared experience in developing alternative techniques for accessing relevant information. This is the foundation of the philosophical approach known as structured-discovery learning. This theory supports that visually impaired students can be trained by monitoring their behaviour and giving them experiences to develop alternative techniques for effective socialization through a need-based intervention.

Based on the assumption (DAE, 2017) that the visually impaired literacy teachers were not adequately capacitated on how to facilitate the literacy classes of the adult learners with visual impairment, these two approaches may serve as a viable option to bridge the knowledge gap.

2.4 Bio-ecological theory

The bio-ecological theory is based on the interdependence between different organisms and their physical environment. According to Donald et al, (2006) this theory was proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979; 1986) who came up with different levels of the system in the social context that influence one another continuously. In Bronfenbrenner's model, these interacting dimensions happen within four nested systems; the *micro-system,* the *mesosystem*, the *exo-system,* and the *macro-system*.

The micro-system entails family, the school and the peer group which a learner interacts with on a daily basis. The mesosystem involves all aspects that nurture or influence the interactions, whereas exo-system has to do with the situation beyond a

learner control but can influence the learner's interaction, and macro-system involves dominant social structures such as cultural values and beliefs. This theory would be aligned on partnership and collaboration between the adult learners with visual impairment with various stakeholders, in question *3.4. Do you receive any form of Learner Support from the government or Non-Government Organisation (NGO)? (Appendix A: Interview Guide).*

A study by (Smith, 2006) has proposed four-step approaches of inclusion in the form of interactive dimensions between the adult learners with visual impairment, teachers, schools and parents as follows: **(a)** a physical dimension which has to do with mobility, room arrangement and seating; **(b)** an instructional dimension which covers the lesson presentation, skills acquisition, assignments/ worksheets and test-taking; **(c)** the social-behaviour dimension which focuses on skill training and self-support, and **(d)** the collaborative dimension which includes aide, co-teaching, resource room assistance, teacher consultation and teacher training.

These dimensions are presumed to be fundamental in aiding this study to identify the best practices and challenges the adult learners with visual impairment may have experienced in AUPE programme.

2.5 Legal documents

This section provides a discussion of legal documents that plays a crucial role in the inclusion of individual learners with visual impairment in the mainstream education including adult literacy programme in Namibia.

The right to basic education, including Adult Education, is a constitutional right enshrined in the Bill of Rights, contained in the Constitution of the Republic of

Namibia. It stipulates that the state, through reasonable measures, must progressively make education available and accessible (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1990).

The policy document ***"Towards Education for All"*** A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training (MBEC, 1993) was the basic policy document which translates the Namibian philosophy on education into concrete and implementable government policies. The policy documents outlined the Namibian education system from pre-primary to university and through non-formal education (ibid, 1993).

The Presidential Commission on Education, Training and Culture (1999) placed more emphasis on the role of Life Long Learning (LLL) in creating a culture of learning throughout life (MBESC, 1999). The National Policy on Adult Learning (2003) provides the overall framework for adult learning. The policy addressed the issue of programme development, resources, coordination, policy implementation, and monitoring (MBEC, 2003).

The Policy guidelines for Basic-Literacy and Post-Literacy Programmes (1996-2000) guide the development of curriculum guidelines, development of teaching/learning materials, training of trainers, monitoring and evaluation, research, planning and programme development (MBEC, 1997). The National Standards for Adult Educators (2010) describes the competences of an adult educator what they were expected by the national stakeholders to know, understand, be able to do and how they should act (MoE, 2010).

National Literacy Curriculum Framework (2013) replaced the curriculum guide for the National Literacy Programme in Namibia of 1993, and provides a new direction for

NLPN in offering Mother tongue literacy, numeracy, English as well as a range of cross-cutting themes to help adult learners to enhance their quality of lives (DAE, 2013).

The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013) propagated the inclusion of all learners in equitable quality education. This policy was recommended to be integrated into all other legal frameworks and policies of the education sector (MoE, 2008).

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on special needs education advocated that "learning institutions must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangement, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities" (UNESCO, 1994, p.11).

The National Policy on Disabilities (1997) states that the provision of education shall be based on the fundamental principles of inclusive education which demands that all children shall be taught together, whenever possible, regardless of any individual differences or difficulties they may face. This inclusion entails "developing the capacity of the regular school system to enable it to meet the diverse educational needs of all children", (Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation 1997, p.10).

The UNESCO Policy Guidelines (2005) document propagate that inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners ... An "inclusive education system can only be created if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become better at educating all children in their communities"(p. 8).

This document goes further by stating that:

> *Inclusion is thus seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education ... Promoting inclusion means stimulating discussion, encouraging positive attitudes and improving educational and social frameworks to cope with new demands in education structures and governance. It involves improving inputs, processes and environments to foster learning both at the level of the learner in his/her learning environment and at the system level to support the entire learning experience.* (UNESCO, 2005, p. 7)

2.6 AUPE Curriculum

The National Literacy Programme of Namibia (NLPN) was established in 1992 under the Directorate of Adult Basic Education at that time. The programme was introduced to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills (Stage 1, 2 & 3) in Namibian languages and English, especially for the previously marginalized groups (MBEC/ United Nations International Children Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 1997). The Directorate's mandate was to contribute to the goals and objectives of Education for All (EFA) as well as Vision 2030, to ensure that people living with disabilities are well integrated into mainstream schools of the Namibian society (MBEC, 2003). AUPE programme was introduced as an extension of NLPN to equip adult learners with further knowledge and skills equivalent to grade 7 at formal education (DAE, 2009).

Since then, significant progress has been made in the provision and organisation of adult learning. The expansion of the AUPE programme was an important response emanated from the outcomes of the first and second overall evaluations (1994/95 and 1999/2000) which brought forth the learners' demand for higher levels of basic education beyond literacy (MBESC, 2003). The policies consideration, as well as the third overall evaluation of NLPN, necessitated the programme to integrate the blind and visually impaired learners (DAE, 2008).

The AUPE is an integral part of adult and non-formal education aimed at achieving the goals set forth by the Ministry of Education such as access, equity, quality, democracy and Lifelong Learning. One of its goals is to promote literacy and numeracy skills as well as provide knowledge, understanding, skills and values, and develop creativity in those with special learning needs. The AUPE programme aims

to prepare learners to develop their communication skills, mathematics skills, mental learning skills, and life skills for personal and social development (DAE, 2009).

In a nutshell, AUPE is a three-year programme, which consists of four core courses and the other two courses are optional. Individual learners take six courses in total; four core and two optional courses. AUPE employs a participatory approach, drawing on the experience of the learners. Upon completion of the programme, adult learners would be expected to acquire the necessary skills and competency equivalent to those learners who completed grade 7 of formal education (ibid, 2009).

AUPE curriculum clearly stated that,

> *"provision is made for the visually impaired and blind learners by supplying Braille materials and training visually impaired promoters who are capable of reading and teaching Braille to facilitate these classes"* (ibid, 2009).

This is a clear indication that Adult Upper Primary Education Guideline promotes inclusivity by emphasizing that any adult may achieve competencies, functional literacy and developmental skills which enables an individual to function effectively in the academic, labour market or democratic decision-making situation (ibid, 2009).

However, the second evaluation report for NLPN revealed that the programme was faced by multiple challenges which require attention from the curriculum implementers (Kweka & Namene, 1999). A study conducted by Likando (2008) on the views and attitudes of adult literacy learners, adult educators and policymakers regarding the adult literacy programmes in the Caprivi region revealed that the

Directorate of Adult Education needs to revisit the curricula and the learning content of the NLPN.

The third overall evaluation of NLPN (2008) also recommended the need for the curriculum to be revised. The study identified the limitation of English proficiency among literacy promoters. This led to a proposal of the introduction of English as a spoken language at stage 1 and some written English in stage 2 of the programme to consolidate the language in stage 3 and AUPE (Ramarumo & McKay, 2008). The National Literacy Curriculum Framework of 2013 was introduced to replace the Curriculum Guide for the National Literacy Programme in Namibia for 1993. The purposed curriculum framework was aimed to provide curriculum guidelines for new directions to bring the programme in line with Vision 2030 and incorporate the needs of adult learners across the spectrum, taking into account the recommendations from the third evaluation done in 2008 (DAE, 2013).

However, it was argued that the development of training manuals for literacy personnel could not proceed without a well-structured, flexible curriculum framework designed to meet the needs of different clientele groups (UNESCO, 1994). Hence, NLPN has adopted a systematic literacy curriculum which reflects well-defined and sequenced areas of functional knowledge and agreed levels of literacy skills. The materials development and implementation has adopted a bottom-up approach revised curriculum, started with stage 1 in 2014, stage 2 in 2015, and stage 3 in 2016, progressing to AUPE in due course. Even though in theory, AUPE curriculum development lends itself to a participatory curriculum which is more inclusive and flexible, in practice it seemed quite different.

