

ASSESSING THE APPLICATION OF LITERACY SKILLS TOWARDS
POVERTY ALLEVIATION BY GRADUATES OF THE NATIONAL LITERACY
PROGRAMME IN OSHIKOTO REGION, NAMIBIA

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Abstract

This study assessed the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation by graduates of the National Literacy Programme in Oshikoto region, Namibia. The study addressed three major questions that were regarded important in understanding how the use of literacy skills is contributing to poverty alleviation in the lives of the participants. The questions looked at the skills the literacy programme graduates in Oshikoto region acquired; how literacy skills acquired are used and the challenges preventing graduates from using skills acquired in order to alleviate poverty in their lives.

The study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to answer its research questions. Judgement sampling was used to select information-rich participants for the study. The researcher utilized one-on-one interviews and observations to collect data from 12 literacy programme graduates. Data collected from participants through interviews and observation was then analysed using the thematic content analysis method.

The findings of the study indicated that entrepreneurial, numeracy and communication in English skills were the most acquired skills by literacy programme graduates. The graduates are aware of the need to use the literacy skills they acquired and remain willing to use them in order to improve their living standard and alleviate poverty. Furthermore, the results show that failure to apply literacy skills is caused mostly by lack of finance. The results also produced new insight regarding how the literacy programme's curriculum can further be strengthened with skills that will significantly equip graduates to enable them to alleviate poverty in their lives.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASDSE	Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment
AUPE	Adult Upper Primary Education
CCN	Council of Churches in Namibia
DABE	Directorate of Adult Basic Education
DAE	Directorate of Adult Education
EFA	Education for All
HHP	<i>Harambee</i> Prosperity Plan
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCRST	National Commission on Research Science Technology
NLPN	National Literacy Programme in Namibia
NPC	National Planning Commission
SODEFITEX	Society de Development et des Fibres Textiles
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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tate is good because he is always with us at home” or she would say “oh mommy, you are going again? This was the most difficult moment, to make the little one understand that I had to go. But it also motivated me to work harder and finish what I started in order to give full attention to my sweet angels. The mere fact of just looking at them and wanting the best for them was the main motivator for me to stand up and work, work, work.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, the late Wilbardt Alfeus.

DECLARATIONS

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

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Name of Student

Signature

Date

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The intention of this study was to assess how adult learners who graduated from the National Literacy Programme in Namibia used the skills they acquired to alleviate or reduce poverty in their lives, with the purpose of revealing the practical benefits of the programme.

Swanepoel and De Beer (2011) argue that literacy is a key to self-dependency and a functional minimum requirement needed to meet one's personal and social needs. In addition, using literacy skills is emerging as the dominant paradigm in the adult literacy discourse. Moreover, Swanepoel and De Beer (2011) claim that it is believed, globally, that literacy is one of the most effective preventive weapons against poverty. In her message delivered on the International Literacy Day (08 September, 2013), Bokova (the Director-General for UNESCO) described literacy as "a basic right and an essential motor for human development. It paves the way to autonomy, the acquisition of skills, cultural expression and full participation in society" (UNESCO International Literacy Prizes, 2013, p.1).

In congruent with the above claim, UNESCO Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (2010) states that literacy is important because it is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Correspondingly, Education for All [EFA] (1993) affirms that there are good reasons why literacy should be at the heart of basic EFA: it is essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.

The above statements imply that a good quality basic education equips learners (young and old) with literacy skills for life and further learning. Therefore, literate adults are more likely to send their children to school, and are better able to access continuing educational opportunities. Moreover, literate societies are better geared to meet pressing developmental needs.

In support of the above suggestions, UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report (2006) argues that the acquisition of literacy education empowers any person to think positively, make good decisions about her/his living conditions and the society, and acquire other skills that can aid her/him economically and socially. In addition, UNESCO states that education is regarded as a human capital endowment that can be used for empowerment purposes, and a negative relationship is normally expected between poverty and education, with those better educated having higher income and thus less likely to be poor.

As part of the Education for All goals, the international community has also, along with Namibia, pledged to improve adult literacy levels by 50% between 2000 and 2015 (UNESCO, 2013). At the same time as part of its developmental goals, the Ministry of Education introduced a National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) in 1992 in order to provide basic literacy and numeracy skills to previously disadvantaged adults and out of school youths to enable them to contribute more effectively to national development (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2006). As stipulated in the National Plan of Action of 2001-2015, "...NLPN aims to achieve a total youth and adult literacy rate of 90% by 2015. The overall qualitative goal is to use NLPN to promote social, cultural, political and economic development nationwide, in order to

improve the quality of life for all people” (Government of Republic of Namibia, Education For All, 2002, p. 22).

The NLPN has four key qualitative development elements (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBESC], 2003): Social, cultural, economic and political development. The promotion of social development is characterised by poverty reduction, gender equality, and combating of the further spread of HIV/AIDS. Social development includes activities such as literacy and numeracy education, gender awareness training, programmes for adults living with disabilities and health education on HIV/AIDS (MBESC, 2003). Furthermore, the MBESC (2003) maintains that cultural development can be defined by the acceptance and tolerance of cultural diversity, and promoting of arts, culture and sport activities in communities. Economic development means that through literacy, employment will be created, citizens will be economically empowered, thus national economic growth and reduced income inequality is promoted. Likewise, Political development is characterised by the reduction of regional development inequalities, promotion of community participatory development and equity, and good governance.

According to the MBESC (1992), the National Literacy Programme in Namibia is a national plan which was developed in the early 1990s in consultation with government ministries, parliamentarians, political parties, churches, non-governmental agencies, regional commissioners, community groups and the private sector. Furthermore, the programme was built on a long tradition of literacy and adult education campaigns dating back to the early activities of the missionaries but most importantly, to the literacy campaign of the South West African People’s Organization (SWAPO) and

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) such as the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN).

The MBESC (1992) stipulates the NLPN stages as follows; at first, the NLPN comprised of three stages of learning, namely stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3. In stage 1, adult learners are taught reading and writing and basic numeracy in their mother tongue. This is open to people whose skills are very low and materials are designed to introduce learners to the basic syllables of their own mother tongue. At stage 2, learners consolidate, reinforce and extend the skills of literacy already acquired by studying especially prepared functional materials in agriculture, health and so on in their mother tongue. This means that, while seeking to improve, reinforce and sustain the skills acquired in stage one, the materials in stage two offer useful knowledge and skills in various topics such as agriculture, health education, small scale business, civics, etc. These topics are selected with the hope that they will provide knowledge and skills needed to improve the programme participants' quality of life. Stage 3 offers literacy and numeracy in English. Learners are introduced to Basic English. The emphasis is on communicative English and reinforcing developmental activities. The completion of the three stages in the NLPN is considered equivalent to grade 4 in the primary school system.

When the NLPN's first adult learners completed stage three in 1994, there were questions about the way forward, "subsequently, it was because of this need and the cry of the disadvantaged and marginalised adults to proceed with education, that Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) stage of learning or stage 4 was introduced" (Directorate of Adult Basic Education [DABE], 1998). The Directorate of Adult Education, therefore, planned the curriculum for the immediate follow up on Stage 3,

which is referred to as Stage 4 or the AUPE stage. The AUPE stage of learning is a three year programme and is equivalent to Grade 7 of Formal schooling (DABE, 1998).

The stage 4 consists of four core courses and four optional ones. Learners are expected to take six courses in all (MOE, 2009). The courses offered in stage 4 are as follows: Know your land and people, which is about history, geography, civic education; Yourself: body, mind and soul i.e. human biology, life skills, morals and religious education; Livelihood for all i.e. elementary business economics; Science in our daily lives; Making a living i.e. entrepreneurship skills; Living off the land and the waters which is about agriculture, forestry and fishing; English in everyday use, and finally Mathematics in our daily lives.

The aims of stage 4 of learning include “the development of functional numeracy skills and mathematical concepts and operations, and to apply mathematics in everyday life; to enable learners to contribute towards national economic development, to gain skills for income-generation and employment” (MOE, 2009, p.3). Furthermore, the curriculum of stage 4 is designed to “respond to the needs of the learners, considering personal and social development; development and work related skills; competencies and attitudes; quality of life improvement; mathematical and problem solving skills; technical and vocational skills; entrepreneurial skills; business and management skills; agriculture/farming for example, livestock production and fishery; market gardening and community development” (MOE, 2009, p. 5).

In line with these findings, it is evident that the NLPN curriculum (especially stage 2 up to stage 4) is supposed to equip participants with various livelihood skills that should enable them to improve their living standards. It is against this background that

the researcher's curiosity was aroused especially with regards to finding out whether the literacy programme learners (who completed all stages) had acquired any livelihood skills; whether they were applying skills they obtained from the programme into practice; and whether their lives had improved from applying these livelihood skills in terms of poverty reduction. The researcher strongly believes (and it is also of the programme) that according to the aim of the programme after learners go through the stage 4's curriculum and acquire skills on income-generation, they should be able to create and/or participate in livelihood activities in order to meet their basic needs and pull themselves or their families out of poverty.

The high literacy rates are associated with the efficiency of literacy programmes. UNESCO (2013) reported that the global adult literacy rate currently stands at 84%. Central Asia has the most effective literacy programme, and has the highest literacy rate of 100%. Sub-Saharan Africa has ineffective literacy programmes and constitutes 24% of the world illiteracy rate. Surprisingly, six of Sub-Saharan Africa's countries are found to have high literacy rates. Namibia is one of the 6 Sub-Saharan Africa's countries with a high literacy rate which is currently at 89% (Census, 2011). As a result, in September 2013, Namibia was awarded a Confucius prize by UNESCO for an excellent National Literacy Programme and for its efforts to promote literacy and non-formal education among disadvantaged adults with the aim of improving citizens' quality of life. The NLPN motivates adult participation and enables them to contribute to community and national development (MOE, 2009). According to Rogers (1993), only literacy programmes which integrate income-generating activities can motivate learners to participate and retain their levels of motivation. Rogers' view is supported by Sibiyi and Van Rooyen (2005), who observed that literacy programmes which start with livelihood skills seem to stand a stronger chance of motivating adult learners to

participate in literacy education. This claim is also supported by Bhola (1994) who believes that adults will be more easily attracted to functional literacy when literacy and the learning of economic skills are combined into one whole. Moreover, literacy programmes linked to income-generating activities attract more learners as they are able to acquire skills that help them to solve their felt needs. In support, Mwangi (2001) argues that adult literacy programmes which do not include livelihood components and skills training tend to be ineffective in terms of increased participation, higher attendance and retention, and completion rates. Thompson (2002) adds that meaningful literacy learning is determined by its linkage and application to the process of poverty reduction. Thompson's opinion seems to be derived from the Situated Cognition theory which posits that learning is more likely to occur and is guaranteed in authentic contexts (Seel, 2001). This implies that literacy should be meaningful when applied in real situations.

The researcher is convinced that the literacy programme in Namibia should be applauded for its strong and meaningful quality. The programme seems to fulfil a number of economic and social objectives for the benefit of its beneficiaries. However, Barton (1992) argues that people do not read in order to read, count in order to count, or write in order to write. Rather, people apply literacy skills in order to achieve ends and improve the quality of their lives. In other words, when people apply literacy skills, poverty levels should decrease, unemployment rates should diminish, stimulation of new job growth and average household income ought to rise and mortality rates should also decrease. In Namibia, numerous reports (Jauch, 2012; Mwinga, 2012; National Planning Commission [NPC], 2015; Namibia Statistics Agency [NSA], 2015; Census, 2011) show that thus far, the unemployment rate and poverty levels are still high and a majority of Namibians subsist below the poverty line. According to the NPC (2015),

26.9% (Upper-Bound Poverty line) of Namibians are regarded as poor, while the overall unemployment rate stands at 28.1% (NSA, 2015). Furthermore, Jauch, (2012) states that there is no doubt that many Namibians are still struggling to meet their basic needs. This could have a direct link to the effectiveness of the literacy programme.

Poverty has different dimensions, but the common dimension is consumption. The NPC (2002) classifies a household as being 'relatively poor' if it devotes over 60% of its expenditure to food, and 'extremely poor' if household expenditure exceeds 80%.

Other dimensions of poverty manifest in people's health, education and interaction within the society. The poor health dimension can be indicated by the number of underweight children and by the number of people dying before the age of 40 years. These are indications of being 'health poor'. Meanwhile, lack of education can be indicated by the number of illiterates or otherwise those known as 'education poor' (NPC, 2002). In Namibia, most dimensions of poverty are interlinked (NPC, 2002, P.19), meaning that a household suffering from one dimension is often suffering from another. UNESCO (2010, p.47) gives an example by stating that there is a link between maternal health and education. For instance, "women with education are more likely to delay and space out pregnancies and to seek health care support than those with no education".

The above finding suggests that the increment in literacy rates` has not been decreasing poverty levels in Namibia. Conversely, at regional levels, there seems to be a trend of poorer regions having lower literacy rates and richer regions having higher literacy rates (Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report, 2013). Figure 1 below shows Namibia's 14 regions (take note that Kavango includes: Kavango East and Kavango West regions). The figure shows that Oshikoto is the sixth region with a high literacy

rate of 88.2%; yet it is the second region with a high level of poverty whereby more than one third of its population is living under poverty (NPC, 2015).

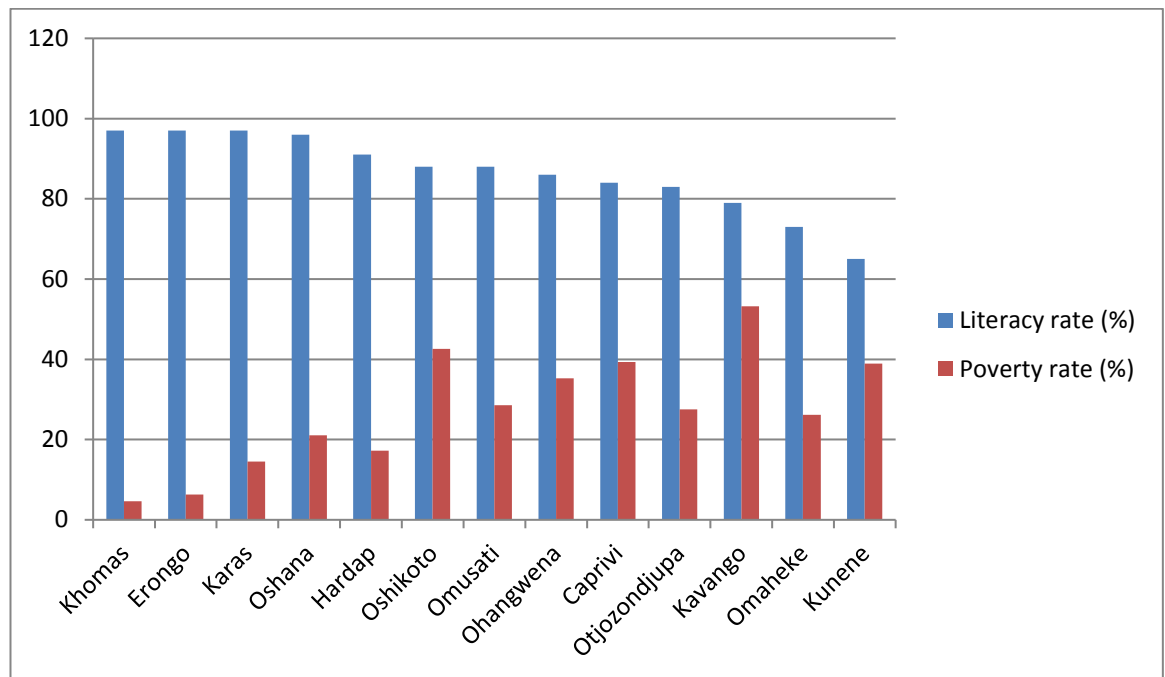


Figure 1: Regions' literacy rates compared to poverty levels (Adapted from Census, 2011 & NPC, 2015)

These findings provoke the following questions: if NLPN is meaningful, innovative and provides skills that should help participants solve their felt needs and thus contribute to the alleviation of poverty in the country, why are the poverty levels still high in different regions of the country where literacy rates are high? Do the people who completed the NLPN apply the acquired literacy skills to build self-reliant capacity and contribute to poverty alleviation and improvement of the quality of their lives? If they do, how do they do it? Generally, one can hardly talk about literacy in the real sense without talking about the context in which literacy is used. Quality literacy or meaningful literacy ought to be situated in authentic situations. Implied here is that the literacy acquired should be useful, valuable, practical and relevant to

participants' felt needs. Adult literacy should bestow confidence to participants to use the skills they have acquired from the programme to generate income and improve their current living situations.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Literacy is considered a key factor in promoting social well-being and poverty reduction. It is an internationally held belief that literacy is one of the pillars of national development and poverty will decline if everyone is provided and enjoys the benefits of quality basic education (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2011). Consistent with this premise, Namibia introduced a National Literacy Programme (NLPN) in order to provide basic quality education to adults and out of school youths. The purpose of NLPN is to promote socio-economic development and improve people's quality of life (MOE, 2006).