The adult facilitators and learners with visual impairment appeared not to be involved in the planning and development of their curriculum, and have been using a "one-size-fits-all curriculum" that applies across the spectrum (DAE, 2017). Nevertheless, the curriculum framework advocates that educators should locate the physically challenged people in the community to become learners, and in case of blind or deaf people, the educators should receive relevant focused training and special materials (DAE, 2013). However, the AUPE broad curriculum was neither revised nor a differentiated curriculum for adult learners with visual impairment was developed by the time of this study.

Other literature reviews have argued that there were limited documented activities for the adult learners with visual impairment (apart from monthly regional statistics) to assure quality and effectiveness of the programme, and Namibia like other countries in Africa faced the challenge of ensuring equitable access to adult learning opportunities (MBESC, 2003).

2.7 Categories of the visual impairment

Visual impairment is a broad term that covers a wide continuum of loss in visual function. Cox and Dykes (2001) indicated the terms such as *low vision, functionally blind,* and *blind* that are often used to describe and categorize levels of vision. Each category is considered in terms of the degree of acuity and its implications for students' learning.

Dean (1996, p.113) claimed that there are many aspects of visual function, including visual acuity (the ability to resolve detail), accommodation (the ability to focus), the field of vision (the area that can be seen), colour vision, and adaptability to light.

According to Dean (1996, p. 115), there are three types of visual impairments: **(a)** Impairment of visual acuity which results in objects being seen less clearly than normally, **(b)** Impairment of the field vision, which affects the angle at which one can see, and **(c)** Impairment of colour vision, which results in one's inability to distinguish between certain colours.

Smith (2006) has identified four different types of visual perceptual aspects which can be taken into consideration such as visual discrimination, visual figure-ground, visual closure and visual memory.

A study conducted by Salvia, Ysseldyke and Bolt, (2013) highlighted that severe visual impairment is presumed to adversely affect learners' educational development, and learners with this disability are presumed to require special education services and curricular adaptations such as mobility training, instruction in Braille, and talking books. Therefore, the teacher must identify the category on which all the learners are falling to modify and adapt learning according to the needs of each learner. However, there is no indication on the literature review whether the categories of visual impairments have been considered when it comes to integrating the adult learners with visual impairment into AUPE programme.

2.8 Program placement

According to Dean (1996), there are three levels of integration as categorised by the Code of practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, as follows: **(a)** local integration; whereby special units are set up in ordinary school, **(b)** social integration; whereby students attending a special class or unit where they eat, play and share activities with other students, and **(c)** functional integration;

whereby the locational and social association of students with special needs with their fellows leads to joint participation in educational programmes.

Curry and Hatlen (2007) acknowledged that the placement of a student identified as having visual impairments in an educational program involves a three-step process: **(a)** assessment, **(b)** identification of instructional needs and preparation of goals and objectives, and **(c)** consideration of placement alternatives.

Curry and Hatlen (2007) further explained that this process is generally conducted by members of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. By law, when program options are being considered and two placement alternatives appear to be equally appropriate to meet student needs, the IEP team must select that program which provides the greatest degree of interaction with non-handicapped peers or the environment which is least restrictive.

According to Salvia et. al (2013), a vision specialist usually assesses functional vision through systematic observation of a learners' response to various types of paper, print sizes, and lighting conditions. Functional integration is therefore deemed appropriate for the adult visually impaired learners under this study. However, other scholars appeared to question the formalization of the adult education programme. Mannathoko, Osman & Wright, (1999) claimed that the dynamics of non-formal education has exposed the field to more arguments, and one is questioning if the placement of learners in adult literacy program considers statutory obligation.

2.9 Challenges

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) report (2009) has documented challenges which may affect the social and academic skills of the adult learners with visual impairment, as follows:

2.9.1 Social challenges

According to Bryan & Voeller (as cited in NCSE report, 2009, p.7) social skills consist of skills that are necessary to meet the basic social demands of everyday life. Deficits in social skills can affect total life functioning, resulting in social disorder. The social disorder affects almost every aspects of life either at school, home or in community. It is estimated that one-third of learners with visual impairments have problems with social skills.

There is general acceptance of the importance and benefit of early identification and interventions to encourage social development in learners with visual impairment.

While the literature review did not identify a study to demonstrate the efficacy of these interventions categorically, it is recommended that early identification as soon as possible after the diagnosis of the visual impairment and offer support and advice to careers about encouraging communication and early development.

Among young people and adults, there is also a broad consensus in the literature that visual impairment can be associated with isolation at learning institutions as well as challenges in forming friendships. It is recommended that; services can usefully provide interventions that support the personal development of the visually impaired learners (for example assertiveness training and communication skills), as well as the

training of sighted peers (for example to improve sighted people's attitudes towards visually impaired learners) (NCSE, 2009).

2.9.2 Emotional challenges

This involves feelings about oneself, by which the learner may feel so chronically sad or depressed or have such a low self-concept and negative outlook on life and the ability to learn. Emotional challenge interferes with academic learning. The characteristics of emotional challenges are depression, lack of resiliency and anxiety (Lerner & Johns, 2009). Emotional instability interferes with learning in the way that the student with visual impairment may not concentrate in academic activities due to the internal build-up feelings of worthlessness, incomplete and negative self-image. Thus, regular psycho-social support, counselling, reassurance, and motivation plays a central role in the education of students with visual impairment (ibid).

2.9.3 Behavioural challenges

This involves acting out physically the inner feelings. Sometimes, the visually impaired learners compensate for the lack of attention or needed support with inappropriate behaviours such as outburst or walk out. However, the interrelatedness of these challenges should not be taken lightly in the learning setting. For instance, stigmatization and name-labelling in the community may result in feelings of self-worthlessness which may lead to territory self-confinement (Lerner & Johns, 2009).

According to a report commissioned by the NCSE (2009), adult learners with visual impairment (particularly with severe visual impairment) are often developmentally delayed in motor development. However, there is clear evidence that they can be taught mobility and independence skills, given appropriate support. It is recommended that;

(a) Visually-impaired learners should be assessed to establish their needs for mobility and independence; **(b)** Services should provide appropriate teaching to individuals with visual impairment in the area of mobility and independence; and **(c)** This teaching is likely to require one-to-one work with a mobility teacher, in combination with consistent practice and reinforcement from other carers (especially parents in the early years).

Besides, Holbrook and Koenig (2006) identified issues that continue to challenge the teaching of visually impaired students as related to the need for qualified personnel, instruction in contracted and un-contracted braille, instruction in both print and braille, and providing literacy instruction for students with additional disabilities. A study done by Josua (2013) revealed that the challenges of the students with visual impairment ranged from negative attitudes towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments, the physical make-up of school environment, and overcrowded inclusive classrooms. A lack of training for staff, lack of teaching and learning facilities and materials, and restriction of learners with visual impairments from taking some subjects in the curriculum are also identified as some of the shortcomings. Other challenges include social exclusion and lack of targeted measures to include learners with visual impairments in social and other academic programmes of the school.

A study by Johnstone (as cited in Engelbrecht & Green 2007, p. 15-16) which was carried out in Lesotho has identified challenges at three levels. The findings indicated the challenges at the *national level* where there are on-going teacher training and policy implementation issues; at the *school level* where there are resource shortages and an unresolved tension between assessment practices and inclusive education; and

at the *classroom level* where there are issues related to class size, pedagogy and meeting the needs of students with significant learning challenges.

2.9.4 Capacity building challenges

The directorate of adult education perform the important training tasks at central, regional and district level in Namibia. The Training of Trainers' sub-division at Head Office was created to organize staff development, train and sustain trainers and District Education Officers among regional staff and partners. The sub-division is responsible to assess the training needs and conduct pre-service and in-service training to the District Education Officers. The Regional Office coordinates the professional support and in-service training to the District Education Officers to conduct the three-week initial training for the untrained literacy promoters as well as monthly refresher courses (DABE/ UNICEF, 1996).

However, the second overall NLPN evaluation reported that there was no training policy in place in order to establish the capacity building system within DABE (DAE, 1999). Hence, training interventions in collaboration with the Namibia Federation for Visually Impaired (NFVI), is seemingly a viable option that offers training and rehabilitation to the individuals living with visual impairment.

2.9.5 Financial challenges

There is a growing consensus in bodies such as the World Bank and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that investment in adult learning generates important economic and social returns (DAE, 2013).

A study was done by Zimba, Möwes & Naanda (as cited in Engelbrecht and Green, 2007, p.43) claimed that Namibia gives the highest national budget allocation to

education in general, but is still faced with lack of adequately trained teachers and inadequate classrooms and educational facilities. This was seen as a hindrance to the effective implementation of a coherent basic education programme in the country. Ramarumo and McKay (2008) maintained that without adequate financing and resourcing for all activities associated with the adult literacy programme, its objectives for improving the lives of learners and the learner base for further education, training and employment will not be met.

2.10 Intervention strategies

The expansion and diversification of adult learning opportunities require that the most efficient use was made of existing financial, physical and human resources, and that additional resources are mobilized where necessary (DAE, 2013). Smith (2006) identified nine (9) types of adaptations which are crucial on classroom interventions of visually impaired learners, as follows: **(a)** size – adapting the number of items the learner is expected to learn or complete; **(b)** time – adapting the time allocated and allowed for learning, task completion or testing; **(c)** level of support – increasing the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner; **(d)** input – adapting the way instruction is delivered; **(e)** difficulty – adapting the skill level; **(f)** output – adapting how the learner responds to instruction; **(g)** participation – adapting the extent to which a learner is actively involved in a task; **(h)** alternate – adapting the goals or outcome expectations, and **(i)** substitute curriculum – providing differentiated instruction and materials to meet a learner's individual goals.

2.10.1 Support materials

The NCSE (2009) reported that access to the curriculum by students with visual impairment requires the availability of additional materials and equipment. The report maintained that processes by which equipment and resources are provided to visually impaired learners and their families, as well as their teachers, could, therefore, be usefully reviewed to ensure that clear procedure exists. It further proposed that this review might also ensure that there are mechanisms for the rapid replacement or maintenance of damaged equipment. The third overall NLPN evaluation indicated that the programme must be inclusive and make special provision for learners who need specialized learning approaches, such as learning via Braille (DAE, 2008).

A study conducted by the Department of Education and Skills (2001, p. 55) indicated that Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) and class teachers, together with curriculum, Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators and External Specialists, should consider a range of different teaching approaches and appropriate equipment and teaching materials, including the use of information technology (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1999).

A study by Booth & Swann (1998) suggested that the schools should add the resource area which comprises of a new wing comprising two teaching areas and two withdrawal rooms, furnished with thermoform machine, a closed-circuit television system and a good selection of lenses and tactile aids. Vygotsky (as cited in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006, p. 53) posited that the learners who are slower at completing tasks should be given tasks that are within the learner's zone of proximal development. Inclusive Education indicators acknowledged the importance of addressing contextual factors, by developing positive attitudes in the school

environment and support provision in addressing curriculum challenges (DAE, 2008). A research study conducted by Koenig and Farrenkopf (1997) indicates the importance of a rich base of concrete experiences as an essential foundation for the development of literacy for students with visual impairments.

Research by Willings. (nd). (cited in www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com) has found that instruction in the area of language arts should integrate both explicit instruction and contextual experiences, whereby the teacher provides meaningful settings for learning with explicit strategies. Providing many reading and writing opportunities in the students' literacy modes (print, Braille, or auditory) will ensure repeated opportunities to learn and practice their skills in reading and writing. The study had recommended intervention strategies to critically accommodate the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Adaptation, and Expanded Core Curriculum.

2.10.2 Infrastructure improvement

Many of the barriers to adult learning can be located within the physical environment. Challenges associated with the physical environment for adult literacy classes include unconducive learning environment, lack of resources, and lack of support from different stakeholders (White Paper, 2001). The report implied that some of the visually impaired adult literacy classes were conducted under facilities meant for sighted people without any modification, while others held under the trees, and distance to reach the literacy centre is another challenge faced by the adult learners with visual impairment.

2.10.3 Differentiated learning

The adult learners with visual impairment are fully auditory and tactile functional, hence the learning activities should be modified to be oriented to those specific areas.

Verbalism should be encouraged since the adult learners with visual impairment are having limited experiential exposure to the environment. The following areas of the content may need improvement to meet the specific learning disability: **(a)** good light or low vision aids; **(b)** white chalkboards; **(c)** sitting near the chalkboard; **(d)** Braille reading materials in severe cases of visual impairment; **(e)** big printed written materials; **(f)** audiotape recorders for recording spoken speech; **(g)** emphasis on audio, tactile and kinaesthetic activities; **(h)** magnification of the written activities; **(i)** prescription contact lenses or glasses to be worn; **(j)** use differentiated instructional methods; and **(k)** parental involvement (Donal, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006).

2.10.4 Social inclusion

The studies conducted by (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2001; Wong & Donahue, 2002; Bryan, 1997; as cited in Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016) identified that learners who have problems with social relationships may lack sensitivity to others, have a poor perception of social situations, and suffer from social rejection. They may exhibit a wide range of poor social traits such as impulsiveness, low tolerance for frustration, and problems in handling day-to-day social interactions and situations. The adult learners with visual impairment normally experience social exclusion from the immediate and wider community. Therefore, these learners need well-developed social and interactive skills in dealing with other people. Although these learners want to be accepted socially, they often do not know how to engage in appropriate social behaviours. Thus, in most cases, they isolate themselves in pairs or groups because they condition themselves mentally that the outside world rejects them. Therefore, they need conscious effort and social maturity to recognize their rights and responsibilities as well as making moral and ethical judgements, and gaining independence in the outside world.

2.10.5 Collaboration and partnership

According to DAE (2008), the effort of the directorate to integrate the adult learners with visual impairment into its programme should not meet its intended goals if it fails to recognize the inter-agencies' collaboration and partnership. These may include the political leaders, other departmental ministries, NGOs, private sector, trade unions, faith-based and welfare organizations. All the stakeholders should have well-defined roles on how to render support to the adult learners with visual impairment. Empirical evidence has shown that the local councillors should play a role in identifying the people with visual impairment in the community, the social workers should provide psycho-social support, counselling and guidance. The adult learners with visual impairment are encouraged to join their regional branches of Namibia Federation for visually impaired for auxiliary support.

2.11 Summary

This chapter critically reviewed and discussed the theoretical framework of the study. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed literature about AUPE curriculum, categories of the visual impairments and the theoretical snapshot about program placement of the adult learners with visual impairment. A review of the literature regarding challenges and the interventions to be put in place to ensure effective accommodation of the adult learners with visual impairment was also covered.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that was employed in this study. It outlines in details the design, the population, the sampling techniques, data collection methods, the instruments, pilot study, the process of data collection and the data analysis of this study.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach using a case study design. Murray Thomas (2003, p.1) refers to qualitative method as "a process that involves a researcher describing characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements and amounts." In this qualitative approach a case study research design was adopted where a phenomenon was thoroughly studied, and conclusions were made from the findings (Gall, Gall & Borg, 1999).

A phenomenological design was also used in this research. A phenomenological design is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation (Leedy and Ormond, 2010). A phenomenological design was used in order to assist the researcher to understand the adult learners with visual impairments' perspectives and understanding on the AUPE programme (Creswell, 2009).

The selected approaches were deemed appropriate in this study because they would help provide information on the subjective experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2009). The researcher therefore strived to describe the phenomenon as accurately as possible, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remains true to facts (De Vos et al, 2011).

3.3 Population

A population is any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common and that are of interest to the researcher (Best and Kahn, 2006). Amongst 14 educational regions in Namibia, only three regions (Omusati, Kunene and Kavango east region) were having AUPE classes for adult learners with visual impairment, when this study was conducted. The target population of this study consisted of all AUPE adult learners with visual impairment in Omusati region.

3.4 Sample and sampling techniques

A sample is defined as a well-informed sub-group of the target population that is selected to participate in a study (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2001).

For this study, a multistage sampling of purposive and intrinsic case sampling was used to select the sample. Intrinsic case sampling is defined as identifying and studying a case that inherently arouses the interest of the researcher (Patton, 2001).

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher implores people with specific characteristics to participate in a research study (Creswell, 2008). For example, in this case, the information-rich group consisted of the adult with visual impairments of AUPE programme who are self-identified as 'low vision, partly blind or total blind' adult learners as they hold a unique case in the society as they possess a special attribute that was relevant to this study. Omusati region was purposely sampled to participate in the study, because this was the only region with a reasonable number (12) of AUPE learners with visual impairments, out of the other two (2) regions that had AUPE classes, when this study was conducted.

All 12 adult learners with visual impairment were targeted to participate in this study, even though only 10 participants volunteered to take part.

The small sample of the study was in line with other scholars who stated that a small sample allows a qualitative researcher a better chance to learn a phenomenon under study in depth (Harry, Sturges & Klingner, 2005 cited in Hamunyela, 2008, p.96).

3.5 Research collection strategies

3.5.1 Interviews

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and naturalistic observations. Semi-structured interviews deemed to be effective in that they are more flexible and allow the interviewees to provide more information (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011).

Interviews was guided by the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, (1.3). Interview tool was divided into two main parts: **(a)** the biographical information of the participants, and **(b)** information on the participants' experience of the programme such as attendance, accessibility, participation, performance, challenges, and possible alternatives.