Although Namibia was rewarded with the Confucius prize for an excellent, successful and innovative literacy programme by UNESCO in 2013 (MOE, 2013), unemployment rates and poverty levels are none the less still high in the country (Mwinga, 2012). Namibia's literacy rate is currently rated at 89% (Census, 2011), the country's poverty level is currently at 26.9% (NPC, 2015). The theory of the positive correlation between increased literacy rate and poverty reduction seems to be inconsistent in Namibia. Consequently, this discrepancy calls for research on the quality of literacy skills the people who completed NLPN exhibit.

Since the inception of the NLPN, three evaluation studies have been conducted by the Ministry of Education. The first overall study conducted by Lind (1996) focused on policy analysis and the community impact of adult literacy. Some of its major findings

revealed that participation in NLPN has resulted in increased awareness, community participation, high self-esteem and respect. Furthermore, Lind's study revealed that adult learners join the literacy programme in order to learn mathematics, to be able to manage money when buying and selling and to continue education. Nevertheless, the findings were based on the skills participants wanted to gain from the programme, but no study was conducted to establish whether adult learners actually acquired those skills and how they use them practically in their daily lives towards poverty alleviation. This particular study established whether the literacy programme's skills are useful on a daily basis and whether the use of literacy skills is geared towards poverty reduction.

The second overall study was conducted by Kweka and Jeremiah-Namene (1999). Their focus was on capacity for implementation and reviewing post literacy and support programmes. This study's major finding was that promoters have minimal proper training, which in turn affect the quality of knowledge they transfer given the fact that they are in charge of giving meaningful literacy to the nation. The third evaluation study was conducted by Ramarumo and McKay (2008), and it focused on organisational structure, implementation and curriculum review of NLPN. The major findings from this evaluation study show the social use of literacy as reading the Bible, hymn books, local newspaper, literature on HIV/AIDS and literature from the Jehovah's Witnesses Church. Moreover, adult learners also use their acquired skills to complete job application forms, bank deposit slips and help with school children's homework. Conversely, these studies did not adequately and clearly report on how adult literacy graduates use the skills they acquire from the programme for improved livelihood.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the practical use of skills acquired by adult graduates of the literacy programme, with the purpose of revealing the practical benefits of the programme. This study focused on the Oshikoto region because Oshikoto is the sixth region with a high literacy rate, 88.2%; yet it is the region with the second highest level of poverty whereby more than one third of its population is under poverty (NPC, 2015).

1.3 Research questions

Research questions refer to questions which the researcher would like to be answered by carrying out the study. According to Prasad, Rao and Rehani (2001, p.19), “research questions use words such as what or how, which also help to specify whether the study discovers, seeks to understand, explores or describes the experiences”.

In order to explore how NLPN graduates apply the skills they have acquired from the programme, this study asked the following questions:

1. What skills have the NLPN graduates in Oshikoto region acquired from the programme?
2. How do NLPN graduates in Oshikoto region apply the skills they have acquired from the programme?
3. What challenges do graduates face in applying the acquired skills?

1.4 Significance of the study

Literacy helps people to cope better with their life's challenges (Lind, 2008), thus, effective application of literacy skills can be one of the preventive weapons against poverty. The identification of the use of skills which are acquired from the literacy programme can attract the attention of both government and development partners in Namibia and encourage them to design and review policies and programmes that can enhance the beneficiaries' standards of living. This study's findings may be a good lesson to countries, for example, other Sub-Sahara African countries, with a high illiteracy rate problem. Illiteracy is one of the crucial hindrances in improving their people's quality of life. These countries may learn responsive strategies to adult learners' practical needs when designing and/or reviewing their literacy programmes. Research conducted on this topic so far has not fully divulged how literacy skills acquired can help alleviate poverty amongst participants.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study's population was initially inclusive of both men and women who graduated from stage 4 of learning. However, upon receiving the list of names from officials of the Directorate of Adult Education in the Oshikoto region, the researcher realised that only one male graduated from this stage. Though the male participant was part of the sample, he could not give consent to take part in the study. Therefore, this study's findings cannot be gender representative nor can they be generalised to the larger population.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

In an ideal world, the study should have considered selected participants who, after completing the literacy programme, went to live out of Oshikoto region. However, due to the fact that these people were not directly contributing to the alleviation of poverty in Oshikoto region at the time of data collection, the researcher did not involve them in the study. Therefore, this affected the sample size, causing it to decrease from 22 to 12 participants.

1.7 Definition of terms

- Improved quality of life – this refers to reduced poverty levels, unemployment rates lowered, stimulation of new job growth and average household incomes increased and mortality rates decreased.
- Livelihood - is a means of making a living or the knowledge, skills and methods used to produce or obtain water, food, medicine, shelter, clothing and children's school fees etc., necessary for survival and well-being whether the economy is subsistence, monetized or a mixture of both.
- Literacy skills – in this study, simply refer to the things/abilities graduates learned from the programme, which enable them to perform certain tasks to improve their lives. It can also include acquisition of reading, writing, understanding, speaking, and numeracy skills and so on.
- Development – refers to the improvement in economic, social, political conditions of people in terms of reduction of poverty, inequality, injustice, unemployment etc.

- Functional literacy – refers to the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, work and in the community to achieve one’s goals and to develop one’s knowledge and potential. Unlike basic literacy, with its focus on acquiring skills, functional literacy deals with how people actually use such skills to live and work in society for improved quality of life.

1.8 Summary

This chapter covered the orientation of the study. There is no doubt that there is a relationship between literacy and poverty. The more literate people are, the less likely they are to be poor. It is imperative to know that literacy needs to be linked to livelihood, skills acquisition and other practical aspects of life. Therefore, meaningful literacy learning is determined by its linkage and application to the process of poverty reduction.

However, the Oshikoto Region’s literacy and poverty figures indicate that the increment in the region’s literacy rates has not decreased its poverty levels. As a result, this study aimed to find out how the Oshikoto region’s literacy programme graduates apply the skills they acquired from the programme to reduce or, better yet, eradicate poverty in their lives. Addressing this question can attract the attention of both government and development partners in Namibia and encourage them to design and review policies and programmes that can enhance the beneficiaries’ standards of living.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW, CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This study assessed the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation. Recent and old research books and journal articles on literacy both locally and internationally were reviewed. Some of them are Samardi (2012); Olufunke (2011); Schur (2011); Taylor (2006); Patton (2002); Thompson (2002); Seel (2001) and Lind (1996). The purpose of reviewing literature was to enhance the researcher's understanding on the topic through a critical analysis of other researchers' findings. According to Patton (2002), the importance of the literature review is that it can bring focus to a study, in such a way that it helps to discover what is already known, establish what is unknown and what the cutting-edge theoretical issues are. Patton's idea is supported by Best and Kahn (2006), who explains that a review of previous literature on a topic is essential because the researcher needs to demonstrate an understanding of the existing literature pertinent to his/her study.

Drawing from literature reviewed, it is fairly evident that there is a dynamic relationship between literacy and poverty reduction. The reviewed literature emphasised that people use literacy skills to reduce poverty in their lives worldwide (Oluoch, TMO & Enose, 2014).

Moreover, the literature review describes how the proposed research is related to prior research in statistics. It shows the originality and relevance of the research problem, specifically that the present research is different from other research done. The

literature review justifies the proposed methodology and it also demonstrates one's preparedness to complete the research (Anonymous, n.d.).

2.2 The Meaning of Literacy

The term literacy appears to be easy and understood by almost everyone. Many people have tried to define literacy in many ways over the years. The definition and understanding of literacy have been influenced by academic research, international policy agendas and national priorities, and international agencies. Thus, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines literacy as the ability of adults (persons who are 15 years and above) to identify, understand and use information from a variety of written sources for a variety of personal, social, economic and civic development purposes (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006, p. 30).

According to the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report (2006), various academics from wide ranging disciplines such as psychology, economics, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and history have been debating over the definition of literacy for several years. Coming from the debate, (including major traditions, critiques and approaches to literacy) four major understandings of literacy emerged:

Literacy as an autonomous set of skills – This refers to the understanding of literacy that it is a set of tangible skills, particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing, oral competencies and numeracy skills (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006).

Literacy as applied practiced and situated – This refers to functional literacy, i.e. the use of literacy skills in relevant ways. It focuses on how people apply the set of tangible skills to improve their lives in terms of socio-economic development (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006). .

Literacy as a learning process – This understanding views literacy as “an active and broad-based learning process, rather than a product of a more limited and focused educational intervention” (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006). Scholars who support this view see personal experience as a central resource for learning. This outlook is shared by Sumardi (2012) who says literacy is based on lifelong learning.

Literacy as text – This fourth understanding of literacy interprets literacy in terms of the subject matter and the nature of the texts that are produced and consumed by literate individuals (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006). This view interrogates whether the types of literacy taught in schools and adult programmes are relevant to the present and future lives of learners.

Literacy has been merely understood as a matter of knowing how to read and write. With time, the notion expanded from “viewing literacy as a simple process of acquiring basic cognitive skills, to using these skills in ways that contribute to socio-economic development, to developing the capacity for social awareness and critical reflection as a basis for personal and social change” (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006).

It is therefore undisputed that there is a connection between literacy and poverty reduction, and that literacy is a crucial socio-economic factor in poverty reduction. This is also confirmed by Olufunke (2011), who states that there is a significant effect

of literacy on freedom from poverty. Thus, this study focused on the notion of functional literacy which refers to someone's engagement in activities in which literacy is required to enable him/her to continue the use of reading, writing and calculations for his/her own, as well as his/her community's development.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is positioned within the National Policy on Adult Learning (MBESC, 2003). The government is aware that outcomes of learning by adults have significant benefits both for individuals and society as a whole. The policy states that adult learning can achieve economic growth and development; equitable social development and poverty reduction; sustainable environmental development; participatory democratic development; and personal development and empowerment. Furthermore, this policy illustrates that the government believes that the use of literacy skills can contribute to the alleviation of poverty. The study is further underpinned by the Autonomous Model of Literacy and Situated Cognition Theory. The two frameworks were regarded appropriate for this study because they both assume that literacy can autonomously influence social practices in a positive way. Furthermore, they advocate for the use of acquired literacy skills for improved living standard. Therefore, in this context literacy has a big role to play towards poverty alleviation.

2.3.1 Autonomous Model

The Autonomous model works from the assumption that literacy in itself autonomously will have positive effects on social practices. Introducing literacy to poor, illiterate people, villagers, and urban youth will have the effect of enhancing and

improving their economic prospects in terms of improving their livelihoods and making them better citizens (Street, 2005).

This model assumes that the acquisition of literacy will, in itself lead to, for example, higher cognitive skills, improved economic performance, greater equality and so on (Street, 2001). Literacy is seen as improving people's conditions "autonomously," irrespective of the social conditions people currently find themselves in. If literacy is expected to autonomously improve people's conditions, the researcher attempted to understand why this theory does not seem to work for literacy programme beneficiaries in Oshikoto region. This is because Oshikoto region has high literacy rate yet it has got high poverty levels. So the literacy programme seems not to autonomously alleviate poverty in people's lives in this region.

2.3.2 Situated Cognition Theory

According to Choi and Hannafin (1995), the Situated Cognition Theory has emerged as a powerful perspective in providing meaningful learning and promoting the transfer of knowledge to real life situations. Seel (2001, p.405) believes that "the theory of Situated Cognition aims to account for how individuals learn in environments that contain the external world to be understood, the individual's perceptions and internal representations of this world, and the individual's symbolic interactions with it". In this context, Seel further explains that learning is defined as the individual's ability to construct meaning by extracting and organising information from a given environment. Cognition consists of learning, thinking and acting, which are interactions between learners and situations. In the context of this study, graduates of the literacy programme acquired literacy skills to use in real life situations in order to improve their living conditions. The Situated Cognition theory regards literacy skills

as tools that need to be used in real life situations to bring about change in people's lives.

Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989, p.33) clarify the Situated Cognition idea as “people who use tools actively rather than just acquire them, by contrast, build an increasingly rich implicit understanding of the world in which they use the tools and of the tools themselves. The understanding of the world and of the tools, continually changes as a result of their interaction”.

The Situated Cognition theorists believe that learning is more likely to occur in authentic contexts. This implies that for literacy to be meaningful, it should be applied in real situations. People should not only read in order to read, count in order to count, or write in order to write. Rather, people should apply literacy skills in order to achieve ends and improve the quality of their lives (Barton, 1992). Thus, the Autonomous Model and Situated Cognition Theory influenced the researcher to investigate, learn and understand how literacy programme graduates use skills acquired from the programme.

2.4 The importance of literacy in poverty alleviation

According to Thompson (2002), literacy is meaningless if the application of basic knowledge, skills and attitude do not satisfy one's needs and improve living standards. Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO] (2000) argues that it is the use of a skill that matters. FAO further maintains that “someone who can read and will not read is considerably worse off than someone who cannot read, because the latter can be taught to read while the former is stuck in ignorance”.

According to Kishindo (1994, p. 20), “a high level of illiteracy hinders information exchange and the transfer of skills. Illiterate farmers, for example, have limited access to information that could help them to increase their agricultural output through the adoption of modern agricultural techniques, since the dissemination of these techniques is mostly through the print media”.

Kishindo further said that the majority of rural households depend on agriculture for their income or improved living standards, not knowing how to read will mean continued use of inefficient/futile production methods and this leads to poverty and undernourishment.

Wiesinger (1973) points out that a survey conducted by UNESCO on illiteracy revealed that countries with low economic development had high illiteracy rates. Thus, questions such as how could these nations develop if most of their people could not read and write arose. Therefore, literacy plays an important role in attacking poverty and in boosting economies, and improving people’s quality of life.

Economists concur as they state that out of several factors illiteracy is a major cause of poverty, which is why more need to be done than just introducing economic reforms or launching poverty alleviation schemes (UNESCO, 2001).

According to the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report (2014), universal literacy is fundamental to social and economic progress. The report further states that literacy is one of the keys to poverty reduction because increased levels of education not only help lift households out of poverty permanently but also guard against them falling into poverty. The above is evident in the following examples:

Dercon et al. (as cited in the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2014) recount that between 1994 and 2009, in Ethiopia's rural households where the head of the household had completed primary education, people were 16% less likely to be chronically poor. If this (Ethiopian situation) was experienced in Namibia, all people who went through the literacy programme were supposed to have reduced poverty levels in their lives because the Namibian literacy programme is equivalent to grade 7 (Ministry of Education, 2006). This would mean that most people in Namibia have completed grade 7, and should be less likely to be poor.

Furthermore, the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report (2014) team concluded that if all students in low income countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million out of 774 million people worldwide could be lifted out of poverty, which would be equivalent to a 12% cut in world poverty. Hanushek and Zhang (2006) correspondingly indicate that acquiring literacy and numeracy skills increases people's earnings. Adults in Afghanistan acquire literacy and livelihood skills to develop own economic initiatives, create self-employment opportunities and develop new productive skills in the process (Schur, 2011).

On a grand scale the correlation of poverty and literacy might hold statistically, but might not be applied to the local level or to particular situation, the proof being the Namibia situation.

2.5. Skills offered in the adult literacy programme

According to the MOE (2009), in stage 4 of learning, learners are expected to acquire some of the following skills:

- Communication/linguistics skills – learners need to learn how to speak the English language so that they will be able to ask for information, take part in discussions as well as writing personal and formal letters. e.g. job application letters and the ability to complete forms e.g. employment forms and write CV
- Mathematics skills - Adult learners need mathematics skills in order to solve problems involving numerical operations e.g. in managing businesses, applying mathematical skills in real life situations and managing household or livelihood activities such as monthly budgets.
- Life skills - such as being able to apply for a job, generate income by making use of business management skills and entrepreneurial skills acquired.