Additional to the interview tool, all interview conversations were recorded using a digital recording device for analysis (Merriam, 1998).

3.5.2 Naturalistic observation

Data was also collected through naturalistic observation. Naturalistic observation implies that a person's behaviour is being observed without aware that he is being observed and that occurs in natural rather than artificial (Mwamwenda, 1996).

The observation was conducted on the physical setting to determine how physical, instructional, and social aspects affect adult learners with visual impairment on AUPE programme. The observation was guided by the questions outlined in the observation schedule informed by the research questions. The researcher was a non-participant observer looking at a situation from an outsider's perspective. To supplement data collected through the observation schedule, still pictures were taken (with permission from the respondents) to depict the physical conditions of the facilities and materials for adult learners with visual impairment within and around their literacy centres.

This study made use of field notes to capture all observable data. Researchers like De Vos et al. (2011), describe field notes as detailed notes that researchers make as they observe the phenomenon unfolding. Field notes contain information on the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the respondents.

3.6 Research Instruments

3.6.1 An interview guide

An instrument is a tool to enable the researcher to gather relevant data (Mpofu, 2001). The study used interview guides as an instrument for data collection. The interview guide was divided into 5 Sections; with *Section A* focused on participants' personal information, *Section B* covered *Attendance and accessibility*, *Section C* covered *Participation*, *Section D* covered *Learner support and Performance*, and *Section E* covered *Challenges and improvement*. The questions in section A were closed-ended, whereas Section B to E had open-ended questions.

3.6.2 Observation schedule

(Smith, 2006) has proposed four-step approaches of inclusion in the form of interactive dimensions between the adult learners with visual impairment, teachers, schools and parents. These four-step approaches (*Physical facilities, Instructional aspects, Social-behavioural aspects, and Collaborative aspects*) form a cornerstone in the design of an observation schedule.

An observation schedule was made in the form of a table, divided into columns with captions. The first column covered *physical facilities* arranged into mobility, building structure, classroom facility, and seating equipment. The second column covered *instructional aspects* structured into lesson plan, lesson presentation, and assistive devices. The third column covered *social-behavioural aspects* structured into mobility skills training and self-support; and the last column covered *collaborative aspects* structured into aide and co-teaching.

3.7 Pilot Study

Pilot studies are done to assure and reassure the reliability and validity of the research instruments. They should, however, be limited to a small number of participants with similar characteristics to those of the target group (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' & Delport, 2005 cited in Likando, 2008).

Conducting a small scale pilot study is usually recommended for reasons of feasibility, convenience and cost-effectiveness of the study (Harry Sturger and Klingner, 2005; Janesick, 2000 cited in Hamunyela, 2008).

This study was piloted with five adult learners with visual impairment who were doing stage three and AUPE programme at Sauyemwa Centre for Visually Impaired in Kavango east region. The results of the study showed few weakness in the instruments

which needed revision. The revised and final version of the research tool took into account the refinement of the research instruments.

3.8 Refinement of the research instruments

After conducting the pilot study, the researcher found that the Interview guide and Observation schedule showed few weakness that was refined as follows:

3.8.1 Interview Guide

At Section A (Biographical information), the researcher found a need for adding columns that provide information on the degree of visual impairment and diagnostic/ eye test check-up to get more information on the condition of vision loss and to establish if assessment was done with an eye specialist. Additional column was also added which showed the literacy centre's structure to establish if the classes were conducted under conducive environment.

On Section B (Attendance and Accessibility), the researcher changed *1.1 Are you from this neighbourhood?*, to *Do you live in this area?* Question 1.3 *What are peoples' behaviour when they see you attending literacy classes?* , was changed to *What are the reactions of other people when they see you attending AUPE classes?*

Section C (Participation) was never refined, as all questions elicited expected answers.

Section D (Learner Support and Performances) were joined together after a researcher found that they complement one another. Question 3.1 *What are your classroom performance looks like*, was fine-tuned by adding a metric of rating their performance from *excellent* to *bad*. Section E (Programme challenges and improvement) were earlier separate headings on own and had to be joined together to reduce the number of sections and to create a flow of responses.

3.8.2 Observation schedule

Few adjustments were made on an observation schedule. On *Physical facilities'* column, the research had to add *type of seating arrangement* and *boarding (if any)* to elicit responses on the seating equipment as well as if the participants were staying at one place where they also attend literacy classes, like at Sauyemwa Centre for Visually Impaired where the pilot study was conducted. On *Instructional aspects* column, the researcher added *assistive devices* and *learning materials* because they add value to the lesson presentation of individuals with visual impairments. Nothing was changed on the *Social-behaviour aspects* and *Collaborative aspects'* columns.

The results of the pilot study affirmed that the designed research instruments were indeed valid and consistent for the current investigation and the questions were understood by the participants.

3.9 Data collection procedures

Following the issuance of the ethical clearance certificate by the University of Namibia, the researcher wrote a letter to the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and requested permission to conduct his study in Omusati region. Permission was granted and communicated to the Director of Education for the Omusati region. The researcher attached the interview schedule to the letter which was delivered to the intended person. The researcher phoned the immediate supervisors and the participants for their consent and to set dates for interviews.

The one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with adult learners with visual impairment in the Omusati region. The interviewing process started before attending literacy classes to avoid disruptions of their lessons. An interview began with

a brief introduction about the nature and purpose of the investigation as well as the ethical considerations. The researcher explained the information on Participant Information Leaflet and Consent Form before handing them over to the participants' for completion *(Appendix F)*. Interviews were conducted with 10 participants and audio-recorded at the same time. A naturalistic observation was made and information was recorded into observation schedule. Supporting still pictures were taken. Each interview session took 15-22 minutes to conclude. After each interview session, an interviewer made a debriefing session to ensure accuracy and consistency of the given information. Additional observable data was compiled on field notes.

3.10 Data Analysis

The interpretative phenomenological analysis method was used to analyse all qualitative data that was collected. Interpretative phenomenological analysis has been developed to guide the design and conduct of small-scale, in-depth qualitative research study. This approach involves trying to understand the experiences an individual has in life, how they made sense of them and what meanings those experiences hold (Mpofu, 2001).

All interview guides were assigned different codes to comply with the ethical consideration. All interview guides and observation schedules were brought together, grouped similar answers and compiled answers. After grouping, the researcher listened to each interview and matched them to the same field notes as coded on the interview guide.

To analyse data, the researcher has followed the following steps: transcriptions and transformations; bracketing and phenomenological reduction; delineating units of meaning; clustering of units of meaning to form themes; summarizing each interview,

validating it and where necessary modifying it; and finally extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

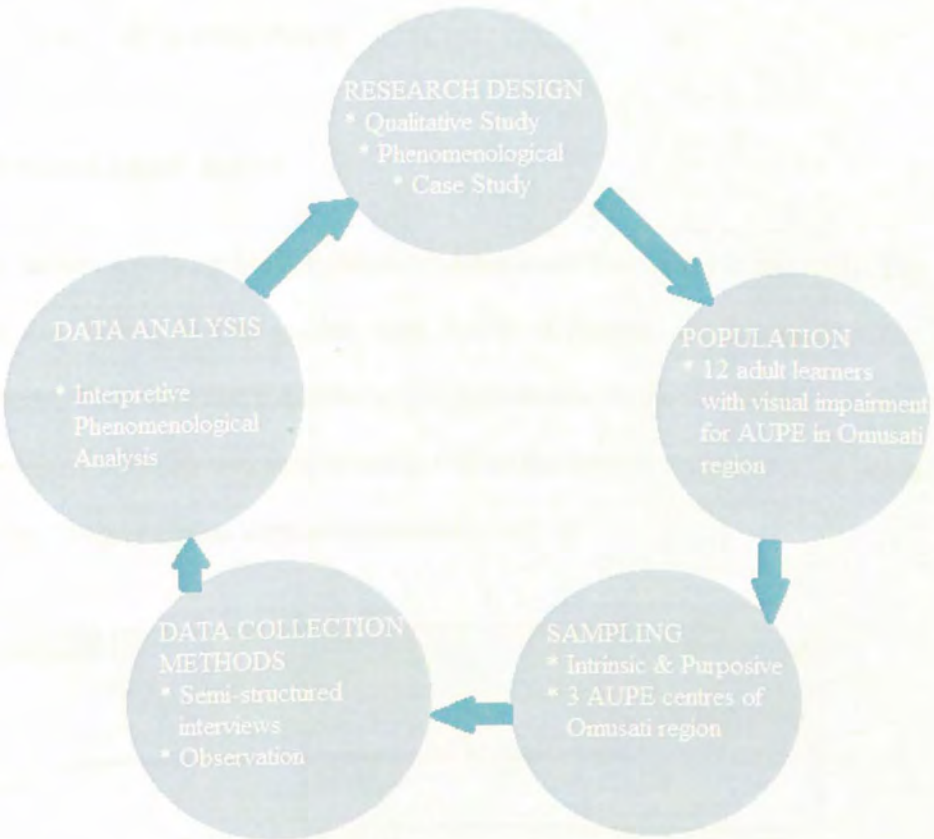
Afterwards, the researcher transformed the field notes and transcribed the interview recording into patterns, themes, codes and categories. Significant quotes were identified and set aside for participants' views consolidation. This approach is deemed helpful in trying to understand the experiences an individual has in life, how they made sense of them and what meanings those experiences hold (Creswell, 2009).

3.11 Research ethics

To abide by research ethics, this study did the following: It **(a)** first sought and found permission from the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture; **(b)** informed and requested all the participants to sign the university designed consent forms expressing their willingness to participate in the research on a free will; **(c)** ensured that participation in the study was voluntary and that participants were not coerced to respond to questions which made them uncomfortable; **(d)** informed participants in advance of the photo-taking and recording devices to be used during interviews; and **(e)** made the participants aware of their rights, the protection of their identity and the confidentiality of the collected information.

3.12 Summary

The diagram below (Figure 2) summarises the methodological process as applied in the study.



No. of years in literacy	1 year	0
	2 years	0
	3 years	3
	4 and more years	7
Degree of visual impairment	Partial/ mild sighted	3
	Moderate/ functional blind	3
	Severe/ total/ legal blind	4
Diagnostic/ eye test check-up done	Partial sighted	✓ 3
	Mild vision loss	✓ 3
	Total blind	✓ 4
Literacy centre's structure	School	0
	Community kinder-garden	4
	Under tree	6

Table 1: Participants' demographic information

4.2.1 Participants description

The (gender column) on the table above shows that there are more female (6) adult learners with visual impairment who attend AUPE literacy classes than their male (4) counterparts in Omusati region.

The age category column shows that the majority (7) of adult learners with visual impairment who attend the AUPE programme are from 45 years old and above.

The source of income column shows that most of the adult learners with visual impairment (7) who attend the AUPE programme in Omusati region relies on old-age pension, whereas (3) relies on disability grant as the source of income. It also shows that none of the participant was employed.

The number of years in literacy column shows that the majority (7) of the adult learners with visual impairment have been in the literacy programme for four years or more, in comparison to (3) participants who spent 3 years in literacy programme.

The degree of visual impairment column shows that (3) adult learners have partial vision loss, another (3) have moderate vision loss, whereas (4) are totally blind. All (10) participants indicated that they have undergone eye test check-up at a medical facility.

The last column shows the nature of the physical structures which form up the literacy classes. It shows that the majority participants (6) attend classes under trees. Only (4) of them indicates being accommodated in the community kinder-garden. None of the participants mentioned being accommodated at any local school.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

4.3.1 Attendance and accessibility

Participants were asked to indicate their homes from where they would come to the literacy centres for classes. Responses showed that not all participants' houses were close to literacy centres, as some travelled long distances to reach their literacy centres. Observation has also confirmed of walking long distance by some individual learners. Tobias remarked:

> *"I travel long distance to reach the classes and sometimes I find others have already started."* (Tobias (27), 16 July 2019)

All participants indicated that the nature of the literacy centres did not restrict their movements. They were responding to the question of whether their centres had necessary structures that support their movement. The researcher, however, observed

that only one centre had a proper brick-walled structure which also serves as a community kinder-garden. Other two centres used trees as classrooms and learners had to endure the scorching heat of the sun, strong harsh winds and rain.

Mukwaanime elaborated:

> *"Our literacy centre was accommodated at the local school in the past, and the school management informed us to look for a place elsewhere. We relocated at the kinder-garden which is far from my house, and that made me to attend less the classes"* (Mukwaanime (85), 16 July 2019).

Learners with partial to mild visual impairments indicated that they walked to their literacy centres with minimal challenges. They walked alone without assistance from someone, to and from the literacy classes. They used walking canes to help them find their way around. Learners who are totally blind, however, had to be accompanied on a daily basis for them to attend literacy classes.

4.3.2 Enrolment in the programme

On the question of enrolment in the programme, participants gave responses that were consistent. They reported to have started very well but during the course of time, some of the activities are no longer stimulating. Many learners quit due to long distance and too many personal responsibilities. Some were apprehensive because they were apparently told that their centre was due to be closed. All respondents indicated that they had high expectations in the beginning but were then sceptical given the challenges which the programme faced.

4.3.3 People's reaction

Participants shared their experiences with the local people regarding perceptions and attitudes. All participants affirmed that the local community members were supportive of the learners' decision to enrol for literacy classes notwithstanding the hardship thereof. People understood what was happening each time they would see the participants attending literacy classes.

4.3.4 Participation in class activities

When asked what classroom activities they do, the respondents answered that they normally do reading in English using the Perkin Braille machines, and counting using flames and wooden boards. The researcher observed one learner demonstrates how to count using dominoes but could not ascertain the lesson presentation thereof.

He found out that participants were made to repeat the available Braille materials they had learned already. He attributed the repetition to the lack of advanced learning materials that prevented learners from advancing to the next subject contents/ modules of the programme.

Matias recounted:

> *"We keep on repeating the same thing. Our teacher told us that there are no books. Some learners got frustrated and drop out"*
>
> (Matias (67), 16 July 2019)

One participant raised an issue of concern related to the examination papers. Examination papers were presented in printed medium and the promoter with visual impairment have to find someone who could read the printed material to enable him to translate them into Braille language.

All but one participant indicated that they were struggling to learn and understand the content of Mathematics compared to English. The respondents indicated their centres lacked proper table and chairs, Braille machines, frames, wooden boards, talking calculators, walking canes and special papers.

Possible alternatives

Respondents expressed their personal opinions on the question of what they would want to be done that might encourage them to fully participate in the classroom activities. They mentioned the need for constructing proper structures that would provide safety and security to the sensitive machines as well as bring to an end the use of trees as classrooms. They also proposed to have all the AUPE primers transcribed into Braille format.

4.3.5 Literacy teacher/ promoter and Learners Performance

Participants were requested to rate their own performance and also the competence of their promoters/ teachers in classrooms. Rating for the teachers' performance was good and for the learners was below average.

The respondents were of the opinions that their performances could improve for better if the classes were catered under conducive learning environment and each one was having his/her own assistive devices and materials.

Participants had different views on the question of learner support. Some said they did receive support from the Government and Non-Governmental Organizations while others reported not to have received any assistance from either the Government or Non-Governmental Organization. Other participants mentioned the community

members and a DEO used to visit them regularly to motivate and offer assistance on request.

4.3.6 Challenges

Responses to the challenges experienced on attending AUPE programme elicited that unconducive learning shelters, repetition of subject contents due to lack of primers, health-related issues, untranslated primers and examination papers into Braille, and insufficient number of blind people in the community to form a class in one locality.

Additional to the responses of the participants, the researcher observed the following challenges. All centres were very poorly resourced – they lacked necessary and suitable learning materials and assistive devices. Learners had to share one talking calculator and two Braille machines at a certain centre. At some centres, learners shared one Braille machine and there was no talking calculator. There were no resource rooms to store assistive devices which left the available machines to be exposed to the sun and rain. It was apparent that the centres were in dire need of assistive resources and materials.

Some of the challenges observed by the researcher are depicted by the pictures below:

Figures 3: Two trees that are used as literacy centres by the adult learners with visual impairment.

Figure 4: Two Braille machines, dominoes and one talking calculator the learners are sharing at one centre.

Figure 5: A makeshift chair and table that are used by the adult learners with visual impairment.

4.3.7 Possible Suggestions

The respondents have suggested that for AUPE programme improvement, AUPE printed primers need to be transcribed into Braille well in advance, provision of proper teaching shelters, and supply of assistive devices and special materials.

They also expressed the wish of wanting the district or regional office to have an official who was trained in Braille, training or refresher courses to be provided regularly, and the need of modern electrical Braille machines, to be in par with the demand of the changing society.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study. The next chapter will discuss the main findings of the study, and conclude the study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly discusses in details the findings of this study. It also presents the conclusions drawn from the research results as well as specific recommendations for future engagement.

5.2 Biographical data

This study could not confidently establish nor explain why female adult learners with visual impairment who attended literacy classes were more than their male counterparts. It is also unclear why all literacy promoters in all centres that participated in this study were males. Therefore, how gender affects the successful implementation of the literacy programme in the selected centres remains unclear.

The results of this study demonstrated that the majority of the participants were 45 years old and above notwithstanding the entry age level into the adult literacy programme has been set at a minimum of 15 years old (DAE, 2010). Mwamwenda (1996) argues that maturation plays a significant role in adult education. It is argued that people in late adulthood, more than any other age, experience more problems with their senses of hearing and sight. That could somewhat explain the high number of adult learners with visual impairment in this study. Moreover, the age group of 45 years old and above are in line with the Presidential Commission on Education, Training and Culture (1999) which placed more emphasis on the role of Life Long Learning (LLL) in creating a culture of learning throughout life (MBEC, 1999).