The above could imply that if an adult learner acquires any of the above-mentioned skills, he/she will be able to search for employment or start any kind of income generation activities.

Taylor (2006) investigated the informal adult learning and everyday literacy practices in Canada. The findings of the study show that oral communication, teamwork, problem solving, reading, computer, writing and numeracy skills were acquired from the literacy programme.

At national level, various evaluation studies on the literacy programme have been conducted since the inception of the programme in 1992 (MOE, 2006). A study by Lind (1996) indicated that adult learners join the literacy programme because they want to learn mathematics, to be able to control money when buying and selling and to continue education. However, it was not established whether adult learners' wishes were met.

Moreover, Ramarumo and McKay (2008) reported that the social uses of literacy skills were practiced through reading different types of books and writing of SMS messages and completion of different types of forms. Nevertheless, this study did not ascertain whether these practices could enable participants to put bread on the table. One could assume that these practices seem to have improved social development only but not economic development. Moreover, the study appears to be confined to reading and writing skills only.

Oxenham (2004) contends that, literacy encompasses more than the basic skills of reading, writing and calculating. It involves learning and education for combinations of: personal satisfaction, healthier family life, more productive livelihoods, managing a business, deeper understanding of local, national, and international conditions and stronger participation in civic affairs and social development. Furthermore, Oxenham reasons that without at least some of these elements, the basic skills from literacy programmes serve no purpose.

2.6 Application of literacy skills for poverty alleviation

Oxenham, Diallo, Katahoire, Petkova-Mwangi and Sall (2002) claim that evidence of literacy helping to reduce poverty was observed in Senegal, whereby managers of Société de Développement et des Fibres Textiles (SODEFITEX) Company reported to have gained six percent in productivity among cotton farmers who had taken the literacy course. Another study conducted by Cawthera (2003) on Nijera Shikhi and adult literacy in Bangladesh concluded that successful visits to the literacy programme had made a sustained and beneficial impact on the livelihoods of participants, whereby a lasting impact on agricultural practices and nutrition, and sustained increase in

savings and investments were experienced. Furthermore, Archer and Cottingham (1996) evaluated three REFLECT projects in Bangladesh, El Salvador and Uganda and reported that participants could now handle their money competently because of having gone through a literacy programme. The participants could no longer be cheated because they could record their monetary transactions and manage their businesses well. On the contrary, a study on whether literacy classes were working in Mali conducted by Puchner (2003) revealed that literacy programmes in Mali did not necessarily improve participants' social and economic situations. In support, Rogers, Hunter and Uddin, (2007) conducted a study on adult learning and literacy learning for the improvement of livelihoods in New Zealand, Bangladesh and Egypt which found out that learning formal literacy may not fundamentally alter livelihoods. What is needed is a livelihood-enhancement programme. They further reported that where literacies are used in livelihoods, such literacies are often learned informally through on-the-job activities, rather than through formal literacy classes.

As stated earlier in this chapter, various evaluation studies on NLPN have been conducted since the inception of the programme in 1992 (MOE, 2006). These evaluation studies' attempted to ascertain whether literacy learners acquired basic skills of reading, writing and calculating. These studies did not clearly report on how adult literacy learners used the skills they acquired from the programme towards poverty reduction. Besides this, according to the literature reviewed, literacy is more than reading, writing and calculating. Literacy helps in the development of many different aspects in people's lives. If the acquired skills from the literacy programmes do not positively improve people's quality of life, then the programme serves no purpose at all.

2.7 Challenges to the application of literacy skills

There are some challenges that hinder adult learners from putting literacy theory into practice for the promotion of better living conditions. The following are some of the common challenges:

- Incompetent literacy facilitators - If literacy facilitators lack adequate capacity to help literacy learners acquire functional skills to improve their lives, adult learners cannot acquire literacy skills relevant to their daily life situations and as a result they have no skill to apply (Oluoch et al., 2014).
- Dependency – According to FAO (2000), women may fail to apply their skills because they are used to relying on men or their husbands for most activities due to cultural beliefs. FAO gave an example of women in Uganda who had acquired numeracy skills from the literacy programme, which they acknowledged to being useful in managing their agricultural and off-farm enterprises when it comes to dealing with credit and savings. However, they depended on their husbands to work with money and accounts because of cultural beliefs.
- Illiterate husbands – Some men feel threatened by literate wives. Therefore, men only allow wives to attend literacy programmes as long as their wives' skills do not exceed their own. In a way, that discourages women from putting theory into practice as they do not want to be seen exceeding their husbands' skills or to appear wiser than their husbands (FAO, 2000).
- Availability of finances – Adult learners may acquire literacy skills which they need to apply in order to reduce poverty. However, lack of finance or inadequate access to start-up capital can be a barrier in the shift from theory to practice (Korboe, 2007).

2.8 Summary

This chapter underscored the meaning of literacy and acquired literacy skills by examining literature on how adult learners all over the world use literacy skills to alleviate poverty in their lives. The study adopted the notion of functional literacy which is the engagement in all activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of individuals and their communities, and also for enabling participants to continue to use reading, writing and calculations for their own and the community's development.

The Autonomous Model of literacy influenced this study because it assumes that literacy in itself autonomously will have effects on personal development and social practices. Situated Cognition Theory also contributes to the theoretical framework of this study by advocating that adult learners should acquire literacy skills such as communication skills, reading skills, writing and income generating skills, in order to make use of them in real life situations to improve their living conditions. It is within this context that literacy has an important role to play in alleviating poverty in people's lives.

The next chapter provides detailed discussion of the research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis procedures used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the application of literacy skills acquired by the graduates of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) towards poverty alleviation in Oshikoto region. This means that the premise of this study was to find out how the graduates used the skills they acquired from the programme of literacy to ensure that they met their basic needs and improved their quality of life, that of their families and the Oshikoto region community at large.

This chapter presents the research methodology including the design employed, the sampling technique used to sample the study's participants from the population, instruments of data collection, and the procedure followed to collect and analyse data.

3.2 Research design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to examine the uniqueness of NLPN graduates' livelihoods and to answer the study's research questions.

The qualitative approach was considered suitable for this study due to the nature of the study's research questions. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005, p.8), qualitative research is based on explorative methods that allow the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. In the context of this study, the researcher tried to understand how NLPN graduates applied literacy skills to reduce poverty in their lives. Therefore, the qualitative approach was considered the

best approach for this study. It afforded the researcher a good opportunity to probe insiders' views by talking to them and observing their behaviours. A phenomenological design helped the researcher to understand the participants' perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 141).

Since the researcher wanted to explore the graduates' meaning, composition and the core of their experience of life after graduating from stage 4, participants were given a chance to describe what was meaningful to them using their own words.

3.3 Population

This study targeted all adult literacy learners who graduated from stage 4 (AUPE) of learning. This stage was considered appropriate for this study because it is equivalent to grade 7 of primary education. According to the evidence by Dercon et al. (as cited in UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2014, p.144), "households where the head had completed Grade 7 of primary education are 16% less likely to be poor". The Oshikoto region was selected for this study because, although the literacy rate was high in the region, the poverty level was also high. The total population of 22 graduates of the NLPN was obtained from the Oshikoto Regional Education Office.

3.4 Sample and sampling procedures

The total population of AUPE graduates in Oshikoto region was only 22 since the inception of the literacy programme. Hence, the study opted for a judgment sampling

of all AUPE stage graduates in Oshikoto region. The entire population of graduates in the region was regarded a sufficient size to achieve acceptable population validity.

While the researcher planned to interview all 22 graduates, only 12 graduates were involved in the study because eight of them had moved out of the Oshikoto Region at the time of data collection and two refused to participate. Pertaining to the graduates that had moved at the time of the study, the researcher did not see the need to involve them in the research as they were not in the target region and were not directly contributing to the alleviation of poverty in the region at the time of data collection. Therefore, the initial number of participants reduced from 22 to 12. Nevertheless, Creswell (2013) accentuate that a typical sample size for a phenomenological design can be between 5 and 25 individuals, and as long as they have direct experience with the phenomenon being studied.

3.5 Research instruments

Interviews and observations were used to collect relevant information and ensure that the research questions were answered. The researcher conducted interviews first before she carried out observations. This was necessary to allow the researcher to verify participants' claims with regard to livelihoods they may have.

A semi structured interview guide (see Appendix A) which consisted of 23 open-ended questions was developed to obtain in-depth information about respondents' experiences on how they used the skills they acquired from the literacy programme. The instrument was divided into four sections of which all contained open-ended questions. Questions in the first section focused on general background and personal

information of the graduates. The second section consisted of questions exploring the skills acquired from the programme. The third section's questions were designed to determine how literacy skills were used by the graduates and the last section explored the challenges faced by graduates in using the literacy skills for the promotion of better living conditions.

After interviews, an observation guide (see Appendix B) was used to collect data through describing people's behaviours, products, occurrences and activities. Observations were conducted at livelihood activity settings and descriptions of physical settings, objects in settings, participants' behaviours and a range of interactions within the settings were recorded on the observation guide.

3.6 Data collection procedure

Permission to access data from the Oshikoto Region was obtained from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education (see Appendix C). Admittance to the region and approval to access the graduates was obtained from the Regional Director (see Appendix D). The interview questions were developed and written in the language of participants, Oshiwambo. Interview questions were translated from Oshiwambo into English for the benefit of all Namibians and anyone else interested in reading the thesis.

Before conducting interviews, the researcher scheduled a meeting with the respondents in order to raise awareness about the study and to obtain consent from participants to participate in the study. At that meeting, the participants and the researcher scheduled days, times and a place for conducting interviews. Furthermore, participants agreed to

come to the place where they attended their literacy classes and that was where one-on-one interviews were conducted.

The researcher interviewed participants face-to-face by initiating dialogue with the interviewees. Participants were allowed to reply as freely and as extensively as they wished. When their answers were not rich enough, the researcher probed further with follow up questions. Questions were read aloud to the respondents and their responses were tape-recorded to increase accuracy of data capturing. After the interviews, all responses were transcribed and translated from Oshiwambo into English by the researcher.

The researcher requested permission to observe settings and activities of respondents who indicated that they had established livelihood activities (e.g. *cucashop*, garden, selling of products etc.). The data was recorded on printed forms (see Appendix B for observation guide). Observations were found necessary in order for the researcher to verify claims made by participants during interviews.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process that enables the researcher to organise and bring meaning to large amounts of data. The researcher chose to use the content analysis approach which is the procedure for the categorisation of verbal or behavioural data for the purpose of classification, summarisation and tabulation (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

Analysis of interview data:

The recorded interview discussions were transcribed by hand in the respondents' language. The respondents' language transcripts were then translated into English and typed. The researcher read through the transcript documents several times and identified theory codes. Interview transcripts were coded using the content analysis process in order to attach meaning to segments of data. Every unit of meaning was marked with descriptive words describing the content of a segment. Comparisons of meanings were done and merged to form appropriate and abstract inductive categories and themes.

After the identification of themes, they were reviewed for further analysis in terms of expanding or collapsing various codes. Following analysis, comparisons were made to identify similar/harmonizing subjects and differences.

Analysis of Observation data:

The researcher analysed the data from observations using content analysis and open coding methods which refer to the process of the "breakdown of data" into themes and patterns to create meanings from the volumes of data. Data was organised to identify themes and relationships, to develop explanations and make inferences; critique information provided from interviews and engage in a synthesis and evaluation of the data.

The themes and categories were developed from codes that were identified and marked across all the types of data generated. The identification of similar codes across data generated through the data-gathering technique (i.e. observations) assured a strong

case for the credibility of this research. To produce credible and defensible findings, methodological triangulation was deemed necessary and used to confirm the information obtained from interviews regarding participants who claimed to have had livelihoods.

3.8. Research Ethics

Prior to starting the actual data collection process, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Namibia's Research and Publications Office (RPO). Thereafter, permission to access the Oshikoto Region was acquired from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education. In addition, admittance to the region and to the graduates was obtained from the Regional Director, Regional Chief Education Officer, and the Senior Education Officer.

Consent forms were designed stating the overall purpose of the study and any risks or benefits of participating in the study. Confidentiality, voluntary participation of participants and the right to withdraw at any time from the study were considered and assured to participants by the researcher. In addition, anonymity was guaranteed by removing all identifying data prior to writing this report and, where an individual was identifiable, explicit consent was obtained before any publication proceeded. NLPN graduates were protected from harm by ensuring that all research activities did not lead to physical and mental harm. They were protected from physical harm by ensuring that interview and observation sessions were conducted free of physical risk. To avoid mental harm, the researcher refrained from evoking stressful reactions in participants.

The researcher did this by creating and maintaining humane rapport during data collection.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed methodologies that were considered appropriate for collecting data and relevant for obtaining answers to the questions of this study. It described the research design used, explained the sample and the sampling procedures followed, instruments used to collect data and discussed ethical considerations that were observed during the data collection process. The next chapter presents the results of the study in detail.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The preceding chapter dealt with methodology that was followed to collect data and find answers to the research questions of this study. This chapter presents the findings from data collected using interview and observation tools. The data was collected and analysed to establish and understand data gathered responding to the main three research questions which are: what skills Oshikoto literacy programme graduates acquired; how the graduates use the acquired skills to alleviate poverty; and the challenges they face when using these skills. In addition to data responding to the three main research questions, the researcher gathered important background information on demographic and what motivated the graduates to join the literacy programme as well as graduates' opinions on the value of the literacy programme. Judgmental sampling was used to select 22 information-rich graduates who completed stage 4 (AUPE) of the NLPN. Nevertheless, as stated in section 3.4 of the research methodology, only 12 graduates could participate in the study.

Findings from interviews were presented first, followed by the observation results. The study's findings are presented in 6 sections. The first section illustrates the biographical information of the participants. The second section reports on what motivated participants to join the programme. The third section presents data from the first main question i.e. the skills participants acquired from the programme. The fourth section targets the second main research question which explains how participants use the skills acquired from the programme. The fifth section reports on the third main research question which targets the challenges participants experienced in using

literacy skills. And the sixth section presents participants' opinions of the value of the literacy programme.

4.1 Biographical information of the participants

All 12 participants were women. Since the programme was introduced in 1998, Oshikoto Region only had 22 graduates (in total) from stage 4 (AUPE stage) of the literacy programme. 21 (95%) of these graduates were females and only one (5%) was male who refused to participate in the study. Out of the 21 female graduates, only 12 agreed to participate in the study. This finding, of more female than male participants, agree with Kweka and Namene (1999), who stated that the literacy programme in Namibia is hugely attended by women. All graduates who participated in this research study were above the age of 45, despite the fact that the literacy programme in Namibia is meant for people from the age of 15 and above (MBESC, 1997).

Out of 12 participants, three (25%) were employed by the government: a cleaner, an institutional worker and a store clerk. They were all employed before they joined the literacy programme. Five (42%) participants were self-employed and had some kind of livelihood. Four of the self-employed participants started their livelihood after going through the literacy programme. Four (33%) participants were unemployed. Three of the unemployed had no source of income meanwhile; one of the unemployed respondents was receiving old age pension on a monthly basis.

4.2 Motivation of graduates to enrol into the literacy programme

Although the first main research question aimed at finding out the skills acquired by the literacy programme graduates, the researcher considered it imperative for readers to first know what motivated graduates to participate in the literacy programme before knowing what skills graduates gained from the programme.

11 out of 12 (92%) respondents gave information that answered the question of what motivated them to join the literacy programme. Respondents indicated various reasons why they joined the literacy programme as follows: to advance their educational level, become better persons and be able to assist their children with their school work; interest in literacy primers that resembled their lives and the lives they admired; to avoid boredom; the need to gain information on income generating projects and start their livelihoods projects after they acquired knowledge and skills; and to motivate fellow community members.

The following are some of the verbatim responses reflecting the above-mentioned reasons participants joined the literacy programme.

One of the respondents who were motivated to advance their educational level said:

“I wondered why I was just at home doing nothing while the literacy classes only took place a few days in a week. I decided to join so that I could advance my educational level”

(Respondent 4, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

One of the respondents who wanted to gain English and numeracy skills in order to be able to assist children with school work stated:

“I realised that I was lacking skills and knowledge so I decided to join the programme in order to learn English, numeracy skills and many other things. I believed that literacy would put me in a good position to assist my children with their school work.”

(Respondent 7, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

Two respondents indicated that they were stimulated by interesting literacy primers.