Old-age pension grant could be another contributing factor. Participants used the old-age pension grant as an extrinsic motivator to attend classes. Participants who could not benefit from the pension grant received disability social grant benefits, instead.

The study findings have revealed that seven (7) of the participants have been in the literacy programme for more than five years. According to AUPE curriculum, the programme was developed to take the course of three years (DAE, 2009). However, three (3) of the participants indicated that they have to repeat the subject contents/ modules due to the unavailability of primers. Thorndike theory of the *law of effect* states that a satisfying state of affairs leads to repetition of the behaviour, whereas an annoying state of affairs weakens a response (Mwamwenda, 1996, p. 199). That theory concurs with this study findings, as it was revealed that some of the adult visually impaired learners ended up dropping out of the programme, and one cannot rule out the relentless repetition and infinite time-frame for the programme completion under difficult circumstances the participants experience. Indabawa (2000) asserted that rural adults with visual impairments were responsive to literacy if it has the potential to benefit and meet their felt needs and aspirations.

The study findings have also dissected the degree of visual impairments which are portrayed by the adult learners with visual impairment. Three (3) participants indicated as having partial vision loss, other three (3) have moderate vision loss, and four (4) have severe vision loss. Douglas and McLinden (2005) described visual impairment as a broad term that covers a wide continuum of loss in visual function. "Severe vision loss" or "totally blind" is also referred as "legal blindness". This is when vision cannot be corrected to better than 20/400 in the better eye or when the visual field is 20 degrees or less, even with a corrective lens (Hardman, Drew & Egan, 2005).

"Moderate vision loss" or "functional blindness" is the label given to a learner who is unable to use sight and must rely on his/ her other senses to learn and get around (Hardman et al, 2005).

Learners who are "mild/ partially sighted" have a visual acuity of less than 6/18 but equal to or better than 3/60 in metrical terms (Resnikoff et al., 2008). They need spectacles and other devices to enhance their residual sight. The literature also refers to this group as learners with low vision

There are many aspects of visual function, including visual acuity (the ability to resolve detail), accommodation (the ability to focus), the field of vision (the area that can be seen), colour vision, and adaptability to light. According to Cox and Dykes (2001), categories of visual impairments reflect more than just visual acuity. They explained that students 'ability to use vision, as well as how much they use other senses for learning are aspects of each category (Bishop, 1996; Turnbull, et al. 2002). The lack of visual function is one of the lead factors that contribute to the adult learners dropping out of the programme as there are no strong supportive systems in place to provide remedial assistance for these learners.

This study finding revealed that all adult learners with visual impairment have undergone the eye tests check-up. However, there was no evidence if they were categorized rightly to the group they aligned themselves. According to Salvia et al. (2013), a vision specialist usually assesses functional vision through systematic observation of a learners' response to various types of paper, print sizes, and lighting conditions. However, there is lack of evidence whether the categories of visual impairments have been considered or assessed when the adult learners with visual impairment were enrolled in the AUPE programme.

The study finding analysed that "functional integration" described by Dean (1996) as the locational and social association of students with special needs with their fellows which leads to joint participation in educational programmes; applies to the

arrangement of the literacy centres of the adult learners with visual impairment, observed in the study.

The study made an observation of the centre's structure to establish if the adult learners with visual impairment were learning under a conducive learning environment. The study findings found that four (4) adult learners with visual impairment were learning under a brick-walled structure without windows, whereas six (6) were accommodated under trees. These structures were observed to be in a dilapidated state, which posed danger to students with visual impairment. That was not in line with Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs which has identified safety as one of the human needs, which requires that one is safe from physical or psychological maltreatment, and is in an environment that is secure, stable and free from threats (Maslow, 1954; 1968). Visual impairment has many limitations that have more educational implications, but assigning adult learners with visual impairment to learn under the tree may portray a gross inhumane treatment and may pose additional risks which may be attributed to environmental factors such as rain, wind, etc. The Policy Guidelines of 2012-2016 has clearly stated that the NLPN/ AUPE programme shall use school classrooms and government buildings that are conducive for educational purposes. Where stakeholders' facilities are used, these should meet the minimum criteria for educational facilities such as enclosed shelter, availability of chairs and desks appropriate for adult learners, adequate lighting and good ventilation as well as the availability of a writing board, as set out by MoE/DAE. However, the research findings have painted a different picture to what the policy guideline has asserted and what observed in the field, as it was revealed that none of the programme sites was conducted in an enclosed classroom (school/educational facilities).

5.3 Participants' views

The study findings revealed that all participants were living in the neighbourhood where their literacy classes are provided, and they had no problem to reach their literacy centres on their own even though some have to travel long distance. This revelation shows that the participants did not require a boarding accommodation to be near their literacy centres as it is done in some localities like at Sauyemwa in Kavango east region where the pilot study was conducted. One of the participants revealed that the challenges which are related to personal problems became too much to handle and this has led to absenteeism and irregular attendance which has caused one of the AUPE centre to be closed down.

The findings revealed that six (6) of learners with partial and mild vision loss showed that they have mastered the art of moving on their own to attend the literacy classes. Four (4) of learners with severe vision loss revealed that they either walk in pairs with the assistance of one learner with mild or moderate vision loss, guided by the walking canes. The studies by Salvia, Ysseldyke and Bolt, (2013) highlighted that severe visual impairment is presumed to adversely affect learners' educational development, and learners with this disability are presumed to require special education services and curricular adaptations such as mobility training, instruction in Braille, and talking books.

The study findings found that the community members' behaviours towards the adult visually impaired learners were satisfactory. That was in line with Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory which is based on the interdependence between different organisms and their physical environment (Donald, et al. 2009). The challenge was just on the reluctance of the nearby schools and the local councillors' offices to work

together and offer necessary support to the adult learners with visual impairment especially on securing them a safe shelter. Conversely, adult learners with visual impairment find it hard to attend classes regularly due to health-related issues, darkness, and distance. Recent statistics from learners' enrolment and attendance registers for NLPN/ AUPE indicated that the numbers of adults with visual impairments in the adult literacy program at present seem low (DAE, 2016). This may be attributed to the fact that adults with visual impairment, particularly those eligible to be integrated into the program are not known to the literacy teachers and are not receiving the services they may require.

5.3.1 Participation in class activities

The study findings revealed that the classroom activities that adult visually impaired learners undertake were English and Mathematics subjects using Braille machines and wooden boards. However, the learners have not indicated whether they are taught other subjects such as *'Know your Land and People'; 'Yourself: Body, Mind and Soul'; 'Livelihood for All'; 'Science in Our Daily Lives'* which are AUPE core subjects. Other subjects offered in the programme are such as *'Making a Living', and 'Living Off the Land and the Waters'* which are AUPE optional subjects (DAE, 2009). They have not denied the fact that the subjects' contents were not easy and AUPE primers were not transcribed into Braille. However, the skills acquisition theory as proposed by (Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016) is crucial for this study finding as it may help to bridge the gap between the status quo and the desirable skills transfer' mechanisms which are relevant to the adult learners with visual impairment. This could not be possible without the availability of the assistive devices identified by the participants such as chairs, tables, Braille machines, flames, wooden boards, talking

calculators, walking canes and special papers. However, the adult learners with visual impairment have emphasized the provision of a shelter that is conducive to the learning environment as a motivator that may encourage them to fully participate in the classroom activities.

5.3.2 Performance and Learner support

The study findings revealed that there was a mismatch on the rating for the promoters/ teachers' performance which was well on track, whereas for the learners was below average. That may be attributable to the learners' understanding of the subjects' contents which was not the same. However, one may expected if promoters were facilitating well, learning outcome was expected to be in par with the teaching.

The study findings revealed that the performance of the majority of the adult learners with visual impairment was below average. To improve the performance of the learners, the number of strategies needs to be employed. Firstly, skills acquisition theory should be used to accommodate strategies such as transfer of learning, transformational learning, active learning, sequential learning, and structured-discovery learning (Wadegaonkar, Sonawane & Uplane, 2016). Secondly, nine (9) adaptation types in the form of *size, time, level of support, input, difficulty, output, participation, alternate* and *substitute curriculum* as proposed by Smith (2006), must be strengthened. Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, (2006, p.53 cited in Vygotsky, 1978) posited that the learners who are slower at completing tasks should be given tasks that are within the learner's zone of proximal development. Crossman (1959) provided an early view of how practice leads to performance improvements. One respondent has even indicated that he needs his own Braille machine to practice at home.