“My mother was attending literacy classes. She had a story book from her classes about a woman named Kamooli. Kamooli was pregnant and she could not read and write. In the story Kamooli was encouraged to go back to school after giving birth. I put myself in Kamooli’s shoes and decided to join the programme.”

(Respondent 2, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

“I saw the books of the people who were attending the literacy programme. I liked those books so much, especially the one with Dr Ndume’s picture. I was told that the picture of Dr Ndume was accompanied by her story of helping people with eye problems. I wished I could read the story myself so I decided to join the programme because of that” (Respondent 10, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

The respondent who wanted to become a better person expressed the following:

“I used to fry fat cakes and employ someone to sell them for me at the cuca-shops. I spent my time at the same cuca-shops doing nothing but just drinking alcohol. I realised that I was wasting my time because I was at the cuca-shops yet I was not the one selling the fat cakes. I was also not at home doing something fruitful. That is when I decided to join fellow community members because they looked healthy and happy when coming from their literacy classes. I thought that I should join the literacy programme to become a better person”

(Respondent 8, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

One respondent who wanted to acquire information on income generation projects reasoned:

“I realised that people who attend the literacy programme acquire knowledge and skills on how to secure grants and loans needed to establish income generating projects. I decided to join in order to get information to be able to start my own income-generating activity and assist my children with their needs”

(Respondent 1, personal communication, September 01, 2014).

Another respondent added that her motivation was based on the desire to start a livelihood generating activity after attending the literacy programme. She expressed her motivation:

“I decided to join the literacy programme because I heard and believed that if you join and get a certificate you can get some kind of livelihood”

(Respondent 11, personal communication, October 16, 2014).

One respondent who decided to join the literacy programme to motivate others to do the same stated:

“I saw that my fellow community members were reluctant to attend the literacy classes, even though this literacy programme is given for free by our government, so I decided to join the programme so that I could be an example to others and make them join as well”

(Respondent 9, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

The table below shows the motivation of respondents and whether respondents in this study were internally or externally motivated.

Respondents' reasons for joining the literacy programme	The type of motivation indicated by responses
A need to advance educational level	Extrinsic motivation
To become a better person	Intrinsic motivation
To assist with children's school work	Extrinsic motivation
To read literacy primers	Intrinsic motivation
To avoid boredom at home	Intrinsic motivation
To acquire knowledge on income generating projects and livelihoods	Extrinsic motivation
To be able to start livelihoods	Extrinsic motivation
To motivate fellow community members	Intrinsic motivation

Table 1: Respondents' motivations

According to Indabawa and Mpofu (2006), motivation and orientation are the necessary tools that propel adults to start learning in order to achieve their goals. Table 2 shows that a high number of respondents were both internally and externally motivated to join the literacy programme. Knowles (1975) believes that adult learners need more inner motivation than external pressure to learn. It is inner motivation that makes adults stay longer in or complete their literacy programme. The findings indicate that respondents had hoped to acquire higher cognitive and better socio-economic skills, knowledge and better living standards in the literacy programme (Street, 2001). Peterson (2010) added that adults look for educational experiences that

will help them get a better job, earn more money, have more leisure or get into a more satisfying career field.

It is clear from the data that what initially motivated graduates to join the literacy programme was the need to better their education, establish knowledge based livelihood, and improve their living standards. The findings show that respondents value the literacy programme and they enrolled hoping that the programme would bring positive change in their lives. These results concur with the Autonomous model's assumption that introducing literacy to the poor and illiterate people can enhance and improve their economic status.

4.3 Skills acquired from the literacy programme (data responding to research question #1).

The preceding subsection established what motivated participants to join the literacy programme. The following subsection provides data responding to research question #1 which discovered the skills acquired from the literacy programme by the participants. The responses gave rise to seven themes.

All 12 (100%) participants answered the questions focused on the skills graduates gained from the literacy programme. Respondents emphasised that they mostly acquired skills of communication in the English language (11 respondents); numeracy (9 respondents); livelihood (10 respondents); agrarian (2 respondents); needlecraft (2 respondents); and finance management (3 respondents). Respondents further indicated that they acquired social skills (2 respondents) and life (5 respondents) skills. They further acknowledged that what they learnt helped them to cope better with life. The following subsections present evidence of acquired skills as given by the participants.

4.3.1 Communication skills in English language

Almost all (11 out of 12) participants acknowledged having acquired communication skills in English language. Respondents pointed out that they could communicate in the English language, write job application letters and fill-in bank forms. They also stated that they had increased their English language vocabularies, could use correct verbs and tenses, and thus claimed that they had improved their English grammar. Respondents further acknowledged being able to read newspapers, write invitations of any kind, and assist children with school work. Below are some of the respondents' precise words regarding the English language skills they acquired.

One of the respondents who claimed to be able to speak the English language testified:

“At work, my communication has improved so much. Doctors can ask me where the nurses are and I can respond well, for example, by telling them that the nurses took a patient to casualty or they went to the theatre and so on. We also receive inspectors or visitors who do not understand the local language and I am now able to communicate with them and give them directions.”

(Respondent 12, personal communication, October 17, 2014).

In support, respondent 11 explained that she learned a lot of English vocabularies and can also fill-in bank forms:

“I can speak English and I have learned so many words in English. I can also complete the bank deposit and withdrawal

slips without assistance. I could not do this before I joined the literacy programme” (Respondent 11, personal communication, October 16, 2014).

Another respondent who could read, understand and complete forms affirmed:

“I can read newspapers and I can understand what the stories are about. In addition, The Fides Bank of Namibia came to our village to give loan and the applications that one needed to fill were in the English, those of us who went through the literacy programme could complete the application forms for ourselves and without any struggle. You could tell the difference between those of us who participated in the literacy programme and those who did not”

(Respondent 5, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

The respondent who claimed to know how to write a job application letter testified:

“I acquired skills on how to apply for a job. I know how a job application letter is written. I can see the difference in myself after having gone through the literacy programme. Now when someone is talking in English, I can understand and I am able to respond.”

(Respondent 3, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

The respondent whose grammar had improved expressed as follows:

“My English grammar has improved so much. I learned how to use verbs for different tenses and use appropriate words when talking to people of different social status. For example, I did not know that in English it is inappropriate to ask someone ‘what?’ when you want him/her to repeat what he/she just said. I learned that you can either say ‘excuse me’ or ‘I beg your pardon’
(Participant 1, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

Another respondent who claimed to be able to design invitations of any kind and assist her children with schoolwork stated:

“I learned to speak English, give directions to someone and write invitation letters, be it for wedding, birthdays or any party. I can also assist my children with their homework”

(Respondent 10, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

One of the respondents who also acquired English language skills and was able to support her children’s learning testified:

“The skills I hold onto from the programme are communication skills. Knowing English made things easier for me when travelling. I now know the meaning of signs on the road and when I go to town, it is now easy for me to see where I am and where I need to go. Knowing English also helps me to ask for directions from people when I am in a strange town or place. Knowing the English language helps me to be able to assist my children with

their homework. I did not know I would find myself teaching them that the word UNDER you pronounce 'ANDA' in English. I also learned that when we talk of positive and negative; there is a difference from that of physical science and diseases”
(Respondent 6, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

These findings support the literacy programme’s objectives which state that participants should acquire communication competencies and develop control of grammar and vocabulary. They should be able to ask for or give information; understand and give explanations; take part in discussions; write personal and formal letters, job application letters; and complete any kind of forms (MOE, 2009).

4.3.2 Numeracy skills

Nine participants maintained that they had acquired numeracy skills. They claimed that they could count very well; price the products in their businesses appropriately; assist their children with mathematics homework and budget for their shopping. The following were some of the respondents’ verbatim quotes:

I am now able to notice when my salary has decreased or increased by any percentage. I can calculate how much is deducted by comparing the salary I usually get with the one from a particular t month. I can also notice the change on my pay slip, for example, increment in my pension or social security contribution. Furthermore, when I’m shopping, I note the cost of the products I want and then I do calculations in order to

determine how much I will need to pay. When I go to the till, I already know how much I will spend”

(Respondent 12, personal communication, October 17, 2014).

Another respondent added:

“I was really struggling with counting and calculations before I joined the literacy programme. I could not count without using a calculator. But now I can see that I have different ways and formulas that I can use when doing calculations without using a calculator. For instance, I did not know how to divide using the different division formulas or methods”

(Respondent 1, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

The participant who could correctly price her products due to the numeracy skills acquired from the programme responded by saying:

“I have learned so much. Now I know that when I am pricing the product I must include product cost price, labour cost, transport cost and profit. I must price and sell with the aim of getting profit and not making a loss”.

(Respondent 3, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

Another respondent who could budget for her new stock shared:

“Literacy skills taught me how to calculate my business profit as well as how to budget for my new stock. I know that I must budget for new stock and I even know how to prepare quotations.”

(Respondent 5, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

Respondent 8 added how numeracy skills help her to handle money with ease in her business:

“When I am handling money, I really know what I am doing and I do not get confused anymore. I manage the cash flow of my business very well.”

(Respondent 8, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

It is clear from the data that numeracy skills play a major role in respondents’ lives. It is also clear that respondents attained the ability to think critically in solving problems and apply numeracy skills to tasks in their everyday lives.

4.3.3 Entrepreneurship skills

Ten respondents stated that they had acquired business skills. Their responses reflected knowledge on starting and running a livelihood successfully; procedures to follow before starting a business; conducting a needs assessment that informs starting a business; a need to have an agreement between shop owner and shop attendant; and the importance of giving good customer service. Respondents further acknowledged that they gained a positive change of attitude towards their livelihood operations.

The following are some of the responses of participants regarding livelihood skills:

Three of the respondents reported on procedures they considered when they started their businesses after they completed the literacy programme:

“I learned that when starting a business, there are procedures I need to follow, for instance, one has to apply for authorisation from the headman or town council. I also learned that before starting a business one should do the research or needs assessment to identify goods that are really needed by customers in one’s area.”

(Respondent 4, personal communication, September 05, 2014)

“I learned that when starting my livelihood, I must not start with too many products. For example, if I want to sell bread, I can start by baking 5 loaves at a time and see how fast they sell. If they sell well on the first day, the second day I can bake 10 loaves.”

(Respondent 9, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

“If I want to start a cucashop business, I need to research the environment to find out if I will have enough customers, what the existing shops nearby are selling and how different my products will be from theirs etc. This is important because if I sell what others are selling, then I will not get enough customers.”

(Respondent 3, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

It is clear from the data that respondents cherish this skill and they are aware of business procedures to follow when starting a business. They further reported that one needs to conduct a needs assessment by researching the environment, finding out what products are not available from other competitors, so that one can gain more customers. This finding agrees with one of the Directorate of Adult Education's objectives, which is to equip adult learners with production, business planning and managerial skills (Ministry of Education, 2014)

The following two respondents explained their positive change of attitude towards business operations:

“When I am doing business, I am guided by thoughts of how to sell and make as much profit as possible with minimal or no losses. Before, if all my fat cakes were not sold, I would take them home and give them to my children. But I do not do that anymore because I realised that I am killing my business.”

(Participant 8, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

“Joining the literacy programme helped me to be able to manage my business well. There is a difference if you compare those of us who participated and those who did not participate in the literacy programme. When I started my business of selling fat cakes, other villagers imitated me. They lasted not more than two weeks before giving up. They said that selling fat cakes was not profitable, but that is because they lacked necessary skills. I am doing well, all

thanks to what I learned regarding business. I manage the money that comes in and out very well. I calculate the cost and profit, and then from the profit I take money for transport, my salary, business savings and other needs. Others just spend all the money that comes in, then tomorrow they have nothing to buy stock with. That happens because they do not separate or have a budget for their business finances”

(Respondent 5, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

Two respondents indicated that applying for grants and giving good customer service can help grow a business:

“I learned how to apply for grants to grow a business. All I need to do is find an organization funding small businesses, for example, Fides bank of Namibia, then fill in an application and submit it. I further learned that you can start a business as an individual or as a group.”

(Respondent 11, personal communication, October 16, 2014).

“I learned that when you have a business, you must treat your customers very well and give them good customer service in order to succeed. When a customer enters my shop, I should greet her/him with a smile on my face and ask him how I can help and also thank him for coming to buy from my shop. In that way customers will keep coming back”

(Respondent 10, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

The data shows that participants gained skills that enable them to make a living and put bread on the table for themselves and their families. It is clear from the data that a majority of the participants acquired livelihood skills needed to reduce poverty in their lives.

4.3.4 Life skills

Five respondents claimed to have gained abilities for adaptive and positive behaviours that enable them to effectively deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life and better their environment. They indicated that they are now able to operate cell phones and banks' automatic teller machines (ATMs), read communal land maps, and avoid electricity accidents. Participants further indicated that they acquired an understanding of their body organs and how they function. They also claimed that the literacy programme enabled them to develop an optimistic attitude towards life.

One of the respondents who could read communal land maps, and operate a cell phone and ATM machine expressed herself as follows:

“When the communal land registrars came to our village, I could understand what the hectare was and I could also read their map well. I could locate my house and those of my neighbours on the map. The officers asked how I knew these things because my fellow community members could not tell what it was. I told them that I could identify things because of the literacy programme. In addition, I can operate the ATM machine and my cell phone without anybody’s help.”

(Respondent 5, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

One of the respondents who claimed to know how to handle a fire breakout and avoid the damage of electrical appliances said:

“I learned that in case there is a fire, I must not use steel materials to fight the fire. If it is related to electricity I must run to the switch box or plugs to switch them off. In addition, if you are cautioned that electricity will go off at a certain time, one must unplug all electrical appliances and switch off all plug, in order to avoid damage when electricity comes back”

(Respondent 9, personal communication, September 2014).

Another respondent explained how the literacy programme enabled her to develop an understanding of her body and learn the functions of organs in her body:

“Now I understand my body and how it works. I know the functions of my body parts such as the heart, brain, vessels. I am also aware of the fact that we have white blood cells and red blood cells as well as their functions in the body”

(Respondent 11, personal communication, October 2014).

The respondent who expressed her optimism about life said the following:

“When I am in poverty, I know that I should not just sit down, fold my arms and wait for handouts from the government. I must use my brain and work myself out of poverty”

(Respondent 1, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

Even though only half of the participants indicated that they had acquired life skills, the overwhelming results of the study support the Ministry of Education's (2009) goal of developing important skills needed in adults' daily lives. The goal states that participants should be trained to gain the ability to display appropriate techniques of handling apparatus competently for safety, the ability to cope better with daily life challenges, and to be equipped with knowledge of science in everyday lives.

4.3.5 Agrarian and Needlecraft skills

Three out of 12 respondents said they had acquired gardening and needlework skills. The respondents indicated that they learnt how to make a garden, do measurements of the garden, plant fruit bearing and non-fruit bearing trees, and vegetables. In addition, respondents also learned when and how to water plants.

The following are some of the verbatim quotes of participants' responses:

"I gained needlework skills. I found these skills useful to me because we have sewing projects in our village."

(Participant 11, personal communication, October 16, 2014).

"I acquired skills on starting a garden, such as how to do measurements of the garden, make lines and plant in those lines"

(Participant 10, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

“I gained skills on how to plant trees and I made my own garden at home. I planted fruit trees and vegetables. My family has also noticed a big difference in the application of my gardening skills”.

(Participant 12, personal communication, October 17, 2014).

Despite the fact that vocational skills are important and 70% of the Namibian rural population depends on agrarian production for a portion of their income and/or livelihoods (National Training Authority [NTA], 2013), it is clear from the data that gardening and needlework skills are some of the least acquired skills. Only three respondents talked about these very important skills. The results clearly suggest that the literacy programme implementers need to put more effort into ensuring that vocational knowledge is shared with literacy programme learners. These skills, especially agrarian, are very crucial for poverty alleviation. Further interpretation of these results could suggest that perhaps that is why Oshikoto Region has high poverty levels.

4.3.6 Financial management skills

Three out of 12 participants reported that they had learned to manage their finances. Respondents reported that they learned to save money and start their livelihood. They learnt to spend money on needs instead of wants. The views of these respondents are summarized as follows:

“I learned how to handle my money with care and to save. I learned the difference between wants and needs. For example,

instead of buying cooking oil, I can produce oil from Marula nuts and Kalahari melon seeds. In that way I save money.”

(Respondent 1, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

In support, another respondent who reckons it is important to save money in order to grow the business and also as an individual stated:

“I learned to save some money for my daily needs and to grow my business.”

(Respondent 9, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

The results show that participants see the need to save money for unforeseen circumstances. It is also clearly indicated that producing and eating traditional food instead of buying it every time can be another way to save money.

4.3.7 Social skills

Two of the 12 participants reported that they had acquired social skills. They indicated that they gained confidence to stand and talk in front of people and also learnt how to relate to other people. The following are the responses of these respondents:

“My life has improved so much. I am no longer shy when I am around people. I have confidence now. I can stand in front of people and deliver a speech even to a large crowd.”

(Respondent 6, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

“I learnt to relate to other people. For example, if I realise that a friend or a neighbour is short tempered, I know how to go about

talking to him/her. I approach her/him in a calm manner to avoid squabbles.”

(Respondent 9, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

The data indicates that because of the literacy programme, respondents were now able to stand and talk in front of many people. They further indicated that their social interactions had improved positively. These results clearly show that going through the literacy programme cannot only help to alleviate poverty, but can also empower and boost people's confidence and self-esteem.

Of all the acquired skills, the results indicate that communication in English is the most attained skill. This shows that respondents have tolerance towards cultural diversity and the need to know the Namibian official language in order to be able to communicate with various people from all walks of life.

The findings on the skills acquired by the respondents further show that numeracy and livelihood skills are the second most acquired among other skills. Respondents expressed that they can do calculations using different methods without calculators, they know how to price products, manage their business cash flows, budget for new stock and prepare quotations. Moreover, regarding livelihood skills, the data indicate that respondents are aware of how to go about starting and managing a business. It is clear from the data that numeracy and livelihood are a good combination of skills respondents possess for establishing and managing a successful businesses. The findings support the belief by Oxenham, Diallo, Katahoire, Petkova-Mwangi and Sall's (2002) who state that numeracy and livelihood skills are important for entrepreneurship. Furthermore, these findings might imply that respondents are

equipped with the necessary skills, thus should be able to engage in entrepreneurship and alleviate poverty.

Though agrarian and needlecraft skills are important as vocational skills, they are the least acquired along with finance management and social skills. This implies that there is a need for the literacy programme implementers in Oshikoto Region to ensure that more attention and focus is directed towards vocational skills.

4.4 How the graduates use the skills they acquired from the literacy programme (data responding to research question #2).

After finding out what skills graduates had acquired from the literacy programme, the researcher explored how they use these skills because it is the use of a skill that matters more than the acquisition (FAO, 2000). The data that follow thus respond to research question #2.

Participants admitted that although their living standard had not improved immensely, they realised that the programme improved the way they usually do things for a better life. Seven (58%) participants reported using the acquired skills by producing own food; creating self-employment; managing finances properly; realizing that alcohol abuse is a destructive behaviour; starting own businesses and attracting customers. The following table consists of the respondents' exact words reflecting how the graduates used the acquired skills:

How the graduates used the skills	Respondent's words
Establishment of own business	<p><i>I decided to build my own cuca-shop. My life has totally improved because I now get a lot of profit” (Participant 8, personal communication, September 05, 2014).</i></p> <p><i>Having gone through the programme has boosted my confidence to sell and handle my money well. I am a direct seller of Table Charm and Swissgarde companies. I have a lot of customers, all thanks to the skills I learned from this programme. The poverty levels of my family have reduced, but I still want my income to increase in order to have enough for my children's needs” (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 04, 2014).</i></p> <p><i>“I assessed my community's needs and as a result, I started a mahangu hammer mill business. Our village is very far from the tarred road, so many people in our village started coming to my business because there is no other competitor”(Respondent 4, September 05, 2014).</i></p> <p><i>“Years ago, I had a cucashop but because of lack of business management skills, it got bankrupt</i></p>

	<p><i>and I closed it down. After graduating from the literacy programme, I realized I was well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge so I decided to start over and open the shop once again. Now, business is booming. I do stocktaking very well. I can see that attending the literacy programme made things easier for me.”</i></p> <p>(Respondent 5, personal communication, September 05, 2014).</p>
Food production	<p><i>“We were taught how to make a garden, plant fruit trees and how to water crops in the garden. Because of that, I decided to make my own garden at home. I do not buy fruits and vegetables anymore because I have several in my garden.”</i> (Participant 12, personal communication, October 17, 2014).</p>
Finance management	<p><i>“Before I joined the programme, I was in darkness and poverty, but now light has come into my life. I used to buy bread for my kids every day, but I decided to start buying flour to bake traditional breads for them at home, which is cheaper than buying bread every day. In addition, I stopped buying cooking oil and started producing oil from marula nuts and</i></p>

	<i>Kalahari melon seeds.</i> ”(Participant 1, personal communication, September 04, 2014).
Change of life style	<p><i>“All my life, I have been abusing alcohol. After I joined the literacy programme, I realized that I am destroying my life, and deepening myself and my family’s poverty because of alcohol abuse. I saw that my life was not in order and I almost went mad. I decided to seek help. I went to the health worker who counselled me, gave me medicine and I stopped abusing alcohol. That helped reduce poverty as well in my life”</i></p> <p>(Participant 8, personal communication, September 05, 2014).</p>

Table 2: How the graduates used the acquired skills

The data on how the acquired skills were used by participants indicate that some respondents were trying to alleviate poverty by establishing a livelihood, and by so doing increased their income. They also changed their attitude towards living a healthy life style. This data seems to concur with the Autonomous model which posits that introducing literacy to the poor will have the effect of enhancing and improving their economic prospects in terms of improving their livelihoods and making them better citizens. Hanushek and Zhang (2006) and Schur (2011) believe that acquiring literacy skills can push someone to develop their own economic initiatives, create self-employment opportunities and it can also increase people’s earnings.

4.5 Challenges in using the acquired skills from the literacy programme (data responding to research question #3).

Participants were asked to reflect on the challenges they experienced in using the acquired skills. The researcher wanted to identify the challenges that were preventing the literacy programme graduates from using the skills they had acquired in order to improve their living standard. Although five participants indicated that they had no challenges in putting the skills and theory they learned into practice, three of the participants indicated that lack of finance prevented them from practically using the skills they learned. Two respondents indicated lack of time management due to many responsibilities such as family responsibilities and being public servants. They claimed that they did not get time to practice what they had learned from the literacy programme. A response from one respondent implied ignorance and lack of commitment. This respondent reported that although she had brilliant business ideas, she kept postponing any actions that would make her dreams a reality. She blamed procrastination as a disease that stops her from applying the skills she learned. One respondent's words reflected the deterioration of information by claiming that she forgot what she learned from the literacy programme.

The researcher derived three themes from the above responses: lack of finances, too many responsibilities and procrastination of business ideas and relapse of information.

4.5.1 Lack of finances

Graduates expressed that as much as they wanted to use the skills they acquired, especially business skills, they did not have the finances to start enterprises to help themselves. They wished that the government could assist them with the starting up of livelihood activities. The following was said about the challenges of using literacy skills:

“I have acquired skills and if I start my livelihood now I would know what to do. My problem is that I am poor and I do not have any money to start a business that will enable me to have an income. I have the desire and the skills, and if I had money I would be able to use the skills I got from the literacy programme. I thought of applying for grants from the literacy programme implementers, but since they briefed us about those grants, they never came back for us to apply”

(Participant 3, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

“I thought of starting a business to improve my life, but I do not have money to start it. Therefore, I am requesting our government to assist us in order to alleviate poverty. We will work wholeheartedly.”

(Participant 11, personal communication, September 04, 2014)

4.5.2 Too many responsibilities

Participants also felt that as much as they wanted to use the skills they acquired from the programme, lack of time due to many responsibilities was a hindrance to establishing any livelihood activities. This is how one of the participants explained the issue:

“As much as I want to put bread on the table for my family, I just have too much house work as a wife and a mother. I barely get time to do other things. My days are occupied with cooking for my family, walking my children to school, fetching water, wood and more. By the time I finish all that I am exhausted and do not have the time or energy for any project”.

(Participant 6, personal communication, September 05, 2014)

4.5.3 Procrastination of ideas and relapse of information

Participants mentioned that procrastination is one of the challenges they face as they have ideas of what to do in terms of starting a business, but due to procrastination, they end up not acting on their ideas. Furthermore, participants indicated that forgetting what they learned also hinders them from putting theory into practice. The following two participants explained their challenges:

“I thought of starting up a livelihood of producing Kalahari seeds oil and Marula nuts oil many times, but I did not act on my thought. It is really a challenge for me. Normally, I make my oil just to use in the house then I keep telling myself that I will

produce oil for business the following day or the day after. Now, it's been two years without my business kicking off. I keep postponing to tomorrow every day. I am sure I have a good business idea and I know I could get customers. I just need to start acting, and then it can be successful."

(Participant 1, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

Another respondent explained how forgetting can be a challenge:

"I learned a lot of things from this programme, but I have been sitting at home for a long time without doing anything. Now I forgot most of what I learned. I know some of the skills I learned but now I am just hard headed."

(Participant 6, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

Although most graduates have tried to implement the skills they acquired from the literacy programme, some were challenged by lack of finances to start livelihood, lack of commitment to act out their thoughts, and lack of time to partake in various activities. These findings support Korboe's (2007) findings that inadequate access to start-up capital is the most consistent barrier in the shift from theory to practice.

4.6 Graduates' opinions on the value of the literacy programme

The fourth emerging theme from the collected data exposed graduates' opinions on the value of the literacy programme and how they would like to see the programme improve in the future. The findings are categorized into the following sub-themes,

namely: quality of the literacy programme and how the programme should be improved.

4.6.1 Quality of the Literacy Programme

According to the Namibia Qualification Authority Act 1996 (2006, p.23), “qualifications carrying the name Certificate generally recognize ability and preparedness for both employment and further education and training. Acquiring a certificate means that a graduate is recognized to having acquired proven ability in a coherent cluster of outcomes of learning pertinent to a work role”. The quality of any programme is measured by the number of its graduates and by whether graduates’ qualifications are recognized in the job market.

In response to the question on the value of the literacy programme, three respondents felt that since they graduated from the literacy programme, the certificates they received did not help them to secure employment, not even low paying jobs like cleaning or cooking. To them, this is a clear indication that the programme lacks quality. The following were some of the respondents’ responses:

“We do not use the literacy certificates we got for anything. They are just packed under our suitcases and they does not have quality. When you go with a literacy programme certificate somewhere to look for employment, you are told that it is not the qualification they are looking for.”

(Respondent 6, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

“I would say this programme does not have any value because possible employers do not accept the certificate we obtained from this programme. Our certificate needs to be recognized and respected so that at least the job of cleaning or working in a kitchen should require/accept literacy programme certificates”

(Respondent 11, personal communication, October 16, 2014).

A literacy programme is part of community development. Community development's aim is to develop people's skills to enable them to influence what happens where they live and capacitate them to remove the barriers that prevent them from acting on the issues that affect their lives. Unemployment is one of the barriers. Despite the Directorate of Adult Education aiming to offer high quality basic education for all previously disadvantaged people in Namibia and to cater for development of skills that will enable adult learners to be self-reliant in order to contribute to the country's economic status as envisioned in Vision 2030. It is clear from the data that some participants doubt the benefits of the programme. This implies that more needs to be done regarding the quality and official status of Namibian literacy programmes.

One respondent felt that there are no visible benefits from the literacy programme for others to see. Therefore, other community members are not participating in the programme because they do not see change in the lives of those who attended the programme. The following is the respondent's response:

“People should see what we accomplished upon completion of the programme. If community members see the improvement in the programme graduates' lives, it may encourage them to attend the programme.”

(Respondent 5, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

Nevertheless, most graduates appreciated having gone through the programme and acknowledged that it brought positive changes into their lives.

One of the respondents thankful for receiving education stated:

“One day the officials from Fides Bank of Namibia came to our village to enlighten us on funds they hand out to people who want to start income generating projects. Those of us who attended the literacy programme could understand English and many other things they were talking about because we were taught business skills in the literacy programme. We really felt good and important, all thanks to the literacy programme. A person who has received some kind of education is better than the one who has not received any education at all.”

(Respondent 5, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

“We are really thankful to the literacy programme, it really educated us.” (Participant 2, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

4.6.2 Graduates’ opinions on how AUPE should improve

Most participants mentioned that there is a need to introduce vocational skills in the literacy programme curriculum in order to alleviate poverty in participants’ lives. They explained that instead of the government recruiting a literacy promoter who teaches

theory only, another person needs to be recruited to train them on practical or handy work such as bricklaying, welding and so on. Participants also stated that government should introduce projects whereby literacy programme graduates can participate in order to make an income.

Three respondents explained the need to incorporate vocational skills in the literacy programme curriculum:

“The government needs to integrate vocational training such as welding, carpentry, needlework, bricklaying into the literacy programme curriculum. The government should assist in this regard by recruiting trainers to teach us so that we add to the skills we learned from books. There’s an Oshiwambo proverb which says, if you hear it you will forget but when you do it you will understand and can never forget. What I want to say is that we are only taught theory and thus we will forget what we learned. We want to do it so that we do not forget.”

(Respondent 1, personal communication, September 04, 2014).

“Stage 4’s curriculum needs some vocational training such as cooking classes or embroidery work.”

(Respondent 4, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

“I am asking the management of this programme to make it useful by training us in vocational skills that are on demand.”

(Respondent 3, personal communication, September 09, 2014).

“The literacy programme implementers need to give those who graduated from stage 4 some money, for example, N\$2000.00, to enable them to start generating projects. We can even do poultry farming projects or bricklaying and when we implement those projects, we can then use the skills we acquired from the theory. Only people who graduated from the literacy programme should be allowed to be part of those projects.”

(Respondent 6, personal communication, September 05, 2014).

4.7 Observation data

Five enterprises (according to the respondents' claims) were to be observed. The purpose of the observation was for the researcher to verify the types of livelihoods the participants claimed to have. However, due to the difficulties of reaching the fifth livelihood the researcher was only able to observe four. The bush track to one of the livelihoods was hugely sandy and the researcher could not manage to go through. The road required a 4x4 vehicle to reach the livelihood and the researcher had a sedan vehicle. Notes were taken during the observations of the four livelihoods. The field

notes included the type of livelihood, products sold in the livelihood, movement of customers, and livelihood structures.

The researcher observed two *cucashops*, a garden and a sales person. One *cucashop* was built with corrugated iron while the other was made of cement bricks. Both of the *cucashops* were among many other *cucashops*, shebeens and bars in one area.

One *cucashop* sold daily needs such as sugar, sweets, traditional breads, cool drinks, tin fish, and cooking oil. Another *cucashop* sold dried chips, biscuits, cool drinks, and beer and fat cakes. The researcher bought some items from the *cucashops* giving N\$100 in each with the intention of observing how the respondents would handle and count the change. They could count money accurately and gave me correct change. They seemed to know and enjoy what they were doing. Since the researcher's arrival, the customers' movement was good. During the observation period, two customers showed up in shop 1 and 3 customers showed up in shop 2.

The third observation was done on a sales person who does direct selling of products ordered from different companies: food supplements from Tianshi and Swissgarde; Cutlery and utensils from Table charm; and perfumes and lotions from Justine. The researcher observed how the respondent could complete order forms easily and accurately in the presence of the customers.

The fourth livelihood observed was a home garden, where the respondent planted fruit trees such as mangoes and guavas; vegetables such as cabbages, tomatoes, onions, pumpkins; and a tree called Moringa tree, which the respondent claimed to have medicinal properties useful in helping fellow community and family members. She said when people get sick, for example, with flu or high blood pressure, she takes the Moringa tree leaves, boils them in water and gives the sick person that water to drink.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented a description of the results obtained from interviews and observations which assessed the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation by graduates of Oshikoto Region.

Responses from the literacy programme graduates revealed that various skills such as communication in English language; numeracy; livelihood; life skills; finances management; social skills; agrarian and needlecraft were acquired by the graduates.

The results further show that literacy skills were applied in the establishment of participants' own businesses, food production, finance management and change of life styles. On the other hand, some respondents were challenged to utilize skills towards poverty alleviation by lack of finances, lack of time management and relapsing of knowledge and information. Verification of livelihood establishment was done through observations. Four livelihoods were observed: two *cucashops*, a home garden and a business of placing orders for various products such as perfumes, food supplements and cutlery. The respondents showed knowledge in their business transactions and they seemed to enjoy what they do. It was observed that respondents could count well and give correct change to their customers.