Even though the study findings revealed that the adult learners with visual impairment have placed more confidence in the competency and capability of their literacy promoters, the final analysis revealed that more emphasis need to be aligned at capacity building and continuous professional development.

Moreover, the findings revealed that the majority of the adult learners with visual impairment have received no learner support either from an immediate or distant support network. Therefore, partnership and collaboration from various stakeholders are viewed as crucial on the effective implementation of the adult literacy program for the visually impaired learners.

5.3.3 Programme challenges

The major challenge revealed by the study findings was that adult learners with visual impairment being taught under the tree. That is supported by the literature review which has stated that challenges associated with the physical environment for adult literacy classes include unconducive learning environment, lack of resources, and lack of support from different stakeholders (White Paper, 2001). The report implied that some classes of the adult learners with visual impairment were conducted under facilities meant for sighted people without any modification, while others held under the trees, and distance to reach the literacy centre is another challenge faced by the adult learners with visual impairment. Even though more than half of literacy classes nationally are being taught under the trees especially in rural areas, the case of the adult learners with visual impairment should be treated differently. Open space may pose hazardous risks such as being exposed to be bitten by snakes or stray dogs.

Repetition of subject contents/ modules of the AUPE programme due to lack of primers was another identified challenge. This situation may create the class to be redundant as learners may get demotivated for doing the same thing over and over.

Another challenge identified was health-related issues. Some of these issues may be aggravated by vision loss as learners have to visit the medical facilities frequently for follow-up medical treatment. In the same vein, some of the health-related issues may emanate from accidental injury due to vision loss.

Un-transcribed primers into Braille was another raised concern. One participant indicated that he had to find someone who can read for him while he transcribes the printed materials into Braille, which is time-consuming.

A case of finding a reasonable number of blind people in the community makes it hard to establish classes for adult with visual impairments; was another challenge. The study has also revealed that one AUPE centre was overwhelmed by challenges such as un-transcribed primers into Braille and lack of materials which caused the learners to be demotivated and resulted in learners' drop out. All the challenges identified in the study findings may directly or indirectly affect the adult learners with visual impairment either socially, emotionally, behaviourally or financially, as the literature review has earlier elaborated.

Furthermore, the study findings acknowledged the fact that the participants' views collaborate with the researcher's observation concerning the unconducive learning environment as well as the lack of assistive devices and materials. However, there was no observable classroom activities to establish the learners' participation in the lesson presentation due to the interview timing.

5.3.4 Possible alternatives

The findings suggested that the provision of proper shelters should improve the well-being of those learners involved in the programme. Moreover, AUPE primers should be transcribed into Braille well in advance, and assistive devices and special materials must be provided on time.

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2016) the following areas of content may need an improvement to meet the specific sensory learning disability; Good light or low vision aids; white chalkboards; sitting near the chalkboard; Braille reading materials in severe cases of visual impairment; big printed written materials; audio tape recorders for recording spoken speech; emphasis of audio, tactile and kinaesthetic activities; magnification of the written activities; prescription contact lenses or glasses to be worn; use differentiated instructional methods; and parental involvement.

The study findings suggest additional information that a district or regional office should be represented by an official(s) who was trained in Braille. This implies that the District Adult Education Officers and Regional Education Officers who are the eyes of the adult learners with visual impairment should be capacitated on using the Braille machines. Training or refresher courses for the promoters with visual impairment should be provided regularly, and the need for modern electrical Braille machines should be procured to be in par with the demand of the changing society. Additionally, by integrating the adult learners with visual impairment into its programme, the Adult Education Directorate would not meet its intended goals if it fails to recognize the inter-agencies collaboration and partnership (DAE, 2008). This is supported by a literature review that indicates a need for collaboration as an

important aspect for the successful implementation of inclusive education (Thomas *et al*, 1998).

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions made, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

The research findings revealed that no centre for the adult learners with visual impairment indicated having a Class/ or Community Literacy Committee (CLC). Therefore, it is recommended that the Class/ or Community Literacy Committee must be established at all centres to ensure that learning in the class and community takes place as expected. The CLC should also help the promoter in securing a suitable meeting place, which is conducive to learning. They should also mobilize in the community to identify the suitable literacy promoter, possible adult learners with visual impairment, as well as support and supervise the literacy programme (DAE, 2009).

The research findings identified that the learners' understanding of the subjects' contents was not the same and they have to repeat subjects. That indicates that placement assessments were not made to make sure the learners were placed on the right stages. Due to a varying degree of visual impairments revealed in the study, learners' profiling through early assessment and identification must be made.

The findings revealed that it was only at one centre where the adult learners with visual impairment were visited regularly by their District Education Officer. That was supported by the White Paper 6 of 2008 which asserted that these opportunities requires the existence of necessary support structures in and outside the institution,

such as a District Support Team (DST), to ensure that educators have access to the support that they need (Department of Education [DoE], 2008). Hence, it is recommended that the District Education Officers must visit and offer support regularly to the classes of the adult learners with visual impairment. The District Education Officers should be capacitated on using the Braille machine to provide learning support. Teaching assistants should be made available where necessary as the promoters with visual impairment cannot handle the classes alone without additional support. It was also revealed that most classes never received any local support, hence partnership and collaboration between local stakeholders is highly recommended. Therefore, it is recommended for the National Federation for Visually Impaired to be brought on board, for future training synergies and provision of other needed special necessities.

As lack of assistive devices was identified in the findings, this study recommends that special materials must be ordered and provided on time to the classes of the adult learners with visual impairment. Due to the identified lack of transcribed AUPE primers and materials at class level, the region is recommended to order the materials on time and stock them at the Regional office.

The identified challenges of long-distance to the class may require the provision of walking canes to be provided to each learner with visual impairment. Each learner must also be provided with his/her own Braille machine. For safety reason, first-aid kits must be provided at each centre. The study has established that the root causes for the lack of assistive devices and materials is unavailability of funds to procure those special resources. Therefore, the central and regional government must invest in the

education of the adult learners with visual impairment programme, by allocating enough budget to procure the costly assistive devices and special materials.

The study findings shared that conducive physical facilities were a major concern. Therefore, the region must make arrangements for the centres of the adult learners with visual impairment to share the public or private local facilities.

The study findings identified four (4) participants with severe vision loss. It is recommended for the mobility skills training to be provided to these adult learners with visual impairment.

The study findings revealed a mismatch between the competency of the literacy promoters and adult learners with visual impairment which was on the range of "good" and "below average". It is recommended for the regional office must recruit qualified and competent promoters with visual impairment, and the learners should be placed into correct stages.

It was established through empirical findings and literature study that extensive activities are taking place at the adult literacy centres. However, there is no indication of the effectiveness of the programme (MBSC, 2003). Therefore, further research on efficacy and quality assurance of the adult literacy programme is recommended. In addition, a further study is recommended on the quality of life and livelihood of adult learners with visual impairment who completed the adult literacy programme.

5.5 Conclusion

This study concluded that the adult learners with visual impairment of Omusati region are faced with various challenges regarding inclusion into the AUPE programme. These challenges are such as unconducive learning shelters, repetition of modules due to lack of primers, health-related issues, untranslated primers and examination papers into Braille, isolated cases of blind people which make it hard to form a class in one locality and the low number of learners.

One could give credit where it is due on the best practices such as sacrificing to attend the literacy classes under difficult circumstances, walking long distances and sometimes in darkness to and from the literacy classes, perseverance to repeat the same stages and modules due to unavailability of the materials, forming pairs to assist one another to navigate the way to attend the literacy classes, attending the classes under unconducive learning environment, and keep going without enough assistive devices and materials.

Even though the District and Regional Office of the Omusati region has done what they could do to provide the limited assistive devices and materials to the classes of the adult learners with visual impairment, much is still required. Collaborative efforts from various stakeholders are needed to turn the challenges into opportunities.

The researcher commends the management and staff of the Regional Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture in Omusati region for the effort they have made in accommodating and supporting the adult learners with visual impairments into adult literacy programme irrespective of challenges beyond their control.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

My name is Waldheim Angula Uusiku (Student Number: 9968407), I am a Masters of Education (Inclusive Education) student at the University of Namibia. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of the visually impaired adult learners who are attending the AUPE programme in the Omusati region. I assure you that you will remain anonymous and no record of your responses will be kept for any purpose other than research.

Instructions

- There are no right or wrong answers to questions contained in this interview. Please feel free to respond to interview questions.
- To guarantee confidentiality, your responses will be handled anonymously, that means you are not required to give your name to the interviewer instead the identification codes will be used.
- Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.