The next chapter deals with the discussion of findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, justifies how the study's questions were addressed and demonstrates how the findings are linked to the existing theory. The main aim of this study was to assess whether people graduating from the literacy programme in Namibia use the skills they acquire to alleviate poverty in their lives and to improve their living standards.

5.2 Discussion of the findings

5.2.1 Demographic characteristics (profile) of respondents

All (100%) respondents in this study were female. This finding confirms Lind and Johnston's (1990) observation that all over Africa, literacy programmes are dominated by women. Women in Oshikoto region participated in literacy programmes because they wanted to enlighten themselves, be empowered and free themselves from being regarded as 'stay at home' mothers and inferior to men. Nowadays, in a number of societies, many families are being headed by women and as a result women get motivated to learn so that they can support themselves and their families.

Men might not participate in the literacy programmes because they may be more focused on vocational and on the job training programmes. Therefore, men do not see the relevance of the literacy programmes to their felt needs (Indabawa & Mpofu, 2006). In addition, men travel to commercial towns or centres to look for employment

and better themselves in order to support their wives and children. Another reason why men did not participate in this study could be that they do not openly admit to being illiterate, and as a result they avoid attending literacy programmes. To them, attending the literacy programme might show the whole village that they are illiterate and thus they do not attend for fear of losing their status in the community or village (FAO, 2000).

All respondents who participated in this study were above the age of 45 years. The Adult Learning Policy emphasises that the literacy programme in Namibia can be attended by people aged 15 and above, and out of school youths (MOE, 2014, p.17). Although Namibia has a high unemployment rate problem among the youth, which is mostly caused by lack of education (Mwinga, 2012), none of the participants were young. The reason could be that the youth associate literacy programmes with reading and writing only and not with programmes which could equip them with skills that could enable them to get out of poverty. This finding could also imply that adults were more eager to learn, despite their ages.

Five (41.7%) of the respondents were self-employed and they started their livelihood projects after graduating from the literacy programme. The acquisition of literacy skills in itself led the graduates to initiate their livelihood projects, become self-employed and improve their economic prospects. This finding agrees with the Autonomous Model which believes that when a poor person participates in literacy programmes, his/her economic prospects will improve (Street, 2005). The introduction of literacy to the poor can have the effect of changing their quality of life by initiating livelihoods and becoming better citizens (Street, n.d.). This finding further supports the literacy programme's objective which is to equip adult learners with skills and knowledge that

will enable them to partake in income generation activities for self-employment (MOE, 2009).

None of the respondents were able to get employment either from the government or non-governmental organizations with the certificates/qualifications they obtained from the programme. This finding could mean that the graduates acquired inappropriate skills or their certificates did not have official value. This finding supports Ramarumo and McKay (2008) who claimed that there seemed to be no adult learners who had obtained employment in Namibia with the certificates they obtained from the programme.

Although, employment is considered to be the main path out of poverty for the poor, Baptiste and Nyanungo (2007) argues that by itself it does not assure freedom from poverty. Therefore, not obtaining employment after graduating from the literacy programme should not be a reason for a high poverty rate. Evidence from studies such as Day and Shin (2005) has shown that there are people who are employed, but yet living below the poverty threshold. The researcher believes that what matters most for any human is how reasonable the amount of the income is and how one manages it. Whether that income is derived from being employed by someone else or self-employment or from both, the income should be enough to meet one's needs and alleviate poverty. Therefore, equipping one with quality education may only promise high income, but not guarantee it. .

In an effort to present a discussion that gives clear answers to the research questions, the study identified what motivated participants to join the literacy programme; singled out the skills acquired by the respondents; analysed how they used the acquired skills, analysed their living standards and discovered challenges they faced in using the acquired skills. These factors are discussed in the next sections.

5.2.2 Factors that motivated participants to join the literacy programme

Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) state that adults in Africa are motivated to learn for various reasons. According to the findings of this study, the factors that motivated participants to join the literacy programme could be classified as: hope of starting livelihoods, literacy primers, realization of the importance of education, boredom, importance of parental involvement in children's education, and motivation for fellow community members.

5.2.2.1 Hope of starting income generating projects and livelihoods

Acquiring information on income generating projects and a hope of starting own livelihoods was also one of the motivating factor for respondents (16.7%) to join the literacy programme. This finding implies that participants had hope in the literacy programme and they trusted that literacy could give them an opportunity to engage in livelihoods and get income in order to be able to support themselves and their families.

This finding is supported by Rogers (2001) who stressed that adults join literacy programmes with the hope that their felt needs would be met. In addition, the finding agrees with Rogers et al's (2007) belief that the literacy programmes which incorporate livelihood activities attract adults' interest for learning. Consequently, adults were able to become self-employed by establishing livelihood projects subsequent to attending the literacy programme. This shows that their hope of starting livelihoods was fulfilled.

5.2.2.2 Literacy primers

Literacy primers were one of the motivating factors for joining the literacy programme mentioned by respondents (16.7%). The findings indicate that literacy primers are not only for learning which takes place in a classroom, but also for informal learning by adults from their day to day experiences through interactions with family and neighbours within society. Literacy primers are teaching and learning materials for illiterate or semi-literate people. Primers can help adult learners to work independently at their own pace (Literacy and Educational Materials, 2015, para. 1).

Primers are important in the lives of adults because they serve a socializing and acculturating function, and reflect the reality of the lives of the illiterate adults (Dighe, 1995). Graduates compared the life of illiteracy portrayed in the primers to that of their own and as a result they got motivated instantly to get themselves out of the situation exposed in the literacy primers.

This finding also implies that other community members were motivated and learnt good habits and positive attitudes towards life from the literacy primers of those attending literacy classes.

5.2.2.3 Realisation of the importance of education

The study's findings revealed that participants decided to join the programme because they realized the significance of improving their educational level. Respondents claimed that they realized the need for knowledge and skills in their lives; therefore, they joined the literacy programme. The findings reveal the respondents' desire to improve their educational level in order to be able to make a living. Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, (2005) argue that adults have a self-concept of being accountable for their lives, so accountability makes them become ready to learn the things they need to know in order to deal effectively with their real life circumstances. In support of these findings, Edwards, Sieminski and Zeldin (1993) believe that learners are motivated to learn to fulfil conscious objectives, to pursue knowledge for the love of it.

The respondent who joined the literacy programme after she observed improvement in the lives of those who attended literacy classes hoped to become a better person. This finding supports Ramarumo and McKay (2008) who state that people believe that becoming literate can make life easier and better.

One could also deduce that the value and the importance of literacy learning can be observed among graduates of literacy programmes, when their lives improve for the better. For instance, respondents indicated that they were abusing alcohol and stopped because they noticed a healthy and positive lifestyle in other community members who were attending literacy classes. Indirectly, participants learnt good habits and behaviours from those attending literacy classes. This finding also implies that joining the literacy programme is a reasonable swop over from negative social life.

5.2.2.4 Boredom at home

This study's findings show that participants joined literacy classes in order to avoid boredom at home which they characterized with isolation, loneliness and depression. The findings imply that participants were pushed to join the programme by a need for association and friendships. Other research studies' (House, Landis and Umberson; Rook [as cited in Qualls & Abeles, 2000] Seeman, 2011) findings show that social interactions benefit people. Therefore, being socially active and maintaining relationships can help people to have good health. In support of this finding, Houle (as cited in Fasokun, Katahoire & Oduaran, 2005) states that, "adult learners can participate in education for the sake of social interaction. This means adults attend literacy programmes just to network with others and avoid isolation".

5.2.2.5 Importance of parental involvement in children's education

This finding implies that respondents were aware of their low education level and how it could have a negative impact on their children's lives and performance in school. Participants joined the literacy programme because they realised the importance of their involvement in their children's education. The data indicated that participants were motivated to improve their educational level so that they would be able to assist their children with school work. Other researchers (Epstein, 2013; Henderson & Berla, 1994) revealed evidence of the positive effects of parental involvement in children's education, pointing out that parental involvement in children's education can make

children perform/achieve better in school and can create a good relationship between family, school, and community, which results in good academic performances (Epstein, 2013). Henderson and Berla (1994) asserted that the most accurate predictor of a child's achievement is the extent to which parents support, encourage and are involved in the learning environment of their children.

Lack of parental involvement in their children's education can cause children to underperform academically, have low self-esteem; negative attitude and lack of motivation towards school (Epstein et al., 2009).

De Fraya, Oliveira and Zanchi (2010) surmise that the higher the educational level of parents, the better their support for their children's academic education, and the better the children perform in school.

5.2.2.6 Motivation for fellow community members

Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005), identified two types of motivations that push adults to join literacy programmes: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation is an internal form of motivation whereby one strives towards a goal for personal satisfaction or accomplishment; whereas, extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain a desired outcome. Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2012) reckon that adults are more internally motivated because intrinsic motivation helps them to solve problems in their lives and efforts from internally motivated adults pay off. They further explained that it does not mean that external payoffs (e.g. income generating activities) have no relevance, but it simply means the internal need satisfaction is the more potent motivator.

The study's findings also revealed that respondents participated in the literacy programme in order to influence fellow community members to take part in the programme. This finding implies that adults are concerned about each other's level of education. According to Wlodkowski (2008), adults are responsible not only for themselves but for others. Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) concur as they argue that adults may want to learn just for the sake of serving others.

Based on the study's findings, it is clear that participants had different needs and unique motivations to participate in the literacy programme. The study's findings concur with other researchers (Beder, 1990; Thompson, 1992) who identified that self-improvement and advancement, family responsibilities, job participation, advancement, influence by other people, social expectations and relationships, escape from boredom, stimulation & cognitive interest are basic motivations for adults to join literacy programmes.

This study's findings show that an equal number of participants were both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Intrinsically motivated participants joined the literacy programme to become better persons; to avoid boredom at home; to motivate fellow community members and for the curiosity about literacy primers.

Extrinsically motivated respondents were motivated to join the literacy programme in order to advance their educational level, to be able to assist their children with school work, to acquire information on income generating activities and to be able to start own livelihoods.

5.2.3 Skills that were acquired from the literacy programme by graduates

The findings of the study indicate that **communication in English language** was the most acquired skill by respondents (91.7%). English is the official language in Namibia. Therefore, participants felt the need to know how to communicate in English as it is a prerequisite for functioning effectively in both the formal and informal business worlds.

This finding addresses the MOE's (2009, p.1) call for the Namibian education system to meet its constitutional obligation of ensuring citizens' proficiency in the official language. According to the MBESC (1993), English was chosen as the official language because it is an international language that is unifying and promoting national integration, unity and intellectual understanding. The ability to communicate in English is also an advantage for any individual as understanding the language offers various benefits such as enabling one to communicate with a broader network and collaborate with fellow people who do not understand one's local language.

Tollefson (1991) states that the role of a language is a determinant of most of our social and economic relationships because a language can have major impact on the kind of family and friends we have, as well as on the occupation and the income we make. He further regards communication in the English language as a practical skill and a tool for education, employment and economic emancipation. According to Day and Shin (2005), there are many reasons why the ability to speak English may affect a person's ability to make money. They reckon that people who have the ability to speak English are likely to be employed and/or be self-employed because they are able to apply for jobs and write business plans. The findings indicate that participants are keen to learn English as an official language because they believe that knowing how to communicate

in English can raise them out of poverty. Respondents believe that the skill of communicating in English can help alleviate poverty levels because it can enable them to accurately write job application letters and fill job application forms which are part of the process of searching for employment. Respondents further expressed that English communication skills can enable them to write sound and high-quality business plans/proposals. Good quality business plans stand a good chance of being approved by various organizations such as regional councils and line ministries that offer grants for rural development projects.

The findings of the study further revealed that respondents (83.3%) acquired entrepreneurial skills. This is one of the most critical skills when it comes to poverty alleviation because it enables the participants to practice entrepreneurship, create self-employment as well as generate employment for others.

Entrepreneurial skills are an important characteristic of economic emancipation and job creation (Ekpe, Razak, Ismail & Abdullah, 2015). Therefore, the acquisition of these skills showed that participants had the ability to start, manage, expand or maintain a livelihood for improved quality of life. The finding confirms the hypothesis by Ekpe et al. (2015) who say that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial skill acquisition and self-employment practice, seeing that 41.7% of the participants were able to start their businesses after graduating from the literacy programme.

The majority of the respondents in this study claimed that due to the literacy programme, they now know the procedures to follow before starting a business; the need and importance of conducting a needs assessment that informs starting up a business; running and managing businesses successfully; how to market the business and the importance of giving good customer service and so on.

This study's findings support Oxenham et al. (2002) who posited that acquiring entrepreneurial skills helps people to take initiatives and start or improve their livelihoods. Furthermore, Oxenham et al. (2002) state that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills helps to improve poor people's lives because acquiring those skills empowers learners to have enhanced confidence and social resources which make them initiate livelihoods.

The study's findings further revealed that respondents (75%) acquired **numeracy skills** which rated amongst the most cherished skills participants claimed to have acquired, geared towards improving their living standards. The respondents indicated that they applied mathematics in their everyday lives, especially when dealing with finances in their businesses and when assisting children with school work. Pricing products, managing business cash flow, calculating business profit, giving correct change to their customers, budgeting for stock and using mental arithmetic were some of the practical examples given by participants. These examples show that participants could do transactions. The findings support Oxenham et al.'s (2002, p. 4) who claim that "numeracy skills are a clear advantage in market transactions in the informal economy, and thus especially important for entrepreneurship". Numeracy is regarded as a critical skill for all and a core skill for life in order for anyone to function well in this diverse world. According to Chinn (2012), numeracy skills help people to find solutions for their everyday problems and enable them to analyse any life situations, observations and experiences. The MOE (2009) agrees that numeracy skills are important in people's daily lives because they enable them to solve problems involving numerical operations in real life situations.

FAO (2000) found that numeracy is useful to people in managing their agricultural projects and other enterprises. Furthermore, numeracy is used in every part of any

person's life either at work, home or beyond. For instance, people use numeracy when going shopping, planning a holiday, deciding on a mortgage, helping children to learn, and to understand statistics and economic news (Why numeracy is important, n.d.). For anyone to make the best choices and decisions in life, one needs to be numerate. Furthermore, having good numeracy skills is regarded as the best protection against unemployment, low wages and poor health (Schleicher, n.d.).

The study's findings revealed that respondents acquired **life and social skills** which are vital for respondents to cope better with life. A number of respondents (58.3%) testified that due to the life skills they acquired from the literacy programme, they could operate cell phones and automatic teller machines, read communal land maps, and understand how their body organs function. This finding shows that the literacy programme enabled the respondents to become self-dependent and capable of doing things for themselves without having to wait for someone else's assistance. This finding supports Lind (1996), who claims that acquisition of life skills makes people self-reliant and enables them to cope on their own.

The study also found that the acquired social skills empowered participants to become confident in participating in public speaking and enabled them to easily relate to others. This finding is indicated by respondents' claims of having good public speaking skills. After attending the literacy programme, participants were no longer shy to speak in front of people and they were able to build relationships and interact with other community members. Furthermore, Purushothaman (n.d.) affirms that people who possess social skills are able to express themselves vocally and with confidence.

Lind (1996) also realised that acquiring social skills can help people feel strong and give them the freedom to speak up without having to feel shy. This is an indication

that literacy has the potential to meet people's most vital needs and to stimulate social participation.

The findings revealed that some respondents (25%) acquired **agrarian and needlecraft skills**. Agrarian skills are some of the most important skills that play a central role in the lives of Namibian inhabitants for income and livelihood and to supplement food resources for food security purposes. However, these skills were found to be the least acquired by the literacy programme's graduates. This finding confirms NTA's (2013, p.2) claim that "Namibia is classified as a country with relatively low agricultural potential". Having low agrarian skills is a disadvantage to the Namibian nation because it compromises food security and thus contributes to high levels of poverty. The finding revealed a need to put more emphasis on agrarian skills because having these skills can have a huge poverty reducing effect. Poverty reduction can take place when individuals apply good agrarian practices which neighbouring farmers can also imitate (King & Palmer, 2007), thus, in turn, reducing poverty in the community. Additionally, providing and sharing knowledge on how to grow food efficiently and economically using new techniques and technologies can increase food production and increase people's income (Rosegrant & Clive, 2003).

Needlecraft is an equally important skill which was also one of the least acquired skills by the participants. According to Baker (2005), there are several benefits to teaching people needlework. Needlecraft develops focus and concentration. It also enhances critical thinking and math skills and increases hand/eye coordination, small motor skills and builds self-esteem.

The fact that only a few participants acquired the agrarian and needlecraft skills suggests that more emphasis should be put on these very important skills in the literacy

education programme. In fact, more vocational skills need to be incorporated into the literacy programme for participants to acquire practical training and productive agricultural practices. Jonas' (2013) study revealed that participants in the literacy programme in Namibia have a strong will to learn different practical skills, but the programme does not realise their learning needs to offer these skills. Therefore, if the literacy programme could put more emphasis on teaching and learning content that can offer practical skills (practical needlework, farming and gardening) to participants, then such content would address participants' felt needs.

Another finding states that a few respondents (25%) acquired **finance management skills**. Finance management is about saving and spending money wisely. Respondents in this study understood this principle very well. They stressed how it is important to put money aside for future use in order to be financially secured and have a safety net in case of emergencies. They understood how important it is to keep track of their expenses in order to detect whether the things they spend money on are needs or just wants.

Finance plays an important role in people's lives because it is a tool for economic improvement and an instrument for satisfying common basic needs. Gaining the skill of managing their finances and having control over them in order to create a promising future for themselves and their families (Mudholkar, 2012) demonstrates the attainment of the literacy programme's objectives, and the bigger goal of poverty alleviation.

5.2.4 The practical evidence of how the graduates apply the acquired literacy skills

More than half of the participants (58%) claimed that they were using the skills they had acquired from the programme towards poverty alleviation. This would be an indication of how they contribute to the uplifting of their personal lives as well as socio-economic development of their communities. The following are practical illustrations of how the graduates used the skills they acquired from the literacy programme.

5.2.4.1 Graduates established their own businesses

The findings revealed that (58%) literacy programme graduates established businesses such as setting up *cucashops*, starting Mahangu milling enterprise and becoming successful distributors of products from companies such as Table charm, Justine and Swissgarde. This study found that various products were sold in the *cucashops*, such as sugar, sweets, biscuits, cool drinks, beer, fat cakes and so on. The researcher observed a participant who became a distributor of products and was walking around, carrying a bag full of products from Justine and Swissgarde companies, marketing and selling them to fellow community members.

The findings indicate that the establishment of own businesses by participants has totally increased their business profits and thus alleviated poverty levels in their lives. This is based on evidence provided by the participants who testified that their lives have totally improved because they get significant profit from their businesses and their poverty levels have reduced. Nevertheless, this finding is in conflict with

Likando's (2008) finding that adult literacy learners were not involved in income generating projects due to lack of necessary skills to create own businesses". The study's finding also disagree with Long and Beil (2005, p. 68) who stated that "there was never evidence from developing countries proving that adult literacy programmes can lead to economic improvements in the life standard of literacy programme graduates".

However, the results of this study agree with King and Palmer (2007) who states that literacy skills development can lift people from poverty. King and Palmer explains that skills development refers to the productive capacities that are developed through skills programmes which enable individuals in areas of the economy to become fully and productively engaged in livelihoods. In support, Oxenham (2004) states that what poor people learn from the literacy programmes may help them to raise their incomes and move out of poverty.

Establishing own business contributes to job creation and economic growth thus reducing poverty and unemployment (Juul, 2006). The establishment of own business benefits both business owners and the whole community in many ways: it generates income for business owners, improves their quality of life and that of their immediate families and thus alleviates poverty. For a community, the establishment of businesses contributes to community development through job creation. This is demonstrated by this study's findings indicating that most graduates who own businesses reported that they recruited people from their community to work in their businesses.

Furthermore, the community also benefits as the establishment of businesses brings services closer to the people. The study's findings revealed that most graduates'

businesses were built more than 50 kilometres from the nearest town. This saved people from travelling long distances to go and buy basic necessities.

5.2.4.2 Graduates produced their own food

The study found that graduates use the skills they acquired from the literacy programme to produce food for their families. The findings support Cawthera (2003) who claimed that participating in literacy programmes can help improve agricultural practices.

Due to the skills graduates gained on plant production, most of them were able to create their own gardens at home and as a result they no longer spent a lot of money on buying fruits and vegetables which are highly priced, especially in Namibia, because they are imported. This may suggest that the literacy programme can not only alleviate poverty through the establishment of businesses, but also through providing other effective ways of saving money. Although graduates applied acquired skills to make backyard gardens, they still need to apply the same skills at larger scales, for example, sufficient agricultural production when cultivating their crop fields.

Although, most Namibians in rural areas depend on own food production for survival, it is reported that food production is at its lowest, threatening the food security of the country (NTA, 2013). Responding to this challenge, the *Harambee* Prosperity Plan (HPP) (2015) entrust the Namibian government line ministries, private organizations and NGO's to devise programmes and projects that will ensure food security at household and national level. Therefore, there is no doubt that the graduates of the

literacy programme contribute to the achievement of the HPP. By applying their acquired knowledge and skills they improve agricultural output in communal areas and increase food security, and combat undernourishment.

5.2.4.3 Graduates managed their finances

The findings further revealed that respondents acquired and implemented finance management skills. Since the acquisition of skills from the literacy programme, participants were inspired to think of creative ways of saving money. Participants reported that they used to buy food such as bread and/or cooking oil without realizing that they could cut their monthly cost by buying flour to bake traditional bread for their families and also, by using Marula nuts and Kalahari melon seeds to produce cooking oil. This practice saves them from spending money unnecessarily, and in turn reduces poverty in their lives.

This finding may suggest that in addition to starting income generating activities, being able to manage finances wisely can also contribute to poverty alleviation. Furthermore, this finding seems to suggest that literacy programmes encourage the use of indigenous knowledge for indigenous food production and preparation. The practice liberates people from dependency, and equips them with knowledge to value indigenous products that are vital for the promotion of a dignified and fulfilling life. This argument supports the Kenyan popular belief that poverty does not have deep roots when wealth creation is in everyone's hands (King & Palmer, 2007).

Good finance management is an essential key to success. It gives one peace of mind and a sense of pride accompanied by the confidence that comes from knowing that one is able to provide, not only for his/her needs, but for other family members as well.

5.2.4.4 Graduates changed their life style

The study revealed that the literacy programme enabled graduates to realise that the abuse of alcohol leads to poverty, while being sober makes them more productive, and enables them to use their thinking capacity. This finding is supported by the World Bank's (2000) claim that education not only improves a person's potential to be more productive, but also makes people realize the risk of alcohol abuse.

The finding further shows that the consequences of literacy education are not only about socio-economic improvement. But they are also about opening the eyes of the participants to be able to see, judge, reason and read situations in different ways. In support, Freire and Macedo (as cited in Mpofu & Youngman, 2001) state that literacy will have a positive effect if it is linked to social change.

When an individual initiates change him/herself, he/she can adapt easily and maintain the new life style. Positive change of lifestyle benefits people in many ways such as personal growth, economic improvements, life values, good progress, plenty of different opportunities and new beginnings (Alexander, 2016).

Without doubt, this study's findings clearly show that the graduates of the literacy programme have been applying the skills that they gained from the programme. Therefore, one can argue that this programme is contributing to poverty alleviation,

and improving the living standard of people in Oshikoto Region. This study's findings are not contesting other researchers' findings that reported a high poverty rate in the region. However, the findings suggest that the problem could partly be attributed to the low number of people participating in the literacy programme in the region. According to Blunch and Portner (2011), if a literacy programme performs poorly in the enrolment and graduation rates, there will be significant impact on economic outcomes at a large-scale. The researcher believes that if more people in Oshikoto Region could take part in the programme, and/or implement what they learned, poverty levels in the region would be reduced.

The findings prove that there are many ways in which the literacy skills are being used. Therefore, the focus of literacy programmes should not only be on the acquisition of literacy skills in the classroom, but on how the skills can be used practically.

5.2.5 Challenges experienced by the graduates in using the acquired skills from the literacy programme

Although this study has revealed that some respondents acquired various skills from the literacy programme, such as how to start a business and run it successfully, it also shows that some respondents could not use the skills and knowledge they acquired due to various challenges. Thompson (2002) argues that it is the use of skills that matters most to the process of poverty alleviation. The following are the challenges that hindered participants from applying the acquired skills.

5.2.5.1 Lack of finances and lack of micro-credit loan providers to start businesses

The study's findings suggest that lack of capital to start businesses was one of the challenges graduates faced which prevented them from applying the acquired skills. This view is also supported by Korboe (2007) who found out that inaccessibility to capital is the most consistent barrier to skills utilization.

The findings show that none of the participants in this study secured micro-credit loans or any other assistance from anywhere. This is despite the fact that records show that the Directorate of Adult Education in the Ministry of Education has a programme called Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment (ASDSE) which was introduced in 1996 to promote self-employment and income generation by providing micro credit and business training and support (Tonin, Ricoveri & Zaire (1997). This finding implies lack of mobilization among communities to become aware of this opportunity. Therefore, there is a need for DAE to become aggressive in mobilizing communities to make use of the prospect. It is important for community members to be assisted with such opportunities for them to have a chance of using what they have learned towards the improvement of their quality of life. This is to ensure that the skills they learned become a part of their everyday life (Indabawa & Mpofu, 2006).

5.2.5.2 Graduates have too many responsibilities

The findings further show that some respondents (8.3%) did not use the skills they acquired because after completing the programme, they had no time to participate in

any activities outside their household. Respondents explained that they were interested in participating in income generating projects; however, they barely get time to do that because of other responsibilities such as being wives and mothers, walking children to and from school and various household chores. The findings further imply that graduates have poor time management skills as well as difficulty in prioritizing their activities. Poor time management can be caused by lack of planning (schedule) and too many distractions (Sellers, 2016). However, if the adults learn to have a schedule and follow it, they may be able to manage their time effectively.

This finding supports Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) who explain that adults have many responsibilities and they spend most of their days doing housework, taking care of children, gardening, fetching water and firewood. Thus, it becomes difficult for them to participate in income generating activities.

5.2.5.3 Graduates procrastinate ideas to start businesses

Some participants (16.7%) were not able to use the skills they acquired due to procrastination with regards to the implementation of ideas. Procrastination refers to the action of delaying or postponing doing something. According to Fabrega (2015), procrastination has been called the thief of time, opportunity's assassin and the grave in which dreams are buried. The findings imply that graduates had good dreams and plans of what to do in order to make an income and alleviate poverty, but they did not put their ideas and plans into action. They kept postponing actions. Therefore, procrastination hindered their dreams. A few participants (25%) indicated that since graduating from the literacy programme, they had dreams of establishing businesses,

however it had been more than two years (at the time of this study's data collection) and they had not yet taken action towards implementing their dreams. The delay caused some graduates to forget what they had learned. According to Rulistia (2009), relapse does not only cause people to forget how to read or write completely, but more that, they may fail to develop their skills and make them useful in their lives. The study's findings further suggest that participants were not motivated enough to make development aspirations become a reality in their lives.

Abadzi (1994) advises that for one to avoid illiteracy relapse, one need to have a literacy facilitator who is able to develop participants' Meta cognitive skills. He further reckons that a competent facilitator must be able to choose instructional approaches that ensure that useful information is retained and retrieved when needed.

5.2.6 Graduates' opinions on the value of the literacy programme

It is undeniable that most participants reported that they had acquired some valuable skills. Most graduates acknowledged the positive contribution the literacy programme made to their lives and how much it enhanced their living standards. However, the fact that none of the participants could get employment with the certificate they obtained from the literacy programme caused some of them to lose trust and confidence, and disregard the certificate they received upon completion. This finding further suggests that there is a need for the literacy programme planners and implementers to strengthen the quality of the programme. According to the participants strengthening the quality of the programme can be done by focusing more on skills development in the programme's curriculum. According to King and Palmer (2007) skills development

refers to building the productive capacities which can enable individuals in all areas of the economy to become fully and productively engaged in livelihoods and to meet the changing demands of the economy and labour market. The findings agree with Oluoch (2005) who stated that literacy programme certificates are not recognized due to poor quality. The findings further imply that there is a need for the implementers to raise awareness to employers on the capabilities of literacy programme graduates. Jonas (2013) recommended that the DAE must partner with various workplaces to support career development for the employment of literacy programme graduates. In other countries such as India, literacy programme graduates are able to get jobs as trainers and facilitators of adult learning in various adult education programmes (Puroshothaman, n.d.).

The study further revealed that a few respondents (8.3%) felt that there are no visible benefits in the lives of the programme's graduates and hence the low participation in the programme. This finding suggests that there is a need for the DAE to market its programmes by using the programmes' graduates who experienced significant improvement in their lives as motivational speakers to motivate and encourage others to take part in the literacy programme.

5.3 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings in view of the existing literature. There is no doubt graduates acquired various skills and they used them towards poverty alleviation. The acquired skills were used in starting businesses, producing food, managing finances appropriately and changing lifestyles towards positive living. The next chapter will focus on the summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The intention of this study was to assess how adult learners who graduated from the National Literacy Programme in Namibia use the skills they acquired to alleviate poverty in their lives, with the purpose of availing practical benefits of the programme. In total, twelve graduates participated in this study. All 12 were women. The participants were aged 45 years and above. Only three respondents were employed and they were all employed before joining the literacy programme. Four participants were unemployed and five participants were self-employed as a result of using the skills they acquired from the programme. The summary of the major findings of the study are summarised according to the major themes which emerged from the data analysis.

6.2 Summary of the study's findings

- Various factors motivated this study's participants to join the literacy programme, specifically, the need to advance their educational level; to become better persons; and be able to assist their children with their school work; interest in literacy primers that resembled their lives and the life they admired; boredom at home; the need to gain information on income generating projects and start their livelihood; and the need to motivate fellow community members.
- The skills acquired by the graduates of the literacy programme include communication in English, numeracy, entrepreneurship, agrarian and needlecraft, financial management, life and social skills.

- The respondents applied the skills they acquired to establish own businesses such as *cucashops*, to distribute products from companies such as Justine, Table charm, Swissgarde, and to start Mahangu milling businesses. Acquired skills were also applied in food production, finance management and changing of life style. This significantly contributed towards poverty alleviation.
- Respondents who did not utilize the skills they acquired identified lack of finances, lack of time management, procrastination of ideas and illiteracy relapse as challenges that prevented them from using the skills in order to alleviate poverty in their lives.
- Most graduates acknowledged the positive contribution the literacy programme made to their lives and stated that it enhanced their living standard.
- Some respondents were of the opinion that the certificates awarded on completion of the programme had no value since they did not enable them to secure employment even in low paying jobs like cleaning or cooking. To them, this was a clear demonstration that the programme lacks quality. Thus, they urged the programme implementers to raise awareness to employers on the capabilities of literacy programme graduates.
- Eight percent of the respondents felt that there were no visible benefits in the lives of the programme's graduates which explain why there is low participation in the programme. This finding suggests that there is a need for DAE to market the value of the literacy programme by using the programme's graduates as motivational speakers to encourage other community members on the benefits of the programme.
- Respondents felt that learning through theory alone is not sufficient to equip one to be able to reduce poverty in one's life. Thus, most respondents suggested

that there is a need to strengthen the curriculum by incorporating diverse vocational skills such as carpentry, embroidery, bricklaying, sewing, cooking, basket weaving and so on.

- It was verified through observations that the respondents' claims of having improved livelihoods were indeed factual. The researcher managed to observe two *cucashops*, a garden and a sales person's livelihood. One *cucashop* was built with corrugated iron while the other was made of cement bricks. Both of the *cucashops* were among many other *cucashops*, shebeens and bars in one area.

6.3 Contribution of the study to the existing knowledge on the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation

In the current literature, there is a gap regarding how adult literacy graduates use the skills they acquire from the literacy programme towards poverty alleviation. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the practical use of skills acquired by adult graduates of the literacy programme, with the purpose of availing the practical benefits of NLPN. The acquired skills were used by graduates to establish own businesses, produce own food, manage finances and change their life style. This is evidence that literacy is one of the contributing factors to socio-economic development.

The study established the motivating factors for joining adult literacy programmes; skills acquired from adult literacy programmes and their applications; challenges that prevent graduates of the literacy programme from applying the acquired skills;

graduates' perceptions on the literacy programme; and how adult literacy can successfully be more geared towards socio-economic development.

The study's findings concluded that graduates joined the programme for various reasons such as to advance their educational level, avoid boredom at home, become better persons, and the need to inquire about income generating activities and start livelihoods. The study's findings clearly show that adults have different needs and they enrol on literacy programmes for different reasons.