SECTION A: Biographical Information

1. Name Code: _____ 2. District Code: _____ 3. Centre Code: _____

Gender		**Age Categories**	**Source of Income**	**No. of years in AUPE**	**Number of years in literacy**	**Degree of visual impairment**	**Diagnostic test is done Yes/ No**	**Centre's structure**
Male	Female	15-24	Employment	1	0-2	Mild vision loss		School
		25-35	Self-employment	2	2-3	Moderate vision loss		Church
		35-45	Social grant recipient	3	3-4	Severe vision loss		Under tree
		45-55	None	4 & more	and above			Community Hall

SECTION B: Attendance and accessibility experiences

1.1 Do you live in this area?

.....

1.2 How did you started with literacy classes and eventually ended up in AUPE?

.....

.....

1.3 What are other people reacting when they see you attending AUPE classes?

.....

.....

1.4 Does your centre have the necessary structures that support your movement?

.....

.....

1.5 Who assist you to move around your centre?

.....

.....

1.6 What challenges did you encounter with attendance?

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.....

.....

.....

SECTION C: Participation

2.1 What classroom activities you do?

.....

.....

.....

2.2 How do you find the content of your subjects' matters?

.....

.....

.....

2.3 Which assistive devices and learning materials your centre is lacking?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.4 What you wanted to be done that might encourage you to fully participate in the classroom activities?

.....

.....

.....

.....

SECTION D: Learner Support and Performances

3.1 How do you rate your classroom performances?

Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Better ☐ Bad ☐

3.2 Do you think your literacy teacher is capable to teach AUPE stage?

.....

.....

3.3 What assistance you think can improve your performances?

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.....

.....

3.4 Do you receive any form of Learner Support from the Government or NGOs?

.....

.....

.....

SECTION E: Programme challenges and improvement

4.1 What problems did you experience with AUPE programme so far?

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.....

.....

4.2 How do you want the AUPE programme to be improved?

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.....

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.....

4.3 Any other experiences you would like to share about AUPE programme?

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.....

.....

.....

I thank you very much for your time and God bless!

APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Date:	
Observer:	
Literacy centre:	
	PHYSICAL FACILITIES:
	Comments
☐ Mobility	
☐ Building structure	
☐ Classroom facility	
☐ Seating arrangement	
☐ Boarding (if any)	
	INSTRUCTIONAL ASPECTS:
	Comments
☐ Lesson Plan	

□ Lesson Presentation	
□ Assistive devices	

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNAM
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE/466/2019 **Date: 21 June, 2019**

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

Title of Project: The Visually Impaired Adult Learners' Experience Of The Adult Upper Primary Education Programme: A Case Of Omusati Region

Researcher: WALDHEIM A. UUSIKU

Student Number: 9968407

Supervisor(s): *Dr. C. Chata*

Take note of the following:

(a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.

(b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.

(c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.

(d) The UREC retains the right to:

(i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,

(ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

Dr. E. de Villiers: HREC Chairperson

Ms. P. Claassen: HREC Secretary

APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR A PERMISSION LETTER TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

0814021818

PO Box 22181

Windhoek

25 June 2019

Ms Sanet Steenkamp

Executive Director

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

P/Bag 13186

Windhoek

Cc. The Regional Director of Education: Omusati Region

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: PERMISSION FOR ACCESS TO OMUSATI REGION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON VISUALLY IMPAIRED ADULT LEARNERS.

I, the undersigned Education Officer in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture: Directorate of Adult Education at Head Office, and a student at the University of Namibia (Student nr 9968407) doing a Master of Education (Inclusive Education), is hereby request for a permission to conduct an academic research at Omusati region, as a part of the requirement of a Master programme. My topic for study is entitled *"The visually impaired adult learners' Experience of Adult Upper Primary Education Programme: A case of Omusati region"*.

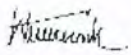
The result of this study will help the Directorate of Adult Education and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in the identification of challenges and improvement mechanism experienced by the visually impaired adult learners of Adult Upper Primary Education programme in Omusati region in particular, and Namibia in general.

The study is scheduled to take place during the second week of July 2019 at Oneeya, Omaandi, and Otamanzi literacy centre, in the Omusati region. Utmost care will be taken not to interrupt the normal literacy classes.

The target group's vulnerability to unethical conducts during the research process will be avoided. The findings of the study will be made available to the relevant authority.

I thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,



Waldheim A. Uusiku waldeangie@yahoo.com

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61 -2933202
Fax: +264 61- 2933922
Enquiries: G. Munene
Email: Gibson.Munene@moe.gov.na

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

File no: 11/1/1

Mr Waldheim A. Uusiku
P. O. Box 22181
Windhoek
Email: waldeangie@yahoo.com
Cell: 081 402 1818

Dear Mr. Uusiku,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OMUSATI REGION

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct an academic research for your Master's Degree on *"The Visually Impaired Adult Learners' Experience of Adult Upper Primary Education Programme: A Case Study of Omusati region in Namibia"*, is here with granted. You are requested to present the letter of approval to the Regional Director to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Ministry. You may contact Mr G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) on the above contacts to submit your provisional summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you upon completion of your study.

Sincerely yours

2009 -07- 03

SANET L. STEENKAMP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Executive Director.

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: The Adult Visually Impaired Learners' experience of the Adult Upper Primary Education Programme: A Case of Omusati Region.

REFERENCE NUMBER: NA

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Waldheim Uusiku

ADDRESS: PO Box 22181, Windhoek

CONTACT NUMBER: (061) 2933131 / 0814021818

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the study staff or doctor any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at The University of Namibia and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of

the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and Namibian National Research Ethics Guidelines.

1. **What is this research study all about?**

   The qualitative research design shall be used and twelve (12) adult visually impaired learners from two literacy centres, namely Oneeya, Omaandi and Otamanzi of the Omusati Region will be selected using purposive sampling technique. Data will be collected by means of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews using an Interview Guide, field notes, capturing photos and tape recording. The interpretative phenomenological analysis will be used to group and categorize the themes to form the patterns.

2. **Why have you been invited to participate?**

   This study intends to establish visually impaired adult learners' subjective experience of Adult Upper Primary Education Programme in the Omusati region. The past studies revealed that visually impaired adult learners were not given fair chances to express their views.

3. **What will your responsibilities be?**

   The data collection procedure will be face-to-face interviews, supplemented by field notes and tape-recording. The process will be voluntary, and the participants' privacy and confidentiality will be maintained. The interview session is expected to last for 15 minutes per individual participant, lasting for four days.

4. **Will you benefit from taking part in this research?**

   It is anticipated that the results of the study will be informative enough to provide a fundamental indication on the subjective experience of the visually impaired adult

learners, to enhance the implementation of the Adult Upper Primary Education programme in Omusati region for benchmarking.

5. **Are there in risks involved in your taking part in this research?**

   No serious adverse effects will be anticipated during the course of the exercise. Assurance and protection will be preserved to minimize possible physical and psychological harm.

6. **If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?**

   The rights of the participants to take part or withdraw in the research will be guaranteed.

7. **Who will have access to your medical records?**

   The information collected will be treated as confidential and protected. The identity of the participant will remain anonymous, during thesis publication. The copyright for the thesis will be strictly sanctioned to the University of Namibia.

8. **What will happen in the unlikely event of some form of injury occurring as a direct result of your taking part in this research study?**

   You are humbly requested to provide your next-of-kin contact number in case of unforeseeable circumstances.

9. **Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

   This study is for academic-purpose only, and the researcher shall incur the costs involved on own.

10. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

a) *You should inform your family practitioner or usual doctor that you are taking part in a research*

study. (Include if applicable)

b) *You should also inform your medical insurance company that you are participating in a research study. (Include if applicable)*

c) *You can contact Dr Charles Chata at tel 0813014020 if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.*

d) *You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications* **at +264 061 2063061; pclaassen@unam.na** *if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.*

e) *You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.*

11. **Declaration by participant**

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled *(insert title of study)*.

I declare that:

a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.

b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.

c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.

d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) .....
2005.

....

Signature of participant Signature of witness

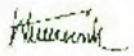
12. **Declaration by investigator**

I *(Waldheim Uusiku)* declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to .....
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter. *(If an interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below.*

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) .....

2005.



....

Signature of investigator Signature of witness

13. **Declaration by interpreter**

I *(name)* declare that:

a) I assisted the investigator (*name*) ..... to explain the information in this document to (*name of participant*) ..... using the language medium of (Oshiwambo, Oshiherero, Afrikaans, etc.)

APPENDIX G: AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

TEMPLATE OF THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AT THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED ADULT CENTRES IN OMUSATI REGION

PARTICIPANTS	ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME	CENTRE
3 Visually impaired adult learners	Face-to-face semi-structured interview	01h06 (22 minutes per each individual session)	Omaandi, (Ogongo)
4 Visually impaired adult learners	Face-to-face semi-structured interview	01h30 (22 minutes per each individual session)	Oneeya (Ogongo)
4 Visually impaired adult learners	Face-to-face semi-structured interview	01h30 (22 minutes per each individual session)	Otamanzi (Ongandjera)