The study clearly revealed that graduates acquired various skills such as communication in English, numeracy, entrepreneurship, agrarian, life and social skills, needlecraft, and finance management skills. These findings may mean that respondents are better equipped with the necessary skills to alleviate poverty in their lives.

The study divulged a number of challenges preventing literacy graduates from putting the theory they learned into practice. The challenges included: lack of finances, too many responsibilities, and procrastination of ideas and relapse of information.

This study's findings suggested the incorporation of vocational skills into the literacy programme's curriculum.

6.4 Limitation and strength of the study

The main limitation of this study was that initially the population was inclusive of both men and women who graduated from stage 4 (AUPE stage). However, only one male graduated from the programme and he did not agree to participate in the study. Therefore, the sample was not representative of both genders. Although there was a limitation, the study's strength is in the fact that the research questions that guided the study were well answered and they captured the diverse views of the graduates.

6.5 Future research

The study did not capture all the regions in Namibia, but only focused on one region - Oshikoto. A study can therefore be conducted in all the other regions to establish different views from different graduates. In addition, future research is needed to study the prospects and challenges of incorporating vocational skills into the literacy programme's curriculum. Furthermore, these findings are based on the graduates who completed the six subjects of stage 4 of NLPN only. Therefore, there is need for further study focusing on those who could not complete their modules in order to share their reasons for failing to complete the modules for the improvement of the literacy programme.

6.6 Recommendations

Resulting from the findings and discussion of this study, various recommendations for MEAC, Oshikoto Directorate of Education DAE, graduates and the entire community

of Oshikoto region were deemed necessary for the improvement of the literacy programme.

6.6.1 Recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MEAC)

- The MEAC should raise awareness in private, NGOs and other government ministries on the capabilities of literacy programme graduates in order to make it easier for the graduates to be employed.
- The MEAC should provide opportunities to graduates to use the skills they acquired. This can be done through introducing government funded IGA to graduates.

6.6.2 Recommendations to the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE)

- DAE should strengthen the curriculum of the literacy programme with vocational skills development in order to increase productivity, economic growth and employability. As Likando (2008) recommended, the incorporation of various vocational skills into the literacy programme curriculum to cater for the adult population of Namibia will be beneficial for all involved parties.
- DAE should rename NLPN in order to make the programme more socially acceptable to men and out of school youth. The findings from this study show that men and the youth do not participate in the programme because they may be associating the literacy programme with reading and writing only and not with a programme that can enable them to enhance their living standard.

6.6.3 Recommendations to the Oshikoto Directorate of Education

- The fact that none of the graduates obtained financial or any assistance from the Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment (ASDSE) programme calls for the regional office to market the programme to all communities, to give an opportunity to graduates who are hindered by lack of finances to apply their acquired skills.
- The regional office should initiate a database of the literacy programme graduates and organise occasional workshops for them to motivate and advise them on how they can apply acquired skills to alleviate poverty.

6.6.4 Recommendations to the graduates

- The graduates who have experienced improvement in their living standards should help the Oshikoto Directorate of Education to mobilise and encourage fellow community members to participate in the programme by sharing the benefits of the programme. This can be done through community meetings and one on one visit.
- Graduates should enquire about and consult governmental institutions, NGO's and private sector enterprises which offer financial assistance or grants to start or expand their businesses. For example, Oshikoto Regional Council, Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Ministry of Youth, Sports and National Services, Fides Bank of Namibia, Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Bank, and so on.

6.6.5 Recommendation to the community of Oshikoto Region

- Community members should play an active role in making input into the planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of the literacy programme. This can be done through initiating meetings with the Education Officers in Oshikoto Directorate of Education to give their input.
- Communities of Oshikoto Region should participate in the literacy programme in order to reduce the poverty rate in the region.

6.7 Conclusion

The study set out to assess the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation by graduates of the National Literacy Programme in Oshikoto Region, Namibia. It is concluded that determining how the literacy programme graduates utilize the skills they acquired can allow us to see the impact this programme can have on people's lives and how useful the acquired skills are. In addition, it can establish an approach to revitalize the literacy programme in Namibia and elsewhere.

Although the study divulged a number of challenges preventing literacy graduates from fully putting the theory they learned into practice and the need of incorporating vocational skills in the literacy programme's curriculum, participants felt that what they acquired from the literacy programme enhanced their living standard. Various skills such as communication in English, numeracy, entrepreneurial, agrarian, life and social skills, needlecraft, and finance management skills were acquired. The acquired skills were applied to alleviate poverty by establishing own businesses, engaging in food production, managing finances wisely and by changing of life style.

The application of the acquired skills is an indication that graduates are willing to be functionally literate. Therefore, there is a need for DAE to seriously consider the emphasis of the graduates of strengthening the literacy programme curriculum with more practical skills that would help the programme's graduates get employment and participate in IGA to boost their socio-economic quality of life.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that challenges experienced by the graduates in putting theory into practice can be addressed by organising seminars with the graduates to share information, motivate and advise the literacy programme graduates on how to apply the acquired skills and how to obtain grants from different institutions. Overall, the literacy programme could contribute more to the fight against poverty.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: SEC/FOE/47/2014

Date: July 16, 2014

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: ASSESSING THE APPLICATION OF LITERACY SKILLS TOWARDS POVERTY ALLEVIATION
BY GRADUATES OF THE NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME IN OSHIKOTO REGION, NAMIBIA

Nature/Level of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: EMILIA ALFEUS (student No: 200322753)

Host Department & Faculty: Lifelong Learning and Community Education, Faculty of Education

Supervisor: Dr. M. Hamunyela

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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'I. Mapaure'.

Prof. I. Mapaure
UNAM Research Coordinator
ON BEHALF OF UREC

Appendix B: Research Permission Letter

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Private Bag 13301, 340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pionerspark, Windhoek, Namibia



The School of Postgraduate
Studies
P.Bag13301
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: 2063523

E-mail: cshaimemanya@unam.na

Date: 23 June 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

1. This letter serves to inform that student: Emilia Alfeus (Student number: 200322753) is a registered student in the Department of Lifelong Learning and Community Education at the University of Namibia. Her research proposal was reviewed and successfully met the University of Namibia requirements.
2. The purpose of this letter is to kindly notify you that the student has been granted permission to carry out postgraduate studies research. The School of Postgraduate Studies has approved the research to be carried out by the student for purposes of fulfilling the requirements of the degree being pursued.
3. The proposal adheres to ethical principles.

Thank you so much in advance and many regards.

Yours truly,

Name of Main Supervisor: Dr. Miriam Hamunyela

Signed: M Hamunyela

Dr. C. N.S. Shaimemanya

Signed: C N S Shaimemanya

Director: School of Postgraduate Studies

Appendix C: Student Permission Request from MOE P.S

P. O. Box 2005
Rundu
Kavango Region
28 July 2014

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education (MoE)
Windhoek

REF: PERMISSION TO CARRYOUT RESEARCH IN OSHIKOTO EDUCATIONAL REGION

I am a student doing Master of Education (Lifelong Learning and Community Education) in the department of Lifelong Learning and Community Education at the University of Namibia. I intend to conduct a research study in Oshikoto Education region as from 11 August 2014 to 31 August 2014 targeting adult literacy learners at the regional level. The study is into: Assessing the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation by graduates of the National Literacy Programme in Oshikoto region, Namibia.

The results of the study are regarded to be important because, the identification of the use of skills which are acquired from National Literacy Programme in Namibia can attract the attention of both government and development partners in Namibia and encourage them to design programmes that can enhance the beneficiaries' standards of living in terms of poverty alleviation. Furthermore, previous research done so far has not unpack fully how literacy skills acquired can help alleviate poverty, therefore this study's findings may be a good lesson to Namibia, to learn responsive strategies to adult learners' practical needs when designing and/or reviewing their literacy programmes.

I therefore seek permission to collect data from Oshikoto Educational region. The collection of data will be through conducting one-on-one interviews with graduates of Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) stage of learning. I will personally conduct interviews so as to clarify issues that may arise during the process.

Attached is the ethical clearance letter from the University of Namibia. For further information you can contact me at 0812986926 or 0813782366. The response can be collected personally or be posted to the above mentioned postal address.

Thanking you in advance

Emilia Alfeus

Appendix D: Permission Letter from MOE P.S



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: Mr C. Muchila
E-mail: Cavin.Muchila@moe.gov.na
Tel: +264 61 2933200
Fax: +264 61 2933922

Private Bag 13186,
WINDHOEK
Namibia

File no: 11/1/1

04 August 2014

To: Ms Emilia Alfeus
P. O Box 2005
Rundu
Kavango
Cell: 081 2986926

Dear Ms Alfeus

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN OSHIKOTO REGION


Your correspondence regarding the subject above, seeking permission to conduct a research study in Oshikoto Region has reference.

Kindly be informed that the Ministry does not have any objection to your request to conduct a research study at identified literacy centres in the region concerned.

You are, however, kindly advised to contact the Regional Council Office, Directorate of Education, for authorisation to go into the centres and for proper information coordination.

Also take note that the research activities should not interfere with the normal school programmes. Participation by literacy promoters or learners should be on a voluntary basis.

By copy of this letter the Regional Education Director are made aware of your request.

Sincerely yours

.....
Mr. Alfred Ilukena
PERMANENT SECRETARY
cc: Directors of Education, Oshikoto



All official correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary

Appendix E: Authorisation Letter to Oshikoto Region

P. O. Box 2005
Rundu
Kavango Region
07August 2014

The Director
Oshikoto Education Region
Ministry of Education (MoE)
Ondangwa

REF: AUTHORISATION TO CARRYOUT RESEARCH IN OSHIKOTO EDUCATIONAL REGION

I am a student doing Master of Education (Adult Education) in the department of Lifelong Learning and Community Education at the University of Namibia. I intend to conduct a research study in Oshikoto Education region as from 18 August 2014 to 30 September 2014 targeting adult literacy learners at the regional level. The study is into: Assessing the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation by graduates of the National Literacy Programme in Oshikoto region, Namibia.

The results of the study are regarded to be important because, the identification of the use of skills which are acquired from National Literacy Programme in Namibia can attract the attention of both government and development partners in Namibia and encourage them to design and/or review programmes that can enhance the beneficiaries' standards of living in terms of poverty alleviation. Furthermore, previous research done so far has not unpack fully how literacy skills acquired can help alleviate poverty, therefore this study's findings may be a good lesson to Namibia, to learn responsive strategies to adult learners' practical needs when designing and/or reviewing their literacy programmes.

I therefore seek authorisation to collect data from Oshikoto Educational region and also solicit for the region's support in carrying out this study. The collection of data will be through conducting one-on-one interviews with graduates of Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) stage of learning, hence i will need the help of the staff at

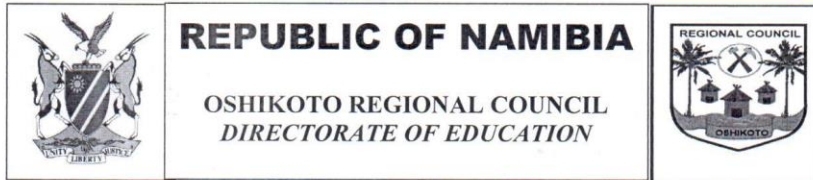
the Directorate of Adult Education to avail relevant documents and assist me in the identification of the Oshikoto's directorate's AUPE graduates.

Attached is the permission letter from the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education and the ethical clearance letter from the University of Namibia. For further information you can contact me at 0812986926 or 0813782366.

Thanking you in advance

Emilia Alfeus

Appendix F: Authorisation letter from Oshikoto Education Region



Tel (065) 281900
Fax (065) 240315
Enq: Mr Vilho Shipuata

Private Bag 2028
ONDANGWA
22 August 2014

Ref: 12/2/6/1

Ms Emilia Alfeus
P O Box 2005
Rundu
Namibia

Dear Ms Alfeus

RE: AUTHORIZATION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN OSHIKOTO EDUCATIONAL REGION

1. We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 07 August 2014, seeking for approval from the office of the Director to conduct a research study in our Region.
2. The writing of this letter therefore serves to inform you that permission has been granted to you on the following conditions, that:
 - The research should not interfere with the normal teaching and learning process at schools.
 - Any participation in the research should be on a voluntary basis.
3. Please be further informed that our staff members will be able to help you with relevant documents and information.
4. With that in mind, it is my wish that your research study will yield satisfactory results, towards the completion of your qualification.

Yours faithfully



MR LAMEK T. KAFID
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
OSHIKOTO REGION



Cc: Mr Thomas Shikongo
Regional coordinator: Adult Education

Appendix G: Information sheet and consent form



13 July 2014

ASSESSING THE APPLICATION OF LITERACY SKILLS TOWARDS POVERTY ALLEVIATION BY GRADUATES OF THE NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME IN OSHIKOTO REGION, NAMIBIA

You are being invited to participate in a research study about how AUPE graduates use the skills they have acquired from the programme to alleviate poverty in their lives. This study is being conducted by Emilia Alfeus, from the Department of Lifelong Learning and Community Education at the University of Namibia. The study is being conducted as part of a postgraduate master degree thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have participated in the National Literacy Programme in Namibia and have completed the AUPE stage successfully.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will be used to explain the practical benefits of the literacy programme. The interview will take about 60 minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should assist in revamping the National Literacy Programme in Namibia for the benefit of Namibian communities.

This interview is anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By signing on the attached form, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this research study. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Emilia Alfeus at 0812986926 or 0813782377.

Consent Form

I.....agree to participate in [*Emilia Alfeus*]'s research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with [*Emilia Alfeus*] to be tape-recorded

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one box)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix H: Interview questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR AUPE GRADUATES IN THE OSHIKOTO EDUCATION REGION

Name of Interviewer_____

Name of Interviewee_____

Place of Interview_____

Date of Interview_____

My name is Emilia Alfeus. I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. This interview is part of my master's research programme which I am completing with the University of Namibia. The purpose of the study is to assess the application of literacy skills towards poverty alleviation in Oshikoto region.

What I want to learn from you is the skills you have acquired from AUPE stage, whether you do apply those skills and how? And also if you have any difficulties in using the skills you have gained from AUPE programme. The results of this study will be used to determine whether the National Literacy Programme in Namibia can help alleviate poverty. By learning more about the situation and reporting it, we can help create good change in our literacy programme.

I wish to assure you that you will remain completely anonymous, your name will not be used in this report and no record of this interview will be kept for any purpose other than research.

SECTION A – PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Sex_____
2. Age_____
3. Educational level_____
4. Employment status_____
5. Year of completing AUPE stage_____

SECTION B – SKILLS ACQUIRED FROM AUPE STAGE

6. What was your life like before you joined the literacy programme?
7. When did you first learn about the literacy programme?
8. What made you join the literacy programme?
9. What were your expectations when you joined the programme?
10. What are the difficulties you have encountered during your participation in AUPE stage?
11. While in AUPE stage, what skills did you learn/acquired?
12. Do you feel your quality of life have improved because of the skills you have mentioned? How?
13. What benefits did you receive from participating in AUPE stage?
14. What changes would you like to see in the curriculum of AUPE?

SECTION C – HOW LITERACY SKILLS ARE USED

15. Do you have a livelihood and how did it come about?
16. Someone once said, we do not read in order to read, count in order to count or write in order to write. But we learn literacy skills in order to be able to put bread on a table and improve our quality of life. Would you say there have been changes in your life in terms of improved quality of life, since participating in AUPE?
17. How did your standard of living change?
18. Do you apply/have you ever applied the literacy skills you have acquired from AUPE in your livelihood? How? If not, what prevented you from applying those skills?
19. How is life/business different for you now that you have gone through the AUPE programme?

SECTION D – CHALLENGES FACED IN USING THE LITERACY SKILLS

20. What challenges did you face in applying the skills you acquired from AUPE stage of learning?
21. What knowledge or experience have you used to handle those challenges?
22. Would you say poverty is reduced in your life/family because of having gained and utilised skills from AUPE? Why/why not?
23. Is there anything else I should have asked you or any other thing or comment that you want to share with us?

Appendix I: Observation guide

Location-----

Date-----

Participant -----

1. What is the physical setting where the application of literacy skills takes place?

2. What products are sold in the business?

3. Description of the situation in which the graduate applied the literacy skills

4. Did the graduate seem to struggle in applying the literacy skills?

Yes

No

If yes,

how?.....

..

5. Other observations:
